

SCHOOL OF LITERATURES, CULTURES, AND LINGUISTICS

THIS NEWSLETTER COVERS THE DEPARTMENT OF THE CLASSICS, PROGRAM IN COMPARATIVE AND WORLD LITERATURE, DEPARTMENT OF EAST ASIAN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES, DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH AND ITALIAN, DEPARTMENT OF GERMANIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES, DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS, DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION, DEPARTMENT OF SLAVIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES, DEPARTMENT OF SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE, AND CENTER FOR TRANSLATION STUDIES.

Conference joins campus and community to address hope and faith in anxious times

The Champaign Urbana Interfaith Exploration, representing concerned Champaign-Urbana community members, organized a conference titled “Cultivating Hope in Anxious Times” with a series of events in and around campus in October and November.

Valerie Hoffman, professor of religion and a member of the organizing committee explained, “The anxiety in the title is that caused by fear-mongering and hate crimes in our world today; hope is cultivated by reaching across boundaries to stand in solidarity with those who are threatened and to embrace the beauty of our diversities.”

Various speakers and discussion panel members set out to explore ways to move beyond tolerance of differences to mutuality, said Michael B. Crosby, pastor of the First Mennonite Church of Champaign-Urbana and a co-organizer.

Events began on Oct. 31 with a lecture by Dr. Francis X. Clooney, of Harvard University. He addressed the topic “Once Upon a Time in Kathmandu: How Hinduism Made me a Better Catholic.”

Events continued on Nov. 7 with Dr. Eboo Patel, founder and president of Interfaith Youth Core, discussing his memoir, “Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim, the Struggle for the Soul of a Generation.” Later that evening Patel gave the conference’s keynote address, “Diversity is Not Just the Difference You Like: Interfaith Leadership in the Time of Tribalism.”

The following afternoon, Dr. Mark Swanson, professor of Christian-Muslim Studies at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, gave a talk titled “From Missionary ‘Focus’ to Neighborly ‘Commitment’: Chicago Lutheran Stories in Christian-Muslim Relations,” at St. Andrew’s Lutheran Campus Center.


Swanson’s lecture was followed by a panel discussion titled “Beyond Tolerance: Building Mutuality and Affection through Interfaith Engagement.” The panel featured Swanson; Dr. Marcia Hermansen, professor theology at Loyola University Chicago; Dr. Jennifer Grayson, assistant professor of history at Xavier University; Dr. Safwat Marzouk, associate professor of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary; and Michael Dann, assistant professor of religion at Illinois.



Pictured from left to right are “Beyond Tolerance” panelists Pastor Leah Roberts-Mosser, Imam Ousmane Sawadogo, Reverend Dawn Blackman, Amy Felty, and Rabbi Alan Cook, with moderator Nicole Anderson-Cobb.

Part two of the “Beyond Tolerance” panel discussion continued Saturday at the Sinai Temple in Champaign, featuring Rabbi Alan Cook, Sinai Temple; Pastor Leah Roberts-Mosser, Community United Church of Christ; Pastor Dawn Blackman of the Church of the Brethren; Imam Ousmane Sawadogo, Central Illinois Mosque and Islamic Center; and Amy Felty of the Baha’l Community. Dr. Nicole Anderson-Cobb of the Department of History at Illinois was moderator.

Events concluded on Sunday with a performance by Ted & Company Theater Works, of “I’d Like to Buy an Enemy.” The company uses humor, professional storytelling, and other types of performance to discuss issues of faith and social justice.

Sponsors for “Cultivating Hope in Anxious Times” included the Interfaith Alliance of Champaign County, the University YMCA, the First Mennonite Church, Sinai Temple, Central Illinois Mosque and Islamic Center, the Hillel Foundation, the U of I Muslim Association, Illinois Interfaith in Action, the U of I Department of Religion, the U of I Office of the Chancellor, the U of I Office of the Vice Provost for International Affairs, and the U of I Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations. 



