

The University of Pennsylvania  
Spanish and Portuguese Department  
*PRTG1800: Topics in Portuguese, African and Brazilian Cultures*

Spring 2025

Syllabus and calendar

Instructors: Mércia Santana Flannery and Carlos Bento do Santos Pio–

[merciaf@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:merciaf@sas.upenn.edu)/[bcarlos@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:bcarlos@sas.upenn.edu)



1. **Office hours:** TR: 9-10AM and 11-12 or by appointment – Please let me know that you are coming to my office hours, so that I can schedule accordingly.
2. **Course description:** This is a survey course designed to provide advance-level students with exposure to Portuguese, African and Brazilian cultures, history and society. Themes will include 1) the Brazilian Amazon, its culture, population, and modern-day exploration and preservation efforts, 2) examples of the literature of Portugal, Mozambique, Cabo Verde and Guiné-Bissau, 3) the independence and civil wars of Angola and Mozambique, and 4) Macau's history and culture. Classes will focus on discussions and on students' presentations based on a selection of articles, literary works, movies and documentaries from these countries.

3. **Course objectives:** At the end of this course, students should 1) have developed their oral and written expression in Portuguese at the advanced-level, and 2) be able to recognize and discuss important themes, historical events, and cultural characteristics of the Portuguese speaking countries covered. This course will be conducted in Portuguese and in English. For Portuguese students the prerequisite is PRTG 1000 or instructor's permission.
4. **Students' preparation:** For every class, students will need to 1) read the assigned articles and/or watch the video materials before class; 2) discuss the proposed topics for each class, 3) write essays and summaries and 4) prepare oral presentations about these materials, as indicated by the instructor.
5. **Class meeting times and format:** TR: 10:15AM-11:45AM in WILL #
6. **Required materials:** a selection of readings, movies and documentaries will be available through Canvas.
7. **Grading:**
  - a) 3 in-class essays: 30%
  - b) 3 Quizzes: 35%
  - d) Participation and homework: 15%
  - e) Final Project: 20%
8. **Grade components:**
  - a. **Essays:** there will be three in-class essays about the themes discussed in class.
  - b. **Quizzes:** there will be three quizzes covering specific sections of the material studied.
  - d. **Participation and homework:** students will be assigned homework (reading summaries and/or preparation for class discussion) and should turn it in to receive feedback. Students are also expected to actively participate in all class meetings, commenting, asking questions and engaging in the designed activities with their peers.
  - f. **Final Project:** You will explore one of the themes covered in class and that you will connect to the travel component of this course, and prepare a 5-minute presentation, which you will deliver during the last week of classes.

9. **Grade scale:**

99-100	A+	88-89	B+	79-80	C+	72-73	D+
94-98	A	83-87	B	76-78	C	70-71	D
90-93	A-	81-82	B-	74-75	C-	Below 70	F

10. **Course Policies:**

**a. Attendance, lateness** - It is the departmental philosophy that students in each section form a learning community so that they benefit from each other's views, positions, knowledge, and experiences. By not being there, students miss the opportunity to learn from their peers and from

their instructor, as well as to share their insights with them and contribute to the class as a whole. The communicative and social aspect of language is central and starts in the classroom. Therefore, given the emphasis placed on participation and interaction in this class, students are required to attend all classes.

Students who miss **2 classes** (a week's worth) or less will not see a reduction in their final participation grade. Upon the third absence, their instructor will send them a Course Problem Notice. If they reach 3 absences, their final participation grade for the course will be lowered by 1.5% (out of 15%) or 10 points (out of 100 points). For each subsequent absence, their final participation grade will be lowered an additional 1.5%. Students are expected to come to class on time; repeated tardiness will be counted towards an absence (3 late arrivals equal 1 absence). Please note that there are no "excused absences." Illness, personal emergencies, travel, participation in sports events or other university-sponsored events all count as absences. If students miss class, they are responsible for making up any work and for knowing the material covered.

