

FULBRIGHT PORTUGAL FORUM – BIOS

ALYSSA BOTELHO

Is a screenwriter and filmmaker with dual degrees in Film/Media and Business Management from the University of Rhode Island. Her work centers on community, psychology, folklore, and overlooked histories. Alyssa is excited to develop a feature-length screenplay set in the Azores during World War I, exploring Portugal–U.S. relations through a father-son story amid the changing whaling industry and rise of American naval presence. Her research will be conducted in collaboration with the Câmara Municipal de Ponta Delgada (Councilman Sérgio Rezendes), the Museu Carlos Machado, and the Museu Militar dos Açores, fostering cross-cultural exchange through storytelling.

University of Rhode Island → Câmara Municipal de Ponta Delgada / Museu Carlos Machado / Museu Militar

AMY INESTROZA

Was born in La Ceiba, Honduras. Her upbringing in a diverse immigrant community in the U.S. shaped her passion for cultural diplomacy and education equity. A first-generation college graduate from the College of the Holy Cross, she earned her BA in International Studies and Sociology with a focus on Latin America. While studying abroad in Buenos Aires, she began learning Portuguese, deepening her commitment to engaging with Lusophone communities. She also conducted research on the intersections of religion and political behavior among Latino and Asian American communities in the U.S. As a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant at the Universidade da Madeira, she looks forward to creating community through dialogue, creativity, and shared experience. She hopes to pursue a career in diplomacy that amplifies underrepresented voices and promotes cross-cultural connection.

College of the Holy Cross → Universidade da Madeira

ANA SOFIA GRAÇA

Is an architect from Portugal and an incoming PhD candidate in the Design, Environment and the Arts program at Arizona State University. With a Master's degree in Architecture from the University of Porto and professional experience in leading studios in Brussels and Portugal, Ana's work explores the intersection of architecture, ecological engineering, and sustainable innovation. At ASU, she will investigate how nature-inspired design principles can enhance the energy efficiency of buildings by developing a thermodynamic architectural system informed by patterns of energy flow in nature. Under the supervision of Professor Jason (PhD), her research embraces a transdisciplinary methodology that adopts a data-driven approach and leverages AI models to evaluate and optimize building performance. Her goal is to rethink architecture's role in resource flows and contribute to

the development of regenerative, energy-efficient design systems that provide better facilities for people as well as the environment.

Universidade do Porto → Arizona State University

CHAMP TURNER

Is a multimedia artist with experience working in museums, collections, and archives. He holds a B.A. in Visual Art and International Affairs from Brown University. With an interest in understanding local history through its material legacy, Champ will work to create a site-specific installation at the Carlos Machado Museum on the topic of historic upheaval events in the Azores. Having lived in Rhode Island (home to a large Azorean diaspora), Champ hopes to connect his work to the shared history of Portugal, the Azores, and New England.

Brown University, RI → Museu Carlos Machado, Ponta Delgada

CLÁUDIA COSTA [Moderator]

Is a physiotherapist and lecturer at Escola Superior de Saúde Atlântica, near Lisbon. She is specialized in Neurological and Vestibular Physiotherapy and is pursuing her PhD in Neuroscience at the Faculty of Medicine from the University of Lisbon, together with the Department of Physical Therapy of the University of Pittsburgh, PA, USA. In fact, it was in this American institution back in 2020/21 that Cláudia, with a Fulbright Grant for Research, developed part of her doctoral research.

Cláudia also manages diversity and inclusion projects intended for students with special needs in higher education and for the development of the physical therapy profession in the African Portuguese-speaking countries.

At the Orientation, Cláudia presented on the topic of Mental Health and Wellness Abroad, helping us to better understand how a major, transformative experience - like Fulbright - is likely to affect what we normally take for granted.

CLÁUDIA SILVA

Is a Materials Engineering PhD candidate at the Centre for MicroElectromechanical Systems (CMEMS) from the University of Minho (UM). Her research focuses on advancing diagnostic technologies in microbiology and molecular biology, using a new approach for early sepsis detection, based on specific biomarkers (quorum sensing molecules - QSM) for each bacteria species that are present in the surrounding environment of bacteria before the infection is set. As a Visiting Student Researcher, Cláudia will have the opportunity to collaborate with Professor Su Ryon Shin at the Brigham and Women's Hospital, Division of Engineering in Medicine at Harvard Medical School, Boston. With the Fulbright, she will deepen her understanding on molecular biology, and develop biomarker's molecular detection systems, optimize methodologies for device integration, and explore innovative

approaches for detecting QSM in a clinically relevant context. This research project will allow her to gain invaluable knowledge and practical skills while collaborating with leading researchers, positioning her to drive impactful advancements in the field of medical diagnostics.

