

THE AMBASSADOR

Notes from The Chair

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It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Spring newsletter of the World Languages and Cultures.

During the last months, I have met some students and prospective students who have asked me: why should we study foreign languages? I will take this opportunity to highlight some of the many advantages

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that learning foreign language gives you. Learning to communicate in a foreign language affords you the opportunity to add another dimension to your personality. You'll have access to another system of thought and a new canon of literature, theater, music, politics and news. A second language confers upon you membership in a second culture. Learning to speak with other people in their native language will provide you with detailed insight into the lives of others. When you learn a foreign language, you find the benefits spill over into your science, pre-health, business and political science courses, too. Studies show multilingual students are able to better hypothesize in sciences and better multi-taskers. Second language learners are even shown to perform higher on standardized tests. Also, multilingual graduates are better competitors in competitive job markets and earn salaries. In fact, World Languages and Cultures majors average the highest salaries among the liberal arts, where top employers are the education and health and social services sectors. *The Economist* notes multilingual graduates average up to \$125,000 more than monolingual peers. If you are not taking a language, do yourself a favor and start learning one today.

Inside this newsletter you'll find short articles about many of the outstanding people, programs, and activities that make our department unique, dynamic, and forward-thinking. In addition to our students, alumni, and our faculty's latest endeavors, this newsletter features additional sections on two classes our department offers: American Sign Languages and Chinese. In their entries, you can learn more about Prs. Mary Ann Stefko's and Andi Liao's passion for their subjects. Also, this newsletter highlights our ESL program, coordinated by our Language Lab Director Ms. Hannah Jackson, and the great service our students provide to the greater community. I want to express my gratitude to our Graduate Assistant, Erika Maxson, who helped us to put together this newsletter. Finally, I invite you to visit our event and attend all our diverse events to learn more about our department. Have a great Spring!

ASL Students Making a Difference in the Community

(Continued on pg. 4)

By: Mary Ann Stefko

If you pass Hyland Hall 205, you might not hear anything but if you watch closely, you will see the lively discussion happening among the students. Faces are animated, hands are moving and so much is being shared. That's because the students are enrolled in American Sign Language class. American Sign Language is the native language of the Deaf community and the third most common language in the country. ASL classes have long been a part of the World Language and Culture Department at the University of Scranton but recently, a new component has been added. Students take their classroom learning and apply it at community events.

This past year, ASL students have attended Family Learning Days at the Scranton School for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children. They were responsible for leading activities for children and their families utilizing the sign skills they learned on campus. They also accompanied students at Halloween for Safe Trick or Treating. In addition, ASL students participated in the Back to School



Bonanza where they accompanied Deaf children to the various activities - allowing them to have access to the activities and information in their native language. Nicole Miller, a Deaf Mom with two Deaf daughters commented, "It's great to have the University ASL students here! Communication is not an issue. My girls are here making friends and learning new things without depending on me. They can just have fun being kids!"

ASL classes have become so popular at the University that there is now an ASL club on campus. Royal Signers hosts events to bring the Deaf community on campus and include students in learning which goes far beyond the classroom. A highlight of the past year was a trip to

the Family Learning Weekend in Pittsburgh for officers of the ASL club. After a Signing Time Live concert, the officers got to spend some time chatting with Rachel Coleman - Signing Time founder and current Executive Director of the American Society of Deaf Children. By working hard in the classroom, the American Sign Language students are able to put their skills to use by making a positive difference in the Deaf community - they truly are men and women for others!

Faculty Scholarship (Continued on pg. 5)

Dr. Ana Ugarte

Dr. Ugarte had an exciting first semester as a new Assistant Professor in the Department of World Languages and Cultures! She enjoyed working closely with the students in her classes in the Fall, while she continued her research on narratives of illness, disability, and medicine in the Hispanic Caribbean. Dr. Ugarte also presented a paper in the academic section of the *Festival de la Palabra/ Festival of the Word* in San Juan, Puerto Rico. This Spring she is teaching intermediate and advanced Spanish classes, and working with several students in Honors Tutorials on Indigeneity and the Culture of Health in Latin America, as well as in an Independent Study on the Cuban Revolution.



