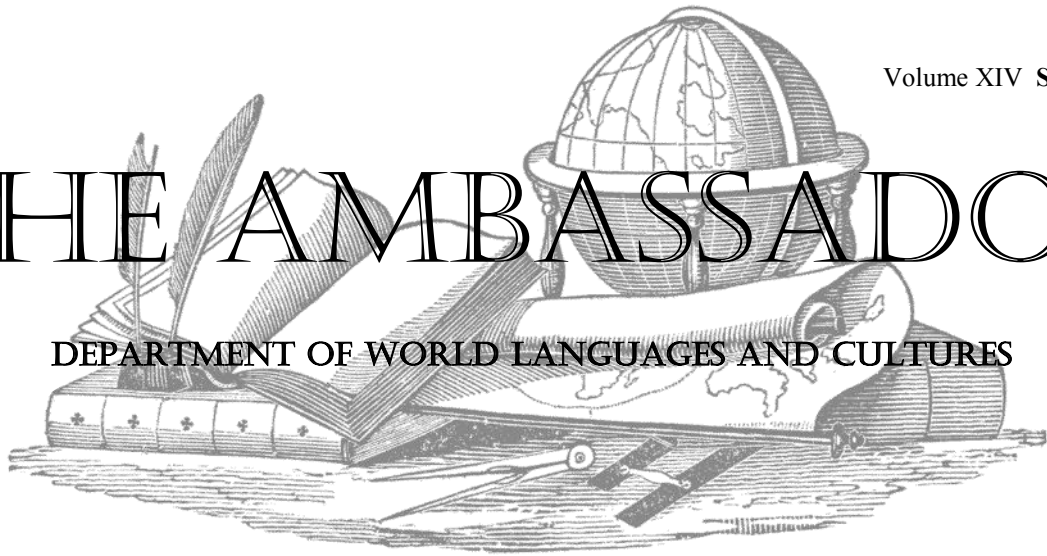


# THE AMBASSADOR

DEPARTMENT OF WORLD LANGUAGES AND CULTURES



## NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

### WHAT'S IN A STOVE?

During Intersession 2012, Dr. Meagher and I took a group of students to Huehuetla, Mexico, to study Women and Development in Latin America. Part of our studies related to the environment and use of local resources such as water and wood. Students worked with local citizens to build a wood-saving stove known as the Patsari stove. Yes, they played in the mud!

I'll bet most of you have given little thought to your stove. Perhaps you have an electric stove, and wish you had gas. Perhaps you live in the country and have propane. In many parts of the world the stove is the center of family activity. The open flame stove pictured here is common in many countries of the global South. It is resource-intensive and highly polluting. Women and children inhale the ash, which is equivalent to smoking 400 cigarettes, or 20 packs, a day. Aside from the negative health consequences, the open-wood fire uses far more wood than the Patsari stove pictured. Deforestation is yet another serious consequence of open-wood fires. Each Patsari stove uses 70% less firewood, reduces smoke-related respiratory ailments and deaths by 40%, and reduces the time the women and children must spend on gathering firewood from ever-greater distances. Be sure to see the class exhibit on Earth Day, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Linda Ledford-Miller



Inefficient open flame wood fires, like the one in the upper picture, may be replaced with healthier Patsari stoves, bottom picture.



#### Inside this issue:

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- Studying Abroad: Seville

### Writing Essays, refereeing, and leading

**Dr. Linda Ledford-Miller's** six essays for *World Literature in Spanish: An Encyclopedia* are now in print, and include commentary on the novelists Gioconda Belli and Elena Poniatowska, the poet Daisy Zamora, and the topics of Marianism, Liberation Theology, and Testimonial Writing. Her essay, "Gender and Genre Bending: The Futuristic Detective Fiction of J.D. Robb," appeared in a special issue of *Reconstruction: Studies in Contemporary Culture*, on genres and popular culture. She served as a referee for a new journal, *L'Érudit franco-espagnol (LEF-E) An Electronic Journal of French and Hispanic Literatures* ([www.lef-e.org](http://www.lef-e.org)). In January she and her colleague Dr. Sharon Meagher led a group of students to Puebla, Mexico, for a course on Women and Development in Latin America, staying at the ecolodge in Huehuetla run by a Totonac indigenous women's cooperative, and at a hotel in Cuetzalan run by a Nahua indigenous women's group.



