



1<sup>st</sup> Edition | Fall 2020 - Spring 2021

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



The publication of this first departmental newsletter sees light thanks to an active and committed editorial board. Its purpose is to inform about the activities, events, people, news, and accomplishments of one of the largest departments at Spelman: the Department of World Languages and Cultures (WLC).

WLC prides itself in being an active space. Our professors come from various countries and are dedicated, not only to help students learn foreign languages, but to open their minds to different cultures and rich ways of looking and approaching the world.

We cherish every moment we see our students enthusiastically learning and navigating through cultures, and we have several students who exemplify this enthusiasm: those who study abroad, who currently work as teachers, government employees, professionals in the medical, social, and political fields, and who are students at different graduate schools. We are proud anytime we hear that a second language has opened invaluable opportunities and benefits for them.

Every year we serve hundreds of students through the Spelman language requirement courses, through our Major and Minor in Spanish and French, and through other languages such as Chinese, Japanese, Latin, and Portuguese. In all these courses, we leave pieces of ourselves, our cultures, experiences, and we infuse in our students a desire to learn beyond the classroom.



Like every year, our students also accomplish academic and personal goals, as well as our faculty. This particular year (2020-2021), despite the pandemic, we achieved several goals while offering quality online education. We finished the year with the loss of family members, students' relatives, and sudden departure of one of our own: colleague and friend, Julio.

While recognizing the vulnerability of life, we take pause to cherish and recognize what WLC has accomplished over the year:

1. **Strengthening our Curriculum.** We implemented a new Spanish curriculum. Worked on a common Portuguese minor with Morehouse College, have initiated a new curriculum for French, are planning to extend courses in Japanese and Chinese to create a minor, and are working with other institutions to offer options in Latin.
2. **Study Abroad.** Although our students have not been able to travel abroad due to the pandemic, we are offering an "online abroad program" this summer through a university in Oaxaca, Mexico. We look forward to work again with other institutions around the globe to offer study abroad experiences: Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Spain, Mexico, Costa Rica, Cuba, Japan, and China.
3. **Cultural Events.** We brought the world to our students through cultural events such as Hispanic Heritage Month, Day of the Dead, Chinese New Year, Cherry Blossom Festival, French Week, and Brazilian Week. Between these activities, we brought to the Spelman Community guest speakers who talked on current political, social, health, and economic issues (please see our calendar of events below).
4. **Our WLC students.** This past year we have welcomed more minors and majors into the WLC family. In spring 2021, we celebrate the graduating students and wish them much success in their new endeavors. We are very proud of all of them.
5. **Our WLC Faculty.** WLC faculty have continued their excellent work in teaching, researching, and serving the college and the professional field. We commend their achievements and celebrate their new books, articles, grants, recognitions, and appointments served at different organizations (see below under Faculty Highlights). We celebrate your work!

To close, I would like to congratulate Dr. Xuexin Liu on her position as Interim Chair for the 2021-2022 academic year. We look forward to a great year at the Department of World Languages and Cultures.

*Jacqueline Alvarez-Rosales*



Dr. Xuexin Liu

Editorial Board: Dr. Janike Ruginis and Pilar Valencia

Nǐ hǎo 你好 Bonjour Olá Konnichiwa こんにちは Salve Hola  
DEPARTMENT OF WORLD LANGUAGES AND CULTURES AT SPELMAN COLLEGE

## REMEMBERING AND CELEBRATING A LIFE WELL LIVED

This semester has been particularly difficult, as the department continues to mourn the loss and celebrate the life of our beloved colleague, Dr. Julio Gonzalez-Ruiz. A prolific writer, avid learner, passionate educator, researcher, and mentor he was loved and admired by his colleagues in the World Languages and Cultures department as well as Spelman students and alumnae and his community. Please visit the online tribute page to read about his great life achievements and love notes left by the community. [CLICK HERE](#)



## EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Each semester the Department of World Languages and Cultures sponsors events that engage with our community and beyond. During Fall 2020 we welcomed international guest speakers who spoke about education and activism, in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month. During Spring 2021 we continued to offer our staple events—Cherry Blossom Festival, Chinese New Year Festival, and Brazilian Festival. We also hosted talks, film screenings, and our third Annual Spanish Research Day. We are excited to continue offering strong programming each semester, where our community can engage with the world.

