

# SCHOOL OF LITERATURES CULTURES AND LINGUISTICS

A NEWSLETTER COVERING THE

DEPARTMENT OF THE CLASSICS

PROGRAM IN COMPARATIVE AND WORLD LITERATURE

DEPARTMENT OF EAST ASIAN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH

DEPARTMENT OF GERMANIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION

DEPARTMENT OF SLAVIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

AND DEPARTMENT OF SPANISH, ITALIAN, AND PORTUGUESE

SPRING 2013

## NEW COURSE ON SUSTAINABILITY PULLS CAMPUS TOGETHER TO STUDY ENVIRONMENT

A new nine-week series of presentations and discussions about the environment is reaching across the U of I campus during Spring 2013, involving students, community members and even a Nobel Peace Prize winner.

Titled the “Campus Series on the Scholarship of Sustainability,” meetings are held on campus every Thursday, through April 4.

Three courses are being offered as part of this initiative: the School of Law’s LAW 792JJ “Current Legal Problems,” the School of Earth, Society and Environment’s ESE 311 “Environmental Issues Today,” the Department of Religion’s RLST 270 “Religion, Ethics, Environment,” taught by Professor Robert McKim, a member of the organizing committee for this series of events. The series leader is Eric T. Freyfogle, Swanlund Chair and professor of law.

The series’ stated goal is to “explore the cultural contexts of contemporary environmental problems, beginning with a recognition that human behavior underlies all problems and that behaviors are complexly linked with cultural patterns and the social institutions based on them.”

“Religion, Ethics, Environment” ties directly into this goal, says McKim, by viewing fundamental questions of humans in nature such as these. What it is to live well on the planet? What do we owe to future generations? Is our planet for human



beings, with everything else—including all other species—best understood as part of the backdrop to the human drama, and important only if they are important to us? Is economic development more important than protecting nature? What is the relationship between caring about individual animals and caring about entire ecosystems?

“Fundamentally these are questions about values and about what’s important,” he says, adding that religious world views “have a profound bearing on what people think about all of these issues and questions.”

McKim has 32 students in his class “from an amazing array of majors and minors.”

The weekly presentations also offer an amazing array of speakers, including Donald J. Wuebbles, the Harry E. Preble Professor of Atmospheric Science at the U of I, and a co-recipient of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize; Carolyn Raffensperger, executive director of the Science and Environmental Health Network; Dr. Antwi Akom,

founding director of the Institute for Sustainable Economic, Educational, and Environmental Design and associate professor of environmental sociology, public health, and STEM education at San Francisco State University; and John Baird Callicott, who McKim terms “the most famous living environmental philosopher.”

McKim also is incorporating into his research his involvement with the series. He’s current writing essays on the capacity of religions to provide leadership and guidance “in this ongoing global predicament,” and in challenging religions to do better (as regards the environment).

McKim notes that this is a different research area from his previous book, *Religious Diversity* (paperback, Oxford University Press, 2012), in which he distinguishes and examines a number of possible responses to the knowledge of diverse religious traditions that are available to everyone today.

The Sustainability Series is sponsored by the Center for a Sustainable Environment with co-sponsorship from the School of Earth, Society, and Environment; the College of Law; and the School of Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics.

To learn more about the series, including viewing its reading list, go to: [sustainability.illinois.edu/Scholarship1.html](http://sustainability.illinois.edu/Scholarship1.html).

### Like Us on Facebook

The School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics is now on Facebook! Find us at [www.facebook.com/slcl.illinois](http://www.facebook.com/slcl.illinois) to get updates.

### 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; 3) **the Frances E. Smith Scheidel Scholarships** for undergraduate students in Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics; or 4) **SLCL departments or programs**. Your gift is most appreciated! Visit our website, [www.slcl.illinois.edu](http://www.slcl.illinois.edu) and click "Give to SLCL" in the upper right-hand corner.

### Check out Our Website

We also have a new look on our School webpage, which now includes a Calendar of Events, Announcements, a Feature News section, and our own Facebook page. Please visit us online at [www.slcl.illinois.edu](http://www.slcl.illinois.edu) to find out what's happening in SLCL!

