

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

WINTER 2011-2012

NORDIC EXPOSURE

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OPENS RESEARCH AND TEACHING POSSIBILITIES NEAR THE ARCTIC CIRCLE

By Dave Evensen

With another winter upon the northern latitudes you may shudder to hear this, but much learning remains to be done in the lands of ice and snow. Thanks to a budding partnership at the University of Illinois, however, that task is getting more exciting, and it leads through Sweden.

Researchers and educators at U of I are expecting valuable opportunities to rise from a trans-Atlantic collaboration with KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm that has roots in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS). The partnership, which has been forming rapidly, will allow Illinois to share expertise with a part of the world where studies in energy, humanities, information and communications, materials, medicine and biotechnology, and transportation are highly advanced.

The partnership, named Illinois-Sweden Program for Educational Research Exchanged (INSPIRE), could also provide Illinois researchers and students with a new access point to the Arctic Circle, making for chilly but beneficial study-abroad and research possibilities.

"Even with the University of Illinois's comprehensive educational and academic programs, there is relatively little taught at Illinois and relatively little research pursued that pertains to northern-most Europe," says Anna Stenport, professor of Scandinavian

Harry Dankowicz, professor of mechanical science and engineering, and who also hails from Sweden, to pull the partnership together.

The partnership began in 2009 and by December of 2010, KTH sent a delegation for a symposium at Illinois, and another symposium took place in May in Stockholm to organize the effort.

Stenport and professors in other disciplines on campus designed a new study abroad course which will be offered in the summer of 2012:

"Environment and Society in a Changing Arctic," a six-credit-hour, interdisciplinary course, to be held from June 11-July 25, 2012. Students from the U of I and KTH Royal Institute of Technology will study issues related to climate change and the Arctic, including a

weeklong excursion to conduct field research on location north of the Arctic Circle.

For more about the Scandinavian Program at the U of I, visit www.germanic.illinois.edu/scandinavian.



One of the locations being explored for the course 'The Changing Arctic' is the Svalbard Islands, in the Arctic Ocean, halfway between Norway and the North Pole. This includes Spitsbergen, the largest and only permanently populated island of the Svalbard archipelago.

studies in the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, and one of the chief organizers of INSPIRE.

"One of the motivators for me has been to increase knowledge of and exposure to the Nordic region for the University of Illinois student population and also its faculty researchers," she adds. Stenport, a native of Sweden, has worked closely with

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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 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 to find out what's happening in SLCL!

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School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
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College of
Liberal Arts & Sciences
AT ILLINOIS



The stories and announcements in this issue of our newsletter reflect the global reach of the programs in the School of Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics. The activities that our faculty and students engage in on a daily basis in our School all aim to provide local expertise with a global perspective. More than ever, in-depth knowledge of societies and their cultures around the globe is paramount for a 21st-century education. The goal of the School is to provide that critical local knowledge.

We provide that in different forms and venues, as the stories in this issue eloquently demonstrate. We offer degrees and courses that explore the languages, cultures, and societies in countries in Africa, the Middle East, Latin and South America, Europe, and South and East Asia. We continue to build connections and enter into cooperative arrangements with universities around the world, which provide our faculty and students with the opportunities to engage in field work and joint projects with international partners. The campus and wider community get the opportunity to attend conferences, workshops, language programs for children and adults, invited lectures, and cultural events that focus on trends and issues with regional and global relevance.

Perhaps the programs that best illustrate the deep commitment that the School and its departments have towards international studies are the study abroad programs, some of which are celebrating their 40th anniversary this year. Over the last 12 months, our faculty members have led study abroad programs in Austria, China, France, India, Spain, and Turkey, and our students have taken part in other study abroad programs in Asia, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. These programs have enabled our students to gain intimate local knowledge and have strengthened their language and cultural expertise.

The invaluable on-the-ground experience that the students gain helps sharpen their understanding of the globalized world we live in. Our School and its programs will continue to strengthen and diversify educational opportunities in international languages, cultures, and societies, thanks to the commitment of our staff and faculty, the support of our alumni and friends, and the willingness of our students to explore, understand, and engage the world.

Abbas Benmamoun

¿SE HABLA ESPAÑOL? U OF I COURSE OFFERS SPANISH TO YOUNG CHILDREN

By Dusty Rhodes, Arts and Humanities Editor, U of I News Bureau



Still image from video by Katherine Gotsche.