### Hispanic Heritage Month

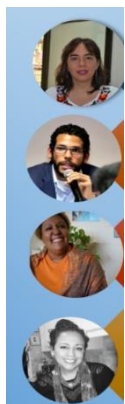
In celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month and the International Decade of African Descends (UN 2015-2024), the department organized two dialogues:

#### Dialogue/Conversatorio #1 | September 30, 2020



“Current Situation, Challenges and Plans for a More Inclusive and Self-Defining Education in Afro-Hispanic Communities.” Participants included Carmen Angola, Bolivian photographer and activist; Martin Miguel Bolivian, M.A., Afro Bolivian educator and activist; Marley Melendez More, M.A., Colombian linguist and activist; Dr. Sheridan Wigginton, co-author of *Unmastering the Script: Education, Critical Race Theory, and the Struggle to Reconcile the Haitian Other in Dominican Identity*.

#### Dialogue/Conversatorio #2 | October 23, 2020



"Recognizing the Afro Hispanic Population through Literature, History and Academic Activism." Participants included Dr. Sagrario Cruz-Carretero, professor, researcher, activist, co-curator of the exhibit "African presence in Mexico from Yanga to the present" at the Institute of Anthropology, Mexican Culture, and Civilization at the U. Veracruzana (Mexico). Juan Manuel Olaya Rocha, professor, writer, editor, founder and director of the Journal *D'Palenque: literatura y afrodescendencia*. Dr. Cristina Rodriguez Cabral, professor, poet, researcher, Premio Casa de las Américas for her collection *Bahia, mágica*, 1986; Celia Rodriguez, professor, researcher, and activist, author of *Decolonizing America: Poverty, Oppression, and Pain*; and Roxana Escobar Ñañez, Ph.D candidate at the University of Toronto.



### Happy New Year of the Ox | February 19, 2021

To celebrate the Chinese New Year, Spelman and Morehouse, together with the Chinese Language and Culture Club, came together to host a lively singing competition. This event was sponsored by the department, in conjunction with Asian Studies.



### Virtual Cherry Blossom Festival 2021 | March 24, 2021

Presented in conjunction with the Asian Studies Program and the AUC Japan Club, this was an exciting event. Although it was the very first virtual event, it offered seven well-organized and moderated activities. It attracted 141 student, faculty, and staff participants. Because of the nature of this festival, the local, national, and international moderators worked hard to make it a great success.



- Introduction to Japanese Pop Culture | Moderated by Ayami Oe & Hisa Wakaba, Tokyo
- The Japanese Youth and Conversational Japanese | Moderated by Ayami Oe & Hisa Wakaba, Tokyo
- Lecture on USAID-Japan/Asian Relations | Alexious Butler, USAID Diplomat and John Seong, Senior Adviser to USAID's Office
- Japanese Art Workshop – Origami | Moderated by Dr. Xuexin Liu
- Survival Japanese | Moderated by AUC Japan Club
- Animated Japanese Games | Moderated by AUC Japan Club
- Animated Japanese Films | Moderated by AUC Japan Club

### “Black Women and the French Republic” | April 8, 2021



Dr. Joseph-Gabriel's presentation focused on her groundbreaking, interdisciplinary research on the anti-colonialist endeavors of Black women in the French empire. It engages concepts of race, gender, and citizenship in the French-speaking Caribbean, Africa, and France. This event brought together about 50 attendees, co-sponsored with the Department of History, the African Diaspora Studies program, and the African Diaspora and the World Program. Dr. Annette Joseph-Gabriel is an Assistant Professor of French and Francophone Studies in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at the University of Michigan.