**Spring 2013**  
**School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics**  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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College of  
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AT ILLINOIS

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Many of the challenges that modern societies face require solutions that cut across traditional geographical and disciplinary boundaries. This is one of the main drivers of the increasing interest in interdisciplinary research and training within U.S. higher education institutions and abroad. It is, thus, imperative that our curricular offerings and training programs rise to the challenge and offer undergraduate and graduate students the opportunity to engage in rigorous and meaningful interdisciplinary academic endeavors. I am pleased to say that the School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics (SLCL) has made interdisciplinary engagement one of its top priorities; indeed, one of the rationales for the establishment of the school was to enable its member departments to explore curricular and research areas that can pool the strong talent in its individual programs. I would like to highlight some of the interdisciplinary initiatives and synergies that are in place or being planned.

**Computer Science and Linguistics:** The Department of Linguistics has teamed up with the Department of Computer Science in the College of Engineering to offer an undergraduate degree in computer science and linguistics. This initiative will enable students to get first-rate training in both fields and be well prepared for careers in computing and natural language. Training in linguistics will offer insights into the diversity of human languages in all their richness and complexity.

**MA in Translation Studies:** Thanks to the efforts of the Center for Translation Studies, the professional MA in translation studies is now accepting applications. The center is an interdisciplinary program in SLCL and draws on the faculty talent of its departments.

**PhD Concentration in Romance Linguistics:** The Departments of French, Linguistics, and Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese have launched a PhD concentration in romance linguistics which will make available to students the resources and faculty expertise in various areas of linguistics, particularly phonetics, sociolinguistics, syntax, second language acquisition, and computational linguistics.

**Mediterranean Studies Initiative:** Jean-Philippe Mathy, director of the Program in Comparative and World Literature and professor of French, is leading an initiative in Mediterranean studies involving students and faculty from various departments in the School. Earlier in Spring 2013, two graduate students, Ashley DiGregorio and Elyse Longiotti, spearheaded the effort to organize "Real and Imaginary Borders across the Mediterranean," an interdisciplinary conference. Plans are under discussion to explore long-term curricular offerings in Mediterranean studies, focusing on the long history of the interaction between the peoples that have lived on the shore of the vast Mediterranean Sea, and on the modern challenges faced by this vital region where major world civilizations converge.

**Research Laboratories:** SLCL is in the process of upgrading and expanding its language research laboratories. In addition to the phonetics and second language acquisition laboratories, two new laboratories will be launched within the new few months: a Neurolinguistics Laboratory and a Discourse Social Interaction and Translation Laboratory. These laboratories will have state-of-the-art equipment and will hold periodic training sessions and workshops for SLCL students and faculty.

There are of course numerous other interdisciplinary initiatives that SLCL continues to explore. The main criteria for such initiatives are the academic needs of the students we serve, rigor, excellence, and long-term sustainability. We see these interdisciplinary initiatives as complementary to disciplinary training and research. The latter offer depth and focused knowledge, and the former allow that knowledge to be put to greater use with the potential for bigger impact.

Abbas Benmamoun

## LINGUISTICS ALUMNA YUANCHENG TU ON THE CUTTING EDGE IN WORK AT MICROSOFT

If you find yourself talking to electronic products, like Siri or an Xbox, you're using technology developed by software development engineers—like Yuancheng Tu, a 2012 PhD graduate in linguistics.

Tu works for Microsoft in Bellevue, Wash., as part of a speech core team that currently belongs to the company's Information Platform & Experience (IPE) branch.

A software development engineer uses computer languages, such as C# or Java to develop, implement, and deploy software applications. Such applications can be small, such as the one in your mobile phone that shows you what's happening with highway traffic, or large, such as an entire Windows operation system.

Tu's "big team" concentrates on building automatic speech recognition-related applications. In lay terms, for example, talking to your phone browser (instead of typing) to conduct searches or using your own voice to control your Xbox360 game station.

"We're trying to help computers to communicate with humans in a more natural way," she says, "for example, touching and speaking instead of typing."

