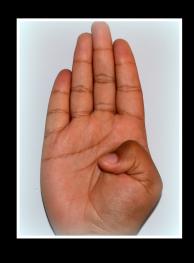
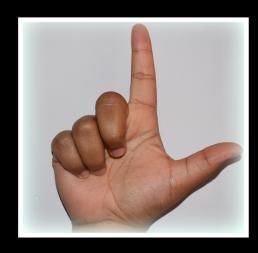
# THE AMBASSADOR

BLACK LIVES MATTER
LES VIES DES NOIRS COMPTENT
LE VITE NERE CONTANO
黒人の命は大切だ
LAS VIDAS NEGRAS IMPORTAN
黒人的命也是命
حیاة السود مهمة
SCHWARZE LEBEN ZÄHLEN







# THE AMBASSADOR

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#### New Faculty Member: Dr. Roxana Curiel

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## Language Spotlight: Chinese

Learn about the benefits of studying Chinese and all the Chinese programs our department has to offer on pgs. 7-9.

### **Notes from the Chair**

## Dear Students, Alumni, and Friends of the Department of World Languages and Cultures:

Greetings from the O'Hara Building! We start this new academic year facing unprecedented changes and challenges. Uncertainties about COVID-19, limitations on co-curricular activities, and an online/in-person hybrid curriculum will be mighty extraordinary hurdles for all of us to clear. In the spirit of *Cura Personalis*, our department has been mindful of the demands and stresses that this pandemic has had on our entire community. As the Chair of WLC, I am proud of the hard work my colleagues have undertaken together. We will continue focusing on what WLC does best—teaching and learning, supporting and caring for one another, and continuing to do good work in and for our community.

Our department is also conscious of the particular and difficult times the country is living. WLC stands in solidarity with the protests seeking justice for George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, and we stand in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter Movement. Structural violence against Black people is a global condition. Our department has traditionally contributed to an anti-racist pedagogy in and out of the classroom by designing and supporting courses and co-curricular activities that address students' understanding of their experience with issues of race and racism within and beyond the college experience. We are invested in making sure our students obtain the critical tools allowing them to understand the dangerous mechanisms of racism so as to challenge them in turn. WLC is dedicated to understanding how systematic racism and exclusion, brought on by cultural white supremacy, has impacted racial justice not only in our country but also around the globe. For this reason, this semester we will host a conversation with the Afro-Puerto Rican writer Dr. Mayra Santos Febres and Afro-indigenous poet Alan Pelaez Lopez. You will have more information about the event in this newsletter.

This year we are welcoming an exciting cohort of new members to our department. Dr. Roxana Curiel recently joined the department as an Assistant Professor. She is an interdisciplinary scholar. Her research analyzes representations of bodies that challenge normative notions of

## Five Questions with Casey Welby

Meet one of our senior language majors, Casey Welby, in our first Five Questions feature on pg. 9.

#### Migration Across the Americas Spring 2021 Course

Learn more about one of our course offerings for the Spring 2021 semester on pg. 10.

#### Blackness in the Caribbean and Latin America Event

For more information about this Fall 2020 virtual event, check out pg. 11

## **English as a Second Language Program**

Read about our ESL program on pg. 11.

#### Fulbright Nights

For more information about our Fall 2020 Fulbright Nights, visit pg. 12.

#### LLC Information

For more information about the LLC operations for the Fall 2020 semester, check out pg. 12

#### Social Media

Links to be found on pg. 12.

citizenship, gender, and race in Mexico, Central America, and the Latinx diaspora in the US. Before joining us, Dr. Curiel was an Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Mexican Literature and Cultural Production in the Romance Languages Department at Williams College. She will be teaching a stirring variety of courses including *Borders*, *Migration and Displacement in Central America, Mexico and the US* that will be offered next semester.

We also welcome four Fulbright Teaching Assistants this academic year: from Palestine, Mr. Belal Elkurd; from Uruguay, Ms. Cecilia Nuñez; from Germany, Ms. Rebekka Stein and from Canada, Ms. Chama Laassassy. You can read detailed information about them in this issue. WLC will host a variety of cultural events led by them. Please follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to receive updates on these events.

