

Portuguese Program Newsletter

Spring 2021 Edition | Volume 5

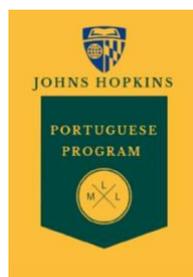


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The editing team of the Portuguese Program Newsletter is proud to introduce its first completely accessible edition, which is a big step towards ensuring that everyone can enjoy the content we are sharing.

Director's Note

Dear Students, Alumni, Colleagues, and Friends of the Portuguese Program,

Congratulations to our graduating students of spring 2021 and best wishes on your future endeavors! We are excited and ready to safely go back to our Homewood campus in the fall semester.

This challenging year, the Portuguese program adapted and adjusted to deliver top quality instruction online and we are proud to say that we excelled! Our students showed patience and perseverance during this period of uncertainty. It was always heartwarming for our instructors to open the Zoom meeting and know that you were there, with a smile, open and willing to learn, even when it was late at night or early in the morning at your location.

The year was also marked by racial tension, injustice, and political turmoil in the U.S. and other parts of the globe. The Portuguese program created opportunities for students to engage and discuss. As part of our fall 2020 Guest Speaker Series, we hosted distinguished professors, researchers, environmentalists, and artists to offer their perspective and expertise on current events in Brazil and the ongoing racial and social divide. In the spring of 2021, Globo TV screenwriters Rodrigo Boecker and Ariel Quintela discussed the power of telenovelas in Brazil and social media's power over political discourse. We concluded the semester by launching a student-led cultural exchange conversation between JHU Portuguese program students and students of the State University of Rio de Janeiro.

In this newsletter you will read about students' perspectives and reflections on the academic year, the courses they took, and tips for prospective students. You will hear about a student's successful journey from JHU pre-med to Duke Medical School. She shares her unique journey and experience in humanities and pre-med courses, which distinguished her from the pool of candidates.

As we move towards a new academic year, our goal is to increase the number of students in the Portuguese minor program. We invite you to take part in promoting and shaping our unique program. Every semester, our opportunities include hosting movie nights, editing our newsletter, tutoring, hosting the speaker series or becoming a semester student worker. If you have any questions, comments, or would like to engage, contact us at flavia_azeredo@jhu.edu. My thank you goes to our hard-working guest editors Stephanie Ruiz-Torres and Maria Camila Garcia, our reviewer Julian Spiker, and all the contributors who dedicated their time to share their passion and experience.

Flávia Azeredo-Cerqueira
Associate Teaching Professor
Portuguese Language Program Director

Bacurau: A Lens to Understanding Brazilian Struggles

By Marina Ayuso, '21

Bacurau is a 2019 "Weird Western" film set in a fictional town in Northern Brazil. The film's most present themes are inequality and class. It begins when a group of foreigners arrives in the region, and strange things occur. Telephone signals go down, the town disappears from maps, drones appear, and deadly shootings increase. We later learn that the foreigners have arrived in the town of Bacurau to kill residents through a deal with the mayor, who treats all the residents poorly and does not deliver appropriate resources.

This film is most definitely a significant reminder of Brazil's ongoing racial, economic, and postcolonial divisions. It demonstrates the corruption in the government and the power that white people have in such an unequal system. It also proves the resilience of the local population, as well as their ingenuity and kindness. Many scenes throughout the film demonstrate the tight-knit nature of the local community, as they care for one another and each other's well-being, unlike the foreigners who take people's lives with no remorse.



I enjoyed the film, but I was somewhat taken aback by its goriness. The movie is practically a bloodbath. However, the gruesomeness is necessary because it highlights the corruption and disparities of the region, the long-lasting effects of colonialism, and, ultimately, the strength of Brazilians. Most importantly, the film touches on critical topics, such as the toxic characteristics of white supremacy, especially now, a time where learning about privilege and anti-racism is of utmost importance. Overall, I would recommend the film to anyone who seeks to learn more about Brazilian culture, politics, or ethnic conflicts.

