



THE NEWSLETTER



Department of World Languages and Literatures



*The limits of my language are the limits
of my universe.*

- Ludwig Wittgenstein -



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CHAIR'S REMARKS:

Welcome to the 3rd annual newsletter of the Department of World Languages and Literatures! Academic year 2011-2012 was a year of many exciting events and challenges. First and foremost, I would like to express deep appreciation for the hard work that full-time and adjunct faculty put into teaching our students, advising our majors, developing new courses, coordinating graduate and undergraduate programs, taking students abroad for summer study, moving forward their research agenda through publishing and conference presentations, participating in searches for new positions, leading student clubs, and contributing to the well-being of the Department and the University at large. Our readers might be aware that according to our contract the average workweek of a professor at Southern must take about 37.5 hours. However, on many occasions an individual professor puts in roughly between 60 and 70 hours of work per week. This work includes teaching, advisement, service to the University on many committees, and research. Many professors in the Department also engage in study abroad projects, various grants that require involvement above and beyond the regular hours, and multiple student activities. It might sound to our readers like professors at every level need to stop themselves from getting involved in so many tasks. However, most of these activities come from our passion for student learning and student success. We want to make sure that our students succeed and consider their alma mater the institution of choice. I am sure we will continue going above and beyond our contractually regulated hours to pursue this goal and provide superior education to all of you who are interested in the study of world languages and literatures.

This year we were exceptionally fortunate to gain three new faculty members. Dr. Luke Eilderts was hired as an Assistant Professor of French, Dr. Alfredo Sosa-Velasco and Dr. Miaowei Weng are joining the Spanish section of the Department as Assistant Professors of Spanish. We are delighted to have them on board and are looking forward to their arrival on campus shortly. You can find more details about each of our new professors on page 3 of this Newsletter.

We have been steadily increasing the number of our majors. As of Spring 2012, we boast 83 majors in Spanish, 14 majors in Italian, and 11 majors in French. Of these roughly 50% major in their respective languages with the goal to become teachers.

We have just completed the first year of piloting the language proficiency requirement within the Liberal Education Program (LEP) framework. This year all our students in 200 level of language study had to take STAMP test – a standardized proficiency exam that assesses the level of proficiency achieved by our 3rd semester students. While the results still need to be analyzed, we

already had one group of students who were able to meet their language requirement without further study. I want to express special appreciation to our assessment assistant Mr. Brendan Walsh. His work has facilitated weekly testing in both STAMP and ACTFL exams.

The STAMP test has illuminated our curricular strengths and weaknesses. We have discovered that across languages our students do exceptionally well in writing and speaking tasks. However, reading remains a challenge for many students. To help us address reading as a skill in a foreign language class, we were able to invite Dr. William Grabe, a world-renowned professor of linguistics and literacy in foreign languages, to campus. Dr. Grabe provided us with many insights into why reading may be lagging behind in language classes and made suggestions on how to make reading a more salient part of a foreign language teaching curriculum.

We continue to involve students in our study abroad programs. You are probably familiar with the Salamanca summer study program that celebrates its 22nd anniversary under the leadership of Dr. Carlos Arboleda. Over 550 students have participated in this program since 1990. Last summer marked a debut for another summer program – Dr. Pina Palma took the first group of students to Tuscany to study Italian language, culture and literature. The program continues to thrive as more students are taking this Italian journey this summer. A new exchange program with Jaume I University in Castellion de la Plana in Spain has been developed through my collaboration with Dr. Judith Hammer and will start accepting students in fall, 2012.

Another important area of growth for the Department is our graduate programs. The MA in Romance Languages has been on target with accepting over 10 students per academic year and striving to grow to at least 18 new students each year. The MS in TESOL/Bilingual and Multicultural Education continues to flourish with at least 15 students admitted per year including a new cohort of teachers from New Haven and Hamden public schools that are being sponsored by a Training for All Teachers federal grant received by Dr. Lorrie Verplaetse.

I also want to thank our faculty club leaders for their weekly involvement with language and culture clubs. Professor Larkin has been leading the work of the Italian Club, Professors Olson and Boyce have been active with the French Club, Professor Geibel has been the leader of the German Club, and Professor Piemontese has been working with Spanish students on activating the Spanish Club.

