Word from the Chair
Dear friends of RCS,
It is good for all of us in RCS to reach out to you as the academic year draws to a close. 2014-2015 has seen much success in all areas. Our students and faculty have been recognized with major awards and important distinctions, many of which you will read about in these columns. Other exciting achievements, less publicized, but with long-lasting consequences:

Dr. Scott Boehm joined the faculty this year. His area of scholarly interest is contemporary Spain in the period from the Civil War (1936) to the present, and especially the artistic response in literature and film to the collective national trauma caused by that war and the divisions within society that ensued. Scott is teaching a series of courses on the contemporary Spanish horror films that attempts to portray and so understand the major issues.

A new addition to the Italian faculty will join us next year. Dr. Juliet Guzzetta will have a joint appointment with the Department of English. Juliet is a specialist of contemporary Italian theater and film and a seasoned teacher of Italian language. She has a lot to bring, all of it good.

Our excellent study abroad programs continue to develop. There are innovative new programs originating in the department that will reach out across colleges at MSU, allowing even more students to benefit from our expertise. A notable example is the new program in health sciences - crafted by our undergrad advisor and newsletter editor, Jennifer Gansler - that will send students to Mexico. An important change to one of our “classic” programs has been the expansion of the French program in Tours to include an annual exchange, in both directions, of master’s-level students. Developing in many of our programs is the possibility of foreign internships that allow our students to integrate more fully into the culture and social fabric of the countries where they study. The great advantage that our students have over many other MSU students – and this will come as no surprise the readers of this newsletter – is their language proficiency. These specially designed internships lead the way to cultural as well as linguistic fluency, fundamental acquisitions in our increasingly globalized world.

If you wish to make a gift to Romance and Classical Studies, please consider helping fund an internship abroad. As you know, study abroad is often the single most important experience of an undergraduate career. An internship is the jewel in the crown.

A last bit of good news: after a pause of several years, the Classics program in the department will once again be offering ancient Greek! This will be a fundamental building block in the restructuring of our program in Classical and Ancient Mediterranean Studies.

Best wishes to all,
Marshall Olds,
Chair (2011-2015)
Professor of French

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Judith Stoddart has been recommended to the MSU Board of Trustees for the position of Interim Associate Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School, effective June 1st, 2015.

Dr. Stoddart has served as an Associate Dean of the Graduate School since 2011, and as an Assistant Dean from 2007-2010. She also has served as coordinator of University Fellowship Programs, Associate Chair & Director of Graduate Programs for the Department of English, and is an Associate Professor of English. A National Merti Scholar and a Rhodes Scholar, Professor Stoddart received a Doctor of Philosophy and a Master of Philosophy in English from Oxford University as well as a B.A. in English and French from Michigan State University. Join us in welcoming our Alumni to this new position, and service to the Graduate School.
Faculty News

Faculty Publications

Sons et sens: La prononciation du français en contexte. (Georgetown University Press, 2013.)


Redefining Lation American Historical Fiction: The Impact of Feminism and Postcolonialism. (New York: Palgrave/MacMillan, 2013.)

New Interim Chair Announcement:

Please Welcome:

Dr. Noverr is an emeritus professor and previously served as Chairperson of the Department of Writing Rhetoric and American Cultures/American Thought and Language (1995-2006), and as Interim Chair of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese (2008-2010). Given Dr. Noverr’s experience and successful past performance, we know he will provide the department with strong, and effective leadership in this transition period.

New Staff Members:

Please join us in welcoming a few new staff members to our language pod.

Office Supervisor/HR Administrator: Carly Ensign (middle)

RCS Graduate Secretary: Leann Dalimonte (right)

L&L Graduate Secretary: Logan O’Neil (left)
Study Abroad

New Program:
Spanish for the Healthcare Professions in Mexico

This new 6-week summer study abroad program offers valuable insight into the health care systems in Mexico. It will give participants the opportunity to develop experience through clinical observation and participation in public health care projects, while improving linguistic competence in a Spanish course for health practitioners. All courses are conducted in Spanish. As a result of completing the coursework and the study abroad program, students will gain exposure to a healthcare system different to that of the United States; learn the healthcare needs of people in a foreign country; and strengthen their ability to communicate and care for patients from a different culture. This program is ideal for students with intermediate to advanced Spanish skills studying Pre-nursing, Pre-med studies, Public Health, Kinesiology and other health-related areas.

Student Spotlight

Tours, France
Emma Dunn, French Major

I was abroad for two months taking classes at the Institut de Touraine while living with a host family. In France, I was able to learn so much more about the language and culture than I ever could have by remaining in the states. Going on excursions to see the châteaux of the Loire Valley, exploring Paris, and experiencing my own adventures in the city of Tours were all incredible opportunities that allowed me to better understand and appreciate French culture. My favorite part of the trip was by far the element of the homestay. My language skills were considerably improved through our conversations, listening to radio and TV together, and the most proud moment for me, successfully sharing jokes at the dinner table. They made me feel like a member of the family, which is exactly what I was hoping for from my experience.

