

Modern & Classical

2004-2005*

Languages

From the Chair

It is my great pleasure to welcome you as a reader to the Modern and Classical Languages Department's newsletter. Thanks to the commitment of our dedicated faculty, and to the support of the university administration and of our alumni, advocates, and friends, we offer study in eleven languages, embracing an even wider number of literatures and cultures.

I hope that you will enjoy reading about our students and faculty, new developments in the department, and our many successes as we serve more than 6,000 students a year at George Mason. Our newsletter will give you a brief look at our many activities in the discovery of knowledge, in teaching and learning, and in engagement in our community. Your support ensures that we will continue to grow and to thrive.

Jeff Chamberlain
Associate Professor and Chair

Arabic
Chinese
French
German
Classical Greek
Biblical Hebrew

Italian
Japanese
Latin
Russian
Spanish

What's new?

Arabic

The Arabic program has enjoyed tremendous growth. At the present time, there are 80 students enrolled in the 100 level and 45 in the 200 level. Most are minors in Islamic or Arabic Studies.

Chinese

A new minor in Chinese is now being offered. In the spring 2005, CHIN 109 will be offered in the late evening time to attract nontraditional students. There are currently 152 students enrolled at the 100-200 level.

Japanese

With unexpectedly high demand for an introductory-level Japanese language course, we offered five sections of JAPA 101. For the first time, we offered a 300-level course -- JAPA 330 Advanced Reading and Speaking I. A total of 167 students are now enrolled in 100-, 200-, and 300-level courses.

New Full-Time Faculty

Dr. Ramonu Sanusi (Ph.D., University of Oregon 2004) joined our department in August 2004 as a tenure-track Assistant Professor of French & Francophone Studies. On September 30, 2004, he gave a lecture "Joseph Zobel's *La Rue Cases-Nègres*: The Writer as a Protagonist," in Janine Ricouart's Caribbean Literature Class. In April 2004, he presented a paper "Sembene Ousmane and the Metamorphosis of Female Personae" at the ALA conference. He will present "The Language and Politics of Mongo Beti in *Branle-bas* and *Trop de Soleil*" at the 2005 ALA conference and "Irruption des romancières africaines francophones: rupture du silence et des interdits?" at the 2005 CIEF conference in Ottawa-Gatineau. He published *Mama Tutu* in 2003 and his second book *Le Bistouri des larmes* is being reviewed for publication. He has just finished writing his third book *The Spirit Child*.

Dr. Sufumi So (Ph.D., University of Toronto, 1997) joined the Department in August 2004 as Term Assistant Professor and coordinator of Japanese. She will present a paper at the 14th World Congress of Applied Linguistics in July 2005. She is a member of the College Board's Advanced Placement Japanese Task Force.

Dr. Grace Zhou (Ph.D., University of California, Davis, 2003) joined the Department in August 2004 as Term Assistant Professor of Chinese. Her teaching interests include Modern Chinese Literature and Contemporary Chinese Film. Her essay titled "The Chinese Renaissance: a Transcultural Reading" has been accepted by PMLA.

Ms. Sana Hilmi's (MA in English Linguistics, George Mason University, 2002) name means "splendor of light." She is currently teaching Arabic at the beginning and intermediate levels and is developing a program for the advanced levels. She will teach Arabic Literature in Translation during the spring 2005 semester.



Italian

Ms. Brita Caminiti is the Italian Program Coordinator. Her primary interests are the works of Italo Calvino and second language acquisition studies. She

is an active member and volunteer for the Italian American organizations Fieri and NIAF, (National Italian American Foundation), in Washington, D.C.

French

Dr. Jeff Chamberlain, Department Chair, presented a paper, "The Original Lingua Franca: Latin as the Language of Empire," at the Fifth Pan-European International Relations Conference, "Constructing World Orders," in September in The Hague, Netherlands. He published a review of Peter Tiersma's *Legal Language*, in *Language Problems and Language Planning* (spring 2004), and was recently asked to edit the French translations of minority language reports for Euromosaic III, a field research project prepared for the European Union by the Research Center on Multilingualism in Brussels.