Universidade do Minho → Harvard University- Brigham and Women's

DORA D'ORSI DUARTE

Is a third-year PhD student at the William James Center for Research, Ispa – University Institute in Lisbon. Her research focuses on understanding the determinants of parental stress during the perinatal period through a dyadic and longitudinal approach. She is currently conducting a multi-wave study with mothers and fathers from pregnancy through the first year postpartum, aiming to identify personal, relational, and contextual factors influencing mental health and wellbeing in early parenthood. During her Fulbright stay, Dora will work with Dr. Natasha Cabrera at the University of Maryland, whose expertise in father involvement and family dynamics will enhance the theoretical and analytical depth of the project. The main goal of this collaboration is to strengthen dyadic longitudinal data analysis strategies. This partnership will contribute to the development of more effective, evidence-based interventions to support families in the transition to parenthood and promote mental health and gender equality in caregiving.

ISPA - Instituto Universitário → University of Maryland-College Park

DOUGLAS KONEFF

“Doug” is fluent in Portuguese and most recently served in Brasilia, Brazil as Deputy Chief of Mission and Chargé d’Affaires. Doug also served as the Office Director for the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs – Brazil and Southern Cone; Minister-Counselor for Consular Affairs at U.S. Mission Brazil; Deputy Chief of Mission in Quito, Ecuador; Deputy Principal Officer at the U.S. Consulate General in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico; and Deputy Executive Secretary for the U.S. UNational Security Council.

Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Doug was a Naval Flight Officer in the U.S. Navy, flying P-3 and EP-3 aircraft in the Pacific and European theaters. Doug and his wife have three children. He is a graduate of Cornell University, where he received a Bachelors degree in International Relations, and the Defense Intelligence College in Washington, D.C., where he received a Masters degree in Strategic Intelligence.

FILIPE CRUZ

A third-year PhD student in Physics at Instituto Superior Técnico, University of Lisbon. His research explores whether the incoherent properties of light can help mitigate the

instabilities that currently hinder the development of Inertial Confinement Fusion, a promising pathway toward clean and virtually limitless energy. He also investigates the generation of strong magnetic fields from beam-plasma interactions, a phenomenon commonly observed in astrophysical environments. During his research stay at the University of California, Los Angeles, he will conduct advanced simulations and analytical studies to examine how laser bandwidth affects fusion conditions and to identify scenarios where astrophysical plasma behaviors can be replicated in laboratory settings. His work aims to bring us closer to practical fusion energy while deepening our understanding of high-energy plasma physics.

Universidade de Lisboa → University of California-Los Angeles

HELENE DUEBEL

Is a recent graduate of Boston University with a degree in Neuroscience and Computer Science. She is passionate about computational approaches to understanding the brain. She is currently a research assistant in the Myers Laboratory at Colorado State University, analyzing neural and behavioral data. For her honors thesis, she applied a state-space model to explore how rats' decision-making strategies shift across the circadian rhythm. Helene is excited to join the Mainen Laboratory at the Champalimaud Centre for the Unknown, where she will examine whether facial expressions reveal decision-making strategies and whether facial movements reflect neural manipulations that alter behavior.

Boston University → Champalimaud Centre for the Unknown

INÊS ALMEIDA [Moderator]

Inês Almeida was the Fulbright Portuguese FLTA for the academic year 2024-2025 at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. She studied at the University of Porto where she completed a Bachelor's in Languages, Literatures and Cultures and a Master's in Teaching Portuguese as a Foreign Language. Before teaching Portuguese in the USA, Inês taught in Germany, Spain and East Timor, and collaborated with several online schools teaching students from various backgrounds. At the moment, she is a PhD student in Linguistics under a Research Scholarship at the University of Lisbon.

JAMIE NICOLAS

Is from Brooklyn, NY. She graduated with a degree in American Studies and Education Studies from Yale University in 2025. In college, she participated in several organizations focused on advancing education equity, including Matriculate, Breakthrough NY, and the National Coalition on School Diversity. During her ETA, she will teach university students and spend time studying Portugal's history with colonialism. Jamie is excited to teach, learn more about Portugal, and increase her fluency in Portuguese, a language she has been

learning throughout her life as a Brazilian American. In the future, Jamie hopes to become a Black Studies professor.