Her daily work includes monitoring the performance of speech-related applications, testing and validating the accuracy of newly developed models, and discovering potential problems encountered while trying to improve current services and applications.

Her journey into this field was shaped during her experience as a PhD student at the University of Illinois, in particular under the guidance of her advisor, Dan Roth. "Dan and I started to collaborate around 2003 and he was my co-advisor at that time." (C-C Cheng from linguistics, now retired, was another of her advisors for her at that time.)

"Later, I slowed down on a lot of my research for family reasons." She rejoined the program in 2007 and Dan was her formal (and only) advisor until her graduation in 2012.

"During my journey at the University of Illinois, many wonderful professors and friends



*Yuancheng Tu (PhD '12, linguistics) is a software development engineer for Microsoft, in Bellevue, Wash.*

from CS [computer science] and linguistics helped me all the way through."

"Dan is a wonderful advisor to work with," says Tu. "He supported me all the way in my PhD journey with his wisdom, patience, and kindness. He is so knowledgeable, but humble! And he has a very open mind for novel ideas, which to me is so very precious as an advisor."

Tu's current colleagues at Microsoft include several groups of LM (Language Model) and AM (Acoustic Model) scientists, as well as run-time and analysis engineers for speech recognition and synthesis. She belongs to the analysis team. "We work together to deliver cutting-edge speech technology," including SR (Speech Recognition), VS (Voice Search) and SMD (Short Message Dictation) for many MS products, such as Xbox, Windows phones, Office, and Windows.

One member of her group is Shiunzu Kuo, a 2001 linguistics alumna who also has a PhD from Illinois and who has the same title as Tu.

As already noted, much of this technology is already in the marketplace. For example, a Windows phone provides voice search and short message dictation. And the voice control system

in the Xbox game station is a striking feature that's much loved by its worldwide users.

"If you've ever played Xbox360, you might try the voice control system to control your game console," she says. "You may say to your Xbox, 'Xbox, play a movie.' Your Xbox will open your movie theater and give you a list of movies. Then you say, 'The Life of Pi,' and your Xbox starts to play that movie."

Speech recognition means the computer "understands" what the human says, and then either acts upon it or starts a conversation with the human, according to Tu.

"We are equipping the machine with the capability (or the intelligence) to 'parse' our human speech and then respond to what we say—or have a conversation with us as human to human," she notes.

Of course, most consumers simply use these products and don't think about the technology that goes into developing them. That's the job of dedicated scientists like Tu and Kuo, who are at work right now on the next wave of software development.



## EALC/RELIGION PROFESSOR HAS EXCLUSIVE ACCESS TO JAPANESE MONASTIC COLLECTION

In 2002 Professor Brian Ruppert decided his next project would be the history of scripture in Japanese Buddhism.

Ruppert, associate professor of East Asian languages and cultures (EALC) and religion, didn't realize at that time that Japan has what's considered the largest manuscript collections in the world—or that he would become the only Westerner with access to them.

The Buddhism project entailed the history of the so-called sacred works (shōgyō) that developed in the varied lineages of Japanese Buddhism. In 2001-2002, thanks, in part, to the support of his colleague in EALC, Professor Emeritus Ron Toby, Ruppert had the opportunity to work on staff at what he calls “the mecca” of Japanese historical research in the world, the Historiographical Institute of the University of Tokyo.

Ruppert, author of *Jewel in the Ashes: Buddha Relics and Power in Early Japan* (Harvard U. Asia Center) and of the forthcoming co-written *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism*, pointed out that Japan has what is thought to be the largest manuscript collections in the world—“the only comparable collections being those of the French and of the Medici in Italy, from what I understand.”

How large? Apparently the largest monastic collection in Japan is that at Daigoji near Kyoto, where there are 800 boxes, containing almost 16,500 documents and sacred works. Just the cataloging and photographing of the collection has taken research groups over a century to complete. However, it's extremely difficult to get in to see what's in the collection. Even the completed catalog is prohibited from public viewing.