SLCL 2020: FACING OUT AND LOOKING AHEAD



After a vote by the faculty of the departments housed in the Foreign Languages Building in 2005, the School of Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics was officially created in 2007. Since then, it has benefited from the leadership of three directors: Doug Kibbee (professor of French); Abbas Benmamoun (professor of linguistics); and Jean-Philippe Mathy (professor of French and comparative and world literature). I now have the privilege to continue advancing our common vision for the School: to foster a collaborative environment that stimulates world-class research, to create the framework for innovative teaching, outreach and community engagement, and to offer transformative learning experiences for all our students.

As the new director my objective is to establish a cohesive identity for SLCL that will strengthen our public profile as a campus hub for the global humanities, promote ongoing interdisciplinary initiatives with other units and colleges, and sustain current and future public engagement efforts. In short: I expect to bring increased visibility and resources to what we already do so well. To that end, we will continue to build on the School's cultural, linguistic and pedagogical expertise, as well as on our strong ties across the university and our networks, be they local, national, or international.

The new decade has also brought changes for our valued staff members. After many years of service, Lenore Sroka, Debbie Kraybill and Von Knight decided to enjoy their well-deserved retirement. Others chose to pursue new professional opportunities. We are therefore re-building our SLCL administrative team, adding new positions and examining the division of work duties among our different administrative areas. We are committed to ensuring that SLCL offers a supportive environment that contributes to our staff members' professional growth. You can learn more about our excellent new hires, as well as our new research and teaching initiatives, on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/slcl.illinois and newsletters slcl.illinois.edu/news/newsletters.

Our (admittedly challenging and oddly shaped) Foreign Language Building is also receiving some attention. A team has already begun to study and address our main needs: from essential maintenance, to creating or reconfiguring shared spaces that promote professional and social collaboration, to updates to our instructional technology. Our work environment should reflect our role as a hub for cultural and linguistic analysis, intercultural competence, and language pedagogy. It is my hope that it will also reflect our cultural plurality, our international connections and a sense of openness to the different communities we serve.

As we enter this new decade, I look forward to continuing to promote a collaborative, culturally diverse, and inclusive environment that will nourish our academic excellence, pedagogical mission, and our public profile. 🌐

Luisa Elena Delgado

Professor of Spanish, Director SLCL

Give to the School

Please consider investing in the future of the School through a gift designated for either: 1) the **SLCL Annual Fund**, which helps to promote overall excellence in the school; 2) the **Douglas A. Kibbee Prize**, awarded annually to the most outstanding dissertation proposal; or 3) **SLCL departments or programs**. Your gift is most appreciated! Visit our website, slcl.illinois.edu and click "Give to SLCL" in the upper right-hand corner.

Attention, Alumni/ae: We Want to Hear Your Stories

We want to hear from you: What do you do (job title, duties), where do you work, and how has your U of I education prepared you for your success? Please send us your story, 200 words maximum, subject heading "My Alumni/ae story" to: Rick Partin, partin@illinois.edu. You may include a photo of yourself in electronic format (.jpg or .png preferred). We'll publish select ones on our School website: slcl.illinois.edu.

Check out Our Website

Look on our School webpage, which includes a Calendar of Events, Announcements, a Feature News section, and our own Facebook page.

For a snapshot of SLCL in numbers, please see our brochure that describes the scope of our School and why we call ourselves the "Gateway to a Global Learning Experience." Go to www.slcl.illinois.edu/news/brochure and click on the image to see how the SLCL contributes to the academic mission of the University of Illinois.

SPRING 2020

School of Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

This newsletter is published biannually by the School of Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and is produced by the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Office of Communications and Marketing. Suggestions and correspondence may be sent to the School of Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics:

4072 Foreign Languages Building
707 S. Mathews Ave.
Urbana, Illinois 61801
(217) 244-3252
Fax: (217) 244-8430
slcl.illinois.edu

Director: Luisa-Elena Delgado
Editor: Rick Partin

War and trauma explored through Greek tragedies

By Jodi Heckel, Arts and Humanities Editor,
University of Illinois News Bureau

During fall semester, Angeliki Tzanetou and her students explored issues of war and trauma through Greek tragedies and learned how the themes presented in the ancient dramas are connected to present-day crises.

Tzanetou taught “The Aftermath of War in Greek Tragedy” for the first time.

“The reason tragedy survives, its timelessness, is rooted in the fact that it spoke to real political and moral issues people were grappling with. It has the power to connect with contemporary issues,” Tzanetou said.

