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Newsletter compilation and editing:

Dylan Gibson
Shannon Dubenion-Smith

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## MCL Faculty Roster

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## MCL Faculty Emeriti

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*View of WWU campus. Photo credit: Western’s Flickr photostream*
As I peer out my office window, my gaze is greeted by beautiful magnolia blossoms – a sure sign that spring has arrived. Now in the last phase of the academic calendar, it is time to share with you news from the last two years in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages.

MCL is home to 39 faculty members from 15 countries who offer courses in Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Japanese, Latin, Russian, Spanish, and Classical Studies. Students in MCL may major and minor in five languages – Chinese, French, German, Japanese, and Spanish – as well as Latin American Studies, and may minor in Classical Studies, Greek, Latin, and Russian. Currently, 212 students are majoring and 288 students are minoring in one of our languages, Classical Studies, or Latin American Studies.

At the end of the 2021-2022 academic year, we said goodbye to Prof. Janet Xing, who taught Chinese and Linguistics for 25 years and was instrumental in the creation of the Chinese major. Soon after, in August 2022, Prof. Brent Carbajal retired from Western after 25 years of service as well, including 11 as a faculty member in Spanish, eight also as MCL department chair; five as the Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences; and, most recently, nine as Provost of our university. Both of these distinguished colleagues were awarded emerita/emeritus status for their outstanding contributions to Western. In September 2023, we bade farewell to another dear colleague from the Spanish section, Prof. Mary Anne Rangel-Guerrero, who had been a pillar of our first- and second-year Spanish language course sequences since 1992. We wish these colleagues all the best in their well-deserved retirement! Since 2022, we have also welcomed to our department two new Assistant Professors, Xiaomeng Li (Chinese) and Tyler Walker (Japanese), and a number of non-tenure-track faculty (Claudia Liu – Chinese; Danielle Martin – Classics; Andrea Predko, Anthony Radoiu – French; Marianne Sebastian – German; Minori Fukuyama, Makoto Negishi – Japanese), whose contributions have been instrumental to the success of our programs. In Fall 2024, we will be joined by Dr. Keenan Burton, who will hold the title of Laurel Nesholm Endowed Assistant Professor of French, a position made possible by a generous donation to Western from the Nesholm Family Foundation. Finally, we enthusiastically welcomed back Prof. Paqui Paredes to the Spanish section in January 2024 after her five exemplary years of service as Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

After the extremely challenging years of the COVID-19 pandemic, MCL faculty are thrilled to be back in the face-to-face classroom where they continue to provide high-quality, student-centered learning experiences for our students. Many collaborate with colleagues in other units across campus including the Center for Canadian-American Studies, East Asian Studies Program, Honors College, Latin American Studies Program, Linguistics Department, and Ray Wolpow Institute for the Study of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Crimes Against Humanity. Two MCL faculty hold directorships in these units: Prof. Sandra Alfers (RWI) and Prof. Luis Portugal (LAS). Outside the classroom, faculty have been hard at work supporting student clubs and holding events, such as the Chinese New Year celebration and Latin American Studies Forum, to foster a feeling of community. Off campus, colleagues lead students through life-changing Global Learning Programs to sites around the world: Qingdao, China (Profs. Claudia Liu and Julian Wu); Ecuador (Prof. Amy Carbajal); Tokyo, Japan (Prof. Massi Tomasi); and Guanajuato, Mexico (Profs. Blanca Aranda and Luis Portugal). I also continue to be inspired and amazed by MCL colleagues’ active involvement in research; in the last academic year, faculty published six books and 11 refereed journal articles and book chapters, and they presented 32 papers at regional, national, and international conferences. You will find much more about MCL faculty’s activities and accomplishments in the pages to follow.

In January 2023, Western’s Employee Language Program celebrated its 10th anniversary. Through this program, advanced undergraduates lead workshops in Chinese, French, German, Portuguese, and Spanish and serve as
conversation partners for Western faculty and staff under the guidance of the Program Director, Prof. Kirsten Drickey, and Curriculum Coordinators Profs. Lindsey Smith, Wenling Su, and Julie Winter. This program has gained national recognition in recent years and has had an extremely positive impact on participating students and on the campus community. You can read more about the ELP below. Our graduating seniors have also won prestigious grants and awards through the Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship Program (Austria, German, Spain), German Academic Exchange Service, Goethe-Institut Summer Academy, Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program, and the Teaching Assistant Program in France (TAPIF). Many of these students have been able to undertake the study of a world language with the assistance of one of our MCL scholarships. I would like to warmly thank our alumni and donors, whose generous contributions greatly benefit our students and programs.

I also owe many thanks to our Department Manager, Holly Childs, and Program Coordinator, Dylan Gibson, whose expertise in all manner of things keeps MCL running smoothly. Holly and Dylan are always ready and willing to lend their support to my colleagues and me whenever needed.

Finally, some exciting news: In Fall 2024, we will leave our current department name behind, and our new name will go into effect: Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures! This designation better communicates the wide range of disciplinary areas that are represented in our curricula and in the expertise of the faculty.

If you are ever back on campus, please stop by the department in Miller Hall! We’d love to see you!

Shannon Dubenion-Smith
During 2023, the Chinese program underwent a dynamic transformation marked by notable advancements and enriching experiences. The addition of a new tenure-track faculty member, Prof. Xiaomeng Li, invigorated the academic landscape, bringing fresh perspectives and specialized expertise to the section. Professor Li has not only contributed to the program’s intellectual vitality but has also fostered a supportive learning environment for our students.

One of the program’s standout events was the Chinese New Year Celebration, which captivated the audience with its vibrant display of traditional customs, mesmerizing performances, and interactive cultural activities. This annual extravaganza served as a cornerstone of community engagement, drawing students, faculty, and local residents alike to partake in the festivities and deepen their appreciation for Chinese culture.

Throughout the year, the program welcomed esteemed invited speakers who shared their insights on a diverse range of topics spanning language acquisition, literature, history and Sinological studies. These presentations provided valuable opportunities for intellectual exchange and broadened students’ perspectives on the multifaceted aspects of Chinese language and culture.

Complementing formal academic endeavors, the Chinese Conversation Club (CCC) emerged as a vital hub for language practice and cultural exchange. Through engaging discussions, language games, and cultural activities, students honed their conversational skills in a relaxed and supportive setting, fostering camaraderie and mutual learning among participants.

Furthermore, the program’s robust study abroad program in summer offered students immersive experiences in Qingdao, China, allowing them to deepen their language proficiency while gaining firsthand insights into the rich tapestry of Chinese culture and society. These transformative experiences not only broadened students’ horizons but also equipped them with invaluable cross-cultural competencies essential for success in an increasingly interconnected world.

The Chinese program’s remarkable achievements over the past year underscore its commitment to excellence in language education and cultural exchange. Through innovative pedagogy, vibrant events, and transformative experiences, the program continues to inspire students to explore, engage, and embrace the richness of the Chinese language and culture.

**NEWS FROM THE CHINESE LANGUAGE FACULTY**

**Xiaomeng Li:**

In 2023, Prof. Xiaomeng Li defended her dissertation entitled *The Impacts of the Chinese Writing System and L2 Proficiency on L2 Word Recognition* at Carnegie Mellon University. She then worked as the Duolingo research fellow at CMU to examine the roles of different types of language assessment in the formal language classroom under the sponsorship of Duolingo Inc. She moved to Bellingham last September to join the department as an Assistant Professor of Chinese and Applied Linguistics. She
published an article named “Profiling adult L2 learners in English bridge programs: A not-so-simple view of L1 effect” in the *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*. This article examined the relative roles of decoding and linguistic comprehension in L2 reading comprehension among adult L2 learners in English bridge programs under the theoretical framework of Simple View of Reading. Last year, she also gave two research presentations at the American Association of Applied Linguistics conference and TESOL International Association conference in Portland.

At Western, Prof. Li works as the Chinese major and minor advisor. She enjoys meeting with students and talking about the Chinese learning journey. She also offers Chinese language courses at different levels and Chinese linguistics courses, such as Chinese Language & Linguistics and Chinese Grammar. She looks forward to working with students to explore the beauty of the Chinese language. In her free time, she loves dancing, baking, hiking, and cats. Feel free to drop by her office in MH 218A if you are interested in any related topics!

*Prof. Li in the Rocky Mountains in Colorado, September 2023*

**Claudia Liu:**

Prof. Claudia Liu teaches first- and second-year Chinese courses. She also serves as the editor-in-chief of the Chinese/English magazine *MIRROR*. This is the first magazine in MCL and the first bilingual magazine at Western!