Having entered Daigoji a few times, Ruppert has been fortunate to gain access to a series of other temple collections. “First and foremost it's the oldest of the imperial monasteries in Japan, with what is thought by some scholars to be the most valuable collection in Japan.” Ruppert calls it “Imperial monastery N,” which was founded

in the late 9th century and features a very large manuscript collection of more than 300 boxes.

He has been regularly going to Imperial monastery N for four years and has taken photographs of manuscripts that vary between 300 and 940 years old.

How is that Ruppert gained access and permission—the first non-Japanese to receive this kind of access to a major pre-modern monastic collection in Japan?



Professor Brian Ruppert views manuscripts from a Japanese monastic collection.

“It's ultimately a process of gaining the trust of people and their institution,” he says. He was a visiting scholar at an institute in Japan in 2007-2008, and he contacted Japanese colleagues who were part of a research group that went to Imperial monastery N regularly. He was invited to come along with them, so long as he also contacted the monastery and filled out a request form. He made it clear that he would ask them for permission again before he ever published a printed version or a photograph of anything he saw.

Ruppert explained that the only way to know what's in that collection is to look at the one site on Earth where the near-30 volume handwritten catalog is held—a research institute in the Kansai region of Japan. “There, I would go for two to three days each year for several years to hand-copy the titles—I even skipped lunch every time—and catalog numbers of the works that I thought were pertinent to my research.

“Then, fortunately, I gained the trust of the official at the institute enough that I was able to

acquire more access to the catalog itself, and now I know the basic contents of the more than 300 boxes.”

Ruppert says he plans to publish a book in the next year or two, as he knows his access to these priceless records will not go on indefinitely.

But ultimately, he says the exciting part is sitting alone with a series of ritual manuscripts—“their little booklets with, in some cases, substantial bookworm holes”—that date from the late 1060s. “That's almost two centuries before the Magna Carta was promulgated!” he exclaims.

“For a scholar who grew up as a kid in Ohio, it's quite a bizarre feeling.”

On the other hand, he adds, “It's the Fort Knox among Fort Knoxes!”

One of the most exciting moments he had was when he asked for a manuscript just titled “catalog,” which was a catalog of a particular cloister within Imperial monastery N, and which the official handwritten catalog said was probably from around the 16th century. Ruppert was looking for manuscripts related to a particular monk he's studying, and he realized not only was it clearly dated to 1524, but that the same monk was the author!

“It was such a ‘Eureka!’ moment,” he recounts. “With just a catalog such as the one I found, we can know about the world of knowledge and culture of learning that these monks shared with the people of the court and the capital. I would call it part of our world heritage of culture and learning, a treasure trove of human creativity and religiosity.

“At the end of the day, gaining access to this culture of learning is all about a combination of trained expertise, social skills, and the care to gain people's trust,” he says. “And it's essential that you be a person who's not physically clumsy, because when you're handling these kinds of materials it's important that you both appear to be and are exceedingly careful.”

Ruppert obviously has the knack, on many levels, and for that we can look forward to his book on these singular records.



Konan University

# THE YEAR-IN-JAPAN PROGRAM: IMMERSION IN LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND LIFE

By Rick Partin, Editor

**M**arcin Michniowski went on the Year-in-Japan Program from September 2011 to May 2012, but it took time for him to realize that Japanese culture could be very different from his own.

Michniowski's Japanese host mother had mentioned her surprise at how late he stayed up to do his homework. "I didn't think much of it at first," he recalls now, "but over a month's time she began commenting on household energy consumption.

"Slowly I began to put two and two together and realize that she was politely asking me to stop wasting electricity," said Michniowski, last year a junior from Chicago, majoring in political science and East Asian languages and cultures.



Caroline Brown with her host mother, Chizue Shinjo, whom she simply called "Okaasan" ("Mom"). Caroline credits long talks with Okaasan as the basis for her language learning while on the program.

He explains, "Confrontation in Japan is undesirable and so people go to roundabout ways to tell you something or to ask you to stop a certain behavior."

Learning in any overseas study program has many dimensions, and the U of I's Year-in-Japan program is no exception.