Virtual Classes: Pros and Cons

By Oliver Wolff, '23

As a math and physics major primarily taking STEM classes, the transition from an in-person to online modality last spring changed remarkably little in how professors ran their classes. Other than substituting my bedroom at home for a lecture hall and my computer screen for a chalkboard, the pace of lectures, content we covered, and even exams remained nearly the same.

When I registered for Intermediate Portuguese I (AS.210.277) for Spring 2021, I knew it would be smallest class that I had yet enrolled in at Hopkins. As a language class it would be largely discussion based, a class structure that I had not encountered since sometime in high school. My experience meeting in small groups over Zoom had been spotty at best, plagued by internet and audio issues. Because hearing clearly what others are saying is without question the most important aspect of a language class, I was worried about how the class would run, and how I would be able to improve my Portuguese.

My fears quickly abated after reading the syllabus packed with research presentations about Portuguese speaking countries, music, online vocabulary assignments, and in-class discussions. Online classes made it understandably difficult to have lessons incorporating aspects of Lusophone culture. Though certainly less fun than eating Brazilian food and dancing samba (which Dr. Azeredo promised we'd have learned in an in-person class), the projects that we were assigned covered the complex history of many Lusophone countries and the challenges that these countries face. For example, in studying Angola and its capital Luanda, we discussed how Portuguese colonization had introduced a myriad of social and economic barriers that the population faced in overcoming the long-lasting effects of European presence. Rather than simply learning Portuguese directly from a textbook, we would take lessons in vocabulary and apply them to topics that extended beyond the classroom.

Though certainly less physically demanding than if we were in person, the creative ways in which we had to adapt to a virtual classroom have led to thoughtful, engaged consideration of the Portuguese-speaking world and taught me lessons in the language that I hope to bring to higher classes within the department.

Brazilian History with Kevin Bertoli

By Rubén Portillo, Master of Music student, Peabody Institute

In March, students from the Portuguese Program had the opportunity to talk with Kevin Bertoli, a Brazilian history professor. During the virtual conversation, students were able to get to know him personally and learn from him.

Bertoli shared many exciting things with the group, such as the story of his journey of becoming a history Professor in Brazil, many interesting facts about Brazilian history, and some reasons why studying his profession is essential. He mentioned that studying history is essential because we can understand where our ideologies, cultures, and politics come from and how they changed until today. Also, he emphasized that history allows humans to obtain inspiration and learn from people in our past. He ended by encouraging students to value the history and culture of their respective nationalities.



Bertoli also opened a space for discussion with the group. The conversation was entirely in Portuguese, so the students learned about him while practicing speaking and listening to the language. They actively participated in the discussion by asking intuitive questions and responding to comments. The interaction helped them develop their language skills because students must hear different pronunciations to communicate with others with different accents in the real world.

These kinds of events and others are offered to students enrolled in the Portuguese Program throughout the semester. I highly encourage anyone interested in the Portuguese language and the culture of the Lusophone world to sign up for classes or events offered by the Program.

Discover the Real Brazil

By Caroline Reynolds, '22

Introduction to Brazilian Culture and Civilization (AS.21 1.394) provides a truly unique course experience at Hopkins. Students have the opportunity to learn about the rich history and culture of Brazil not just through readings and lectures, but through class discussions and guest speakers as well. The course material encompasses everything from the reasons for Brazilian's soccer prowess to Brazil's transformation from a Portuguese colony to an independent nation.

One of the most impactful moments of this course was having the opportunity to speak with Eder Muniz, a native Brazilian and professional graffiti artist. Eder joined our class as the first guest lecturer in our speaker series early on in the semester. Hearing him describe his passion for graffiti, an art form that is often regarded as nothing more than vandalism, was incredibly refreshing and fundamentally changed the context in which I viewed this course. Eder's commentary on the Afro Brazilian community's struggles and the importance of graffiti and street art as a means of self-expression for this community provided a new window through which I could examine similarities between Brazil, The United States, and other emancipated countries still grappling with racism and discrimination.

