

LEMANN CENTER FOR BRAZILIAN STUDIES



**2024 - 2025
ANNUAL REPORT**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Year in Review

- 6 Director’s Letter
- 8 The Jorge Paulo Lemann Chair in Brazilian History
- 9 The Jorge Paulo Lemann Chair in Brazilian Economy
- 10 Lemann Distinguished Visiting Professors

Student Fellowships

- 16 Lemann Center Graduate Fellows for the 2025-2026 Academic Year
- 20 Lemann Center Graduate Fellows from the 2024-2025 Academic Year
- 24 Werner Baer Doctoral Fellows from the 2024-2025 Academic Year
- 26 Werner Baer Postdoctoral Positions from the 2024-2025 Academic Year
- 28 Werner Baer Postdoctoral Positions for the Upcoming 2025-2026 Academic Year

Faculty Research Grants

- 30 Faculty Collaborative and Research Grants for the 2025-2026 Academic Year
- 33 Faculty Collaborative and Research Grants from the 2024-2025 Academic Year
- 38 The Brasillinois Initiative of The University of Illinois System
- 40 Brasillinois/Fapesp Collaborative Grants for the Upcoming 2025-2026 Academic Year
- 41 Study Abroad Undergraduate Scholarships from the 2024-2025 Academic Year
- 42 Lemann Lecture Series in the 2024-2025 Academic Year
- 51 Portuguese Language Program
- 53 Co-Sponsored Activities and Events
- 54 Visualizations of User Engagement of The Lemann Center Webpage



YEAR IN REVIEW





DIRECTOR'S LETTER



Our Lemann Center for Brazilian Studies here at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, commemorated its 15th anniversary during this past academic year. Since 2009, our center annually offers fellowships and grants for Illinois students and professors heading to Brazil, and for Brazilian students and faculty coming to Illinois, in all fields. For students and professors alike, our center is the most reliable and transparent source of support for research in and about Brazil. Our Lemann Center's credibility and dependability stand out in the place and time that we are living.

We are thrilled to announce that Dr. Carolina Rocha joined our center as Associate Director. A cultural and literary critic, with her MA and PhD from the University of Texas, Austin, Dr. Rocha taught at Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville where she also served as Director of the Women's Studies program. The co-editor of *New Trends in Argentine and Brazilian*

Cinema, Dr. Rocha has published in the *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, *Hispania*, the *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, and many more. Dr. Rocha is bringing leadership to the Lemann Center in the administering of grant programs for professors and students as well as stewarding internal and external partnerships. Seja bem-vinda, Carolina!

The Fulbright Commission of Brazil launched the inaugural call for the "Fulbright Distinguished Chair at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign," thanks to the collaboration between the Executive Director of the Illinois Global Institute (IGI), Jerry Dávila, and the Executive Director of the Fulbright Commission of Brazil, Luiz Loureiro. For the inaugural competition cycle, our center suggested "Fine Arts" to be the area of specialization, endeavoring to build synergies with the Illinois College of Fine and Applied Arts and the Office for Arts Integration to "cultivate and amplify the arts and creative practice" across campus. Brazilian candidates apply to the Fulbright Commission of Brazil, in order to spend one semester lecturing and researching on our campus in the 2026-2027 academic year.

Two Lemann Distinguished Visiting Professors contributed to the vibrancy of Brazilian studies on campus. In the Fall 2024 semester, Dr. Magna Inácio taught a course on Brazilian politics that had nearly 30

students. Dr. Inácio is Professor of Political Science and former Director of the Centre for Legislative Studies at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG). In the Spring 2025 semester, Dr. Elisa Frühauf García taught a Brazilian history course that had some 30 students as well. Dr. Frühauf García is Professor of History at the Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF), and a co-PI on a Bridge Seed Fund grant from the University of Birmingham and Illinois for the upcoming semester as well.

Our center likewise contributed to the cutting-edge multidisciplinary research led by Brazil- and Illinois-based faculty. In the 2024-2025 application cycle, the Lemann Center funded four collaborative research proposals for Illinois and Brazilian faculty. We also supported one individual research proposal for an Illinois faculty member to carry out in Brazil. Additionally, for the first time, our center funded three other UIUC faculty in the collaborative grant competition headed by Brasillinois, the University of Illinois Systems-led initiative for Brazilian studies on all three campuses, and FAPESP, the São Paulo State's Research Foundation. Professors will study machine-learning in chronic disease detection; one of Brazil's greatest, but nearly forgotten thinkers, the Black activist and scholar Édison Carneiro; the threat of drought on Brazil's wheat sector; Black women's experiences in entrepreneurship in São Paulo; conservation agriculture practices

that complement no-tillage farming; the effects of plastic contamination on reproductive health; and the social reproduction of migrant labor in urban space. Past and present Lemann-funded professors, and Lemann Distinguished Visiting Professors, were part of our center's sixteen talks in the Lecture Series of the 2024-2025 academic year.

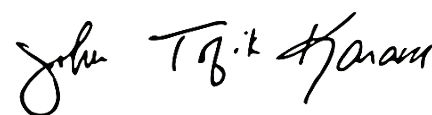
The Lemann Center likewise renewed its support for Illinois graduate students in the humanities, social sciences, and STEM fields. The graduate student fellows in the past year came from History, Information Sciences, Latin American Studies, Political Science, and Urban Planning. The graduate student fellows for the coming academic year are in Community Health, Agricultural and Consumer Economics, Political Science, and Urban Studies. Graduate research projects in the outgoing cohort included examining the "lei de cotas" from the perspective of students themselves; surveillance technologies in Afro-Brazilian communities; and the historical intersection of gender, labor, migration, and race in the Madeira-Mamoré railroad. Projects in the cohort for the upcoming academic year include the "Água Legal" program that seeks to provide reliable and safe water access for marginalized communities; racial inequalities in the "Minha Casa Minha Vida" housing program that aims to increase homeownership in low-income communities; land

use decision-making and barriers that limit investment in pasture restoration in the Amazon and Cerrado biomes; and how political polarization on a national scale influences local Brazilian election debates and dynamics.

Thanks to the generosity of Marianne Kilby and family, the Werner Baer postdoctoral position has supported a multidisciplinary array of research among early career scholars at the Lemann Center. This postdoctoral position was created in memory of Professor Werner Baer, renowned economist of Brazilian development who taught at Illinois from 1972 to 2016. Three postdoctoral fellows took up residence in 2024 and 2025, stemming from Food Science and Technology, Law, and Production Engineering. In the coming 2025-2026 academic year, three more postdoctoral fellows will develop research in Agricultural and Biological Engineering, Anthropology and History, as well as Physical Education. Projects in the outgoing cohort include creating a portable low-cost device that will make it possible for industries to stop adulteration at the food supply level; conceptualizing vulnerability not only as a legal basis for protection but also as a political stance against marginalization; developing decision and risk models of natural gas pipeline systems for public safety and greater efficiency across mid-western and northeastern Brazil. Projects in the incoming cohort seek to improve wastewater

treatment in Brazil by designing an electrochemical removal process of micropollutants; explore Afro-Indigenous performance and storytelling in the Rio São Francisco landscape amid economic and environmental changes; and prepare a handbook and digital platform to train and support community health workers as well as propose strategies for scaling up community-based health interventions.

A decade and a half ago, the world seemed to be headed for somewhere other than the conjunction where we now find ourselves. But the mission of our Lemann Center has remained steadfast: to promote the multidisciplinary study of Brazil. As Jorge Paulo Lemann remarked when he made the donation to our university, the Lemann Center must endeavor to not solve problems in Brazil but rather to train the next generation of scholars in Brazilian studies to define the problems they seek to resolve. The Lemann Center's fifteen-year-plus track record of supporting creative and original research about Brazil is the solid ground upon we stand as we look ahead to the coming year.



John Tofik Karam
São Paulo, 13 July 2025

THE JORGE PAULO LEMANN CHAIR IN BRAZILIAN HISTORY



Jerry Dávila

Jorge Paulo Lemann Chair in Brazilian History

In the 2024-2025 academic year, Jerry Dávila, the Jorge Paulo Lemann Chair in Brazilian History, was selected and served as the Presidential Fellow by the Office of the President of the University of Illinois System. He shares his work with us here.

This year I stepped away from my role with the Illinois Global Institute (IGI) to focus on a book project on the history of civil rights law in Brazil. Early work from that project appeared last year as the chapter “Doormen and the Individualization of Segregation in Brazil,” in the volume *The Entangled Labor Histories of Brazil and the United States*, edited by Fernando Teixeira da Silva, Alexandre Fortes, Thomas Rogers, and Gillian McGillivray. This August I will be

returning to the IGI, where our area and global studies centers are navigating unexpected challenges to their long history of support from the U.S. Department of Education.

In the Brasillinois Initiative sponsored by the University of Illinois System, we have had an exciting year of work building institutional partnerships in research and student mobility. These include signing an agreement with CAPES to fund 350 “sanduíche” fellowships for doctoral students to conduct work at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Springfield, and Urbana-Champaign. A Spring 2025 visit by President Timothy Killeen to Brazil strengthened existing connections with CAPES (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior, the higher education arm in Brazil’s Ministry of Education), FAPESP (Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de

São Paulo, the São Paulo state’s research foundation), USP (Universidade de São Paulo) and other institutions, while building new possibilities with CONFAP (Conselho Nacional das Fundações Estaduais de Amparo à Pesquisa, the national confederation of state research foundations) as well as other university partners.

Graduates of the program in Brazilian history at Illinois have continued to have significant scholarly achievements. Thais Sant’Ana, assistant professor at the University of Houston Clear Lake, published an article in the flagship journal *American Historical Review* entitled “State-led Development and Migrants’ Resilience in the City of the Forest: c. 1910s-1930s.” Cassie Osei at Bucknell University co-authored “Gayl Jones’s Afro-Brazil: Hemispheric Black Feminisms and (Mis)Readings of Marronage” in *Palimpsest*. John Marquez at the University of California at Irvine published “Black Marriages in Lisbon, Portugal, 1611-1623” in the *Journal of Slavery and Data Preservation*.

THE JORGE PAULO LEMANN CHAIR IN BRAZILIAN ECONOMY



Marcelo Cunha Medeiros

Jorge Paulo Lemann Chair in Brazilian Economy

In the 2024-2025 academic year, Marcelo Cunha Medeiros, the Jorge Paulo Lemann Chair in Brazilian Economy, contributed to the vibrancy of Brazilian studies on campus and beyond. He shares his work with us here.

The 2024–2025 academic year was marked by significant accomplishments and new challenges. One of the most rewarding milestones was hosting two undergraduate exchange students from Brazil—Mariana Martins and Gustavo Nogueira—who are full scholarship recipients in their home country. Their visit was made possible through the support of the Lemann Chair in Brazilian Economy and the Econ Datalab project at the Department of Economics. During the fall semester, they enrolled in courses and actively participated in

collaborative research with other undergraduate students at the Datalab. I also had the privilege of hosting two visiting PhD students: Rodrigo Sarlo from Brazil, who spent a full academic year with us, and Brendan Martin from the United Kingdom, who joined for one semester. Rodrigo is working with me and Professor Drew Creal (Economics) on the estimation of high-dimensional covariance matrices, with applications to cluster analysis and robust inference. Brendan's research focuses on network autoregressive models in large dimensions.

Beyond these visits, I continued my research at the intersection of machine learning, artificial intelligence, and econometrics. A major highlight of the year was the launch, jointly with Lena Song (Economics), of the AImpact Center (<https://aimpact.illinois.edu/about.html>), a multidisciplinary initiative dedicated to examining the societal effects of artificial intelligence and digital technologies. The center aims to understand and address the ethical, social, and economic implications of these innovations, with the goal of ensuring their benefits are broadly and equitably shared.

In addition, I finalized several research papers that are currently under review at academic journals, participated in international conferences, and gave seminars at leading universities in the United States and abroad. I also had the pleasure of hosting my co-author, Chuanping Sun, for several weeks to collaborate on our project “Sorted Penalty Estimator: Inference for a Correlation-Robust Shrinkage Method,” which has recently received a revise-and-resubmit decision from the prestigious *Journal of Econometrics*.

Finally, one of the year's highlights was celebrating 30 years of the Real Plan in Brazil. In collaboration with the Lemann Center and the Department of Economics, we had the pleasure of hosting Gustavo Franco and Edmar Bacha, one of the plan's two founding fathers, for a full day of presentations, discussions, and interactions with students and faculty. In summary, the year was filled with academic achievements, international collaborations, and exciting new initiatives.

LEMANN DISTINGUISHED VISITING PROFESSORS



Our Lemann Center hosted two distinguished visiting professors: in Fall 2024, Dr. Magna Inácio, from the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais; and in Spring 2025, Dr. Elisa Frühauf Garcia, from the Universidade Federal Fluminense. Their respective biographies and reports are featured here.

Magna Inácio

Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Fall 2024

Magna Inacio is an associate professor of Political Science and former director of the Centre for Legislative Studies at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG). She previously served as Edward Laroque Tinker Visiting Professor at Stanford University and Visiting Scholar at the University of Oxford. She has conducted extensive comparative research on political institutions, presidencies, coalition politics, and Executive-Legislative relations. She has published several books and articles in journals such as *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, *America Hoy*, *Journal of Politics in Latin America* and *Brazilian Political Science Review*. She is the editor of www.pex-network.com, focusing on presidents and executive politics, development and functioning of presidencies, and cabinet politics.

Report

Brazilian presidentialism has undergone important shifts in the dynamics of inter-branch relations and in the legislative process. There is growing debate over whether presidents have become less powerful and whether decision-making authority is shifting toward Congress. These transformations carry heightened significance in the context of political polarization and its profound effects on democratic governance.

As a Lemann Distinguished Visiting Scholar, I have engaged productively with these changes by integrating research, teaching, and collaborative networking. My time at Illinois

was not just an opportunity to deepen my understanding of these dynamics; it was also instrumental to develop new analytical approaches to presidential power and to foster international academic exchange.

