

Portuguese Program Newsletter

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Director's Note

Greetings from the Portuguese Program!¹ The academic year of 2022- 2023 was memorable in many aspects. It was marked by the coming back of in-person activities and the first study abroad program after the pandemic. The Portuguese program hosted several academic events, guest speakers, exciting social activities, an enriching study abroad program, and many more. You will read in this volume the highlights of this successful year and plans for 2023-2024.

This academic year was filled with things to celebrate! We celebrated Brazil's re-establishment of its place as Latin America's largest democratic institution after the General Elections in November, which elected President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva. To prepare the JHU community for the elections and address everything at stake, we had a panel discussion with Dr. Gladys Mitchel-Walthour, Dr. André Pagliarini, and Dr. Luis Rodriguez. In February, after the inauguration of Lula, Dr. Beatriz Rey discussed the aftermath of the elections and Brazilian democracy after the autocratic president Jair Bolsonaro. 2022 was also the year of the Bicentennial of Brazil's Independence, and Dr. Gabriel Paquette taught our students why 1822 mattered. Dr. Keisha-Khan Perry discussed race, black women's activism and the fight of black women against the land grab in Brazil. Dr. Xavier Vatin showed us Brazil and US connections through Afro-Atlantic religions. In this newsletter, you will also learn about JHU librarian Dr. Mackenzie Zalin and his important work in expanding our university's Portuguese and Lusophone collections.

As for our fall social events, we had Mestre Iara, from ABADA Capoeira, teaching our students this Afro-Brazilian martial art. During the workshops, our students exercised their bodies and brains, learning about the relevance of capoeira during Brazil's colonial period and how the sport and the culture of capoeira spread worldwide. The Portuguese program also cheered for JHU's men's and women's soccer, attending matches and bringing students and faculty to honor our players. The Portuguese Program gained a new member, Dr. Benjamin Chaffin. Dr. Chaffin came to us from UC Santa Barbara, where he received his PhD in Hispanic Languages & Literatures with a Specialization in Brazilian & Portuguese Literatures. *Seja bem-vindo* Dr. Chaffin!

Get ready for Fall 2023! There will be lots of amazing academic events to keep you informed about Brazil and the Lusophone community and social activities to bring us together to practice the language and to network. Save the date because on October, 23rd the Portuguese Program will host grand Mozambican novelist Paulina Chiziane. She is the first African woman to receive the most important award for Portuguese literature, the Camões Prize. Chiziane will start her US visit at JHU. On September 20th & October 18th we will host a movie night. October 1st is the application deadline for the Study Abroad during Intersession 2024, Brazil: Health, Politics and Cultural studies, and finally during October 4th we will host our first Board Game night.

The Portuguese Program's success would not have been possible without our fantastic students. I am extremely grateful for their support, dedication to help promote the program, and active participation. You can also be part of the most vibrant language program on our campus. You can support us by volunteering to be our movie nights host, newsletter guest editor, language tutor, PILOT leader, flyer designer or by becoming a student worker. Take part in promoting and shaping our unique Portuguese Program. If you have any questions or would like to engage, get in touch flavia_azeredo@jhu.edu. A big thank you to our fantastic 2022-2023 team, Portuguese tutor Bruna Vieira, our amazing PILOT leaders Stephanie Ruiz-Torres, who graduated in May, and Nicholas Probst. We wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors. Thank you also to our phenomenal guest editors, Stephanie Ruiz-Torres and Maria Camila Garcia, and all the contributors who shared their passion and experience. *Obrigada!* I strongly encourage you to stay tuned and get involved with the Portuguese Program in the coming years!

Flávia Azeredo-Cerqueira
Associate Teaching Professor
Portuguese Language Program Director

¹ The Portuguese Program Newsletter is an accessible document.

Expanding Horizons: The Rise of the Portuguese Language Collection at Johns Hopkins University

By Dr. Mackenzie Zalin

Johns Hopkins University has long been a destination for scholars of Romance languages. Though the Spanish, French, and Italian collections have traditionally enjoyed pride of place in the Sheridan Libraries at Johns Hopkins, the Portuguese language collection has come into its own in recent years. It should be noted, however, that the expansion of the holdings of the Portuguese language collection has not occurred spontaneously. The efforts that have been made to make the Portuguese language collection better reflect the growing interest of JHU students and faculty in the Lusophone world represent conscious decisions (and a great deal of work) on the part of numerous collaborators within and without the Sheridan Libraries.