As we covered Brazil's political history and socioeconomic development throughout the remainder of the semester, I continued to challenge myself to make comparisons between Brazil and what I had learned about the United States and the history of the rest of the world. From differences in healthcare systems to the similar decimation of indigenous populations, this class provided additional, authentic perspectives that have enabled me to better understand and tackle difficult questions surrounding twenty first century societies.



Eder Muniz painting one of his artworks.

My Pre-Med Journey at JHU

By Grace Kim, '21

As I stepped foot into Bahia, Brazil, I felt out of place. This was not what I had imagined when I applied for the Health, Politics, and Culture course for the Salvador study abroad program, which had originally perked my interest due to its broad range of topics and full immersion experience. However, my host mother didn't speak any English, making it difficult to communicate and connect with her. Our cultural workshops, such as samba and capoeira, placed me way out of my comfort zone, and I found myself not being able to enjoy these to my fullest extent. Soon, I realized that my problem was that of passivity- not actively immersing myself to build these meaningful connections and to challenge myself.

When I applied for medical schools this past year, the most common inquiry I got during my interviews was about my Brazil study abroad experience. Coincidentally, many of my interviewers had some connection to the country, and we were able to share our various experiences about Brazil. Through these conversations, I realized that my study abroad had been valuable in developing and demonstrating core competencies of a physician, particularly cultural competence and resilience/adaptability. I strongly believe that because of this study abroad, my medical school application and important traits were strengthened.

Cultural competence is defined as “knowledge of socio-cultural factors that affect interactions and behaviors and shows an appreciation and respect for multiple dimensions of diversity”. When one of my interviewers asked about how my study abroad had reinforced this trait, I expanded upon how adapting my behaviors and communication styles to best fit someone who was from a different culture could go a long way in helping form meaningful relationships. For example, I soon realized that initiating conversation first despite the language barrier showed that I was interested in getting to know more about my host family. I pulled terms learned from Portuguese class to get them to laugh at my attempts and asked many questions about them through Google Translate. As a future physician, I will be encountering many diverse patients; adapting myself to show that I care about getting to know them will be essential in forming trust, which will be important in having them share various concerns that affect their health.

Another common question I had during interviews was “When was your proudest moment?”. I always answered that my proudest moment was when I performed capoeira at an afterschool capoeira program. Initially, I kept refusing to go up due to fear of embarrassing myself, but I realized that I had to get out of my comfort zone to fully enjoy the moment. By the end of the dance, I realized that I had fun during the performance and had accomplished something I never imagined that I could do. Oftentimes, this was followed up by a question about how lessons learned from this experience could translate into medicine. A physician requires resilience in the face of uncomfortable situations. Although physicians experience obstacles and setbacks that have much more gravity than what I had experienced, the lessons learned are the same. Despite feelings of not wanting to continue in fear of failure, we need to try our best in the moment, whether that be dancing in front of a crowd or fighting for patients to improve health outcomes.

Most importantly, studying abroad humbled me in that it emphasized that there are many things about the world that I do not know. This intellectual and cultural humility indicated that again, since I will never truly know everything, I just need to best adjust myself to understand people from diverse backgrounds, and that I need to continue striving to gain new experiences and knowledge

to better my understanding. After my study abroad, I became more open to pursuing new areas of study through taking other humanities courses for the rest of my undergraduate career, one of which was Brazilian Culture & Civilization (AS.211.394). Learning in-depth information, such as the Brazilian health care system, was instrumental in further developing my understanding, especially in the context of global health and comparing health care systems. This thus helped me hold interesting conversations with my interviewers. I want to carry this explorative mindset into medical school, where I realize that medicine is intertwined with many other areas of study. Studying abroad definitely made me a more unique and compelling applicant, and I strongly recommend other pre-meds to pursue it!



