

Fall 2014

Foreign Languages & Literatures Times

Department of World Languages & Cultures, Old Dominion University

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FOREIGN LANGUAGES & LITERATURES TIMES

College of Arts & Letters

FALL 2014



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A Cultural French Experience Here at ODU

On an internationally oriented campus, culture and language organizations are not a rare sight to see, but do any of these clubs stand out? At ODU, the French Club is on a mission to share and celebrate French culture, language and even food with both foreign and American students alike. A common misconception may be that the French Club is only open to French students and learners of the French language, but that is untrue! The French Club wants to make known that anyone who wants a cultural experience or to try some unique food is welcome to attend French Club events.

So what are some things that the French Club has done this year? There have been three main events this year: one general meeting, a Cafe Conversation at Borjo Coffeehouse, and a movie night screening the French movie, "The Untouchables." According to the French Club president, Nurettin Yigit Gultekin, the most memorable, helpful and interactive event was the Cafe Conversation, where French students could communicate with Americans and help them with basic phrases and improve their francophone skills while enjoying coffee in a quaint setting. Next semester, more Cafe Conversations are planned for the French Club, so keep your eyes peeled.

The goal of the French Club in the future is to plan more events where French students can interact with American students. Also, bi-monthly French Club meetings could be put into place so students learning to speak French could get together more often and practice French speaking and writing skills. But it doesn't stop there. The French Club aims to become more approachable for even those students who are not studying a foreign language, but simply want to enjoy culture and food and interact with an international crowd.

The Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures publishes the Foreign Languages and Literatures Times newsletter to bring you updates on our students, alumni, new course offerings, faculty news, symposia and lectures, and any other newsworthy items. Please feel free to send in any information you have. Plus, we're always looking for a good feature story, so be sure to let the Foreign Languages and Literatures Times know what you're doing.



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Celebration! Anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall



On Friday evening, Nov. 7, 2014, the German section of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures and the Graduate Program in International Studies organized an event to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The event included a screening of a documentary on the rise and fall of the Berlin Wall, as well as commentary and a discussion afterward with several faculty members who had firsthand experience with divided and united Germany. Also, Professor Regina Karp, director of the Graduate Program in International Studies, gave a 30-minute presentation on the implications of the fall of the wall for the present and future of Europe. There was a tremendous turnout; 45-plus students and faculty came to celebrate and learn, which was both impressive and touching to the hearts of those faculty members that lived through the time of the Berlin Wall.

The movie presented a historical background of the wall, including the situation and factors that led to the wall being erected, the state of



Germany during its time of division, and how the wall finally came down on Nov. 9, 1989. Now we can see that living or visiting Germany is like “walking through a history book,” and that it has one of the most diverse cultures in the world.

While the wall was still standing in Berlin, Germany was a divided country. The western side was occupied by the U.S., France, and U.K, while East Germany was led by the post-World War II Soviet Union. The stark differences between the two cultures could be seen in how West Berlin developed into a high-class western metropolis, versus the communist East Germany. After the wall was torn down and Germany became unified again, East Germany was rebuilt and modernized, but cultural stereotypes remained against both West Berliners and East Berliners.

Even though this was a major issue of the past, we can see reflections of it in our present world. Separation within a nation is not isolated to Germany; in fact, it is a modern event that can be seen across the world. It is necessary that we learn from history in order to make a better present.



Hispanic Heritage Month at St. Patrick Catholic School

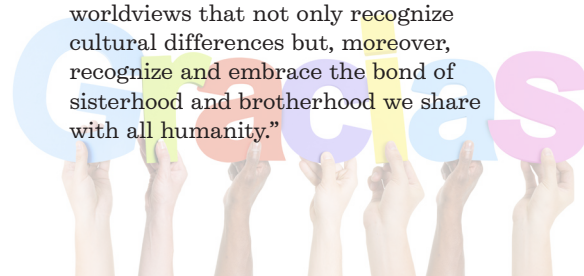
BY ELENA VERA-GUERRERO

Each year, from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15, Americans celebrate the long and important presence of Hispanic and Latino Americans in the United States who came for a better life, future, and to have the chance to achieve their dreams.

As part of Hispanic Heritage Month, St. Patrick Catholic School celebrated “La Fiesta Latina” on Oct. 10. More than 100 persons between parents, students and faculty, attended the annual celebration highlighting the Hispanic and Latino cultures and enjoyed the games, arts and crafts, live music and Latin American cuisine.

