Listening in the Age of Cervantes:
Moriscas and Gendered Sounds from Spain to Algiers

February 27th, 2020
4pm
UCLA Faculty Center
Hacienda Room
480 Charles E. Young Drive East
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1657

What is the role of sound in early modern literary and historical texts? Can written and printed sources capture gendered sound in the past? How can these sources help us understand what people heard? Professor Velasco’s presentation ponders these questions by listening for the acoustic qualities and semantic significance of the vocalizations and musical expressions by Muslim and Christian women on both sides of the Mediterranean. Despite the fact that some of the most widely circulated texts on Algiers and its conflicted relationship with Spain were conspicuously aware of the sounds of women, most investigations have not listened attentively to the gendered soundscapes echoing in the archive. This presentation seeks to redress this scholarly hard-of-hearing by tuning into and sounding out the audible events and actions associated with Moriscas and women in Algiers in both written and visual texts. Through listening critically to sound events that often go unheard we can better understand the ways in which auralizing (through imaginative or virtual listening) together with visualizing evidence of women’s lives in the past allows us to hear why the vocalizations of women mattered and how they helped interpret both political events and personal activities.