### The Translator's Ghosts

**Dr. Jamie Trnka** is currently on leave and living in Maastricht, The Netherlands, where she is completing her work on a book about the aesthetics of solidarity in Cold War East and West Germany. She most recently presented her work in progress as an invited lecturer at the prestigious National Literature Archives in Marbach am Neckar, Germany. The presentation was titled "The Translator's Ghosts: Translation, Cultural Mediation, and the Reanimation of Political Literature".

Pending funding, she hopes to attend this summer's Institute for World Literature in Istanbul, Turkey. The four-week institute offers, among many other activities, the opportunity to work closely with other scholars of literature and globalization through lectures, seminar discussions, and workshops.

### Seville, Cuzco, Austria

**Dr. Yamile Silva** has published the article "Soledad Acosta de Samper y su proyecto de la Nación." in the book *Gendering Citizenship and Globalization* edited by Auxiliadora Pérez in Seville, Spain. In addition, she has been invited to submit the article "The Cuban Situation in Ana Mozo de la Torre's letter (1815)" to the History/Literature journal at Stanford University, Republics of Letters. She presented her paper "Catecismo o instrucción popular: "lenguaje" y "poder" en la Independencia" at the *XI Congreso Internacional de Literatura Hispánica* in Cuzco, Perú, in March 7-9, 2012. She has been accepted to present a paper at *54 International Congress of Americanists* in Austria in July 2012.



### Collaborative Learning and Gender Awareness

**Dr. Monika Moyrer** has recently collaborated with Anca Luca Holden from Mt. Holyoke College on an essay about Romanian collage poetry. In November, her article "'Für mich war es ein angenehmer Geruch, ein eigenartiges Parfüm des Papiers'. Herta Müller's Collages as Wall Hangings" was published in *Literatur für Leser*. She has finished editing an article on memory and collage that will appear in a Compendium on Herta Müller. Last fall, she attended a workshop organized by the PA chapter of the American Association of Teachers of German and presented a poster at the Women in German Conference in Augusta, Michigan. The main purpose was to discuss the theoretical framework for ways to implement a reflective feminist pedagogy in her course on border crossings, which she teaches this spring. Thus, collaborative learning and gender awareness continue to inform her pedagogy and serve as a preparation for her contribution in a forum on the global status of women in celebration of the International Women's Day.

### Classical Reviews

**Dr. Joseph Wilson** finished a review of Robin Osborne's *Athens and Athenian Democracy* for Bryn Mawr Classical Reviews; it should appear shortly. He also contributed an article, "Using Corfu: the Island in Homer and Apollonius Rhodius," for an as-yet untitled volume forthcoming from Cambridge Scholars Press.



## A CELEBRATION OF THE CHINESE NEW YEAR AT THE U. OF S.

On Sunday, February 5th, The World Languages and Cultures Department, together with Asian Studies hosted a Chinese New Year party to help usher in the year of the dragon. The celebration was attended by University faculty, as well as this semester's Chinese language students. The Rose Room was decorated with presentation boards made by the Chinese language students of Abington Heights as well as hand-made paper cut-outs made by **Allison Lai** and her students. For those unfamiliar with the holiday, which is also known as the Spring Festival as it marks the end of winter, the party offered a unique look into the food and customs of China. The guests were all invited to participate in making their own food, which included several different types of dumplings as well as a Chinese salad and green onion pancakes. The tables were each decorated with an apple and an orange to symbolize peace and luck, and the centerpieces were cut-outs of the Chinese character "chun," which means "spring."

After all of the guests had enjoyed the delicious meal, Allison Lai's Chinese classes came to the front of the room to sing the New Year song, *Gonxi Ni*, the lyrics of which wish congratulations and blessings on the listener, and which was written to mark the end of Japan's occupation of China during World War II. They then presented different New Year traditions, including the various ways that Chinese families prepare for and celebrate the holiday.

