

Portuguese Studies at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

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Situated in the region that boasts the oldest and largest Brazilian, Cape Verdean, and Portuguese community in the United States, the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth has, over the years, developed a strong commitment to Portuguese Studies. The teaching of Portuguese language at UMD began in the mid-sixties, and an undergraduate major was approved shortly thereafter. The first teacher of Portuguese was Gregory Rocha, a graduate of Harvard University, who was joined soon after by António Felix from the same institution. The latter ran a summer program in Lisbon in the 1970s. The first Portuguese lector from the Instituto Camões—then the Instituto de Alta Cultura, soon to become the Instituto de Língua e Cultura Portuguesa (ICALP)—arrived in 1969, launching a productive relationship that continues to the present day. Over the years and while located in the Department of Foreign Literature and Languages, the Portuguese program had on average 20 to 25 majors at any given time and between 150 and 200 enrolled in Portuguese classes students per semester.

In 1975, the University launched the Center for the Portuguese-Speaking World, led by Fred Gifun, Department of History, and Mary Vermette, College of Continuing Studies. In its twelve years of existence, this Center organized colloquia, summer programs in Lisbon and the Azores, and other cultural initiatives. The Portuguese Studies Group, begun in 1988 and lasting three years, inaugurated an oral history project and promoted *Saudade*, a documentary film on the Portuguese in New Bedford, directed and produced by Bela Feldman-Bianco, distinguished Visiting Professor in Anthropology from the Universidade de Campinas, Brazil.

In the 1990s, Portuguese at UMD entered a period of transition. Frank F. Sousa (Ph.D. UC Santa Barbara)—with financial support from the local Portuguese community, the Camões Institute, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the Luso-American Foundation—developed the Summer Program in Portuguese in 1994. With well over 60 students a year since its inception, the program continues to be the largest of its kind in the United States.

Founded in 1996 with financial support from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Citizens Bank, and the Luso-American Foundation (FLAD), the Center for Portuguese Studies and Culture (www.portstudies.umassd.edu), under the leadership of Frank F. Sousa, initiated a

considerable expansion of Portuguese studies at UMD. In 1997, with major underwriting from FLAD, the Center led the process to hire three tenure-track faculty, namely, Michael Baum, Ph.D. in Political Science (University of Connecticut); Andrea Klimt, Ph.D. in Anthropology (Stanford University); and Victor J. Mendes, Ph.D. in Portuguese (University of Lisbon). This accomplishment—in a tight fiscal year when the entire university hired just four tenure-track faculty—allowed the Center to develop fully into an interdisciplinary international studies and outreach unit dedicated to the study of the language, literatures and cultures of the Portuguese-speaking world.

In 1998, the Center, in collaboration with José Ornelas of the University of Massachusetts Amherst and Paulo de Medeiros, then of Bryant College, launched *Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies (PLCS)*, a semi-annual, multilingual, peer-reviewed, thematically oriented academic journal. *PLCS*, whose editor is Victor J. Mendes, aims to take stock of its scholarly field at the beginning of the twenty-first century, at a moment when the literatures and cultures of the vast and varied Portuguese-speaking world are gaining increased international visibility and interest. The objective of the journal is for each volume to become a central point of reference in a relevant area of research. The first ten issues of *PLCS* have included essays by such noted scholars as Harold Bloom, Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, Lawrence Lipking, Michael Murrin, and Helen Vendler, along with contributions by prominent Lusophone intellectuals such as Eduardo Lourenço and Luiz Costa Lima. The journal has received considerable acclaim, including highly favorable reviews in the *Times Literary Supplement* and the *Washington Post*. Also in 1998, the Government of Portugal, through the efforts of its foreign minister Jaime Gama, made a large donation to the Center for development of a graduate program in Portuguese Studies and publication of pedagogical materials for teaching Portuguese.

In 2000, the Portuguese program hired the Brazilianist Dário Borim, Jr. (PhD, University of Minnesota). In the same year the Center led the effort to create a separate Department of Portuguese (<http://www.umassd.edu/cas/portuguese>). This fundamental step in the development of Portuguese Studies at UMD was made possible, in part, by another generous grant from the Luso-American Foundation. Frank F. Sousa was the first chair of the department, having held the position in 2001 and 2002. In its first year of operation, the department hired a fourth tenure-line faculty member, Anna Klobucka (PhD, Harvard). By fall 2002 the department had more than 40 majors and 300 students enrolled in Portuguese classes per semester. UMD students majoring in Portuguese take 33 credits of upper-level courses taught in Portuguese in the areas of literary and cultural studies of Portugal, Brazil and Lusophone Africa, including the required course 'An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Analysis'. They are also encouraged to fulfill their college and university distribution requirements in the fields of Humanities and Social Sciences by taking courses offered in other departments that focus on the Portuguese-speaking world, such as the History of Brazil, Portuguese in the Americas, or Cape Verdean Politics and Society.