“Together, we can create something really cool!” Prof. Liu’s students from her first-year Chinese classes inspired her to create an interactive and bilingual platform for the Western community and beyond. The purpose of 鏡 (Jìng – Mirror) is to showcase and promote the activities of the Modern and Classical Languages Department and its students. Learning a language is all about communication, so the aim of *Mirror* is to give students a venue to share and communicate what they have learned and inspire one another to greater heights. During this year, the editorial team received not only academic and news articles, but also short stories, artwork, and multimedia contributions with video or audio. The students involved improved their Chinese and also English, the student editors greatly enhanced their self-confidence, the section and department had new material to publicize the program, and most importantly, the magazine brought everyone together to make sure that learning Chinese is a worthwhile and rewarding endeavor!

*Prof. Liu visiting the Lake of Lotus, study abroad program in Qingdao, China, 2023*
Wenling Su:

Prof. Su, known as Su Laoshi to her students, takes great pleasure in teaching courses at different levels and extends her passion beyond her teaching assignments to promote mutual understanding among diverse communities.

For several years, National Chengchi University (NCCU) in Taiwan and Western Washington University have been engaged in a student exchange program. Prof. Su seized the opportunity to visit her students in Taipei during the summer of 2023. They exhibited an impressive command of Mandarin Chinese and a strong interest in exploring the local culture while studying at NCCU’s language center. In return, two exchange students from NCCU visited Prof. Su’s CHIN 201 class during the fall quarter. The lively discussions in Mandarin Chinese between the two groups contributed to a deepened mutual understanding of diversity and cultures.

In addition, Prof. Su volunteered to organize two sessions of a workshop for Compass 2 Campus Day in October 2023. This event, coordinated by Compass 2 Campus through the Woodring College of Education, welcomed fifth graders from local schools to experience university life. Prof. Su taught the young visitors about foods traditionally shared by Chinese communities in Asia and conducted interactive lessons on self-introduction in Mandarin Chinese. The young students quickly grasped the new language and thoroughly enjoyed the engaging workshops.

Julian Wu:


French Français

By Prof. Lindsey Smith

Bonjour tout le monde!

Since our last update, the faculty and students of the French section have been very busy at Western and beyond. In addition to sharing research at several respected national and international venues, we have been adding courses to the curriculum to broaden the geographic and cultural focus of the program, all while maintaining a strong foundation in the study of the French language.

With the pandemic largely behind us, our student-led culture and conversation club, the Table Française, has been fostering a sense of community through a shared interest in the francophone world. Recent activities have included an evening of theater, an experiential workshop on bandes dessinées, screenings of francophone films, celebrations of francophone holidays and festivals, and outings to local restaurants such as AB Crêpes. These activities allow our students to find common ground and create mentoring networks encouraging the use of French outside the
classroom. The French table is also a meeting place for students in our program and native speakers from other departments. Bonne continuation!

The French team of the Employee Language Program has also been growing since our return to campus. Now with over a dozen student facilitators, we have been supporting French-language endeavors across campus including conversation sessions, translation projects, and workshops for faculty and staff. Our students are thus making interdisciplinary connections with colleagues in the College of Business and Economics, the Math Department, Outreach and Continuing Education, the Dance Program, and the Institute for Global Engagement, among others. In addition to providing our campus community with opportunities to hone and share their language skills, this program also offers professional opportunities for our students to develop leadership and communication skills applicable to fields such as teaching, international business and marketing, journalism, and media production. We look forward to continuing these collaborations across languages and disciplines in the future.

This year, we would like to recognize the Nesholm Family Foundation, and especially WWU French program graduate Laurel Nesholm, for a generous donation that will be used to support student success in the French program, notably through the creation of an endowed position. Over the past year, we have been working to recruit a new colleague, and we are thrilled to announce that Dr. Keenan Burton, who recently completed a PhD at Washington University in St. Louis, will be joining the WWU French faculty next fall. Dr. Burton is a specialist of 18th- and 19th-century literature and culture, with a particular interest in LGBTQ+ studies and the performing arts, including opera and jazz. Welcome, Keenan!

Finally, we would like to recognize recent alumni who are following in the footsteps of Profs. Predko, Radoiu, and Smith by working in France as part of the TAPIF (the Teaching Assistant Program in France): Brianna Corley, Kate Dolan, Sarah Massie, Audrey Quane, and Elliott Windrope. Through the TAPIF, the French Ministry of Education hires native English speakers as language assistants for public schools across France and in its overseas departments. The program is quite competitive, and we are proud to see WWU so well represented. Félicitations!

MEET THE NEW FRENCH LANGUAGE FACULTY
Interviews conducted in French and translated by Lilly Terwilleger (French Major and ELP facilitator)

Meet Anthony Radoiu
Visiting Assistant Professor of French

Quelle est votre motivation pour votre travail dans le monde académique ? Vous avez commencé cette vie pour quelles raisons ?

J’aime bien lire et faire des recherches à propos des textes du Moyen Âge et de la Renaissance, mais aussi, j’aime beaucoup enseigner. À ce moment, je suis en train d’enseigner la littérature médiévale et de partager ma passion avec mes étudiants.

What is your motivation or the reason for your work in academia? Why did you start this career?

I love to read and research texts from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, but I love teaching, too. Currently, I’m in the process of teaching medieval literature and sharing my passion with my students.
Avez-vous voyagé dans d'autres pays ?


Depuis combien de temps parlez-vous français ?

J’ai une histoire compliquée, parce que mon père parle français, mais il est américain et ma grand-mère est québécoise, elle est canadienne. Mon père ne m’a jamais enseigné, donc j’ai dû recommencer quand j’étais à l’université. J’ai pris un seul cours de français au lycée, donc j’ai commencé de parler français à l’âge de 16 ans, c’était tard en fait. Et j’ai pris 101 quand j’ai commencé à l’université.

Qu’est-ce qu’on peut faire avec un diplôme français ?

Le français est très utile dans le monde politique, parce que le français est la deuxième langue après l’anglais dans les Nations Unies et dans l’Union Européenne. C’est très pratique dans le domaine diplomatique, mais c’est très pratique aussi pour les affaires. Ici surtout, aux États-Unis, parce que nous sommes près du Québec, on fait beaucoup d’affaires avec le Québec, avec le Canada. Et avec la France aussi. Donc, c’est très utile d’être bilingue.

Est-ce que vous avez des conseils pour apprendre la langue française ?

Oui, pour toutes les langues, mais surtout en français, ce que je répète toujours à mes étudiants, c’est qu’il faut avoir deux cerveaux, le cerveau anglais et le cerveau français. Mes étudiants maintenant, ils font beaucoup de travail, mais ils pensent en anglais, et traduisent tout en français. Et c’est compliqué parce qu’en fait le système en français c’est très différent. C’est difficile, mais il faut avoir un autre cerveau, deux cerveaux !

Have you traveled to any other countries?

I lived in France for four years, I’ve gone to Canada to visit my family in Quebec, and I’ve gone to the Philippines because my mother is from the Philippines. My wife is Tunisian, so I’ve been to Tunisia three times to meet her family. And I’ve traveled around Europe a bit—to Germany, Greece, and Italy.

How long have you spoken French?

I have a complicated history, because my father spoke French, he is American, and my grandmother is from Quebec, she is Canadian. My father never taught me, so I had to start over when I was in college. I took one French class in high school, so I was sixteen years old when I started to speak French, it was actually a bit late. And I took French 101 when I started at college.

What can one do with a French degree?

French is very useful in the political world because French is the second most-used language after English in the United Nations and the European Union. So, it’s very practical for diplomacy, but also for business. Especially here, in the United States, because we’re near Canada, and the United States does a lot of business with Quebec and with Canada. And with France, too. So, it’s very useful to be bilingual.

Do you have any advice for learning the French language?

Yes, for all languages, but especially in French, what I tell my students all the time is that you must have two brains, your English brain, and your French brain. My students right now, they do so much work, but they think in English and translate everything into French. And it’s complicated because the system in French is very different. It’s difficult, but you have to have another brain, two brains!

FAITS DIVERS – FUN FACTS

Secret talents: Plays clarinet, studied Political Science

Favorite spots in Bellingham: Mallard, Fairhaven

Bucket-list destination: Senegal
Meet Andrea Predko
WWU alumna and instructor of French

Comment était votre parcours pour devenir professeur.e ?

Après avoir travaillé en France, je suis retournée aux États-Unis et j’ai fini mes études. Je savais déjà à l’âge de 17 ans que je voulais enseigner le français.

Quelle est votre motivation pour votre travail dans le monde académique ? Vous avez commencé cette vie pour quelles raisons ?

Je trouve que les langues étrangères sont super importantes et, pour moi, même quand j’étais petite je voulais savoir comment les langues pouvaient ouvrir les portes. À mon avis, je pense que tout le monde a besoin d’apprendre une autre culture et langue, comme le français, le japonais, l’espagnol, ou l’arabe, par exemple.