Chinese Spring Festival is the most important Chinese holiday, and is not actually one day at all. Rather, it starts on the first day of the first month on the traditional Chinese calendar and lasts until the Lantern Festival 15 days later. Many Chinese families prepare for the festival with a spring cleaning meant to clear out any misfortune and make room for good luck. They also decorate their homes in the color red and with various paper cut-outs signifying good fortune, and wealth. Throughout China and Taiwan, firecrackers can be heard day and night for the full 15 days. The festival is a time when Chinese families come together to relax and celebrate, and here in Scranton it was an opportunity not only to celebrate, but also to experience a new culture.

**Allison Carey**

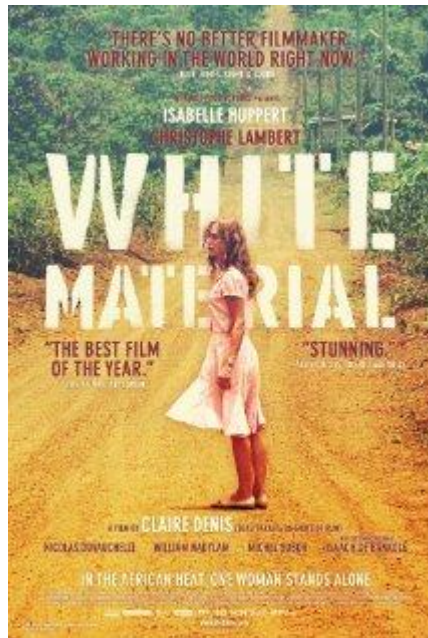


**Firecrackers, accompanied by the symbol for the Spring that is coming.**



**At the New Year celebration organized by Prof. Lai (second from the left), faculty and students came together to make traditional Chinese food. It included dumplings, cucumber salad, green onion pancakes and steamed buns (bottom right).**

## MOVIES, MOVIES, MOVIES,... NONE OF THEM FROM HOLLYWOOD



As is already traditional, the Spring semester brought the chance to watch numerous movies from different countries. The following are some of those that were screened.

### Les films français

The French Film Festival, organized by Dr. Marzia Caporale, featured two recent French-language films that have received widespread critical acclaim, *Potiche* (March 21) and *White Material* (March 27).

Set in 1977 in a provincial French town, *Potiche* is a free adaptation of the 1970s eponymous hit comic play. When her husband is taken hostage by his employees on strike, trophy wife Suzanne takes the reins of his business and proves herself a quite competent leader. However, when a former flame-turned-union leader arrives on the scene, things get complicated as her husband returns after recovering from the trauma.

*White Material* takes place in an unnamed African country torn by a rebellion. There, Maria, a fearless white woman, refuses to abandon her coffee crops and to acknowledge the danger to which she is exposing her family. For her, to leave is to

surrender: a sign of weakness. Andre, her ex-husband and father of her teenage son, resolves to arrange for their return to France. He will stop at nothing to protect Maria and their son, as well as his second wife, an African woman, and their baby. The film is a riveting exploration of the complexities of racial conflict and the limits of human will.

### I film italiani

The Italian Film Series begun on February 27 and will last until May 5. It opened with *Due vite per caso*, a movie that takes a look at how events shape our future decisions. It tells the story of Matteo in two versions, the first of which is under normal circumstances and the second is the events that follow a freak accident. Would Matteo make the same decisions if this accident had not occurred. Those who attended the two screenings of the film (February 27 and March 1) know by now the answer to that question.

March 28 and 29 were the dates for *La doppia ora*, in which Guido, after many failed attempts, finally finds success in the speed-dating game when he meets Sonia, a

Slovenian immigrant with whom he hits it off. During a romantic getaway. Sonia's reality crumbles as her past resurfaces; questions arise, the answers to which only appears after a series of twists and turns that leaves the audience guessing until the end.

The series will close with *C'è chi dice no* (April 30 and May 3), a film that tells the story of three young adults fed up with the Italian system of nepotism. In order to succeed, is it important who your parents know, what they do and what their position is in society? The main characters are prepared to stick it to the privileged elite.

