

THE AMBASSADOR

DEPARTMENT OF WORLD LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to another busy semester at The University of Scranton!

The Department of World Languages and Cultures offers you opportunities to study modern and classical languages and cultures and to develop a more nuanced perspective on the world in which we live. Language study can help you to communicate with new and diverse populations and open doors to perspectives unavailable to you in English. Any level of mastery is likely to sharpen your ability to follow key international developments, providing new insights and the ability to participate in democratic debate. Language skills are highly transferable and support your success in a range of fields. We hope you will consider joining us as we study American Sign, Ancient Greek, Arabic, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Mandarin, Russian, and Spanish.

This semester's issue brings you new insight into opportunities for study here and abroad, and introduces you to the ongoing research of faculty and staff. We know you'll enjoy learning more about Prof. Allison Lai's use of digital technologies to support classroom learning in our Mandarin Chinese classes; hearing from former Fulbright Language Teaching Assistant Imen Neffati about her recent research and presentations on Tunisian Women at The University; and learning more about ongoing faculty research and faculty-led study abroad.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *The Ambassador*, and look forward to seeing you in our classes.

Jamie H. Trnka



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This newsletter can be read in color at the Department of World Languages and Cultures website:
<http://www.scranton.edu/academics/cas/world-languages/newsletter.shtml>

During Summer 2017, Silva led a travel course to Pamplona, Spain (Universidad de Navarra) from June 5th to 27th. She also conducted research in the Biblioteca Nacional de España in Madrid for two weeks and finished a co-edited peer-reviewed anthology of academic essays on *Utopias en el Caribe* that will be published by the University of Puerto Rico Press. In November, she will present her paper “El mundo agonizante y la metamorfosis en Quema de Ariadna Castellarnau” at XXVII Annual Conference Asociación Internacional de Literatura y Cultura Femenina Hispánica (AILCFH) in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. She co-organized the Tercer Programa Académico del Festival de la Palabra that has been postponed given the impact of Hurricane Maria in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Silva will start serving as president of the Academic Organization Asociación Internacional de Literatura y Cultura Femenina Hispánica (International Association of Women and Gender Studies in Hispanic Literature and Culture) and she will serve (by invitation) on the U.S. Student Fulbright National Screening Committee (South America) in December 2017.

Dr. Yamile Silva**Dr. Habib Zanzana**

Dr. Habib Zanzana presented three scholarly papers in summer 2017 “The Intersection of Vocal Gesture, Literary Expression and the Visual Arts in Alberto Giacometti, Natalia Ginzburg and Contemporary French Writing,” at the Intersezioni Conference in Florence, Italy, June 2017

“Literacy, Performance and Foreign Language Education: Equity, Community Engagement, and Best Practices,” at Foro Iberoamericano sobre Literacidad y Aprendizaje, in Madrid, Spain, July 2017; and “Literatura infantil y juvenil: traducción de Don Quijote de la Mancha al árabe para el aula,” at Congreso Internacional Siglo de Oro, in Madrid, Spain, July 2017.

Dr. Jamie Trnka

Dr. Trnka continues to conduct original archival research on the EU-sponsored cultural initiative “Shahrazad—Stories for Life.” Her analysis of Shahrazad’s work between 2007 and 2012 provides new insight into how advocacy organizations turn increasingly to documentary theatre and other creative media to advance the cause of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Her current focus is on their multilingual, multimedia initiative *Letters to Europe*, which brought together authors from twenty-two countries writing in twelve languages. She uses critical theories of the archive, memory citizenship, and translation to address new developments at the intersection of documentary literature and first-person narrative.

She served as a facilitator and commentator at the 2017 Studienforum Berlin’s two-week faculty seminar on Germany, Europe and Refugee Integration.



Dr. Linda Ledford-Miller

Dr. Linda Ledford-Miller and husband Llewellyn Miller pictured above in Spoleto, Italy.