As usual, we are proud to showcase the research, service and achievements of our remarkable faculty members. We especially want to celebrate and share with all of you that Dr. Habib Zanzana has been promoted to Full Professor for his accomplishments and contributions to the department and beyond.

Also, we are proud to showcase the research, service and achievements of our remarkable students. In this issue, you can read about Casey Welby.

Thanks to all of you who have supported our department and me during these first weeks of this unusual semester. Special thanks to Hannah Jackson, Director of the Language Learning Center, and to secretary JoAnne Jurkiewicz. Laura Freedman, our G.A., has been extremely helpful in editing and finalizing this current issue.

Although distanced, I look forward to the times when we will meet virtually in the coming year. WLC is hard at work thinking about innovative programming. In the meantime, please reach out to me if you have suggestions about how the department might best meet the challenges ahead. For now, I wish you all the best.

Sincerely, Dr. Yamile Silva

## New Faculty Member: Dr. Roxana Curiel

Dr. Roxana A. Curiel is an Assistant Professor at the Department of World Languages and Cultures. Her work analyzes representations of bodies that challenge normative notions of citizenship, gender, and race in Mexico, Central America, and the Latinx diaspora in the U.S.

She earned her B.A. (2012) from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and her Ph.D. (2016) in Peninsular and Mexican Literature and Cultures from the University of California, Riverside. She was a Visiting Professor at Pepperdine University (2016-2018) and an Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow (2018-2020) in Mexican Literature and Cultural Production at Williams College.

She is currently working on a monograph entitled Machorras: Embodying Identity Against Mexicanidad, in which she explores the trajectory of the narratives of mestizaje and Mexican masculinity within the construction of a patriarchal nation-state throughout the 20th and 21st centuries and the ways these narratives have been



challenged by bodies that do not fit the patriarchal norms of nationhood. Engaging in a queer curatorial practice, she examines photographs from the Mexican revolution (1910), representations of Black and Indigenous femme bodies, films, lucha libre shows, anti-police protests, and drag king interventions—informed by her collaborative performances as Fausto. This book project offers a broader understanding of masculinities and the anti-Blackness engrained in the mestizaje narrative. Moreover, it questions what it means to be socialized as a woman in a femicide state.

Her teaching and research interests also encompass pedagogies for language-minoritized students, raciolinguistics, film theory, Indigenous sovereignty, migrations across the Americas, and forced displacement. She recently joined Kali Uchis, Becky G, and El Guru to discuss how white privilege affects the Afro-Latinx communities for the series of panels created by We Are Mitú and Conciencia Collective.

### FLTA Introductions (Continues on pg. 5)



#### Cecilia Núñez

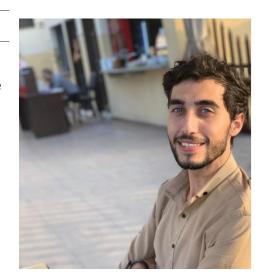
¡Hola a todos y todas! My name is Cecilia Núñez and I am the Spanish teaching assistant at Scranton University this year. I was born and raised in Uruguay, a small, quiet and beautiful country located in South America, between Brazil and Argentina.

I have been teaching English as a second language in secondary schools for the last six years, and I must say that I love what I do. I am also really into traveling and learning different cultures and walks of life. I consider myself an easy-going and open-minded person, so feel free to stop by my office anytime! I'm looking forward to meeting you all!

To contact Cecilia, you can email her at **cecilia.nunez@scranton.edu**.

#### **Belal Elkurd**

My name is Belal Elkurd. I was born in Gaza, Palestine, and I currently live in Gaza. I have a great passion toward learning language, so I have studied English language and literature at Al-Azhar University from the Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences and graduated in 2017. In my country, I have been teaching the English language since 2016. I have taught English language at my university for college students, at several English language camps and at English language institutes. In 2017, I started teaching the Arabic language to for non-Arabic speakers at Gaza Learning Cooperative center. During my experience in teaching I have met many students from different cultures and backgrounds, this encouraged me to explore more about teaching the Arabic language and apply for the FLTA program not only to have more experience in teaching Arabic but also to learn a lot about the American culture and be an ambassador of my country in the U.S.