### Der deutsche Film

The German Club offered on March 20 the screening of *Bella Martha*, a 2001 romantic comedy drama film directed by Sandra Nettelbeck. Previously, on February 10 the Foreign Film Series presented the German drama *Four Minutes*, a movie that tells the story of two very different women: Jenny, a young convicted killer with enormous musical talent, and Traude, an aging music teacher at the women's prison who is grooming Jenny to perform in a piano contest.



## VOICES FROM TAIWAN, FRANCE, ARGENTINA AND JAPAN



From the left, Teaching Assistants Esther Tranchant, Carolin Sánchez, and Keiki Saijo, and Visiting Professor Allison Lai

Teaching Assistants Caro Sanchez (Argentina), Esther Tranchant (France), Keiko Saijo (Japan) and visiting professor Allison Lai (Taiwan) presented the annual TA TALK at a dinner on Wednesday March. 21 in Brennan 509. The annual event was sponsored by a University of Scranton Diversity Initiatives Grant and coordinated by Prof. **Marie Karam**, Director of the Language Learning Center. Teachers and administrators from elementary, middle and high schools were invited to this presentation to promote greater understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures. In addition those attending were encouraged to invite the TAs to visit their schools to present to assemblies or to speak to world cultures and language classes. At this year's event over 100 educators from all over the region enjoyed uniquely personal insights into the cultures of Argentina, France, Japan and Taiwan.

The first to present was **Allison Lai**, Chinese professor in Taiwan who is teaching Chinese this year at the University of Scranton. Prof. Lai shared with the audience many aspects of modern life in Taiwan. "You will love the mix of the old traditions in Taiwan. Old traditions such as the Palace museum, night markets and the festivals. New traditions such as the electronic gadgets, bustling city life and modern high speed rail. You can see trees that are over 1,000 years old, stay at an Aboriginal camp in the mountains, visit the old Dutch fort and admire the beauty of Taipei 101. Taiwan is so diverse and generally very friendly. Just watch out when you cross the road because the Taiwanese don't stop for red lights...", Lai explained during her presentation.

Next was **Keiko Saijo**, Japanese instructor, who covered many topics such as Japanese food, sports, education, and culture. "If you come to Japan, you will find a lot of beautiful nature, delicious foods, and cartoons and you will fall in love with Japan. You will find out some interesting differences between America and Japan. Please come to learn about my beautiful country, Japan!" she said.

Then French instructor **Esther Tranchant** introduced the audience to French culture. She talked about the wide diversity of beautiful landscapes, about the delicious French food, and about the rich culture of the country. She presented French art from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to nowadays. To finish, she introduced Paris and parts of the city that she loves and that might not be the best known.

Finally, **Carolina Sánchez Romera**, from Argentina, took the audience on a trip throughout her homeland sharing her love of its many varied regions and ending with the city farthest south "at the end of the world" Argentina's city of Usuaia. Caro discussed several argentine traditions, including the social drinking of *mate*, a quite healthy kind of tea, the unique tango dancing in Buenos Aires, and the crazy cheering for soccer teams all around the country, among other topics. She also presented an overview of the political and educational systems.

## PUEBLA HOSTED THE 14TH ANNUAL MEXICO INTERSESSION PROGRAM



From the left, Jezza Malik, Andrés Perea, Amanda Stahl, Scott Holdren, Jilliam Tiburzi, George Vazquez, Yamile Silva, Hank Willenbrink, Laura Desmarteau, Antonella Amatto, and Robert Parsons at the San Andrés de Cholula Church.

This past January, the foreign language and political science departments of the University of Scranton held the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Mexico intersession program for a span of three weeks. Seven other students and I chose to embark on a cultural journey with university professors **Dr. Yamile Silva**, **Dr. Robert Parsons**, and **Dr. Hank Willenbrink**. However, this journey started in a different location this year when the usual program to the city of Guadalajara became a trip to Puebla due to the amount of drug related violence in Guadalajara. Since all of us had a variety of reasons why we wanted to go, such as to receive credit for classes or to travel to see what Mexico was like, we were still very excited to hear that we were going to Puebla.