Quel est votre spécialisation de recherche ou le sujet que vous aimez le plus ?

La pédagogie, et aussi j’aime bien la linguistique. On peut parler français, mais c’est une autre expérience quand on enseigne le français. Il faut savoir enseigner les niveaux différents et plusieurs approches parce que tout le monde apprend d’une façon un peu différente.

Avez-vous voyagé dans d’autres pays ?

Les pays francophones ! Je suis allée à Montréal et j’ai travaillé en France, avec le TAPIF (Teaching Assistant Program in France). Ça c’était probablement la meilleure expérience parce que je pouvais visiter d’autres pays en Europe, les pays sont proches.

Comment est-ce que ces expériences avec d’autres cultures à travers le monde influencent-elles votre vie professionnelle ?

Ça m’encourage de continuer de parler, et d’étudier le français—et les autres langues et cultures—parce que je peux parler, je peux avoir une petite conversation, et j’ai des amis partout !

What was your path to becoming a professor?

After working in France, I returned to the United States and I finished my studies. I knew at the age of 17 that I wanted to teach French.

What is your motivation or reason for your work in the academic world? Why did you start?

I find that foreign languages are super important, and for me, even when I was little, I wanted to know how languages could open doors. In my opinion, I think that everyone needs to learn another culture and language, like French, Japanese, Spanish, Arabic, for example.

What is your research specialization or the subject that you love the most?

Pedagogy, and I also like Linguistics. It’s one thing to speak French, but it’s another experience when one teaches French. You have to know how to teach different levels and different methods because everyone learns a little differently.

Have you traveled to any other countries?

French speaking countries! I went to Montreal and I worked in France with the TAPIF (Teaching Assistant Program in France) program. That was probably the best experience because I could visit other countries in Europe, the countries are close by.

How do these experiences with other cultures across the world influence your professional life?

It encourages me to continue speaking and studying French—and other languages and cultures—because when I meet someone, I remember my French. I can speak, I can have a small conversation. I have friends everywhere!
Depuis combien de temps parlez-vous français ?

J’étais petite, et c’est grâce à mon père, parce que quand j’avais quatre ans, chaque nuit, il me faisait chanter l’alphabet en anglais et puis en français. Il n’est pas français, mais c’était sa sous-spécialisation, le français.

Est-ce que vous avez des conseils pour apprendre la langue française ?

N’ayez pas peur. Tout le monde fait des fautes, n’ayez pas peur. Il faut parler. Aussi, essayez de trouver des médias en français ! Écoutez la radio française, ou regardez des films en français !

How long have you spoken French?

I was young, and that’s thanks to my father, because when I was four years old, each night, he made me sing the alphabet in English and then in French. He isn’t French, but he did a minor in French.

Do you have any advice for learning the French language?

Don’t be afraid. Everyone makes mistakes, don’t be afraid. You have to speak. Also, try to find some media in French! Listen to French radio or watch films in French!

FAITS DIVERS – FUN FACTS

Secret talents: Plays tennis, studies Italian and did academic work in the Canadian-American Studies Program at WWU

Favorite spots in Bellingham: WWU Arboretum, Village Books, being near Bellingham Bay

Bucket-list destination: Morocco

OTHER FRENCH LANGUAGE FACULTY NEWS

Cécile Hanania:

Prof. Hanania has been named Laurel Nesholm Endowed Professor in French for the year 2023-2024 in recognition of her exceptional service to the French section. This honor coincides with two quarters of professional leave during winter and spring 2024. Thanks to the support of the Laurel Nesholm family, Prof. Hanania will spend part of her sabbatical in Paris, working at the French National Library of France in order to complete two in-progress monographs on French writer Marguerite Duras (1914-1996). The first is an analysis of an enigmatic Durassian novella (La Maladie de la Mort), the other is a seminal work consisting of the study of canonical texts and dogmatic discourses (religious, political, theoretical, and literary) in Duras’s entire body of work.

In addition to these projects, Prof. Hanania recently published an article examining Duras’s disengagement from communist doctrine and its aesthetic repercussions on her fiction. A zealous communist militant in the 40s, Duras later became a severe critic of the Stalinist era and the Marxist-Leninist ideology. Prof. Hanania’s article “Tombeau de la Révolution” (“Revolution’s Grave”), focuses on the ironical portrayal of revolutionary intellectuals in The Little Horses of Tarquinia, a novel published in 1953, just after the death of Stalin. The article is scheduled to appear in the Revue des Lettres Modernes, Paris, Garnier, in the fall of 2024.

Also underway is another article for the University Press of Bruxelles: “La culture populaire chez Duras, une arme anti-Zhdanovienne” (“Duras’s Popular Culture as an anti-Zhdanov Tool”). Prof. Hanania argues that Duras’s irreverence toward official discourses and canonical texts and her attraction to minor and popular genres (songs, fairy tales, comic books, etc.) originate in her resentment against the cultural policy elaborated by the Soviet politician Andrei Zhdanov and in her exclusion from the Communist Party mostly due to her opposition to socialist realism.
Along with these publications, Prof. Hanania also attended several international conferences these past two years. In the summer of 2022, she participated in the CIÉF convention (International Council of Francophone Studies) held at the university of Trento, Italy. She delivered a paper on Franco-Vietnamese writer Anna Moï, “Un barrage en héritage, le Viêt-nam d’Anna Moï entre rhizomes et fantômes” (“The Inherited Vietnam of Anna Moï, between Roots and Ghosts”), which examined how Moï’s evocation of her native country is interlaced with reminiscences from Duras’ novels set in Indochina.

In the summer of 2023, she attended another CIÉF convention, held in Hammamet, Tunisia, where she did a presentation on Chloé Delaume, a French writer of Lebanese origin. Her paper, “Abdallah/Dalain/Delaume, une écrivaine entre hétérotopie et dystopie” (“Abdallah/Dalain/Delaume, a writer between heterotopia and dystopia”), focused on an experimental text, Corpus Simpsi, based on the life simulation game The Sims, and explored the connections between virtual reality and fiction.

**Lindsey Smith:**

Since our last update, Prof. Smith has been settling into MCL and sharing her research at a variety of venues. With Prof. Hanania, Prof. Smith designed two new courses for the department, one focused on cultures and societies of the francophone Caribbean and another focusing on literatures from the francophone world that will be offered for the first time this spring. Prof. Smith has also been active supporting student initiatives and endeavors across campus including an interdisciplinary student translation project with members of the Dance program.

In 2022, Prof. Smith participated in the 20th & 21st Century French and Francophone Studies International Colloquium held in Pittsburgh. Her presentation, “Narrational Parallax and Mediated Intimacy in La Fille dans l’écran,” examined the depiction of
digital technology in a recent graphic novel created by Lou Lubie and Manon Desveaux. This collaborative publication, which emerged from an online comics collective, is illustrated using two distinct styles that visually represent and ultimately bridge the distance between the two protagonists, one in France and one in Quebec.

In 2023, Prof. Smith led a pedagogical workshop on social annotation technologies and their use in the language classroom for the WAFLT (Washington Association for Language Teaching) conference held at WWU. And, later that quarter, Prof. Smith presented at the trilingual Caribbean Studies Association conference held in St. Croix (US Virgin Islands). Her presentation, “Patrick Chamoiseau: Contemporary conteur of la créolité,” examined a variety of textual strategies used by the author when depicting the interaction between storytellers and their audiences. She plans to attend the upcoming 2024 CSA conference in St. Lucia this summer with the hope of extending her visit to Martinique and Guadeloupe, where she intends to meet with local authors, artists, and university representatives.

This past fall, Prof. Smith traveled with other members of MCL to the PAMLA (Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association) conference in Portland where she presented on the politics of migration during the BUMIDOM period (1963-1982). Prof. Smith’s project, “Péyi an nou: Fractured Frenchness and the aftermath of BUMIDOM,” continued her work on the documentary-style bandes dessinées of Jessica Oublié.

Greetings from the German program!