The Year-in-Japan Program, administered by the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures (EALC) for a consortium of American universities, offers advanced undergraduates the opportunity to spend an academic year developing Japanese language skills and expanding their knowledge of Japan through a variety of courses. Students live with host families.

Established in 1976, the program takes place on the campus of Konan University, situated in a suburban district of Kobe, a port city and the sixth largest city in Japan (pop. 1.5 million). Kobe is located in the Kansai area, the middle of Japan, which includes Kyoto, Nara, and Osaka.

The academic program is designed to develop language skills and knowledge of Japanese society and culture. During each 15-week semester, students take intensive language training and two courses in Japanese studies.

The Japanese language program emphasizes the development of speaking and reading skills. The Japanese language teachers are native speakers with graduate training in Japanese linguistics or the teaching of Japanese as a second language.

As a program of EALC, courses are given full U of I academic credit. Registration in the program is counted toward the U of I's residency requirement for its students.

Students may also have the opportunity to take independent study and go on program-sponsored field trips. The trips were a highlight for anthropology major Caroline Brown of Champaign, Ill. Last year, as a junior, she participated in the program.

"I'm really glad they included the trips they did, which included Hiroshima and Miyajima," Brown said. "Miyajima has a famous torii gate with two full tree trunks as the poles of the gate: it's a beautiful sight to see."

Faculty for the Japanese studies courses are selected from the faculty of Konan University and from American scholars living in Japan. This year the on-site director is Elizabeth Oyler, associate professor of Japanese, Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures, and the Program for Medieval Studies. She's also on leave this year as director of the Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies (CEAPS). She oversees academic, student, and administrative matters for the consortium. Last year the director was



Ikuta Shrine in Kobe, Japan.

Professor Robert Tierney of EALC.

Marcin and Caroline both valued their communication with Tierney last year. "We would all chat about the sensation of being a foreigner in Japan, and Professor Tierney

was very receptive to such conversations," said Caroline.

Marcin added, "Every time I had a question about Japanese culture or advice on how something is done in Japan, I could always talk with him."

To help facilitate students who may not speak Japanese fluently, the program also offers the Joint Seminar, in which students from the U.S. can take classes with Japanese students. Topics offered in the seminar also promote discussions and American students' understanding of Japanese culture.

Marcin said the Joint Seminar was as a place where American students could get a multi-cultural perspective on issues affecting Japan and the rest of the world. "It was also a great place to meet and make new friends (from many countries)," he added.

Both Marcin and Caroline reflected on how important the host family was to their acculturation and language development. Caroline said, "My host mother would talk with me for hours on end, and that was the real base of my language learning. We would talk only in Japanese."

Marcin noted, "My host family was absolutely fantastic! They were exceptionally kind to me and treated me like their own."

He added that living in Japan was a very different experience from anything that he had previously done. "It really allowed me to explore what I thought I knew about myself and challenge my beliefs. I would do it again in a heartbeat!"

Marcin and Caroline both said they loved the program, and recommend the experience highly.

To learn more about the Year-in-Japan program, visit its website: [yij.ealc.illinois.edu](http://yij.ealc.illinois.edu).

## NEWS BRIEFS

### INTERDISCIPLINARY SYMPOSIUM EXPLORES ROLES OF EMOTIONS IN CULTURE AND SOCIETY

An interdisciplinary symposium, "Resentment's Conflicts," co-organized by the Department of Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese (SIP) (L. Elena Delgado) and IPRH (Dianne Harris and Nancy Castro), was held on campus on October 19.

In the last decade, work in the humanities and the social sciences has been increasingly concerned with theorizing and exploring the role of emotions in culture and society.

The symposium's organizers wanted to explore how the interpretation and theorization of affective categories changes contexts.

"We decided to focus on resentment, one of the so-called 'negative' and 'anti-social' emotions and to study it precisely with an emphasis on the historical and social framework context that gave rise to it," said Delgado.

