

Teaching Portfolio

Submitted to the Graduate School for Consideration for the 2023 Excellence in Teaching Award

Vera Maria Bulla

PhD Candidate

Institute for Women's Studies

Department of Romance Languages

Portuguese Program

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**UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA**

Bulla |

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January 17, 2023

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Dear Colleagues,

I am writing in support of Vera Bulla's application for the Excellence in Teaching Award. I have known Vera since spring of 2017 and have found her to be an excellent teaching assistant, student, and researcher. As a fourth-year Ph.D. student at the University of Georgia, Vera has taken five courses with me and received a grade of A in all of them. She is currently working on her dissertation provisionally titled "Re(existence) of Women Through Environmental Disasters" under my supervision. In addition, she is a teaching assistant in the Portuguese Program and a tutor for the federally-funded Portuguese Flagship Program.

Before I talk about Vera's excellence in teaching and research, I would like to mention that she comes from the countryside of the least developed region of Brazil, the Northeast. Places help shape our stories and the reason I mention Vera's background is because, in spite of it, she has thrived. Vera has worked incredibly hard to be where she is and to have achieved everything I describe below. Her enthusiasm and passion for education are remarkable.

Vera has taught a wide range of Portuguese language courses from first semester (PORT 1001) to conversation and composition (PORT 3010). Her enthusiasm and excellence for teaching granted her the Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award in 2019. Only teaching assistants who excel in their teaching duties may be given the chance to teach a 3000-level course since it involves not only planning content-based lessons and overseeing a semester long research project but also coordinating a telecollaboration partnership between UGA and a Brazilian university. It is a challenging course to teach and, without a doubt, Vera rose to the occasion as I can attest after observing one of her classes last year (as interim Portuguese language supervisor). Vera's lesson plan was incredibly organized and composed of task-based activities that focused on student discussion. Activities had clear guidelines and were timed wisely. She created a collegial atmosphere during class and had great rapport with students. Vera has also been incredibly responsible and committed to the backward curriculum redesign we have been developing and implementing in the Portuguese basic language sequence for the past two years. In order to overhaul our curriculum, we have provided professional development training to our teaching assistants not only in backward design but also in task-based instruction, teacher's talking time, lesson plan development, among other themes. Vera has been invested in this project by showing her commitment to improving her

teaching practice, by participating in all workshops, and by piloting some of the new courses. It has been a pleasure working with her as she has shown resilience and dependability as a member of our team.

All in all, Vera is an outstanding instructor of Portuguese and genuinely enjoys her teaching responsibilities. She is also a tutor for the Portuguese Flagship Program, the first Flagship Program in the U.S. devoted to Portuguese. This multi-year, federally funded program is designed to produce graduates with dual strengths in professional-level Portuguese language proficiency and their chosen career domains. Under my supervision as Curriculum Coordinator, Vera was trained on how to prepare our Flagship students to take the ACTFL OPI (Oral Proficiency Interview). As a result, Vera's students have had very successful ratings at the interview.

Vera is committed to developing a cutting-edge research agenda. Her research interests encompass female science fiction writers, ecofeminism, and disaster studies. Vera's timely dissertation research – "Re(existence) of Women Through Environmental Disasters" – highlights the multitude of female experiences within climate fiction through their own voices. As both Brazilian women and nature have been historically depicted within a context of patriarchal oppression and coloniality, Vera proposes to approach the topic from a particular angle, namely, an updated self-portrayal of these women and their relationship with the environment that affords them agency. She is working with two Brazilian female contemporary science fiction writers, Aline Valek and Nikelen Witter, who use ideas of radical love, ancestral indigenous epistemologies, and scientific knowledge as paths for healing humanity and the Earth. As testament to Vera's commitment to both teaching and research, she was recently selected to teach 2 introductory courses at the Institute for Women's Studies in spring 2022. This opportunity will allow her to combine her teaching expertise with her research interests, giving her renewed knowledge and perspective.