To contact Belal, you can email him at **belal.elkurd@scranton.edu**.



#### Rebekka Stein

Hallo zusammen! My name is Rebekka Stein, and I will be teaching German at the University of Scranton this year. I am from Jena, a city in the central German state of Thuringia, which is also called the "green heart of Germany." I have just finished my master's degree in secondary education for English and Geography, and I have also studied some courses in Teaching German as a Foreign Language. I am very excited to spread my love of language learning and cultural exchange at the University of Scranton this year. At the same time, I am looking forward to learning more about the U.S., Pennsylvania, Scranton, and you, the students. I hope to meet you in one of my classes, at German cultural events and talks, or around campus!

To contact Rebekka, you can email her at rebekka.stein@scranton.edu.

#### **Chama Laassassy**

Salut! I'm Chama, and I'll be teaching French this year!

I was born in Casablanca, Morocco, and my family and I moved to Montreal, Canada, when I was nine years old. I went from living near the beach to navigating Montreal's dreadful 30 centimeters of snow. Nevertheless, I fell in love with Montreal's charm, which lies in its arsenal of people of different cultures and ethnicities. This sparked massive respect for diversity and a love of languages in me. Indeed, I speak French, Arabic, English, and Spanish fluently, and I am currently learning Turkish and Italian.

I was a law student for a year before I realized that teaching is what I love doing the most. I graduated with a *Bachelor of Teaching English as a Second Language* from McGill University.



Back in Montreal, I work as an English and French teacher, as well as a youth community organizer within immigrant-focused NGOs. In my free time, if I'm not travelling, cooking up a storm, or volunteering, you will probably find me watching foreign TV shows, especially Turkish *dizis*.

French class with me will be full of opportunities to speak, in a safe, non-judgmental and energetic environment. We'll be playing lots of games and listening to French rap from time to time. Don't hesitate should you need anything!

To contact Chama, you can email her at chama.laassassy@scranton.edu.

## Faculty Scholarship (Continues on pg. 7)



#### Dr. Yamile Silva

Dr. Yamile Silva has been elected a member Executive Council of the Colonial Section, *Latin American Studies Association* (LASA) for a five year-period (2020-2025). LASA is the largest professional association in the world for individuals and institutions engaged in the study of Latin America. With over 13,000 members, more than 60 percent of whom reside outside the United States, LASA brings together experts on Latin America from all disciplines.

Since the Spring edition of the Ambassador, Silva published her annotated edition *La sonrisa del paisaje. Diarios de Abigail Mejía* (Santo Domingo: Ministerio de Cultura de la República Dominicana, 2020. pp. 180). Her article, "I, humble servant of your grace': Isabel de Salazar's and Ana de Nabarrete's Petitions" has been accepted for publication by *Revista de Estudios de Género y Sexualidades* (Michigan State University). It will be published on Nov. 2020. Also, Silva's book review of Rocío Quispe Agnoli. *Nobles de papel. Identidades oscilantes y genealogías borrosas en los* 

descendientes de la realeza inca. Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2016. 264 pp. was published In Journal of Gender and Sexuality Studies Volumen 45, Número 2 (2020). Finally, her article ""Different when I Opened My Mouth: Experiences, Reflections, and Perspectives of Faculty Members with Foreign English Accents in Higher Education" written in collaboration with Dr. Andrés Ramirez (Florida Atlantic University) has been accepted by Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism and will be published on its forthcoming issue, Volume 19, Number 2.

Silva was invited as a keynote speaker by the *International Book Festival of Santo Domingo* organized by the Ministry of Culture (Dominican Republic). Her talk "*La sonrisa del paisaje*. Escritura y cultura material en los diarios de Abigail Mejía" on June 4, 2020 was via Zoom and YouTube due to Covid 19.

#### Dr. Marzia Caporale

## Dr. Caporale had the following publications appear in print:

#### **Book review:**

Federici, Sandra, et Raphaël Thierry, coord. *Africa* e Mediterraneo: Cultura e Società. "Libri in Africa, libri d'Africa." Vol. 89. In Etudes Littéraires Africaines Spring 2020

#### **Iournal article:**

'Recasting the Gaze: Self-perception and Body De(con)struction in Nelly Arcan's "La honte" L'Esprit créateur 60.2. 2020.