As always, we are happy to celebrate our majors, minors and all the other students who make a special effort to do well in their respective world language study and TESOL. Each section organized festivities for their graduates. Special awards were given to our students at the Honors Convocation and at the Philanthropy celebration by the Alumni Foundation of SCSU. I would like to congratulate Jeffrey Arbelaez who received the Marguerite Fortier Smirnoff Memorial Endowed Scholarship, Mariana Calderón, the recipient of Therese C. Petto Scholarship, Mary Iaquinto who was awarded the E.J. Zilli Award, Ellen Hanley – the recipient of WLL Retiree Award, and the following students from the German program who were awarded German books by the German government: Christina Alexis Andrzejewski, Sarah Carpenter, Victoria Hultgren, Amy Kalinauskas, Victoria Farkas, James Namnoum, and Brian Salley.

To continue and build on our successes, we have to work on growing our faculty, ensuring that we have sufficient class offerings for all, establishing a capstone experience for our graduates among many other endeavors. We hope to provide all our readers with the support they need and to have your support in our professional pursuits in return. I thank you for taking time to read our Newsletter, your desire to stay connected with the Department and its faculty and students, and the tireless work that you put into the study and teaching of World Languages. Our doors are always open. Please, drop in at your convenience.

Elena Schmitt, Chairperson
Department of World Languages and Literatures

NEW FACULTY PROFILES



Assistant Professor, French

"Luke L. Eilderts received his Ph.D. and M.A. from the Pennsylvania State University and his B.A. from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. A scholar of twentieth- and twenty-first-century French culture, he specializes in questions of identity and citizenship in contemporary France. Luke comes to Southern after two years as a Visiting Assistant Professor at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. He is very excited to join the faculty in the department of World Languages and Literatures and looks forward to many years of engaging collaboration and scholarship with his future colleagues and students."

Alfredo J. Sosa-Velasco (Licenciado en Historia, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid; M.A. in Spanish, University of Florida; Ph.D. in Romance Studies, Cornell University) specializes in Nineteenth-, Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century Hispanic Literatures and Cultures with a strong emphasis on Iberian literatures and cultures, Catalan and Transatlantic studies. He is the author of *Médicos escritores en España, 1885-1955* (Tamesis Books, 2010) and co-editor of a special issue of *Romance Notes*, entitled "Untying Tongues: Literatures in Minority and Minoritized Languages in Spain and Latin America" (2011). His areas of research include art, narrative, theater, cultural studies, history of ideas, literary theory, and queer studies, among others.



Assistant Professor, Spanish

Miaowei Weng (PhD in Spanish and Comparative Literature, Washington University in St. Louis; MA, Spanish philology, Peking University) joins Southern Connecticut State University as assistant professor of Spanish. Her teaching and research interests include twentieth- and twenty-first-century Spanish Peninsular literature and cinema, childhood studies, history and memory, politics in literature and film. Her recent conference presentations include “Beyond the *Gauche Divine*” at the 53rd Annual M/MLA Convention in November, 2011 and “Mourning and Allegory in *El sur*” at the Kentucky



Foreign Language Conference in April, 2011. She has co-authored the article “Research and Theory Driven Insights: The Suggestions for L2 Reading Instruction,” published in *The Reading Matrix* 7.3 (2007): 44-54. Weng’s transcultural background and comparative training have enabled her to see beyond a single nation-state. In addition to Modern and Contemporary Peninsular Studies, she also works on Sino-Spanish communication and East-West comparative studies. Her current research focuses on images of China in modern and contemporary Spain, aiming to contribute further to the emerging East-West dialogue in the humanities.

Assistant Professor, Spanish



ALUMNI NEWS:

Rachel Pelham, a French minor, has just received her Peace Corps placement in Guinea, beginning on July 1, 2012.

Roseceil Rader, alumna of SCSU, has been teaching French and Spanish for over twenty years, and is still going strong with no intention of retiring.

Emily Byron, Spanish alumna, reports that: “This past year I have been working as the permanent building substitute at an elementary school in Waterbury. One of the reasons why I was hired at this school is because of the large population of Spanish-speaking families in the area. My Spanish skills really come in handy when I need to clarify content or directions for students who are English language learners. Also, when needed, I communicate with parents who do not understand English.”

