Florida International University  
*University Graduate School*

**Master’s Thesis Defense**

**Abstract**

Fragile Saints  
by  
Mary-Claire Ibarra

FRAGILE SAINTS is a magical realist novel set in contemporary Peru. Elsa is struggling with her recent divorce and childhood memories of her family’s silk-producing farm haunt her, so when Elsa’s dying grandmother requests to see her, she visits Peru. There, Elsa learns she has inherited a country house, near the old family hacienda, which is haunted by a dark secret. Elsa is intrigued with the house, its caretakers, and her new lover Gustavo, yet she encounters disturbing ghostly visitors.

The novel is written primarily from Elsa’s point of view, as she discovers her purpose, but an omniscient narrator is employed as well, taking the reader into the family’s past. Like Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and Isabel Allende’s *The House of Spirits*, FRAGILE SAINTS uses magical realism to create a family saga where ancestral mishaps and the natural world influence the present day characters, making them vulnerable and yet also indomitable.

**Date:** March 24, 2016  
**Time:** 2:00 p.m.  
**Place:** Biscayne Bay Campus, AC1 319  

**Department:** Creative Writing  
**Major Professor:** Debra Dean