During this period, I focused on Brazilian presidentialism, generating both theoretical and empirical insights into how executive power is exercised and contested in polarized environments. Teaching Brazilian politics to U.S. students—through both historical and analytical lenses—proved challenging yet highly rewarding. More than being an introduction to Brazilian institutions, the course invited students to view Brazil as both a variant of presidentialism and a crucial comparative case for thinking about democratic governance worldwide. Rather than remaining at the margins, Brazil took the center of current debates on presidentialism, political polarization, and the future of democracy.

What can we learn from Brazilian politics in polarized times?

Brazil offers insights into how democratic institutions respond to crises and resist authoritarian backlash. Brazil is at these political and institutional crossroads. Long considered a successful case of presidentialism – based on cooperative inter-branch dynamics and stable policy coordination – Brazilian democracy experienced four decades of institutional consolidation and structural reform under conditions of political and ideological

alternation in power. Recent crises have placed these achievements under strain. In particular, they challenge the role of the presidency in a system historically centered on Executive leadership. The Brazilian presidency has long been the main engine of the decision-making process, largely due to its extensive decree-making powers and coalitional politics. This strength has also become a source of weakness. The so-called “presidential expectations gap” may directly undermine public trust in government performance and indirectly weaken party support for the Executive, especially when presidents are confronted by less cooperative legislatures.

In recent years, in Brazil, the Congress has challenged the Executive’s dominance in policymaking. Since the mid-2000s, the lawmaking process has become more competitive and, in the most recent period, the Legislature has increasingly taken the lead. The congressional role in distributive politics has also grown, pushed by constitutional changes sharing budgetary power between branches. While this shift is not entirely new, polarization has intensified congressional efforts to assert itself vis-à-vis the presidency. But does this necessarily mean a less powerful Executive?

Addressing this critical issue requires a more sophisticated and comprehensive analytical framework. My research advances such a framework by moving beyond the conventional emphasis on legislative tools to encompass the full range of administrative powers at the chief executive’s disposal. This expanded approach reveals nuanced dimensions of presidential authority that have been largely overlooked, providing deeper insights into how executives sustain and exercise power amid increasingly political polarization. My work shows that administrative powers, though often seen as limited, offer flexibility that enhances presidential discretion. These tools enable presidents to maintain their central role in policymaking—even in adverse political environments. To support this argument, I have conducted original and collaborative research showing that the use of decree types varies across presidencies, depending on the institutional and political constraints each president faces.

In a pioneering step, our research team has developed innovative methods that employ computational text

analysis to uncover the content of decrees, offering deep insight into unilateral presidential strategies. This approach enables the identification of distinct patterns in the use of administrative decrees through the systematic analysis of a vast, previously unexplored corpus of these decisions. For instance, presidents often engage in selective implementation of laws—regulating only parts of the legislation through decrees—especially when they disagree with Congress. This tactic enables them to shape policy while avoiding direct confrontation with legislators. Moreover, presidents frequently revise existing decrees to reshape policies without incurring the costs of introducing new legislation. These strategies show that presidential decree-making goes beyond legislative initiatives and enables executives to adapt to less favorable inter-branch relations through administrative action.

Overall, these findings show that Brazilian presidents rely on both legislative and administrative decrees to pursue their policy priorities. In polarized contexts, administrative decrees become even more valuable, offering a flexible instrument to govern despite congressional opposition, or even hostility. However, the growing reliance on these tools may also increase public and party distrust of the Executive by blurring the lines of accountability.

Inter-branch relations in Brazil are shifting, and the presidency’s traditional leadership in the policymaking process is in dispute. Yet, it remains an open question whether Congress intends to reverse the Executive’s delegated powers through formal institutional changes, or whether these tensions will lead to a new political equilibrium.

In sum, this fellowship enabled new understandings of presidentialism. By integrating cutting-edge theoretical frameworks, robust empirical evidence, and novel methodological approaches, this contribution not only elevates Brazilian scholarship within international debates on presidentialism and institutional dynamics, but also provides critical insights relevant to addressing the challenges of fostering democratic governance in times of political polarization.

LEMANN DISTINGUISHED VISITING PROFESSORS



Elisa Frühauf Garcia

Universidade Federal Fluminense, Spring 2025

Elisa Frühauf Garcia is professor of history at the Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF). She has held research positions at the State University of Campinas (Unicamp) and the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) in Madrid. Professor Frühauf Garcia is a CNPq Research Productivity Fellow and Faperj Scientist. Her first of many publications was, *As diversas formas de ser índio : políticas indígenas e políticas indigenistas no extremo sul da América portuguesa*. It received the Prêmio Arquivo Nacional de Pesquisa. The book was published by the Arquivo Nacional itself. Other institutions that supported her work include the Fundación Carolina, the Newberry Library, and the Max Planck Institute for Legal History. Additionally, she has been a visiting professor at the State University of Feira de Santana in Bahia, funded by Capes. An expert on the indigenous peoples of Brazil, her current research focuses on the relationships between Native women and European men in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. By adopting a long-term perspective, her work bridges history, cultural heritage, and the diverse ways in which the early colonial past is interpreted and utilized.

Report

Upon my arrival in Champaign in early January 2025, I began teaching the course “History of Brazil” (HIST 450) offered by the Department of History. The course, with 25 enrolled students, proved to be an enriching experience. I aimed to provide students with a comprehensive overview of Brazilian history, consistently linking the course to

contemporary issues and drawing comparisons with U.S. history. The students actively engaged in discussions and readings, showing enthusiasm for transnational approaches. I made a conscious effort to include Brazilian authors in the readings and invited guest speakers from Brazil to expose students to diverse perspectives and introduce them to our academic community. In addition to historiographical discussions, I incorporated audiovisual materials, which complemented the topics covered in class. A notable moment was discussing the Oscar win of the film “I’m Still Here”, which served as an excellent opportunity to address aspects of the dictatorship, democratization, and current political challenges. We also discussed global inequalities in access to film production, with many students surprised to learn it was Brazil’s first Oscar win.

In late March, I delivered the lecture “Contesting Colonial Knowledge: Gender, Sexuality, and the Agency of Indigenous Women in Brazil” as part of the Lemann Lecture Series. This was a valuable opportunity to present my current research in a multidisciplinary setting. Since my arrival, I have also attended several lectures organized by the Lemann Center, which have been highly enriching. These activities provide an excellent platform for exchange among Brazilian scholars from various regions and backgrounds as well as Brazil specialists at UIUC. They offer insight into ongoing research at the university and help strengthen connections within our vibrant and diverse community.

With Professor Emily Twarog from the School of Labor and Employment Relations, I applied for a Bridge Seed Fund grant for the 2025–2026 academic year. In collaboration with Professor Courtney Campbell from the University of Birmingham's History Department and joint director of the Brazilian Center there, we developed the project “Women's Bodies, the State, and Resistance: A Transnational History.” We are thrilled to share that our project has been approved, and we are currently coordinating our activities. In addition to workshops planned in Urbana-Champaign and Birmingham, the project aims to establish a virtual lab titled “Women at Work: Global Lab on Gender, Body, and Politics.” We are researching similar initiatives in the Humanities to better define our proposal. The funds from the Bridge grant will also support activities related to the “Transnational Feminisms” (GWS 575) course that I will teach next semester in the Department of Gender and Women's Studies. Professor Campbell will be a guest speaker, providing students with the opportunity to engage with her ongoing research.

In April, I attended the conference of the Organization of American Historians (OAH) in Chicago, where I met with several colleagues, strengthened academic ties, and participated in activities related to Indigenous history. Although the sessions focused on Indigenous peoples in North America, it was valuable to learn about the work being done here and to connect with Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars dedicated to the field, opening possibilities for future collaborations. Additionally, the conference provided an opportunity to engage with

publishers regarding the book I am currently working on, tentatively titled “Indigenous Women in Early Modern Brazil: Gender and Colonialism in a Transnational and Long-Term Perspective.” Nothing is confirmed but, I hope to have positive news soon.

With the conclusion of the academic semester in May, I plan to dedicate most of my time to advancing the book project, utilizing the excellent resources available at the campus libraries. However, not all activities during this period will be research focused. I am scheduled to participate in the Lawcha Conference “Making Work Matter: Solidarity & Action across Space & Time,” which will be held at the University of Chicago from June 12 to 14. I will coordinate panels featuring papers from Brazilian scholars, thereby strengthening our international presence. Two of the participants are former students of mine from the Universidade Federal Fluminense, and I am delighted to see them pursuing international careers in women's history and gender relations.

Throughout the semester, I had the privilege of engaging with a variety of activities and resources at UIUC, including workshops, lectures, and networking events. These experiences have significantly enriched my academic journey and contributed to my professional growth. Reflecting on the positive experiences since my arrival and the exciting projects currently underway, I am truly excited about the opportunities and challenges that the upcoming fall semester will bring.

STUDENT FELLOWSHIPS





LEMANN CENTER GRADUATE FELLOWS FOR THE 2025-2026 ACADEMIC YEAR



Juliana Watanabe Soufen

Department of Health and Kinesiology

“Transforming Slum Communities: Infrastructure Interventions for Sustainable and Equitable Urban Development”

This dissertation research examines the health and social impacts of infrastructure interventions in slum communities—specifically, the effects of formal water provision in the Jardim Pantanal slum community, located in the state of São Paulo. The focus is on the Água Legal Program, a unique initiative in informal settlements to provide reliable and safe water access for marginalized populations. The program serves as a critical case study for understanding how infrastructure upgrading—particularly in water services—can transform the lives of residents in vulnerable urban settings.

Using a qualitative methodology, this fieldwork contributes to the literature from two complementary perspectives. First, from the standpoint of slum residents, the study explores how formal access to water influences their daily lives, social identities, and economic opportunities. By documenting these lived experiences, the research centers the human dimensions of urban slum upgrading. Second, the study investigates the community-based and participatory strategies employed before, during, and after the program’s implementation. A key focus is the role of community social agents, who are instrumental in facilitating communication, mobilization, execution, and monitoring of the program. Their insights are essential for understanding the operational aspects of implementation and identifying lessons learned that can inform future interventions in similar contexts.

To that end, the fieldwork includes semi-structured, narrative interviews with 20 residents and 15 social agents directly involved in the Água Legal Program. The study is guided by two complementary theoretical frameworks: Grounded Theory and the Social-Ecological Model. These frameworks support an integrated analysis of how infrastructure improvements through formal water access affect both individual lives and broader community dynamics. The use of thematic analysis techniques helps identify recurring patterns and key themes in the qualitative data, offering an understanding of the program’s impacts from the perspectives of residents and community social workers.

While the focus is context-specific to Jardim Pantanal, the findings offer valuable insights for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers interested in implementing inclusive, sustainable infrastructure solutions in other marginalized urban areas. Ultimately, this study seeks to highlight the importance of socially informed, participatory approaches to infrastructure development, reinforcing the role of community voices in shaping equitable urban futures.



Julia Paiva

Urban Planning

“Racial Inequalities in Brazilian Housing Policy: An Examination of Minha Casa, Minha Vida”

Minha Casa Minha Vida (MCMV) is Brazil’s housing policy that aims to increase homeownership in low-income communities. Even with a high production of units, the program’s seemingly race-neutral design overlooks the racialized barriers that prevent minorities from fully benefiting. This study analyzes how the policy is translated into exclusionary practices and explores the multidimensional barriers faced by racial minorities in accessing MCMV. Using a mixed-methods approach, this study investigates how MCMV’s market-driven approach perpetuates racial segregation and exclusion in housing access.

Through spatial statistics analysis and interviews with MCMV stakeholders, I will describe institutional practices and spatial patterns that may exacerbate income and racial disparities.

Building on my master’s thesis — awarded the best thesis in the department in 2024 — this research provides empirical evidence of racial barriers within MCMV, on both local and national levels. The project starts with fieldwork to collect first-hand accounts of how the program is implemented on the local scale. Through semi-structured interviews with program stakeholders, I will assess areas where program implementation may be subject to latent biases that drive racialized outcomes. From the voices of my interviewees, I will strengthen the framework I previously developed in my thesis considering how housing policy can be understood in terms of race, and how forms of “inclusion and exclusion” may coexist, as Edward Telles wrote. Moreover, the interviews will be crucial to the subsequent phase of spatial modelling, as it adds nuance to the interpretation of statistical trends and explains why certain demographic groups may face greater challenges in accessing housing.

During the 2025-2026 academic year, I will perform a spatial statistical analysis using MCMV administrative data and Brazilian census data to assess the outcomes of MCMV in its 15 years of implementation (2009 to the present). The goal of this analysis is to identify where income and racial disparities in access to MCMV housing are most pronounced. This will include using spatial autocorrelation techniques to identify clustering patterns across regions.

As Brazil grapples with its history of racial discrimination, it is critical to explore how these inequalities persist within ostensibly inclusive policies. By providing empirical evidence of the racial barriers embedded within MCMV on local and national levels, this research has the potential to inform policy changes that address the needs of Brazil’s most vulnerable populations. The Lemann Graduate Fellowship will be crucial in supporting my full-time dedication to the Qualifying Research Paper for my PhD in Regional Planning. The fellowship will enable me to comprehensively assess MCMV program, specifically in data processing and report writing during AY 2025-2026.

LEMANN CENTER GRADUATE FELLOWS FOR THE 2025-2026 ACADEMIC YEAR



Flávia Motta

Agriculture & Consumer Economics

“Deforestation and Pasture Degradation in Brazil”

My research aims to investigate the drivers of land use decisions and the barriers that limit investment in pasture restoration as an alternative to further deforestation. From Fall 2025 to Spring 2026, I will analyze data to identify where pasture degradation is most likely to occur. Focusing on properties in the Amazon and Cerrado biomes, I will examine how factors like market access, public policy, and cattle sales are associated with degradation. This phase will provide a foundation for understanding the spatial distribution of degraded pastures. Subsequently, in Summer 2026, I will conduct fieldwork in Brazil. I will interview landowners, extension agents, and supply chain actors.

The next phase will use insights from this fieldwork to analyze the barriers to pasture restoration. I will focus on understanding how agricultural credit, investment, and other factors shape restoration decisions, contributing to policy recommendations. By combining data analysis, field insights, and econometric modeling, I seek to inform policies that promote sustainable land use in Brazil’s cattle sector, ultimately supporting environmental conservation and agricultural productivity.





