

Spanish and Portuguese in Newcastle

January 2022

Our news

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Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies (SPLAS) is a lively and dynamic section with 20 lecturers committed to working with you in the development of your language and academic skills to explore the diverse cultures and societies of Spain, Portugal and Latin America.

SPLAS at Newcastle has maintained a top 10 position in the UK during 2010-2020 according to the Complete University Guide. In 2019 and 2020 we scored 6th out of 48 departments in the UK.

In 2022 we are looking ahead with lots of energy and new ideas to boost our existing curriculum. 4 new modules will be offered in Sept 2022 to strengthen our provision in Latin American Studies, Catalan Studies, Translation Studies and Sociolinguistics. These new modules are **Catalan Culture** (taught by Dr. Jennifer Arnold), **Language Diversity in Spain** (Dr. Josep Cru), **Reading in Translation** (Dr. Jennifer Arnold) in stage 2 and **Latin American Art and Theory** (Dr. Giuliana Borea) in stage 4. We are also forging new partnerships in Latin America with the signing of a partner university agreement with Universidad Nacional de México (UNAM). Founded in 1551, UNAM is the oldest university in North America. It is also the largest in Latin America and it will provide new opportunities for our students going into the Year Abroad.

In January 2022, Dr Dunja Fehimović was invited to attend the Festival de cine global de Santo Domingo for the second time, after having first participated in the 2020 edition, where she and Professor Mary Leonard (Universidad de Puerto Rico-Mayaguez) organised an international conference entitled Mapping New Caribbean Cinema. On this occasion, Dunja contributed to the festival's educational activities by working with Professor Leonard to create and convene, for the first time, the Caribbean Film Education Network. This two-day virtual event brought together colleagues from Barbados, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago to foster mutual support and future collaborations that would benefit students of film around the region. The multilingual conversation was facilitated by students and teachers from the Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo's new translation and interpreting programme.

Dunja also found time to sit on the jury for the Festival's short film competition, where she reviewed over 30 submissions from as diverse contexts as Japan, Iran, and Panama. The winning film, *El nombre del hijo* (The name of the son), di-



rected by Martina Matzkin (Argentina) focussed on the difficult but tender relationship between Lucho, a 13-year-old trans boy, and his father at a crucial moment in his life.

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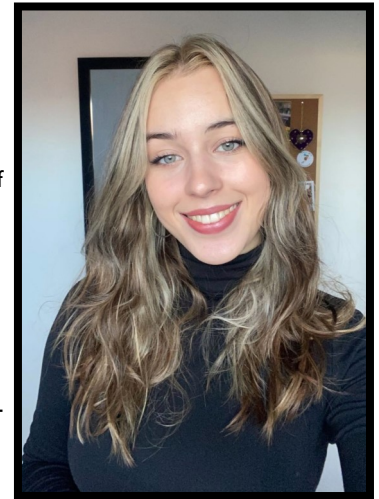
Portuguese at Newcastle University

Publishing an essay in Year 1
By Conceição Pereira
Lecturer in Portuguese

*Is that even possible?
The answer is yes. A big YES. It is not usual but it happened once and it can happen again!
Each year we celebrate the success of our students. They make us proud and together we form this lively, diverse and supporting community.*

Charlotte Pickles, a student of Modern Languages (German, Portuguese and Spanish), wrote an amazing essay for the module "Introduction to History, Culture and Society of the Iberian Peninsula". She chose to write about Ngunga's Adventures, a novella by Pepetela, an Angolan writer that wrote and first published this book in the 1970's during the Colonial War in Angola. Charlotte wrote about three different contexts of the publication of Pepetela's novella: the first edition, during the war, the second, after Angola became an independent country and the translation to English in 1980.

The essay was adapted as a blogpost to be published in the Newcastle University blog "Decolonising Modern Languages and Cultures" with the title "Ngunga's Adventures: the significance of publishing and anti-colonial education", that can be read on the blog (<https://blogs.ncl.ac.uk/decolonisesml/2021/10/28/ngungas-adventures-the-significance-of-publishing-and-anti-colonial-education/>).



Charlotte Pickles is now a second year student and the SML Decolonising Student Lead.