The Athenian playwrights wrote stories of the Trojan War, and the audience for the tragedies performed at the ancient theater of Dionysus in Athens would have been mostly male. Many of them would have been veterans of war, Tzanetou said.

“They would sit together as a community. There’s some emotional cleansing that goes on,” she said.

The class studied themes that include combat trauma and what happens when war veterans return home after being absent from their families; displacement, migration, refugees and asylum; and the trafficking of women and sexual violence.

The students read ancient Greek tragedies and contemporary works, including psychiatrist Jonathan Shay’s books, which connect post-traumatic stress disorder with war experiences described by Homer in the “Iliad” and the “Odyssey.” Several students said connecting the work of the ancient Greeks to problems in the world today made reading the plays more engaging.

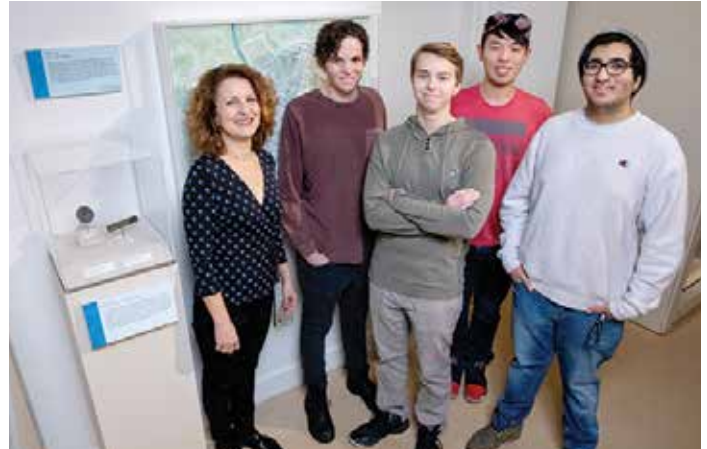
They watched films such as “Queens of Syria” by Yasmin Fedda, based on Euripides’ “Trojan Women” and about Syrian women forced into exile; “Mojada” by Luis Alfaro, an adaptation of Euripides’ “Medea” to the Mexican border crisis; and “4.1 Miles” by Daphne Matziaraki, a documentary on Syrian refugees in the waters between Turkey and the island of Lesbos.

Sophomore Hamza Lodhia appreciated that the focus was not only on issues involving veterans but also on others who are affected by war. He was particularly moved by “4.1 Miles.” “It gave a visual representation of a real problem going on. It’s not just veterans but people impacted by war,” Lodhia said.

The students also spent several class periods at the University YMCA’s New American Welcome Center, which provides resources to new immigrants. “It helped me become aware of a community that I didn’t even know about,” said sophomore Vincent Kim. In class, professors tell us how the class relates to real-life situations, but rarely do teachers tell us what we can do about an issue.”

For their final project, students did a reading that adapted a scene from a Greek tragedy to address a contemporary situation. A group of students including Kim, Lodhia, senior Oscar Serlin and freshman Max Serlin adapted the third play of the “Oresteia” trilogy by Aeschylus, in which Orestes is on trial for matricide. The play illustrates the progress from exacting justice through bloody vendettas to replacing that with the rule of law.

The students reimagined the trial scene with Orestes as an American soldier in the Vietnam War being court-martialed for killing two other soldiers who committed atrocities during the Mỹ Lai Massacre (the



Classics professor Angeliki Tzanetou uses Greek tragedies to explore themes of war, trauma and displacement. She is pictured at Spurlock Museum of World Cultures with some of the students in the class, from left, Oscar Serlin, Max Serlin, Vincent Kim and Hamza Lodhia. (Photo by L. Brian Stauffer)

mass murder of unarmed South Vietnamese civilians by U.S. troops in Sơn Tịnh District, South Vietnam, on 16 March 1968). They said they wanted to emphasize the idea of justice being served, no matter the cost, and ties of brotherhood and kinship.

“We were exploring the theme of someone doing something bad because he believed he was making up for something, and also his self-doubt, because no matter what (another soldier) did, they were still brothers in arms and that doesn’t go away,” Oscar Serlin said.