Larissa Migotto

Political Science

“The Impact of National Polarization on Local Politics in Brazil”

This project extends the work I started as a Lemann Fellow last year, which examined the impact of national political polarization in Brazilian municipal elections. My previous study focused on televised debates from São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Porto Alegre in 2016 and 2024. I am now scaling up the research to include a broader dataset of televised municipal debates, intending to cover all of Brazil’s state capitals. This new dataset will allow me to go beyond a few case studies and look at broader trends across regions. My main question is similar to before: When and why do local candidates adopt nationalized

campaign strategies? To answer this, I will use a mixed-methods approach. First, I will transcribe and structure the debates using computational text analysis techniques. With a larger dataset, I will look at the frequency and framing of references to national leaders and topics.

I will use sentiment analysis to see how municipal candidates talk about national figures, whether these are positive, negative, or neutral references. This will help me identify patterns of how national figures are used across municipalities. Second, I will do fieldwork in Brasília during the summer to interview party leaders. These interviews will explore how national elites think about their relationships with local candidates, how they engage in municipal campaigns, and how they see the role of these national-local alliances in the 2026 general elections.

This topic is timely and relevant because most studies on polarization and nationalization focus on the U.S. or Western Europe and rarely look at how these dynamics work in more fragmented, multiparty systems like Brazil’s. As local elections become more entangled with national political divisions, this could undermine responsiveness at the municipal level and make local governance more difficult in the long run. By combining large-scale textual analysis with interviews, this project will provide a comparative contribution to the debates on polarization, nationalization, campaign strategies, and democratic accountability.

The Lemann Fellowship will be crucial for this next phase of my project. It will allow me to do the fieldwork, process a larger and more unique dataset, and have time to write and publish the results. In the end, my goal is to write a dissertation and future publications that will help us better understand how national polarization is affecting local politics in Brazil.

LEMANN CENTER GRADUATE FELLOWS FROM THE 2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR



Kainen Bell

Information Science

“Understanding the Impact of Surveillance Technologies on Afro-Brazilian Communities”

My Ph.D. research uncovers algorithmic biases and follows the work of digital rights activists and organizers of anti-surveillance campaigns in Brazil who protest facial recognition camera initiatives. Thanks to the support of the Lemann Center, I was able to travel to 4 cities in Brazil (Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Brasília, and Recife) between July and November 2024 to begin my preliminary dissertation research. For my study, my goal is to learn how Afro-Brazilian communities collaborate to resist and prevent the abuse of surveillance technologies in their neighborhoods.

I began my research in Rio de Janeiro participating in a month-long Global Policy Fellowship at the Institute for Technology and Society (ITS). The mission of ITS is to ensure that Brazil and the Global South respond creatively and appropriately to the opportunities provided by technology in the digital age and that the potential benefits are broadly shared across society. I was one of ten researchers selected worldwide from 1,000 applicants who share common interests in technology and its interfaces with law, and who want to expand their knowledge about the Brazilian technological context. The intensive four-week program included a series of meetings with ITS partners in Rio de Janeiro, Brasília, and São Paulo including the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation, Brazil’s National Data Protection Agency, NuBank, The Center for Security and Citizenship Studies (CESeC), and others concerned with AI Development and Regulation in Brazil. Among my peers, my research topic was the only that focused on Brazil, so I was able to make the most of the meetings and ask questions to the multiple stakeholders such as how they work to minimize racial biases in AI and surveillance technologies. Towards the end of the ITS Global Policy Fellowship I presented a lecture titled, “AI Ethics: Regulating Facial Recognition in Brazil” at the International School of Law and Technology offered by ITS in partnership with the University of Montréal. It was important because they will be the next leaders of AI policy and regulation, and too often we are told that technology is unbiased, and the solution to social inequalities. I had the opportunity to visit community research organizations including LabJaca (now renamed as Instituto Decodifica), which conducted research sharing the alternative ways military funding could have been spent to benefit the communities of favelas, rather than inciting violence. I also met and interviewed members of the national anti-surveillance campaign and local campaigns in Recife.

These four months of fieldwork were more fruitful than I imagined. I had little expectations that the Global Policy Fellowship would be helpful due to its focus on law and policy, but it ended up being instrumental in meeting national stakeholders involved in building and regulating AI and surveillance technologies. My original study was not so focused on AI, but during my fieldwork I learned about Brazil’s goal to be a leader in the Global South in AI development and differentiate itself from the Global North, which opened new research ideas. Afterwards, I was awarded a Fulbright-Hays dissertation fellowship to continue my research in Rio and Bahia from February to December 2025. This has allowed me to deepen my ethnography in Rio and follow up further with the organizations and groups I met last summer and observe the use of facial recognition to monitor Carnival, as well as add a new site to my case study, Salvador, Bahia. The Lemann Center Fellowship was instrumental and helped set the stage for my dissertation and has led to me finding new funding to continue my study and make connections, build trust with the community organization and Afro-Brazilian Activists at the heart of this work, and discover research insights that would have been impossible to make without being in Brazil.



Otavio Barros

Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies

“Expanding Access, Confronting Barriers: Brazilian Students’ Perspectives on the Lei de Cotas Policy”

In the context of global debates on race-conscious educational policies, Brazil’s Lei de Cotas (Law No. 12.711/2012) stands as a significant, if complex, effort to address systemic racial inequalities in higher education. Through the Lemann Center Fellowship, I investigated the policy’s impact on access, equity, and belonging by centering the narratives of 12 Brazilian students. Guided by Critical Race Theory (CRT) and counter-storytelling methodology, the research offers a critical lens on both the achievements and the ongoing challenges associated with the policy.

Implemented in 2012, the Lei de Cotas mandated racial and social quotas in federal institutions of higher education. Its immediate effects were notable: between 2012 and 2015, the enrollment of students of color increased by 29.1%. For many participants, the policy was transformative, expanding opportunities that were historically denied to marginalized communities. In my research, students emphasized that the Lei de Cotas played an important role in diversifying university spaces and fostering a sense of community among underrepresented groups.

However, my research reveals that access alone has not guaranteed substantive equity. Participants consistently pointed to structural barriers that persisted even after admission. Financial precarity was a common challenge, with many students struggling to cover living expenses despite entering university. Experiences of racial microaggressions and feelings of isolation were also widespread, compounded by curricula that remained largely Eurocentric and disconnected from the histories and realities of marginalized populations.

These narratives challenge the assumption that affirmative action policies can, by themselves, redress deeply entrenched inequalities. Drawing on CRT, the study highlights how Brazil’s racial structure and the social construction of race shape educational experiences. Participants noted that the policy’s achievements were often undermined by institutional unpreparedness and societal resistance, reflecting broader tensions around race, meritocracy, and inclusion.

In line with CRT’s concept of interest convergence — the idea that racial reforms advance only when they align with the interests of dominant groups — the research underscores the contingent nature of racial progress in Brazil. While the Lei de Cotas marked a significant political and symbolic step forward, the lack of complementary reforms limited its transformative potential.

Participants proposed several measures to address these shortcomings, including expanded financial aid programs, anti-racist training for faculty and staff, the decolonization of university curricula, and policies aimed at improving retention and graduation rates for marginalized students. Their experiences suggest that meaningful educational justice requires a multi-dimensional approach that not only ensures access but also actively dismantles institutional barriers to success.

By amplifying the lived experiences of students directly affected by the Lei de Cotas, this research contributes insights to broader discussions of affirmative action. As countries like the U.S. move away from race-conscious admissions, the Brazilian case offers both inspiration and caution: policies aimed at equity must be paired with structural transformations to achieve lasting change.

LEMANN CENTER GRADUATE FELLOWS FROM THE 2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR



Luisa Fernandes

Urban Planning

“This Channel is Actually a River:’ Challenging Green Hegemonies Through the Perspective of Territorial Environmental Practice”

Urban communities and social movements in Latin America that sustain deep relationships with the natural environment - whether through ancestral traditions or the daily challenges of inhabiting environmentally sensitive areas - face ongoing struggles in their pursuit of the Buen Vivir. These struggles are intensified by environmental policies that, rather than addressing local complexities, reproduce colonial structures and promote green hegemonies aligned with private interests. While detached from territorially grounded practices, such initiatives tend to undermine and even not consider communities' existence in decision making. With the support of the Lemann Center in the past year, I dedicated myself to the

investigation of how such groups build an environmental agenda and react to status quo policy making. Moreover, the analysis of such practices was also done through understanding practices of urban development policy that internalize Global North-South power dynamics, translating them into local actions that, through the prerogative of sustainable development, prioritize private profit and often exclude the very groups capable of offering sustainable alternatives.

Based in Fortaleza, this research aims to complexify current debates on the environment, investigating the causes and consequences of urban occupations in environmentally sensitive areas and how institutional policy making deals with issues related to risk and vulnerability. Applying this framework to the case of Fortaleza, it is possible to observe how environmental policy initiatives tend to perpetuate models of green colonialism and, more than that, reinforce a global system of financial and epistemic dependency between the Global North and South. As a result, investments in environmental policy are seen and treated as business opportunities and tradeoff assets in opposition to the promotion of collective rights.

This investigation engages with critical perspectives on the relationship of people with space, which develop in contradiction to hegemonic models. Some are traditional and indigenous worldviews, critical political ecology, environmental justice and counter hegemonic scholarships of urban planning, contributing to the understanding that there are alternative models for constructing life in urban settings and with the natural environment.



Larissa Migotto

Political Science

“How Does National-Level Polarization Affect Political Discourse in Local Brazilian Elections?”

Scholars have been warning about the impact of polarization on democratic processes. Most of the literature focuses on advanced democracies like the U.S. and Western Europe, but there is less research on states like Brazil, where party systems are fragmented and there are lower levels of party identification. Furthermore, there is not much work on polarization beyond presidential elections. To address this, I am exploring how nation-wide polarization affects municipal elections and debates.

Given my research question, I analyzed televised debates from the 2016 and 2024 municipal elections in three major Brazilian capitals: São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Porto Alegre. I chose these cities because of their size, political relevance, and competitiveness. I focused on televised debates because they are key moments that attract the electorate’s attention. Methodologically, the project combines quantitative text analysis with qualitative interviews. I collected debate videos from two Brazilian channels (Band and Globo), transcribed them using Transkriptor software, and structured the text data using computational methods. I started by counting mentions of national leaders (Dilma Rousseff, Michel Temer, Lula da Silva, and Jair Bolsonaro) and topics, comparing trends across years and cities. Then, I conducted sentiment analysis to see if mentions were positive, negative, or neutral.

The results confirm my expectation that nationalization has increased. Mentions of Lula and Bolsonaro skyrocketed in 2024 compared to Dilma and Temer in 2016— a notable finding, particularly considering that the 2016 municipal campaigns took place during Brazil’s impeachment crisis, which would suggest a strong presence of these national figures in the local debates. There was also an increase in national topics and a decline in local ones, although local issues still dominated overall. Furthermore, the sentiment analysis showed that the mentions of Lula and Bolsonaro are polarized; they received both strong criticism and praise in 2024, while Dilma and Temer were mostly mentioned negatively in 2016. Interestingly, the trend was not uniform across cities; for example, Bolsonaro was barely mentioned in the local debates analyzed from Porto Alegre.

There are a couple of limitations to this project. I have only analyzed three cities so far, and data collection has been slow because there is no centralized database for local debates in Brazil. Part of the contribution of this project will be to create such a database, so not only my research but also other scholars interested in political communication and local politics in Brazil can benefit from it. Second, my topic classification is still based on simple keyword counts and needs to be refined.

To expand this project, I’ll incorporate debates from all state capital cities in 2024. I also hope to analyze mayoral government plans, which are available for over 5,000 municipalities on the Brazilian Supreme Electoral Court (Tribunal Superior Eleitoral, TSE) to broaden the scope of my research. Ultimately, I want to understand how national polarization filters into local politics and what this means for democratic accountability and representation in Brazil.

WERNER BAER DOCTORAL FELLOWS FROM THE 2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR



Owen MacDonald

History

“Caribbean Amazônia: Labor and the Constructions of Race and Gender along the Madeira-Mamoré Railroad, Northwestern Brazil, 1870-1942”

This dissertation argues that railroad construction in the western reaches of the Amazonian rainforest connected a “modern” vision of the Brazilian nation to not only a fledgling vision of empire in the United States but also a fluid Circum-Caribbean circuit of human movement. Processes of conflict, negotiation, and collaboration between Indigenous Amazonian people, working women and men, Brazilian political elites, and North American capital all contributed to a developing trans-imperial political economy at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. I spent the 2024-2025 academic year finalizing the first and fourth chapters of my dissertation. The first chapter of the

dissertation will examine attempts to build the railroad in the 1870s. Often treated as a brief prelude to the more successful twentieth-century project, I argue that the power of the biocultural environment, the resistance of Indigenous peoples, and inter-ethnic worker solidarity that succeeded in blocking railroad construction for decades was a vital moment of historical possibility. The fourth chapter explores the social world of the Bajan Town neighborhood that developed among Afro-Caribbean railroad workers and their descendants in Porto Velho in the early 1900s. Besides making progress on the dissertation, I drafted an article which I plan to submit to a top journal in the field of Latin American history. “A Lobisomem in Porto Velho,” grew out of a series of newspaper stories from the 1980s that I encountered in a miscellaneous folder in the archives of the Museum of Rondoniense Memory that reported on a werewolf terrorizing a peripheral neighborhood. Taking seriously the concerns of these residents and centering the issues raised by working class and poor Black women in the reports, this article draft historicizes the lobisomem attacks in the context of a transforming urban environment in the waning days of the military dictatorship. I will continue to work on the dissertation while teaching in the upcoming academic year.