Ms. Laura Fyfe, Basic French Language Program coordinator, taught FREN 550 Images de la femme dans la littérature africaine. She presented papers on Senegalese writer Ken Bugul at the MMLA and the ALA. Ms. Fyfe initiated a TA training and orientation program this August and revised the curriculum for the French program to incorporate cinema and literature

components. She has two forthcoming reviews in the *French Review*.

Dr. Paula Ruth Gilbert's latest book, *Violence and the Female Imagination: Québec's Women Writers Re-Frame Gender in North American Cultures*, will be published in 2005 with McGill-Queen's University Press. As a follow-up to her 2003 reader on *Violence and Gender*, Dr. Gilbert is currently working on a second reader dealing with international issues of violence and gender. She plans to lead the study abroad program in Paris in summer 2005 and spring 2006.

Dr. Janine Ricouart's book co-edited with Roseanna Dufault and titled: *Les secrets de la sphinx, Lectures de l'oeuvre d'Anne-Marie Alonzo* was published by les Editions du remue-ménage in Montreal, in November 2004. Dr. Ricouart continues her research on francophone women writers from France and Quebec.

Russian Studies

Dr. Leslie Chekin is teaching RUSS 325 Major Russian Writers, which for the first time is devoted to a comparison of the masterpieces of Bulgakov and Dostoevsky.

Dr. Julie Christensen is currently on academic leave. She will present papers at the 2005 American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies. Her proposed Synthesis course, RUSS 353 Russian Civilization, was accepted.

Dr. Jim Levine published an article (co-authored with Charles Jones) titled "Russian V+ *shch-* Adjectives and Adverbs" in the *Journal of Slavic Linguistics*.

Mr. Sergei Samoylenko, a native of Krasnodar, Russia, is teaching RUSS 101. Sergei received his B.A. and M.A. in Theoretical and Applied Linguistics from Kuban State University. We are grateful to our colleagues in Communications for sharing Sergei with us this semester.

Dr. Tatiana Vasilyeva is serving as Faculty Advisor to the Russian Club and is leading a weekly conversation hour on Fridays at 1:30 p.m.



Students in Paris with Ms. Fyfe.

Special Thanks

We are grateful to all our **teaching assistants and adjuncts** for their dedication and their invaluable contribution to our department. We could not do it without you!

Classics

Dr. Martin Winkler received a Research Fellowship from the Society for the Humanities at Cornell University and is on leave for 2004-2005. At Cornell, he will begin work on a book tentatively titled *Homer on the Screen*, about film adaptations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* from silent cinema to *Troy*. He has also been invited to contribute a chapter on "Greek Mythology on the Screen" to *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Myth*. In addition to numerous articles, reviews, lectures and papers, he edited *Gladiator: Film and History* and contributed two chapters "Gladiator and the Traditions of Historical Cinema" and "Gladiator and the Colosseum: Ambiguities of Spectacle."

German

Dr. Esther Elstun was honored in April for 35 years of service to the University. She also completed a three-year term on the executive board of the Virginia Conference of the American Association of University Professors in June and she was a participant/discussant at a conference on "Literature and Philosophy After Kant," held at George Mason June 11-12. The Department of Modern and Classical Languages was one of the co-sponsors of the conference, which was organized by Professor Ted Kinnaman (Philosophy & Religious Studies) and drew scholars from colleges and universities throughout the United States.

Dr. Elstun is currently completing her 30th year as an elected member of the university's Faculty Senate from the College of Arts and Sciences and she chairs the Senate's Academic Policies Committee and is a member of its Executive Committee. She is also representing the faculty of the university on the Board of Visitors' Faculty & Academic Standards Committee. She became the first faculty member to serve in this capacity last year, after the Board of Visitors agreed to permit faculty participation on this committee.