In the play, Orestes is acquitted and not punished. “We decided to update it so Orestes is punished in the end,” Max Serlin said. “The values in ancient Greece were much different—‘help your friends, hurt your enemies.’”

Tzanetou said the group’s adaptation was outstanding in its depth and level of sophistication. “They didn’t just find a corresponding story, they thought very deeply about the themes.”

Tzanetou said she plans to publish the adaptation in the journal *Illinois Classical Studies*, which is published by the University of Illinois Press.

Other adaptations by students in the class used “Trojan Women” to explore the persecution of the Rohingya people in Myanmar and the fate of women living under Taliban rule in Afghanistan, and “Hecuba,” also by Euripides, to look at the oppression of women during the Bosnian war.

“One doesn’t have to have lived through war trauma or displacement trauma to feel these things,” Tzanetou said. “These things really touched the students, and it came out through their performances. It opens you up to be a better listener to other people and it makes you feel at home with Greek tragedy.”

Tzanetou ended the class on a lighter note, with a study of Aristophanes’ comedy “Lysistrata,” about Greek women uniting for a sex strike in order to put an end to war. ☞

To learn more about this topic, Professor Tzanetou recommends Jonathan Shay’s *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character*, New York: Scribner, 1994.

SLCL IN THE CLASSROOM

Linguistics course in Hittite offers glimpse of Bronze Age language, technology

By Jodi Heckel

This past fall semester linguistics professor **Ryan Shosted** offered a class in Hittite, an extinct language that no one speaks.

“I did it partly because it’s so impractical,” he explained. “I think there should still be space at the university for studying things that are impractical, simply because they are interesting and open up a new world to your students.”

Hittite was used in the Bronze Age by people living in what is now Turkey. Hittite is an Indo-European language, from the same family as Russian, English, Irish and Hindi.

The students in Shosted’s class studied ancient texts and learned basic vocabulary and language structure, how to read and write Hittite in cuneiform as well as in the Roman alphabet, and about Hittite culture. They translated texts about a priest floating a model boat down a river to cast away evil, and learned about the ritual sacrifice of a sheep.

Daniel Stelzer, who’s majoring in linguistics and computer science, explained, “Linguistics is all about studying the mental structures of languages, the rules that native speakers know subconsciously, and with a language like Hittite, those structures are entirely gone.

“It’s like a puzzle, trying to piece together what we can figure out from the scraps and fragments that survived.”

Studying this language is a way for students to apply their linguistic knowledge to a difficult problem, Shosted said, and it helps them to better understand how a family of languages developed and evolved.

The course provides a mixture of 21st-century and Bronze Age technology. Many of the assignments were delivered online, but in class, the students worked together on translation and grammatical exercises and practiced how to press cuneiform symbols into clay. They took photos of their works in clay and uploaded the photos to an open-source learning platform.

“A hallmark feature of the class is giving students the opportunity to write in clay and have the Bronze Age experience to write how the Hittite scribes wrote,” Shosted said. “I think of it as half art class. I wanted them to make beautiful tablets, and I wanted them to look right.”

Cuneiform was used for the Hittite language, as well as Sumerian, Akkadian and others. It consists of wedge-shaped marks positioned vertically, horizontally or diagonally, as well as a hook-shaped mark that does not have a tail as the others do. Various marks positioned together form the characters of the language.

“The page is full of triangles of various shapes,” said Genevieve Scheele, a graduate student in classics who took the Hittite course. “It’s not my favorite writing system. It’s difficult to make and to read, because there are so many characters that look alike.”

Learning cuneiform drew her to the class, though. She said after learning to write in Hittite, she’d add the Sumerian and Akkadian languages.

“I’m a dead languages nerd,” Scheele said. “I’m particularly interested in historical linguistics. I came to classics from religion, doing biblical studies, so Hittite is pertinent to Indo-European languages and other studies with ancient near-Eastern cultures.



A student writes in Hittite using cuneiform symbols pressed into clay. The University of Illinois linguistics department offered a course in Hittite for the first time this past fall. Photo by L. Brian Stauffer

“It’s not the first ancient language course I’ve taken, but it’s the first I’ve taken that deals with reading tablets,” she said.