Yale University → Instituto Politécnico de Leiria

JOÃO FRANCO

Is an incoming PhD candidate in Complex Systems and Data Science at the University of Vermont, with a keen interest in social complex systems. His research will combine large-scale empirical methods with agent-based modelling approaches to investigate the factors that shape personal attitudes and the potential resistance to changing them. João will explore how individuals manage this resistance — often through strategic behaviours or changes in social connections — and how these micro-level dynamics, combined with exogenous macro-level changes in social networks, can drive different broader social dynamics. Supported by Fulbright, his doctoral project seeks to advance our understanding of the intricate complex dynamics governing individuals and society, that can ultimately support decision-makers in designing evidence-based policies that better reflect individuals' needs and priorities.

Universidade Nova de Lisboa → University of Vermont

JOCELINE RODRIGUES

Born in Praia, Cabo Verde, is a dedicated and passionate aspiring physician whose goal is to blend clinical work with advocacy, research, and service. She is deeply committed to transforming healthcare into a more equitable system, with a strong focus on global health, community outreach, and policy reform. Joceline graduated from the University of Rhode Island, where she earned bachelor's degrees in Sociology and Biology. During her time at URI, she was honored as a Ryan Scholar and a Gilman Scholar, allowing her to spend a semester in India, South Africa, and Argentina. These immersive experiences enhanced her understanding of global health and fueled her desire to advocate for vulnerable populations worldwide. As a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant (ETA), Joceline plans to immerse herself in Portuguese culture, improve her fluency in the language, learn about the healthcare system, and explore Lusophone communities. Following her Fulbright year, Joceline plans to attend medical school and pursue a dual MD/MPH degree, continuing her advocacy for marginalized populations and working towards global healthcare solutions.

University of Rhode Island, RI → ISG | Business and Economics School

JULIA LININGER-WHITE

Is a graduate of Middlebury College, where she studied History and Global Health. While working on a drug policy initiative in Oregon, she became interested in how different

countries approach public health without compromising law and order. Her study of Portuguese and a semester in Lisbon gave her a strong appreciation for national identity, civic order, and community resilience—values she also sees in her home state of Oregon. As an English Teaching Assistant, Julia looks forward to strengthening local ties through education, service, and shared values. She is excited to build her prior English teaching experience at the Washington English Center in D.C. and at Success Academy in Chisinau, Moldova. An avid tennis player and runner, she also looks forward to building community through sports and volunteering.

Middlebury College → Egas Moniz School of Health & Science

KHARY HORNSBY

Is a law school educator who has conducted legal training in 50+ countries for professionals and leaders over two decades. As founding dean of global programs at UC Irvine Law and previously leading international programs at University of Minnesota Law School, he has guided thousands of internationally-trained lawyers while pioneering the integration of contemplative practice into legal pedagogy.

His approach emerges from an unconventional path: from an academic start in cellular biology and researching the mind-body connection at the Chinese Academy of Sciences to prayer chaplain, yoga teacher, and fifteen years immersed in African and Latin dance. Khary explores how embodied awareness—grounded in both science and mindfulness—enhances professionals' capacity for ethical discernment, cultural and emotional intelligence, and sustainable excellence.

His work demonstrates that presence is not separate from professional rigor but foundational to it, applicable across all fields requiring complex judgment and human connection.

University of California – Irvine → Universidade Nova de Lisboa

LUÍS AFONSO

Is a PhD candidate in Aquatic Sciences – Biology and Ecology at the School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, University of Porto, supported by FCT. He conducts his research at the Interdisciplinary Center for Marine and Environmental Research (CIIMAR), focusing on the development and ecological application of environmental DNA (eDNA) analysis tools in marine ecosystems, particularly targeting vertebrate megafauna such as marine mammals. As a visiting student researcher with the eDNA Collaborative Team at the School of Marine & Environmental Affairs, University of Washington, he will investigate how environmental conditions influence DNA degradation in dynamic marine environments. This work aims to improve the accuracy and reliability of biodiversity monitoring, a crucial step toward the sustainable understanding and management of ocean resources.

Universidade do Porto → University of Washington

MARIANA RODRIGUES

Is a Portuguese as a First Language and English as a Second Language teacher, with a master's in teaching by the University of Porto. As a young teacher at the start of her teaching career, she has worked in different teaching contexts in Portugal. In the upcoming school year, she will be working as a Foreign Language Teaching Assistant in the United States, where she will assist and teach in Portuguese language classes, participate in the department's activities and accompany the students in their learning. Through this experience, she hopes not only to hone her teaching skills in a diverse environment but also to act as a cultural ambassador for her home country, developing intercultural dialogues and activities within the community of learners. The opportunity to work as an FLTA will also be of immense value in the future, to continue her work as a researcher in the field of foreign language teaching and didactics.