I give Vera Bulla my highest recommendation for the Excellence in Teaching Award, not only for her strong dedication to teaching, but also for her contribution to the interconnection between teaching and research.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,



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January 17, 2023

Selection Committee
Excellence in Teaching Award

Dear colleagues,

I write to enthusiastically nominate Vera Bulla for the 2023 Excellence in Teaching Award. Vera is an innovative and accomplished instructor of our introductory courses, has served as a mentor for other graduate teaching assistants, and has played a crucial role in building up the infrastructure of teaching resources that will ensure the success of GTAs in the years to come.

I first met Vera when she was a student in Feminist Theories, one of the required courses for the Women's Studies Graduate Certificate. To say that Vera was instrumental in the success of the course would be an understatement. In a class that can be a challenging space—many disciplines represented, varying backgrounds in feminist theory—Vera came to each class prepared, engaged, and offered a transnational perspective that was crucial to our collective learning. She was a model for others and, given her background in the relationship between the speculative, feminism, and social change (topics that I share an interest in), I learned a lot from her. She helped make it an invigorating intellectual space.

I was of course thrilled to learn that we had hired her to be a graduate teaching assistant in the Institute and teach our introductory courses. And, given her success as a GTA in the Romance Languages department, I was not surprised that she flourished as a Women's Studies instructor. As you can see from her portfolio, the numerical scores and written comments attest to her gift as a teacher, namely, the ability to create a learning environment necessary for student success. This is all the more challenging in a context in which students are engaging assigned readings that introduce them to concepts and experiences that challenge many of their common-sense convictions. Vera has spent a great deal of time thinking through course policies, assignments, and daily learning activities that will ensure not only student success in the conventional sense (namely, satisfactory grades) but that will enable students to be independent, creative thinkers—skills that will aid them long after the semester in question comes to a close. The numerous ways in which Vera has taken advantage of the teaching resources at UGA, both at the department level and beyond, is truly impressive.

Beyond her classroom preparation, Vera has developed an eLC page for the Institute that goes well beyond sample syllabi. She collected supplementary readings and other resources for no less than twenty topics to help not only the introductory courses but our 2000-level courses as well. In addition, there are materials for conducting mid-semester evaluations and twenty different innovative assignment modules, both low and high stakes for day-to-day learning and successful final projects. I look forward to utilizing these resources in my own classes.

I should note that Vera's accomplishments are all the more impressive since she has already spent a truly breathtaking amount of time developing superlative pedagogical skills and engaging in outreach outside of the classroom on behalf of her home department. The time she has spent cultivating community and an appreciation for language learning has been important not only for Romance Languages but for the university community as a whole. That dedication to community shines through in her teaching and service for Women's Studies and we are grateful that she chose to dedicate time to our teaching and research mission.

Vera is also a model for integrating scholarship and teaching, broadly construed. Her YouTube channel, "Projeto Ouça Mulheres," is a collection of fantasy fiction in Spanish, Portuguese, and English by women throughout the world (dating back to writers like Mary Shelley through the present day). Its uniqueness lies in being perhaps the only trilingual website that warehouses such material, introducing readers/listeners to a range of works they might not otherwise be exposed to. The multilingual character of it is key—in particular, it serves to introduce Anglophone readers/listeners to the growing body of fantasy literature produced by women authors throughout Latin America, where all forms of fantasy literature (including traditional fantasy writing but also horror and speculative and science fiction) are experiencing a renaissance led by women writers with growing international acclaim.

Finally, I should note that Vera has accomplished all of this while completing an innovative and groundbreaking dissertation that integrates transnational and Brazilian feminist theory, literary criticism, and environmental studies. She is truly a model of excellence for being a scholar-teacher, one that both graduate students and faculty alike have learned from. I can think of no better way to acknowledge her contributions than with the Excellence in Teaching Award.

Thank you for your work on this committee and for considering the nomination of this truly exceptional colleague.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kelly Happe", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Kelly E. Happe
Associate Professor and Graduate Coordinator

Personal Statement

As a fifth-year doctoral student in the Romance Language Department, I am writing to apply for the coveted Excellence in Teaching Award through the University of Georgia Graduate School. I have taught Portuguese and Women's Studies as a Teaching Assistant since 2017. During this time, I have explored and delivered classes and programs that have enriched my students' learning experiences through language and cultural projects.