Scheele is interested in linguistic epistemology—the relationship between language and how we think, or why language is the way it is. She’s taken courses in Japanese and Hebrew, but she finds Hittite particularly formidable.

“It’s an interesting challenge for me, learning a new writing system,” Scheele said. “With Japanese, even though there are thousands of characters, there’s a system to it that makes sense. With Hebrew, there’s a system that makes sense. So far with cuneiform, there’s no system that makes sense. It challenges me because it doesn’t fit the models I know.”

Stelzer said there’s a natural connection between linguistics and computer science, but particularly so with a language such as Hittite, as both have the aspect of a puzzle—analyzing available data and piecing together the hidden rules behind a system. Stelzer is interested in finding ways for computers to better understand and use languages. When he wanted to make a meme with some text in cuneiform, he encountered only one font with Hittite symbols that was difficult to use.

To avoid accessibility issues for students who might not be able to see the font on their computers, Shosted did the tedious work of making assignments by positioning vector graphics of each symbol individually. Then Stelzer wrote a computer program to automatically convert a line of alphabetic text into a single image filled with the equivalent cuneiform symbols.

But Stelzer said he also enjoys working with the clay to write in the same way Hittites did during the Bronze Age. “It’s a wonderful break from what I spend the rest of my week doing,” he observed. ☞

To learn more about Hittite, Professor Shosted recommends Trevor Bryce’s *Life and Society in the Hittite World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

SLCL STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Elena Wilson combines her studies and research with a devotion to service

When she was only in middle school in Rockford Ill.,

Elena Wilson spent several weekends a year helping out at soup kitchens and donating time to other service organizations. By high school, her circle of service grew, as she traveled to different Midwestern states to help people far from home.

When Wilson came to the University of Illinois, she wanted to continue helping people, so she pitched in with several service efforts in the Champaign community.

At a ceremony held in November, Wilson was named a recipient of the Lincoln Academy Student Laureate Award, given to a senior at the U of I through the Chancellor's Honors Program. As deemed by the Lincoln Academy, a nonprofit organization that administers the Order of Lincoln Award, recipients have demonstrated exceptional attributes in leadership with the desire to make a difference in the world.

Each year the award is presented to one student from each four-year degree-granting institution of higher learning in Illinois, as well as one student from the state's community colleges.

While earning dual degrees in molecular and cellular biology and **Germanic languages and literatures** (with a concentration in culture and literature), Wilson has been involved in a number of different service organizations, including Young Life and Illini Screening Society. Wilson has also been a student volunteer at Carle Hospital, Champaign County Christian Health Center, the HeRMES Multicultural Clinic, and is an active LAS James Scholar member.

Despite her busy class schedule, Wilson has continued her volunteer efforts, spending almost as much time volunteering as she does in class, she said.

Wilson became involved with Young Life her freshman year and is now a leader. The group leads Bible studies and mentoring events with local high school students in the area. Each summer they take the kids to a summer camp.

"I got hooked onto that community really early on," she said. "And then as I started figuring out my interests, I became more aware of other service organizations."

That's when Wilson became involved with Illini Medical Screening Society, an organization that sends members into to the community to do health screenings. As her interest in health care grew, Wilson began volunteering at Carle Hospital, where she worked with nurses or technicians and learned the various roles of the hospital.

In addition, Wilson said that Volunteering at the Champaign County Christian Health Center and the HeRMES Multicultural Clinicas allowed her to interact with underinsured and uninsured

populations. That experience has motivated her to become more involved in health policy and advocacy.

Wilson is also actively involved with research. She works in the Carl R. Woese Institute for Genomic Biology researching the mechanisms of kidney stones in hopes of identifying better treatments. She also works on independent research within the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, analyzing Holocaust literature.

Wilson said that the award is a reminder that her civic engagement, academics, and research are recognized and noted. "It's like a pat on the back," Wilson said.

"If anything, it's just motivating for me to continue doing what I'm doing," Wilson said. "It's great to be recognized, but I totally recognize there are many more people on this campus that maybe do more than me. We're all part of a giant team working together to make things better for the community."

Kate Krueger, director of the LAS Honors program, nominated Wilson for the award. As soon as she read the qualifications for the award, Krueger said, she thought of Wilson because she is highly involved on campus and exemplifies academic achievement.