Henrique Hernandes

Anthropology

During this first year as a PhD student in Linguistic Anthropology, the Werner Baer Doctoral Fellowship was of fundamental importance in enabling me to take steps and achieve goals that furthered my education and research. I focused my energy on my studies and on connecting with faculty members and scholars who are doing interesting work. Moved by questions of how shared forms of musical and performative expression – and their embeddedness in people’s everyday lives – can shape identity, communication, and language use in Afro-Brazilian community settings, I took classes across different departments (Anthropology, African American Studies, Musicology, and History) garnering resources and knowledge that meaningfully connect with the research I am to pursue and develop. In all these classes, I was able to have rich discussions and to produce

quality work, which was reflected in my excellent results at the end of the Fall semester. These classes also placed me in a good position to pursue graduate minors in African American Studies, Museum Studies, and Music and Sound Studies. Additionally, I was able to participate in varied academic events throughout the year hosted by academic units like the Lemann Center, the Anthropology Department, the School of Music, and the Humanities Research Institute, which exposed me to diverse scholarly perspectives, significantly broadening the possibilities of making connections and establishing dialogues. An important highlight, for example, were two lectures organized by the Lemann Center, which made possible, on one instance, to hear about Prof. Marc Hertzman's exciting new book about Quilombo dos Palmares in Brazil, and, in another instance, to connect with Brazilian researcher and the educator Sonia Guimarães. As a Fellow, I was inspired to give back to the community at the local level, and I am currently a volunteer at the Urbana Public School District, supporting youth at the Middle and High School levels as a mentor and tutor. During the upcoming Summer, the Lemann Center will continue to offer valuable support through a summer stipend, which will allow me to continue to do quality scholarly work.



Erika Vieira

History

As this was my first year as a PhD student in History, my trajectory has been shaped by coursework. I was happy to be on the Werner Baer Doctoral Fellowship for the academic year of 2024-2025, which gave me security to focus on coursework and develop my English skills before having to TA.

In HIST 593, Approaches to History, and HIST 594, Introduction to Historical Writing, the goal was to produce an original article-length piece on a historical subject of choice. HIST-593 presented challenges, mainly in my adaptation process to US American academic and historical standards; nonetheless, it helped shape my project, which during HIST 594 became "If They Have the Rubber Then Let's Play Ball: Cricket and the Brazilian Amazon at the Turn of the Twentieth Century." With this paper, I seek to explain how cricket was introduced

to the Brazilian Amazon, and based on class, race, and gender characteristics, transformed into one of the main youth leisure practices of the country, called Betz.

For my main field, Modern Latin America, I attended HIST 507, Race and Ethnicity in Latin America, and HIST 405, History of Brazil from 1808 to the present day. These were the classes I found most engaging. I got to learn the history of other Latin American countries and the US, thus enhancing my skills as a Latin Americanist. Furthermore, in HIST 405, I got to talk about Brazilian history a great deal, which I will always find very stimulating. I also took two classes for my minor field, Gender and Women's Studies. The first one was GWS 550, Feminist Theories and Methods, with the Gender and Women's Studies department, and the second was NRES-598 Gender and Environment in the Amazon, with the Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences department. I chose these classes because I hope that my PhD thesis in the future will be about women's history in the Brazilian Amazon; hence, clearly, these classes presented subjects I was very interested in.

I met with my adviser almost every week to talk about my progress, which I deeply appreciated. I participated in meetings and receptions that enabled me to meet professors in History and other departments which will help my final papers and future research.

WERNER BAER POSTDOCTORAL POSITIONS FROM THE 2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR



Marcus Ferreira

Food Science and Technology

Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro

Marcus is developing a portable low-cost device that analyzes odors and gases using chemical sensors and pattern recognition algorithms. In Brazil, this device will make it possible for industries to stop adulteration at the food supply level as well as guarantee food's freshness in the production line.



Filipe Cunha Lima Viana

Production Engineering

Universidade Federal de Pernambuco

Filipe is developing decision and risk models of natural gas pipeline systems for public safety and greater efficiency. His research will expand the stakeholders and factors that have been downplayed or overlooked in managing risk and improving efficiency in the transportation of natural gas in Brazil's mid-western and northeastern regions.



Fabio Braga

Political Science

"Between Fragility and Resistance: The Ontology of Vulnerability and Its Relationship with the Brazilian Legal System"

This project asks how the Brazilian Supreme Federal Court (STF) developed a concept of vulnerability to justify affirmative measures and institutional reforms. Drawing on Martha Fineman's theory of universal vulnerability and Judith Butler's notion of precariousness, the research frames vulnerability not as a residual or episodic condition, but rather as an ontological feature that demands sustained legal and political recognition. My work takes a comparative look at Brazilian and U.S. jurisprudence by examining how both systems confront state omissions and institutional violence through the lens of vulnerability.

In Brazil, the STF uses vulnerability not only as a legal basis for protection but also as a political stance against marginalization. The jurisprudence is evident in decisions such as ADPF 709, which mandated government action in response to the neglect of Indigenous communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, and ADPF 457, which struck down municipal legislation banning gender-related content in public schools. Meanwhile in the United States, judicial responses to the Trump-era ban on transgender individuals in the military show how vulnerability can be politicized and resisted. U.S. federal courts' injunction denounced the ban as rooted in hostility and lacking rational justification. Student protests and legal claims involving racial profiling, immigration hearings, and discretionary policing reveal how recognition and

institutional visibility are central to the legal construction of citizenship. In both countries, vulnerability takes shape not as an individual deficiency but as a structural asymmetry of power, visibility, and voice. Our recognition of vulnerability as a universal and situated condition can challenge liberal neutrality and reorient legal discourse toward justice with greater responsiveness.

The dissemination of these findings extended beyond academic spaces. In early 2024, I presented “The Concept of Vulnerability as a Mechanism of Resistance” at the Brazilian Studies Colloquium (cosponsored by Loyola University and Florida State University), exploring how jurisprudential narratives shape collective understandings of human dignity. Later that year, I presented “Feminist Constitutionalism, Reproductive Rights, and Vulnerability” at the XX Congress on Collective Rights in Portugal. This presentation was published in *Lex Medicinæ* (Portugal), underscoring the transnational relevance of the idea of vulnerability and its intersections with gender and legal discourse.

The next phase of my research explores how urban, and property law reproduce social exclusion. At the 2025 Law and Society Association (LSA) Annual Meeting in Chicago, I will present two papers: “Geographies of Property: The ‘Rosto da Cidade’ Project,” analyzing how redevelopment policies compound structural inequalities, and “From Fragility to Empowerment: Understanding Vulnerability in STF Jurisprudence,” linking theory to judicial outcomes. I will also co-moderate the roundtable “Gender and Social Inequalities: Rethinking Law in Contemporary Brazil,” facilitating interdisciplinary dialogue on race, gender, and institutional reform. Additionally, I will participate in the LSA Graduate Student & Early Career Workshop, supporting scholars focusing on law and social justice.

This project led to collaborative work as well. Thallyta Pedroza (UIUC) and I co-authored “What Eyes Can’t See but Hearts Can Feel: The Effects of Food Policies on Vulnerable Populations in Brazil,” forthcoming in the *Revista da Faculdade de Direito UFPR* (Vol. 69, 2025). The article expands on themes related to the field of food security, exploring how legal frameworks can both mitigate and exacerbate material deprivation. Thallyta Pedroza, Thais Zappellini (UIUC), Ana Faranha (Universidade de Brasília), and I are also preparing a proposal for the 2025 LSA Advance Grant Program, tentatively entitled “Legal Education, Policy, and Institutional Frameworks as Engines of Inclusion and Inequality.” If funded, the project will convene a virtual seminar series and podcast exploring how legal education and state policies intersect with structural vulnerability in South America.

Looking ahead, I intend to publish an article based on my postdoctoral research under the same title, “Between Fragility and Resistance: The Ontology of Vulnerability and Its Relationship with the Brazilian Legal System.” In this piece, I will argue that recognizing vulnerability as an enduring condition can inspire new legal and political imaginaries—ones that redistribute voice, visibility, and institutional protection. Rather than treating vulnerability as a problem to be solved, I propose understanding it as a fertile stage for generating knowledge, rethinking agency, and constructing a more inclusive and responsive legal culture. This research reflects my commitment to placing vulnerability at the center of legal analysis and democratic practice. By combining conceptual rigor, empirical research, and international dissemination, the project contributes to ongoing efforts to transform law into a space of recognition, resistance, and structural change.

WERNER BAER POSTDOCTORAL POSITIONS FOR THE 2025-2026 ACADEMIC YEAR



Francisco Timbó de Paiva Neto

Physical Education

Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina

Francisco will undertake a comparative study of “community health workers” (CHWs), with the goal of producing an accessible handbook and platform to identify best practices in the integration, training, and support of CHWs, as well as to propose strategies for scaling up community-based interventions.



Pâmilla Vilas Boas Costa Ribeiro,

Anthropology

Universidade de São Paulo

Pamilla will study how Afro-Indigenous residents use “batuque,” an Afro-Brazilian percussive and dance-based performance tradition, and storytelling to navigate the transition of the Rio São Francisco from a sacred river governed by reciprocity to an increasingly commodified and environmentally degraded landscape.



Yuri Kappenberg

Organic Chemistry

Universidade Federal de Santa Maria

Yuri will improve wastewater treatment in Brazil by designing an electrochemical removal process of micropollutants. This research aims to investigate molecular interactions in order to improve absorption efficiency and more effectively analyze potential transformative byproducts.

FACULTY RESEARCH GRANTS



FACULTY COLLABORATIVE AND RESEARCH GRANTS FOR THE 2025-2026 ACADEMIC YEAR



Denise Lewin Loyd

Business Administration

“Understanding Support Ecosystems for Black Women Entrepreneurs: A Cross-National Comparison of Entrepreneurs in the United States and Brazil”

Over the past decade, Black women have increasingly engaged in entrepreneurship across the globe. At the same time, there remains a dearth of academic studies on Black women’s experiences in entrepreneurship. To address this gap, we seek to answer the following research questions: 1) How does engagement with various support systems impact Black women entrepreneurs’ success? 2) How do Black women entrepreneurs engage with and find support across relational, community, regional, and national levels? 3) How do Black women entrepreneurs’ experiences of engaging with and finding support differ across national contexts? We examine the support systems of Black women entrepreneurs in the United States and Brazil. These countries have similar histories of entrenched racism and legacies tied to the Transatlantic slave trade. Our cross-national, interview-based approach enables us to advance understanding about how common racialized experiences of Black women entrepreneurs affect their social and economic outcomes. Moreover, the proposed study represents one of the few studies that will offer insight into the lived experiences of Black women entrepreneurs.



Sandy Dall’erba

Agricultural and Consumer Economics,

“The Ripple Effects of Drought: How Climate Change is Transforming Brazil’s Wheat Production, Imports, and Food Security”

This project examines the growing threat of drought on Brazil’s wheat sector and its implications for food security and international trade. As climate change intensifies, Brazil is facing its worst drought in over 70 years, affecting nearly 60% of the country. While Brazil is a major producer of soybeans and corn, wheat—though less studied—is a vital staple and heavily imported, particularly from Argentina, the U.S., and Canada. In recent years, Brazil has increased domestic wheat cultivation in states like Paraná, Rio Grande do Sul, and Santa Catarina, recognizing wheat’s critical role in food systems. This project investigates how droughts—both domestic and abroad—disrupt Brazil’s wheat yields and trade flows. The study aims to inform more effective adaptation strategies to protect food security in Brazil and beyond. By identifying how climate shocks propagate through trade networks, it offers critical insights into the need for cooperative international responses, challenging inward-looking trade policies. As drought and other climate extremes become more frequent, the project’s findings will help shape robust, evidence-based approaches to resilient agricultural and trade systems worldwide. The research is a collaboration with Professor André Luis Squarize Chagas (Economics, Núcleo de Economia Regional e Urbana (NEREUS), Universidade de São Paulo), building on a long-standing academic partnership between CREATE and NEREUS. It also provides hands-on interdisciplinary training for a graduate student, equipping the next generation of scholars with skills to analyze human-environment interactions under global change.



Mary Arends-Kuenning

Agricultural and Consumer Economics

“Economic, Social, and Environmental Aspects of Conservation Agriculture in Brazil”

No-tillage (NT) farming has transformed agriculture by reducing soil disturbance, lowering operational costs, and enhancing soil quality through increased carbon content. NT is now the primary soil conservation strategy in Brazil. However, although NT helps mitigate water erosion, it alone is insufficient to ensure comprehensive soil and water conservation. Complementary Conservation Agriculture (CA) practices, such as crop rotation, permanent soil cover, contour farming, and the construction of terraces are essential. Despite the significance of these practices, there is limited information regarding their adoption by rural producers in Brazil and the socioeconomic factors influencing this process. In collaboration with Professor Wander Plassa da Silva (Universidade Estadual de Londrina) and Professor Tiago Santos Telles (Instituto de Desenvolvimento Rural do Paraná), this study aims to investigate the socioeconomic and spatial dynamics of soil and water conservation practices across Brazil, with a particular focus on the state of Paraná. By analyzing national and regional trends, the research will identify areas with low adoption rates, highlight benchmark regions, and examine the profiles of farmers who adopt or do not adopt conservation measures. The findings will provide critical data to support scientific research, technological advancements, and policy interventions, promoting awareness and sustainable agricultural practices.



Eliana Monteverde Dominguez

Crop Sciences

“Effects of Stacking Resistance Genes to Soybean Cyst Nematode: Impact on Grain Yield and Disease Resistance in Soybeans”

Soybean cyst nematode (SCN) (*Heterodera glycines* Ichinohe) is the most economically damaging pathogen affecting soybeans worldwide, causing significant yield losses. The use of resistant cultivars is the most effective strategy to manage SCN, but resistance is a complex trait controlled by multiple quantitative trait loci (QTL). Despite progress in breeding, the relationship between SCN resistance QTL, yield, and seed composition remains unclear. Furthermore, the high genetic variability of SCN in Brazil necessitates stacking multiple resistance genes to improve durability. This project aims to develop high-yielding Brazilian soybean lines with different combinations of SCN resistance QTL and assess their impact on yield and seed composition. A collaborative effort with the Universidade Federal de Viçosa (UFV) has resulted in the development of SCN-resistant segregating populations. Greenhouse and field trials in Brazil and the U.S. will evaluate the effectiveness of stacking resistance genes. Findings from this collaborative study will provide crucial insights for breeding SCN-resistant soybeans while maintaining high agronomic performance and improving long-term resistance management strategies.