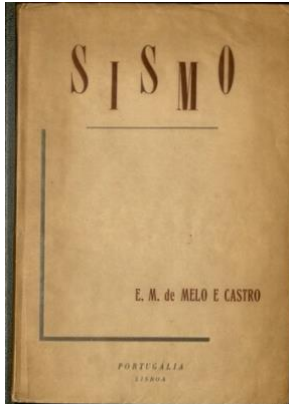
After arriving to take up my post as Librarian for Modern Languages and Literatures (among other disciplines) at JHU in the heady days of January 2020, I met with Professor Flávia de Azeredo-Cerqueira about crafting [a library research guide](#) for Portuguese and Lusophone Studies. The experience of creating this digital portal was so enjoyable that I began to think seriously about how I might expand upon the holdings in Portuguese I had described therein, which, while robust, had been historically underserved compared to the breadth and depth of the other Romance languages at JHU. Then, the COVID-19 pandemic turned the entire world upside down, and with it, the process of acquiring materials in the Sheridan Libraries.



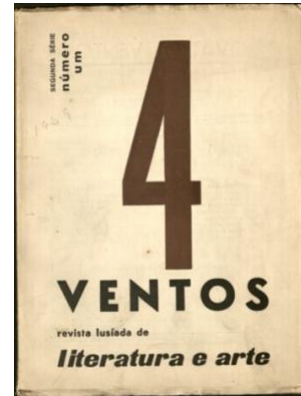
Paulicéia Desvairada by Mário de Andrade

Amidst this cataclysm in the late summer of 2020, I was approached by Professor Marina Bedran, who had just arrived at JHU after completing her PhD at Princeton, about acquiring some rare and unusual items from Brazil for her teaching and research. Knowing how difficult it was to buy anything directly from vendors in Brazil due to the stringency of the pandemic restrictions at the time, I turned to my colleague, Richard Ramer, who has for decades been the premiere US-based bookseller of anything and everything in the Lusophone world. In addition to various works in Portuguese which he helped to source for the general collection, he furnished JHU with most of

its recent acquisitions in the Portuguese language for special collections. Standouts among these include what may be the only copy in the northern hemisphere of the first edition of Mário de Andrade's *Paulicéia Desvairada* (arguably the first work of Brazilian literary modernism), a full facsimile of the *Revista de antropofagia* (another Brazilian modernist masterpiece), and several examples of avant-garde Portuguese poetry in *Sismo* and *Quatro ventos*.



Sismo by E.M de Melo e Castro



Quatro ventos

It was most gratifying to be able to see these new acquisitions set alongside longstanding holdings from the Portuguese collection (including but not limited to our remarkable reproduction of a 1626 edition of Camões' epic poem *Os Lusíadas*) when I hosted Professor Azeredo-Cerqueira's advanced Portuguese class in special collections this past fall. Being able to gather in person to view such an exceptional assemblage of materials indicated not only that the COVID-19 was for all intents and purposes finally over; it also indicated that a new era in the development of the Portuguese language collection was well underway. I look forward with great zeal to continuing this work with students and faculty at JHU.

About the author: Dr. Mackenzie (Mack) Zalin is the Librarian for Classics, Comparative Thought & Literature, Jewish Studies, and Modern Languages & Literatures in the Sheridan Libraries at Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Zalin's duties range widely across collection development, reference, and instruction not only for Portuguese, but also for French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Spanish, and Yiddish in the Sheridan Libraries. He works on M level in the Eisenhower Library and welcomes queries in person or by email at mzalin1@jhu.edu.

Navigating Political Landscapes in United States and Brazil: A Lecture by Dr. Beatriz Rey

By Stephanie Ruiz-Torres ('23)

Dr. Rey's lecture provides a profound examination of democratic processes, decision-making, and the importance of strong political institutions. With a PhD in Political Science, she draws upon her extensive knowledge and research to provide critical insights into the political landscapes in the United States and Brazil, emphasizing the parallels and lessons that can be drawn from both countries.