"It seemed like a no-brainer to me that she should have won," Krueger said. "She's managed to figure out a way to succeed and really accomplish what she wants to

accomplish and to grow while she's here—and that's really exciting."

Robert Jenkins, visiting assistant professor of Germanic languages and literatures, and former undergraduate advisor for the department, commented, "Learning of Elena's award isn't surprising to anyone who knows her or has had her in class. She's an exceptional student and a role model for students who wish to be involved in many different things. She really knows how to manage her time and she's continually seeking to broaden her horizon of experience."

In 2018, for example, she won a prestigious award from the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures to study abroad in Vienna, Austria for a semester. "This is the kind of thing that marks her character," Jenkins commented.

Wilson reflected that the past four years as an undergraduate dedicated to service has allowed her to successfully align her priorities with a strong set of beliefs. Despite her busy schedule, she insists she gets eight hours of sleep every night. Ever since middle school in Rockford, she added, has motivated her to continue helping people—in whatever path she chooses after graduation. 🌀



Elena Wilson has received the Lincoln Academy Student Laureate Award. (Photo courtesy of Elena Wilson.)

NEWS BRIEFS

Professor Mara Wade, Germanic Languages and Literatures, to become president of world's largest Renaissance society



Mara Wade, professor of Germanic languages and literatures, will become the 41st president of the Renaissance Society of America (RSA) in April.

The Renaissance Society of America is the largest international academic society devoted to the study of the era 1300–1700. Founded in 1954, the RSA has approximately 5,000 members around the country and the world.

Professor Wade has been attending the RSA for decades and said that she has enjoyed watching it mature into a world-class scholarly organization. “It’s an increasingly diverse organization which welcomes innovative scholarship,” she said, adding, “We welcome innovative approaches and global perspectives.”

Professor Wade’s research interests lie in visual culture, with particular emphasis on emblematica; digital humanities, court studies, gender studies, early modern literature and culture of German-speaking lands and Scandinavia. ☞

Professor Eric Calderwood keeps adding awards for his book *Colonial al-Andalus*



Eric Calderwood, associate professor of comparative and world literature, keeps piling up awards for his book, *Colonial al-Andalus: Spain and the Making of Modern Moroccan Culture* (Harvard University Press 2018).

Colonial al-Andalus won the L. Carl Brown AIMS Book Prize, awarded annually to the outstanding book in the area of North African Studies.

In November the book also received honorable mention for the Nikki Keddie Book Award from the Middle East Studies Association. This prize recognizes outstanding scholarly work in the area of religion, revolution, and society.

And in February, Calderwood was awarded the Laura Shannon Prize Silver Medal for *Colonial al-Andalus*. The Laura Shannon Prize, one of the preeminent prizes for European studies, is awarded annually to the best book in European studies that transcends a focus on any one country, state or people to stimulate new ways of thinking about contemporary Europe.

Colonial al-Andalus has been translated into Spanish as *Al Andalus en Marruecos* (Almuzara 2019): almuzaralibros.com/fichalibro.php?libro=4354&cedi=1.

In addition to the awards for his outstanding book, Calderwood also has been selected a CAS (Center for Advanced Study) Fellow for next year. That award will support the work on his second book, tentatively titled *The Invention of al-Andalus* (under contract with Harvard University Press). ☞

Dr. Florencia Henshaw, Spanish and Portuguese, receives LAS Academic Professional Award and two other honors

Dr. Florencia Henshaw of the Department Spanish and Portuguese, has been named a recipient of the 2019 LAS Academic Professional Award.

The LAS Academic Professional Award honors selected academic professionals for their outstanding contributions to their home unit,



the College, and the entire campus by advancing the mission of teaching, research, and public service of the U of I.

She also was selected as one of the six members of the Editorial Advisory Board for “The Language Educator,” a publication of the American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Mariselle Meléndez, professor and head of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, stated, “This is a great honor, as ACTFL is the premier platform for language pedagogy and its impact in this area is nationally and internationally recognized.”