ALUMNI NEWS

FRENCH SECTION NEWS:

This year Dr. Linda Olson continued the French Table, which met on Wednesdays during the Community Hour. The first semester, we talked about lifestyles in francophone countries, and activities ranged from making contacts with e-pals, speaking with visiting French students, and exploring French TV games, reality, and cooking shows. In the spring we turned to more extended video programs, watching and then discussing such documentaries as "The Hunt for the Head of Henri IV" (they did find it!) and "My family lives in a chateau," as well as classic films such as "La Marseillaise" and "La Vie est un long fleuve tranquille." By the end of the academic year, regular student participation had tripled!

In addition, Marie-Dominique Boyce developed and enriched the French Club this year by linking its activities with those of the Alliance Francaise, of which she is the President of the New Haven Chapter. The following were the activities in which some of our French students participated:

- In January, a reading of Rimbaud's poems in translation by a famous poet,

Ashberry, at the Wadsworth Atheneum (Hartford).

- In February, a reception in honor of two visiting high school teachers from Toulouse (France), with a tasting of escargots and foie gras.
- In March, a talk at Yale by Prof. Eileen Angelini on her DVD, "La France divisée" (collection of memoirs of survivors of the Holocaust during the Nazi Occupation of France).
- In April, within the context of a "Tour of the Francophone World," at the restaurant "Rudy's" (New Haven) a Belgian dinner of mussels with five different sauces, French fries with eight different sauces, and a select Belgian beer. Entertainment was provided by SCSU alumnus Joe Flood, who performed songs by Georges Brassens in French & in his own English translations.

For more information about the French Program at SCSU, please contact Dr. Linda Olson at olsonl1@southernct.edu.

FRENCH

ITALIAN SECTION NEWS AND THE STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM IN MONTEPULCIANO:



Montepulciano, Palazzo Comunale,

Last summer a group of Southern students traveled to Italy to study language and literature. The participants of the newly-established Tuscany Summer Program stayed in Montepulciano, a small Medieval and Renaissance town in the hilly heart of Tuscany, situated half way between Florence and Rome. In addition to its historic renown and beauty, Montepulciano's "modern" fame comes from Twilight: New Moon, the recent blockbuster that was partially filmed here. In the words of Jeffrey LaBella, one of the participants: "the town is

completely different from anything I have ever seen in the U.S. or even dreamed of seeing. The buildings are so old; it has a charm to it that cannot be seen anywhere in the U.S.” Our students attended morning language classes at the language school “Il Sasso.” In the afternoon they learned about “Love Books of the Renaissance” under the guidance of Professor Palma, the Program Director.

Students shared private apartments within the medieval walls. This living arrangement enhanced their cultural experience because it required daily interaction with local people. Without the “filter” of intermediaries, students shopped at the little stores, at the Friday open-air market, and at the many boutiques in town. Reflecting on her shopping experience while in Montepulciano, Danielle Vinci noted: “this store was special...because of the lady who owned it. She... tried her hardest to understand us; we were able to practice our Italian with her, who was patient and happy to help... and loved the fact that young people actually wanted to talk with her.” Danielle also commented on Piazza Grande, the heart of the town: “you would think that in such a small town not much is going on. But in this piazza I’ve seen more stuff go on than in New Haven!... here everything happens that makes you feel connected to everyone else around you. You see people, listen to them, exchange greetings and opinions.”

On weekends the group traveled to Rome, Siena, Florence, Pienza and San Antimo. Some students also chose to visit Orvieto and Piacenza.

Visiting Italian cities and discovering their rich artistic, historic, and cultural treasures enriched the students’ experience; nonetheless, Jeff LaBella observed: “still, there has not been a city that I have liked more than Montepulciano. I do not know what it is about this town, but it feels like home and I really do love it.”

Similarly, Gabrielle Salerno, reflecting on her experience in Montepulciano stated “living there felt as though we had gone back in time, or at least a nice break from our hectic lives as Americans.”

During their stay in Montepulciano Southern students were also entertained by the 36th edition of the Cantiere Internazionale d’Arte.