Universidade do Porto – University of Georgia

MARTA BARROS

Is a PhD candidate in Psychology at the Faculty of Psychology, Universidade de Lisboa, specializing in Human Cognition. Her research focuses on face perception and the (lack of) ability to distinguish between faces, mainly people from a different ethnicity from ours. As a Visiting Student Researcher at the University of Colorado Boulder in the Department of Psychology and Neuroscience, she will further develop and improve a training methodology which aims to improve recognition memory for cross-race faces. This research project will provide insight into face recognition mechanisms as well as positive social and legal implications, as being able to tell people from different ethnicity apart will facilitate socialization.

Universidade de Lisboa → University of Colorado Boulder

MATTHEW HERNANDEZ

Is a Colombian-American, multilingual, 2024 graduate of Denison University, where he majored in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics. For his Senior Thesis, Matthew investigated the politics of housing and immigration in the contemporary context of his hometown, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Since graduating college, Matthew has served low-income communities as a paralegal at Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services and he has aided international affiliates of Harvard University seeking immigration consultation and representation at Harvard Law School's Immigration and Refugee Clinical Program. In

Portugal, Matthew is excited to support Portuguese students in linguistic and cultural learning so that they may access unique career opportunities after their university studies. After Fulbright, Matthew plans to enroll in law school to become a stronger advocate within his community. On the weekends, Matthew enjoys long distance biking, attending live music events, and spending time with his one-year-old niece, Valeria.

Denison University → Universidade de Aveiro

NÁDIA SEIDI

Is a PhD candidate in Psychology at the University of Aveiro, Portugal, conducting her research in collaboration with the Centre for Predictive and Preventive Genetics (CGPP) at the Institute for Research and Innovation in Health (i3S). She is supported by a national fellowship from the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT). Her research focuses on how parents communicate with their young children about inherited genetic conditions, with the goal of enhancing the support provided by genetic healthcare professionals. Throughout her doctoral work, Nádia has explored the psychosocial challenges experienced by parents, children and genetic healthcare professionals within the context of genetic counselling. As a Fulbright Visiting Student Researcher at the University of South Florida, she will conduct focus groups with genetic healthcare professionals from both Portugal and the U.S., gathering insights to inform practice. Her ultimate goal is to develop practice recommendations that promote a more family-centered approach in genetic counselling.

Universidade de Aveiro → University of South Florida

NUNO TAVARES

Is a PhD candidate in Biomedical Sciences at ICBAS - School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, University of Porto, developing his project at the Portuguese Oncology Institute of Porto Research Center, in the Cancer Biology and Epigenetics Group. His research is focused on microRNAs and their translational and clinical applications in testicular tumors. As a Visiting Student Researcher at Cornell University, he will join Professor Robert Weiss's lab to focus his research on the regulation of microRNAs and the therapeutic potential of epigenetic drugs for testicular cancer treatment."

Universidade do Porto → Cornell University.

PEDRO COSTA

Is pursuing a PhD in Mechanical Engineering at the Centre for Mechanical Engineering, Materials and Processes, of the University of Coimbra, in collaboration with MAHLE, Componentes de Motores S.A., a world-leading manufacturer of components for the

automotive industry. His research focuses on improving the surface finishing of high-hardness Diamond-Like Carbon-coated piston rings used in hydrogen-fueled internal combustion engines, aiming to reduce the cost of finishing operations while avoiding excessive cylinder liner wear. During his stay at the Sloan Automotive Laboratory, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Pedro will work on adapting and refining physics-based deterministic wear models to predict how machining processes influence the surface roughness and performance under critical engine lubrication conditions. This work aims to define the minimum finishing level required without compromising engine efficiency, thereby reducing manufacturing costs while supporting the transition to low-emission mobility solutions.

Universidade de Coimbra → Massachusetts Institute of Technology

PEDRO TEIXEIRA

Is a master's student in Early Modern History at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of the University of Coimbra, where he also completed his bachelor's in History with a minor in Social and Cultural Anthropology. Thanks to Fulbright and FLAD, he will develop part of his master's thesis at Brown University, steered by Professor Gabriel Rocha at the Department of Portuguese and Brazilian Studies (POBS). He will analyze unexamined travelers' journals and testimonies of the Portuguese Kingdom found in the institution's archives. His project, supervised by Professor Paiva, aims to understand the foreigners' unique interpretations of the Portuguese Inquisition and its central ceremony, the auto da fé. The project aspires to bridge the gap between History and Anthropology by employing methodologies derived from Anthropological History and Ethnohistory to delve into aspects of the ritual, sharing interdisciplinary knowledge between Portugal and the USA. Beyond the scope of understanding the Inquisition and cultivating multidisciplinary, this research is also paramount in highlighting documentation that enables social scientists to develop a deeper understanding of Portuguese Society and Culture.