In late May, Dr. Ledford-Miller joined Fr. John Sivalon in the first faculty-led study abroad to Bolivia, taking ten students to Cochabamba for six weeks, where they earned nine credits of Spanish and three credits in Theology. Their World Religions course focused especially on indigenous beliefs and practices. Students lived with families and had classes daily at the Maryknoll Language Institute. In addition to formal classes, we all attended weekly presentations in Spanish on a range of cultural and historical topics. We learned to sing “Todo cambia,” Everything Changes, a song made famous by the divine Mercedes Sosa. We took a trip to the (still-functioning) Jesuit missions in the lowlands, and most of the group visited La Paz and Lake Titicaca as well. Some of the more intrepid students hiked up a nearby mountain,—no mean feat, given that the altitude of Cochabamba city is 8,400 feet, and Tunari mountain is over 16,000 feet high! Students also had the opportunity to visit and then volunteer at a local orphanage and a hospital. Students thanked their host families and teachers with an American-style picnic with hot dogs and hamburgers.

While in Cochabamba, Dr. Ledford-Miller gave two presentations, both at the Universidad Católica Boliviana “San Pablo”: “Can We Survive the Apocalypse? Dystopian Vision in the Novels of Margaret Atwood and Emily St. John Mandel,” on May 24, 2017, to an audience of over one hundred, and again in Spanish to an audience of fifty, “¿Se puede sobrevivir al apocalipsis? La visión distópica en las novelas de Margaret Atwood y Emily St. John Mandel,” on May 25, 2017.

Dr. Ledford-Miller and her husband visited a good friend in Spoleto, Italy for a few days—during the European heat wave, unfortunately, before heading to the much cooler temperatures of England. For the third year in a row she attended a wonderful conference on crime fiction, where she presented “A Death Desired? Emily St. John Mandel’s Last Night in Montreal,” at Captivating Criminality 4. Bath, England. June 29-July 2, 2017. She received a hefty copy of *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism* in the mail, for serving as Academic Advisor and translator, as well as providing the bibliography and list of further readings for the entry on the famous Brazilian writer, “Érico Veríssimo 1905-1975.” *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*. Lawrence J. Trudeau, Ed. Farmington Hill, MI: Gale, 2017, 245-320.

Dr. Ledford-Miller is on sabbatical for the fall semester, working on more projects than she can possibly finish.

Dr. Virginia Picchietti

Dr. Virginia Picchietti's essay, “*Andremo in città: Edith Bruck’s Short Story and Nelo Risi’s Film*,” will be published in the volume entitled, *Resistance, Heroism, Loss: World War II in Italian Film and Literature*.



STUDENT-STAFF RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS: INTERACTING WITH “DIGITAL NATIVES” THROUGH ONLINE PLATFORMS

Professor Allison Lai (Mandarin Chinese) will present her original research on technology-assisted language learning at the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages in NYC. Together with her student Daniel Muenkel, she will demonstrate how to incorporate technology into a language learning using ThingLink, Padlet and Homestyler. With the use of technology, teachers can guide students toward thinking critically about what they are learning, building interpersonal communication skills, working more effectively in teams, creating and innovating new ideas, concepts, and products and developing highly transferable digital skills.

In a series of action research projects, Lai worked with Scranton students to conduct online research on traditional Chinese medicine, using ThingLink to compile their own vocabulary lists, create examples and upload images. Using the online platform Padlet, students designed invitations and upload the cards and vocabulary, reading and replying to one another’s invitations. Finally, she introduced ideas of home through the creative integration of homestyler. Students designed their dream home on the homestyler website, wrote short descriptions, and presented the images they generated in class.

Students described positive experiences with the activities, which are exemplary of opportunities to combine diverse skills arenas in our language classrooms:

“It is easy to share our work and be able to look back on how we and our other classmates progress.”

“It helps create stronger bonds between students and the teacher.”

“The collaborative project had us research traditional Chinese culture, immersing us in the culture. This helped us to learn more about China as a whole and not just about the language.”

Lai’s paper “Using Online Platforms to Promote Collaborative Learning in a Foreign Language Class” will be published in Florida Foreign Language Journal, Issue 13, 2017.