Students from Old Dominion, Spanish 312 and its instructor, Elena Vera-Guerrero, participated in the event as part of faculty voluntary service to the community. They helped with the pretend passports, stamping the picture of the country when the little children arrived. Students visited nine countries: Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Panama, Puerto Rico and Peru. The kids enjoyed asking in Spanish for the name and money of each country: “¿Cómo se llama tu país? and ¿Cuál es la moneda?”

St. Patrick’s principal, Dr. Steve Hammond, said the event was “a beautiful way to bring learning, relationships and fun together!” At the end of La Fiesta Latina, Dr. Hammond added: “In our quest to address the forces of globalization in an insightful manner, we are preparing our students to see themselves as world citizens and leaders. Obviously, to do that, they — and we — have much to learn in appreciating varying cultures and worldviews that not only recognize cultural differences but, moreover, recognize and embrace the bond of sisterhood and brotherhood we share with all humanity.”



Alexis Selby is currently a sophomore at Old Dominion University majoring in human services with minors in French and women’s studies. Because of her fascination with foreign languages and a helping hand from ODU’s LEAP program, Alexis began working with the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. Over the course of her studies at ODU, Alexis plans to study abroad in either francophone African or European countries to get a firsthand cultural experience with French language.

Featured Faculty: Dr. Gabriela Christie Toletti

Dr. Gabriela Christie Toletti, faculty member of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, has traveled across the nation and the world, taking part in various events and meeting with several renowned authors outside the English-speaking world. Through her knowledge of Spanish and teaching it as a foreign language, she displays to students and faculty alike how speaking another language can be useful and beneficial to enhance our careers and lives in general.

One event Dr. Toletti participated in as a foreign language educator was the Foreign Language Association of Virginia (FLAVA) conference in Williamsburg, Va., in September 2014. Dr. Toletti gave her presentation, "Bringing Foreign Languages to Life: Practical and Fun Strategies for Active Teaching and Learning." Her presentation emphasized the students' participation in their learning processes by creating an environment around them that encourages students to apply their language knowledge and skills both inside and outside the classroom, in order to become more understanding of cultural diversity. Dr. Toletti presented several exemplary activities such as web conferencing, mobile collaboration, open-ended tasks, problem solving, and ethnographic studies and culture capsules that appealed to all learning styles such as visual, auditory, kinesthetic, etc., while having fun at the same time.

In addition, Dr. Toletti wrote an article in collaboration with Enrique Sánchez Acosta, Ph.D. candidate, and Dr. Juan

José Escribano Otero, information technology and communications academic director, both from Universidad Europea de Madrid in Spain. Their article was titled, "Peer Review Experiences for MOOC: Development and Testing of a Peer Review System for a Massive Online Course." (Published by The New Educational Review, 37(3), October 2014.) The article addressed how Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) at first did not utilize peer reviewing, but using it now shows benefits to learning, even in courses with more than 7,300 students. The article illustrates how this modern style of learning is evolving to fit the learning needs of a massive and knowledge-hungry generation.

Also on her full plate of international endeavors, on June 9, 2014, Dr. Toletti was honored to interview the renowned German-Jewish-Argentine author Robert Schopflocher in Buenos Aires, Argentina. This interview dealt with his heritage, his life's work, and the topics he explores in his novels and short stories. The interview will be published in PEN literary magazine in Germany.

In turn, Dr. Toletti wrote an essay titled "El reencuentro de una familia del Río de La Plata" ("A Family from the Río de la Plata Reunites"). The essay is published in Dr. Frederick Lubich's book, "Festschrift," in honor of Robert Schopflocher. The volume is titled, "Transatlantische Auswanderergeschichten. Reflexionen und Reminiszenzen aus drei Generationen. Festschrift zu Ehren von Robert Schopflocher" ("Transatlantic emigrant stories. Reflections and

reminiscences of three generations. Festschrift in honor of Robert Schopflocher"), published by Königshausen & Newmann, 2014. Dr. Toletti's essay is included in the chapter, "Sudamerika: Fremde und Heimat" ("South America: Foreign and Home").

Last, but surely not least, on June 16, 2014, Dr. Toletti interviewed the well-known Uruguayan author and playwright Dino Armas in Montevideo, Uruguay, to assist with her book about him and his work. Her book explores and analyzes the plays by Dino Armas that involve themes of immigration, migration, and dictatorship in Uruguay throughout the 1970s and '80s. Her book is expected to be published in 2015. Both interviews with Dino Armas and Robert Schopflocher were filmed by Charles C. Christie Jr., Dr. Toletti's husband.