All absences must be reported through the Course Absence Report system, which students can access through Penn-in-Touch. The system should not be used for days on which exams are scheduled. If the absence is for more than a week's worth of classes, they should contact their home school's advising office for assistance and to discuss the academic implications of a longer absence.

For further information regarding attendance, consult the official College webpage on Policies Governing Class Attendance (<https://www.college.upenn.edu/attendance>). Should you have any questions or concerns, you should consult your instructor, the Director of the Portuguese language program or the Undergraduate Chair of Hispanic and Portuguese Studies.

**b. Class participation** - Active participation at all class meetings is expected. Students will need to prepare the material to be covered in each class, as indicated by the professor. Students will also be graded on their class participation and, thus, it is required that all participate. Class participation includes 1) arriving on time, 2) bringing your own material and 3) using Portuguese during class.

**Obs.:** this course has a travel component requirement. If you enroll in this course, it is understood that you will travel with the class to Brazil/Portugal.

**c. Missed exams or assignments** – **There will be no make-up quizzes or essays.** If you miss a quiz or an essay, you will receive a 0. Students are encouraged to check the schedule with their professor before making travel arrangements.

**d. Academic Integrity** – The Department of Romance Languages fully supports and adheres to all university policies regarding academic integrity (cheating, fabricating, plagiarism, etc). The work you submit in class, including online tests, **is expected to be your own**. If you submit work that has been copied without attribution from some published or unpublished source including the Internet, or that has been prepared by someone other than you, or that has been prepared with help from online sources, or that in any way misrepresents somebody else's work as your own (e.g., translation without proper attribution), you will face severe discipline by the university. For more information consult:

**University code of Academic Integrity:** <https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity/>

**Office of Student Conduct:** <http://www.upenn.edu/osc>

**The Department Home Page:** <https://roml.sas.upenn.edu>

**e. Other** – Please be considerate and try to avoid behavior that would disturb the class. This includes checking electronics, online “surfing”, doing work for other courses, or texting during class. During our virtual classes, please keep your camera on.

**11. Course problem notices:** in keeping with the College of Arts and Sciences Policy, students may receive a Course Problem Notice for any of the following reasons: (1) excessive absences; (2) frequent tardiness; (3) late or missing assignments; (4) poor performance on tests, quizzes or compositions; (5) weak participation in class. A copy of this notice will be sent to your academic adviser. Students not performing up to course standards should take advantage of some of the following resources available on campus.

## **12. Learning/additional resources:**

The Department Home Page: <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/roml>

Consult the Romance Languages Department Home Page for information on additional resources. The Department maintains a list of tutors who will tutor for a fee.

The Portuguese Language Program Facebook Page: Portuguese Program at <https://www.facebook.com/Portuguese-Program-at-UPenn-228546267523722/>

Language Direct: <https://plc.sas.upenn.edu/languagedirect>

Organized by the Penn Language Center, this is “a unique peer tutoring program for foreign language learners at Penn. Language Direct consist of a network of peer tutors, supervised by graduate students, who assist foreign language learners. Their services are free. Request a tutor through their site.

The Penn Tutoring Center: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/aap/tutoring/index.php>

Students who would like additional help with their language studies can also contact the Penn Tutoring and Learning Resource Center at 220 South 40th Street, Suite 260 (215-898-8596).

MMETS (Multimedia Center): <http://www.sas.upenn.edu/computing/instructional/mmets>  
(located in the basement of David Rittenhouse Lab at 33rd and Walnut)

The Weingarten Learning Resources Center: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc>

The learning center provides free professional guidance in academic skills such as academic reading, writing and study strategies.

The David B. Weigle Information Commons (first floor west of the Van Pelt Dietrich Library)

Center): <http://commons.library.upenn.edu>

**13. Statement of inclusivity:**

This class strives to be an inclusive learning community, respecting those of differing backgrounds and beliefs. As a community, we aim to be respectful to all citizens in this class, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation.

**14. Tentative Course Calendar – Tentative – See attached document.**