Dr. Rey explores the idea of decision-making in the context of American politics, particularly focusing on how strategic choices by politicians have led to increased partisanship. She posits that this political divide is not accidental but a result of deliberate decisions made by key figures such as the Speaker of the House. This perspective underlines the consequential role of individual decisions in shaping the broader political environment.

Nevertheless, she also highlights successful bipartisan collaboration, exemplified by the work of the Committee on Modernization of Congress. This committee serves as a beacon of hope, demonstrating that bipartisan cooperation is possible and can lead to effective problem-solving and reform within the institution. It is a powerful counter-narrative to the prevailing discourse around the deepening partisan divide.

Shifting her focus to Brazil, Dr. Rey draws comparisons with historical political situations in other countries, such as pre-Nazi Germany. In these comparisons, she emphasizes the necessity of robust institutions as safeguards against political extremism and societal unrest. For Brazil, the ongoing struggle to establish and strengthen these institutions is a key issue that needs to be addressed.



Students with Dr. Beatriz Rey after her lecture

The lecture is underpinned by the fundamental assertion that political institutions and decision-making are crucial in preventing polarization and potential instability. The absence or misuse of these tools can exacerbate divisions and engender unrest, as demonstrated by historical and current examples. Conversely, their effective implementation can facilitate cooperation, stability, and progress.



Dr. Beatriz Rey

In conclusion, Dr. Rey's lecture provides a deep dive into the dynamics of democratic processes, with an emphasis on the importance of decision-making and robust political institutions. She presents a comprehensive view of the political landscapes in the U.S. and Brazil, shedding light on the possible consequences of political polarization and the potential for bipartisanship. Her insights underscore the need for robust institutions to maintain stability and prevent political and societal instability.

About Dr. Beatriz Rey: Dr. Beatriz Rey is a Senior Researcher at the Center for Studies on the Brazilian Congress (NECON) and a Fellow at POPVOX Foundation. With extensive experience as a legislative assistant in the U.S. House of Representatives and as a Visiting Fellow at the SNF Agora Institute, she holds a Ph.D. in political science from the Maxwell School at Syracuse University, and her expertise extends to being a contributor to the Brazilian Policy Agendas Project and a columnist at the Brazilian Report.

The Role of Black Brazilian Women in the Fight Against Land Grabs: A Lecture by Dr. Kiesha Khan-Perry

By Jayla Scott ('23)

Inspired and reinvigorated. As I think about how I felt after logging off Zoom after listening to Dr. Kiesha Khan-Perry's talk, those are the words I would use. The topic of Dr. Perry's talk was very important – the role of Black Brazilian women in leading the fight against land grabs in Brazil – but the reason why Dr. Perry got involved with research in Brazil in the first place was what resonated with me most.

Dr. Perry didn't start studying Portuguese and engaging with activism in Brazil until after she went to Brazil for a study abroad program as an undergraduate student. She left that trip feeling just how interconnected the fight for Black liberation was in the United States and in Brazil. Just like me. I came to Hopkins knowing I wanted to study international studies but not knowing how I would complete the language requirement for that major because I am horrible at learning languages. Early freshman year, while searching through programs on the study abroad site for intercession, I stumbled across the trip to Bahia, Brazil, to study health, politics, and culture. I applied to the program and was admitted. Going on that trip not only solved the problem I was having with figuring out what language I would study, but it also opened my world to Brazil's importance in the activism work I was slowly starting to get involved in. I returned from Bahia with purpose, knowledge, and love for a country I had never known about.



Dr. Kiesha Khan-Perry

During her talk, Dr. Perry shared that she had a similar experience, and that is why she started learning Portuguese, doing extensive research in Brazil, and writing an entire book on the importance of local Black Brazilian women in movements for political change.

For this reason, Dr. Perry's talk had an extra lesson - anybody looking to understand and contribute to the fight against anti-black racism must not only understand the experience of Black Americans but must also know the history of activism against anti-black racism in Brazil. That activism and the production of knowledge about anticapitalism, Black radical feminism, anti-black racism, among others, must consider what has been fought for and done in Brazil. Black Brazilian women are an essential part of the narrative of Black people and Black activism.

So, thank you, Dr. Perry, for the extra lesson.

