

Fall 2012

Foreign Languages & Literatures Times

Department of World Languages & Cultures, Old Dominion University

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FOREIGN LANGUAGES & LITERATURES TIMES

college of arts & letters

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

FALL 2012

Inside this newsletter:

Lee Slater
Meet the Editor

1
2

Featured Faculty

Peter Schulman and UniverCity

Japanese Program

Outreach Activity Report

2-3

4

5

International Literary and Cultural
Studies Research Forums

Clarissa Sligh's Visit to ODU

Japanese 311 Contest

6

7

8

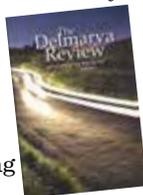
Dr. Lee Slater uses travels to enrich FLET courses

Dr. Lee Slater's activities in the African countries of Rwanda and Senegal are making an impact on students at ODU, especially those who have interest in the Foreign Literature in English Translation courses (FLET).



Slater, professor of world literatures and French, used observations from her trip to Rwanda to write an essay, "Writing Rwanda."

The essay chronicles initiatives to rekindle literary and cultural life in Rwanda less than two decades after a devastating genocide there. Writing workshops, spoken word events in cafés and the first literary festival of its kind in Kigali are signs of healing and hope in the country's first tentative steps toward language as personal expression. Dr. Slater's essay was published in the *Delmarva Review*, and the questions and challenges it evokes were recently discussed on NPR's "Delmarva Today."



Professor Slater also accompanied an ODU study abroad trip to Senegal this past May, serving as a translator for faculty and students. The group delved into the culture norms of Senegalese women, and gained insight into the similarities and differences between

Senegalese culture and our own. One of their stops included a visit to the Musee de La Femme Henriette-Bathily, a museum dedicated to Senegalese women. The study abroad participants were able to meet the museum's founder (and Senegalese writer and poet), Annette Mbaye d'Erneville, and be her honored guests while in Senegal. In return, the students presented the poet with English translations of her children's poetry.

In response to student interest, Dr. Slater's experiences in Rwanda and Senegal have inspired a new 300-level course, Understanding World Literature, under the theme of conflict and reconciliation. This course will consider narratives on Rwandan genocide, contemporary works from Senegal and more. Slater hopes to connect with the authors of these works



DR. SLATER INTERPRETING FOR A COLLECTOR OF SLAVE ARTIFACTS

via Skype during class discussions and include guest speakers from ODU.

These experiences and others are being used to build the Foreign Literature in English

Translation (FLET) program, which began as one 100-level course. Slater will continue revamping the FLET curricula and expanding its offerings to introduce recent authors and themes. In the long run, Dr. Slater and other ODU faculty are working on developing the topic of world cultures into a major.

Dr. Slater plans to return to Rwanda this spring.

(Visit www.senegalstudy.org to see more about the trip to Senegal.)



DR. SLATER (RIGHT) WITH DR. JENNIFER FISH



DR. SLATER INTERPRETING FOR THE HEADMASTER OF A SCHOOL IN SENEGAL



OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND LETTERS

IDEA FUSION



MARTINA IN HEIDELBERG, GERMANY

Meet the Editor

Martina Fortin is from Chesapeake. Currently a sophomore at Old Dominion University, she is pursuing a major in linguistics (English), with minors in German and music performance. In addition to her studies, she is the first violinist in ODU's Russell Stanger String Quartet. With the help of ODU's Career Management Center, Martina was able to acquire a position working for the Foreign Languages and Literatures Department as the editor for the FL&L Times. This past summer, Martina interned for Central Texas College (Europe) in Mannheim, Germany, and gained a better understanding of German culture. Some of the cities she visited include Mainz, Wiesbaden, Heidelberg and Strasbourg (France). Martina is excited to be working alongside the faculty of the Foreign Languages and Literatures Department.

The Foreign Languages and Literatures Department is excited to publish the Foreign Languages and Literatures Times, our newsletter designed 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 may have on the above. 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 up to.