Dr. Ugarte was also invited to give a talk at Duke University, entitled "Caribbean Scientific Fictions: Prosthetic Storytelling in the Works of Adal Maldonado and Maielis González Fernández" on February 8th. This talk is part of her current research on the intersection between Caribbean Science Fiction and Disability Studies. She also submitted an article, "Sororidad en las Entrañas: Despidiendo a xPati," to a special issue of the *Revista Yucateca de Estudios Literarios*. This special issue is a tribute to the work of Yucatec Maya writer and anthropologist Ana Patricia Martínez Huchim.

Along with Dr. Julia Guzmán, from the Occupational Therapy Department, Dr. Ugarte has been developing a Faculty Led Study Abroad Program in Cusco, Peru. Students will be able to take up to 9 credits in Spanish courses, including a Latin American Studies class, "Perspectives of Health, Healthcare, and Well-being in Latin America". Drs. Guzmán and Ugarte will be co-teaching this interdisciplinary class. In addition, the Study Abroad program will focus on issues of health in Latin America, exposing students to different health centers in rural and urban communities, as well as talks from community leaders and traditional healers such as *hueseros*. She looks forward to this Study Abroad program!

Dr. Yamile Silva

Thanks to an Internal Grant, Silva conducted research on Abigail Mejía (1895-1941), who besides being a school teacher, poet, essayist and novelist, was one of the most renowned Hispanophile feminists. As a result of this research, Silva has been working on the annotated edition, *Diarios de*



Abigail Mejía, that will be published in August 2019 by the Archivo General de la Nación de la República Dominicana. Also, Silva presented the book "Carta al silencio" by Ylonka Nacidit-Perdomo in Santo Domingo on December 22, 2018.

Dr. Silva has been invited as a keynote speaker by the Spanish Embassy in Dominican Republic to give a talk on Abigail Mejía. Her talk "Abigail Mejía através de sus diarios" will be on March 16, 2019.

This semester, Silva has served as a member of the Scientific Council: "CreadorAS en la Educación Literaria e Intercultural" (CICELI). This conference will be on July 18-20, 2019 at the iUniversitat de València, Spain.

Dr. Marzia Caporale

Dr. Marzia Caporale presented a paper at the conference of the Society for Francophone studies in Bruxelles, Belgium in November 2018. Her talk entitled 'Resister à Ebola. Écriture performative et narration ecocritique dans *En compagnie des hommes* de Véronique Tadjo' has developed into a book chapter to be published in a collection edited by Peter Lang in late 2019.



Recent Chinese Activities (Continued on pg. 7)

By: Andie Liao

"Nothing is as engaging and exciting as food" could probably sum up the experience of learning Chinese at the University of Scranton. During the fall semester, students who took elementary and intermediate Chinese not only improved their communication skills in the language itself, but also mastered the art of using chopsticks. They were adventurous enough to try snacks from Taiwan and China, and most importantly, they took part in an authentic dumpling-making activity. Everyone had eaten dumplings before, but preparing dumplings from scratch is about more than just enjoying their taste: People in China get together and make dumplings while talking about ups and downs of their lives' and compare each other's dumpling making skills.

As their Chinese Instructor and a true lover of dumplings, I was genuinely impressed by the creativity of each student. I showed them seven ways of making dumplings and they exceeded my expectations by inventing new shapes and styles. Suffice it to say that the dumplings tasted as delicious as they looked.



The spring semester kicked off with the celebration of the Lunar New Year. It started with the exciting chopsticks competition: Teams according to tables competed and challenged each other by picking up little things like M&Ms, sunflower seeds and pieces of tofu. We then embarked on a journey of cross-cultural comparisons and learned about the traditional Japanese way of celebrating the new year, the food which is usually eaten and the customs Japanese people practice for the special holiday. The students also learned about the story of the annual Chinese zodiacs and made a pig origami in celebration of the year of the pig. Additionally, they made a beautiful crane which functions as a chopsticks holder at the same time. The event ended with the soothing but challenging Chinese calligraphy. We were honored to have a professor and his student to demonstrate how to do it in a tutorial and all the carefully written words were absolutely beautiful and artistic. Even though not everyone knows how to write Chinese characters, all participants managed to finish more than one red couplet with Chinese phrases of blessings for the new year.

Learning languages opens up a new door of communication, broadens our views of different cultures and increases our willingness to try different things. The Global Insight event focusing on the Chinese language giving those who haven't learned this language a first or better understanding about its special way of expressing thoughts and utterances. To assess the individual language learners' levels, the students are going to take the TOCFL test from Taiwan later this semester.