Sample Student Work on homestyler pictured above.



Sample Student Work on Padlet pictured left.

FULBRIGHT TEACHING ASSISTANTS



Chie Fujikake (Japan), Vianey Florentino Pérez (Mexico), Lea Gorski (Germany), Andie Liao (Taiwan), and Céline Langlard (France).

My name is Vianey Florentino Pérez. As a teacher and an indigenous woman from Mexico, I applied for an FLTA to be an ambassador of my little town, my people and my country while promoting intercultural bridges between Mexico and the USA. I firmly believe education is the key to having more respectful, tolerant and creative countries. Everyone has the global responsibility of working toward making the world a better place to live now and in the future. Being an FLTA means learning from one another while teaching others.

Lea Gorski: I applied for the FLTA-program because I am studying both German and English to become a teacher. I have always been fascinated by the American culture(s). Fulbright gave me the opportunity to not only live in the U.S., but also to share my own culture and language by teaching German at the University of Scranton. In the 21st century, intercultural competence, embracing diversity, and learning from each other are key elements for successful careers and meaningful interactions in our globalized world. I believe that learning foreign languages and seeing things from another culture's perspective makes this world a better place.

Andie (Chia-Ying) Liao, Taiwan:
I am always excited to meet people from different cultures and interact with them and share my culture. I want to be away from my country to learn, share and experience another culture. Since the University of Scranton has an affiliation with Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence Charter School, I am currently working there as the Mandarin Chinese teacher. I teach students from grades K-8. Teaching young students is very interesting and motivating because they are always energetic and full of potential. I am glad I have the chance to experience how both a university and elementary-middle school work on my first trip to the USA.

SPAIN “THE PILGRIM’S WAY TO SANTIAGO”



This Summer, Dr. Yamile Silva led the travel course to Spain “The Pilgrim’s Way to Santiago.” From June 5 to 27, students greatly improved their oral and written communicative abilities in Spanish. The group spent three weeks in the beautiful northern city of Pamplona and took two courses –a language class and a seminar on the Pilgrim’s Way to Santiago- at the Universidad de Navarra. The program included all supervised trips and cultural and recreational activities around Pamplona and Santiago de Compostela, Pamplona’s historic old town, Cathedral of Santa Maria la Real, “Running of the Bulls” walk, Juevintxo, Sevillanas class, Pilgrim’s Way to Santiago stage 4: from Pamplona to Puente la Reina, Bilbao: Guggenheim Museum and Loyola Sanctuary, San Sebastián,

Olite Castle and winery, and a final trip to Santiago de Compostela. In this picture, University of Scranton students at the Loyola Sanctuary

STUDY ABROAD IN FLORENCE ITALY

Drs. Zanzana and Caporale lead the 10th Study in Florence Summer program which ran from may 27th to June 24th. A group of 17 students from the University of Scranton took part in this yearly academic program offered in collaboration with the Florence-based Istituto Europeo, a government accredited school of Italian language and culture. Students lived in Florence for the duration of the program, took classes and participated in many co-curricular activities such as museum visits and food tasting events. The group also spent a day in Venice, hiked in the beautiful coastal region of Cinque Terre, and toured the oil and wine making region of Chianti in the Tuscan countryside. The program is scheduled to run again this year from May 26th to June 23.



CONTEMPORARY TUNISIAN SOCIETY THROUGH CINEMA



Former Fulbright Teaching Assistant Imen Neffati, originally from Tunisia, returned to our department in September 2017 to host a series of film screenings and discussion sessions on Tunisia after the Arab Spring, under the supervision of World Languages and Cultures Faculty Dr. Marzia Caporale and Habib Zanzana. Imen, who is currently completing a PhD in Contemporary History at the University of Sheffield in the U.K., received a grant that allowed her to bring her project to our campus and share her knowledge and experiences with University of Scranton students and the community. Imen ran four screenings of recent films produced in Tunisia and Lebanon, the first, titled *As I Open My Eyes* and directed by Leyla Bouzid, was released in 2015. The film sheds a light on the coming-of-age experience of a young female singer who rebels against tradition and censorship in an authoritarian, patriarchal society. The music in the film plays an important role in exposing the audience to a new narrative that fights for freedom in a police state.