It has been another busy year for us, and our programs and courses continue to make a difference to students at Western – and beyond. We celebrated our student scholarship winners this past May and honored the section’s Outstanding Graduating Senior, Andy Dirks (Class of 2023). Andy, a double major in German and Economics, is currently on a Fulbright scholarship, teaching English to Austrian students. Our German Club is still going strong, with many motivated students attending a range of events, including movie and game nights and the ever-favorite “Stammtisch.” Our graduates, who mostly stay in touch via social media and email (and sometimes with surprise visits!), continue to inspire us, and we take great pride and joy in their accomplishments. Some are living and working internationally (e.g., Germany, Austria), others remain closer to home, working for companies such as LinkedIn, Slalom, and Pokémon, yet others share their passion for German as teachers. Alysha Holmquist-Posner (Class of 2006) is one of them! Just recently, our professional organization, the American Association of Teachers of German, awarded Alysha a nationwide award, an AATG Certificate of Merit, for her commitment to teaching German in K-12. Herzlichen Glückwunsch, Alysha! Another one of our graduates, Danil Vishniakov (Class of 2016) will return to Western virtually on March 13, 2024, when he will share his professional journey with us. An outstanding graduating senior as well, Danil pursued a graduate degree in law after Western and is currently an Associate Legal Advisor with the Department of Homeland Security in Washington, D.C. As in past years, the German section also supported several events on campus during the 2022-2023 academic year, including the Annual Meyerhoff Lecture of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum at Western Washington University in April 2023. During this occasion, the program hosted philosopher Dr. Adam Knowles (University of Zurich) who provided students with the opportunity – in German – to learn about his studies and career in Switzerland. This February, Pamela Kerpius from Migrants of the Mediterranean will meet with students to share her work on humanizing global migration through storytelling. These programs would not be possible without our on-campus partner, the Wolpow Institute. If you would like to support our German program so we can continue to make a difference in the lives of students, both through our curriculum and extra-curricular events, kindly contact me to learn how you, too, can make a difference through language education.

I hope you have enjoyed this short program update from Bellingham. We are including news from our students and faculty in this section, too – so, make sure to read on! Finally, feel free to follow us on social media, either on Facebook (German at Western), Instagram (wwu_german), or via LinkedIn – we’d definitely love to connect with you!

Beste Grüße aus Bellingham, Sandra

Sandra Alfers, Professor of German / Founding & Executive Director, The Ray Wolpow Institute, German Section Coordinator, alferss@wwu.edu, 360-650-7427

NEWS FROM THE GERMAN LANGUAGE FACULTY

Sandra Alfers:

Moin, moin! Sandra Alfers returned to her dual position as a faculty member in the German program and director of the Ray Wolpow Institute for the Study of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Crimes Against Humanity in Winter 2023. During her year-long sabbatical, Prof. Alfers was fortunate to stay in Germany for an extended period to complete her forthcoming book, *Traces of Memory. The Work and Life of Else Dormitzer (1877-1958)*, which will appear in
Michael Berenbaum’s special series “The Holocaust: History and Literature, Ethics and Philosophy” with Academic Studies Press (Boston) in May 2024. Prof. Alfers was based outside of Munich, where she was a visiting research fellow at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Spring 2022, taking advantage of the amazing resources, libraries, and archives the university and city had to offer. The “9-Euro-Ticket” allowed for a convenient commute to work and, on the weekends, for exploration of the Alps. A fan of chocolate, one of her highlights was a trip to Vienna, which would not have been complete without a slice of the famous Sachertorte!

In Fall 2022, Prof. Alfers was elected to serve on the national board of the Consortium of Higher Education Centers for Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights Centers, the primary professional organization of center directors committed to securing, integrating, and advancing Holocaust, genocide, and human rights education on U.S. college campuses. After she got back to WWU, she organized, among other things, the Annual Meyerhoff Lecture of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in April 2023, which brought together partners from across campus for several different educational programs. In June, her travels took her to Israel where she was a faculty fellow in the inaugural Alan Cornell US Campus Faculty Seminar at the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem. She cherished the opportunity to be a student again, to learn about Holocaust Education in Israel during what turned out to be a truly exceptional place-based learning experience.

This academic year, Prof. Alfers is continuing her work for both the German program and the institute as German Section Coordinator and RWI director. In partnership with the Holocaust Educational Foundation of Northwestern University, she is organizing a cross-border regional institute (Witness: Mediating Testimony in the Arts) for higher education faculty in April 2024. She has launched a new series for WWU alumni to share their professional journeys and personal stories and is excited that WWU alumnus Danil Vishniakov (Class of 2016) will be among the first speakers this year. As for her next research projects: She is part of an international cohort of scholars and is busy preparing publications for a multi-year international project on The Cambridge History of Holocaust Literature spearheaded by Stuart Taberner and Erin McGlothlin for Cambridge University Press, which is supported by a grant from the UK Humanities Council.

Petra S. Fiero:

Petra S. Fiero continues to enjoy teaching, especially now that classes are face-to-face again. She loves mentoring her students and being a liaison to the thriving German Club. Every year in October, she participates in the Campus Fulbright Committee where she reviews applications and interviews candidates. In November 2022, she was invited to serve on the National Fulbright Committee where she reviewed close to 30 research applications from students who wanted to embark on study abroad in Germany.

Prof. Fiero has also served on the Board of PAMLA (Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association) for the last three years and presented the following paper at the PAMLA Conference in Los Angeles in November 2022: “Trolle, Schmach und Schande in Vladimir Vertlib’s Roman Zebra im Krieg (2022).” Vladimir Vertlib’s latest novel is a vehement critique of internet addiction and the excesses of social media. Prof. Fiero discussed how virtual verbal violence
leads to real violence, humiliation, and shame, and how virtual hate-postings heighten the inclination to commit crimes up to starting a war. In October 2023, she had the chance to interview Austrian filmmaker Christian Frosch at the PAMLA Conference in Portland, Oregon, after a public viewing of his intriguing movie about the Nazi war criminal Franz Murer called *Murer: Anatomie eines Prozesses* (Anatomy of a Trial).

In her free time, Prof. Fiero enjoys the outdoors as this photo from the Hoh Rain Forest proves where she was searching for the spirit of her late husband David Fiero:

![Petra Fiero at Hoh Rain Forest on the Olympic Peninsula](image)

**Cornelius Partsch:**

A few years ago, Prof. Partsch started to read some of the work of Max Czollek, a Berlin-based poet and essayist who writes about contemporary Jewish and migrant identities and often provocatively questions the conventions of German and German-Jewish interaction after World War II, which he views as being predicated on Jewish assimilation into the dominant culture. His most recent polemic *Desintegriert euch! is now available in English as De-Integrate! A Jewish Survival Guide for the 21st Century*. After reading *Outer Limits*, a volume of poetry by Czollek, Prof. Partsch contacted the author to inquire about translating and publishing a selection from that collection. Czollek and his German publisher were excited about the idea and immediately granted permission for a translation, which was published in January in the journal *Asymptote*. The site contains the original German, the translation, as well as audio of Czollek reading his poems, a translator’s note, and biographies.

In the spring of 2023, Prof. Partsch floated the idea of putting together an MCL team for Ski to Sea at a department meeting. While not all 8 spots on the team could be filled with MCL colleagues, the team ended up with 5 MCL faculty and 3 colleagues from other WWU departments. After a lengthy and highly creative discussion about the team’s name, the team settled on “Ski to C Minus,” but ended up doing much better than the name would suggest. “Ski to C Minus” finished the race and came in in 205th place (out of 455). It was a fantastic, rain-free day, and everyone gathered at the finish line in Fairhaven to welcome the sea kayaker before heading to the (required) team party. There, stories about the day’s events, athletic highlights (and challenges), and memorable moments were shared. It was such a successful event that brought us all closer together that a repeat is being planned for 2024, this time for “Ski to C Plus!”

![Pictured from left to right: Cornelius Partsch, cross-country ski (MCL - German), Ernest Hartwell, downhill snowboard (MCL - Spanish), Jae Fisher, run (ANTH), Tyler Walker, road bike (MCL - Japanese), Charles Patterson, canoe (MCL - Spanish), Lindsey Smith, canoe (MCL - French), Alia Khan, cyclocross bike (ESCI), Zoë Plakias, sea kayak (ECON)](image)
Julie Winter:

Prof. Winter has continued her work with the LediZ (Learning with Digital Testimony) team in Munich, Germany, led by Dr. Anja Ballis. This work seeks to preserve Holocaust survivor testimony with digital technology so that students can continue experiencing interactions with eyewitnesses. Prof. Winter has implemented some of this technology in her German 203 classes (in 2021 and 2023) and has presented and published on the topic.

In Spring 2022, Prof. Winter’s 330 class read twentieth century autobiographical writings in German and studied the cultural events surrounding them. For a final project, students became literary translators—each chose a text that spoke to them and gave their best literary rendering in English. They presented these projects at the end of the year in the Miller Hall Atrium in a department-wide event. Asking students to use their German in this way—by translating into their native language—is an eye-opening experience for them, one that gives them a feeling of mastery in both languages.

As an example, we include Emma Ahmann’s translation of Arno Holz’s poem “Erinnerung” (Reminiscence):

Red roofs
Coming from the chimneys in patches, smoke,
High above in the sunny air, occasionally, doves.
It is the afternoon.
There from Mohdriker’s garden clucks a hen,
The entire city smells like coffee.

I am a small eight-year-old boy
Resting my chin on both of my fists,
Flat on my belly
To peek through the floor hatch.
Steeply beneath me is the courtyard,
Behind me, is a book that has been carelessly discarded.
Franz Hoffmann.
“The Slave Hunters”

How peaceful is that?!

