The Office of International Education sponsored the Forum Theater Troupe’s first visit to Southern. The Forum Theater Group consists of women from Tlaxcala, Mexico who work together to raise awareness of the oppression that women experience as wives of abusive husbands, wives of immigrants in the U.S., or as immigrants themselves. These women fight for self-determination, justice, and equality for woman and families.

The group of ten actresses performed two plays in Spanish, “Mariposa Viajera” and “El V eneno de mi Suegra.” The titles translate to “Traveling Butterfly” and “The Poison of the Mother-in-law.” The plays dealt with issues such as domestic violence and vulnerable women. None of the women are professional actors.

Courtney Baird, a SCSU Spanish student said, “I liked how the dialogue was very real, it didn’t feel exaggerated or toned down.”

Courtney said, “It was a nice presentation and very accurate. Based on my experience with Mexican culture it really touched upon some issues that women face.”

After each play, the translator and actresses discussed the social issues and asked the audience to reflect on their own lives to propose a solution. After the audience and actresses brainstorm the solution, an audience member goes on the stage to improvise with the troupe.

The play’s producer, Stephanie Bifulco said, “We started doing theater four years ago as a tool to address problems locally and then internationally.” She also says that all of the actresses have family members in New Haven and New York who they are staying with. They’re the mothers, wives, and daughters of migrant workers.

Audience members record the plays on their phones.

Forum discussion after the first play, “Mariposa Viajera.”

Photos by Jake Grubman