In addition, Henshaw received the highly competitive Conference Attendee Travel Stipend award for the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP) 2020 Annual Conference, scheduled for July 9-12 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. She also has been elected vice president of the Downstate Illinois Chapter of the AATSP. ☞

Professor Harriet Murav named to professorship of Global and Transnational Studies at Illinois



Harriet Murav, professor of Slavic languages and literatures, and comparative and world literature, has been named the Catherine and Bruce Bastian Professor of Global and Transnational Studies.

Murav is the editor of *The Slavic Review*, an international interdisciplinary journal devoted to the study of Eastern Europe, Russia, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. Murav also is a Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies Faculty member and is on the faculty of the Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center at Illinois.

The professorship is funded by the estate of Bruce A. Bastian, a 1954 graduate of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (LAS). Mr. Bastian, who died in 2002, stipulated in his will that no more than half of the net income would be used to endow one faculty position in the College of LAS. The remaining net income would be used to provide financial need-based undergraduate scholarships for enrolled students and for graduate student fellowships.

The income from the estate is used to support global and transnational studies in LAS as part of the campus initiative on the humanities in a globalizing world. ☞

Professor Mariselle Meléndez named to UI President’s Executive Leadership Program



Mariselle Meléndez, professor and head of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, has been selected by U of I President Killeen to be a member of the President’s Executive Leadership Program (PELP).

PELP aims to leadership skills related to overseeing a public institution at the university or system level. Consisting of four seminars held during a 12-month period, the program aims to broaden participants’ understanding of higher education issues and to strengthen their skills in leading and managing a public institution at the university or system level.

For this extremely competitive program, participants were chosen for their outstanding professional trajectories, leadership skills and potential to engage with the issues of higher education at the state and national level. As the only humanities professor that was chosen

by President Killeen, Meléndez will have the opportunity to travel to Springfield, Chicago, and Washington, where she will network with private and public officials, including representatives of federal granting agencies. ☞

Professor Antony Augoustakis named University Scholar and publishes new book



In September, **Antony Augoustakis**, professor and head of the Department of the Classics, was one of two professors in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences named University Scholars in recognition of their excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service.

“The University Scholars program honors the best of the best, showcasing the phenomenal research and teaching that transform students’ lives and drive progress for our state and nation,” said Barbara Wilson, the executive vice president and vice president for academic affairs for the U of I System.

Augoustakis, the only humanities professor receiving the award this year, was recognized for his wide-ranging scholarship, which has received international recognition. His interests encompass from philology and women and gender studies, to comparative literature, history, linguistics, literary theory, and cultural studies.

In September, Augoustakis published a new book he co-edited with Emma Buckley (St. Andrews), and Claire Stocks (Newcastle), titled, *Fides in Flavian Literature* (University of Toronto Press). Contributors explore the ideology of “good faith” (fides) during the time of the emperors Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian (69–96 CE), the new imperial dynasty that gained power in the wake of the civil wars of the period. For more about the book: utorontopress.com/ca/fides-in-flavian-literature-2 ☞

Vincent Cervantes receives LAS award as outstanding assistant professor



Vincent Cervantes, assistant professor of Spanish and Portuguese, is a recipient of the 2019 LEAP Award (Lincoln Excellence for Assistant Professors), an honor granted to faculty early in their career based on scholarly productivity and contributions to the educational mission of their departments and the College of LAS. He will hold the title of LEAP Scholar for two years.

Cervantes joined Illinois after completing his PhD in Spanish and Latin American Studies at the University of Southern California. He already has four publications, including two in his first year and a half at Illinois, and he has several others in progress, including a book a book entitled, *A Body Exposed: The Aesthetics of Sex, Death, and Mexicanness*.

The competitive LEAP award was created as a way to foster excellence and recognize the impact assistant professors have in the College of LAS. ☞

Professor David Cooper named LAS Humanities Scholar, publishes award-winning book



David Cooper, associate professor of Slavic languages and literatures, has been named a Conrad Humanities Scholar for the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (LAS) for 2019-2024.

The Conrad Humanities Scholar designation was created to recognize mid-career scholars with the highest potential for continued achievement in the humanities field, and to help

Illinois retain these particularly talented individuals.