Grace Kim with her Brazilian mom (left) and with the Intersession 2020 group (right).

Improving My Portuguese Through Films

Sofia Posada, '24

I have a lot of Brazilian friends and decided to learn Portuguese when I came to Hopkins. Last semester, I took Fast Portuguese for Spanish speakers (AS.210.275) and this semester I am taking Intermediate Portuguese (AS.210.277). I have loved learning the language and have participated in most of the Portuguese events. One of these events is called Guest Speaker where we learn about Brazilian culture. But, my favorite event is Movie Night, where we all join to talk about a movie or show we watched in Portuguese. This event has helped me improve my listening abilities so much. Last semester, it was very hard for me to understand the actors speaking in Portuguese, so I had to watch the movies/shows with English subtitles. But now I can easily watch movies/shows with Portuguese subtitles and understand everything. My goal is to be able to understand the shows without needing subtitles.



This semester we had three Movie Nights and my favorite was the most recent one, where we discussed the first episode of the series “3%.” Over winter break, I binge watched all four seasons of the series and I absolutely loved it, so I was excited for the discussion. I think these Movie Nights are great because we get to practice our listening skills by watching the shows/movies and then practice our speaking skills during the discussion. Next semester, I am excited to go to more Movie Nights.



Immersing Myself in Brazilian Cinema

Ashraf Nawari, '22

My experience in the Brazilian Cinema (AS.211.316) course during the spring semester was unforgettable. Having been previously familiar with aspects of Brazilian culture through an abroad trip to the country with Prof. Flavia as well as through general media and entertainment, this class both solidified and expanded upon my knowledge of the country. From the misrepresentation of Afro-Brazilians to the conditions of the working class, many of the films that we viewed touched on important political and social issues in Brazil. Our class discussions about movies such as *Four Days in September* highlighted the realities of the dictatorship in Brazil and how that subsequently ended up affecting film production in the country.

Some of my favorite discussions were during guest sessions that took place over the course of the semester. Notable people in Brazilian TV such as Rodrigo Boecker would come to the class to speak about the film output and popularity of *telenovelas* in the country and how that often differed from the United States. Other speakers such as Ariel Quintela, a film maker and producer, gave a workshop to us on how a successful documentary can be made by describing the various stages that go into the planning and execution of a film production. These guest appearances and workshops were very useful because it allowed me to gather the necessary theories and information needed to make a documentary, which was what our final project was.

Making a documentary for our final project was the most rewarding aspect of the course to me. Being able to apply what I previously learned by collaborating with group members on a topic of interest, the role of Afro-Brazilians in Brazilian cinema over time, challenged me to both artistically and accurately gather information and present it to a diverse audience. Ultimately, this allowed me to enhance my knowledge of film production and it allowed me to develop a greater appreciation for cinema as a whole, and especially Brazilian cinema.

Backstage at the Latin Grammy's

Rubén Portillo, Master of Music student, Peabody Institute

My name is Ruben Portillo, I am a MM guitar student at The Peabody Conservatory from Paraguay. I am taking Portuguese with Dr. Azeredo, and the Culture & Dictatorship class (AS.217.307) with Prof. Marina Bedran at the Krieger School of Arts and Science of The Johns Hopkins University. As a musician that has profound interest in the music of Latin America, these classes have helped me a lot to understand more about the cultural aspects of the music. Music is an element that creates a soundscape in our minds, that means that it could take you anywhere with its sound. However, with a better behavioral understanding of the place that the music was originated in, the listeners can situate themselves better during the listening and therefore, enjoy of a more meaningful experience.