Just over there, in Knorr’s rain gutters,
Two sparrows, fighting over a straw,
A man who saws,
And between there, clearly coming from the church,
Continuous hammering with short pauses,
The coppersmith named Thiel.

And when I look down,
All I see is Mother’s flower shelf:
A pot of wallflowers, two pots of gillyflowers, a geranium
And right in the middle of it, delicately laid in a wooden cigarette box,
A little heap of mignonette.

Oh how the smell lingers!
The aroma wafts all the way up to me!
And the colors!
Oh! How the wind blows over it
The wonderful, wonderfully beautiful colors!
I close my eyes,
And I still see them always.

Prof. Winter’s publications and presentations:

Articles


Winter, J. (forthcoming, 2024). Phenomenal and frustrating—Students in a German language class interact with digitized Holocaust testimony. In A.


**Book review**


**Presentations**


**Translations**

Subtitles for Interactive Digital Holocaust Survivor Abba Naor (J. Winter, Trans.) LediZ (Learning with Digital Testimonies), University of Munich, Munich, Germany, 2023.

My Experiences at WWU and in Austria
By Andy Dirks

The German program at Western Washington University is not only a wonderful academic department but is attached to a vibrant German-speaking community. When I started learning German during my junior year at WWU, I did not intend to major in it. I thought that I would get, at best, a minor. After spending time in the department and engaging with the German club, a club generously supported by the faculty in the German department, I knew that I wanted to major in the subject.

After graduating, I moved to Vienna to teach English through the Fulbright Austria program. I am now 4 months in and loving the freedom and cultural exchange that comes with the position. Thanks to Professor Fiero, a pillar in the German department, I was able to get the guidance (and the letters of recommendation) I needed to get accepted into this competitive position. The German language skills and cultural competencies that I learned during my time in class have been pivotal for my transition to Viennese life.

One class that has helped me immensely is German 314 - the phonetics course taught by Professor Dubenion-Smith. Studying the sounds and focusing on how to produce them has given me immense confidence when speaking. Many people think that I am German when I start speaking to them. I often laugh to myself when I tell them that I am from the United States, and they give me a slightly surprised look.

I am enjoying my life as a teacher in Vienna. Much of my free time consists of traveling around Europe and within Austria. So far, I have visited 8 different countries (including Austria) and intend to visit many more during the weekend. Budapest was one of my favorite cities ever and Copenhagen comes in at a close second.

I have already reapplied to teach a second year, in Graz, a city in Upper Austria. In tandem with the teaching job, I hope to start a Master in Economics at the University of Graz. I would like to continue living in Europe (particularly in German-speaking countries) to enjoy the amenities afforded to me by this program and the way of life there. Overall, I cannot recommend this program enough. I feel so supported in every way. I wouldn’t be where I am without the help of the German-speaking community at Western Washington University.
**Alysha Holmquist-Posner:**

*Herzlichen Glückwunsch, Alysha!* Western Alumna and Enumclaw High School German Teacher Alysha Holmquist received the American Association of German Teachers (AATG) Certificate of Merit. This award honors achievement in furthering German teaching in the United States. Certificate of Merit teachers are recognized for outstanding teaching, creative and successful activities for promoting German, innovative curriculum and successful course design, successful interdisciplinary cooperation, and/or significant contributions to the profession. Alysha graduated from Western in 2006 before continuing on to a Master’s Degree in German Literature from the University of British Columbia. Alysha has been teaching German at Enumclaw High School for 11 years and is also the German American Partnership Program (GAPP) exchange coordinator.

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**Japanese 日本語**

*By Prof. Massimiliano Tomasi*

In the fall of 2022, the Japanese program welcomed a new tenure-track faculty member, **Prof. Tyler Walker**. Professor Walker received his Ph.D. in 2019 from Columbia University and has previously held teaching positions at St. Olaf College and Kalamazoo College. His research examines cultural production in and on the Japanese countryside between the First and Second World Wars. Tyler’s first article was published last February in the *Journal of Japanese Studies*, and since arriving at WWU he has contributed to international conferences on literature and the environment as well as Japanese proletarian culture of the interwar period. In addition to teaching all levels of Japanese language at WWU, Tyler has enjoyed designing and implementing new courses on literature, film, and environment for our Japanese majors.

This year the program has also welcomed **Prof. Makoto Negishi**. Prof. Negishi brings extensive professional teaching experience in Japanese language and culture at the university level, both within and outside the United States. He actively collaborates with fellow professors in the field and is a recent co-author of the Japanese textbook *食で考える日本社会: Diving into Japanese Culture and Society through Food* (Kuroshio Publishers).

**Prof. Deguchi, Prof. Tomasi** and **Prof. Kusakabe** continue to teach across the curriculum. Last year, Prof. Deguchi became Full Professor (congratulations!), and Prof. Tomasi led a Global Learning Program to Tokyo. Japanese continues to be in high demand, and the program added a fifth section of Japanese 101 in Fall 2022.
**Russian русский язык**

*By Prof. Edward Vajda*

Prof. Vajda (Russian and Eurasian Studies) edited a 1,251-page two-volume work entitled *The Languages and Linguistics of Northern Asia* (March 4, 2024, Berlin/New York: De Gruyter Mouton). He continues to focus on the Ket language of Siberia and has been able to conduct “fieldwork” with some of the last remaining speakers of Ket by using Skype, given that it is not possible to travel to Siberia at the present time. In this connection, he has published book chapters in other volumes on such topics as Ket onomatopoeia and Ket proper names. Prof. Vajda continues to teach courses in Russian language and folklore, as well as on nomads of Eurasia. He also contributes to the Linguistics Department curriculum, teaching the basic introduction (LING 201) and courses on word formation and historical linguistics.

*Screen shot of Edward Vajda conducting a Skype interview with native Ket consultant Valentina Romanenkova (Tengdalang), a fluent native speaker who currently lives in Krasnoyarsk, Russia. Vajda and Tengdalang have worked together for nearly 20 years.*

**Spanish Español**

*By Prof. Hugo García Gonzáles*

Hello to all alumni of the Spanish program of the Department of Modern and Classical Languages, Western Washington University!

After the hiatus imposed by isolation during the COVID-19 global crisis, the return to in-classroom teaching has proven to be a challenge. The Spanish section continues to work towards the recovery of all the necessary context to offer its students the best education. It is an undertaking that requires the collaboration of everyone, including former Spanish majors and minors. Therefore, the Spanish section would like to invite all its graduates to keep in touch, either by email or by visiting the department’s website where they can receive news of upcoming events and/or academic and cultural activities of interest. Above all, the Spanish section is particularly interested in the success of the professional life of its graduates. Of equal interest are any suggestions that graduates may have on topics and/or aspects to be included in the language, culture, literature, linguistics, and film classes. Therefore, the invitation for feedback and communication remains open.

Some of the good news we can share with you right now has to do with our faculty. The first of these news is that *Profs. Ernest Hartwell*, specialist in Latin American and Pacific literatures and cultures,
and Sheryl Bernardo-Hinesley, specialist in Hispanic linguistics, were granted tenure and promoted to Associate Professor. Our congratulations to both on their tenure and promotion, and our appreciation for their dedication to the education of the new generations that continue arriving to the Spanish section programs!

Other very positive news related to the section’s faculty have to do with the return of Prof. Paqui Paredes to the Spanish section. After five years of serving as Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at WWU, Prof. Paredes decided to return to teaching, which is her passion. This means that the possibility is now open for current and future students to receive classes from Prof. Paredes. The Spanish section welcomes Prof. Paqui Paredes!

On the other hand, we had a retirement, which is always bittersweet news. Mary Anne Rangel-Guerrero, one of our most beloved colleagues and one of our longest serving instructors in the Spanish section, retired at the beginning of the 2023-24 academic year. Many of the students who completed a major or minor in Spanish were students in Prof. Rangel’s classes. She was also a phenomenal colleague. An excellent cook and baker, Prof. Rangel can bake the most delicious and most beautiful breads. On many occasions, she baked some of her preferred treats for her students’ classes and events. Prof. Rangel is already greatly missed. But we are happy that she can have more time for all her projects. The Spanish section wishes her a happy retirement!

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES OF INTEREST

The Spanish section continues to work hard to meet the educational needs of its students. That is why working together with students and instructors is essential.

This is first and foremost because “Spanish language” does not only refer to a specific vocabulary with grammatical rules. To say Spanish language, in addition to referring to the communicative tool that language itself is, is also to refer to cultural contexts, ancestral values, multiple histories and a skein of affections that constitute a whole human universe impossible to ignore in today’s world.