Last year I was given the opportunity to branch out and teach Introduction to Women's Studies. I will begin my third semester enlightening and learning more in this area alongside my students about the history, past and present issues, and changing attitudes of today's women of the world. Our classroom has an atmosphere of acceptance and warmth, so whenever we discuss controversial or uncomfortable topics all know there is zero tolerance for criticisms or unkind comments. I have witnessed many students with low self-esteem blossom when they realize there is a class that understands their gender or sexual orientations, and during the semester I enjoy seeing them become more confident and self-assertive. As an end of the semester project the students choose a lecture, reading or impressive woman we have studied to create an original painting, poem, song, story, play or anything that has impressed or impacted their thinking.

A few years ago, I collaborated with my TA co-workers to design a new Portuguese teaching curriculum using an original Backward design and a unique format using original material for class plans. These teaching plans were designed from the ground up, and I am proud to have contributed to the new program by creating the plans and activities, gathering materials, implementing these plans in the classroom, and providing feedback.

For five years I tutored groups of UGA Portuguese Flagship Program students as they prepared to venture from home to continue their studies in a Brazilian university. In 2019 I helped to secure funding for the Portuguese Program from The Flagship Program, an initiative of the Defense Language and National Security Office of the US Department of Defense, for a project combining language, literature, and art. I continue to host this event every year. This project is open to all UGA students. I am delighted and honored to have former students ask for my recommendations and several have been influenced to study abroad in Brazil because of the interest created in my Portuguese classes. Two of my students won the Boren Scholarship Award.

My efforts as a teacher here at UGA inside and outside of the classroom have been concerned with enriching the learning experiences of my students. By listening to my students, I continue to grow as a teacher and seek new and interesting ways to engage my students as we study about the history of women's struggles and the issues facing today's women in our changing world. As a first-generation college graduate, I am eager and proud to teach Women's Studies classes and the Portuguese language and culture so that perhaps these young men and women will be encouraged to discover new opportunities abroad, open their minds to new ideas, respect one another, and appreciate their world with a newly found confidence through their expanded views of women's issues and a new language and culture. I am deeply honored to be nominated for this prestigious award. Thank you for your consideration.

Teaching Philosophy Statement

During my teaching college level classes at the University of Georgia, I came in contact with the active learning approach. Since I began to apply active learning exercises in both disciplines, Portuguese and WMST, my teaching philosophy evolved around them. After a year working with the Center for Teaching and Learning as part of the Future Faculty Program, I decided to experiment with many of the active learning exercises available. I incorporate different exercises in order to involve student's interest in the material, so the process of learning is vibrant, interesting and immersed in the content. For example, one active learning exercise in Women's Studies the students enjoy is the Concept Map, which consists of visual representations of ideas and thoughts. Students produce drawings and graphs about specific topics we have explored to better understand the significance of that particular idea. They are encouraged to construct these drawings using their own interpretations and, at the end, we share and discuss their material. I am always amazed by the quality and explanations of the maps the students produce.

Also, as part of the active learning approach in the classroom, I allow time for class discussions, use the think-pair-share activity between students, and we build tests collaboratively using a post-it parade where each person puts a meaningful test question on the wall. The students walk around the classroom as they discuss and engage with the material of the day. They feel confident about the material they are learning, and when they are not, we discuss more, and I explain in different ways. Many times, students volunteer and explain to the other students. These engaging methods help them create community with one another and establish trust and camaraderie.

In the classroom my students are encouraged to participate and try their best, in language classes and in WMST content classes. I strive to create the feeling of trust and kindness - trust that no one makes fun of another when a verb is mis-conjugated or when the wrong preposition is used in a sentence, and kindness along with respect for one another. A comfortable and positive learning atmosphere allows students to be more receptive to the language and use it without hesitation in class. When introducing new ideas, sexual orientations and cultural differences there are often very different opinions. Our environment is one where we can all have opinions without arguments. I foster an atmosphere where confidence is strong and participation is active, and the more the student hears praise for any attempt to speak up in class, the more class participation grows.