Universidade de Coimbra → Brown University

PIA HERNANDEZ

Is a recent graduate from Rollins College with a B.A. in Music and in Religious Studies, summa cum laude and a Phi Beta Kappa member. Music is at the core of Pía's mission, and she seeks to lead peaceful and productive change through the conversation of music. Her passion for raising indigenous voices, promoting regenerative wellness, and leading systemic change is channeled through her intuitive musicianship and artful expression. Through Fulbright, she will continue synthesizing her studies on music and spirituality by crafting a project on Portuguese folk choral music while refining her skills as a conductor.

Rollins College → Instituto Politécnico de Lisboa

PRIYA TALREJA

Priya Talreja is a transportation electrification researcher from the San Francisco Bay Area with a B.S. in Environmental Policy Analysis and Planning from the University of California, Davis. She previously worked on electric vehicle incentive programs at ICF, CALSTART, and the California Air Resources Board. As a Fulbright researcher, Priya will collaborate with the University of the Azores and the Azores Regional Directorate for Energy to develop a mapping tool that supports the equitable placement of electric vehicle chargers to address the varying mobility needs of the islands' industries.

University of California – Davis → Universidade dos Açores / Direção Regional de Energia dos Açores

RICARDO LOURO

Is an Associate Professor at Instituto de Tecnologia Química e Biológica António Xavier, Universidade Nova de Lisboa. His main interests are focused on the areas of spectroscopy of metalloproteins and cellular bioenergetics, applied to investigate the molecular mechanisms of electricity production by bacteria. During his stay at the Division of Biology and Biological Engineering of the California Institute of Technology, he will work with Prof. Dianne Newman to develop a new method for monitoring the viability of bacterial biofilms. This method will be used to identify the limiting conditions for persistence of biofilms. This information will provide guidance to develop new strategies to fight recalcitrant bacterial infections, and to identify conditions capable of sustaining life that differ from any known terrestrial ecosystem.

Universidade Nova de Lisboa → California Institute of Technology

SARAH BRADEN

Holds a PhD in Linguistics, an MS in Education, and a BA in biology and environmental studies. Dr. Braden is an Associate Professor in the School of Teacher Education and Leadership at Utah State University where she helps to train future teachers and education researchers. In her research, Dr. Braden uses applied linguistic and linguistic anthropological methods to identify instructional design principles that leverage the assets of multilingual youth in STEM learning environments. Dr. Braden has been a PI or Co-PI on several projects funded by the National Science Foundation in which she collaborated with scientists and education researchers to design and deliver informal STEM learning opportunities on cosmic ray physics and engineering to middle and high school students.

Utah State University → Universidade de Lisboa

TAYYABA HASAN

Is a Professor at Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School, and Harvard-MIT HST. A global leader in photodynamic therapy, she has ~300 publications, 30+ inventions, and directs international programs on image-guided cancer treatment and affordable oral cancer care in low-resource settings. Dr. Hasan has received over a dozen major awards, including ICPP, SAASCR, ASP, ESP, IPA, and the US Presidential Award (PAESMEM), recognizing her scientific impact and commitment to mentoring. She is internationally respected for mentoring advancing equity and in science. Through the Fulbright program, she aims to expand global collaborations and promote innovative, accessible healthcare solutions.

Massachusetts General Hospital / Harvard Medical School / Harvard-MIT Health Sciences and Technology → Universidade de Coimbra

ZAHRA TYEBJEE

Is a material designer and a graduate of the Master of Fine Arts in Textiles program at the Rhode Island School of Design. During the Fulbright grant, she intends to develop a deep understanding of Azorean basketry craft through collaborating with local artisans, learning traditional basket weaving techniques, and mapping the lifecycle from seed to basket. As fewer local artisans are working with basketry today, she will build upon Azorean methods of preservation to carry forth the craft while amplifying the sensory and tactile qualities of basket weaving to bring emotional resonance to materials. Her research will be compiled into an artist's book and an interactive exhibition of materials. She will work with Anda&Fala - Associação Cultural and Centro de Artesanato e Design dos Açores. Zahra looks forward to engaging with the local community through hiking and trail running.

Rhode Island School of Design → Anda&Fala - Associação Cultural / CADA – Centro de Artesanato e Design dos Açores