Valencia, Spain
Will Landreth, Spanish Major

I benefited from my study abroad experience in many ways, but the most important was the experience of living in another culture’s way of life and getting out of my comfort zone. It makes you really appreciate all the things you take for granted back home as well as find ways to better the place you currently live based on the things you learned and saw while studying abroad. I didn’t have a problem with funding. I got help with the finances through my parents and money I receive from my tribe (I’m a quarter Native American). I had two favorite parts of my trip, the first being my time in Madrid. I loved the city and I got to see the Estadio Bernabéu which was really cool. Second would be when I visited la Sagrada Familia in Barcelona.

Santander, Spain
Annika De Souza, Spanish Minor

During summer 2014 in Spain my fluency increased, the country gives context to the language you’re learning. Being in a place where the language is spoken all the time, you can pick it up so much better. You learn so much more than what you would in a classroom. I met a friend that I conversed with for one hour per day, where I got to spend time with her family. My favorite part of the trip was Noche de San Juan. We had bonfire on the beach, and people threw in papers with their hopes and dreams. The whole community participates in the celebration. I had to use money from college fund, and got a scholarship from the alumni association; I didn’t get any of the MSU scholarships. I was thinking about going to Peru, but it was less time in the classroom than Santander and was more expensive; Santander was more beneficial.
Valencia, Spain
Alexandra Bahling, Spanish Minor
I benefited from this trip in so many ways I am sure I could write a book, however, I will pick just a few big ones. Along with a huge expansion in my Spanish speaking skills, I gained a new appreciation for life itself. Experiencing another culture and being accepted as apart of it is a feeling that can never be expressed through words. I honestly fell in love with Valencia and the whole experience of complete immersion that I am now a huge advocate of studying abroad. I was nervous about the cost of the trip at first, but in the end I knew that the Valencia study abroad program was the best fit for me and had complete confidence in MSU to make it worth every penny—and it was!

Florence, Italy
Nicole DiMichele, Social Work Major
I benefited from the ability to learn about and to live in a city and more largely a culture built on a foundation of art, creativity and humanities that has evolved so differently from our own. I grew up with an Italian heritage at the center of my life so having the opportunity to learn and speak the Italian language and take an in-depth look at Italian art, culture and politics was more life changing than I could have ever imagined. For funding I reached out to different resources. I was fortunate enough to have my parents help me out along with two study abroad scholarships that made it possible for me to go. I had to balance the cost with how badly I wanted to go to Italy, so I was determined to get there one way or another. With the help of my parents and those scholarships, I would have had a much harder time affording it!

It was a six week program in Florence, Italy. And I also visited Paris, London and Barcelona for two weeks after the conclusion of the program.

Tours, France
Dana Vandeveer, French Major
I studied during the summer of 2014 in Tours, France for the French language, culture and literature program. There are many benefits to studying abroad, but I think when you are a language major it gives you insight that you don’t see a lot of in the United States. We are spoiled as a nation, believing that our language is a dominant one, our customs are normal and that our lifestyle is the most functional. For others it’s not the case. I think for anyone studying in Europe, the access to the rest of the country was the most exciting. Once you’re over traveling to Spain for the weekend is as easy as going to Chicago for us. I personally believe that anyone interested in study abroad already will be accepting the fact that they will be paying a decent sum of money, but it did not affect my decision. Arm yourself with logistics before personal things.
On November 21, 2014, Becky Brewer gave a presentation to students interested in pursuing a career using their degree from the College of Arts and Letters. Using her expertise as the College of Arts and Letter Career Consultant, she discussed ways for students to gain the skills in which they need to apply for jobs and finding other opportunities outside of college. Ways to look competitive were presented as well as giving students information on where to start their search for employment. She engaged the students by having them read brief stories about Michigan State University alumni. After their excerpt was read, they discussed the journey the alumni took to be in the position they are in today. The stories were all different, showing there are so many possibilities with a degree from the College of Arts and Letters.

Alumni: Paige Hook English/French Major ’13
I graduated from Michigan State University in December 2013 with a B.A. in English and an additional major in French. I studied abroad in Tours, France, during the summer of 2012. The following summer, I interned at the Franco-American Commission (the Fulbright Commission) in Paris, as a part of the Internships in Paris program that MSU offers. My experiences in France sparked an interest in working in the field of study abroad and educational exchange. Upon graduation, I took a position working in the International Career Development Programs department at the French-American Chamber of Commerce in New York. In this position, I sponsored J-1 visas for young professionals to come to the US to intern. I left that position to pursue a graduate degree, and began an M.A. program at New York University, studying International Education, with a specialization in Cross Cultural Exchange and Training. I am looking forward to this exciting new opportunity!
Clubs

Spanish Club

The MSU Spanish Club hosted a concert night on November 12 in Wells Hall. Cuatro Sur, a Latin rumba/flamenco group, performed for a group of students who attended. Professor Cabañas, a Spanish Professor at Michigan State, is one of the members of the group. The dúo kept the students engaged as they sang by providing lyrics for a couple familiar songs. They also told stories about Spain in between songs. A great time was had by all!