During my teaching experience at UGA I have found that students learn better when they can apply what they learn in class to real life situations. I take notes about their likes, dislikes, preferences and majors so that I can try to adjust classroom activities relating to these subjects. I write name cards with their names on the first of classes, so I can learn all of their names faster. The name cards help me to know them individually and help them feel welcome and included in the classroom. As we approach the middle of the semester, I either contact CTL for a Mid-

Semester Formative Evaluation or I conduct a student evaluation so I will have time to adjust the course following the preferences and needs of the students. In the past, students indicated that they wanted more active learning activities, such as Chain Notes activity and Minute Paper activity. Using the student evaluation form from CTL, students verbally share their preferences to a CTL consultant, when I am not in the classroom. Then, the consultant gives the information and I make the adjustments and report to the students about the changes. This student evaluation lets the students know that I value and appreciate their opinions, and it further tells me where I can improve and better reach them in my teaching.

As a native of Brazilian I can teach and relate to them through my Brazilian background in my Portuguese classes. Students know I have firsthand experiences and they know whatever I share with them is true and accurate. With my Women's Studies classes I am open to their questions and curiosities about the subject matter. When comparing women's issues in Brazil and the U.S. they know I am familiar with the Brazilian lifestyle, language, and intersectionality there, and with this they know I can be trusted to give them a more personal account of issues of where I grew up.

Descriptions of Courses Taught

Graduate Teaching Assistant

PORT 1002: Elementary Portuguese II

Role: Graduate Teaching Assistant

Term(s): Fall 2016 (1 section).

Enrollment: Each section had 20-28 undergraduate students (all class-levels) who were primarily non-majors. This class acts to fulfill the language requirement for various degrees.

Course Description: The Portuguese 1001-1002 course sequence is designed to give the student the ability to actively communicate in Portuguese using all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In PORT 1002, the emphasis will be on basic oral expression and listening comprehension as is reflected in all our classroom activities.

Teaching Responsibilities: Responsibilities included co-teaching classes, grading, organizing assignments, encouraging students in conversation during classroom activities, attending the weekly Portuguese Table, and participating in activities outside the classroom involving Portuguese events.

PORT 2001: Intermediate Portuguese I

Role: Graduate Teaching Assistant

Term(s): Spring 2017 (1 section).

Enrollment: This section had fifteen undergraduate students (all class-levels) who were primarily non-majors. This class acts to fulfill the language requirement for various degrees.

Course Description: The Portuguese 2001-2002 course sequence has been designed to give you the ability to actively communicate in Portuguese using all four language skills: listening,

speaking, reading, and writing. In PORT 2001, there will be considerable emphasis on oral expression and listening comprehension; this is reflected in all our classroom activities.

Teaching Responsibilities: Responsibilities included co-teaching classes, grading, organizing assignments, encouraging students in conversation during classroom activities, attending the weekly Portuguese Tables, and participating in activities outside the classroom involving Portuguese events.

Instructor of Record

PORT 1001: Elementary Portuguese I

Role: Instructor of Record

Term(s): Fall 2017 (2 sections); Spring 2018 (1 section); Fall 2018 (2 sections); Fall 2019 (1 section); Spring 2020 (1 section).

Enrollment: Each section had 20-28 undergraduate students (all class-levels) who were primarily non-majors. This class acts to fulfill the language requirement for various degrees.

Course Description: The course is designed to give the student the ability to actively communicate in Portuguese using all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The calendar of activities and events should remind you of a study abroad program that takes you on a journey to Brazil, introducing you to the language, culture, customs, and current events of this country, through a series of experiences that approximate a study abroad.

Teaching Responsibilities: Responsibilities included preparation, teaching and grading of grammar and vocabulary topics, class discussions, writing assignments, group work and creative projects. In addition, I collaborated in the creation of oral and written tests and develop class plans based on backward design. Outside of the classroom my responsibilities included weekly office hours for students and Portuguese Table conversation skill-building practices held at the UGA library every Monday evening, and each semester I planned and participated in the events for Portuguese students.

PORT 1002: Elementary Portuguese II

Role: Instructor of Record

Term(s): Spring 2019 (2 sections); Fall 2019 (1 section); Fall 2020 (1 section); Spring 2021 (2 sections); Fall 2021 (1 section).