### Spelman/Morehouse Brazilian Festival | April 12 – 16, 2021

Spelman and Morehouse College came together to offer a comprehensive and exciting programming for this year's Brazilian Festival.



- “Race, Health, and the Challenges of Implementing Equitable Policies in Brazil” | Dr. Clarice Mota, Universidade Federal da Bahia
- Studying Abroad in Brazil - Student Panel



- “A Sweet Bite of Brazil”: Brigadeiro Cooking Class
- Film Screening – “Bacurau”
- History and Introduction to Capoeira Movements & Music

Third Annual Spanish Research Day | April 23, 2021

The graduating Spanish Majors showcased their written thesis research through thought provoking presentations. During the department’s Spanish Research Day, faculty, students, and the Spelman community joined virtually to support their work and learn about their unique research.

- La negra tiene más que tumbao: El estudio de tres artistas | Haleigh Edmonds
- Los Afroamericanos en la Guerra Civil Española: Los borrados, los olvidados, y los desconocidos | Raila Harvey
- Como las Mujeres Afro-mexicanas han sido afectadas por las estructuras patriarcales como el racismo y el sexismo | Maya Machado
- La salud es riqueza: Inseguridad alimentaria en comunidades pobres y minorías | Tirzah Peddy
- Salud materna en comunidades inmigrantes en la Argentina contemporánea: Un análisis de la justicia reproductiva | Phoenix Pittman
- Disparidades de salud en la comunidad Latinx | Hunter Smith
- La borradura de la negrura: La complejidad de la identidad dominicana | Alexis Young



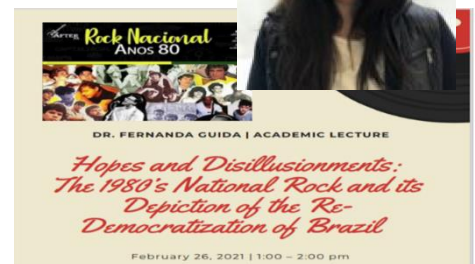
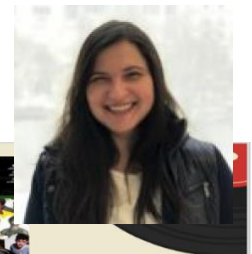
Film Screening of Puerto Rican Film Landfall (2020) | March 11, 2021



After the screening of the Puerto Rican film, “Landfall,” there was a vibrant conversation held with film Director Cecilia Aldarondo and Film Producer Lale Namerrow Pastor. The screening event co-sponsors were Arts Division, Film and Visual Culture, Political Science, Social Justice Program, Social Sciences Division and Honors Program.

**WELCOME, DR. FERNANDA GUIDA!**

The department is thrilled to welcome Dr. Fernanda Guida Fall 2021 as new Assistant professor of the Portuguese program. Dr. Guida holds a Ph.D. and a M.A. degree in Romance Languages from the University of Georgia, with an emphasis in Portuguese Language and Literature, a secondary emphasis in Film Studies and Adaptation, and a minor in Spanish Language and Literature. Prior to accepting her role at Spelman College, she was the director of the Portuguese Program at the Lauder Institute at Penn, where she taught and oversaw the graduate-level courses in Portuguese as well as coordinating the



Summer Immersion Program in Brazil as part of the Latin America area of concentration. Further, she has also held the position of visiting professor and the Overseas Coordinator of the Portuguese Flagship Program at the University of Georgia. She has experience in teaching Foreign Languages and Culture in higher education institutions in the USA (at Penn and UGA) and in Brazil (at UFMG and UFSJ). Her main research and academic interests include Brazilian literature, culture and society, foreign language education, and film studies.