About Dr. Perry: Keisha-Khan Y. Perry is a distinguished scholar, currently serving as the Presidential Penn Compact Associate Professor of Africana Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. With expertise in race, gender, and politics in the Americas, she has garnered recognition for her groundbreaking research, including her award-winning book "Black Women against the Land Grab: The Fight for Racial Justice in Brazil." Perry's work delves into the complex intersections of scholarship, pedagogy, and political engagement, while her ongoing research explores the constraints of state violence on activist research and writing.

Study Abroad Highlights: Intersession in Salvador

By Tirth Bhakta ('23) and Eric McAlexander ('24)

Tirth's Reflection

The study-abroad program in Brazil was as vibrant and amazing as the country itself. Not only did I get to experience a culture that I had been studying for years and improve (and test) my language skills, I also had the chance to stay with a wonderful Brazilian family and meet incredible people along the way.

The process was nerve-racking at first of course: the airport (oh god the airports), meeting new people, feeling out the space around you. However, it quickly became amazing, and eventually, incredibly rewarding. My host family was incredibly welcoming and kind, and they went out of their way to make me feel at home (also forcing me to leave – “why are you here still?” was a frequent question at 8 PM). They would often invite me to join them for meals and cultural activities, and I loved getting to know them and learning more about their way of life. Likewise, they were very receptive to my culture and had a proactive interest in my life, interests, and opinions. Just to make the point clear: I still have a group chat with my “mom” and her best friend that I send messages in every other day!



Tirth with another program participant, Stephanie

In addition to all the cultural exploration, I had the opportunity to learn about many different aspects of Brazil: the healthcare system, scientific research, history, and (my favourite) slang in the advanced Portuguese class. The schedule was challenging at times, but incredibly rewarding. I felt like I learned a lot from my teachers and from ordinary people – both formally and informally.

One of the most incredible aspects of studying abroad is the connections that are formed between people who share this experience. When you travel to a foreign country with a group of strangers, you're all stepping outside of your comfort zones together. You're all experiencing the same culture shock, language barriers, and homesickness. And as you navigate these challenges together, you form a bond that is unlike any other. You become a support system for each other, sharing laughs, tears, and moments of triumph. These connections can last a lifetime, even after you return home. When you go through such a transformative experience with others, you become part of a special community that is bound by shared memories and a deep understanding of what it means to study abroad.



Tirth and friends during the program!

Of course, something must be said about certain recreational nocturnal activities. I encourage everyone to safely explore at night, you will meet wonderful people and discover a lot of the inner, hidden culture of Brazil: the late-night socialising, the customer service, the relationship between the tourism industry and the tourist. It is all incredibly interesting and worth the exploration! The best times I had with my friends were when we were on our own : exploring, laughing, and dancing.

Overall, the study-abroad program exceeded my expectations in every way. I not only gained new knowledge and skills, but I also made lifelong friendships and memories. I would highly

recommend this program to anyone who is interested in learning about a new culture and challenging themselves personally.

Eric's Reflection

This experience changed my life. I have always wanted to connect more with the Brazilian side of my family, but until now I haven't had the chance to travel down. When I came back home and told my mother and grandmother about all my adventures, my whacky stories, and the people I met along the way, all they did was smile and say "that's Brazil! That is exactly my Brazil!" There was a little bit of every type of vacation during the trip; hiking through the mountains and seeing waterfalls, shopping in open-air fruit markets, visiting universities and hospitals, just really getting in the mind of what its like to live in Brazil. Everyone we met was so friendly and always had a laugh with us, the tour guides to the professors to the strangers we befriended along the way, and most of all our amazing and sweet host mothers. They really made us feel like part of the community, like we were living as Brazilians, not just in Brazil. It was one of the best experiences of my life and I cannot wait to go back!



Eric and friends in the program

The Portuguese Program Newsletter Team would like to extend a big thank you to the Portuguese Program, Dr. Azeredo-Cerqueira, for developing abroad programs to expand our horizons in/about Brazil and in the Lusophone world.