In Puebla, we stayed with different host families in a community called Estrella del Sur. All of the host families assigned were extremely kind and gave us an opportunity to converse strictly in Spanish. For the duration of the trip, we talked Spanish in our homes, classes, and daily life.

Class was conveniently held in the La Universidad Iberoamericana, which was only a fifteen minute walk from la Estrella del Sur. This Jesuit University was one of a kind with a pond in the middle of the campus and different types of ducks and peacocks spread throughout it. We took two courses for four days during the week; a political science course and a contemporary Mexican culture and language course. All the classes, courses, research papers and

cultural activities that we participated in, allowed us to earn six credits from the program and learned a lot about the country of Mexico in such a short amount of time.

Along with the two courses, the students had a lot of time to explore different cities in Mexico. In addition to staying in Puebla and seeing sites such as the great pyramid in Cholula and their famous Cathedral, we had the opportunity to travel to Oaxaca and Mexico City. In Oaxaca, we saw different sites such as the mescal (an alcoholic beverage similar to tequila) farm, where we learned first-hand how to make this famous drink of this city. We also saw the pre-Colombian archaeological site, Monte Albán, which is located in the mountainous range above the plain in the Valley of Oaxaca. The weekend after Oaxaca, we visited Mexico City for two days where we saw famous pieces of art in el Palacio de Bellas Artes. We also visited the basilica of the Virgin Mary (La basílica de Santa María de Guadalupe), and the National Palace (el Palacio Nacional) in the central square (zócalo) where we saw famous murals by artists such as Diego Rivera.

Unfortunately, I could not include in this article everything we did during the time we spent in Mexico, but I can say it was the experience of a lifetime. In twenty days, I can say on behalf of the group that this was truly a learning experience both in and outside of the classroom.

**Scott Holdren**



## LEAVE THE COMFORT ZONE: THE BEST WAY TO LEARN A LANGUAGE

“Sevilla?... That’s in Spain, right?” About a year ago, that was the response I received from my family when I told them that I was planning to study abroad. Traveling has always fascinated me but the idea of studying abroad seemed far-fetched. I grew up as an only child on Long Island (New York), the furthest anyone in my family had ever traveled was to the Caribbean, and there I was, wanting to live in a foreign country on my own for four months. Well, thanks to the study abroad office dealing with my indecisiveness between locations and filling out tedious application forms, and visa applications, here I am living in Southern Spain!

Seville (or Sevilla, as they say here in Spain) is a city located in Andalucía. It is home to flamenco, tapas, *corridos de toros* (bullfighting) and *fútbol* (soccer). The city is filled with plazas and parks and the streets are lined with orange trees and palm trees. The sun is always shining and people love to be outside. Free time is often spent strolling or biking through one of the city’s gorgeous parks, playing *fútbol* or sitting alongside the river Guadalquivir.

I’ve learned that life in America (especially in New York!) is way too rushed. We rarely take the time to stop and look around. In Seville the majority of stores and offices close for the afternoon for about three hours. During this time, people head home to have lunch with their families, go for a drink with friends or take a nap. This tradition, called *siesta*, has taught me to appreciate free time and to be more relaxed.

Besides some of the obvious reasons above, I chose to study in Seville for the chance to fully immerse myself in the Spanish language. I’m amazed at how quickly my Spanish has improved since arriving here. Spanish has turned from an option into a necessity in all aspects of my life. I need it to communicate with my host family, talk with my Spanish friends and to understand what my professors are saying. Learning the language has taught me not to be afraid to make mistakes. It was scary at first to think of saying something embarrassing or mixing up words. But, it’s better to try and say something than not to say anything at all in fear of mixing up the indicative and subjunctive modes of verbs.

These past two months have been an incredible adventure. I have traveled to Madrid, rode camels in Morocco, rock climbed in the Northern Sierra and visited the Alhambra in Granada. I have visited museums, volunteered at a preschool, made new friends, eaten tapas, and gotten lost. I’ve seen flamenco shows, tried new foods and found my way around the city. Many people assume that studying abroad is just about studying, traveling and partying, but I’ve discovered that it is much more than that. It’s about leaving your comfort zone, exploring different cultures, and learning to live in the moment. Most importantly I’ve learned to appreciate a new culture and to live like a true *Sevillana*!