## WELCOME, DR. GUSTAVO SEGURA-CHÁVEZ!



The department is also thrilled to welcome Gustavo Segura-Chávez this Fall 2021, under a one-year appointment as Lecturer in the Spanish program. Segura-Chávez comes with ample experience teaching Spanish at a variety of levels. He is currently working on his dissertation titled “Reconstitución de escena: Masacres del siglo XX chileno en la memoria cultural” at the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, University of California Davis.

## A PROFILE: MS. CARMELITA

Carmelita Davis joined the department as Administrative Assistant in 2020, and from the first day became an integral member. She specializes in communications, file management, marketing, budget assistant and other special and creative assignments. Her work experience is diverse including non-profits and government agencies.



A little about Ms. Carmelita: “I enjoy hiking, biking and short get-a-ways to Georgia State Parks, Callaway Gardens, and Columbus Riverwalk with my husband; I am inspired by my husband and son. I also enjoy photography and researching natural remedies especially using herbs, spices, essential oils, and food as preventative medicine.”

## SUMMERS ONLINE WITH THE SPANISH PROGRAM



The Spanish program has been offering summer online courses since 2017. We executed back in 2016 our first pilot program with Professors Pilar Valencia and former colleague Fernando Esquivel-Suárez (Assistant Professor, English) who were the first faculty from our department to obtain training. Since then, approximately 250 students have reached their language goals and pursued upper-level Spanish courses. This summer our offerings extend to offer courses on composition and conversation!

## WORKING WITH THE DIRECTED SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION PROGRAM @ SPELMAN COLLEGE

Spanish Senior Lecturers, Dr. Janike Ruginis and Pilar Valencia, were delighted to welcome two Spanish majors into their virtual classroom, as part of the Directed Supplemental Instruction Program (DSI). Working together, the DSI students, Kayla Bryant (Spanish major) and Naima Castaneda (Spanish minor),





gained insight into class development and had the opportunity to gain hands on experience by developing in-class grammar and conversation activities, tutoring and conversation sessions, and leading class discussion on important cultural topics.



“I have experienced a tremendous amount of growth as a DSI this academic year. I not only gained from the experience, but there was also space for me to offer my abilities. I have learned that teaching is a learning process. Being a DSI also helped me build connections with the class of 2024 and working with the department has been an unparalleled privilege.”

Kayla Bryant, Spelman College 2022

Major: Spanish

Minors: International Studies and Photography

## THE SPOTLIGHT!

### FRENCH AND SPANISH MINOR AND MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS AND FUTURE PLANS

- ✓ Princess Naomi Aladekoba will attend MIT Summer Research Program, 2021 (Spanish minor)
- ✓ Aakilah Brown was accepted into Emory University Medical School, Fall 2021 (Spanish minor)
- ✓ Taylor H. Currie will participate in Health Group’s summer internship as Business Analyst, 2021 (collaboration between US office and India, Philippines and Ireland’s office) (Spanish minor)
- ✓ Raila Harvey accepted a full-time position at Mastery Charter School in Camden, New Jersey as an Elementary-Middle School Spanish Teacher for 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade (Spanish major)
- ✓ Lydia Laramore will attend Yale Law School, Fall 2021 (French minor)
- ✓ Maya Machado was welcomed into the Spelman College Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa and she will pursue a PhD in Sociology at the University of California, San Diego (Spanish and Sociology majors)
- ✓ Aquilah Ohemeng presented this Fall “THE FLOWERS THAT GREW FROM OUR TEARS: A Senior Dance Capstone Performance” (Spanish minor)
- ✓ Tirzah Peddy will pursue a Doctor of Chiropractic degree at Southern California University, Los Angeles College of Chiropractic, Fall 2021 (Spanish major)
- ✓ Pheonix Pittman accepted a position as Business analyst at McKinsey and Company in Atlanta (Spanish major)
- ✓ Hunter Smith is moving to Madrid, Spain to pursue a year teaching English. Upon her return she will attend medical school (Spanish major)
- ✓ Alexis Young will pursue her goal of becoming an Obstetrician/Gynecologist upon graduation

