

Associate Professor Emerita, Rifka Epstein (formerly Cook)
Department of Spanish and Portuguese,
Northwestern University
(Prepared: March, 2025)

• **MAJOR PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS**

Spanish language: History. Judeo-Spanish Language and Literature. Culinary traditions of Sephardi Culture. Communities of Crypto Jews' Descendants in Latino America, Language Learning Strategies, and Teaching with Technology.

• **EDUCATION**

Master of Science in Linguistics Caracas, Venezuela
Universidad Pedagógica Libertador, (1994-1997).
Thesis: *Production of Expositive Texts: Design, Application and Evaluation of a Pedagogical Strategy* ("Producción de Textos Expositivos: Diseño, aplicación y evaluación de una estrategia pedagógica"). [This degree is equivalent to an ABD, in the USA]

Professor in Spanish Language and Spanish Literature Caracas, Venezuela
Universidad Pedagógica Libertador, (1975-1980).
(Profesor en Lengua Española y Literatura). (Equivalent to a B.A. in the USA)

Teacher in Hebrew Jerusalem, Israel
Chaim Greenberg College (1972-1974)
(Teacher in Hebrew for the Diaspora). This degree is equivalent to a B.A. in the USA and allows me to teach Jewish Studies and Hebrew Language at any school outside of Israel.

• **OTHER ACADEMIC PREPARATION**

Studies about Judeo-Español Jerusalem, Israel
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem with Dr. David Bunis at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (February-June 2010)

• **EMPLOYMENT**

Northwestern University Evanston, IL
Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Spanish and Portuguese September 2001-present. Beginning Spanish 101-1, 101-2 and 101-3. Accelerate Elementary Spanish 115-1, Intermediate Spanish 121-1, 121-2 and 121-3, Spanish 121-3, Special Topics, Gastronomy and Hispanic Identity, Accelerate Intermediate Spanish 125-0, Spanish 206, Spanish 203, Spanish 208: Spanish and Community. [2001-2023]

School of Continuing Studies, (Northwestern University) Evanston, IL
September 2001-August 2023 Elementary Spanish 101-2; Intermediate Spanish 121-2 and 121-3.

Shepard Residential College, Tutorial Course Evanston, IL
Spring 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 GEN LA 280-6 "The Silver Mirror: Latino American Culture in Movies". Winter 2013, 2014: GEN LA 280-3 "Tell Tale Text: Newspapers' Headlines".

Northeastern Illinois University Chicago, IL
Visiting Lecturer (Fall 2001-Spring 2002)
Spanish 101, and Spanish 224 (Intensive Reading of Spanish), Spanish 230 (Spanish Conversation II), Spanish 325 L, (Business Spanish I and II)

Law School ((Northwestern University), Evanston, IL
Beginning Spanish for Lawyers (Fall 2006-2009), Advanced Spanish for Lawyers (2007-2009)

Universidad de Oriente, Nueva Esparta, Margarita, Venezuela
Associate Professor [Tenured] (September 1994- August 1999), Adjunct Professor (September 1988- August 1994), Assistant Professor (September 1982-August 1988), Lecturer (September 1980-August 1982). Spanish I, II, Composition I and II, Latin and Greek Etymology. Spanish as a Second Language. Coordinator of Spanish (1982-1987). Chair of Humanities Department (September 1988-1990, 1992-1994). During my time at the University my duties included teach, research, being student advisor and to teach, and administrative role. I have a permanent position at this academic institution.

Universidad Central de Venezuela, Caracas, Venezuela
Visiting Faculty (January-July 1991)
Spanish of XV Century: An introduction to the Judeo-Spanish [Español del S. XV: Introducción al Judeo-Español]

Yavne Yeshiva Caracas, Venezuela
Hebrew Lecturer, (September 1974- July 1979)

Bucharim's Religious School Jerusalem, Israel
Hebrew Lecturer (September 1973-July 1974)

Teaching Hebrew Latin-America
Voluntary teaching Hebrew 2020-2022 on ZOOM, to different communities consisting of descendants of Crypto-Jews originating from the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisition of 1492. Countries such Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, México, Chile and Argentina.