Language Learning Center

By: Hannah Jackson

The Language Learning Center, located in O'Hara 306, offers language learning support for students and community members learning Spanish, French, Italian, Chinese, and Arabic. Services available include language conversation hours, a computer lab, language tutoring, a database of language resources, and more. The Language Learning Center also offers English as a Second Language tutoring to adult English learners in the community and hosts several events for local students and community members such as the TA Meet & Greet event for teachers, the annual TA Talks, and various cultural events hosted by our Fulbright TAs and WLC faculty. Curious about how the Language Learning Center can help you learn or improve your language skills? Contact Hannah Jackson at Hannah.jackson@scranton.edu or 570-941-4711.

Community ESL Program

By: Hannah Jackson

The Language Learning Center offers English as a Second Language tutoring and conversation classes for members of the community who are interested in learning English. When possible, English learners are matched with tutors who can speak their native languages. The program currently tutors over 20 learners from Ecuador, Morocco, Sudan, Iran, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and more. Learners at all levels of English proficiency are welcome from preliteracy to advanced. English students learn practical life skills, conversation, how to interview for jobs, English grammar, literacy, and more. The program aims to equip members of the community with the English skills they need to reach their goals. If you would like more information on the Language Learning Center's community ESL program, please contact Hannah Jackson at Hannah.jackson@scranton.edu or 570-941-4711.



Graduate Assistants

By: Erika Maxson

This year, the Language Learning Center was lucky enough to have two Graduate Assistants, Erika Maxson & Vianey Florentino Perez. Erika Maxson, a second year graduate student in Spanish Education, has been with us since August 2017 and is now completing her final semester in the LLC while student teaching at Valley View Middle School. She hopes that this experience, along with running Spanish conversation hours, weekly ESL classes and tutoring, will help her land a job as a Spanish teacher in the local community. Vianey joined us in the lab in Spring of 2019 as a Graduate Assistant, having taught Spanish 1 in the Fall as a Teaching Assistant. After completing a year as a FLTA from Mexico during the Fall of 2017 and Spring of 2018, Vianey decided to stay in Scranton another two years in order to complete her Master's degree in Theology. Upon returning to Mexico, Vianey hopes to continue teaching Spanish using her experiences abroad. Between the two, there is almost always a GA present in the Language Learning Center and willing to help in whatever way possible!

Student News

By: Kelsey Rosa



Kelsey Rosa is a senior International Language-Business major from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. She has an Arabic minor and an emphasis in Spanish, and she has worked as a Spanish, ESL, and Arabic tutor at the Language Learning Center for three years. Kelsey chose to study languages so she could learn how to see

the world from different perspectives and to connect with people who see it from those different perspectives. Since she started studying languages at the University of Scranton, Kelsey has not only tutored and studied several languages but she also had the opportunity to study abroad in Seville, Spain for the spring 2019 semester at La Universidad de Sevilla. While in Seville, she enjoyed immersing herself in the culture, conducting research on the Spanish language, and talking with and learning from the people of Spain.

Notes from Alumni Desk (Continued on pg. 10)

Carlos Osorios-Rios



My name is Carlos Osorios-Rios and I am a proud graduate of the University of Scranton's class of 2016 as well as a former tutor at the WLC department's Language Learning Center. I graduated from Scranton with a degree in French and Francophone studies. I consider myself very fortunate to have had various opportunities to directly apply what I learned from this degree. Upon graduating from Scranton, I entered the New York City Teaching Fellows, an alternative teaching program that allowed me to work as a full-time teacher within the Department of Education while completing a masters degree in Bilingual Childhood Education. When I entered the program, I was prepared to teach in a Spanish/ English dual-language

classroom as I knew that it was an area of need in NYC. However, thanks to my French & Francophone studies at Scranton, I was hired as the 4th grade French teacher in a dual-language program in Brooklyn. After completing my masters degree and approaching my third year as a teacher, I felt that the next step for me was to further deepen my knowledge of French & Francophone studies. My studies once again granted me the opportunity to apply to the PhD program in French at the CUNY Graduate Center. I'm elated to say that I have been accepted as a Tuition Fellow, a scholarship that will allow me to keep my job as an educator and pursue advanced studies in this area with tuition coverage for the first five years of study. At the Graduate Center, I hope to continue the path of study that has allowed me to eclipse my own boundaries and contribute my experiences to the further understanding of global literary and cultural studies. I hope to enrich the field of 20th Century and Contemporary French, Francophone African, Latin American, and Caribbean literatures through two current research interests: the examination of the migration experience across Africa, Europe, Overseas France, and the Western Hemisphere, and the presence of death and dying in the national literatures of the countries in these regions.