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATING SENIORS

### French Minors

Aryn Franklin (Major in International Studies)

Jasmine Geyen (Major in International Studies)

Joy Kirkland (Major in International Studies)

Lydia Laramore (Major in International Studies)

Ariel Talbert (Major in Political Science)

**Spanish Minors**

Naima Castaneda Isaac (Major in Philosophy)  
Lauryn Collins (Major in Economics)  
Nia Dailey (Major in Health Science)  
Taylor Delk  
Emani Figaro (Major in Economics)  
Fana Haile Selassie (Major in International Studies)  
Kamile Henriques Wyatt (Major in Computer science)  
Logan James  
Kendall Jones (Major in International studies)  
Shelby Lewis  
Armani Morris  
Aquilah Ohemeng  
Brittanie Rice  
Taylor Simpson  
Raquel Thomas  
Kaiya Thompson  
Ashley Varlack  
Valerie Wilson

**Spanish Majors**

Haleigh Edmonds (Double major in Arts)  
Raila Harvey (Double major in Education)  
Isabella Jackson\*  
Maya Machado (Double major in Sociology and Anthropology)  
Tirzah Peddy  
Phoenix Pittman (Double major in International Studies)  
Leila Sampson\*  
Hunter Smith  
Jandolyn Washington\*  
Shelby Woolridge (Double major in Theatre and Performance)\*  
Alexis Young  
\*Graduating in December

**Spanish Majors Graduating with Departmental honors**

Haleigh Edmonds  
Raila Harvey  
Maya Machado  
Phoenix Pittman  
Hunter Smith



ALMA OAKES  
MEMORIAL AWARD RECIPIENT

Presented to Phoenix Pittman

The Alma Oakes Memorial Award is for a student who best exemplifies intellectual excellence and qualities of character that Ms. Oakes sought to impart to her students by her teaching example.



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## FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

### Jacqueline Álvarez-Rosales, Associate Professor, Spanish

- National Humanities Center Fellow 2021-2022.
- Carnegie-Rockefeller Humanities Research Grant- Spelman Humanities Division, 2021.
- Blue Ribbon National Commission Member for the Institute of Andean Studies (IAS). “Engaging Africans and their Descendants in Andean Studies.”
- Invitation: Round Table Participant/Contestant on Afro-Andean: “Reframing Andean Studies.” 61 Annual Meeting of the Institute of Andean Studies (IAS), 2021.
- Invitation: Conversation/Interview on her book: “Grieving Words: Colonial Writing and the Construction of the Afro Andean Otherness.” The Series of Andean Cultures & Histories Working Group (ACH). Northwestern University, May 6, 2021

### Anne Carlson, Senior Lecturer, French

- Book Review Essay in the Journal of Global and Postcolonial Studies, volume 8, no. 1 (Spring 2020): Special Issue "Frontiers and Frameworks in African Diaspora Teaching and Scholarship," Guest Editor: Pushpa Naidu Parekh.
- Participated in a virtual professional development course entitled "Guiding Learners to Intercultural Citizenship: Designing Interdisciplinary Units to Link Language + Culture+ Content" through the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

### Gabriel Eljaiek-Rodriguez, Adjunct, Spanish

- Books: *Colombian Gothic in Cinema and Literature*. Anthem Press, October 2021; *Baroque Aesthetics in Contemporary American Horror Cinema*. Palgrave Mcmillan, December 2021.
- Book chapter: “Latin American Horror Cinema.” *Global Horror Film: Trauma, Borders, and Shifting Visions*, edited by Samirah Alkassim and Ziad Foty. Cognella Press, December 2021.
- Article: “Invocación y evocación: fantasmas de la violencia en Sumando ausencias de Doris Salcedo.” *Revista de Estudios Colombianos*, Número 55, Enero-Junio 2020.