Presenters from SLCL included Mariselle Meléndez (SIP) and Anke Pinkert (Germanic Languages and Literatures). Presenters from other U of I units included: Lisa Marie Cacho, (Asian American Studies), and Colleen Murphy, (Philosophy). There were also three external speakers: Luis Martin-Cabrera (UC-San Diego); Thomas Lewis (Brown); and the keynote speaker, Professor Javier Moscoso (Institute of Philosophy of the Spanish National Research Council).

As Javier Moscoso stated in his presentation, resentment is a passion of modernity, whose first systematic treatment was provided by Adam Smith in the mid-18th century. It's also an emotion that comes about as a consequence of the new correlation in the distribution of merit—a quality that is shared fully with the "monomania of ambition." It's therefore not surprising that references to resentment increase in times of economic crisis and social upheaval, according to Delgado.

Along those lines, the symposium explored resentment largely as a conscious response to, and intervention in the world, rather than as a symptom of deficient selfhood, she added.

The papers presented at the symposium covered a broad spectrum of topics and cultural contexts: from the relationship between resentment and monomania in 19th century France (Moscoso), to the way in recent years the state of Arizona has been marshaling white resentment through attacking undocumented Mexican immigrants and ethnic studies classes that center on Mexican-American history (Cacho).

Resentment in relation to social activism and social justice in the Latin American context was explored by Mariselle Meléndez, who analyzed female participation in the Túpac Amaru Insurrection) and Thomas Lewis (contemporary proposals of liberation theology).

The relationship between politics and affect, as well as the question of class resentment, was analyzed by Luis Martin-Cabrera, while Colleen Murphy reflected on the problematic connection between resentment and political reconciliation.

Anke Pinkert, working with Michael Brawn, Jose Cabrales, and Gregory Donatelli (Education Justice Project), also delved into issues of personal and collective agency through her teacher-student account of the impact of reading Holocaust literature and testimonials in the U.S. prison system.

The symposium was co-sponsored by the School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics; the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies; and the Department of Philosophy.

To view presentations from the symposium, visit: [www.iprh.illinois.edu/multimedia](http://www.iprh.illinois.edu/multimedia).

### SWEDISH PLAYWRIGHT STRINDBERG HONORED WITH TALKS, COURSE, THEATER PRODUCTION

A series of events during the fall semester celebrated Swedish playwright August Strindberg's contributions to world literature, art, history, photography, and drama.

The U of I presented a number of events commemorating Strindberg's legacy and introduced his work to new audiences. A special Strindberg



'Chancellor and the Four Deans' (from the production of August Strindberg's *A Dream Play*: Michelle Grube, David Monahan, Nick Narcissi, Adam Thatcher, Katarina Spungen, Shawn Pereira. Photo by Elizabeth Rowe.

course, a production of the avant-garde drama *A Dream Play*, and numerous presentations and talks served as a fitting tribute, according to Anna Stenport, director of Scandinavian studies and associate professor of Germanic languages and literatures.

"Strindberg's works challenge expectations of theatre and art on many levels, and often asks uncomfortable questions about gender and class, and the series of events showcased both the complexity and the contribution of the author to world drama.

"With a sold-out production of *A Dream Play*, well-attended talks and workshops, and lots of interactions with students in a number of classes, we offered an extraordinary and fitting tribute to Strindberg during a centenary commemoration year, which featured events all around the world.

"I am very happy and proud to have seen this come together as a collaborative event across campus," she said.

Stenport taught the special Strindberg course, "The International Strindberg," and the U of I's Department of Theatre produced *A Dream Play*, which was performed repeatedly in October and November.

International and U.S. experts on Strindberg, art, performance, and modern drama came to the U of I campus to give presentations about Strindberg (1849-1912), including:

- Freddie Rokem, Tel Aviv University, on Strindberg's conception of theatrical space
- Max Truax, Chicago, director of *A Dream Play*, on visualizing Strindberg in the light of surrealist art
- Chip Sheffield, Rochester Institute of Technology, on Strindberg and the visual arts
- Kristina Hagström Ståhl, Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts, on staging Strindberg's *Miss Julie*
- Eszter Szalczér, University at Albany, *A Dream Play* reconfigured

The events were co-sponsored by the Swedish Institute, the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation, the U of I Department of Theatre, the College of Fine and Applied Arts, the Center for Advanced Studies, Program in Comparative and World Literature, Departments of English and Philosophy, and the U of I Scandinavian Program.