Professor Cooper has also received recognition for his translations, one of his areas of expertise. The American Association for Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL) awarded him its 2019 Prize for Best Scholarly Translation for his book *The Queen’s Court and Green Mountain Manuscripts With Other Forgeries of the Czech Revival*. Cooper edited and translated the book, which was published in 2018 by Michigan Slavic Publications.

In describing the basis for Cooper’s award, the AATSEEL wrote: “In both the quality of these English translations and the judicious arrangement of the scholarly apparatus that accompanies them, David Cooper has provided an exciting, multifaceted work: a sourcebook of materials from a key episode in Czech literary history, an illustrated reflection on the nature of Romantic forgery, and an inviting presentation of poems whose value demands to be read beyond their bizarre origin”. ☞

Raquel Goebel receives partnership grant for best practices in language instruction



Raquel Goebel, director of the Portuguese Language Program in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, is the recipient of “The Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTL) Partnership grant”. The grant will help Goebel and her colleagues develop a model that reflects best practices in online proficiency-oriented instruction.

The grant is funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and housed at the Center for Language Teaching Advancement (CeLTA) at Michigan State University. Goebel will collaborate with colleagues from Michigan State and the University of Chicago in developing an online model of LCTL instruction that reflects best practices in proficiency-oriented instruction. The project includes research in LCTL proficiency assessment, goal setting, curricular and technological innovations, and teacher education and professional development.

The project is a cross-university initiative within the Big Ten Academic Alliance, the nation’s preeminent model for effective collaboration among research universities. ☞

Italian Talent Show amazes for third straight year

The Italian Program (Department of French and Italian) continued its new tradition of (really stunning) talent shows prepared by its graduate and undergraduate students. At the end of fall semester, the department presented its third talent show at the Illini Union Courtyard Cafe before more than 150 spectators. For two hours, 45 student artists from several Italian undergraduate courses performed Italian poetry, Italian operas, songs of musica leggera, and an Italian dramatization of “The Little Prince.” The show ended with all the students and the public singing together “L’italiano.” During the intermission Professor Nora Stoppino distributed academic awards for the best minors and majors for 2019. The winners received tickets for an Italian performance at the Krannert Center. ☞



Xochitl Cisneros performs as The Little Prince (Il Piccolo Principe) and Joseph Bleyer as The Vain Man (Il Vanitoso) during the Italian Talent Show. Both students were enrolled in the Italian Grammar course 210 during fall semester.

SLCL CAMPUS OUTREACH

‘Quad Day for the Humanities’: SLCL co-hosts first-ever Humanities Expo

Kristin Wilcox, the director of the Humanities Professional Resource Center, wanted to do something to highlight the humanities on the U of I campus, so she contacted Zach Reed, academic advisor for the School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics. Together they began putting together what would become the first-ever Humanities Expo, which took place in the Foreign Languages Building on Sept. 6.

Nearly 50 registered student organizations and academic units set up booths and tables for students to learn about majors, careers, and other opportunities for those interested in the humanities disciplines. Presenters at the expo included everyone from campus institutions, such as the Spurlock and the Siebel Center for Design, to student clubs, such as Books 2 Prisoners and Students for the Study of Religion.

The Humanities Professional Resource Center is a newly created program to offer career advising and opportunities for students studying humanities. Wilcox said the expo will be a yearly event to give students an opportunity to see and understand the humanities programs that are available to them on campus.

“Humanities degrees give you a lot of useful tools that can be applied in different ways,” she said. “The Humanities Professional Resource Center is there to help students figure out what it is they want to build their skills in and how they want to use them.”

The Foreign Languages Building, home to the School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics, which calls itself “The Gateway to a Global Learning Experience,” was the natural choice for the host site, said



Reed. “Being a part of SLCL, I wanted students to realize how broad and dynamic a humanities degree can be,” he said. “With the Humanities Expo, students get an opportunity to explore different degree programs and registered student organizations, talk with academic advisors and coordinators, and find information on the various support services the University provides on campus.”

Wilcox pointed out, for example, said every industry needs people who can solve problems with words and critical reasoning—which is exactly what many humanities disciplines are well-suited for.

“It makes sense for students to major in the area of the humanities that interests them most, because they’ll all develop similar capacities in writing, language, communication, and building relationships,” Wilcox said.