Enrollment: Each section had 20-28 undergraduate students (all class-levels) who were primarily non-majors. This class acts to fulfill the language requirement for various degrees.

Course Description: Portuguese 1002 continues with the study abroad experience simulation with the second part of the student's journey to Brazil, focusing on the job internship, professional language, and trips through a series of experiences that approximate the study abroad. This class is task-based, and the student is presented with real life situations, such as booking an Airbnb for a weekend getaway, booking a hotel for a group from work, visiting the doctor, going to a birthday party, etc. Again, the calendar of activities and events simulate a study abroad program with the student becoming more proficient and self-confident in the language.

Teaching Responsibilities: Responsibilities included preparation, teaching and grading of grammar and vocabulary topics, class discussions, writing assignments, group work and creative projects. In addition, I collaborated in the creation of oral and written tests and developed class

plans based on backward design. Outside of the classroom my responsibilities included weekly office hours for students and Portuguese Table conversation skill-building practices held at the UGA library every Monday evening, and each semester I planned and participated in the required events for Portuguese students.

PORT 1110: Accelerated Portuguese II

Role: Instructor of Record

Term(s): Spring 2020 (1 section); Fall 2021 (1 section).

Enrollment: Each section had 10-15 undergraduate students (all class-levels) who were primarily non-majors. This class acts to fulfill the requirement for various degrees.

Course Description: PORT 1110 is a task-based course that combines the Portuguese 1001 and 1002 courses. This combination course is designed with a faster pace in mind for those who are heritage speakers or those who may have a background in Spanish or are able to learn foreign languages more easily. As with Portuguese 1001 and 1002, this course follows the same study abroad simulation in its calendar.

Teaching Responsibilities: Responsibilities included preparation, teaching and grading of grammar and vocabulary topics, class discussions, writing assignments, group work and creative projects. In addition, I collaborated in the creation of oral and written tests and developed class plans based on backward design. Outside of the classroom my responsibilities included weekly office hours for students and Portuguese Table conversation skill-building practices held at the UGA library every Monday evening, and each semester I planned and participated in the required events for Portuguese students.

PORT 3010: Accelerated Portuguese II

Role: Instructor of Record

Term(s): Fall 2020 (1 section).

Enrollment: This section had eleven undergraduate students (all class-levels) who were primarily non-majors. This class works to fulfill the requirement for a minor in Portuguese.

Course Description: This course develops students' linguistics skills in Portuguese bridging the intermediate and advanced levels. This level encourages a meaningful and contextualized use of Portuguese language with an emphasis on speaking and writing. Each class focuses on topics of personal and general interest, including family, leisure activities, health and well-being, university life and future careers, as well as current events in the Portuguese-speaking world, with a focus on Brazil

Teaching Responsibilities: Responsibilities included preparation, teaching and grading of grammar and vocabulary topics, class discussions, writing assignments, group work and creative projects. In addition, I collaborated in the creation of oral and written tests and developed class plans based on backward design. Outside of the classroom my responsibilities included weekly office hours for students and Portuguese Table conversation skill-building practices held at the UGA library every Monday evening, and each semester I planned and participated in the required events for Portuguese students.

WMST 2010: Introduction to Women's Studies

Role: Instructor of Record

Term(s): Spring 2022 (2 sections), Fall 2022 (1 section), Spring (2 sections)

Enrollment: 45 students (Spring 2022) and 27 students (Fall 2022), undergraduate students (all

class-levels) who were primarily non-majors. This class fulfills the multicultural requirement for various degrees.

Course Description: The study examines women of diverse racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds. Topics will include contemporary concerns within women's studies: labor markets and the workplace, motherhood, health, reproduction, socialization, migration, language, media representations, bodies and sexuality, law, and public policy, among others. This course focuses on how diverse women's everyday experiences and lives shape and are/have been shaped by social, cultural, political, economic, and other important institutions. We also investigate the operation of power dynamics, current and historical, in social, institutional, and political spheres and how they impact women differently in relation to the above-mentioned contemporary concerns.

Teaching Responsibilities: Responsibilities include syllabus design, content, lectures, reading assignments, essays, skill-building activities, class discussions, writing assignments and reflections, group work, and creative projects. I update the syllabus every semester, changing readings and adding new materials, as needed. I try to include readings, videos, podcasts, magazines articles, and short stories with guided exercises to enhance the reading experience about literature, History, and the writer's biography.