The ultimate goal of the Spanish section is for its students to be well prepared to face the globalized context that they will have as an area of work. Some challenges will be old, although they may well present themselves in new guises or may have taken on a greater dimension and must be urgently addressed. For instance, the preservation of the environment and forms of social inequality are two of these great universes that the younger generation inherits and will have to find the best possible answers for. Other challenges are more recent, such as artificial intelligence, which has flooded all areas of life today and which we hope will become a formidable tool for a better future. Faculty members of the Spanish section assist students in understanding history, values, cultures, and ways of communication as a basic platform from where they can take off to face their professional endeavors.

An essential part of the Spanish section’s practice is fostering collaboration between students and
instructors. One of the most relevant and long-standing examples of this collaborative work is the Employee Language Program (ELP), coordinated by our colleague **Prof. Kirsten Drickey**. This is the program in which some of the best and most advanced students of the Spanish section teach language classes to Western staff, both instructors and administrative personnel. Through this practice, students experience the teaching and learning process from the opposite perspective, as instructors.

For students interested in a professional future related to teaching, the ELP represents a way of learning pedagogical tools and acquiring teaching practice as career preparation.

An additional collaborative activity is the Speaker Series **Escuchando Entendemos** in which both Spanish professors and students give talks on topics of current interest. The illustration below is the poster that announces the events for February 2024. As the poster shows, the Spanish language opens up avenues for exploring many different topics of interest for students across campus.

**A NEW STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM IN SPAIN?**

Yes, it is a possibility that is open to our students. Although it is not yet a reality, **Profs. Joan Hoffman** and **Charles Patterson** have been hard at work creating a new faculty-led study abroad program to León, Spain. More information on the creation of this program can be found in Prof. Patterson’s section below.

The Spanish section sends greetings to all its alumni, majors, and minors, and wishes them every success in their personal and professional lives.

¡Adiós y buena suerte!

**NEWS FROM THE SPANISH LANGUAGE FACULTY**

**Kirsten Drickey:**

Kirsten Drickey (Spanish) and Jordan Sandoval (Linguistics), together with a rotating team of talented undergraduate researchers, have continued work on a joint research project that studies the effects of explicit pronunciation practice in the intermediate language classroom. The project began in 2018, and in the following years, various iterations of the Curriculum Development Team (CDT) have run experiments on language pedagogies and have developed materials for use in Spanish courses at Western. The team has also presented at multiple national and international conferences, most recently at the Washington Association for Language Teaching (WAFLT) in Bellingham, Washington, and the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP) conference in Salamanca, Spain.

**Western’s Employee Language Program**

In January 2023, Western’s Employee Language Program celebrated its ten-year anniversary. This program offers free, language-focused professional development opportunities for Western’s faculty and
staff while providing hands-on learning and professionalization opportunities for upper-division students in MCL and related academic units. The program receives funding from the President’s Office and is managed by Outreach and Continuing Education, with curricular support from faculty in Modern and Classical Languages.

As of Winter 2024, we offer programming in French, German, Mandarin, Portuguese, and Spanish. Current Curriculum Coordinators are Lindsey Smith, French; Julie Winter, German; Wenling Su, Mandarin; and Kirsten Drickey, Spanish and Portuguese.

Our core programming consists of language-specific group workshops, along with one-on-one study, custom workshops, community events, and support for language-centered community engagement projects and events across the university. Our participants join us from nearly all departments and academic units across campus, reflecting the diversity of our WWU community.

Our facilitators are likewise a diverse group. We have native speakers, heritage speakers, and second-language learners teaching together in our programs. Participation in the ELP connects facilitators to MCL faculty and to their peers, and it drives engagement with the university more broadly, given the diverse range of participants who take our workshops. The connections forged between participants and student facilitators often result in informal mentoring networks.

For student facilitators, their work experience with the ELP connects their academic study to their professional goals. ELP programming allows student facilitators to gain firsthand experience in language instruction; conference and research presentations; community engagement; event planning; and translation. Facilitators leave the program with extensive experience that they can leverage for employment, graduate school, fellowships, and other options. Indeed, we count multiple Fulbright recipients among our alumni, along with teachers, media professionals, healthcare practitioners, Peace Corps volunteers, social services, non-profit professionals, and at least one telenovela actor.

Ernest Hartwell:

Ernest Rafael Hartwell (Associate Professor of Spanish) has been busy in the last year. In addition to successfully going up for tenure, Prof. Hartwell has presented his research in Verona, Italy (Conference on East West Cross-Cultural Relations, June 2023), Málaga, Spain (Congreso Internacional de Literatura Hispanofilipina, November 2023), Princeton University (Workshop: The Word and the Sword in the Early Modern Spanish Pacific, April 2024) and Seattle (Association of Asian American Studies annual conference, April 2024). Additionally, Prof. Hartwell completed a 6-week archival research trip to Manila in Summer 2023. Also in early 2024, Prof. Hartwell, in collaboration with colleague Professor Hugo García González, was guest editor of a special dossier of Periphērica: Journal of Social, Cultural, and Literary History on 19th-century Cuban and Philippine literature.

In terms of solo publications, in Spring 2024, two of Prof. Hartwell’s contributions to edited volumes came out in print; first, University of Michigan Press published “Brazo, Corazón y Lengua: Transformations in Caribbean and Philippine Anti-Colonial Writing on Immigration,” a chapter penned by Prof. Hartwell in Transnational Philippines: Cultural Encounters in Philippine Literature in Spanish, and soon thereafter, University of the Netherlands Press released The Spanish Pacific, 1521-1815 A Reader of Primary Sources vol. 2, to which he contributed “Race, Gender, and Colonial Rule in an Illustrated 18th-century Manuscript on Mexico and the Philippines,” a 6,000-word translation of an understudied primary text and an accompanying theoretical introduction. Stay tuned for forthcoming publications: a chapter in a Routledge reader on Philippine literature in Spanish, another chapter in another Routledge companion on race and early modern visual culture, and an article in Cambridge University Press’s edited volume entitled: Transitions in Latinx Literature.
Pictured are Ernest Rafael Hartwell meeting with Philippine National Artist Kidlat Tahimik during the former’s archival research trip to the Philippines in Summer 2023.

Hugo García González:

Hugo García González, Professor of Latin American Literatures and Cultures, Film, and Spanish Language since 2006

On February 16, 2024, Prof. García González, together with Prof. Hartwell, presented the most recent issue of Periphērica. Journal of Social, Cultural, and Literary History, published by the Department of Romance Languages, University of Oregon, Eugene.

Prof. García González and Hartwell were guest editors for this issue of the journal and generated a dossier entitled “El pabellón colonial” (“The Colonial Pavilion”) featuring articles by several colleagues that touch on a variety of topics related to Cuba and the Philippines in the historical period that spans between the late 1830s, when Spain lost its mainland Americas colonies, and the explosion of the battleship Maine in the bay of Havana in 1898. The dossier departs from the International Exposition of 1889, in Paris, and the press that covered this event, to explore imperial imaginaries between the Caribbean and Asia, as well as anticolonial discourses. In the area of teaching, Prof. García González continues to strive to bring new courses and content of current interest to enrich his students’ experiences.

In Spring 2024, Prof. García González is teaching the seminar Queer Voices of Latin America in Literature, History, Culture, and Film. This seminar departs from assuming a historical perception of the term ‘queer’, considering the different meanings it has assumed, from its inclusion in the English language to its internationalization and adoption into the Spanish language.

A similar flexibility is applied to the geopolitical reach of the course; in this sense, the seminar works with a broad vision of Latin America that deals more with subjects and cultural experiences that could or
could not be situated within the cartographic space of Latin America. The course includes women from the 16th century, such as Catalina de Erauso and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, essential figures for understanding the historical dimension of the female struggle against the limitations of patriarchy, to some of the most interesting novels of the present time that combine autobiography, fiction, and struggles for equality.

**Joan Hoffman:**

Since our last edition of *Interlingua*, Prof. Hoffman has continued to teach grammar, composition, culture, and literature and to advise Spanish majors, minors, and study-abroad participants; and she currently serves as MCL’s liaison with our faculty union, United Faculty of Western Washington. Her latest university-sponsored trip was to present her work at the annual conference of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP) in July 2022. Her recent publications include a journal article and a book: "The Solitude of Her Suffering: On Trauma and Treasures in Ana María Matute’s ‘Fausto,’” *L’Érudit franco-espagnol*, vol. 17, 2023, pp. 28-37 and *La otra historia: Antología de autoras españolas*, 2nd edition of *Voces femeninas de España: Una antología*, Cognella Academic Publishing, 2024. ISBN: 9781793561565, 294 pp. She taught from this latter volume in Winter 2024 and invited one of the authors studied, Charo González Casas, to speak to the class from Spain via Zoom.