## IT'S NOT WHAT YOU SAY, IT'S HOW YOU SAY IT

"Experimental and Empirical Approaches to Politeness and Impoliteness," the third in a series of international conferences dedicated to Linguistic Impoliteness and Rudeness (LIAR III), took place at the Levis Faculty Center on the U of I campus from August 29-31.

Scholars from 15 countries, in addition to the U.S., traveled to Urbana for the conference, the first to be hosted in the U.S. Countries represented included Australia, Belgium, Brazil, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Japan, Mexico, Spain, Switzerland, and Turkey, making this a global, as well as interdisciplinary, conference. An estimated 130 faculty and students attended the conference.

The conference program consisted of six plenary talks and 42 regular papers, as well as five posters. The six plenary talks were streamed live by ATLAS and watched in real time by over 300 people in different parts of the world. They are now archived online and remain available to watch at the Plenary Videos link ([www.liar3.illinois.edu/html/str/](http://www.liar3.illinois.edu/html/str/)). In addition to the plenary talks, two of the presentations were given over Skype by scholars in China and India. A dedicated conference Facebook page ("Experimental and Empirical Approaches to Politeness and Impoliteness") has also been regularly updated with news about the conference and hosts conference photos.



Marina Terkourafi, associate professor of linguistics, organized the conference and was its convener.

Linguistics professors Rakesh Bhatt, Anna-Maria Escobar, Zsuzsanna Fagyal, Andrea Golato, Georgia Green, Makoto Hayashi, Tania Ionin, Numa Markee, and Rajeshwari Pandharipande served on the conference organizing committee and as session chairs, while graduate students Abdelaadim Bidaoui, Nyssa Bulkes, Matt Garley, Andrew Hinderliter, Iftikhar Haider, Amelia Kimball, Tatiana Luchkina, Kate Lyons, Tim Mahrt, and Lori Moon were the student helpers.

In addition to 10 campus sponsoring units and three corporate sponsors, the conference was awarded a competitive conference support award by the National Science Foundation (P.I. Marina Terkourafi, Co-P.I.: Kiel Christianson). This award will be primarily used to support a graduate research assistant to help in the publication of an edited volume of selected papers from the conference

by the P.I. (scheduled to appear in 2014 by John Benjamins).

## FALL SLAVIC CONFERENCE: "MEMORIES AND WARS"

The Slavic department Fall Symposium, "Memories and Wars," was held in the Levis Faculty Center on campus on September 19.

The keynote speaker was Alexander Etkind, professor, King's College, University of Cambridge. Etkind is the principal investigator of the interdisciplinary Memory at War project (see [www.memoryatwar.org](http://www.memoryatwar.org)).

SLCL presenters included Professors George Gasyna, Lilya Kaganovsky, and Judith Pintar of the Slavic department, Robert Tierney of the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures, Brett Kaplan and Jean-Philippe Mathy of the Program in Comparative and World Literature, and Carl Niekerk of the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures; the event also featured presentations from the Departments of History, Psychology, Neuroscience, and Music. View the conference flyer at [www.slavic.illinois.edu](http://www.slavic.illinois.edu).

According to Michael Finke, head and professor of Slavic languages and literatures, who organized the symposium, "We benefitted from the presence of renowned figures in the field of memory studies, such as Alexander Etkind of Cambridge and James Wertsch of Washington University; but the real value of the symposium was how it brought together colleagues from across campus, highlighting the University's remarkable strength in this cutting-edge, interdisciplinary field."

The conference was cosponsored by the Center for Advanced Study; the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures; the Program in Comparative and World Literature; the Program in Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies; the Program in Jewish Culture and Society; the Russian, East European and Eurasian Center; the School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics; and the Unit for Criticism and Interpretive Theory.