<http://www.fondazionecantiere.it/en/cantiere>

This event gave students the opportunity to mingle with visiting artists and take advantage of the many performances staged in town. As Danielle, one of the students, wrote, “you see something different every time of day or night you turn the corner, whether it is someone playing the violin on the side of the street, a concert in a garden or an opera in Piazza Grande.”

Jeffrey LaBella summarized for all the 2011 Tuscany Program “I am glad I got to experience Italian culture because now I have a greater respect for the country and will apply certain things that I learned in Italy and bring them back home with me.”

This summer another group of Southern CT



Montepulciano, Pulcinella Tower



Florence, Loggia dei Lanzi

State University students will live in Montepulciano from June 28-July 30th. No doubt this year's adventure will be even more exciting than the last one.

The Italian Program at Southern CT State University is also proud of its students who studied in Italy this past spring: Caitlin Beesmer spent a semester in Florence and Melissa Farfone in Trieste.

For more information about the Italian Program at SCSU or the Study Abroad Program in Montepulciano, please contact Dr. Pina Palma at palmag1@southernct.edu.

italian

SPANISH SECTION NEWS:

The Spanish Section has grown substantially in the last few years. We now have over eighty undergraduate majors and even more minors. To meet the increasing demand for Spanish language and culture instruction, we hired two new full time faculty members this spring, both of whom will begin in August, 2012. Dr. Alfredo Sosa-Velasco comes to us from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where he was Assistant Professor of Spanish. Miaowei Weng is finishing her doctoral dissertation at Washington University in Saint Louis, Missouri. The section is delighted that these two experts in Modern Peninsular literary and cultural studies will join us next year. The section will also welcome two new coordinators in August: Dr. Sosa-Velasco will become Coordinator of the Basic Language Program, while Dr. Rafael Hernández will

serve as Coordinator of the Spanish Section. The section members joined forces this year to recognize our students' successes. To that end, Dr. Resha Cardone organized the initiation of 19 undergraduate and graduate students and 3 faculty members into Sigma Delta Pi, an exclusive national collegiate honor society devoted to maintaining academic excellence in Hispanic studies and supporting the Hispanic community and its flourishing culture. Additionally, in May, we held our first annual year-end party for all Spanish students and faculty members. Food from our friends at Manjares restaurant, a live jazz ensemble, a dance performance by Spanish majors, Anthony Gómez and Andrea Salmerón, and the awarding of certificates and prizes all contributed to making the party a remarkable success.



SIGMA DELTA PI INDUCTION CEREMONY, 2011

During the academic year, several members of the Spanish section also participated in the Connecticut-American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese Conference (AATSP), which was held in October, 2011(fall) at Quinnipiac University and in April, 2012 (spring) at Fairfield University. Co-chaired by Dr. Carlos Arboleda for the third consecutive year, this conference is sponsored by our WLL Department, Quinnipiac University, Fairfield University, and REDIPE (Red Iberoamericana de Pedagogía).

At the fall 2011 conference, Professor Rafael Hernández and his student Orlando Ash presented a paper on the work of Miguel de Unamuno,

Professor Rubén Pelayo presented new research on the theory and praxis of Garcia Marquez's short-story writing as: "Teoría y práctica: *El ahogado más hermoso del mundo*, La cuentística de Gabriel García Márquez," and Professor Sobeira Latorre introduced poet Marianela Medrano who read from her most recent book of poetry.

The spring 2012 conference recognized the great work of ten female Latina and Caribbean poets from NY and New England including our colleague Professor Luisa Piemontese. Professor Rubén Pelayo also presented at the conference a paper on the poetry of Dario, Neruda, and Paz titled, "Dario, Neruda and Paz for Beginners."

The proceedings of the 2012 conference will appear in a special issue of a magazine sponsored by REDIPE. In addition to academic presentations, the poets read their work and interacted with the audience through a vivid dialogue on poetry and education.

Finally, the section initiated a lecture series this year, and our first speaker in the series spoke on campus in April 2012. Dr. Aníbal González, one of the most known scholars of Latin American literature and a professor at Yale University, delivered his talk entitled, “A New Republic of Letters? Promises and Perils of Latin American Post-National Literature.” We look forward to hosting at least one new speaker every semester. For more information about the Spanish Program at SCSU, please contact Dr. Rafael Hernández at hernandezr3@southernct.edu.