In 2001, the Center established the Hélio and Amélia Pedroso/Luso-American Foundation Endowed Chair in Portuguese Studies, a rotating distinguished visiting professor program whose objective is to contribute to the needs of the interdisciplinary Portuguese program at UMD, particularly at the graduate level, as well as to support the publication program of the Center. Donald Warrin of the University of California, Berkeley, a specialist in Portuguese-American history and literature, held the chair in spring 2003 (in the Department of History), followed by

the renowned literary scholar Carlos Reis of the Universidade de Coimbra in 2005 (hosted by the Department of Portuguese).

In 2003, the Center launched two book series. The Adamastor Book Series aims to publish translations of poetry, fiction and essay. The series, whose general editor is Victor J. Mendes, has published *Chaos and Splendor and Other Essays*, the first collection of essays to appear in English by Eduardo Lourenço, Portugal's most celebrated cultural critic. Forthcoming volumes include *Transdisciplinary Readings of Garrett's Travels in My Homeland*; *Sonnets and Other Poems* by Luis de Camões, translated by Richard Zenith, with a preface by Helen Vendler; and *The Traveling Eye: Retrospection, Vision and Prophecy in the Portuguese Renaissance* by Fernando Gil and Helder Macedo. The second collection, the Portuguese in the Americas Series, publishes monographs in the social sciences, history and literary criticism, as well as works of imaginative literature, thereby contributing to the emergent field of Portuguese-American Studies by documenting the variety and complexity of the Portuguese experience in America. The general editor of the series is Frank F. Sousa; Andrea Klimt edits volumes dedicated to the social sciences. The series has published four volumes to date: *Portuguese-Americans and Contemporary Civic Culture in Massachusetts* by Clyde Barrow; *Through a Portagee Gate*, a memoir by the acclaimed author Charles Reis Felix; *In Pursuit of Their Dreams: A History of Azorean Immigration to the United States* by Jerry Williams; and *Sixty Acres and a Barn*, the long-awaited posthumous novel by Alfred Lewis, the most important Portuguese-American author of the twentieth century and the first to command the attention of the English-reading public, with reviews in the *New York Times* and other prestigious publications.

In 2004, the Center launched the Portuguese Language Textbook Series, whose first volume is a 600-page advanced grammar and composition textbook entitled *Mais um Passo no Português Moderno: gramática avançada, leituras e composição* by Francisco Cota Fagundes of University of Massachusetts, Amherst. The volume, whose editor was Victor J. Mendes, was sponsored by the above-mentioned textbook development grant from the Government of Portugal. The Center is now involved in a joint venture with Prentice Hall to publish a Portuguese language textbook for beginners, *Ponto de Encontro: Portuguese as a World Language*, whose primary author is Anna Klobucka.

In 2004, the University hired three more faculty whose scholarship is primarily dedicated to the Lusophone world, namely, Cristina Mehrrens (History), a Latin Americanist specializing in the history of Brazil; Isabel Rodrigues (Anthropology), whose research centers on Cape Verde; and Timothy Walker (History), a maritime historian with a focus on Portugal. These new colleagues are contributing significantly to the interdisciplinary scope of both the undergraduate and graduate programs in Portuguese.

In September 2004, the Department of Portuguese, chaired since 2003 by Anna Klobucka, launched the M.A. in Portuguese Studies. The majority of core and elective courses comprising the thirty-credit M.A. curriculum are taught in Portuguese in the disciplinary area of Lusophone literary and cultural studies, but students are also able to take up to nine credits from an interdisciplinary list of courses related to the Portuguese-speaking world, which are taught by affiliated faculty in other departments. The graduate program, directed by Victor J. Mendes, admitted eight students in its first year of operation, and is in the process of preparing to expand to the doctoral level. This year the department filled its fifth tenure-track position with its hiring of Gláucia Silva (Ph.D., University of Iowa), a specialist in Portuguese linguistics and language

pedagogy, who will teach such undergraduate and graduate courses as Introduction to Portuguese Linguistics and Teaching Portuguese as a Foreign Language, among others. This post was made possible by a generous grant from the Camões Institute.

In April 2005, the Center for Portuguese Studies and Culture established the \$1.5 million Affonso Ferreira Portuguese-American Archives Endowment, an expansion of the efforts begun with the Portuguese in the Americas Series. This endowment will allow for the development of archives devoted to the collection of letters, unpublished manuscripts, diaries, historical photographs, newspapers and magazines, papers of fraternal organizations, videos, films, recorded music, passports, oral history recordings and transcriptions, among other materials. The objective is to build a unique and rich collection to be used by educators, scholars, family and community historians, filmmakers, exhibit curators, and journalists, among others. This initiative will lead to the hiring of an archivist and social historian or anthropologist/sociologist. The development of the Archives Endowment was made possible by the generous commitment of eight Portuguese-Americans, the Luso-American Foundation, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, through its endowment-matching fund program.

Portuguese Studies at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth has developed a complex interdisciplinary program which allows for the preparation of students at the undergraduate and graduate levels and provides opportunities for its faculty to do research, publish, and work collaboratively within the university and with colleagues in other institutions.