Not only it has helped me to understand the cultural context of the music, but also to connect and interact better with my colleagues. For example, in November of 2019, right before the impact of COVID-19, I had the amazing opportunity to attend the biggest event of Latin American Music, which is the Latin Grammys, as a Scholarship Ambassador of the Latin Grammy Cultural Foundation in Las Vegas. In the event, I stood in the stage and gave the award to great musicians including Brazilian artists such as Anavitória, Gilberto Gil, Paula Fernandes e Tiago Iorc. That event was the inspiration to start taking classes in Portuguese because I realized how diverse the world of Music is. I heard a lot of artists with distinct backgrounds giving their speeches of acceptance and all of them had a unique way of representing their culture. It was really interesting to me how a lot of musicians there spoke English, Spanish and Portuguese and I learned how the knowledge of another language gives you access to communicate with a wider range of people in their professional lives.

Portuguese is the most spoken language in South America and the third most spoken European language in the world. I encourage anyone to learn another language to advance in their careers.



Ruben Portillo at the Latin Grammys.

Futebol: The Sport of the Masses

Daniel “DJ” Quezada, ‘24

This past fall, I had the distinct pleasure of taking Professor Azeredo-Cerqueira’s course on the history of football in Brazil (AS.211.294). The course covered virtually the entire history of the sport’s existence in Brazil, from its arrival with British settlers to the modern-day Brazilian professional leagues and international squad. What I found most compelling about the class wasn’t just the history of the development of the sport itself, but the ways in which the sport interacted with and was formed by the social forces all throughout Brazilian society. Some of these were immensely surprising, particularly our class discussions over how the Brazilian national team’s prestige on the world stage served as a significant source of soft power for the Brazilian dictatorship in the 20th century-- forcing players to tread a fine line in their public appearances to maintain the strong image the politically-appointed team leadership desired. The class additionally featured comprehensive discussions of the layers of corruption endemic in present-day Brazilian and global football and their detrimental effects on the game itself and the Brazilian public.

In addition to our in-class discussions, Professor Cerqueira additionally hosted several discussions with guest speakers to comment on units we were covering. One particular standout discussion I can recall was one led by Professor Xavier Vatin, covering the political and cultural effects of the aforementioned Brazilian dictatorship on the sport. The discussion evolved into a much larger discussion about the similarities between the suppression of athletes and popular protest aimed at combating systemic racism in both the United States and modern Brazil.

Overall, taking this class was one of the best decisions I made during my first semester at Hopkins. As someone intensely interested in both football and Latin America, this class encouraged me to look more deeply into both and gave me a constructive environment in which to discuss what I had read. I would take it again in a heartbeat.



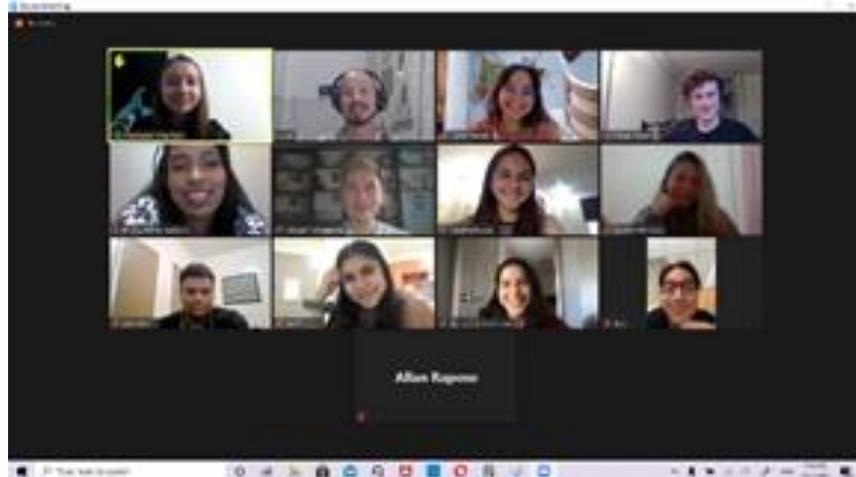
Upcoming Events: Meeting Students from Brazil