- **AWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

2023 Nominated for Northwestern Canvas Hall of Fame for my SPANISH 115-1 and Spanish 125-0 courses' sites.

2020-2021 International Classroom Partnering Grant given by The Office of the Vice President for International Relations and the Buffett Institute for Global Affairs Northwestern University. Project: *Promoting Community Dialogues in Spanish*. (Northwestern University [Evanston, IL] and Torcuato Di Tella [Buenos Aires, Argentina])

2020-2021 Fulbright Scholar, Alternate Candidate. Project: The Language Kaleidoscope and Multiethnic Mosaic, UNED (Universidad Nacional Estatal) Costa Rica

2019-2020 Associate Student Government Faculty and Administrator Honor Roll.

2018-2019 Associate Student Government Faculty and Administrator Honor Roll.

2016 T. William Heyck Award. For promoting community and advancing student learning through the residential college.

2015-2016 Associated Student Government Faculty and Administration Honor Roll.

2015 Promoted to Associate Professor of Instruction, effective from September 01, 2015.

2013- 2014 Associated Student Government Faculty and Administration Honor Roll.

2013 Technology Innovators Nominees Submitted by Readers –The Digital Campus 2013 - The Chronicle of Higher Education. <http://chronicle.com/article/2013-Technology-Innovators-/138877/>

2010-2011 Faculty Affiliate of the Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities. (Northwestern University)

2010 Distinguished Educator (Turning Technologies)

Spring 2006-2016, Faculty Sports Appreciation, NU Athletic Department.

1998. Recognition for Professional Achievement as Associated Professor, Universidad de Oriente, Venezuela.

1985, 1990, 1995 Recognition for 5, 10 and 15 years working as Professor at Universidad de Oriente, Venezuela.

1990 Recognition for Professional Achievement, Government of the State Nueva Esparta, Venezuela.

- **GRANTS AND RESEARCH SUPPORT**

Undergraduate Research Assistant Program (URAP) Grant. Project: Political Transformation and its Effects on Families, Feelings, and Foods. (Northwestern University, 2019-2020).

Undergraduate Research Assistant Program (URAP) Grant. Project: Bolivian Crypto Jews: The Culinary Recovery of Exile. (Northwestern University, 2018-2019).

Faculty-Student Interaction Grant, given by the Associated Student Government [ASG], Winter & Spring 2017, Winter & Spring 2016, Fall 2013 and Winter & Spring 2014, Fall 2012, Spring 2013. Each one of them were used with a view towards aiding my efforts to connect and interact with my students.

The Sava Ransavljevic fund (2015) to support a trip to Argentina to delivery two papers related to Sephardic Studies.

Residential College Fellow Assistant Research Award (FARA) project “Merging the Borderline: country music of Venezuela and the American West”. (Northwestern University, 2013- 2014)

Residential College Fellow Assistant Research Award (FARA) project “*Mafalda and El Chavo: Bridging Worlds*”. (Northwestern University, 2011-2012)

Hewlett grant and the Sava Ransavljevic fund (2010) to support coursework at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and research related to Shabbat songs in Ladino, using library resources and interviewing people who still speak the language.

Hewlett grant to develop, with other colleagues, a video program for Spanish 121 (June, 2008)

Searle Center for Teaching Excellence Innovative Teaching Grant. (2008) to create a Center for Teaching Foreign Languages with Technology, to support its creation for the CLI (Council on Language Instruction). A Blackboard page was reserved for the CLI to serve as an excellent and useful space in which to upload conference materials and share materials between language faculties from all language departments at Northwestern University. Dr. Margaret Sinclair administrated it.

Jewish Studies Program Grant, at Northwestern University (2008, 2010, 2011, 2012) to attend to conferences in USA, Israel, Argentina and Brazil.

- **PUBLICATIONS (OR ANALOGOUS ACTIVITIES IN THE ARTS)**

Related to Jewish Studies:

Cook, R. “Weaving Jewish Beliefs: Sha’ar Hashamaim and the Guarding of Jewish Traditions”. [In English] Halapid’s facsimile, The official Publication of Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies. VOL. 60 / 61 • Spring/Summer • 2023 / 5783 • pages 10-13

Cook, R. (Translation from English into Spanish) Wise, humourous and personal reflections by Sam Bension Maimon, translated from English by Rifka Cook. (Reflexiones Sabias, Humorísticas y Personales de Sam Bension Maimon) [El Encanto de la VIDA SERARDI_v2](#). Dec. 2022.