Reshaping Feminism: Taylor Young's Zine Amplifies Afro-Latin American Women's Voices

By Stephanie Ruiz-Torres ('23)

Interviewee(s): Taylor Young ('23)

Taylor Young's zine titled "Black Women in Latin America" is a compelling exploration of the intersection of race, gender, and culture through a Black/Afro-Latin American feminist perspective. The zine shines a spotlight on the often overlooked contributions Afro-Latin American women have made in various fields, including art, music, politics, feminism, and academia.

The project was inspired during Young's junior year when they took a class called "Radical Women: Brazilian Literature, Art, and Culture." This class introduced Young to a range of Latin American women who utilized their work to express radical ideas. Specifically, an essay by Lelia Gonzalez, "For an Afro-Latin American Feminism," struck a chord with Young. Gonzalez highlighted the widespread omission of the "racial question" in feminist discourse and activism, resulting in Black women being "denied the right to be subjects" in issues of fundamental importance to them.

Young designed the zine as a response to Gonzalez's call to action. Their intent was to highlight Afro-Latin American feminism and centralize Black women in the narrative. Young believes that despite increased awareness of racial inclusivity, mainstream feminist activism still falls short in embracing the voices of Black women. By focusing on the racial question, Young's zine demands its readers remember this critical aspect of the feminist struggle.

The most rewarding aspect of the project for Young was the creation of a medium that truly centers Black women. They enjoyed countering the notion that Black women are often sidelined in discussions about feminism and liberation, emphasizing their essential role in the fight for equality.

Young's key takeaway message for readers is a challenge to conventional feminism: any feminist movement that doesn't fully incorporate the voices of all Black women will invariably be deficient. This zine is not just an artistic project; it's an urgent call for more inclusive and comprehensive activism that recognizes and champions the distinct experiences and contributions of Afro-Latin American women.

Learning Capoeira

By Stephanie Ruiz-Torres ('23)

In Fall 2022, I had the exceptional opportunity to partake in a series of workshops focusing on the dynamic martial art of capoeira, led by Professor Yara from Abada-Capoeira DC. This experience opened my eyes not just to the physical aspects of the art form, but its deep-rooted cultural, historical, and social dimensions. Capoeira, with its mesmerizing blend of acrobatics, dance, and martial arts, has always intrigued me.

From our first session, Prof. Yara emphasized that capoeira was more than just kicks and flips; it was a narrative of resistance, identity, and community. Originating among African slaves in Brazil, it served as a clandestine means of self-defense and a form of cultural preservation. The fluidity of its movements camouflaged the martial elements, allowing slaves to train without arousing suspicion. As we moved through the basic ginga steps, or the fundamental sway that forms the base of capoeira, I couldn't help but feel the weight of the history that echoed in each movement. The workshops, though intensive, were designed with beginners in mind. Prof. Yara patiently took us through each sequence, ensuring that we not only understood the mechanics but also the significance behind them.

One of the most memorable parts of the workshop was the *roda* – the circle in which capoeira is traditionally played. As two players entered the *roda*, the rest of us clapped and sang traditional capoeira songs, creating an electrifying atmosphere. This was where the real magic happened. In the *roda*, it wasn't about competing but about connecting, improvising, and responding to your partner's moves. Prof. Yara explained that in capoeira, there are no winners or losers; instead, it's a dialogue between two players, a conversation of movements.

Through these workshops, I not only gained a newfound appreciation for capoeira as a sport but also as a rich cultural tapestry interwoven with tales of resilience, community, and freedom. As the workshops concluded, I walked away with not just a basic understanding of capoeira but a profound respect for its place in the annals of history and its importance in the ever-evolving narrative of human expression.



Capoeira participants practicing the moves and lessons learned with Prof. Yara

Contact the Portuguese Program

Flavia Azeredo-Cerqueira

Program Director

Phone Number: 410-516-6738

Email: flavia_azeredo@jhu.edu



Stephanie Ruiz-Torres

Portuguese Program Newsletter Guest Editor

Johns Hopkins University '23

Email: sruizto1@jhu.edu



Maria Camila Garcia

Portuguese Program Newsletter Guest Editor

Johns Hopkins University '23

Email: mgarci74@jhu.edu



“Os limites da minha linguagem são os limites do meu mundo”

“The limits of my language are the limits of the world”

Ludwig Wittgenstein

THANK YOU FOR A WONDERFUL YEAR!