Stephanie Longo

Local author and historian Stephanie Longo has received a Gold Award in the History category from the Nonfiction Book Awards, via the Nonfiction Authors Association, for her 2018 publication, "Italians of Lackawanna County," published by Arcadia Publishing.

The Nonfiction Book Awards recognize literary excellence in more than 150 categories. The program honors books year-round, judging them based on a scoring system that evaluates the quality of the writing and production of the book. A book can receive a bronze, silver or gold award based on the final evaluation score.

Ms. Longo is known as an expert on the Italian American history of northeastern Pennsylvania and has authored several works on the subject, including *Italians of Northeastern Pennsylvania*, *Italians of Lackawanna County* and *Dunmore*, all published by Arcadia Publishing. A graduate of both the University of Scranton (BA, MA) and Regent University (MA), she has made it her mission to continue to preserve the history that her ancestors brought to the United States from Guardia dei Lombardi, Italy. A dual citizen of the United States and Italy, Ms. Longo resides in Dunmore and is presently the director of marketing and communications at the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, as well as the book reviews editor for *Ovunque Siamo: New Italian-American Writing* and a current participant in the Leadership Lackawanna Core Program.



FLTA Update, Lauren Coggins

By: Lauren Coggins



For the past six months, I have been on my Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in Mexico at Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas (UNACH) in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas. Here, I assist professors with some of their English courses for students studying English Education, while also running conversation clubs. Outside of the classroom, I volunteer at the local migrant shelter, where I help prepare and serve dinner, while interacting with our current guests. Overall, my stay in Tuxtla has been quite a warm one, thanks to the lovely people of my city, as well as the humid heat. As a resident here, I have discovered the magic of drinking an ice-cold pozol (a corn-cacao drink) on a hot day and taking the time to give a friendly hello to all that you meet. Here in Tuxtla, people not only take pride in their favorite refreshing

drink, but also in their sense of community. Upon returning to the USA, I hope to live more in the moment, as the Tuxtletecos have taught me the beauty of being able to take a step back, no matter how hectic one's life may get.

Upcoming Semester Events (Continued on pg. 10)



A Domestic Archaeology of Repatriation

Cristina Rivera Garza

One of the foremost writers in the Spanish language, and one of the most interesting experimental writers in America, Rivera Garza has published 6 novels, three collections of stories, five collections of poetry, and three translation books. Her books have been translated into multiple languages, including English, French, Italian, Portuguese, and Korean. Rivera Garza, Distinguished Professor of Hispanic Studies, was born in Matamoros, México and has lived in the United States since 1989. She studied urban sociology at the National Autonomous University of Mexico and received her Ph.D. in Latin American history from the University of Houston. In 2012, she received a doctorate in Hispanic Letters Honoris Causa from the University of Houston, where she directs the Spanish Creative Writing Program. She is the recipient of, among other awards, the Bruce Carlin Award for Latin American Literature (Paris, 2012) as well as the Anna Seidler (Berlin, 2009) and International Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz awards for her novel, *No One Will See Me Cry* (University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

Thursday, March 21 at 5:30 pm in the Moskovitz Theater
 (DeNaples Center, 4th Floor)
 Sponsored by the Humanities Initiative



Talk on Syphilis and Literature by Dr. Juan Carlos González Espitia University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill



"On Syphilis, Orchestrons, and Other Imported Goods:
 Trademarks in the Infirm Writings of Silva and Casal."

March 20, 2019, 5pm
 Leahy Hall 235

Co-sponsors: Latin American Studies, Elitacuria Initiative, the Department of World Languages and Cultures
 and the Humanities Initiative

Contact information: Dr. Yamile Silva (yamile.silva@scranton.edu)

Social Media

This year, our Graduate Assistant Erika Maxson created social media pages for the Department and regularly posts upcoming events, pictures from WLC department sponsored activities, highlights on WLC faculty and staff, relevant articles and much more. Stay up to date with the Department on a weekly basis by following the Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts listed below!



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