

## Portuguese: More than Just a Class

I recently sat down with Utah State's Rubynara Carvalho, a Portuguese lecturer, to hear all about the Portuguese club here on campus. Ms. Carvalho has a Master of Arts degree in Portuguese with an emphasis in Foreign Language Pedagogy. She has taught in the United States since 2003 at Brigham Young University, the University of Utah, and now at Utah State with previous experience teaching in Brazil. When Carvalho first came to Utah State in 2015, she made it a priority to start up a Portuguese club. Under her direction and with the help of her assistant, Skyler Kennington, the club now meets about once a month to engage with students that speak Portuguese or are learning it. "The main goal of the club is to provide students with an opportunity to practice Portuguese outside of the classroom and meet other students at different levels with different perspectives. [They] have some time to discover something new about the culture, and other people who speak Portuguese," Carvalho explained.

In the past the Portuguese club has hosted a lot of fun and engaging activities. The most popular event is Portuguese karaoke that has usually been done only in the fall, but this year was done in the spring as well. Another exciting event is Portuguese bingo, a favorite of most college students, where winners can earn a variety of Brazilian prizes, often traditional Brazilian food and candy. They also host game nights with games from countries that speak Portuguese. "[Overall] we try the most we can to provide a game or something they can do to have fun and authentic food," said Carvalho.

Not only does the club hold fun events, but a lot of them have an educational emphasis as well. The club often brings in Brazilian people from the community to help expose students to the culture. One of the most entertaining people is a Brazilian Samba instructor who came to

teach a samba class. This is a perfect example of engaging the students with each other, the culture, and the community. Dual immersion students from Cache Valley schools are also invited to come participate. Carvalho says it is important that “people are coming not just from the university but also from the community.”

The club also has opportunities to engage with other majors and clubs. The first Saturday of each month the Museum of Anthropology does a culture activity, and the Portuguese club was invited to participate in a “Food from Around the World” event. They brought Brazilian food, and the students could explain to others the origins of the food and the special occasions where those foods are typically eaten. The club also helped the Museum of Anthropology show some traditional Carnival decorations and food. Carnival is a popular several-day holiday in Brazil which marks the beginning of Lent. All these activities serve the purpose of deepening the connections the students have to the language and culture.

Ms. Carvalho explained why student involvement is crucial, especially when trying to learn a language. “This club is important because it provides another opportunity besides the classroom. Most students only get to practice [the language] during class because they don’t have enough time, or because they don’t know anyone else that speaks Portuguese. So those meetings encourage them to meet other people who are also learning and practicing Portuguese, and maybe make another friend who also speaks it. [Students] can have more time to learn more about the culture, to have fun in the language, and to be involved not only in the classroom.” All skill levels are welcome to participate in the club, and you do not have to be enrolled in a Portuguese class. Students who would like to attend future events should look at the Portuguese club Facebook page and their website page, as well as keeping their eyes open for posters around campus.

Carvalho is busy not only with her classes and the club but also with creating a new Portuguese major. “One of the goals of the University is to have students develop high skills, and to prepare them so they can get a higher degree in Portuguese. Not only in the linguistics but the cultural, artistic, and political aspects. This is the main goal of both the [new] major and the University, to provide more variety as students learn about other communities.” Carvalho explained that essentially this new degree will offer students an elevated knowledge of the language and teach them cultural nuances. The new major will not only give them opportunities in the job market, but it will also be useful when connecting with people. More information about this degree will be posted as it continues to be developed.

By: Madelynn Woolf



Portuguese Club Facebook Page: @ The Portuguese Club at USU

Portuguese Club Website: <http://lpcs.usu.edu/languages/portuguese/clubs-and-activites>