

Biography

Oscar Aponte is a doctoral candidate in Latin American and Caribbean history at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY). Originally from Bogotá, Colombia, Oscar graduated from Universidad Nacional de Colombia with a B.A. in sociology and holds an M.A. in history from Universidad de los Andes (Colombia). He also holds an M.A. and an M.Phil. in history from The Graduate Center, CUNY. His primary research interest is the process of state formation and the penetration of capitalism into one of the last indigenous frontiers of modern Latin America—the Amazon rainforest. In particular, his doctoral dissertation, entitled “The Roads to Rural Colonization: A Regional History of Putumayo, Colombia, 1896-1977,” examines the interconnection between roadbuilding projects and colonization cycles in the present-day Putumayo Department—located in the northwestern corner of the Colombian portion of the Amazon rainforest—between the arrival of the Capuchin missionaries in the area in 1896 and the departure of U.S. based Texas Petroleum Company (Texaco) from Putumayo in 1977. Oscar has conducted preliminary archival research and fieldwork in Putumayo and Bogotá with the financial support of the PhD program in history, the Provost’s Office, and the Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino Studies at The Graduate Center, CUNY. Research for his dissertation has been funded by the Social Science Research Council’s International Dissertation Research Fellowship program and the ZEIT-Stiftung Foundation’s Beyond Borders program. Oscar has been a LASA member since 2018, and since 2020 is the chair of the student section of the association.