By Stephanie Ruiz-Torres, '23

To culminate the plethora of events that the Portuguese Program did this semester, students Oliver Wolff and Lily Batchelor collaborated with Lucas Fonseca, whom teaches English at the State University of Rio de Janeiro and has a master's degree in Applied Linguistics to create an event, *Bate Papo*, which means "chat". These upcoming events, and the *Bate Papo* all took place under the supervision of Dr. Azeredo. In this *Bate Papo* students from JHU spoke in Portuguese to students from UERJ (State University of Rio de Janeiro), about cultural differences and similarities, what we knew or wanted to know about our respective countries, and about our likes and dislikes.

The event was engaging, and I am especially looking forward to going to more of these in the future. Next semester, Lily and Oliver will continue to collaborate with Lucas Fonseca, to create more diverse events like the *Bate Papo*. The goal of this upcoming program is to give students that are a part of the Portuguese Program at Hopkins the opportunity to practice the language outside of the typical classroom setting. Students will be participating in an exchange with Brazilian students and talking about different themes from everyday life that might not be covered in the classroom, like slang words, music, and movies.

I highly encourage any students who are interested in learning Portuguese, practicing it, or those who simply want to meet new people to join these upcoming events. More information will be coming out next semester!



The students from Rio de Janeiro and JHU during the *Bate Papo* event.

Boost Your Portuguese Skills

MOVIES & TV SHOWS

1. City of God
2. The Way He Looks
3. Bacurau
4. 3%
5. Central Station

MUSIC

1. Pupila by Anavitoria and Vitor Kley
2. Foi um Rio Que Passou em Minha Vida by Paulinha da Viola
3. Chega de Saudade by Joao Gilberto
4. Fica Tudo Bem by Anitta and Silva
5. Construção by Chico Buarque

PODCASTS

Podcasts are a fantastic tool to learn, improve and practice a language, focusing especially on listening skills, and vocabulary enhancement. Here are our suggestions – **Todo Mundo Pod, and Xadrez Verbal.**

LEARNING APPS

Download **Tudo Bem**: You will learn essential vocabulary, phrases, and grammar with interactive games and lessons. Also, the app **VEJA**, it is an authentic news source and one of the most important in Brazil.

Portuguese Program Fall 2021 Courses

During the fall 2021, the Portuguese Program will be offering eight courses for students to immerse themselves in!

1. **Advanced Portuguese I: Language and Literature (AS.210.391)** offered by Professor Magali Spiker on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 10:00 – 10:50 AM.
2. **Fast Portuguese for Spanish Speakers and Speakers of other Romance Languages (AS.210.275 (02))** offered by Dr. Flavia Cerqueira on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 10:00 – 10:50 AM.
3. **Intermediate Portuguese I: Language and Literature (AS.210.277)** offered by Dr. Flavia Cerqueira on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 10:00 – 10:50 AM
4. **Intermediate/Advanced II (AS.210.278)** offered by Professor Magali Spiker on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 11:00 – 11:50 AM.
5. **Fast Portuguese for Spanish Speakers and Speakers of other Romance Languages (AS.210.275 (03))** offered by Staff on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 12:00 – 12:50 PM.
6. **Brazilian Culture & Civilization (AS.211.394- Section 1 & Section 2)** offered by Dr. Flavia Cerqueira on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:00 – 1:15 PM.
7. **Radical Women: Brazilian Literature, Art, and Culture (AS.217.427- Section 1 & Section 2)** offered by Dr. Marina Bedran on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:00 – 1:15 PM, and Fridays from 12:00 – 12:50 PM.
8. **Freshman Seminar: Soccer in Brazil: opium of the masses (AS.211.294)** offered by Dr. Flavia Cerqueira on Mondays and Wednesdays from 1:30 – 2:45 PM.

The Portuguese Program Fall 2021 events will be announced at the start of the Fall semester on the Portuguese Program Website.

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