Cook, R. The Jewish Community of Margarita Island, Venezuela. January 2020, [In English] https://dbs.anumuseum.org.il/skn/en/c6/e20536300/Place/Isla_de_Margarita

Cook, R. My Childhood in Caucagua, Venezuela (years: 1955-1960). January 2020, [In English] <https://dbs.anumuseum.org.il/skn/he/c6/e20659503/>

Cook, R. “Sharing Sephardi Heritage Through Food”. Halapid. Society for Crypto- Judaic Studies.Vol. XLVI/XLVII. Autumn/Winter 2019/5780. Issues 27 & 28.

Cook, R. “Las recetas de mis 15 abuelas” (The recipes of my grandmothers by GenieMilgrom) July 25,2019 [In Spanish] <https://esefarad.com/?p=91180>

Cook, R. “A Pilgrimage to a Personality: Doña Gracia Mendes”. Cambridge Scholars Publishing/ Judeo-Spanish and the Making of a Community. 2015. <https://www.cambridgescholars.com/product/978-1-4438-7805-0>

Cook, R. “Cinco días sin Nora: Más que un suicidio” (Nora’s will: More than suicide”)El Djudió. Informativo do Centro Hebraico Riograndense (CHR), [In Spanish]. 2014. Inprint.

Cook, R. "Pinceladas sobre el video Novia que te vea" (Brushstrokes on the video Bride to be). eSefarad. Noticias del Mundo Sefardí. [In Spanish] July 23, 2012.
<http://www.esefarad.com/?p=34643>

Cook, R. "Detrás del telón de Novia que te vea". (Behind the curtain of Like a Bride) Maguen-Escudo N° 163. [In Spanish] Caracas, Venezuela. [In Spanish] (April-June 2012). In print

Cook, R. "Los dolientes de Jacobo Sefamí". eSefarad. Noticias del Mundo Sefardí. September 18, 2011. [In Spanish] <http://www.esefarad.com/?p=26399>

Cook, R. "My language myself". Sh'ma: A Journal of Jewish Responsibility. [In English]:
<http://www.shma.com/2011/03/my-language-my-self/>

Cook, R. "La Buena eksperiensa de mi anyo sabatiko en Israel" (The great experience of my sabbatical year in Israel). Aki Yerushalayim #88, [In Judeo-Spanish]. October 2010.
http://www.aki-yerushalayim.co.il/ay/088/088_13_la_buena_eksperiensa.htm

Related to Teaching/ Teaching with technology:

Cook, R; Calkins, S. "More than recall and opinion: Using "clickers" to promote complex thinking". Journal on Excellence in College Teaching. Publisher: Miami University, Oxford Ohio, [In English] 2013: 24(2).

Cook, R. Clickerim veteoriat Bloom behoraa. [Clickers and Bloom Theory in teaching] in Hed Haulpan hechadash, # 96, [In Hebrew] Winter 2010.

Related to Linguistics/Language:

Cook, R. "Rabbi Yehuda Haleví and Ferdinand De Saussure: The Notion of the Language". Raíces. Spain. [In English]. 2005, 88-89.

Cook, R. "El Judeo-Español: El Español del Siglo 15 Vive Aún. (The Judeo-Español: The XV century Spanish is still alive). [In Spanish]
www.elcastellano.org/ns/edicion/ultima/rifka.html.2004.

Cook, R. "Uma Visao Diferente na Analise dos Anuncios de Oferta de Empregos" (A different vision on request job text's analysis). In Os Discursos Jornalísticos: Manchete, Reportages, Classificados & Artigos. Ed. Silvia Inés de Vancocelos, Maringa, Brazil. [In Portuguese] 1990:83-105.