Sample Teaching Materials

Final Project guidelines (PORT 1001)

This activity was designed to help students plan their final project. As a challenge they were asked not to use Power Point in the presentation and think "outside the box."

Final Project guidelines

- The Final Project that you will be developing this semester will be about any topic related to either the Portuguese Language or Brazilian Culture.
- *The goal is to learn and share with your classmates.*
- The topic can include, but not limited to, aspects like: music, dances, geography, curiosities, slangs, idioms, places to visit, important places, economy, politics, literature, arts, TV, theater, famous people, sports, biodiversity, indigenous life, history, recent events, internationalization, education, higher education, business, finances, holidays, important celebrations, cultural manifestations, life in Brazil or any Portuguese speaking country, architecture, professions, comparisons with other countries, etc).
- Find a topic that interest you. Something we did not have time to discuss in depth in class or that we did not discuss at all.
- The project is to be done among your entire group.
- You have to write down a plan for your project. In bullet points, you will tell your teacher what are your plans for the project. What kind of information you intend to share?
- After receiving a feedback from your teacher, you will develop an outline of your project. You have to incorporate your teacher's suggestions into your project. Also, you should include the way you will present your project (theater, video, story book, comic strips, BE CREATIVE), the sequence you intend on follow to present the information you have, who is going to say what, what kind of visual you will be using, what kind of hands on activity you plan on doing, etc. Give as much information as you can about your plans.

This is the activity plan for the Final Presentation for the two PORT 1001 sections.

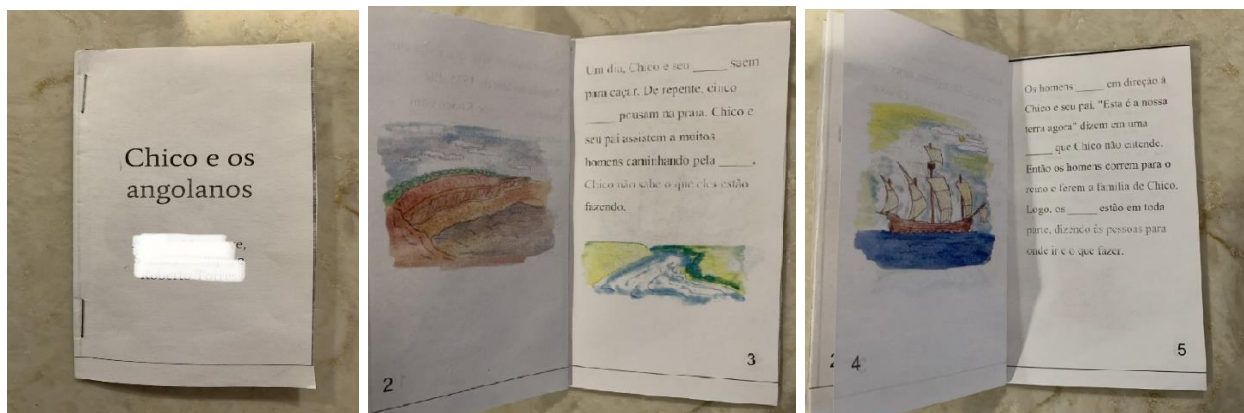
This plan was divided into three steps.

1. Student groups were asked to plan ahead of time to decide which Lusophone country or Brazilian region they were going to research and present.
2. They were asked to decide how they would present without using Power Point. The students filled out a form that contained this information and used it as a guide to complete the assignment.
3. Groups carried out the actual research and collaboration.