Spanish

Dr. Rei Berroa published with Margarito Cuéllar the anthology *Poetas en la Casa de la Luna*, a compilation of Spanish poems read at the 12th Poetry Marathon that he organizes yearly for Teatro de la Luna in Arlington. He is conducting research for the book *Lorca in New York*, on the year Lorca spent in that city. This project was nominated by the Provost's Office for the Mason Senior Faculty 2005 NEH Summer Grant. In May, two of Dr. Berroa's poems were recorded in the CD *31 Arlington Poets*. In the summer, on the occasion of Pablo Neruda's 100th birthday, he put together a 90-minute radio program for Pacifica Radio with Rob Robinson. The program included interviews with Neruda's translator, Alastair Reid, from *The New Yorker*, and A.B. Spellman, Deputy Director of the NEA.

Dr. Zennia Hancock completed her Ph.D. in Spanish Language and Literature at the University of Maryland at College Park in December 2004. The title of her dissertation is *The Spanish Shahrazad and Her Entourage: The Powers of Storytelling Women in Libro de los engaños de las mujeres*.

Ms. Irene Lee is currently Assistant Director of the Basic Spanish Program and coordinates the Spanish 200 level courses. Ms. Lee led a group of 14 students to Cuernavaca, México, in the summer.

Chinese

In addition to teaching, Dr. Karl Zhang lectured on a variety of topics, worked with neighboring schools, organized the Third Chinese Bridge Speech Contest at the Chinese Embassy, and secured a Chinese government scholarship for one Mason student to study in China for one year. He also led a study abroad group to China in summer 2004.

De tianxi yingcai er yuzhi, buyi lehu!
What a pleasure to be able to teach such wonderful students!



Jacqueline, Antonella, Emily, Whitney, Bill, Magnus, Elena, Kara, Cynthia, Melissa, Dr. Román-Mendoza, Matthew and Christine at the Centro Fiorenza.

Dr. Jennifer Leeman is on leave and is currently preparing a book on Spanish in the US. Her article, "Racializing Language: A History of Linguistic Ideologies in the US Census," has been accepted for publication in *The Journal of Language and Politics*. She co-presented with Dr. Gabriella Modan (Ohio State University) "Multilingualism, National Identity and the State: Census Language Questions in the US and Canada" at the American Association of Applied Linguistics Convention in May. Dr. Leeman's article "Engaging Critical Pedagogy: Spanish for Native Speakers" was accepted for publication in *Foreign Language Annals*, and she was invited to speak on this topic at a symposium held at the University of Maryland. Dr. Leeman continues to serve as Director of the Basic Spanish program.

Dr. Esperanza Román-Mendoza presented papers on pedagogical issues at ACTFL in Philadelphia and ExpoCampus in Madrid, and continued to develop instructional materials, such as the textbook *Sol y viento* (McGraw-Hill) and the Rosetta Stone software *Latin American Spanish III*. She received a grant from the Technology Across the Curriculum program. She led two exciting study abroad trips: a winter program in Cuba and a summer program in Florence/Elba. Dr. Román-Mendoza is the Acting Director of the Basic Spanish program.

Awards

Congratulations to students recognized at the department's annual awards ceremony in May 2004!

Chinese. Our special thanks to the Embassy of China for the Chinese Government Scholarship awarded to honor student: **Dacil Keo**. This one-year scholarship includes tuition, board and a stipend. **Tamara Wehmeir, Dacil Keo** and **Sasha McGlynn** received the Achievement in the minor of Chinese Award.

German. Thanks to the generosity of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, the following outstanding students of German received prizes. Elementary course: **Ashley Kesner, Elizabeth Phillips and Michelle Swetnam**. Intermediate course: **Karen Craven, Madeleine Morgan and Erin Nickenig**. Significant progress in the study of the language and its literature: **Maja Frigelj and Benjamin Jung**. Literature: **Laura Strecker**. Graduating seniors with a German minor: **Jenny DiPlacidi, Alison Jones and Paul Ondiak**.