For faculty member Dr. Toletti, 2014 was filled with international learning and teaching experiences for the sake of appreciating culture, literature, and language. Her works inspire foreign language and literature students alike, to demonstrate how the critical language skills they are learning in the classroom can be applied in the professional world.

Below are several photos of Dr. Toletti at the FLAVA conference and meeting with Uruguayan author Dino Armas and Argentine author Robert Schopflocher. All photographs were taken by her husband, Charles C. Christie Jr.



Friends of FLET: A Diverse Dive into Global Literature

On Nov. 20, ODU hosted the 2014 International Fair. One event was the FLET Forum in the Webb Center's North Café, hosted by faculty members Dr. Lee Slater and Dr. Lane Dare, who teach Foreign Literature in English Translation, a dynamic and intriguing literature course open to any ODU student.

The FLET Forum featured a panel of current and former FLET students, sharing what they learned and how FLET changed the way they look at history, politics and culture, and gave them a better world understanding. One student described the course as “a history lesson without sitting through a dry history class.”

The students who made up the forum were both American and international students, and all of them agreed that the literature and discussions in this course made history and politics feel more humanized and emotional, which gave students a greater understanding of different people around the globe. By reading literature from different parts of the world, students better understand our differences, but also truly see that we are all more similar than we are different.

So what's next after FLET? Former students expressed that they want to pursue all kinds of careers across the board: international policy, the fiscal sector, media and communications, NGOs, speech pathology, military, and nonprofit developmental work. No matter what professional field one pursues, FLET enhances your cultural



understanding, enables you to think critically, and opens your eyes to the bigger picture, more than just the immediate factors that affect you.

As for what's next for FLET at the university, Drs. Slater and Dare discussed an upcoming upper-level version of the course, where students can focus their literary and cultural studies on a particular area of the world, such as South America, Europe, Africa or Asia.

All in all, FLET is more exciting and offers much more cultural variety than a regular English literature course. Dr. Slater's and Dr. Dare's passion for the subject is passed along to the students so that anyone can enjoy and benefit from this unique literature.

Language in Motion

For the 2014 academic year, faculty member Betty Facer received a grant from the Visiting Alumni Lecture Series to create an outreach program in the arena of foreign languages. The program, titled Language in Motion, is set to begin in spring 2015, featuring ODU alumni who have become foreign language teachers, as well as current ODU students that have either studied abroad or actually come to ODU from other countries.

To briefly explain, ODU alumni teachers will make their K-16 classrooms available for current ODU students to visit and speak about their experiences abroad, and the impact that learning and knowing a foreign language has had on them. The goal is to encourage and influence grade school students to pursue foreign language education and take a chance on studying abroad. Current ODU students will also host language/culture activities that grade school students can take part in. The language lessons that are currently being set in motion are Spanish and Japanese, but current ODU students may present on Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Korean, Latin, Portuguese and Russian as well.



The goal of Language in Motion is to visit the community surrounding Old Dominion and show how foreign language acquisition is important at all education levels. It will be a unique, dynamic

and educational experience for the grade school students. The ODU alumni teachers get to mentor current ODU students in foreign language education, showcase their school and students, and overall, encourage language learning opportunities. On the other hand, current ODU students will get to improve their public speaking skills, practice their language skills in a different environment, share their study abroad experiences, and get to engage in both networking and cultural discourse with language teachers, guest speakers and other professionals.

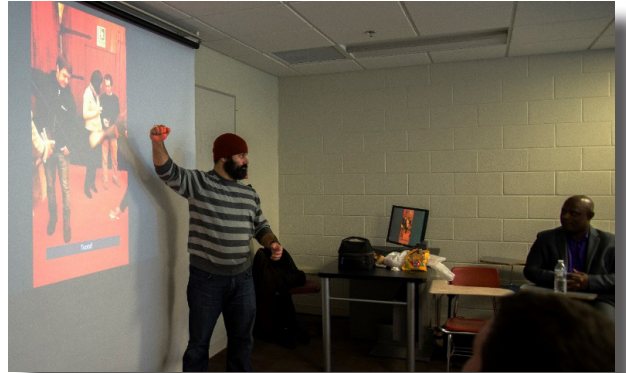
Learning Medical Spanish to Save Lives

Dr. Martha Daas of ODU's Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures is an adjunct faculty for Eastern Virginia Medical School (EVMS) and has been part of a language learning service program for medical students. Starting next year, a service learning project will be a requirement, and students can choose to learn another language that will make them more flexible medical care providers. From the looks of it, knowing a language besides English — particularly Spanish — will be almost necessary in the medical field. According to the U.S. Census, it is estimated that the Latino population in the United States will triple by 2030, and nearly one in three U.S. residents will be Latino. In 2010, Hispanic people made up 8 percent of the entire Virginia population of 636,000 residents. One in four of these residents were reported to speak mostly Spanish with a limited knowledge of English. So what happens when they need medical care?