Here is a photo taken in Puerto Rico with Prof. Hoffman’s WWU colleague, Sean Dwyer:

And a photo of her recent book:

**R. Mata:**

**Bridging Continents: A Transatlantic Dialogue with an MCL Graduate**

*By R. Mata*

In June 2023, I presented a paper on language parenting practices of U.S.-Mexico transborder immigrant parents at the X International Conference of Hispanic Linguistics and VIII Biennial Meeting of the International Association for the Study of Spanish in Society at the University of Liverpool in England. After my presentation on the second day of the conference, I met Hannah King, who saw me wearing my Western sweatshirt and told me that she had not only attended Western but that she had been a double major in MCL. This was the first time that I had met a former MCL student at an academic conference — and she was someone whose presentation on diverse Spanishes in London had made quite an impression on me the day before. We spoke for a little bit about Western and how she looked back on her time here, but it was not until two months later when we ran into each other in York, England, at the annual conference for the British Association for Applied Linguistics — where we were both presenting — that I thought about interviewing her for our newsletter. I was interested in how one of our MCL graduates gets to become one of our academic peers — especially since year after year from November to January I submit a number of letters of recommendation for our students who are seeking admission to various graduate programs, but rarely do I hear back from them about which school(s) accepted them or where they might be in their academic careers. The idea for this interview was a way for me to connect the dots between the students and learners that we
interact with in our classrooms every day and the scholars and colleagues that some of them end up becoming. Think of it as a “fill in the blank” exercise where there could not possibly be a wrong answer.

My interview with Hannah took place virtually – as these things happen nowadays – in the early months of 2024. We had planned to start this conversation in person in York the day after the conference, but train strikes in the UK at the time made it impossible to meet again since she had to take an earlier-than-expected train back to London (where she currently lives), whereas I was stuck with a later-than-expected train to Newcastle (where I was off to my next academic visit). Having completed her master’s degree at Newcastle University, Hannah had given me some pointers about places to visit in and near Newcastle. We had struck gold weather-wise in the north of England that week with about five days in a row of sunny weather, but I was welcomed in Newcastle by non-stop rain that stayed with me throughout my short stay there and which reminded me, more than anything else, of Bellingham in fall and winter. I thought of things that must have felt familiar and unfamiliar to Hannah as a graduate student from Washington State in Newcastle – and that was the question that I decided to ask her first for the interview.

How did you decide to pursue a master’s degree in Newcastle in the UK after graduating from WWU?

I did not immediately pursue an MA after graduating from WWU. Instead, the fall after graduation, I moved to South Korea, where I taught English for two years. When I left that job, I felt ready to continue my studies and began to explore possible graduate programs. At the time, I wanted to broaden my studies beyond French or Spanish, so, with a wider interest in languages and cultures, I began with searches related to intercultural communication (ICC).

Surprisingly (to me, at the time), I found few relevant programs in the US, while those that I did find paired ICC with business. (I have since realized that had I known to search for “sociolinguistics,” I would have found many interesting programs!) Serendipitously, I then saw a flyer on my brother’s coffee table for a company called Across the Pond, which organizes studies for foreign students in the UK. There, I found many master’s programs that excited me and was ultimately accepted to study Cross-Cultural Communication and Applied Linguistics at Newcastle University.

And what do you miss the most about WWU and Bellingham?

I loved living in Bellingham (aside from the gloomy rain)! I miss WWU’s campus, with its beautiful buildings, green spaces, and friendly feel. I used to visit the trifecta of bookstores (Village Books, Henderson’s, and Michael’s—which is, sadly, no longer around), walking the path from downtown to Fairhaven, along what Google tells me is called the S. Bay Trail—that’s news to me! I also cannot think of Bellingham without craving Mallard’s, The Bagelry, and On Rice.

You were a double major in Spanish & French for your undergraduate degrees here at Western. What advice would you give to our language majors who might be thinking about graduate school?

While this advice may not be right for everyone, I highly recommend taking some time away from studying between degrees in order to spend some time in the “real world.” Get out there – work, volunteer, use your languages, meet people, spend time among other cultures, challenge yourself! Along the way, see what continues to catch your eye; which topics, ideas, and interests do you keep returning to? This can guide and help you to make more suitable and informed choices about which graduate program is best for you. It will also mean that when you do find yourself back in a classroom, you will have more extensive life experiences to draw on.

My other advice is to talk to people! Chat with current and former students, reach out to academics in departments that interest you, check out their recent publications, visit the campus, find out what funding
options are available. Arguably the most important aspect of graduate school is to feel comfortable and supported!

As a WWU undergraduate student, what did you think you’d do with your language degree? Did you know you wanted to be a professor and pursue an academic career back then?

I don’t think I had any idea! As long as I can remember, I have had wide and diverse interests that sometimes made it hard for me to choose a singular path. In fact, my approach to selecting a major at Western was to take any and all classes that interested me in my first two years, with the logic being that by the time I had to choose a major, whatever I had taken the most classes in would be the subject that interested me most! The result? A degree in French and Spanish.

Becoming an academic was never my intention, not as an undergraduate student at WWU, an English teacher in South Korea, an MA student in the UK, or even as a research associate following my MA. Perhaps I should have seen the writing on the wall (I was certainly spending all of my time in and around education!). I probably first started to accept that I was embarking on an academic career part-way through my PhD, when I began teaching at London Metropolitan University, and collaborating on research projects beyond my doctoral degree. Designing and implementing studies and writing papers with academic colleagues (and friends) made me start to see academia as part of my path.

One of the things that I found out when I met you first at the University of Liverpool and then at the University of York is that your linguistics PhD research focuses on Spanish speakers in London. What can you tell us about this population? What’s unique about them and what have been some of your major findings?

Part of my interest in Spanish speakers came from the fact that there are many studies on Spanish in contact with English in the US and relatively few outside. Thus, I thought it would be interesting to ask questions about how these two languages interact in the UK, and in London specifically. That said, the Spanish speaking population in London is very diverse, so I wouldn’t want to make generalizations about them as a whole.

What I can do is make some comments about the group of Spanish speakers that I have focused on in my research: a Spanish language group (I actually attended my first Spanish language group in Bellingham!). These London-based, international Spanish speakers are linguistically and culturally diverse, including attendees with and without Spanish as their mother tongue. One thing that surprised me when conducting sociolinguistic research in this space was that, although I had expected the group to display language mixing practices (such as combining English and Spanish for communication and identity purposes), it has proven to be a primarily Spanish-language space. My findings are still to come; however, the project centers around the way participants in this nationally diverse social group use talk about places for purposes such as belonging, identity-making, and connecting across languages and cultures.

You’ve been in England for a while and have been affiliated with various universities there (Newcastle University; University of Warwick; Birkbeck, University of London; London Metropolitan University). What do you like about England that has kept you there?

Yes, I have! Seven years and counting. . . plus my year in Newcastle. Newcastle is the city that sold me on the UK. When I arrived for my one-year MA program, I did not intend to stay, but the plethora of bridges, friendliness of locals, access to the sea, laid back atmosphere, and Geordie English left me wanting more—being called “love” regularly also couldn’t have hurt!

Logistically, it is the UK educational system that has keep me here. Having completed an MA in the UK, the logical choice was for me to return for a PhD. This time, I have found myself in London, where you can find the whole world in just one city. Not only does London have green spaces and quiet squares,
museums and art venues, food and people of all kinds, it also has languages and cultures galore, making it a perfect place for someone like me who has an interest in the intersection of language(s), culture(s), and communication!

Where can we find you online, or learn more about you and what you are up to?

My Twitter handle is: @hmking_linguist (http://www.twitter.com/hmking_linguist)

And my LinkedIn profile is: https://www.linkedin.com/in/hannahmarieking

Bios

**Hannah King** is a senior lecturer in English language at London Metropolitan University and an associate fellow of The Higher Education Academy. She teaches on the English Language Teaching MA as module leader for Understanding the Language Classroom and The Multilingual Classroom. Additionally, she leads the module Fundamentals of Academic English, which runs as part of the Open Language Programme (OLP).

Hannah is also a PhD Candidate in Applied Linguistics at Birkbeck, University of London. She holds an MA in Cross-Cultural Communication and Applied Linguistics from Newcastle University and a BA in French and Spanish Language and Literature from Western Washington University. As a sociolinguist, her main research interests include interactional and discursive identities, transnational language practices, and multilingualism.

**R. Mata** is an Assistant Professor of Spanish linguistics at Western Washington University in the department of Modern & Classical Languages, Department of Linguistics, and the Latin American Studies program. His main research interests include language attitudes toward U.S. Spanish in the United States and Mexico, as well as the morphosyntactic and discourse-pragmatic features of the Spanish spoken along the Mexico-U.S. border.