Engaged teaching and Research #LeyDeIdentidadDeOrigenYa by María Zubelzu de Brown

Today in Argentina thousands of people are searching for their origins after having had their identity stolen through years of baby trafficking. The project #leydeidentidaddeorigenya, headed by Dr. Philippa Page and myself, María Zubelzu de Brown SFHEA aims to reveal the dark nature of illegal adoption in Argentina and provide both support and hope to those searching for the truth. More than 370 Spanish undergraduate students guided and supported by the Spanish Department lecturers and colleagues investigated and shed light on how calculated networks of midwives preyed on mothers, kidnapped their babies and sold them to make profit. Many of these mothers were young, single or originated from difficult backgrounds which left them vulnerable to this crime. The abductions were facilitated by manipulative coercion, deception and intimidation which prevented victims from seeking help.

Through hosting international conferences, speaking out about this issue and engaging with local educational institutions the project has gone from strength to strength by raising awareness of the stealing of babies which is



estimated to affect thousands of people.

On 15 Nov we held a Zoom Talk where all our students had the unique opportunity of asking questions to our two guests. Yanina Sibona and Sergio Torretta. Yanina Sibona is an Argentine journalist who works for TN News and is in charge of the "We are Family" section and the diversity and inclusion section.

Sergio Torretta is a director, producer and film critic who is a victim of baby trafficking himself.

The founder of the *Victimas red de parteras - unidos*, Monica Sznajdman and Claudia Raimondo, the artist who designed the symbol of the movement were also invited and collaborated with sharing invaluable information about #LeyDeIdentidadDeOrigenYa

This event was completely designed by two of our Stage 4 students, Georgina Hulston and Ben Carrington who conducted a first class Zoom interview in Spanish with more than 110 participants while some other students watched it from their classrooms.

All research coincides with the production of a documentary directed by Sergio Torretta, who will use his platform to give a voice to victims of this crime by presenting an opportunity to share their stories. From the project, it is hoped that by talking openly about the appropriation of babies more victims will feel able to come forward, share their experiences and be able to access key resources to discover their origins. With further plans to pursue this important activism, project #leydeidentidaddeorigenya will continue to unite individuals impacted by this insidious crime and fight the silence which has deterred so many victims from seeking justice.

The articles written by our students and photographs of their work were displayed in an exhibition on the 5th floor, OLB and the Languages Resource Centre.

New colleagues! Dr. Giuliana Borea



I am happy to have joined Newcastle University as a Lecturer in Latin American Studies at the School of Modern Language in September 2021. Before joining the University, I was a recipient of the Marie Curie Research Fellowship at the University of Essex and a Stipendiary Fellow at the Institute of Latin American Studies at the School of Advanced Study, University of London. I am also an affiliated lecturer at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, where I have taught extensively.

I have a PhD in Anthropology from New York University, an MA in Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas from University of East Anglia, an MA in Museum Studies from Universidad de Valladolid in Spain, a Specialization in Cultural Policy and Management from Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana in Mexico, and a BA in Anthropology from the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. These studies across continents have allowed me to build a wide academic network which I wish to bring to and expand in Newcastle.

As a social anthropologist with an interdisciplinary perspective into the arts and cultures, my research concerns the political economy and transnational networks of Latin American contemporary art worlds; museum theories and practices; place-making, sensory knowledge and methodological concerns with a focus on Peru, the Andes and the Amazon. Among my publications, I am the editor of *Arte y Antropología: Estudios, Encuentros y Nuevos Horizontes* (PUPC, 2017) and the author of *Configuring the New Lima Art Scene: An Anthropological Analysis of Contemporary Art in Latin America* (Routledge, 2021). I will complement the solid and diverse SPLAS teaching curricula with a proposed module on Latin America Art and Theory and with lectures on indigenous knowledges and topics on mobility and place.

I have built my career intersecting academic work, cultural policies and curatorial activity reinforcing the links between academia and society. I have been Peru's Director of Museums and Cultural Heritage at the National Institute of Culture (Ministry of Culture) and Coordinator of the Chavin National Museum, the Qhapaq Ñan Museum Network and the Lima Contemporary Art Museum. I have curated exhibitions of Peru's indigenous art in Peru, the UK and Spain, and my plan is to work in curatorial activities with the participation of students and in dialogue with the city.