Cook, R. "Evaluación del efecto de una estrategia pedagógica para la producción de algunos textos de orden expositivo" (Assessment of a Pedagogical Strategy for Expositive Texts' Production). Bibliographic Information and News. Teaching of Science (Información Bibliográfica y Noticias. Enseñanza de las ciencias, # 17 [In Spanish] 1999.
<http://www.raco.cat/index.php/ensenanza/article/viewFile/21568/21402>. p.148-149

Cook, R. "Análisis de datos en una investigación" (Analysis of data in an investigation) in CLAVE: Specialized Magazine of ASOVELE: Venezuelan Association for Language Teaching, [In Spanish] 1997-1998: 128-136

Related to Literature:

Cook, R. "The Humor in Don Quixote de la Mancha". (El Humor en la Obra DonQuijote de la Mancha). Unibásicos. Ed. Universidad de Oriente. Porlamar. Nueva Esparta. Venezuela, [In Spanish] 1989: 23-53

Other topics:

Cook, R. Failing to o speak up, gives tacit approval. [LinkedIn page], October 2023.

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7125475193833029638/>

Cook,R. Two standards of concern and compassion by the Red Cross. [LinkedIn page],

October 2023. <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7131681202603704320/>

Cook,R. I cease... you fire. [LinkedIn page], November, 2023.

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7133164814889070593/>

Cook, R. Cooking with Rifka. September 10, 2021[In English]

<https://sites.northwestern.edu/cookingwithrifka/>

- **PROFESSIONAL TALKS**

Related to Jewish Studies:

Hidden Footprints: Crypto Jewish Passover Traditions in Modern Cuisine. Paper presented at Xperience, Beit Shemesh, Israel. March 24, 2025. [in English]

A Portrait of Jewish Life in Venezuela: Yesterday and Today. Paper presented at Telz Stone (Kiriath Yearim), Israel. March 5, 2025. [in English]

Doña Gracia Mendes: an inspiring story of hope for a people in exile. Paper presented at Telz Stone (Kiriath Yearim), Israel. Feb. 05, 2025. [in English]

The Undiscovered discovery of America: The hidden Jews. Paper presented at Xperience, Beit Shemesh, Israel. Dec. 23, 2024. [in English]

The Brave Trail of the Crypto-Jews. Paper presented at Na'amat, Jerusalem. Feb. 28, 2024. [in English]

The Phoenix rises from the flames of the Inquisition. Paper presented at Shepard Residential College, Northwestern University, April 24, 2023 [in English]

Across the border: The Crypto Jews. Paper presented at Department of Political Science, at the Professor Elizabeth Shakman Hurd's class: The American Border: Politics, Policy, Theology (Political Science 101, Northwestern University,), Feb. 2023, [in English]

Doña Gracia, the queen Esther of the Century 16. Paper presented at the Jewish community in the Netherlands: Bendigamos, Amsterdam. In ZOOM, Sunday, September 11, 2022, [In English]

An inner connection: Intertwined Secrets of the Notable figures in Spain. Paper presented at the Spanish and Portuguese Department, Northwestern University, in ZOOM, Friday, May 6, 2022, [In English and Spanish]

The Undiscovered discovery of America: The hidden Crypto-Jews. Presented at North Central College, Naperville, IL, in ZOOM, Tuesday, April 26, 2022. [In English]

The invencible flame of Porto: Carlos Arturo Barros Basto. (La llama invencible de Oporto: Carlos Arturo Barros Basto) Presented at Raíces de Sefarad on line, organized by the Centro Cultural Sefarad, Buenos Aires, Argentina, in ZOOM, Thursday, July 29, 2021.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PieOQgEekto> [In Spanish]

Emerging Communities of Cripto Jew's Descendants in Latino America.
(Comunidades emergentes de descendientes de Crypto Judíos en Latinoamérica)
Presented at Raíces de Sefarad On line, organized by the Centro Cultural Sefarad, Buenos Aires, Argentina, in ZOOM, Thursday, August 6, 2020.
facebook.com/ccsefarad,youtube.com/watch?v=B0vDPuF9SUE [In Spanish]

Belmonte: Listening to the Whisper and Uncovering the Footsteps! Papers Presented at Belmonte Jewish Museum, Portugal. September, 2019. [In English]

A Psalm of Survival: the Sephardic Jews in Latin-America. Paper presented at KesserMaariv Synagogue. March 3, 2020.