#### Dr. Roxana Curiel

Dr. Roxana Curiel's paper "Mujeres rifle: Masculinidad femenina en el evento fotográfico de la Revolución mexicana." was accepted for publication at *Hispania*.

She gave the following talks during the summer:

"Conversatorio Drag King," Orgullo Crítico Independiente México 2020.

"How White Privilege Affects the Afro-Latinx Communities," Conversation with Becky G, Kali Uchis, and El Guru for Conciencia Collective and We Are Mitú panel sessions.

"Drag King/Queer: Mujeres cis, personas trans y no binaries en el drag," Día Internacional del Drag.

"Cultural Appropriation in Latinx Music," Sociedad Latina (Summer Sessions).

And she is organizing with Dr. Silva the upcoming talk with Mayra Santos-Febres and Alán Peláez López about "Blackness in the Caribbean and Latin America"

## Language Spotlight: Chinese

By: Hsiang-Ling (Charlize) Wang (Continues on pgs. 8-9)

The World Languages and Cultures Department offers Chinese courses across three levels: Elementary, Intermediate, and Advanced in both Fall and Spring semesters. In the Mandarin Chinese courses, the instructors Lily Liu Laoshi (老师, lǎo shī, teacher) and Hsiang-Ling Wang Laoshi adopt a cognitive-functional approach to language education and instruct spoken skills and literacy. Nowadays, Chinese language plays a paramount role in international affairs and global society. More in-depth information about the three-level courses and crucial reasons why studying Chinese can make a difference can be found below.

The Chinese program at the University of Scranton reinforces customized proficiency-oriented lessons for Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) learners. These classes develop the students' communicative skills for daily life-based contexts and address the needs of heritage and non-heritage speakers through intercultural competence to the traditional and modern cultures animating

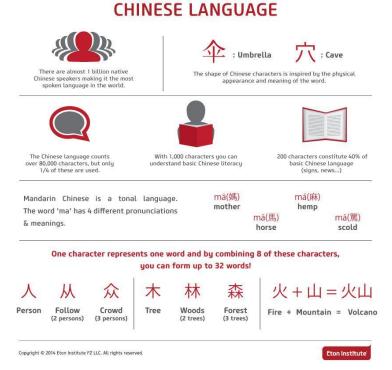


Professor Hsiang-Ling Wang

Chinese-language societies. In Elementary Chinese, the course emphasizes four communication skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Through effective practice, students will: (1) advance their

three modes of communication: interpretive listening and reading, interpersonal speaking and writing, and presentational speaking, (2) gain knowledge of the specialized Chinese language and its application in real-life situations such as greetings, family, time and date, seeing a friend, and so on, and (3) have a deeper understanding of cultural literacy, such as superstition, lunar calendar, Confucius philosophy, family value of filial piety, and so forth.

Intermediate Chinese offers an integrated course that builds upon core skills acquired in Elementary Chinese. CFL learners will: (1) focus on advancing a higher Chinese language proficiency, (2) continue to develop the basic three modes of communication skills at "survival" level (e.g. asking and answering simple questions on familiar topics and handling simple situations or transactions), (3) as well as analyze cultural contexts (for example, making comparisons



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and finding similarities between cultural aspects of American and Chinese societies). Furthermore, the Advanced-level course is designed for students who have completed two years of college-level courses and aims to develop their linguistic competence of comprehending and producing paragraph-level Chinese. In Advanced Chinese, CFL learners are going to: (1) advance a great range of topics with modern Mandarin Chinese, with extra emphasis on speaking and writing proficiency, and (2) read a variety of authentic material including newspapers, magazines, novels, and learn how to write essays in Chinese.