Now in its second year and thriving, the University Language Academy for Children offers Spanish instruction four days a week to children ages four through eight.

Parents considering enrolling their young children in after-school piano lessons, ballet classes, gymnastics, or martial arts now have another option for enriching their future—a Spanish language course. Taught by native or near-native Spanish speakers, the curriculum presents Spanish to children ages four through eight using games, crafts, stories and songs.

“By playing, they learn a lot, and they’re having fun,” said Silvina Montrul, the head of the University of Illinois Department of Spanish, Italian and Portuguese. “We want the children to enjoy the classes.”

Montrul, who also is the director of the Second Language Acquisition and Bilingualism Lab, established the University Language Academy for Children in September 2010. Classes meet for about an hour four days a week at University Primary School. The program entered its second year this fall, and Montrul is pleased with enrollment and progress within the program.

She can point to studies that prove that early childhood is the best time to learn a second

language, and that bilingualism stimulates brain health throughout a person’s life, even delaying the onset of Alzheimer’s. Montrul also can cite statistics that show that Spanish is the logical second language to learn. The 2010 census shows that there are more than 50 million Spanish-speakers in the United States, making it the second-largest Spanish-speaking nation in the world, outranked only by Mexico. And in the U.S., Illinois has the fifth-highest number of Spanish-speakers.

“The same way that many of us have had to learn English in other countries—to make you competitive, to function in society—I think Spanish proficiency is one of those competencies that people in the United States will have to have in the future,” Montrul said.

Growing up in Argentina, Montrul and her classmates learned English in elementary school (she also speaks French). But such programs to teach children a second language, so common in other countries, are so rare in the U.S. that Mon-

trul and her staff were forced to create curriculum materials from scratch. They found creative ways to teach the children the standard vocabulary of greetings, colors, numbers, days of the week and months of the year, as well as words for seasons, animals, various foods, emotions, family members, and body parts. The older children progress into reading and writing in Spanish.

Montrul analyzed the fees charged for other children’s activities to set the price for the academy at \$215 per month for four classes per week. The academy runs throughout the school year.

“It’s comparable to what you would pay for other after-school activities that children do in this town,” Montrul said. “Parents spend money on music lessons, ballet lessons, martial arts lessons. This is another skill that enhances cognition and other aspects of intelligence as children develop. This is a tool they will use for life.”

U OF I PROGRAM IN SHANGHAI: A LASTING ALLURE

By Rick Partin, Editor

Gary Xu, director of U of I's program in Shanghai, China, says that it's a "once in a lifetime" experience.

But one alumnus who went on the program felt once was not enough, so he has returned to China seven more times.

That one former student is Jonathan Estwing of Marion, Ill., and a 2010 East Asian cultures and literatures graduate. He went with Professor Xu in the winter of 2008, his first time in China, but merely the first of what would be eight trips there.

Xu, a native of Nanjing, China, is an associate professor of East Asian languages and cultures and director of Graduate Studies. He has led more than 10 groups of undergraduate students to study-abroad trips to China.

After Estwing's initial trip sparked his interest in China, he was able to secure an internship at a Chinese consulting firm in Chongqing, China, after graduating. He lived and worked in China for about seven months. Estwing worked directly for the CEO of the company and left as the director of international projects.

In his position Estwing influenced the investment of millions of dollars, and was able to travel with his CEO from China to the U.S. and Canada to meet with presidents or CEOs of multiple American companies, as well as U.S. state-level government officials (directors of commerce and international trade). In China he also marketed U.S. business for investment by Chinese investors.

"This opportunity allowed me to see a whole different level of China that foreigners rarely see," he commented, adding, "all of these experiences I would never have had without the initial experience and exposure from my trip with Professor Xu."

This year's group, composed of Xu and 19 students, will go on the program from December 26 to January 13, to study and travel in what Estwing calls "the fascinating and crazy world that is China."



Jonathan Estwing poses on top of the Great Wall. Estwing, a 2010 graduate in East Asian languages and cultures, went on the Shanghai, China program in the winter of 2008 and has made a total of eight trips to China. When asked which people in the program struck him as most influential or memorable, he named director Gary Xu, professor of East Asian languages and cultures: "Without his efforts the whole trip would not have been possible. Also I made life-long friends on this trip."

THE PROGRAM

The program itself takes place in two parts, on-campus and off-campus (in Shanghai). The on-campus portion takes place during the second eight weeks of fall semester. "It's quite rigorous," says Xu, who has been running the Shanghai program for seven years.