Crypto Jews: The Culinary Recovery of Exile. Paper presented at the 2019 Denver Conference of the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies, Sunday, June 30 -Tuesday, July 2, 2019.

"The treasure of Tradition". Paper presented at the Latin-American and Caribbean Studies, Northwestern University. April 24, 2018. [In English]

"The Muslim of Mafalda and Djohá: Different Patterns, Common Threads". Paper presented at the 7th Annual ucLADINO Judeo-Spanish Symposium: New Directions, Old Roots, on March 14-15, 2018 at the University of California, Los Angeles. [In English]

"Preserving Sephardic language against wind and tide". Paper presented at the Hebrew Club in Panamá, (March 18, 2016) [In Spanish]

"Echoes of the Sephardic culture in Hispanic Videos". Paper presented at the XVII International Congress of Hispanic Literature. (Mérida, México, March 9-11, 2016). [In Spanish]

"The Iberian Inquisition comes to the Americas". Paper presented at Oakton College. February 17, 2016 [In English].

"Las muselinas de Mafalda y de Djoha: Diferentes patrones, hebras communes" (The Muslim of Mafalda and Djoha: *Different Patterns, Common Threads*). Paper presented at the VI 6th International Symposium on Sephardi Studies The Centre for Research and Promotion of Sephardi Culture CIDICSEF - of FESELA, jointly with Maimonides University of Buenos Aires, August 2015. [In Spanish]

“Tres periplos ... un horizonte: Los sefardíes” (Three Journeys towards one Horizon: The Sephardim). Paper presented at the 18 Conference on Judeo-Spanish Studies, Madrid June 30-July 3, 2014. [In Spanish]

“Against Wind and Tide”. Presented at *The Jewish Communities of Latin America Conference*, organized by the Universities of Bar Ilan and of São Paulo, Brazil. University of São Paulo, Brazil. September 3rd and 6th 2012. [In English]

“Ashorer shira Lijvod ha-shabat” [Let’s sing songs in honor of Shabbat] presented on August 2011 at the IV Simposio Internacional de Estudios Sefardíes, Universidad Maimónides, Buenos Aires, Argentina. [In Spanish]

“Preserving the Ladino language through Zemiroth Shabat [Shabbat songs]”. Paper presented at the Sephardic Learning Center, Chicago, IL. December 23th, 2010. [In English]

“Moshe, akí todos son djudios, áma sus vistidos son diferentes” [Mohe, here everybody is Jewish, but their clothes are different]. Paper presented at the AJS 42nd Annual Conference December 19-21, 2010 in Boston. [In English and some sections in Judeo- Spanish]

Related to Linguistics/Language:

“What methodology I used in my research about language and cultural studies?” at the Humanities Research Workshop –Session 2, Northwestern University, Evanston, January 24, 2011 ([In English].

“Direct Object Marker in Spanish”. 48th Annual Conference of the Association of Jewish Studies. San Diego, California, USA, December 2006 . [In English]

“The Interview as Type of Text”. (La entrevista como tipo de texto). At the II National Colloquium of Speech Analysis (II Coloquio Nacional de Análisis del Discurso) Mérida, Venezuela. 1998. [In Spanish]

“Cohesion & Coherence”. (La Coherencia y la Cohesión), Universidad de Oriente, Venezuela. 1998. [In Spanish]

“Analysis of job request’s text”. (Análisis de textos de solicitud de empleos), Universidad de La Plata, Argentina, 1997. [In Spanish]

“Traces of Hebrew Influence Upon the Spanish Language”. (El Matiz Hebreo en la Lengua Castellana). Universidad Experimental Pedagógica Libertador. Caracas, Venezuela, 1994. [In Spanish]

Related to Teaching/Teaching with technology:

Promoting Community Dialogues in Target Languages: Spanish and English at TEACHx, May 24, 2021. Northwestern University.