Rubén Pelayo at the AATSP Conference, Quinnipiac University, October, 2011.

Spanish

MA in Romance Languages Update:

The MA in Romance Languages—which offers advanced training in literature, language and cultural theory to students of French, Italian and Spanish—hosted an Open Class event for future graduate students on April 25, 2012. In the first portion of the evening, WLL faculty Drs. Sobeira Latorre and Erin Larkin opened *Culture of Expression*, one of the program’s core seminars, to prospective students. After a discussion of the week’s assignment on food culture, the class took a more informal turn; current students shared dishes they prepared representing various countries of study and future MA students got to hear their perspectives on the program, as well as meet graduate faculty and get to know the department and its offerings. The event was a great success, thanks to the efforts of current graduate students and the participation of faculty, who welcomed ten prospective MA students. Questions about the MA in Romance Languages? Email program coordinator Dr. Erin Larkin at larkine3@southernct.edu.

MA In Romance Language



Culture of Expression, Open Class, 2011.

SALAMANCA PROGRAM:

Led by Dr. Carlos Arboleda, the summer study abroad program in Salamanca, Spain continues to thrive. This summer, Dr. Arboleda is taking a group of 29 graduate and undergraduate students to Spain.

Dr. Arboleda reports proudly that: “Six of the students traveling to Spain were awarded with Student Government Association Scholarship (SGA). Each of them got \$625.00. Every year the SGA recognizes with these awards to a number of students traveling abroad. These award recipients were chosen through a competitive selection process based on a demonstrated good GPA in their undergraduate studies. Also, during my one to one

conversation and interviews with all the participants I took into consideration students’ willingness, desire and intend to assume a significant role in this international experience. The students are: Anthony Gomez, Melissa Bautista, Lauren Lukasz, Spencer Artaiz, Sarah Taylor, and Kiera O’Connor. Also, another of our Spain travellers - Michelle Florence Sica- was awarded with the Cubeta Scholarship. This is an award established by Dr. Patricia Zibluk to honor her father.





Salamanca, Spain, Summer 2011



LANGUAGE LAB NEWS:

According to the technology and language lab survey we conducted in Spring Semester 2011, the majority of our students have a positive attitude toward technology and 70 % of them own a smartphone, an iPad or a smart device with Internet access. We have strong reasons to believe that this number will only increase at a fast rate. This indicates that our students are ready for more effective and pedagogically sound mobile and web-based learning and teaching.

Riding on the wave of this new technology, we are fortunate to get allocations from the bond funds to acquire two state of the art iPad learning labs. We are expecting to have the new labs here before school starts in Fall Semester. This is both exciting and challenging for us. It is exciting because these two new mobile iPad labs will allow us to use the most advanced technology in our language teaching and learning. On the other hand, it is also challenging because this means that we cannot teach in the old way any more. We have to innovate our curriculum, teaching methods and materials to make sure the technology is really enhancing, or even transforming student learning.

To prepare for this new mobile technology, we conducted a forum on mobile technology at the beginning of the summer. In the forum, we demonstrated some possible applications to be used in the iPad labs and brainstormed on ideas how to best use the labs for language teaching and learning.

We have purchased 3 more iPads for the Open Lab. Now we have total of 5 iPads and 5 iPodTouches in the Open Lab for students and instructors to check out to use individually.

After some successful experience with VoiceThread last year, we have renewed the license. We are also holding a license for Ligt, an online recording tool. Talk to me if you are interested in using these tools or need help with setting them up for your classes.

Last semester, we also conducted a workshop on using Prezi in language classes. We are now building a database and making barcodes for all the equipment, media, books and resources in the lab. This will not only help us better keep track of our resources, but also make search for available resources more convenient for instructors and students.

Jian Wu, Foreign Language Lab Director



Mobile iPad Learning Lab

For questions or comments, please contact Dr. Sobeira Latorre (editor) at latorres1@southernct.edu, or Dr. Jian Wu (co-editor) at wuj4@southernct.edu