New colleagues! Marcela Reyes Otaiza



I was born in Venezuela where I did a degree in Humanities (Licenciatura en Letras - Universidad Católica Andrés Bello) and studied a Master's Degree in Literatura Latinoamericana Contemporánea (Universidad Simón Bolívar).

20 years ago, I started teaching Literature and Language Accuracy to native Spanish speakers; first in High Schools, and later at Higher Education Level (Universidad Simón Bolívar – Caracas).

I arrived to the UK in 2006, where I trained as a Teacher of Spanish as a Second Language in Instituto Cervantes and did a PGCert in Learning & Teaching in Higher Education (Durham University). I worked for 15 years at Durham University in the School of Modern Languages and Cultures as a Module Leader for a variety of Modules and Year Abroad Coordinator.

For me, teaching is a multidirectional activity, where the views, feelings, abilities, ideas and knowledge of students and colleagues are the avenues where the learning process takes place. I think it is in this exchange with students that we can create a dynamic and inclusive learning experience. I have come to Newcastle University full of enthusiasm and motivation. I am looking forward to share with my students my love for the Hispanic Culture.

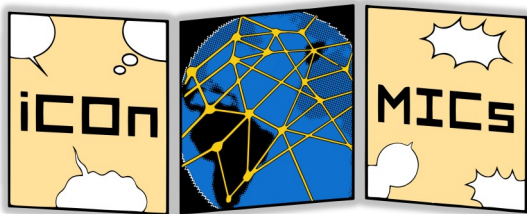
Catalan is growing

Since September 2020 Laura Arbonès is the new Catalan lecturer at Newcastle. Laura has BA in Applied Linguistics from Pompeu Fabra University (UPF) in Barcelona. Apart from teaching Catalan language modules at beginners' level (both in our degrees and for the first time in the UWLP) and intermediate level, she has just started a PhD at SML to study representations of minorities and intersectionality in the teaching of Catalan as a foreign language. The offer of Catalan modules and Laura's PhD are possible thanks to the generous funding of Institut Ramon Llull and the support of Newcastle University. Laura has also organised an e-tandem exchange with UPF so that our students can practise their Catalan with native speakers and has set up an Instagram account @catalanewcastleuk to create a virtual Catalan



community with her students and all people interested in Catalan culture. With a substantial number of students taking Catalan each year (between 50 and 60 students in total), we will also be introducing a cultural content module taught by our colleague Jennifer Arnold, which will provide an insight into the intrinsic relationship between language, culture and identity within the Catalan context. These modules will enable students to better understand diversity and particularly current social, historical, and political issues within the context of Spain.

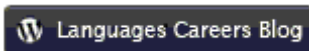
SPLAS is a vibrant interdisciplinary research environment and our lecturers are currently involved in 3 international research projects: the AHRC Screening Violence. A Transnational Study of Post-Conflict Imaginaries; the H2020-RISE Contested Territories; and the COST Action 'Investigation on comics and graphic novels in the Iberian cultural area' (iCON-MICs). The activities organised around these projects and the exchanges facilitated will provide opportunities for our students to widen their horizons and learn hands on about the latest research produced. These research developments inform our teaching on crucial areas such as social justice, memory Studies and cultural history.



Training School (September 2022)

An example of the kind of activities carried out at Newcastle is the Training School on cultural legacy and preservation in Spain and Latin America as part of the COST Action project iCON-MICs that will bring 40 international trainers and trainees, such as Dr. Christoph

Müller, curator of the the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut (IAI) in Berlin, the largest library in Latin American studies in Europe. The intense 1 week program will focus on research methodologies for the analysis of historical cultural production, sharing knowledge on digitalisation and preservation of popular culture materials, such as comics produced in Spain, Portugal and Latin America.



Spanish and Portuguese languages in the world

Some figures

- ⇒ There are **493m native speakers of Spanish** in the world. If you add L2 learners, the figure is 591m.
- ⇒ More than 24m students took Spanish as a foreign language in 2020.
- ⇒ There are **250m native speakers of Portuguese** in the world. And 24m more take it as L2, making the total figure 274m.

Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies

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In the world there are between 6,000 and 10,000 languages