“Creating a community through Cross-Cultural Conversations”. SLP_Charla Divulgativa. Northwestern University_April 27, 2021

“Wooden Spoons and Blue Jeans: Spinning Language Threads Beyond the Classroom”. Paper presented at the Third International Conference on Heritage/Community Languages on February 16-17, 2018 at the University of California, Los Angeles. [In English]

“Using clickers uniquely in ESL environments”. Paper presented at Minneapolis Community & Technical College. Minnesota, January 18, 2011. [In English]

“Language skills with clickers”. Paper presented at the Turning Point User Conference at Harvard University, October 9 -11, 2010. [In English]

“Clickers and Bloom Taxonomy questions”. Paper presented at the 2009 conference for the International Association for Language Learning Technology in Atlanta, Georgia, May 26-30, 2009. [In English]

“Clickers in Spanish class”. Turning Technologies Users Conference. Temple University, Philadelphia. March 12th 2009. [In English]

“How I brought Chefs from around the world into my class with Blue Jeans?” At the event to celebrate teaching innovation Northwestern University. May 2017. [In English]

“Outsourcing the Oral Presentation: Making Connections with Native Speakers Beyond the Language Classroom”. At the second Professional Development Series presentations, Northwestern University, Feb. 2012. [In English]

“Teaching Spanish as a second language”. Workshop. Universidad de Panamá, December 12, 2011. [In Spanish]

“Bloom Theory in Teaching”. Paper presented at the pre-conference of Jewish Studies, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, July 2009. [In Hebrew]

“Written Evaluation”. Paper presented at the International Reading Association’s Conference, San Francisco, California. 2002 [In English].

- **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND SERVICE AFFILIATIONS**

2018 Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies (SCJS).
2008 International Association for Language Learning
Technology (IALLT). 2006 Los Muestros. Institute Sepharde
Europeen. Bruxelles. 2005 Association of Jewish Studies (AJS), New York.
2004 American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). 1997
International Reading Association (IRA).

WORK IN PROGRESS

Book: “The beauty of Sephardi Life” Translation from English into Spanish. Author Sam Maimon. Edit. Maimon Ideas. Seattle, Washington, USA. Waiting for publication. (Already published in pdf)

- **UNIVERSITY, WCAS, AND DEPARTMENT SERVICE (over at least the last five years)**

- o Memberships and offices on department and program committees.

SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE DEPARTMENT

September 2013- July 2023

Coordinator of the Círculo de Lectores, [Spanish Reading Club]. The main objective of this activity is to create a reading friendly environment and to motivate students to continually develop and strengthen their reading and speaking skills. This extra curricular activity will bring together students of 121 and above levels in Spanish.

September 2014 July 2016

Technical coordinator Spanish 101-115. My responsibilities included administering on-line video quizzes of 200 + students, troubleshooting student technical difficulties, re-setting of quizzes when necessary, as well as the continual upkeep of the site, the posting of announcements, and the development of the following quarter's site during breaks. Typical time commitment is 15+ hours per week.

Spring 2012-July 2018

Through serving as an evaluator of Spanish Language Proficiency, I collaborate with the school in assessing the language abilities of students who apply for the Journalism Residency Program in Latin America.

Summer 2005

Co-coordinator of Teaching, Research and Professional Development Committee. o Student relations, e.g., Master or Faculty Associate of a residential college.

Fall 2017 July 2023

Faculty in Residence South Area (lives in Allison Hall)

My role as a Faculty-in-Residence in Allison Hall is reflected as a “dedication” to all the residents in the South Area here at NU. I am dedicated to our students, by providing for them several activities and events outside of the classroom (such: inviting faculty for dinner while the faculty shares with the students, field trips (for example to Museums or Bowling), writing Thank you cards, Cooking class, Movie Club, etc.). I believe I am dedicated to the comfort and well-being of each of my residents, individually and in-group, so that they may experience the strength derived from connecting as a community - and the beauty arising from our shared humanity.

Fall 2009 July 2023

Faculty Fellow at Shepard Residential College.

Being a Faculty Fellow at Shepard Residential College provides me with opportunities to meet and interact with several students outside the classroom, by offering firesides and tutorial courses. In addition, I had the opportunity to share with them lunch at the dining hall, to invite them to meals during reading week, or to include them in organized trips to the Mexican Museum and neighborhoods in Chicago.