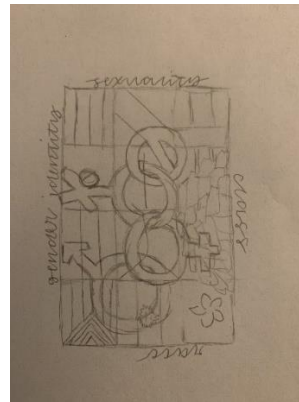
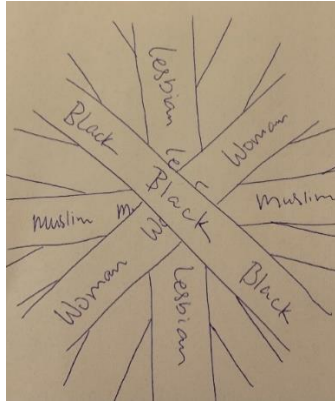
The purpose of this assignment was to help them to plan (as a group) in steps to avoid confusion and the feeling of being overwhelmed. In the end, the students were able to present surprising materials and ideas, such as books, theater plays, short films, poems, and poster exhibitions.

Sample of Student Work

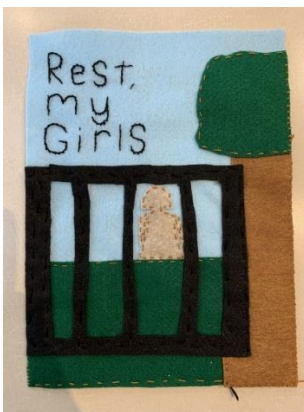
Often students question their language skills or their ability to learn a new language when they are taking their first language class such as PORT 1001. As an instructor, I encourage them to always use the language in the classroom and then build on these lessons with written and oral assignments. During the semester, I strive to fortify their knowledge in the language through repetition and recycling of previous exercises combined with new information in every class. At the end of the semester, I ask groups to search for a topic of their interest related to a Lusophone country or a Brazilian region. One example of a Fall 2018 group's Final Project, described on the previous page, is a history of Angola using an interactive mini book. The interaction portion is designed to ask their fellow students to answer grammar rules or verb conjugation about their story during their presentations. They successfully followed their instructions and used the language in a highly creative way.



Interactive mini-book entitled: "Chico e os angolanos".



Examples of the “Concept Map” activity as students were learning and discussing about diversity, inclusion and intersectionality in the Women’s Studies classes.



Final Creative Project in Women’s Studies: Examples of works of art produced by students inspired by short stories and class content discussed in class. Students choose one text, video, short story, or conversation we had in class and present to the class as a reflection about the topic we discussed.

Project – Literature & Art

Painting day – Event #1 – Spring 2018

I believe that art is an important instrument to express our feelings and our understanding and perception of the world. The importance of art in my life through colors and drawings is a way to connect my feelings to my studies. As an outside activity for students in all Portuguese classes, I asked Dr. Cecília Rodrigues to read a short story by the prestigious Brazilian writer, Guimarães Rosa, and discuss the story with the students. Dr. Rodrigues also gave historical remarks about the story’s author. Students were given canvasses, brushes, and paint to express their ideas and impressions on canvass. In front of the group students described their creative works in Portuguese, thus giving them a chance to practice speaking outside their classroom with new friends. These paintings revealed interesting interpretations of the story, and created dialogue, laughs and new connections with unfamiliar faces of Teaching Assistants and fellow students in other Portuguese classes. The event was sponsored by the Portuguese Flagship Program. The Department of Romance Languages provided the resources to help us to exhibit the paintings created by the students. After this event, students asked for more literature and art events.



Flyer for the event and samples of the exhibition.



Students worked intensely to create artistic interpretations of the short story. Students painted individually or in pairs while conversing in Portuguese with each other.

Painting day – Event #2 – Spring 2022



Painting day – Event #3 – Fall 2022



Innovative Teaching Projects and Roles

Brazilian Student Association (BSA) Symposium

Along with these activities outside of the classroom, I organized days where Teaching Assistants and students sold *brigadeiros*, a chocolate Brazilian candy, to raise money for our BSA Brazilian Spring Symposium. The students practiced their Portuguese as they worked alongside a Teaching Assistant at various locations on campus, and these sales promoted community and camaraderie in our Portuguese program. Portuguese students from all levels were encouraged to present their final projects during the BSA Symposium. Two students from my PORT 1002 class presented their research about the complex systems and structures of political parties in Brazil. Both students studied Political Science at UGA and they were encouraged to research a topic in their field and relate the material to a Lusophone country.