### Estelle Finley, Senior Lecturer, Spanish

- Pre-Revision Review of Manuscript: “Caminando 1: Intermediate Spanish Foundations – Level One” by Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita, Cognella Academic Publishing.
- Conference Presentation: “Mediation of the Voice of the Writer in Equatorial Guinean Reality” at BEYOND CENSORSHIP? Literature, Film, Media and Public Discourse, African Literature Association Online Conference 2021.

### Luis Gonzalez-Barrios, Assistant Professor, Spanish

- Presentation: “The Latin American Literary Boom: Popular Reception in Neoliberal Times.” The Gronthee Talks: Latin American Literature. March 27th. London, UK, 2021 (On-line presentation).
- SPELMAN COLLEGE BETA OMEGA CHAPTER of PHI BETA DELTA (National Honor Society for International Scholars) Virtual Induction Ceremony on Monday, April 26, 2021.

Xuexin Liu, Full Professor, Japanese

- Published Research Articles: “Japanese Adjective Conjugation Patterns and Sources of Difficulty” in Foreign Language Learning” in Studies in Linguistics and Literature (SLL) Vol. 4, No. 3. 2020; “Abstract Lexical Structure and Language Transfer in Second Language Learning” (co-author Longxing Wei) in International Journal of Language and Linguistics Vol. 7, No. 3. 2020; “Code-switching as a Bilingual Lexical Strategy” (co-author Longxing Wei) in Studies in Linguistics and Literature (SLL) Vol. 4, No. 4. 2020.

Janike Ruginis, Senior Lecturer, Spanish

- Participant in ACTFL virtual professional development course entitled "Guiding Learners to Intercultural Citizenship: Designing Interdisciplinary Units to Link Language + Culture+ Content" through the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Certification pending. 2021.
- Advisor to Directed Supplemental Instruction (DSI) student Kayla Bryant (Spanish major). 2020-2021.

Anastasia Valecce, Associate Professor, Spanish

- Book Publication: *Neorealismo y cine en Cuba: historia y discurso entorno a la primera polémica de la revolución (1951-1962)* [Neorealism and Cinema in Cuba: History and Discourse on the First Polemic of the Revolution (1951-1962)]. Purdue University Press, Nov. 2020.
- Articles: “Black Skin, White Tourists: Race, Gender, and Sex Tourism in Dominican Film *Sand Dollars*,” Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies: 102-115, 2020; “(In) Visible Cubas: Digital Conflict, Virtual Diasporas, and Cyber Mambises.” Section I, Chapter 4: 74-87, University of Florida Press (UFP), 2020.
- Non-Peer Reviewed Publications: "A Bio-Filmography on Laila Petrone Peynado." GYNOCINE PROJECT: WOMEN FILMMAKERS and CINEMAS, ed. Barbara Zecchi. 2020; Interview of Afro Dominican- Italian film director Laila Petrone Peynado. GYNOCINE PROJECT: WOMEN FILMMAKERS and CINEMAS.
- Invitations: Clark Atlanta University. Art and Fashion Week. The Clark Atlanta University Art and Fashion Department. Invitation to a Panel Discussion on art and the profession by Chair Dpt. Professor BJ Arnett, April 19, 2021.

Pilar Valencia, Senior Lecturer, Spanish

- **Fifteen years!** It is hard to believe, but it has been a great ride. My first recollection, as part of Spelman College, was being asked by several students, “Professor, how long have you been at Spelman?” to which I responded: “It’s my first year.” The students exclaimed, “It seems like you’ve been here for a long time!” What a great compliment; I felt at home! From that first semester until now, thirty plus semesters later, I am honored in being a big part of teaching at the 100-300 levels in Spanish, but also several Study Abroad Programs within the Department of World Languages and Cultures as well as the college at large. Further, I have completed online learning training and certification with Spelman’s Instructional Technology and Design, as with external institutions, participated as faculty cohort in online learning professional development series, and adapted courses for continuous online learning during the COVID Pandemic.

###