FACULTY COLLABORATIVE AND RESEARCH GRANTS FOR THE 2025-2026 ACADEMIC YEAR



Marc Hertzman

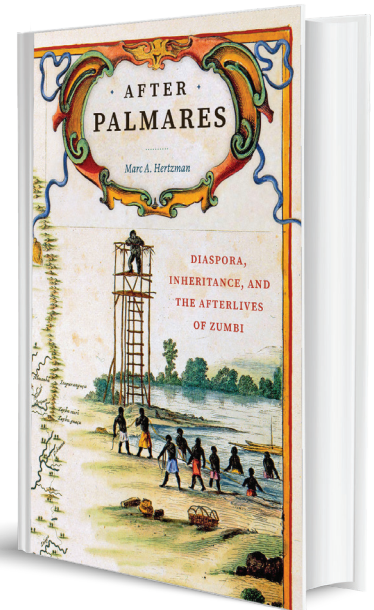
History

“Black Radical: The Life and Times of Édison Carneiro”

In collaboration with Petrônio Domingues (Universidade Federal de Sergipe), this project explores the remarkable life and intellectual production of Édison Carneiro, one of Brazil’s great (but forgotten) thinkers.

A Black activist and scholar, Carneiro indelibly shaped twentieth-century Brazil. Our book project places him at the intersection of five key overlapping debates and processes: (1) the contested emergence

and consolidation of twentieth-century Brazilian racial ideology; (2) the formation of a diverse, multi-layered Black intelligentsia; (3) the inscription of gendered hierarchies within that intelligentsia and in Brazilian higher education; (4) the creation and institutionalization of modern Brazilian scholarly disciplines, a process that marginalized Carneiro and elevated “hard” social-science research above the study of culture and other “soft” disciplines; (5) the rise and fall of Marxist-inflected social movements and intellectual currents. This will be the first study of Carneiro in English and by far the most thorough and critical study in Portuguese. Drawing on the research that Hertzman already completed and additional, ongoing work by Domingues, the authors will use the Lemann collaborative grant for a year of intensive work on the monograph, which they intend to publish with a university press in the United States and then immediately translate into Portuguese for publication in Brazil.



FACULTY COLLABORATIVE AND RESEARCH GRANTS FROM THE 2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR



Francina Dominguez

Atmospheric Sciences

“Investigating the Interactions Between Soil Moisture, Precipitation, and Fire Activity in Brazil Through Remote Sensing and Climate Modeling”

Brazil experiences significant climatic and hydrological variability that directly impacts ecosystems and socio-economics. Understanding the interconnected dynamics of soil moisture, precipitation, and fire activity is vital, especially given the increased frequency of hydroclimate extremes such as droughts and heat waves. This project aimed to disentangle the complex triad formed by precipitation, soil moisture, and wildfires using a combination of satellite data, reanalysis products, and climate modeling. The study focused on Brazil's Cerrado biome—a vital agricultural and ecological zone. The project's hypothesis proposed that variations in soil moisture are significantly modulated by both precipitation and large-scale atmospheric moisture fluxes, with these variables jointly influencing fire incidence. The goal was to identify dominant patterns, seasonal and interannual variability, and temporal relationships (leads and lags) between these variables using robust geospatial and statistical methods. The transdisciplinary approach and collaboration with the Universidade Federal de Viçosa (UFV) enhanced the capacity for cross-continental climate research with global implications.

The results demonstrate a clear link between reduced soil moisture and increased fire susceptibility, particularly in the Brazilian Cerrado. Decreasing soil moisture trends over parts of the Cerrado, especially during austral spring and summer, align with intensified fire seasons and El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) warm phases. The EOF patterns showed strong interannual variability associated with ENSO and Tropical Atlantic Variability (TAV), confirming that ocean-atmosphere interactions modulate moisture availability. During El Niño years, the weakening of the South Atlantic Convergence Zone led to suppressed precipitation and increased fire outbreaks. These analyses indicated that precipitation anomalies often precede changes in soil moisture by 1–2 months, and soil moisture deficits precede increased fire activity by up to three months in highly sensitive regions.

These findings will improve wildfire prediction systems, inform conservation and land management policies, and guide adaptation strategies and hydrological planning in the face of climate change.

A scientific paper, “Soil Moisture Dynamics in Brazil: A Multi-Dataset Analysis from 1990 to 2020,” has been submitted to the International Journal of Climatology. This publication further explores this project's dataset comparisons, climatological insights, and methodological advancements.

FACULTY COLLABORATIVE AND RESEARCH GRANTS FROM THE 2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR



Jorge A. Guzman

Agricultural and Biological Engineering

“Climate-Adaptive Soil Management for Enhanced Coffee Production in Brazil's Cerrado”

This research aims to understand how conservation soil management practices can strengthen the resilience of coffee production against climate variability and change in the Alto Paranaíba region of Minas Gerais, one of Brazil's most critical coffee-producing areas. In collaboration with the Universidade Federal de Viçosa (UFV), and with additional funds provided by Brazil's higher education ministry (CNPq), this project enabled David Pereira, a Ph.D. student at UFV, to spend a year at UIUC pursuing the

final stage of his dissertation as well.

The project combines field experimentation and laboratory analyses to provide precise data for calibrating the computational soil carbon model, DayCent. We use this model to clarify potential impacts and mitigation strategies under future climate scenarios. This approach redresses agricultural intensification and climate uncertainty that heighten the vulnerability of agroecosystem production due to environmental stressors and human activities. We specifically evaluated the impact of adopting cover crops and akin conservation strategies on soil organic carbon, fertility, and overall soil health.

Before David arrived at UIUC, he conducted fieldwork in 13 coffee-growing areas of the Cerrado region, which varied in production history and productivity levels, including a pristine area with natural Cerrado vegetation for comparison. Soil samples underwent extensive analysis, including chemical, physical, and biological characterization. We also assessed variables such as soil temperature, bulk density, hydraulic conductivity, particle size distribution, particle density, field capacity, and permanent wilting point. Furthermore, the research undertook advanced laboratory techniques that enhanced insight into nutrient dynamics and the stability of soil organic carbon across various land uses and management systems. These analytical data sets are now being integrated with other findings to support the DayCent simulation model in predicting organic matter dynamics in coffee agroecosystems under various climate change scenarios. Research findings will be shared in the Sustainability Research and Innovation Congress (SRI 2025), taking place in Chicago from June 16 to 19, 2025. SRI is one of the leading international platforms dedicated to sustainability and innovation.

Beyond scientific production, the project aimed to support local farmers by generating practical, evidence-based recommendations for sustainable soil management. One of the key strengths of this initiative is its ability to connect applied science, computational tools, and traditional agricultural knowledge. The collaboration between UIUC and UFV teams, combining expertise in tropical soils, sustainability science, and modeling, proved essential to the project's success and scientific rigor.



Geoffrey Hewings

Economics

“An input-output analysis of the key drivers in CO2 emissions from a regional supply perspective: an application to the Brazilian states”

The interdependence between industries and the structure of income and consumption are key factors in the determination of the economic dynamics of a region. For Brazil, these factors are particularly important given the income and productive inequalities, both within regions (intraregional) and between regions (interregional). The regional disparities are due, in large part, to the weak diversified productive structure of some regions. There is a significant spatial concentration of economic activity in Brazil, generating asymmetric relationships among regions, with some regions dependent on production from wealthier states, such as São Paulo, but the reverse dependence is very small. While the imbalances in regional dependencies in terms of production and income have been documented, little research has been directed to the impact on emissions; are there similar imbalances? In order to address this issue, it is critical to design model simulations that capture policies favoring green growth. The research project is building a multiregional economic network model capable of simulating the impact of a several policies on the Brazilian economy, exploring different dimensions - spatial (nation, region), sectoral (different industries) and social (income distribution). We are identifying the “key” agents responsible for CO2 emission and, given the nature of the interregional interdependence, the concepts of embodied emissions reveals direct and indirect sources of emissions.



Juan Salamanca

Art and Design

“Data-driven Visualization of Climate Change: Revealing the Impact of Amazonian Agrarian Systems on Environmental and Epidemiological Changes”

The agrarian system and land use changes in the Amazon contribute to global climate change through practices like large-scale crop cultivation, extensive livestock farming and intensive agriculture, leading to deforestation and habitat loss amid other issues. However, understanding the intricate relationships between these dimensions and socio-economic factors has been challenging due to fragmented data. In

2023, a pivotal study by Rorato et al published in Nature introduced the “Trajetórias” dataset, offering comprehensive environmental, epidemiological and social indicators for the Brazilian Legal Amazon (BLA), enabling a deeper exploration of the impacts of Amazonian agrarian systems. To address this, our project is developing a data-driven visualization tool that integrates data from “Trajetórias,” facilitating the articulation of socio-economic-environmental solutions for the Amazon. By visualizing relationships between deforestation indices, burned areas, pasture areas, vector-borne diseases and other indices, our web-based tool can provide insights into the environmental and epidemiological impacts of climate change in the Amazon. This effort, supported by a visual analytics methodology, can offer a user-friendly platform for policymakers, researchers and the general public to comprehend the current state of the Amazon and inform policies to mitigate climate change in Brazil.

FACULTY COLLABORATIVE AND RESEARCH GRANTS FROM THE 2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR



Rafael Tassitano

Kinesiology

“Unlocking and Accelerating Physical Activity Opportunities for Vulnerable Children in Brazil: A Path Toward the Sustainable Adoption of School-Based Policy”

Global South countries have limited capacity and resources to respond to the global call for promoting physical activity. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, vulnerable children are only accumulating 15 minutes of physical activity during school hours. In response, a school-based physical activity policy has been developed for implementation in the educational system of the city of Arapiraca, Alagoas, in Northeast Brazil. This proposal has been part of an ongoing project aimed at supporting the policy's implementation. We hypothesized that the amount of time accumulated, and the variability of children's physical activity are associated with the school's context. We are now evaluating the perceived barriers and facilitators among stakeholders and school staff regarding policy adoption. Data from a representative cross-sectional study in Arapiraca is being used to test our hypotheses, and online semi-structured interviews are being conducted to examine perceived barriers and facilitators of policy adoption. Hierarchical regression models and interaction tests are being performed to test our hypotheses. The semi-structured interviews are being transcribed, coded, and analyzed to identify themes related to barriers and facilitators.



Charles MacNeill

Music

“Brazilian Popular Music and the Second Bossa Nova Generation Music”

This project led to the recording of a CD featuring Brazilian-influenced music composed by my recently graduated DMA student, Dr. Adriano Goio Lima. We had recording sessions involving the University of Illinois Concert Jazz Band, a big band under my direction with the participation of Professor Jim Pugh as a special guest, and a mixing session. We recorded seven tunes, all composed by Dr. Goio Lima. We also had the participation of Xintian Yu and Dexter O'Neal, both DMA candidates in jazz performance, as singers, since all the tunes had lyrics, also written by Dr. Goio Lima.

This work helped to foster an inclusive environment where students can explore a variety of musical traditions, particularly those that are underrepresented. It also allowed students playing in the U of I Concert Jazz band to express their musicality with a Brazilian repertoire. Main collaborators had the opportunity to discuss alternate instrumentations and orchestrations within the big band format, as well as other details such as music form and the extension of the arrangements. From the seven recorded tunes, Dr. Goio Lima wrote five arrangements, and I contributed two arrangements and revised them all. These exchanges enriched the project and provided invaluable learning experiences. We did the recording live in Smith Memorial Hall, in the very same room where the U of I Concert Jazz Band rehearses every day and where we knew students would feel comfortable and secure to perform, utilizing their highest level of capabilities. In disseminating the results, we organized a performance for Jazz Week at the Krannert Center, where we had the opportunity to play the songs we recorded.



Douglas Smith

Social Work

“A Brazilian Cultural Adaptation of Family-Centered Motivational Interviewing”

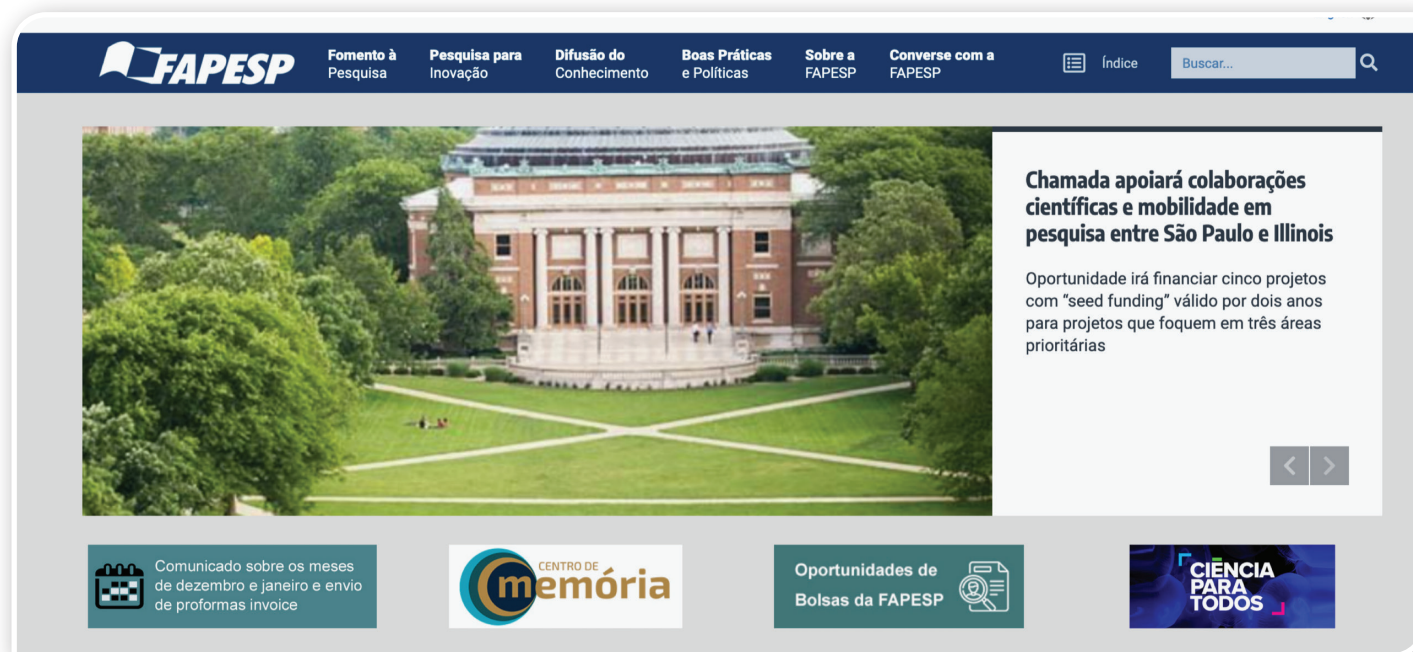
This project aimed to culturally adapt and test a well-known intervention originally developed in the U.S., called Motivational Interviewing (MI), for use in Brazil’s CAPS (Centros de Atenção Psicossocial, or Community Psychosocial Care Centers). It was a collaborative effort with Dr. Heloísa Garcia Claro Fernandes (UNICAMP, Universidade Estadual de Campinas). Although we are submitting our final report, we will continue to collect and analyze data over the next year. The original plan was to begin to collect

data as early as August 2024, but we experienced a longer-than-expected delay with UNICAMP’s ethics committee. Nevertheless, we made excellent progress in submitting an IRB application, developing the clinical protocol, securing a clinical site from which we will recruit patients, training clinicians, developing Portuguese-language training materials, and drafting an article outlining the steps we took to make cultural adaptations to the MI intervention historically designed in the U.S.