Flyers used to sell candies and raise funds to the Brazilian Student Association's symposium. During the symposium, students were encouraged to present and watch presentations. As president of the Brazilian Student Association, I am proud to say we earned the award of Best Symposium.

List of Teaching-Related Professional Development and Training Experiences

Honors and Awards

2019 Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award, Graduate School, University of Georgia

2022 Future Faculty Fellowship Program, University of Georgia, sponsored by the Graduate School and the Center for Teaching and Learning

University Service

2014-2019 Secretary, President and member of the Brazilian Student Association, International Student Life, University of Georgia
2016-2021 Tutor for the Portuguese Flagship Program
2018-Present Member of the Portuguese Curriculum Redesign Team

Coursework Related to Teaching

Spring 2012 WMST 7770: Teaching Women's Studies (3 credits)
Spring 2019 Backward Design and Assessment with Dr. Kristin Davin (UNC Charlotte), Portuguese Program, University of Georgia (2 day-workshop)
Summer 2018 Boston University STARTALK Portuguese Teacher Training (2 day-workshop)
Fall 2016 ROML 7770: Romance Languages Pedagogy (3 credits)

Related Training

Fall 2021 Preparing for the Job Market: The Teaching Statement, Center for Teaching and Learning
Fall 2021 Strategies for Giving Clear Instructions in the Target Language, Portuguese Program
Fall 2021 How to Prepare an IPA: Integrated Performance Assessment, Portuguese Program
Spring 2020 Lowering Teacher Talking Time and Engaging Students in a Zoom Era, Portuguese Program
Fall 2020 Active Learning and Student-Centered Teaching
Fall 2019 Backward Design in Portuguese Courses

Workshops I presented in partnership with the 3FP cohort group in the T.A. Café

Spring 2022: "Teaching Untethered: Taking Your Teaching Outside"

Fall 2022: "Teaching Resources 101"

Evaluation of Teaching

On the learning environment:

PORT: I really loved our professor she was very nice and understanding and really helped if one of us was stuck. I feel like I learned a lot in this class and I was usually very excited to go to class and participate.

WMST: I love how Vera implemented things like student lead discussions and presentations, it really allowed everyone to get involved in the class.

On facilitating student growth:

PORT: Vera Bulla and the whole of the Portuguese department is one of the best at UGA. Compared to other classes and departments, there is a sense of community and security within

the classroom thanks to course, instructor, and students. The course always followed the guidelines but also allowed us to step aside and have real life conversations with one another.

WMST: Since being in this class, I have been exposed to more perspectives. I will definitely go on to be able to understand all of the people I interact with in a better way than before.

On instructional delivery skills:

PORT: Honestly, Vera is amazing and is always so open to offering help to her students. It was really easy to learn and retain information in this class. Everything went well, this was my favorite class.

WMST: Professor Bulla is very kind and understanding, she will always work with you so that you can succeed. She is very passionate about what she teaches, and it shows in her detailed, interesting lectures.

Overall:

PORT: Vera is very passionate about teaching Portuguese, and she seems to really care about her students! Her activities to help us learn were very interactive, which helped us become more comfortable with speaking the language.

WMST: Made an effort to make each student feel valued

Quantitative Evaluations: End of Semester Course Evaluation

Prompt	Spring 2022 (WMST)	Fall 2021 (PORT)	Spring 2021 (PORT)	Fall 2020 (PORT)	Spring 2020 (PORT)
Number of Students	44	19	25	20	23
The teacher followed the syllabus and its stated grading procedures in a reasonable manner		5	5	4.7	4.9
Portuguese classes: The course was taught primarily in the target Romance language WMST classes: The instructor tried to increase the interest of the students in the subject matter.	5	4.7	4.6	3.5	4.5
The teacher was available for consultation	4.2	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.9
Overall, the teacher performed effectively in this course	4.8	5	5	4.3	4.7

Faculty Observation

Vera Bulla has continued to demonstrate excellent teaching skills, as well as a high degree of commitment and dedication to her teaching responsibilities and pedagogical development. Vera has been a great collaborator during the implementation of the redesign project. She truly takes advantage of the professional development opportunities we offer instructors. She is always one of the most engaged TAs during the workshops, always asking questions pertinent to her teaching practice.