**Paqui Paredes:**

Prof. Paqui Paredes Méndez has returned to her faculty position in MCL and in the Spanish section, after serving as Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences for five years. She is thrilled to be back in the classroom and working with students. In the last few months, she has been collaborating with Prof. Joan Hoffman and with Luis Suárez de Benito (Educational Liaison for the Spanish Embassy in Washington State) to counsel students on the benefits and process of applying to the North American Culture and Language Assistant Program in Spain. Many of our graduates have benefitted from this program, which places American and Canadian Students in Spanish schools for an academic year as teaching assistants. The program allows students and graduates to live and work in Spain for a year or more while receiving a stipend, and it’s a wonderful opportunity for intercultural exchange.

**Charles Patterson:**

The past couple of years have been full of new experiences and renewed traditions for Prof. Patterson.

He’s had the chance to design and teach two exciting new courses. In Winter 2023, he contributed to the Honors College for the first time with his seminar titled “Chocolate: Sinful and Saintly.” In it, he and his students spent ten weeks learning about the origins and development of chocolate, along with its cultural importance. Students had opportunities throughout the quarter to prepare and share recipes, hear from guest speakers, research chocolate using the tools of their own disciplines, and analyze chocolate tropes.
in film. The course culminated in a fieldtrip to the K’ul Chocolate factory here in Bellingham. In Spring 2023 he taught a new version of SPAN 450, the special topics capstone course in Spanish, titled “Lope de Vega and his Generation.” Students learned about the theater industry in 17th century Spain, including the intense rivalry between literary giants Lope de Vega and Miguel de Cervantes, and read some of the major plays written during that period. They also got to watch and discuss videos of modern performances of these works. As a final project, students created their own audiovisual adaptations of early modern plays, which they submitted to an international festival for adjudication. Several projects from Western students won awards and special mention! Here is a link to the Western Today story about them:


Prof. Patterson has been able to resume his travels, allowing him to share his research with colleagues and continue getting to know the Spanish-speaking world. In June he attended the conference of the Cervantes Society of America at Princeton University, where he presented some of his recent work on the treatment of the Noah’s Ark story in a work by Cervantes. Later that month, he traveled to Salamanca, Spain, to present another part of that research at the annual conference of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese. He and his wife, Dayna, were fortunate to be able to meet up with Western colleagues Kirsten Drickey and Jordan Sandoval while there, and together they explored the famous Melibea’s Garden and tried arepas at a wonderful Venezuelan restaurant. After the conference, Dayna and Charles traveled northward to the city of León, Spain, to evaluate it as a site for a potential study abroad program for Western students. It proved to be a wonderful city, with friendly people, a mild climate, and significant historical sites. While there, they even got to see in person the king of Spain, Felipe VI, when he visited León for a European Union conference. Prof. Patterson had discussions with representatives of the University of León and is now working with his colleague Joan Hoffman to design a faculty-led study abroad program there. Finally, in November, Prof. Patterson traveled to Mexico to attend another conference on early modern Spanish theater in the beautiful colonial city of Puebla. He arrived a few days early to spend the weekend in the Mexico City area, visiting places like the ruins of Teotihuacán and artist Frida Kahlo’s birthplace, La Casa Azul. In Puebla, in addition to presenting his ongoing research on modern adaptations of the work of Cervantes, he also had the chance to attend an impressive Day of the Dead parade.

The return to campus after Covid has allowed Prof. Patterson to re-establish Western’s chapter of Sigma Delta Pi, the national honors society for Spanish students. In both Fall 2022 and Fall 2023 he organized induction ceremonies for new members, and now there are enough active members to begin electing officers and organizing activities. Prof. Patterson is excited to continue working with this important organization as chapter advisor.
2022-2023 Award and Scholarship Winners

Outstanding Graduating Seniors

Chinese – Laura Wagner
French – Brianna Corley
German – Andy Dirks
Latin American Studies – Lily Berver
Spanish – Lily Berver

Teaching Assistant Program in France (TAPIF)

Brianna Corley
Kate Dolan
Sarah Massie
Elliott Windrope

US Teaching Assistantship/Fulbright-Austria Program (Austria)

Andy Dirks
Raven Klingele

Goethe-Institut Summer Academy

Trent Danielson

Japan Exchange and Teaching Program (JET)

Maya Moreno

MCL Scholarships

Herbert L. Baird, Jr. Scholarship – Anna Hedrick
Herbert L. Baird, Jr. Scholarship – Javin Morrison
Departmental Tuition & Fee Waiver Scholarship – Parker Eckardt
Departmental Tuition & Fee Waiver Scholarship – Emma Magnuson
Eunice D. Faber Scholarship – Kate Lincoln
Eunice D. Faber Scholarship – Gracie Weis
Golden and Li Family Scholarship – Rose Snyder
Ingrid Stahlbrand Kassler Scholarship – Bren Anderson
Ingrid Stahlbrand Kassler Scholarship – Connor Roble
Loomis/Hanley Foreign Language Scholarship – Dana Gravseth
2023-2024 Award and Scholarship Winners

Outstanding Graduating Seniors

Chinese – Ben Lewis  
French – Olivia Rose  
German – Marina Barras  
Japanese – Adam Hacherl  
Latin American Studies – Moisés Morales López  
Spanish – Aileen García

“Reading China and Writing Thoughts” International Book Review Contest

Ariel Chen – First Prize  
Annesha Birch – Third Prize  
Alexandra Knepp – Third Prize  
Isabel Lau – Third Prize

Chinese Proficiency Competition for World College Students

Lilly Hesari – Champion Title  
Liana Palmer – Second Place

Delta Phi Alpha German Honor Society Inductees

Zephyr Copeland  
Lilly Sabatier

German Academic Exchange Service RISE Grant

John Lewis

Goethe-Institut Summer Academy

Miya DeCaro

Japan Exchange and Teaching Program (JET)

Jasani Dawson

Paul Woodring Arts and Sciences Scholarship Nominee

Kristen Saturday
MCL Scholarships

Herbert L. Baird, Jr. Scholarship – Aleyna Barry
Herbert L. Baird, Jr. Scholarship – Vanessa Ceniceros-Navarro
Herbert L. Baird, Jr. Scholarship – Samantha Herlich
Herbert L. Baird, Jr. Scholarship – Valentina del Risco Sánchez
Herbert L. Baird, Jr. Scholarship – Gracie Weis
Departmental Tuition & Fee Waiver Scholarship – Aleyna Barry
Departmental Tuition & Fee Waiver Scholarship – Vanessa Ceniceros-Navarro
Departmental Tuition & Fee Waiver Scholarship – Mia Hale
Departmental Tuition & Fee Waiver Scholarship – Samantha Herlich
Departmental Tuition & Fee Waiver Scholarship – Dio Jean-Baptiste
Departmental Tuition & Fee Waiver Scholarship – Chloe Maple
Departmental Tuition & Fee Waiver Scholarship – Wren Mason-Todd
Departmental Tuition & Fee Waiver Scholarship – Cece Pyfer
Departmental Tuition & Fee Waiver Scholarship – Valentina del Risco Sánchez
Departmental Tuition & Fee Waiver Scholarship – Gracie Weis
Departmental Tuition & Fee Waiver Scholarship – Lucy Wells
  Eunice D. Faber Scholarship – Chloe Maple
  Eunice D. Faber Scholarship – Wren Mason-Todd
  Eunice D. Faber Scholarship – Lucy Wells
  Karen L. Freeman Scholarship – Mia Hale
  Karen L. Freeman Scholarship – Dio Jean-Baptiste
  Karen L. Freeman Scholarship – Cece Pyfer
Golden and Li Family Scholarship – Alexa Agbayani
Golden and Li Family Scholarship – Olivia Hinton
Golden and Li Family Scholarship – Shan Robinson
Ingrid Stahlbrand Kassler Scholarship – Zephyr Copeland
Ingrid Stahlbrand Kassler Scholarship – John Lewis
Ingrid Stahlbrand Kassler Scholarship – Kristen Saturday
Loomis/Hanley Foreign Language Scholarship – Ian Pelot
Modern and Classical Languages Scholarship – Dio Jean-Baptiste
2022-2023 Employee Language Program Coordinator Graduates

Lily Berver – Spanish
Laci Bowhay – Spanish
Brianna Corley – French
Rachel Ferguson – French
Alondra Figueroa Zepeda – Spanish
Trevor Harrison – French
Isabella Heide – Spanish
Chase Jackson – Spanish
Kevin Nolasco – Spanish
Olivia Rose – French
Kendra Sutton – Spanish
Bryson Taylor – German

2023-2024 Employee Language Program Coordinator Graduates

Miguel Acuña – Spanish
Aileen García – Spanish
Lizeth García – Spanish
Capri Granville – French
Dana Gravseth – Spanish
Elinor Hendricks – Spanish
Yasmin Lamas Flores – Spanish
Eden McGee – Spanish
Javin Morrison – Spanish
Zebenay Tekeawe – Spanish
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