As planned, Douglas Smith went to São Paulo in August and September 2024. While there, he worked with Dr. Garcia Claro Fernandes on training psychiatrists and other health care providers at the CAPS location in Indaiatuba. We had meetings with administrators, who agreed to implement the model at their location. We did three separate full-day trainings with their staff. Training preparations specific to the family-based model we are developing involved using Deepl to translate English-language materials into Portuguese and then having them edited by a native speaker. This included both slide decks, as well as a fictional transcript we developed of a model clinical session. Developing this transcript in Portuguese was an important step as there are few such training materials in Brazil.

Dr. Garcia Claro Fernandes and I drafted an article on our cultural adaptation efforts. We are using a framework that outlines several steps of cultural adaptation that are rarely reported in research literature. We used qualitative research methods during an MI training to ask clinic staff about the treatment population, and about what adaptations to MI would be needed to make it work with their patients. Additionally, we did a scripted reading of the transcript during training and got feedback from clinicians on what modifications would be made. One adaptation we are writing about involves using more small talk in Brazil, which is not typically done in North America when implementing MI. We are inviting one psychiatrist that was trained in MI to join us as a co-author on this article. This research will continue through June 2025, when collaborators expect to finish the first article on cultural adaptation, enroll participants, and begin to review recordings of the model in order to make sure the intervention is being implemented as planned. The two main collaborators plan to co-author two additional articles.

THE BRASILLINOIS INITIATIVE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS SYSTEM



Angelina Sandora

Brasillinois Coordinator

The University of Illinois System officially launched Brasillinois in Spring 2024. It was more than just a partnership announcement. It was a declaration of the System's intent to build a lasting framework for collaboration between Illinois and Brazil that would create new knowledge, foster innovation, and empower the next generation of scholars.

Brasillinois has laid the foundation for a dynamic, long-term partnership—one that is already producing results across disciplines, and institutions. The initiative is proving to be a model for how academic systems can build sustainable, high-impact networks grounded in mutual respect and shared goals.

Brasillinois was developed with a mission to foster collaborative research, teaching, and mobility between the University of Illinois System and leading Brazilian institutions. It builds on over a century of institutional relationships, deep alumni ties, and a strong history of Brazil–U.S. exchange.

The unique role of the Lemann Center for Brazilian Studies in fostering research and supporting student training has been a model for the way we have conceptualized an approach that connects the entire University of Illinois System with Brazilian Partners.

Brasillinois supports scholars and students from Urbana-Champaign, Chicago, and Springfield, as well as partners including FAPESP (the São Paulo State's Research Foundation), USP (Universidade de São Paulo, Fiocruz (the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation), FAPERGS (the Rio Grande do Sul State's Research Foundation), FGV (the Getúlio Vargas Foundation), and UNICAMP (the Universidade Estadual de Campinas), among many others.

The initiative is focused on three thematic areas that reflect both regional priorities and global challenges: Climate and Sustainability; Public Health and Medicine; and Democracy and Inclusion. These pillars guide the initiative's programming and allow for focused, interdisciplinary collaboration that is relevant to communities in both Brazil and the United States. Though

these pillars are a guide, they do not limit the work of the Brasillinois initiative.

One of the signature accomplishments of Brasillinois' first year is the launch of a Joint Call for Proposals in partnership with FAPESP. Announced in December 2024, the call invited teams of Illinois and São Paulo-based researchers to submit collaborative research proposals. Each project was eligible for up to \$40,000 USD in seed funding, co-funded equally by FAPESP and the University of Illinois System. The Lemann Center plays a vital role sponsoring several of these projects. In the future there will be various opportunities for funding for collaborative grants as well.

Research is just one part of the Brasillinois model. At its core is a belief that collaboration must be person-centered rooted in long-term relationships between students, faculty, and institutions.

Brasillinois has supported institutional delegations to Brazil from all three of the University of Illinois campuses in multiple disciplines connecting on the possibilities of research between the researchers.

In March 2025, CAPES and the University of Illinois System signed an agreement to bring 350 sandwich program scholars over three years. In 2026–2027, Brasillinois will facilitate the arrival of Brazilian PhD students and early-career researchers at University of Illinois campuses, with additional cohorts arriving in 2027–2028. These scholars, supported by Brazilian federal funding, typically spend 6 to 10 months in Illinois conducting research, attending

seminars, and building professional networks.

On the undergraduate side, planning is underway to expand study abroad opportunities for Illinois undergraduate students to Brazil and expanding financial access for these opportunities. In return, Illinois faculty are engaging in short-term visits to Brazil to co-teach, conduct fieldwork, and expand institutional ties.

Brasillinois is more than a set of exchanges—it's a networked ecosystem. One of the reasons for its early success is its ability to connect multiple levels of partnership, from grassroots faculty collaborations to top-level institutional agreements.

In the past year, Brasillinois has formalized relationships with leading Brazilian universities, including ongoing discussions with UNICAMP and UFAM. Brasillinois participated in and hosted events such as FAPESP Week Chicago and the Sustainability Research & Innovation Congress 2025. Brasillinois strengthened internal capacity to support cross-campus research and mobility projects.

The path ahead for Brasillinois is filled with opportunity. Plans for multiple joint calls for proposals are already underway, along with expanded mobility funding and new thematic working groups across climate science, public policy, and medical humanities.

Please reach out to the Brasillinois coordinator Angelina Sandora if you have any questions. sandora3@uillinois.edu

BRASILLINOIS/FAPESP COLLABORATIVE GRANTS FOR THE 2025-2026 ACADEMIC YEAR

The Lemann Center funded three UIUC faculty-led collaborative grant proposals in the competition managed by Brasillinois and Fapesp. Brasillinois is the University of Illinois Systems-Wide Initiative, spearheaded by President Tim Killeen. Fapesp is the São Paulo State Research Foundation (Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo Illinois).

Bruno Nunes

UIUC Health and Kinesiology

Alexandre Dias Porto Chiavegatto Filho

Faculdade de Saúde Pública da Universidade de São Paulo

"Machine Learning Solutions to Identify and Correct Under-diagnosis of Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases in Brazil."

Jodi Flaws

UIUC Comparative Biosciences and Veterinary Medicine

Wellerson Scarano

UNESP Human Embryology and Medicine

"The Effects of Plastic Contamination on Reproductive Health."

Nikolai Alvarado

UIUC Department of Geography and Geographic Information Science in Earth, Society, and Environment

José Gilberto de Souza

UNESP Rural Economics

"Social Reproduction and Migrant Labor: Dependency, Value-Extraction, and the Politics of Urban Space Across the Americas."

STUDY ABROAD UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS FROM THE 2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR

The Lemann Center expanded the number of scholarships for Illinois undergraduates to participate in short-term study abroad programs to Brazil. What follows are excerpts from some of their reports.



Katie Guzman

Gies Scholar Program in Brazil

The short-term study abroad program “has been more impactful to me in that I was able to visit not just as a tourist, but also as a minority student in a privileged university ... To start, the program consisted of an online portion to work with Brazilian students on a project for a small coffee business in Brazil ... When we visited Brazil, we got a chance to speak to the current marketing team, a social worker/recruiter, and some participants of the program. Their stories have changed my perspective of the world ... It felt great to hear how much they were trying to make a difference ...”



Max Elloye

Hoeft Technology & Management Business Immersion Trip to Brazil

As part of “the case study project, we visited a recycling company to observe how they managed and sorted electronic waste” ... “This teamwork brought me closer to not only the Brazilian students, but also the Hoeft students in the other cohorts who I was not as familiar with. We collaborated on business recommendations” in order to “continue to have a positive and sustainable impact within their community, while reaching broader audiences.”



Soundarya Sivakumar

Hoeft Technology & Management Business Immersion Trip to Brazil

“In March 2025, I had the incredible opportunity to travel to Brazil for a one-week study abroad trip. As a group of 14 business and engineering students, we immersed ourselves in the vibrant culture of Rio de Janeiro and deepened our understanding of global dynamics.”

“Our first corporate visit was to MJV Technology & Innovation, where speakers emphasized how design thinking, agile strategies, and sustainability are core pillars for driving meaningful work in global innovation. This session laid the foundation for

our subsequent site visits and case study as it introduced a holistic approach to problem-solving. The site visits to IBP (Brazilian Institute of Petroleum), Papel Semente, and Ciclo Orgânico offered us a firsthand look at how sustainable practices are integrated across different industries to positively impact society while maintaining operational efficiency.”

LEMANN LECTURE SERIES IN THE 2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR

Each year our Lemann Center hosts research presentations of scholars, faculty, and graduate students from UIUC and other institutions. There were sixteen lectures in the AY 2024-2025 series.



Leonardo Oliveira Silva da Costa

Universidade Federal de Lavras (UFLA)

"Predicting novel environments for eucalyptus families using environmental covariates," September 3

Eucalyptus urophylla S.T. Blake is the most widely planted tree species in Brazil. By analyzing how genotypes respond to environmental variations, we can model the genotype-by-environment (GxE) interaction. This allows us to predict productivity in untested environments and make more accurate cultivar recommendations. Using the environmental information approach and producing thematic maps is expected to increase the efficiency of breeding programs for this species.

The speaker graduated in Forest Engineering from the Universidade Federal de Goiás (UFG) and holds a master's degree in Genetics and Plant Breeding from the Universidade Federal de Lavras (UFLA). Currently, he is a second-year doctoral student at UFLA, modeling genotype-by-environment (GxE) interaction through environmental factors for commercial eucalyptus clones.



Wail S. Hassan

UIUC

"Arab Brazil: Fictions of Ternary Orientalism," September 10

Arab-Brazilian relations have been largely invisible to area studies and Comparative Literature scholarship. Arab Brazil is the first book of its kind to highlight the representation of Arab and Muslim immigrants in Brazilian literature and popular culture since the early twentieth century, revealing anxieties and contradictions in the country's ideologies of national identity. The book analyzes these representations in a century of Brazilian novels, short stories, and telenovelas. Hassan shows how the Arab East works paradoxically as a site of otherness (different language, culture, and religion) and solidarity (cultural, historical, demographic, and geopolitical ties).

Hassan explores the differences between colonial Orientalism's binary structure of Self/Other, East/West, and colonizer/colonized, on the one hand; and, on the other hand, Brazilian Orientalism's ternary structure, which defines the country's identity in relation to both North and East.

The speaker is Professor and Head of the Department of Comparative & World Literature and an affiliate of the Lemann Center for Brazilian Studies, which in 2011, funded the first research project that led to this book. A specialist in modern Arabic and Arab Diaspora literature and intellectual history, Hassan is a past president of the American Comparative Literature Association.



Magna Inácio

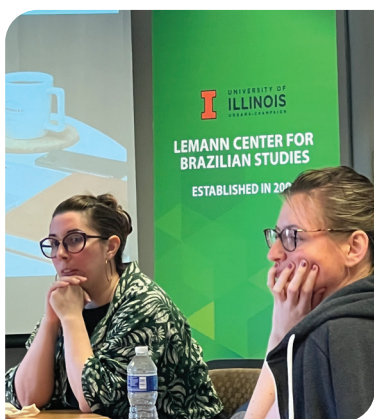
Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG)

“Administrative Unilateralism and Presidential Decree-Making in Brazil,”
October 1

Brazilian presidentialism has shown considerable change in the dynamics of inter-branch relations and in the law-making process. The strengthening of Congress has increased the costs of legislative bargaining and the Executive's legislative success. Several analyses have questioned whether Brazilian presidents have become less powerful, and whether a Congress-led decision-making process has emerged. Professor Inácio explored this question based on a comprehensive analysis of presidential decree-making, considering both the legislative and administrative powers of the Chief Executive. The literature on presidential powers in Brazil focuses mainly on legislative decrees as the president's key tool for getting things done. However, little is known about whether presidents strategically choose the type of decree to issue, legislative or administrative, when they diverge from legislators on policy goals.

This talk shared results of ongoing research, showing that these types of decrees vary among Brazilian presidents, depending on the political and institutional constraints each one faces. Using machine learning techniques to uncover the content of these decrees, the results show that presidents resort to administrative unilateralism to pursue policy goals, but they use diverse strategies when issuing administrative decrees. Selective implementation of laws, with partial regulation of their content via decree, is used when the president diverges from congressional decisions. Revision of previous decrees is also used to reshape policies without the incurring the costs of passing new legislation. In this way, we shed light on presidential decree-making in Brazil, which goes beyond legislative action and allows presidents strategically to tackle less friendly inter-branch relations.

