Greetings from the Chair

In SPPO, learning doesn’t stop at the doors of campus classrooms. Our students and faculty members actively collaborate with community partners in numerous ways. In the process, students put into practice the linguistic skills and cultural competencies acquired through their classes, while gaining a better understanding of Latinx communities in Ohio. Here are just a few examples of these productive partnerships:

With colleagues in the Theater Department, Drs. Ana Puga and Paloma Martinez Cruz direct the Be the Street theatre project, bringing together OSU graduate students and Latino residents of the Hilltop neighborhood in west Columbus.

Undergraduate students help Dr. Elena Foulis to film interviews with local residents documenting the experiences of Latin@s in Ohio.

Under the leadership of Dr. Frederick Aldama, students in SPPO participate in the LASER Mentoring Program, serving as academic role models to high-school-age Latinx students.

Undergraduates in the Spanish and Portuguese Club participate in SPPO’s Día de los Muertos events every November, and also volunteer at a local elementary school to interpret at parent-teacher conferences.

I believe these examples demonstrate our students’ enthusiasm for utilizing what they’ve learned in the classroom to in turn serve and learn from their surrounding communities. The department is lucky to have such students and to draw on the expertise of faculty members who carry out engaged scholarship and creative activities.

Laura Podalsky
Chair, Dept. of Spanish & Portuguese

Recent Publications

Dr. Anna Babel

Devin Grammon
PROFESSOR PALOMA MARTINEZ-CRUZ

The Department of Spanish & Portuguese is dedicated to community engagement; Prof. Paloma Martinez-Cruz plays a key role in this endeavor. Prof. Martinez-Cruz teaches Latinx and Latin American literature cultural production, advises graduate students, and emphasizes outreach on several levels. Toward this end, she has developed various techniques to heighten student engagement with course texts and topics and foster shared intellectual leadership. She views Latinx studies not only as an academic discipline, but as a transformative project. She seeks new ways to develop student-centered, experiential learning opportunities. In her class “Latin Soundscapes,” for example, students took salsa classes with OSU’s salsa club and reported on what they had learned at the end of the semester.

As Outreach Committee Chair, her work involves coordinating the Día de los Muertos events in the fall, and the Festival Latino in the summer. So far, the committee has hosted two city-wide events for Día de los Muertos, filling venues at each event. About this popularity Prof. Martinez-Cruz said, “It’s exciting to see the City of Columbus and OSU community turn out to celebrate and learn about this holiday.”

The Outreach Committee and its projects are not Prof. Martinez-Cruz’s only community endeavor. Over the next two years, she will help direct “Be the Street,” a program that creates devised theatre with Latino communities. Emphasizing community voices in Columbus’ Hilltop neighborhood, “Be the Street” sponsors a series of workshops that will lead to a performance inspired by participants’ real experiences.

In addition to all of this, Prof. Martinez-Cruz co-founded, and coordinates, Onda Latina Ohio, a new initiative to promote Latina visibility in Columbus. Beginning in 2013, Onda Latina Ohio’s digital and print contributions will compile and examine the aesthetic and political strategies that Latinas employ to make meaning of place. Community members, activists, students, faculty, and local artists have attended various Onda Latina programs in numbers ranging from 8-80 participants and audience members at each event.

Recent Publications

Meghan Dabkowski is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Hispanic Linguistics who recently. Before coming to OSU, she earned her Master’s and Bachelor’s in Spanish and Film Studies, both from the University of Pittsburgh. Her research interests include sociophonetic variation, the intersection of intonation and pragmatics, and discourse analysis.

“One of the most enjoyable aspects of my academic life at OSU has been the opportunity to engage with the community and work to build pathways for diverse types of students. I have been lucky to serve as the graduate student representative on SPPO’s Outreach Committee, which works to develop ties beyond the department. We participate in community events like Festival Latino and put on our own signature annual event to celebrate Día de los Muertos. I also coordinate a LASER (Latinx Space for Enrichment and Research) Hub at a local high school. Because I have been exceptionally privileged to experience higher education, I believe that I have a responsibility to use that privilege and experience to help others, so I partner with a group of Latinx high school students and undergraduate student mentors, meeting weekly throughout the school year to work collaboratively on preparing for college.”
UPCOMING EVENTS

21ST ANNUAL SYMPOSIA
March 30-31, 2018
Hispanic and Lusophone Studies Symposium

Drawing on the theoretical perspective of wall-building as individual and national identity protection, scholars from different disciplines and periods of the Luso-Hispanic World will reflect on issues linked to identity and wall or border building. Topics include, but are not limited to: national identity and nationalism; race, ethnicity, and alterity; immigration and citizenship; and queer perspectives and the social construction of gender and sexuality.

Congress on Hispanic and Lusophone Linguistics (OSUCHiLL)
Presentations may deal with any aspect of Hispanic or Lusophone linguistics, including but not limited to: variation, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, phonetics, phonology, morphology, historical linguistics, psycholinguistics, semantics, and syntax. Creoles or indigenous languages of Hispanic and Lusophone countries may also be discussed. Our keynote speakers are Dr. Daniel G. Erker of Boston University and Dr. Ashwini Deo of The Ohio State University.

Scan to learn more about the 21st Annual Symposia on Hispanic and Lusophone Studies and Hispanic and Lusophone Linguistics

SYMPOSIUM ON INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES AND CULTURES OF LATIN AMERICA (ILCLA)
The Center for Latin American Studies at OSU
OCTOBER 25-28, 2018 | CALL FOR PROPOSALS
This symposium will contribute to the teaching and learning, dissemination and preservation, study and advancement of indigenous languages and cultures of the region.

Scan to learn more about ILCLA and to access the proposal form.

UPCOMING COURSE- THE U.S. EXPERIENCE: LATIN@S, LANGUAGE, AND LITERACY
SPANISH 2367S | MW 12:45-2:05PM
This is a GEC second writing/social diversity course that focuses on generating ideas, drafting, and revising writing projects. These projects will be situated within the thematic context of literacy and related issues among Latin@s born in the United States and Spanish-speaking immigrants. This course is taught in English & Spanish.

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UPCOMING COURSE- INTRODUCTION TO BRAZILIAN CULTURE
PORTUGUESE 2330 | WF 9:35-10:55AM
This GE cultures and ideas/diversity global studies course is an integrated, multidisciplinary overview of modern Brazilian culture in terms of its visual, plastic, musical, literary, dramatic, and popular arts within socio-economic and political context.