The Portuguese Language in Service Encounters in Massachusetts

by Alexander Lee

Monday, April 8, 2013, 3:00 pm
Liberal Arts Building, Room 397D
(A&S Dean’s Conference Room)
All are welcome to attend.

Abstract. The displacement of people to industrialized nations in search of opportunity has led to the creation of multietnic societies throughout the Americas, Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. This juncture of migrant minorities in a dominant host society often results in various degrees of language contact. The US in particular has experienced a surge of minority languages in recent years, most notably Spanish. This makes Spanish one of the most researched languages in the fields of language contact and bilingualism in the US. Portuguese, with fewer speakers and a markedly different immigration history, has received considerably less scholarly focus. The present work aims at countering that trend, documenting and analyzing the use of Portuguese as a significant language in face-to-face customer service encounters among Lusitanics (people who can claim ancestry to Portugal or any of its former colonies or territories) in Massachusetts.

Alexander Lee holds a BA in Spanish Language and Literature from Montclair State University and an MST in Adolescent Education from Pace University. He also holds an MA in Portuguese Studies from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. A candidate in the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth’s doctoral program in Luso-Afro-Brazilian Studies and Theory, Alexander Lee’s research interests include Portuguese language contact in the Americas, Portuguese language pedagogy, and Portuguese for specific purposes.

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