The course around which the program centers is Global Studies 298, "Global Studies Seminar Abroad." About 20 to 25 students go each year, according to Xu. Although most students are from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, all schools on campus are represented. Also, he estimates that about 30 percent of the students are members of minority groups, including African Americans, Native Americans, and Latinos.

To qualify for the program, students must demonstrate a high grade-point average and write a strong essay to prove they want to go to China. Although most students are juniors and seniors, freshmen and sophomores also have participated. While in Shanghai, students stay on campus at Shanghai Jiaotong University (in its historical downtown campus), but travel to other cities. They learn the Chinese language, culture, and history. Xu estimates that one-third go back—for example, for internships, business opportunities, or to live. Through the program they get hooked up with business leaders. "It's very practical," he says.

Estwing is an excellent example of those who return. He found out about the program from the study abroad office website.

"I did not know Professor Xu before our trip but got to know him during it," he recalls. "I went to meet with Professor Xu before the trip and asked him many questions about the trip. He was helpful and answered all of them. I wanted to go because I wanted to experience China."

"Without his efforts the whole trip wouldn't have been possible."

Estwing says he knew nothing about China before he went. But once there, he was hooked. He particularly liked the practical aspect: "I think the structure of the program was not as formal as a traditional university course, but I think this made it all that much better. Rather than spending all of our time in classes, we got to experience



Professor Gary Xu (center, with tie) poses with a group of students attending a show opening for the Chinese female artist Huang Ying, at Beijing's Today Museum.

ally enjoyed it there."

He can't say enough about Professor Xu's guidance. "He was very helpful in answering any and all questions before, during, and after. During the trip he provided enough structure to keep us on track, while at the same time providing enough freedom for each of us to explore how each of us could benefit from the trip on a personal level."

U of I's East Asian and Pacific Studies Center also is involved with the program, and there is

more of real life in China. I think this is important because rather than learning some facts about China I was able to experience the life in China and learned that I re-

an exchange program with faculty. Xu mentors many of the Chinese professors who come here. "It's become an important resource for us," he says, in terms of administrators, deans, and professors.

When students return from the program they give a poster presentation. Xu mentions that topics have ranged from cuisine, to electronics, to piracy.

"It's all about getting to know Chinese students," Xu comments. "The best part is the interactions with people."

As returnees Estwing and Newlin can attest, the entire experience is one well worth revisiting, and they encourage other students to look into this unique program.

For more about the Shanghai Program visit www.las.illinois.edu/students/international/coursesabroad/winter/shanghai.

STUDENTS PRAISE IMMERSION EXPERIENCE

Professor Gary Xu (left), director of the U of I program in Shanghai, China, poses with Victor Hong and Grant Newlin, two College of Business students who went on the program last year. The photo was taken on a cruise on Huangpu River along the Financial District of Shanghai. The needle building in the background is called the Oriental Pearl, which is actually Shanghai TV Tower, China's symbol for economic takeoff.

Hong, of Penang, Malaysia, is currently a junior, majoring in finance. He has also utilized U of I programs to study or teach in Brazil and Turkey. This winter he will be headed to Cuzco, Peru, to participate in an environmental protection project. During spring break he will travel to Panama on the Global Business Brigades program to help local communities to establish sustainable businesses.

Newlin, from Avon Lake, Ohio, graduated in 2011 from the College of Business with a bachelor of science degree in accountancy. He is currently enrolled in the U of I MAS accountancy program and plans to complete his CPA before starting full time at Ernst & Young in Chicago in the summer. He says he enjoyed the Shanghai program so much that he is returning to China this winter break for another study abroad experience, this time in Hong Kong and Chengdu, China. "I thoroughly enjoyed the Shanghai program's complete immersion experience," he reports. "Gary brought us to some great local restaurants and shops, truly giving us a complete and unique cultural experience for the group. I highly encourage other U of I students to check out the GLBL 298 program in China. Professor Xu is awesome, and there is so much to learn in China, especially as we look to the future and where the global economy is heading."



NEWS BRIEFS

FILM CHRONICLES BACKLASH TO INDIAN LAW DESIGNED TO HELP WOMEN



Rini Bhattacharya Mehta's first effort at filmmaking was inspired by the "moment of shock" she felt when she stumbled upon the backlash against the Indian law designed to help women.

Mehta, a visiting professor of comparative and world literature at U of I, shared her first film, *Post498A: Shades of Domestic Violence*, during U of I's annual International Week in April.