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Featured Faculty



Dr. Junji Yoshida is a new Assistant Professor of Japanese. Dr. Yoshida welcomes all types of students with his friendly demeanor and “Buddha smile” but keeps them accountable for their individual performances. (Note: He is a vegan but not a Buddhist and hates to be mistaken as “merciful,” especially toward the end of the semester!) He has high expectations

for his students and is committed to training them to rise above the challenges of academic pursuits and integrity. “The teacher’s role,” he holds, “is to create a rigorous but nurturing environment in which students can feel relaxed enough to make errors without feeling embarrassed.”

Dr. Yoshida’s current research project focuses on the nexus of vernacular humor and the technology of cinema in 20th -century Japan. Instead of characterizing “Japanese film comedy” either as a local variant of classical Hollywood comedies or as an offshoot of traditional comic art (rakugo or kyogen), he emphasizes the genre’s broader appeal as equal with aspirations of disenfranchised people. His project, “Historicizing Humor,” insists that a series of early Japanese filmmakers had adopted the playful mode of narration in order to register Japan’s experiences of imperialism, industrialization and capitalism. His analysis encompasses a silent-era parody of samurai swashbucklers (“Forced to Wander”) through a wartime state-policy-friendly screwball comedy (“Living Legend of Magoroku”) to a postwar caricature of “democratic” U.S.-Japanese military alliances (“Pigs and Battleships”).

What unites these diverse texts is the way in which the film carves out a symbolic position that it solicits the spectator to occupy. His project brings films in dialogue with a broader range of issues in contemporary film criticism, including vernacular modernism, theories of subjectivity and spectatorship, and the relationship between private and public spheres. In spring 2013, he will present his preliminary research at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference. In the following summer, he plans to visit Waseda University’s Theatrical and Film Museum in Tokyo to use its resources in exploring the shifting relationship between avant-garde comedy and its audience in the late 1920s and early 1930s.



Dr. Andrew Gordus is recently tenured as Associate Professor of Spanish. Currently, he researches the U.S.-Mexico border region, specifically, the issues of bilingualism and

challenges for the people of that region who live between two cultural identities. He will also be researching popular culture of Northern Mexico and the U.S., including those who are among the “imperfect cultural representation.” In addition to border studies, Dr. Gordus will be researching masculine identities in Latino literature and how gender identity intersects with cultural national identity. His new course ideas include the popular culture of Latin America along with border studies, masculinities in Latin America, and the aspect of Latin American culture in film.



Wanda Franco-Tubbs is initially from Puerto Rico. She received her master’s degree in administration and education from Grand Canyon University, her bachelor’s degree in

Spanish literature from the University of Massachusetts, and her associate degree in chemistry from the University of Puerto Rico. During her time at the University of Massachusetts, she decided to switch her major from chemistry to Spanish literature. In addition to teaching at Old Dominion University, Mrs. Franco-Tubbs teaches at I.C. Norcom High School in Portsmouth. When she is not teaching, she practices jujitsu and runs an online martial arts clothing store. She also spends time with her three children.

While skilled in the Spanish and English languages, Franco-Tubbs is also fluent in French and Italian. She firmly believes that learning second languages should be encouraged everywhere.

Naoki Shikimachi is from Saga, Japan, a small town on Japan’s southern island of Kyushu. He received his master’s degree in Japanese from the University of Colorado at Boulder and



his master’s and bachelor’s degrees in education from the University of Saga. Shikimachi enjoys teaching Japanese and describes this experience as being a “bridge” between the U.S. and Japan. Shikimachi teaches Japanese at ODU and at Frank W. Cox High School in Virginia Beach. In his spare time, he likes playing tennis with his friends, snowboarding with his family, and helping his son practice various sports.

This is Shikimachi’s first semester teaching Japanese at ODU. He admires his students’ diligence and creativity. He said his class “has such a positive and enthusiastic environment. I hope my students visit Japan someday. I believe that learning other languages and cultures opens a world of possibilities to people, especially in the 21st century.”

Maria Roy is from Chile, and enjoys teaching Spanish at ODU. An ODU alumna, she majored in both Spanish and history, minored in education, and received her master’s degree in humanities. She is fascinated by Spanish literature and medieval Spain, so it is no surprise that her history focuses on Spanish medieval and renaissance history. Roy loves languages and how they work. She chose to teach Spanish because there are a lot of Spanish speakers, and she likes how Spanish is a living language that is constantly changing.