Why is learning Chinese beneficial? It is commonly said that "learning Chinese opens doors to economic opportunities." This is undoubtedly true for the value of gaining Chinese-language proficiency yields profound benefits. First, being a CFL speaker opens the gateway to a comprehension of over 5,000 years of the world's oldest and richest history and culture. Moreover, Mainland China not only is the most populous country with almost 1.4 billion people in the world, Mandarin Chinese is also the most widely spoken language all over the world. When it comes to its language, Chinese grammar is relatively simple, since Chinese contains virtually no significant inflectional changes. The most basic sentence structure in Chinese is same as English: Subject+ Verb+ Object. For example, I love you in Chinese is 我爱你 (wǒàinǐ). Perhaps most importantly, unlike French, German or English, Chinese has no verb conjugation, nor does it have noun declension such as gender and number distinctions. To illustrate, in English learners have to memorize different verb tenses such as "eat/ate/eaten," whereas there is only one word in Chinese to express this:  ${}^{t}(ch\bar{i})$ . Looking at plurals also gives us a glimpse of this easy grammatical structure: in English one has to change "teacher" to "teachers," whereas Chinese only has just one form: 老师(lǎoshī). Is learning Chinese worthwhile? Absolutely! "With the continuing rise of China as a global economic and trading power... Chinese will rise as a global language" the Science Daily astutely notes. In fact, China is not only one of largest trading partners of the United States but also the second largest economy in the world. The advantages of mastering the Chinese language goes far beyond increasing work prospects.

Additionally, Mandarin Chinese is not only used in Mainland China or Taiwan; rather, it is spoken in the influential Chinese-language communities of Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, the Philippines, and Mongolia. It is critical to know how significant the power of Chinese economy is in international business environment and how useful is the Chinese language.

If you are interested in Chinese, take a moment to explore our Chinese program, and get in touch inperson at Language Learning Center in O'Hara 306 or via email at <a href="https://hinese.neg.google

# Five Questions with Casey Welby

Casey Welby is a senior classical languages and history major here at The University of Scranton. While she is currently studying Italian and majoring in Latin, Casey has taken classes in Ancient Greek, German, French and Czech. Learn more about Casey and her love of learning languages in our first edition of Five Questions!

#### What made you interested in studying languages?

I became interested in studying languages in high school after I took my first Latin class. I loved the clarity of the language and also loved learning about other cultures. There is so much more than vocabulary and grammar in language classes!



## How do you think studying other languages will help you after graduation?

I'm applying to PhD programs in history and many programs require one to two modern foreign languages. I am looking to do research in European history, so being able to speak the native language will be a tremendous help!

#### What has been your favorite language class? Why?

I've loved all of my language classes at the University, but my most immersive class was the Czech beginner class that I took when I studied abroad in Prague, Czech Republic. The Czech language is so different from any other language I've learned. It was amazing being able to use my new language skills every day. Our class went on field trips to local farmer's markets and coffee shops where we had the chance to use our new speaking abilities!

#### What are your plans for after graduation?

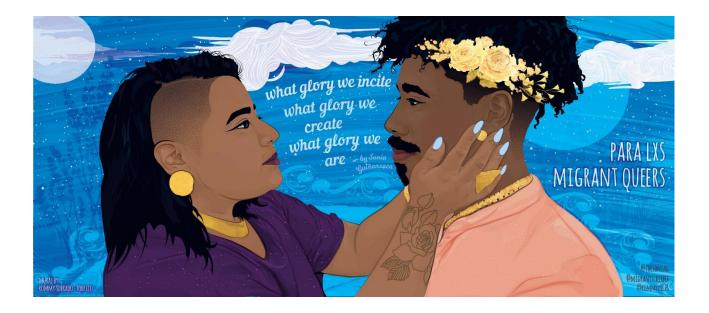
As of right now my plans are not set, but I am applying for History PhD programs and also applying for a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship to the Czech Republic.

#### What advice do you have for students who are considering studying another language?

Go for it! It may seem scary to start learning another language, but there is no better time than in college to explore your interests. You could find a passion for languages and cultures you didn't know about!

