

Biography

Christine Ortiz

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Professor Christine Ortiz was born in Wichita Falls, Texas to Robinson and Cecilia (Pastore) Ortiz, where her father was working at the time as an electrical engineer in the United States Air Force. Soon after, the family moved back to Puerto Rico, the birthplace of her father, and eventually settled in Westchester, NY near the home of her mother. Cecilia Ortiz was raised in Brooklyn, NY and her family traces back to Messina, Italy. Professor Ortiz has two identical twin brothers 5 years her junior; Robinson Ortiz, Jr. (<http://cancerdocchitown.blogspot.com/>) who is an oncologist at the University of Chicago, Illinois and Brian Ortiz who is the CEO of <http://www.seomatrix.com/> and lives in New Haven, Connecticut. Professor Ortiz obtained her B.S. from [Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute](#) in Troy, NY and her M.S. and Ph.D. from [Cornell University](#) in Ithaca, NY, all in the field of materials science and engineering. Her doctoral thesis focused on synthesis and mechanical properties of liquid crystalline networks and was co-advised by [Professor Edward Kramer](#) and [Professor Christopher K. Ober](#). After braving many years of snow in both Troy and Ithaca, she moved to a (relatively) small town in the north part of the Netherlands called [Groningen](#) to face nonstop rain as an NSF-NATO post-doctoral researcher in the lab of [Professor Georges Hadziioannou](#). While in Holland, she learned atomic force microscopy, single molecule force spectroscopy, high resolution force spectroscopy, and related nanomechanical techniques. Professor Ortiz joined the faculty in the [Department of Materials Science and Engineering at MIT](#) as an Assistant Professor in 1999 and was tenured in 2006. Her research group focuses on the ultrastructure and nanomechanics of structural biological materials such as cartilage, bone, seashells, and armored fish. In 2002, Dr. Ortiz was awarded a National Science Foundation Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (NSF-PECASE) which was presented to her by President George W. Bush at the White House in Washington DC. Her research has been featured in Physics Today, Science News, USA Today, the Discovery Channel and on the covers of the Journal of Structural Biology and Journal of Material Science. Professor Ortiz has a strong commitment to teaching, mentoring, and increasing diversity at all educational levels. She has developed and taught a popular new undergraduate course annually each spring semester “*Nanomechanics of Materials and Biomaterials*” and is a frequent participant in [MITES \(MIT Minority Introduction to Engineering and Science\)](#), [MSRP \(MIT Minority Summer Research Program\)](#), [SACNAS \(Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science\)](#), [Institute Diversity Committees](#), and [SHPE \(Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers\)](#).