Along with a bilingual clinician at EVMS, Dr. Daas teaches the EVMS students medical Spanish that they can then use for service projects at EVMS, Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters (CHKD) or even missions abroad in Honduras. Overall, the service program is four years long. The first year serves as a building block for learning medical Spanish, and students are educated on Spanish-speaking culture, populations, health disparities, etc. During their second year, students continue to improve their Spanish and cultural competency. Those who have reached a certain fluency will work on a voluntary basis in a clinic. In their third year of the program, students will seek out opportunities to use their medical Spanish skills during clinical rotations. And finally, in their fourth year, students will participate in a Spanish immersion clinical rotation for their capstone projects.

In this day and age, it is necessary to address cultural and linguistic diversity that often results in health care disparities. Through the EVMS program, students will become aware of modern health care disparities and learn to reverse that, so that physicians, nurses, physician assistants and pharmacists will give equal care to all citizens. Whether the medical students choose to serve in the Spanish-speaking community around EVMS or take their language skills abroad, this program offers the opportunity to not only enhance resumes, but teach real life skills to become more culturally sensitive and linguistically versatile in order to save lives.

Fall 2014 News in the Foreign Languages & Literatures Department



Dr. Paloma Sugg made it possible for ODU students to take the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) test, a reading and listening proficiency test. Foreign language students earned a rating, showing both their reading and listening proficiency, which could then be used on resumes and help them in future education or career opportunities. The test was available in English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. This incredible opportunity that Dr. Sugg set up for ODU language students also was free! Outside the university, test takers have to pay a fee to take the exam and receive their score. Around 20 students took the ACTFL test, and overall, they were pleased with their scores. This opportunity was aided by Betty Facer, who set up and facilitated the ACTFL testing in ODU's Language Lab.

The Spanish Tertulia is another ODU event made possible by Dr. Paloma Sugg, with the help of Dr. Luis Guadano. A tertulia is a public discussion that has its roots in Spain during the 1920s when people would gather in bars or other public venues to discuss current events and literature. Now tertulias are held around the world in Portugal, Latin America and here at ODU. Dr. Sugg is co-leading ODU's tertulias with the help of Dr. Guadano. ODU Spanish students and those just simply interested in Hispanic and Latino culture can gather to discuss current events, literature, pop culture and more.

Japan Foundation

BY MINORI MARKEN

Minori Marken was appointed to serve as the coordinator of the Japanese Language Education Global Articulation Project (J-GAP) for the Virginia/Maryland region beginning in January 2015. This appointment is part of a larger transitional period in J-GAP's administration within the U.S. The project originally began with a Japan Foundation grant in 2011 as an international effort in eight countries to facilitate communication about curriculum design and teaching methods between groups of Japanese language educators. Since the work accomplished within these four years was highly successful within a number of countries, including the U.S., the Mid-Atlantic Association of Teachers of Japanese (MAATJ) stepped in to begin overseeing J-GAP when the Japan Foundation terminated its sponsorship of the program in the Virginia/Maryland region. This region formerly represented the entire U.S. under the Japan Foundation's administration.

Mrs. Marken's role will involve promoting the continued progress on the former J-GAP's educational goals, as well as communicating the results of the previous efforts to language educators in the area. Furthermore, since MAATJ's support is purely administrative and not financial, Marken must also secure funding to achieve these efforts. One of the project goals, and a particular emphasis of Marken's, is to promote communication between different school systems, universities, and even educators within the same school regarding concepts such as learning objectives and classroom dynamics. This allows students advancing from secondary school to the college level, or transferring between schools, to have a smooth transition within their Japanese classroom.

Facilitating J-GAP's work in this field and maintaining the communication infrastructure in place (through conferences and smaller meetings between language educators in the Virginia area) with a significantly decreased budget will prove to be a crucial challenge during Mrs. Marken's tenure as J-GAP coordinator.