# Migration Across the Americas Course Offering Spring 2021

What are borderlands? How have they been created? What identities and communities emerge from these liminal spaces? This course focuses on the cultural production that explores US-Mexico-Central American borderlands and the diverse policies and practices that (re) create and (re)image these borders. In consideration of the transnational effects of extractivism, some of the dictatorships in Central America, the NAFTA agreement, as well as war zones and the drug war; we will explore the concepts of citizenship, migration, and nationalism in its intersection with gender, racial positioning, and social class. Drawing upon cultural studies, feminist theory, queer theory, history, and sociology we will examine materials such as photography, installation art, journalism, literature, film, and music. This interdisciplinary approach aims to shed light on these causes and consequences of the political, cultural, and economic narratives involved in our current understanding of migration. Taught in Spanish, this course will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10-11:15 a.m. For more information, contact Dr. Roxana Curiel at Roxana.Curiel@scranton.edu.



# Blackness in the Caribbean and Latin America Event

This virtual conversation will be led by Dr. Roxana Curiel with guest speakers Dr. Mayra Santos Febres (she/her/hers) and artist Alán Peláez López (they/them) on October 14 at 5 p.m. The artists will discuss how their work engages with Black life experience across the Americas and the Caribbean, and what Blackness means in a context where latinidad, mestizaje, and nationalisms continually erase that experience.

Dr. Santos-Febres is an Afro-Puerto Rican writer. She holds a PhD from Cornell University. Currently, Santos-Febres is a professor at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras, where she directs the creative writing workshop and the Festival of the Word.

Alán Peláez López is an AfroIndigenous poet, installation and adornment artist from Oaxaca, México. Pelaez Lopez's work is published in Poetry magazine, the Georgia Review, Puerto Del Sol, Everyday Feminism & elsewhere. They have received fellowships and/or residencies from Submittable, the Museum of the African Diaspora, VONA/Voices, and University of California-Berkeley. They live in Oakland, CA & the internet as @MigrantScribble.

You can register for the event by using the following Zoom link: <a href="https://scranton.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwrf-uvpzIoEtXpAeiLclMn">https://scranton.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwrf-uvpzIoEtXpAeiLclMn</a> OGninIB8hlv



Dr. Mayra Santos Febres



Alán Peláez López

## **English as a Second Language Program**

By Hannah Jackson

Over the past few years, the Language Learning Center has offered informal English as a Second Language (ESL) tutoring to members of the community—Scranton students and community members alike—who were interested in improving their English proficiency. Starting in the 2020-2021 school year, the World Languages and Cultures Department is also offering ESL 101 and 102 courses on academic English for University of Scranton students who speak English as a second/additional language. These courses focus on developing non-native speakers' academic English skills in reading, writing, and research. ESL 101 is designed to equip students with the academic reading and writing skills they need to succeed as college-level writers and ESL 102 focuses on elements of style and grammar applied to the composition of academic essays. These courses are designed to be part of a future ESL program for international students with TOEFL scores lower than the university's minimum requirement for admission. The World Languages and Cultures Department continues to be dedicated to serving the University and Scranton community through English as a Second Language tutoring and instruction.

## **Fulbright Nights**

You don't need a passport in order to immerse yourself in a new culture! Join the World Languages and Cultures Department's FLTAs as they share the culture and language of their home country through interactive events.

#### Canada

Come learn more about Canada with French FLTA Chama Laassassy on Thursday, October 22 from 7-8 p.m. Information on how to access the Zoom can be found below:

Link: https://scranton.zoom.us/j/96346386184?pwd=Y1hYcXNsWGl5ZmZGSFNYM0FIYkFZdz09

Meeting ID: 963 4638 6184

Passcode: FrenchFN

#### **Germany**

Come learn more about Germany with German FLTA Rebekka Stein on Thursday, November 12 from 7-8 p.m. Information on how to access the Zoom can be found below:

Link: <a href="https://scranton.zoom.us/j/94647343306?pwd=Wnd5VWdmeXcwRjc4QkxIWmRFeUJ0dz09">https://scranton.zoom.us/j/94647343306?pwd=Wnd5VWdmeXcwRjc4QkxIWmRFeUJ0dz09</a>

Meeting ID: 946 4734 3306

Passcode: GermanFN

### **LLC Information**

The Language Learning reopened this semester offering both in-person and virtual hours to students. For information regarding our virtual drop-in tutoring or conversation hours, be sure to visit <u>our website</u> or contact Hannah Jackson at <u>hannah.jackson@scranton.edu</u>.

### **Social Media**



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