## MIDWEST LANGUAGE TESTERS ASSOCIATION MEETS AT U OF I

The Department of Linguistics hosted the 2012 meeting of the Midwest Association of Languages Testers (MwALT), which was held on campus, Friday, October 5 and Saturday, October 6.

This year's 14th annual meeting, "Inferences and Actions in Language Testing," was chaired by Fred Davidson, professor of linguistics. The graduate student organizing committee was composed of Sun Joo Chung, Stephanie Gaillard, Junli Wei, and Iftikhar Haider.

MwALT's purpose is to foster understanding of the principles of language assessment in educational settings in the Midwest.

A workshop was held on Friday about statistical analysis for placement tests. On Saturday, the conference met at the Levis Faculty Center, where numerous presenters shared their current research in the field.

Co-sponsors for the event included the U of I Second Language Acquisition and Teacher Education Program, and Cambridge Michigan Language Assessment.

The Plenary speaker was Paula Winke, assistant professor of linguistics and languages, Michigan State University, who spoke on the topic, "Issues in large-scale placement testing." She specializes in language testing and individual differences in second language acquisition.

## "EMBLEMATICA ONLINE" MAKES RENAISSANCE EMBLEM BOOK COLLECTIONS AVAILABLE

The project launch for Emblematika Online—a digitization of two of the world's largest and most important Renaissance emblem book collections—took place on September 12 in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library on campus.

The event included presentations by the University of Illinois project managers and was attended by 50 scholars and librarians from the U of I. The German launch was on July 26 at the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, where PIs Mara Wade (U of I) and Thomas Stäcker (HAB) presented to a group of 40 interested scholars and librarians.

Emblematika Online is a joint research project between the U of I and the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the Deutsche Forschungsgesellschaft (DFG).

The project presents a multi-national virtual collection of digitized emblem books, providing open, worldwide access to the digital facsimiles of 723 Renaissance emblem books, which contain more than 70,000 individual emblems.

A collaboration between the HAB, the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, and the U of I Library, the project has digitized or indexed nearly 15,000 individual emblems and built a new portal, "providing integrated access to our digitized emblem book collections and eventually those of other major emblem book collections worldwide," said Wade.

Researchers include Mara Wade (PI), professor of Germanic languages and literatures; Timothy Cole, professor, University Library and Mathematics librarian; Myung-Ja Han, assistant professor of library science/metadata librarian; Tom Kilton, emeriti faculty, Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures; and Jordan Vannoy, research programmer, Grainger Engineering Library.

To learn more about this fascinating project, visit: [emblematika.grainger.illinois.edu](http://emblematika.grainger.illinois.edu).



SCHOOL OF  
LITERATURES  
AND  
CULTURES  
LINGUISTICS

## KACHRU LECTURE



S.N. Sridhar, Stony Brook University, was the 2012 Kachru Distinguished Lecturer.

S.N. Sridhar, Distinguished Service Professor of Linguistics and India Studies, Stony Brook University, gave the 2012 Kachru, the Braj and Yamuna Kachru Distinguished Lecture in the Linguistics Sciences at the U of I on September 26.

The lecture was entitled “Languages without Borders: Models of Multilingualism in Cognitive Science and Sociolinguistics.” Professor Sridhar analyzed several developments in the field and proposed some potentially fruitful directions of research.

The lecture is named for Yamuna Kachru, professor emerita of linguistics at the U of I, and Braj B. Kachru, professor emeritus of linguistics at the U of I’s Center for Advanced Study.

Yamuna Kachru’s areas of research are Hindi and South Asian linguistics and world Englishes in communication across cultures. She has published extensively in her areas of research and was honored by the President of India for her contributions to Hindi linguistics in 2006.

Braj B. Kachru has pioneered, shaped, and defined the scholarly field of world Englishes and was honored with the Duke of Edinburgh Joint First Prize for his book *The Alchemy of English* (Pergamon, 1986). He is the founder and coeditor of *World Englishes* and associate editor of *The Oxford Companion to the English Language*.

Professor Sridhar is author of three books, editor and co-editor of six others, and author of numerous articles in scientific journals and chapters in books.