Teaching Spanish is never boring, she says, because she gets to teach many other subjects including art, literature, food, history and more. In addition to teaching at ODU, Ms. Roy teaches high school and spends a lot of time with her children. She does translations as well, including the driving manual for Arkansas when Bill Clinton was governor. In her spare time, she enjoys running, reading historical medieval mysteries, cooking with good ingredients, growing her own food, and watching sports.



MARIA ROY IN FRONT OF RAPHAEL’S “SCHOOL OF ATHENS” AT THE VATICAN MUSEUM



DR. SCHULMAN WELCOMES GUESTS AT THE BORJO/CAFÉ EINSTEIN CAFÉ TALK.

Peter Schulman and UniverCity

UniverCity is an interdisciplinary initiative by **Dr. Peter Schulman**, associate professor of French. The goal of this initiative is to bring ODU faculty into the local businesses and economy, and show how culture can benefit our local businesses. It also shows how creative Dr. Schulman and other ODU professors can be, as UniverCity is made up of eccentric events.

One such event occurred on Oct. 15, 2012, when Schulman and other ODU faculty chatted with Berlin's Café Einstein via Skype from Borjo Coffeehouse in University Village. This coffeehouse conversation featured poetry readings from **Frederick Lubich**, **Tim Seibles** and **Renee Olander**. **Susan Wansink** also presented a photo exhibit opening for "Übergangsorte in Berlin" ("Transitional Spaces in Berlin").

On the night before the U.S. elections, another café talk took place in Café Stella, located in the Ghent area of Norfolk. The main discussion at Café Stella centered on the techniques the early Romans used to win elections and compared them to our own strategies of today.

Another event (location to be announced) will feature poetry and art about trains, marking the new direct train service from Norfolk to Washington, D.C.

While other UniverCity events are being planned, Dr. Schulman's goal is to connect with many cafes throughout the world.



Japanese Program Outreach Activity Report



This past year, elementary, middle and high school students from the area participated in ODU's Japanese program outreach activities.

On Feb. 17, approximately 25 students from Landstown High School in Virginia Beach visited ODU. Most of them were from the Level 3 and 4 Japanese courses. They heard two guest speakers: an ODU graduate with the

experience of teaching for six years at schools in Japan and an ODU senior who spent one year in Japan as an exchange student. The high school students also spent time with ODU students in **Minori Marken's** Japanese class. They enjoyed using the target language outside their classrooms. They also practiced Japanese songs for the Cherry Blossom Festival, which was held in Virginia Beach in April 2012.

The ODU Japanese program also invited about 25 students from four middle schools in Virginia Beach (Brandon, Corporate Landing, Larkspur and Plaza middle schools). They were all from the Level 2 Japanese courses. The ODU students in **Mieko Ishibashi's** Japanese class joined them to play games and sing in Japanese together.

On April 1, the ODU Japanese chorus, led by Ms. Marken, sang two pieces in Japanese at the Cherry Blossom Festival in Virginia Beach. Most members of the chorus were students taking Japanese courses. This was the third year the chorus sang there.

More than 30 middle school

and high school students sang with the chorus.

Another outreach activity was Ms. Marken's elementary school visit. Last year she started sharing Japanese culture with students in elementary schools. In 2012 she was invited to four elementary schools in May and June, and introduced the culture and language to students in 11 classes, in total, from kindergarten to the fifth grade.



STUDENTS USED JAPANESE NEWSPAPERS TO MAKE A "SAMURAI HELMET," AN ORIGAMI CRAFT.



STUDENTS FIGURE OUT WHICH LETTERS ARE NEEDED FOR THEIR NAMES

International Literary and Cultural Studies Research Forums, Fall 2012

The International Literary and Cultural Studies Research Forum for the fall of 2012 was organized by **Dr. Elizabeth Black**, associate professor of French, and **Dr. Heidi Schlipphacke**, associate professor of German. The forum consisted of three talks throughout the semester and featured speakers from Old Dominion University, Christopher Newport University and Indiana University, Bloomington.



Medieval economics, chivalry in 'Dragon Tattoo'

This event featured guest speakers **Dr. Kevin Moberly**, associate professor of English at Old Dominion University, and his brother, Dr. Brent Moberly from Indiana University, Bloomington. As the event title suggests, this discussion centered on the re-emergence of the corporate governance model featured in Stieg Larsson's mystery, "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo." In Larsson's novels, first published in 2005, constant references to such medieval models bring attention to the issues of women and sexual violence, more than other chivalric traditions.