Mehta said her "epiphany" came through a simple Google search. She was tracking the progress of India's legislative efforts to deal with pervasive domestic violence when she queried Section 498A, a 1980s addition to the Indian penal code that provides a brief prison term and fine for a woman's husband or in-laws found guilty of cruelty.

Instead of articles about how the law had saved women, Mehta found the opposite. "The first page of results was occupied entirely with websites and organizations which exist to protest against the 'abuses' of 498A," she said.

Mehta's eventual response to that surprise discovery was a 52-minute documentary, filmed entirely in Kolkata, West Bengal, during July 2010.

"I wanted to see and film up close a society in which—in spite of democracy, globalization, equal citizenship, and all sorts of ongoing outward progress—lashes out against women's rights in such a vicious manner," she said.

In *Post498A*, women of varying ages and economic classes face her camera to detail physical and psychological abuse. A number of interviewees discuss a 2005 civil law called the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, aimed more at providing aid and support for the victims than at punishing the men. Mehta also takes a wide-angle view on how certain regressive attitudes toward domestic violence exist in the midst of an otherwise-progressive society and the era of globalization.

Mehta devotes a portion of the film to addressing the allegations she found online—that vindictive women misuse 498A just to get money from men:

The public prosecutor for West Bengal, in an on-camera interview, says he hears many such complaints, but that the actual number of fraudulent cases is "negligible."

KACHRU DISTINGUISHED LECTURE IN THE LINGUISTIC SCIENCES

Madhav M. Deshpande of the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures at the University of Michigan delivered the Braj and Yamuna Kachru Distinguished Lecture in the Linguistics Sciences at U of I in April.

In his lecture, entitled "Indian Linguistic Tradition & Pāṇini," Deshpande presented a brief account of the contribution of the tradition of linguistic analysis in India and highlighted the grammatical work of Pāṇini, who lived around 400 B.C. Pāṇini's grammatical work in eight chapters, the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, consisting of approximately 4,000 grammatical rules,



Madhav M. Deshpande (center) poses with Yamuna Kachru (left) and Braj Kachru after presenting the Kachru Distinguished Lecture in the Linguistic Sciences. Deshpande teaches in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at the University of Michigan.

represents a culmination of the development of linguistic analysis in India that began several centuries before him.

The formulation of his grammatical system has fascinated modern linguists and led to a continued interest in its study in relation to the emerging new paradigms of modern linguistics, according to Deshpande.

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

2011 THULIN LECTURE IN RELIGION

Professor John L. Esposito of Georgetown University gave the annual Marjorie Hall Thulin Lecture in Religion in April.

The lecture, sponsored by the U of I Department of Religion, was titled "The Future of Islam and Muslim-West Relations."

University professor as well as professor of religion and international affairs and of Islamic studies at Georgetown University, Esposito is Founding Director of the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding in the Walsh School of Foreign Service.

A consultant to the Department of State as well as corporations, universities, and the media worldwide,



2011 Thulin lecturer John L. Esposito of Georgetown University speaks with audience members following his lecture on campus in April.

Esposito specializes in Islam, political Islam, and the impact of Islamic movements from North Africa to Southeast Asia.

Marjorie Hall Thulin (1910-2009), for whom the annual lecture is named, was a 1931 graduate of the University of Illinois. She enjoyed a successful career in advertising and published poetry and children's literature in addition to editing a book on the history of Glencoe, Ill.

Mrs. Thulin's desire for students to understand how religion grows and functions in a complex society, especially Christianity in American society, led her to endow a fund establishing the Marjorie Hall Thulin Scholar of Religion and Contemporary Culture. Through this endowment, each year an internationally known scholar of religion and contemporary culture is a resident on the Champaign-Urbana campus for several days.

"NEW FRANCOPHONIES" CONFERENCE VIEWS COLONIAL LANGUAGES

Scholars from multiple disciplines met on the U of I campus in April for an international conference that addressed the relationship between language and cultural identity in former colonial areas.

"New Francophonies and Colonial Languages in a

Global World" considered the ways in which French and other former colonial language communities "imagine themselves through culture—where culture is a means of expressing identity in and through spoken and written discourse, literature, drama, speech, and music," according to conference co-organizer Adlai Murdoch, associate professor of French and Francophone literature at U of I.

