Name: Amanda Moon

Group: 5

Topic: The Panama Papers

Region: Latin America

Article Name: The Panama Papers: 7 things to know

Published: 4/6/16

Source: CNN

Link: <http://www.cnn.com/2016/04/04/world/panama-papers-explainer/index.html>

The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) published a leak of over 11 million documents dubbed “The Panama Papers”. These documents reveal a network including 12 current or former world leaders as well as 128 other politicians and public officials from all around the world who through the Panama Law firm, Mossack Fonseca, are involved in shell companies and offshore accounts. These shell companies and offshore accounts are in areas where they can avoid paying the taxes that should apply to their accounts, thus making these accounts corrupted. This is called tax evasion. Some important people mentioned are associates of Russian President Vladimir Putin, important members of FIFA’s ethics committee, the Prime Minister of Iceland, and 33 other individuals that are blacklisted by the US government. An anonymous source gave these documents to a German newspaper, and that newspaper shared them with the ICIJ. These documents are outing many offshore account companies and tax havens, and outing Panama for be a major place for money laundering. Many of these individuals are going under investigations that could greatly affect their careers.

Personally I think this is a serious crime and all individuals that were mentioned in the papers or are associated with those mentioned should be investigated and punished accordingly. I think that countries should unite under the common cause of cracking down on these tax havens and areas where money laundering is prevalent.

Because the main themes in this story are power, money, and secrecy, I think these might fit with Macbeth or King Lear, but I do not know enough about the plays to really compare this article to them.

Topic: Brazil’s Government Crisis

Region: Latin America

Article Name: Brazil Corruption: Is the government in crisis?

Published: March 16, 2016

Source: BBC

Link: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-35810578>

3.5 million brazilians held mass anti-government protests on March 13. There are several problems in Brazil causing these protests. The first is the Brazilian Economy. Brazil is going through its worst economic recession in 30 years, and inflation and unemployment have gone up drastically. There is also lots of corruption in the brazilian government that is upsetting the citizens, mainly the Mensalao Scandal and Operation Car Wash. The Mensalao Scandal involved using public funds to bribe congress members to vote a particular way. Operation Car Wash involved Brazil’s biggest construction companies overcharging state-oil company Petrobras for building contracts. This extra money would then be given to executives and politicians who were in on the deal for their campaigns and personal expenses. President Lula, who governed the country from 2003 to 2011 was briefly detained on March 4 for being involved in Operation Car Wash. On top of all of this, Dilma Rousseff, current president of Brazil, is facing possible impeachment over allegations that she manipulated Brazil’s accounts to hide a growing deficit. Brazil is divided into those who support Rousseff and Lula and those who don’t, but everyone seems to agree that Brazil needs to start with a clean slate. These events could result in monumental changes to power and government in Brazil, and in time may bring Brazil back to it’s former glory.

My heart lies with the Brazilian citizens in this situation. They are being lied to and are seeking justice. I believe the politicians involved should receive their according punishments, and if that means the president needs to be impeached, then so be it. A reformed government may lead to the end of Brazil’s awful economic recession. The main themes in this story are corruption, scandal, and money, so I think this story could align with King Lear or Macbeth. However, I haven’t learned about these stories in detail, so I am not sure.

Topic: The legalization of Gay Marriage in Colombia

Region: Latin America

Article Name: Colombia high court paves way for gay marriage rights

Published: 4/7/16

Source: CBS News

Link: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/colombia-high-court-paves-way-for-gay-marriage-rights/>

Colombia’s highest court is paving the way for gay rights, despite Colombia being a conservative Roman Catholic nation. Only a few countries in Latin America allow same sex couples to marry, including Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay. Gay couples in Colombia were already allowed to form civil unions. These civil unions provided many of the same benefits of marriage, including inheritance, pensions, and health benefits, but symbolic right to wed has been denied until now. On April 7, the Constitutional Court rejected a justice’s opinion that would have prevented the unions from being registered as marriages by a 6-3 vote. In the coming weeks, the court is expected to approve a new ruling stating that denying the right to wed at public notaries is discriminatory. Colombia has always been very open to expanded rights to gay couples. In 2011, congress designed rules to record civil unions between gay couples in such a way that they would not be discriminated against. After this, many notaries began simply listing the unions as marriages, but some outright refuses to list the unions as marriages. This is what lead to the current action in the court. This action will allow many more couples to be legally married, and is an important step forward in the fight for LGBT+ rights.

I believe gay couples and individuals deserve the same rights as straight couples and individuals, so I support this action by the colombian courts. I think it’s a great step forward in the fight for gay rights, but there is still a long way to go until equality is reached, and those couples receive the respect they deserve. I hope this action inspires other Latin American countries to take action in the fight for gay rights. I think this article could relate to the Twelfth Night, as it involves relationships, and unfairness in those relationships. I have not researched the Twelfth Night in depth, so I am not sure how much the stories would align.