French. The following students received the Outstanding Achievement in French Award: **Mena Behsudi and Jen Barnard**. **Dominique Robin-Sitterre** received the Outstanding Graduate Award.

Spanish. The following students received the Undergraduate Excellence in Spanish Award: **Gisela Caballero, James Dettre, Sarah Mertz, Nidi Miller, Francisco Reyes, and Maria Szente**. **María Eugenia Thomae-Forgues** received the Graduate Study Award.

Russian. **Ashley Kesner**, Russian Studies major, was awarded a Fulbright- Hays scholarship for the spring 2004 Advanced Russian Language and Area Studies program at Herzen State Pedagogical University in St. Petersburg, Russia. Ashley is currently studying Russian literature and politics at Oxford University, on the Mason in Oxford program.

Study Abroad. The following students received Study Abroad Merit Scholarships: Shauntel Sellers, Tiffany Marie Perry, Chinchu Kungaa, Genevieve Anne Harder, and Marie Ann García.

Study Abroad

Dr. Zhang led a group of 11 students to Zhejiang University in **Hangzhou**, south of Shanghai. The group toured **Beijing, Shanghai**, and the scenic mountain **Huangshan**, and attended language and culture classes for six weeks while living in dorms.

Dr. Román-Mendoza led participants on the two-week Cuba program. They visited **Havana, Varadero, Santa Clara, Trinidad, and Santiago** and developed a new sense of appreciation for other ways of living and thinking.

Students in the eight-week Italian language program had a wonderful time in **Elba and Florence** this summer under the guidance of Dr. Román-Mendoza and Ms. McCabe.

Ms. Lee accompanied students to study Spanish at the Cemanahuac Institute in **Cuernavaca**, Mexico. Students lived with local families and participated in fieldtrips offered by the school to **Teotihuacán, Mexico City, Taxco and Tepoztlán**.

Dr. Hancock was Faculty Director of the **Seville** program and Ms. McCabe led the **Madrid** program this summer. The two groups consisted of a total of 39 students.

Ms. Fyfe took 15 students to **Paris** to study at the Institut Catholique de Paris in summer 2004.

Dr. Ricouart accompanied 7 students to **Monaco** in January 2004.

Mathew Semler, Russian Studies major, spent spring 2004 at the Moscow State University. This program was sponsored by the School of Russian and Asian Studies (SRAS).

The Russian Club provides opportunities for anyone interested in learning more about Russia. Last semester, the Russian Club visited museums, saw concerts, watched films, held parties, and volunteered for Mason's retirement reception for renowned author, professor Vassily Aksyonov.

This semester, the Russian Club organized a "Ribbons for Russians" fundraiser for the terror victims in Beslan, launched its conversation sessions for the fall semester, inaugurated a new panel of officers, and redesigned its website www.gmu.edu/org/russianclub.

Students have expressed an interest in reviving the **German Club**. Look for more news on this in future newsletters.

Alumni News

Rebecca Givens, Russian Studies (2004), a 2003 recipient of a Fulbright-Hays award for a semester's study in St. Petersburg, was accepted to Carnegie Mellon's M.A. program in Arts Management.

Marc Kokosky, Russian Studies (2003), is grants administrator at the US Civilian Research & Development Foundation. Mark served as an International Election Observer during the Russian Presidential elections.

Kenneth Guy, Russian Studies (1997), is Consular Assistant at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

Robert Morris, Russian Studies (1995), received his Ph.D. in Marine Biology this past June from the University of Oregon. Dr. Morris has been awarded a

post-doctoral fellowship at Cornell University for the 2004-2005 academic year.

Sheila Turek, MA French (1997), is now Assistant Professor at the University of Wisconsin, Whitewater.

Rigoberto Guevara, MA Spanish (1998) is now Assistant Professor of Spanish at University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

Our thanks to German alumna **Ingeborg Linderman** who donated a selection of German books to the Department for distribution to students of German.

Alumni! Let us know where you are. Send us an email at language@gmu.edu or write to us at 4400 University Drive, MSN 3E5, Fairfax, VA 22030.