

## **Portuguese at the University of Arizona**

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In 1998, yearly Portuguese enrollment at the University of Arizona averaged 80 students. Currently, the average is approximately 600 students, including summer classes and study abroad participants. This dramatic increase is a result of intense recruitment, curricular developments tailored to students' needs, and new requirements.

The comprehensive recruitment program involves visits to advanced Spanish classes during course registration periods, production and distribution of flyers, and presentations about the importance of Portuguese studies during orientation sessions for graduate and undergraduate Spanish majors and Latin American studies students. Our recruitment strategies target Spanish speakers, capitalizing on the large Spanish-speaking student population on campus. The creation and advertisement of a Portuguese course for Spanish speakers has had substantial impact on Portuguese enrollment, attracting several undergraduate and graduate students campus-wide who speak Spanish as their native, heritage, or second language. One year of Portuguese (or another language) is currently required for all Spanish majors, contributing to the increased enrollment in Portuguese classes, although a count of the students currently taking Portuguese reveals that around 38% of them are Spanish majors, while the other 62% come from other majors. In addition, in 2001, a major in Spanish with a Portuguese concentration was established, which requires completion 18 units in each language.

Curricular changes were established in order to accommodate both tracks: students take either one semester of Portuguese for Spanish speakers or two semesters of Portuguese for English speakers, then progress to an intermediate-level class that emphasizes the development of oral skills and cultural awareness. The highest level language class emphasizes advanced grammar and development of writing skills. Once the series of language classes is completed, students may take upper-division classes on a wide range of topics, including contemporary, 19th- and 20th-century Brazilian literature; Lusophone African and Portuguese literatures; Portuguese linguistics; phonetics and phonology; Luso-Brazilian culture; theater; and cinema.

The University of Arizona also offers a Ph.D. track in Luso-Brazilian and Hispanic American Literary Studies within the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. This Ph.D. concentration was

approved in 2003 in response to the current job market for Latin Americanists able to teach Portuguese and Brazilian literature in addition to Spanish and Spanish American literature. It consists of 9 units in Brazilian literature and 9 units in Spanish American literature, in addition to 6 units in each of two distinct secondary areas and 18 units of electives. A fully staffed faculty in Portuguese and Spanish, in addition to an already established graduate curriculum, provide students with a broad and solid comparative perspective of the literary and cultural production in Latin America. This Ph.D. track has been instrumental in the expansion of the Portuguese curriculum, as it provides the program with graduate students who are well prepared to teach both language and introductory literature classes, while providing these students with the opportunity to acquire substantial teaching experience in both Spanish and Portuguese.

Three tenured faculty members teach Portuguese courses: A full-time Brazilian literature specialist has been essential in mentoring undergraduate and graduate students and thereby fostering greater enrollment in upper-division and graduate offerings in Luso-Brazilian literature and culture. A faculty member who teaches both Brazilian and Hispanic literatures offers a comparative approach and attracts students interested in Hispanic literature to Portuguese studies. A linguist teaches courses on grammar, linguistics, phonetics, and phonology, in addition to directing the Portuguese Language Program and supervising the graduate teaching assistants. On average seven graduate teaching assistants are hired to teach Portuguese every semester. These TAs are closely supervised during weekly meetings in order to ensure that Portuguese students consistently receive a high-quality classroom experience and that the content is clearly articulated in each course, building cohesiveness in teaching philosophies and practices. The director also observes and assesses the TAs' teaching, and meets with them to discuss annotated syllabi in order to reflect and plan for adjustments. This monitoring allows for constant evaluation of teaching practices, syllabi, and textbooks. In addition, Portuguese TAs are encouraged to attend technology workshops (hosted by the College of Humanities) and teaching conferences (AATSP, ACTFL). Some of them carry out research related to the teaching of Portuguese, while others participate in online material development (<http://portspan.cercll.arizona.edu/>).

A core component of the Portuguese curriculum is the development of cultural awareness. To this end, the Portuguese Language Program has been active in promoting biweekly Portuguese-speaking tables, hosting a cultural festival every spring, and coordinating students' participation

in Teletandem (<http://www.teletandembrasil.org/home.asp>), a binational project that promotes mutual language learning by pairing native speakers of different languages. In addition, the Portuguese Language Program hosted the first Symposium on Portuguese for Spanish Speakers: Acquisition and Teaching in 2003 and continues to host lectures by guest speakers. Recently, the Portuguese Language Program has started to collaborate with the community to celebrate Brazil Week every September.

The Portuguese teaching staff takes every opportunity to showcase the program in community-oriented events sponsored by the university, such as the Language Fair and Humanities Week, when capoeira and Brazilian music groups are invited to perform and flyers entitled “Why Study Portuguese” are distributed. The Portuguese faculty is striving to incorporate computer-assisted learning tools into their teaching practices. In addition to web discussion groups and language lab sessions, we are currently developing online courses and teaching materials. An undergraduate major in Portuguese was approved by the departmental faculty in 2008, and is currently waiting administrative approval for establishment. Maintaining the growth of the Portuguese Program in terms of both quality and quantity is our current challenge, and requires constant, labor-intensive efforts in recruitment and retention, as well as substantial administrative cooperation.