DR. BRENT MOBERLY (LEFT) AND DR. KEVIN MOBERLY DISCUSS MEDIEVAL THEMES PRESENT IN "THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO"

Cultural politics tap into digital media



Dr. Angelica Huizar's presentation centered on Latin American digital artists,

which she proposed as poets of the Millennium generation. Narrative structures created by visual artist Fernando Llanos in his video installations of news events from Latin America were displayed as she discussed an emergence of digital media poets through Llanos' bold, artistic approach.

A Vicious Character Wrapped up in the Swaddling Clothes of Myth

Dr. Michael J. Mulryan, assistant professor of French at Christopher Newport University, exposed many truths and myths about Jean Henri de Latude, the in/famous prison escape artist who lived from 1725-1804. While exploring this dramatic inmate's antics and exaggerations, Mulryan pointed out that readers will notice how the escapades symbolize desires for freedom under a tyrannical government. Variants of this escape artist's stories were presented, highlighting the historical and literary legacies of the delusional de Latude.



Clarissa Sligh's Visit to ODU

On Oct. 25, 2012, independent lesbian artist/photographer and civil rights activist Clarissa Sligh came to Old Dominion University. Among the many TRANSformations events she hosted at ODU, one included an artist activist workshop, where participants were encouraged to explore the transformations in their lives by creating and cleverly altering their personal collages. The purpose of the workshop was to actively listen to other participants while using art, photos and writing to analyze how past experiences shape the self-image and current self-expression. The workshop proved to be quite a success and appeared to make a great impact on those who attended.

Other TRANSformations events included a reception, book signing and a segment titled "Politics of Identity and Social Change," which also featured award-winning journalist Wil LaVeist. Clarissa Sligh also made appearances at Norfolk State University and the Hampton Roads LGBT Center.

Participants in the workshop had to completely transform their collages

and were encouraged to keep adding to them.

During her visit, Clarissa Sligh discussed her work on race, gender and sexuality. Through her photography and books, Sligh delves into the assumptions we make about identity based on appearance.

Heidi Schlipphacke, assistant professor of German at Old Dominion University, has used Clarissa Sligh's book, "Wrongly Bodied Two," in her History of Queer Bodies class. In this book, Ms. Sligh describes the journey of a female-to-male transitioning person (Jake) with the help of explicit photographs. This work also includes the true story of Ellen and William Craft, a slave couple who escaped to the North during the Civil War. Ellen dressed as the white "master" of her husband so that they could successfully escape to their destination. This narrative was discussed during the Politics of Identity and Social Change segment of Ms. Sligh's visit.



WIL LAVEIST AND CLARISSA SLIGH DISCUSS THE PROFOUND IMAGE OF JAKE.

Clarissa Sligh is the author of "Wrongly Bodied: Documenting Transition From Female To Male." Her collections have been displayed by many art museums, including New York's Museum of Modern Art, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston.

Through her art, Clarissa Sligh sheds light on the issues of ethnicity, sexuality and society in general. Her appearances at ODU and NSU were very bold and compelling.

To learn more about Clarissa Sligh, visit www.clarissasligh.com and www.wronglybodied.com.



TWO OF CLARISSA SLIGH'S MAGNIFICENT PAPER CRANE MOBILES.
HEIDI SCHLIPPHACKE, CLARISSA SLIGH, AND ALICIA PHILLIPS-DUNLAP

PARTICIPANTS IN THE WORKSHOP HAD TO COMPLETELY TRANSFORM THEIR COLLAGES AND WERE ENCOURAGED TO KEEP ADDING TO THEM.





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Japanese 311 Contest

The Foreign Languages and Literatures Department congratulates the winners of the Japanese 311 speech contest! In the photo, **Dr. Junji Yoshida** is giving the second-place certificate and prize to Jalisa Wilson. Pictured in the middle is Jesse Ila, who placed first in the contest. We also congratulate Shoma Rahman (not pictured), who placed third. All of the students did their best, and although many speeches were not voted among the top three, they all deserve commendation.