The speaker served as Lemann Distinguished Visiting Scholar in Fall 2024. She is Associate Professor of Political Science and former director of the Centre for Legislative Studies at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG). She has held positions at Stanford University, the University of Oxford, GIGA/Hamburg, Universidad de Salamanca, and elsewhere.



Celenia Graves and Mary Borgo Ton

UIUC

“IA + Bibliotecas: AI in Latin American and Caribbean Studies,” September 17

This talk considered if, when, and how to engage with artificial intelligence as part of the research process. We take a behind-the-scenes look at how AI recognizes patterns in text, images, and audio and address ethical, legal, and practical considerations. Along the way, we discussed bibliotecas in the broadest sense—we considered examples from Archivo Mesoamericano and other digital humanities projects that use AI to transcribe audio in romance languages, create 3D models of cultural heritage objects, and identified narrative tropes across texts.

LEMANN LECTURE SERIES IN THE 2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR

Celenia Graves (she/they) is a diversity resident at UIUC and is currently the Experimental Learning and Engagement Librarian for the Grainger Engineering Library and Information Center IDEA Lab makerspace. Mary Borgo Ton is an Assistant Professor and Digital Humanities Librarian at UIUC. Her research uses digital approaches to study screen-based media in the global south with a particular focus on nineteenth-century missionaries who traveled to Africa and Oceania.



Daniela Nunes

UNICAMP

“Gender Differences in Living Arrangements and Mortality Among Brazilian Older Adults,” October 8

As Brazil's population ages, a growing number of older adults are living alone, which may significantly impact their health and survival. Our study delves into the critical relationship between living arrangements, gender, and mortality among older adults in São Paulo, Brazil, using data from the 2000–2017 SABE Study, a comprehensive longitudinal survey involving 2,124 participants aged 60 and above. Our findings highlighted the complex association between living arrangements and mortality among older Brazilian adults, emphasizing the need to consider gender-specific

dynamics. Particularly for men, those consistently living alone face a higher mortality risk, underscoring the necessity for targeted support. Addressing these gender specific needs in living conditions and support structures is crucial to potentially reducing mortality risks in the aging population.

Dr. Daniella Nunes is an Associate Professor at the School of Nursing at the Universidade Estadual de Campinas (Unicamp). She is the coordinator of the Extension Program at the School of Nursing/Unicamp, and leader of the Research Group on Technology and Care in Aging (GPTCEn).



Neide Sosvianin

Instituto Beija Flor (IBF)

“From Resilience to Empowerment: A Journey Building a Better Future for Women and Children,” October 15

The speaker was born in Bahia, raised in São Paulo, and professionally trained in Paraná, where she currently resides. She holds a bachelor's degree in law from PUC-PR and Administrative Management from FAE Business School. She completed an MBA in Financial Management, Controlling, and Auditing at Fundação Getúlio Vargas (FGV). In April 1987, she and her partner, Sérgio, established Versátil Andaimes (Versátil Scaffolding), a company in the construction equipment rental industry. In 2010, she founded the Beija-Flor Institute in Colombo, PR, in the metropolitan area of Curitiba.



Rogério Sávio Link

Universidade Federal de Rondônia (UNIR)

“The Apurinã and the Last Frontier: Historical, Mythical, and Anthropological Reality in the Amazon,” October 22

This presentation focused on the Apurinã indigenous people, part of the Maipure family of the Arawak group, who inhabit the heart of the Amazon rainforest. Using linguistic, anthropological, archaeological, and documentary sources, I discussed the history of these people and regional and international history. Between the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Apurinã territory became the last frontier of Luso-

Brazilian expansionism, driven by industrial capitalism's exploitation of rubber. A central question is whether Apurinã mythical narratives reflect long-term historical aspects, and whether their worldview as a “people of the middle land” has roots in historical immanence, transformed into theological transcendence. Additionally, I analyzed how, as an egalitarian society, the Apurinã structure their political, warrior, and religious power to prevent the emergence of coercion and class division. Finally, I addressed debates on the distinction between the Tupi and Arawak groups, questioning the view of the Apurinã as an exception to the Arawak pacifist ethos, suggesting instead that they maintain this characteristic in an Amazonian indigenous universe.

The speaker is Professor in the Department of History at the Universidade Federal de Rondônia (UNIR). He holds a PhD in History (2016) from the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) with a focus on the Apurinã indigenous people in the Amazon during the 19th and 20th centuries.



Sonia Guimarães

Institute of Aeronautical Technology (ITA)

“Unlocking Potential Through Diversity: A Call to Action,” November 12

When we picture a scientist, how often do we see a black Brazilian woman in our minds? Dr. Sonia Guimarães challenged this norm by showcasing the extraordinary achievements of black women in STEM, who defy the odds to excel. Despite systemic barriers, these women have risen to prominence, driven by unparalleled skill and resilience. Studies show that diverse teams are not only more innovative but also more successful. Diversity is not a checkbox, but rather a catalyst for transformation.

Sonia Guimarães is Associate Professor at the Institute of Aeronautical Technology (ITA), with her PhD in physics from the University of Manchester (UK). She is the first black woman to have a PhD in physics in Brazil, graduating in 1989, a title that led her to become a professor at ITA when the institute still did not accept women among its students, in 1993. In May 2023, Sonia received the Santos Dumont Medal of Honor to Merit as a celebration of her 30 years of work at ITA. In December of the same year, she was elected by Bloomberg Línea as one of the 100 most innovative people in Latin America.

LEMANN LECTURE SERIES IN THE 2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR



Fábio Feldmann

University of Wisconsin-Madison

“Brazil in the face of Climate Change: the challenge of COP 30 in the Amazon,” October 31

Brazil gained recognition for its global leadership in the international community with the successful hosting of the major UN conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Since then, the impact of extreme weather events have brought the issue of global warming into people's daily lives around the world. Brazil is currently facing an extraordinary period of drought, which affects everything from power generation at hydroelectric dams to riverside populations in the Amazon. Forest fires are dangerously affecting the Pantanal, our planet's largest wetland, and smoke is compromising air quality in Brazilian cities. Ongoing deforestation in the Amazon and Cerrado make Brazil one of the main emitters of greenhouse gases on the planet. As we know, the success of the upcoming UN “COP 30” Climate Change Conference depends on the host country's ability to articulate itself in the diplomatic field and clarity regarding the objectives of the event. Despite all of this, there is a clear mobilization of some business sectors, climate deniers, and extreme right-wing politicians to organize parallel events at COP 30 in opposition to progress on international accords and initiatives to redress climate change. This mobilization could have geopolitical consequences if it proves capable of bringing together countries governed by far-right populism. In the run-up to COP 30, we have the opportunity to anticipate and neutralize these efforts so that we can focus on the crucial issues for tackling climate change.

Fábio Feldmann is one of Brazil's main references on the environment, with long-standing participation in civil society and international forums on climate change, biodiversity and human rights. He was a parliamentarian for three terms and a member of the National Constituent Assembly, mainly responsible for the environmental chapter of the 1988 Brazilian Constitution. He also contributed to Brazilian legislation on water resources, solid waste management, environmental education, and the protection of the Atlantic Forest. Feldmann also served as São Paulo's state secretary for the environment, implementing projects to control air pollution. He was a Visiting Tinker Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.



Dana Johnson

Assistant Director of External Fellowships, University of Illinois Graduate College

“Graduate Student Workshop: Writing Effective Fellowship Proposals,” January 28

This workshop provided participants the opportunity to learn how to write competitive research proposals. Dr. Dana Johnson is part of the Graduate College’s efforts to help Illinois graduate students compete for fellowships and grants. She conducts proposal-writing workshops and individual advising sessions for graduate students. She earned her Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. She has published on youth, education, and the “brain drain” phenomenon from Serbia in *Social Anthropology and History and Anthropology*.



Rafael Goes

Universidade Federal de Pernambuco

“Economic Cracks: Evaluating the Effects of the Disaster on the Labor Market and Households in Maceió, Brazil,” February 11

This talk investigated the labor market and economic impacts of a disaster in the northeastern Brazilian city of Maceió, caused by industrial rock salt extraction. Using a difference-in-differences approach, the speaker first assessed the micro-local short-term impacts on employment in affected areas, leveraging annual employer-level data from 2015 to 2021 to estimate labor market disruptions. Next, he analyzed household-level data from vulnerable populations to examine the disaster’s effects on both economic and social outcomes. Finally, to understand the broader economic consequences for the municipality, he used data from the Continuous National Household Sample Survey in order to evaluate Maceió’s economic performance in the absence of the disaster. His findings revealed a statistically significant 6% decrease in employment and a 9% increase in business closures in affected areas due to the disaster. Additionally, the disaster significantly impacted vulnerable households, with a reduction in child labor and an increase in access to medication for chronic diseases. At the city-wide level, he documented a 20% decline in earnings from work among affected individuals and an overall reduction in employment rates by approximately 12.5%. These results provided critical insights into the labor market and social impacts of industrial urban disasters, emphasizing the need for robust policy interventions to address urban environmental risks. As the frequency of such disasters rise due to climate change, this research highlighted the importance of urban economic resilience planning and policy formulation.

The speaker is currently a PhD candidate at PIMES/UFPE (Universidade Federal de Pernambuco), and a visiting scholar at UIUC. His research focuses on applied microeconomics, particularly in urban economics, crime, and education, strongly emphasizing causal inference.

LEMANN LECTURE SERIES IN THE 2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR



Marc Hertzman

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

"After Palmares: Diaspora, Inheritance, and the Afterlives of Zumbi," March 11

This book talk explores the dramatic rise, fall, and afterlives of Palmares, one of history's largest and longest-lasting maroon societies. Forged during the seventeenth century by formerly enslaved Africans in what would become northeast Brazil, Palmares stood for a century, withstanding sustained attacks from two European powers. In 1695, colonial forces assassinated their most famous leader, Zumbi. Hertzman examined the ways that Palmares and its inhabitants lived on after Zumbi's death, creating vivid

portraits of those whose lives and voices scholars often assumed were inaccessible. With an innovative approach to African languages and paying close attention to place as well as African and diasporic spiritual beliefs, Hertzman reshapes our understanding of Palmares and Zumbi and advances a new framework for studying fugitive slave communities and marronage in the African diaspora.

Marc Hertzman is Professor, Associate Chair, and Director of Graduate Studies in the History Department. His previous works have been recognized with prizes and honorable mentions from the Brazilian Studies Association, the Conference on Latin American History, the Latin American Studies Association, the International Association for the Study of Popular Music, and others.



Elisa Frühauf Garcia

Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF)

"Contesting Colonial Knowledge: Gender, Sexuality, and the Agency of Indigenous Women in Brazil," March 25.

This talk explored early European accounts of the Indigenous peoples of coastal Brazil, which frequently emphasize themes of sexuality, particularly in relation to Indigenous women. These accounts are replete with detailed, stereotypical depictions of their bodies, sexual practices, partner choices, roles as mothers, and emotional lives.

The speaker analyzed how these perceptions were constructed and subsequently propagated across Europe, situating them within the broader context of Portuguese colonial rule in Brazil. Furthermore, this discussion highlighted how Indigenous women, despite being framed within these colonial narratives, actively resisted and subverted such portrayals, thereby reclaiming their agency and offering a more complex understanding of their lived experiences under colonial rule. The talk also addresses how Brazilian historiography has, until recently, perpetuated colonial perspectives on Indigenous women, and how these views continue to permeate the country's cultural heritage. This legacy is visible in many Brazilian cities, where public spaces and monuments often perpetuate outdated narratives and shape the historical perceptions of passersby.

The speaker is currently the Lemann Distinguished Visiting Scholar. Her first of many publications was, *As diversas formas de ser índio*. Based on her Ph.D. dissertation, the book received the coveted Prêmio Arquivo Nacional de Pesquisa, and was published by the Arquivo Nacional itself.



Flávio Barbosa Justino

Universidade Federal de Viçosa (UFV)

“Atmospheric Rivers and Fires across North and South America,” April 15.

This presentation examined how atmospheric rivers (ARs) influence extreme climate conditions and wildfire activity in Brazil and North America. ARs can both alleviate drought and trigger floods, while large-scale climate patterns (e.g., ENSO, SACZ, PNA and NAO) shape fire risk by intensifying heatwaves and drying soils. He assessed AR variability and its link to wildfires across different biomes using climate models, remote sensing, and statistical analyses. Understanding these interactions is vital for improving early

warning systems and climate adaptation strategies. This research highlights the need for interdisciplinary approaches to address climate-induced hazards in both regions.

The speaker is a distinguished climatologist and professor. He completed his Ph.D. in meteorology at the Leibniz-Institute of Marine Research in Germany. He has taken up positions at the University of Toronto, the Ohio State University, and elsewhere. He has over 90 peer-reviewed publications and he has supervised 21 master's and 22 Ph.D. candidates at UFV.



Fabio Braga

Werner Baer Postdoc

“Between Fragility and Resistance: The Ontology of Vulnerability and Its Relationship with the Brazilian Legal System,” April 22.

In an era marked by growing challenges to marginalized communities, the concept of vulnerability emerges as a crucial lens to analyze the judiciary's role in upholding justice. Vulnerability is not solely a marker of fragility; it is a condition that unites all human beings and is a powerful basis for resistance. Recent rulings, such as the federal court decisions blocking discriminatory policies targeting trans individuals

in the military and halting the deportation of a Palestinian student from the U.S., underscore the judiciary's role in checks and balances. This presentation explored the Brazilian legal system's engagement with vulnerability, examining how judicial decisions can reinforce or challenge precarity. By applying the concept of vulnerability literacy, assessed through moral conception, political purpose, recognition matrix, concept of citizenship, and legal discourse, this research proposed a transformative legal framework to strengthen social justice. Drawing on qualitative bibliographical analysis, it interrogated how vulnerability compels judicial systems to rethink recognition and protection in the face of state-sanctioned marginalization. From a comparative perspective, this study encouraged dialogue on the judiciary's responsibility to safeguard democratic principles and human dignity.

The speaker was a Werner Baer Postdoctoral fellow in AY 2024-2025. Previously, he was a Visiting Researcher at the University of Oklahoma's Center for Brazilian Studies. He holds a PhD in Human Rights and Democracy from the Universidade Federal do Paraná (UFPR) and a Master's in Socio-Environmental Law and Sustainability from the Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná (PUC-PR).