Featured speakers included Professor Emeritus Albert Valdman of the Creole Institute, Indiana University; Sylvie Dubois, Gabriel Muir Professor



Adlai Murdoch, associate professor of French and Francophone literature, and Evelynne Accad, professor emerita of French.

and director of the Center for French and Francophone Studies, Louisiana State University; and Françoise Lionnet, professor of comparative literature, University of California-Los Angeles.

SHOSTAKOVICH SYMPOSIUM EXAMINES MUSIC AND MESSAGES OF 20TH-CENTURY COMPOSER

Twenty scholars from fields ranging from musicology to Slavic, European and East Asian literatures and cultures, to Russian and Soviet history attended a two-day symposium at U of I to examine what Soviet composer Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975) was saying (or not saying) with his cycle of 15 string quartets.



Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975) is the best-known composer of the Soviet era.

The event, held in February, ended with the Grammy Award-winning Pacifica Quartet's performance of quartets 11, 13, 14, and 15 by Shostakovich.

Shostakovich lived and composed under Soviet rule. The question of whether his music contained coded comments

on Stalinism has occupied top minds in musicology and music history since shortly after the composer's death in 1975.

The symposium, hosted by the University's Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, School of Music, the Russian, East European and Eurasian Center, and others, took a broad interdisciplinary approach that went beyond Shostakovich's musical response to the political events of his day.

Keynote addresses were given by Richard Taruskin, Laurel Fay, and Simon Morrison. Taruskin, a professor of musicology at the University of California at Berkeley, is the author of six books, including the six-volume "Oxford History of Western Music."

Fay is the author of *Shostakovich—A Life*, published by Oxford University Press. Morrison, a professor of music at Princeton University specializing in 20th-century works, has written books on Russian opera and the composer Sergei Prokofiev.

SLCL FACULTY ACHIEVEMENT

THREE SLCL PROFESSORS RECEIVE FELLOWSHIPS FROM PRESTIGIOUS AMERICAN COUNCIL OF LEARNED SOCIETIES



Lilya Kaganovsky, associate professor of Slavic languages and literatures, comparative literature, and media and cinema studies, has been awarded an International and Area Studies

Fellowship by the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), the Social Science Research Council, and the National Endowment for Humanities. Scholars pursuing research and writing on the societies and cultures of Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union were eligible for these special fellowships. The award is for her second book project: *The Voice of Technology: Soviet Cinema's Transition to Sound, 1928-1935*.



Yasemin Yildiz, professor of Germanic languages and literatures, received an ACLS Collaborative Research Fellowship for 2011-2012, for "Citizens of Memory: Muslim Immigrants and Holocaust

Remembrance in Contemporary Germany," a joint project with Michael Rothberg and Andrés Nader, which will result in a co-authored book. "Citizens of Memory" explores the effects of transnational migration on cultural memory, demonstrates the ways many immigrants take on the histories of their adopted societies, and interrogates the presumption of Muslim anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial.



Dan Shao, associate professor of East Asian languages and cultures, received an ACLS American Research in the Humanities in China Program award. Applicants must submit

a carefully formulated research proposal that reflects an understanding of the present Chinese academic and research environment.

ACLS, a private, nonprofit federation of 71 national scholarly organizations, is the preeminent representative of American scholarship in the humanities and related social sciences.

PROFESSOR RECEIVES FELLOWSHIPS FOR RESEARCH ON EMBLEMS



Mara Wade, professor of Germanic languages and literatures, has received fellowships from the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

These fellowships are being used back-to-back to support research on emblems at the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbuettel. Wade is the chair of the Society for Emblem Studies.

PROFESSOR AWARDED STATE FARM CONTRACT FOR ACCIDENT ANALYSIS



Roxana Girju, associate professor of linguistics, has been awarded a 15-month State Farm contract to devise and build a prototype system for intelligent analysis of car accidents from written reports.

The funding is the first in a series of contracts that will lead to a state-of-the-art, full-fledged semantic interpretation system for the auto insurance industry.

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SLCL CONVOCATION, MAY 2011



Graduates for the Class of 2011 cross the stage at Foellinger Auditorium for the School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics Convocation ceremony, held on May 14. Nearly 200 graduates representing all SLCL departments or programs participated, respectively receiving bachelor's, master's, or doctorate degrees. The keynote speaker was Wayne Pitard, professor of religion and director of the Spurlock Museum. In his talk, Pitard shared lessons he has learned about selfless giving from his experiences the previous four years as the director of Spurlock, the University's museum of world cultures. This year the museum is celebrating its 100th anniversary (www.spurlock.illinois.edu).