The second film was *Le Challat de Tunis*, a mockumentary directed by another Tunisian female filmmaker, Kaouther Ben Hania. The critically acclaimed and award winning film is based on a true story that took place in Tunis in 2003. Ben Hania investigates the legend of le challat, - “the slasher”- who runs the streets of Tunis on his motorbike to slash the buttocks of eleven women with a razor as a way to punish them for their “immodest” dress code. The film examines gender politics in Tunisia by offering a feminist insight into the macho misogynist cultural education of a large proportion of Arab men.

The third film was *Même pas Mal* by Nadia El Fani, a documentary that follows up on the hate propaganda the director suffered after releasing a film that discusses the rapport of the Tunisian society with Islam on the eve of the Arab Spring. El Fani voices the concern of a society that believed the Arab Spring and the revolutionary spirit that followed it marked the auspicious moment to establish a secular constitution that protects all citizens’ rights, believers and non-believers. Finally, the last film was again by a female director and titled *Where do we go now?* Nadine Labaki, a Lebanese director, touches on the problem of violence between Muslims and Christians in the multi-religious Lebanon. The film offers a critical perspective on a different part of the Arab world, and succeeds in outlining the differences between North African Francophone cinema and the Middle-Eastern Arab film traditions. The students who attended the various screenings showed great interest in the films and provided thoughtful feedback and comments on the social and cultural questions raised by the films.

Imen also gave a talk at the Jane Kopas Women’s Center on the subject of family law and women’s rights in Tunisia from independence to 2017. She also gave presentations to students of advanced French about life in contemporary Tunisia.

MY CHEVENING JOURNEY

I have always believed that everybody deserves what they dream of. Exactly one year ago, I decided to apply to the Chevening programme to reach my goal of doing postgraduate studies in the UK. Finally, on August 9th, after a couple of months of constant work to present a well thought-out application, a face to face interview with the programme officers' panel, plenty of support from family, friends, colleagues and former professors, but most importantly, lots of patience, I received my Final Award Letter at the British Embassy in Mexico City. This letter acknowledges that I will study a MA in Applied Linguistics at University College London (UCL) fully-funded by the British Government. Picking up this letter in the city capital of my country marked the beginning of what is going to be another amazing turning point in my life: my Chevening Journey.

Chevening is the UK Government's international awards scheme which focuses on developing global leaders. It was funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and partners' organizations who personally select the recipients via British embassies and high commissions around the world. This scholarship offers a one-of-a-kind opportunity to develop academically and professionally, network extensively, experience UK culture, and build long lasting positive relations with the UK.

Being selected for this award signifies a great personal and professional achievement that is publicly recognized by British embassies throughout the world. When it comes to Mexico, only 62 scholars from a wide variety of study fields were chosen out of the 1400 applicants for this 2017-2018 cycle. In order to build bonds with the selected scholars, the British Embassy in Mexico City organized a pre-departure event hosted by British Ambassador Duncan Taylor at his residence during the evening of August 9th. It was such an honor to not only meet the Ambassador, but also the representatives of both private and public institutions that co-sponsor the programme in my country, such as SEP (The Secretary of Public Education), the Anglo Mexican Foundation, HSBC, and Shell just to mention a few.



Our lives are defined by opportunities, and this is a great one! As my departure date comes closer, I cannot stop reflecting on the outcomes of the opportunities I have looked for that have taken me to this exact moment in life, and one thing I can tell you, finding someone's calling and committing to it allow you to fully take advantage of any favorable circumstances that crosses your path. So, London, here I come!

María José Estefanía González Betanco
 MSc English as a Second Language Scranton Alumni 2012
 Graduate Teaching Assistant at the Department of World Languages and Cultures 2010-2012
 Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant 2009-2010

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