LEMANN LECTURE SERIES IN THE 2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR



Marcus Ferreira

Werner Baer Postdoc

“Smart Sensors for Food Safety: Democratizing Access to High-Quality Food in Brazil,” May 6.

Food safety is a critical global concern, especially in Brazil, where small-scale food industries lack access to low-cost, high-speed, and reliable quality control technologies. To address this, my research proposed the development of an Online Portable Low-Cost E-Nose System (OPLCEN) aimed at the Brazilian food industry for enhancing food safety monitoring. In parallel, complementary simulation-based research on food

drying behavior has been conducted to model heat and mass transfer phenomena through computational software. These simulations provided critical insights into moisture transport and drying kinetics, supporting the broader goal of improving food processing conditions and real-time monitoring capabilities. My project aimed to optimize the physical design of the OPLCEN to improve analysis accuracy through the application of artificial intelligence (AI). We are testing the device with Brazilian commodities, where this system can then be used independently or installed at the end of food drying lines to enable real-time monitoring at a fraction of the cost of conventional methods. Whether used alone or in combination with smart dryers, the OPLCEN has the potential to significantly improve food safety practices and profitability for small food manufacturers across Brazil.

The speaker earned his Ph.D. in Chemistry and Food Engineering with recent studies in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and sensor technologies. With a multidisciplinary mindset, he uses sensors and AI innovations to solve practical problems. He is driven by the philosophy of using technology to build a better society through sustainable innovations serving industries and communities.

PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE PROGRAM



Raquel Goebel

Director

The 2024–2025 academic year marked a period of dynamic growth, innovation, and outreach for the Portuguese Program, characterized by expanded partnerships, curricular enhancements, immersive student experiences, and significant cultural engagement both on and off campus. A major highlight of the year was the deepening of strategic partnerships at institutional and international levels.

As Portuguese Language Program Director, Raquel Goebel strengthened collaborative ties with the Federal Institute of São Paulo through the ongoing support and co-sponsorship of the Teletandem project. This initiative offers

students the opportunity to engage in reciprocal language exchange with native Portuguese speakers, free of charge. Through this immersive virtual interaction, students experience authentic linguistic practice while developing a deeper understanding of Brazilian culture. Building upon this collaboration, Raquel co-authored and submitted a research proposal titled "(Virtual) Exchanges as an Instrument of Inclusion and Democratization of Linguistic and Cultural Knowledge". This proposal was developed in partnership with faculty from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and the Federal Institute of São Paulo, reflecting a broad commitment to innovation in language pedagogy and global learning. This year, the academic curriculum underwent important updates, particularly at the advanced level. All advanced Portuguese courses underwent curricular reform to better align assessment with cultural competencies. Traditional exams were replaced with engaging project-based assessments that allowed students to explore Lusophone cultures through multimedia presentations, websites, and personal digital projects. These assignments reflected individual interests while encouraging critical engagement with Portuguese-speaking communities. Students were also required to attend campus and community events conducted in Portuguese, creating connections between classroom learning and real-world cultural experiences. In addition to coursework, students participated in a range of culturally immersive experiences. In October, a workshop on professional norms in Brazil and the U.S. was led by Thaís Silveira, from the Illinois Leadership Institute, offering students a comparative view of workplace culture. Later that month, a group visited Incobrasa Industries in Gilman, Illinois, where they learned about the influence of Brazilian professionals and practices in the agribusiness sector. Students also attended a lecture by Neide Sosvianin, founder of the Instituto Beija-flor, who discussed her work in social entrepreneurship supporting women and children in Brazil. A December visit to AB-Inbev in St. Louis rounded out the semester with a unique look into Brazilian-American ties in the global beverage industry. The cultural immersion efforts continued into the spring semester. In February 2025, a group of 30 students attended a screening of the Oscar-winning Brazilian film *Ainda Estou Aqui*, which provided insight into Brazil's military dictatorship and sparked discussion around historical memory and resistance. In May, the Portuguese Program collaborated with the Department of French and Italian to host a screening of *Legado Italiano*, a documentary celebrating 150 years of Italian immigration to Brazil. The event highlighted Brazil's rich multicultural heritage and promoted intercultural dialogue among students and faculty. Recognizing student interest in broadening their understanding of Brazil, Raquel proposed a new eight-week general education course, *Discovering Brazil: Culture, Heritage, and People*, set to launch in Spring 2026. The course will explore Brazilian culture and history through the lenses of diversity, identity, and social justice. A short-term study abroad component during Spring Break is also planned to complement classroom learning with first-hand experience. This initiative is expected to boost enrollment and expand access to Portuguese

PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE PROGRAM

studies for students from a variety of academic backgrounds. Outreach efforts were a key focus of the program this year. Through the CourseShare program of the Big Ten Academic Alliance, Raquel offered advanced Portuguese courses to students at other BTAA institutions, filling instructional gaps and expanding access to quality language instruction across the region. Her work in this area has attracted interest from several partner universities looking to promote Portuguese study on their campuses. Raquel also played an active role in national and regional language advocacy. She continued her work with the Brazilian Council of Citizens (Conselho do Cidadão) and the Council of Brazilians Residing Abroad (CRBE) and started her second term as Associate Director for Region 4 of the Illinois Council of Foreign Languages. Additionally, she assumed leadership as the Special Interest Group officer for Portuguese at the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), strengthening the Program's influence in broader professional networks. On April 2025, Raquel joined a Career Center-sponsored trip to Springfield, Illinois, to meet with officials from the Illinois Department of Central Management Services (CMS). There, she advocated for increased internship and career opportunities in state government for language students, emphasizing the practical value of multilingual skills in the public sector. Student engagement extended beyond the classroom through vibrant extracurricular programming. As advisor to the Luso-Brazilian Student Organization, Raquel supported the planning of cultural celebrations such as Festa de Dia das Bruxas, a traditional Bala Baiana cooking workshop, Festa Junina, and a lively Carnaval celebration. Carnaval drew 365 attendees and was organized in collaboration with other Latin American student groups, fostering a sense of community and cross-cultural celebration. Raquel also led a special Children's Carnaval as part of the CLACS "Discovering Latin America" series, further promoting Portuguese culture in the broader community. In keeping with the Program's commitment to outreach, Raquel participated in the University High School's Summer Camp, where she taught introductory Portuguese sessions. She also contributed to the International Student and Scholar Services' "Taste of Language" event in February and co-organized the 2024 Teaching Share Fair for the School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics. Throughout the year, she maintained the Program's online presence, sharing cultural resources and event highlights via social media. The year concluded with the successful hosting of the XII Illinois Portuguese Language Connection on April 26, 2025, held at the ACES Library. Co-organized with faculty from Northwestern University and the University of Chicago, the conference featured the theme "Cultura Popular do Nordeste." Attendees enjoyed traditional food, cultural performances, workshops, and presentations that celebrated northeastern Brazilian traditions such as cordel literature and quadrilha dancing. This event continues to be a cornerstone of statewide collaboration and language promotion. Raquel's unwavering dedication to advancing the Portuguese Program through education, outreach, and community building has resulted in a year of exceptional progress and impact. As we reflect on these achievements, we look forward to continuing this momentum into the 2025– 2026 academic year, inspired by a renewed commitment to excellence, inclusivity, and global engagement.



150 years of Italian Presence in Brazil



Screening of the film *Legado italiano* April 11, 2025 at 6 PM in 1090 Lincoln Hall followed by a reception in the Atrium of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics Bldg.

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
School of Literatures, Cultures & Linguistics

CO-SPONSORED ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Bicentennial Commemoration of U.S.-
Brazil Diplomatic Relations (1824 – 2024)

Chicago Cultural Center, September 5

“Cyro Baptista: Chama,”

Krannert Center, September 6

“Brazilian Music to Sing and Dance,” part
of “Hispanic/Latin American Heritage
Celebration,”

Kenwood Elementary School, Unit 4, September 20

“The Real Plan: 30 Years Celebration,” with
Edmar Lisboa Bacha, Gustavo H.B. Franco,
Márcio Garcia

I-Hotel, September 24

Mohammad Darawshe, “The Palestinian
Citizens in Israel in Time of Crisis,” Latzer
Hall

YMCA, September 25

Gafieira Rio Miami Musical Performance to
Commemorate the Lemann Center’s 15th
Anniversary

Krannert Center, October 5

International Music Night (Outreach
event),

Illini Union Courtyard, October 17

CLACS and Lemann Center Fall Reception,

Maize at the Station, October 21

“CLACS Legacy and the REAL
Development Challenges for Latin
American Regional Economics”

Alice Campbell Alumni Center, November 11-12

Sabina Cerruto, “The Chico Mendes
Extractive Reserve”

Amazon Defenders Online Series, January 27

Carnaval,

February 10

“150 Years of Italian Presence in Brazil,”

*Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics Building,
April 11*

“Discovering Latin America and the
Caribbean,” Bilingual Program for Children

*Champaign Public Library and Kenwood
Elementary School, April 22*

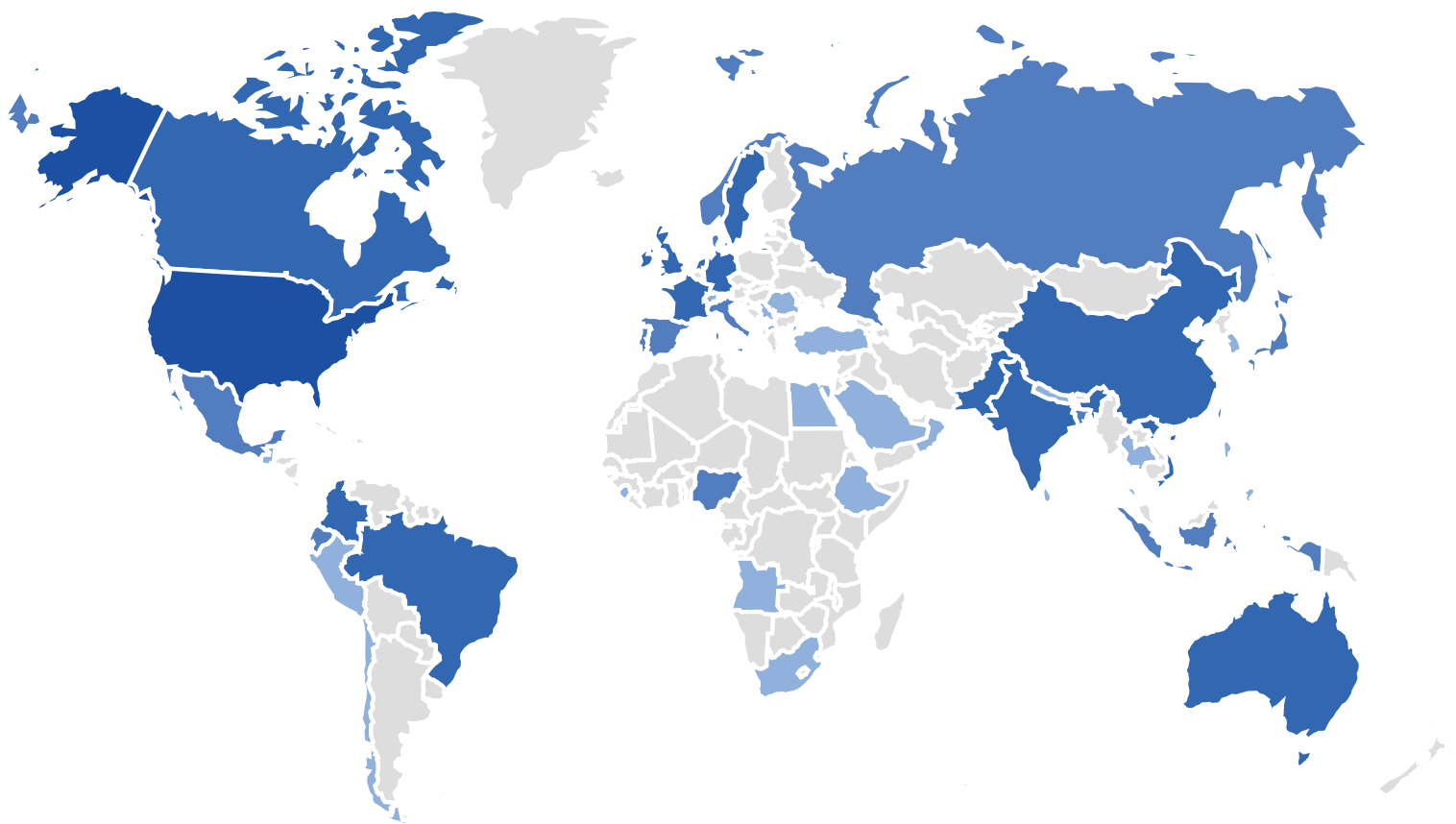
“XII Illinois Portuguese Language
Connection,”

ACES Library, April 26

“Kant and the Isms Conference,”

May 13-15

VISUALIZATIONS OF USER ENGAGEMENT OF THE LEMANN CENTER WEBPAGE





COUNTRY	ACTIVE USERS
UNITED STATES	1.3K
BRAZIL	189
CHINA	152
INDIA	18
GERMANY	17
UNITED KINGDOM	16
FRANCE	14

ABOUT US

Established in 2009, the Lemann Center for Brazilian Studies promotes teaching and research about Brazil by faculty and students at Illinois and their Brazilian counterparts, who take advantage of the extensive resources available at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC).

Building on long-standing collaboration with Brazilian scholars in economics and agriculture, as well as nearly a half-century of teaching and research in Brazilian literature and history, the Center fosters knowledge and understanding of Brazil across disciplines and colleges. It does this by offering fellowships to UIUC and Brazilian students at graduate and undergraduate levels, funding faculty research, organizing international conferences on Brazilian topics, and supporting cultural activities.

Lemann Center Staff (2024-2025)

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Carolina Rocha, Associate Director
Elis Artz, Senior Program Coordinator
Lucas Cavoli, Extra Help
Maria de Godoy Saab, Extra Help
Thallyta Laryssa P.F. Cavoli, Graduate Assistant

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