Editor’s Message:
Film and Film Studies at the Center

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Whether the focus of your work is on language(s) or literatures, you cannot have a conversation about our collective curriculum in Spanish and Portuguese without including film. Film is a powerful vehicle for learning (about) languages and cultures at all levels of instruction; motion picture captures our students’ attention and invites them to consider unique perspectives. In our classrooms, we employ all types of visual media: feature-length films; documentaries; television series; short films and clips; films based on novels; and films inspired by songs, nursery rhymes, rap, jazz, and more.

Indeed film has made its way to the center of the curriculum and this trend has been echoed in the journal. Over the last decade, more and more editorial space in *Hispania* has been dedicated to the teaching of film, and educators in our field have generally embraced film with enthusiasm. When the Special Focus Issue on the Scholarship of Film and Film Studies was initially presented to the then AATSP Executive Council, there was an urgency expressed to sponsor and produce this volume.

Film captures the best and worst of humanity and is art in its own right. Film illustrates many aspects of the broad mission of the teaching of Spanish and Portuguese: language varieties; authentic language; cultural constructs; products, practices, and perspectives; and representations of geography, demography, and identity. Motion pictures depict cultures; however, we should not forget that many films are fiction. Some are even metafictional in familiar and disturbing ways. On occasion, our students insist that film is fact. At these moments, we come full circle, savoring the quixotic space that blurs fiction and reality that allows us to pause and analyze culture, human behavior, and expression.

I was fortunate to work with three stellar guest editors on this project. It was humbling and exciting to edit along side three scholars of such high caliber: Dr. David William Foster (Arizona State University), Dr. Ben Fraser (East Carolina University), and Dr. Bill VanPatten (Michigan State University). See bios for our Guest Editors on the next page. They taught me about passion for our work. They worked with dumbfounding speed and intensity as we read thoughtfully and critically almost fifty submissions in various stages of development. We winnowed down the line up to those in this volume. In the front matter of this issue, Foster, Fraser, and VanPatten share their thoughts about film and film studies. Please read on because you will be struck by their wisdom, their viewpoints, and their diverse approaches to film and film studies.

I would also like to sincerely thank Dr. Domnita Dumitrescu, *Hispania*’s Book/Media Review Editor, because she worked tirelessly to put together twenty reviews in this volume that are focused exclusively on film. I would like to acknowledge the important contributions of Dr. Jennifer Brady, Managing Editor, and Dr. Conxita Domènech, Assistant Managing Editor, who both were instrumental in the timely production and quality of this volume. Lastly, it is essential to thank the approximately 120 anonymous peer reviewers who also helped to vet and provide feedback for the submissions for the current collection of articles on film and film studies. Through their generosity, they represent the true spirit of the AATSP captured its motto: “Todos a una.”

Sheri Spaine Long
Editor
*Hispania*
David William Foster

David William Foster is Regents’ Professor of Spanish and Women and Gender Studies at Arizona State University. His research focuses on urban culture in Latin America, with emphasis on issues of gender construction and sexual identity, as well as Jewish culture, and he has published extensively on Argentine texts. He has held Fulbright teaching appointments; has served as an Inter-American Development Bank Professor in Chile; and is former president of the Latin American Jewish Studies association. He is also the Editor of Chasqui: Revista de estudios latinoamericanos.

Benjamin Fraser

Benjamin Fraser is Professor and Chair of Foreign Languages and Literatures at East Carolina University. He publishes on contemporary Spanish and Latin American cultural, urban, and film studies. He also serves as Associate Editor of Hispania, Executive Editor of the Journal of Urban Cultural Studies, Senior Editor of the Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies, and is a co-editor of the Hispanic Urban Studies book series.

Bill VanPatten

Bill VanPatten is Professor of Spanish and Second Language Studies at Michigan State University. He has published widely on the acquisition of second languages, contemporary language teaching, and the interface between acquisition and teaching. He has also published bestselling textbooks and movies for Spanish and French. For more information, visit his website: https://sites.google.com/site/bvpsla.