Allyson Kiss



Allyson Kiss is studying during the Spring 2012 semester in Seville, Spain. From top to bottom: Kiss with a fellow University of Scranton student, Lindsey Walsh; the Cathedral of Seville; and Plaza de España.

### NEW TEACHER WORKSHOP SPONSORED BY THE WORLD LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT

The Department of World Languages and Cultures will present its annual World Languages Teacher Workshop for all area foreign language teachers Mon., April 30, 8:30am-2:00pm, in Brennan Hall 509. The annual workshop attracts foreign language middle and high school teachers from over 25 school districts. Presenters this year include workshop coordinator and Language Learning Center Director Marie Karam, German Professor Dr. Monika Moyrer and Teaching Assistants from Argentina, France, Japan, Taiwan: Caro Sanchez, Esther Tranchant, Keiko Saijo, Allison Lai. This year's workshop *A Mini-Methods Update 2012: Interpersonal and International* will focus on the planning, assessment and teaching strategies necessary to achieve the goal of Interpersonal Communication stated in the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. "Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions." The workshop will analyze key indicators from current research which assist teachers in developing real communication in the classroom. Topics include specific examples of Backward Design, formal and informal assessments, performance rubrics and contextualized language instruction.

### 2012 INDUCTION CEREMONY FOR THE ALPHA MU GAMMA HONOR SOCIETY

The Theta Iota Chapter of the Foreign Language National Honor Society Alpha Mu Gamma will celebrate On May 1st the induction ceremony of its new members. The ceremony will take place in The DeNaples Center 405, from 11:30 am to 1 pm. Inductees will receive their certificates of membership and society pins, and graduating seniors will also receive their gold honors cords.

Requirements to become a member of this society are:  
a) for a full membership, two consecutive A's or A-'s in language courses (in the same language) at the Composition and Conversation (311-312) levels or above; for associate membership, two consecutive B+'s or better in the same levels, or a noteworthy academic record in more than one language. Applicants must have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0.

Alpha Mu Gamma is the first and largest national collegiate foreign language honor society of the US. It was established on 1931. More than 307 chapters exist nowadays. Among other activities, the Society publishes a quarterly newsletter; has biennial national conventions; and celebrates regional conferences at which students are able to meet others who share their interest in foreign languages.

### AN EVENING OF TAIWANESE MUSIC, POEMS AND TEA

On the Sunday night of March 25, light caresses from the early spring breeze drove the noted Scranton winter away. Several Chinese language students accompanied this gentle breeze towards Condron Hall. They arrived to attend a special cultural feast with music, poems, tea and all sorts of traditional delicacies from Taiwan.

Located on the Tropic of Cancer, Taiwan is famous for producing high quality teas year round. However, the spring harvest produces the best teas. Late March is the perfect time to taste Taiwanese Spring Tea.

Organized by Visiting Prof. Ms. **Allison Lai**, the culture program

aimed to introduce famous Chinese poets, poems and tea to her students. "One can't say he learns Chinese without knowing any famous poets or poetry -said Ms. Lai-. By reciting Classic poetry, the students learned to capture the rhythm of Chinese language and appreciate another form of ancient Chinese art. I hope my students continue to learn and cherish both the language and the culture."

In old Chinese paintings, viewers often see scholars talking cheerfully and enjoying Chinese tea. To imitate those intellectuals, Ms. Lai arranged a Chinese tea set on the table. The tea set included a teapot, a

Wenxiang cup, and additional small drinking cups. The Chinese use the "Wenxiang cup" to enjoy the beautiful aroma of tea. The Chinese believe that tea refreshes both the body and mind. It is a tradition to drink a cup of tea with friends, families, and soul mates.

Ms. Lai and her Chinese language students spent the evening 以茶代酒,(Drinking tea instead of wine). They tried authentic Taiwanese culture, and enjoyed the Taiwanese national drink, 珍珠奶茶 (Bubble tea). They also had traditional desserts, such as sesame seed candy, pineapple and radish cakes, and sticky rice balls.