Italian Club

The Italian Club meets weekly to offer learners and speakers in Italian the opportunity to come together and use the language to bond over a common interest in the Italian culture. The Italian Club hosts cultural events several times throughout the semester that have ranged from inter-club soccer tournaments, Italian movie screenings, off campus excursions, and guest speakers.

French Club

The mission of the French Club is to promote French culture and language throughout the MSU campus. We have meetings and events throughout the year where speakers of any level can practice French and learn more about Francophone countries and culture. This past Fall we hosted a coffee hour on campus with other Romance language clubs. At this event, students were able to meet some of the French faculty and connect with other members of the club.
Events

“In the Shadow of Cortes: (In)Equality of Speech?”
On April 17, 2015, RCS professors Scott Boehm (Spanish), Valentina Denzel (French), Joseph Francese (Italian), Danny Méndez (Spanish-Latin America), and Marilia Ribeiro (Portuguese), discussed and exchanged ideas on kinds of subalternity in the Romance world in this round table. Reflecting on whether subalterns do speak and are actually being heard and by whom, and departing from their different study areas, participants addressed the issue of (in) equality of speech and (in) visibility of actions and agency of individuals or social groups that may be referred to as subalterns. This panel served as a wrap-up discussion brought to our attention in three events organized by RCS faculty in 2014-2015.

In the Shadow of Cortes: From Veracruz to Mexico City
Populated by Mexican storytellers, families, poets, fishermen and others, In the Shadow of Cortés: From Veracruz to Mexico City is a photographic exhibition that challenges the idea of a uniform Mexico during and after the Spanish conquest. Featuring 30 photographs and 7 didactic panels, the exhibition is a collaboration between historian Kathleen Myers and Steve Raymer, an award-winning photojournalist formerly on the staff of National Geographic. Together, they traced the path of Hernán Cortés’ 1519 invasion of central Mexico. The exhibit and related events were programmed jointly by the Center for Latin American Studies and Romance and Classical Studies with the support of a “Creating Inclusive Excellence Grant” from the Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives, and the collaboration of the College of Arts and Letters, the Residential College in Arts and Humanities, the College, American Indian Studies, Global Studies in the Arts and Humanities, and the RCS Graduate Student Association.

The opening event featured a talk by Kathleen Myers, exhibit curator, followed by a dynamic discussion with the audience, a gallery walk and opening reception in the Look Out! Art Gallery. Closing events included a round table with various specialists in Colonial Mexico and Indigenous Studies in the Americas: Amber Brian (U of Iowa), Rocío Cortés (U of Wisconsin, Oshkosh), Kelly McDonough (U of Texas, Austin), Dylan Miner (RCAH, AISP), Laura Smith (AAHD, AISP), and Zenaida Moreno (RCS). A gallery walk and reception followed the round table. All events were open to all MSU students and general public, and provided pedagogical resources for undergraduate and graduate students of Arts and Letters, Social Sciences, and any interested in the processes of (de)colonization and diversity in Mexico and Indigenous Latin America.

Additional information:
http://cal.msu.edu/cortes
Faculty Award

Dr. Joseph Francese, Beal Outstanding Faculty

- Dr. Francese how did you achieve the prestigious William J. Beal Outstanding Faculty Award?

Hard work (I get up and begin work very early every morning, seven days a week); and a sincere commitment to public higher education of superior quality (all of my own education was completed in a public school system and in public universities [my B.A. and Ph.D. were awarded by land grant institutions]). This helps me identify with and understand my students. They remind me of myself when I was their age. I really enjoy what I do. While I have many off-campus interests, I can say that for me my job at MSU is both vocation and avocation.

- What would you want alumni to know about the award?

The William J. Beal Outstanding Faculty Awards are made each year to members of the regular faculty and are based on a comprehensive and sustained record of scholarly excellence in research and/or creative activities, instruction, and outreach/engagement. Nominations are first vetted in the individual colleges. Final selection is then made by an All-University Awards Committee appointed by the President. It’s the highest award MSU can give its faculty.

Commitment:

Research: Through my research I give the University resonance. I have published half a dozen books, numerous scholarly essays, and edited three collections of essays by well-known scholars in my field. In addition, I continue to edit (since 2003) a premier journal in Italian studies (Italian Culture). And since 2012 I am the editor of a monograph series for the publishing house of the University of Florence, Italy.

Teaching: For example, in 2006 I was awarded the prestigious Fintz Award for excellent teaching in IAH. Governance: Numerous University, college-level, and departmental committees. Outreach/engagement: Since coming here I have made myself available to Italian American community throughout Michigan, and have interacted with the Italian Consulate in Detroit. And I’ve also worked to establish an after-school program in Italian language at a local elementary school.

Also, for several years I was a consultant to Quizbusters, a sort of academic olympics show on WKAR-TV, sending from Italy “video questions” on famous sites. I prepared these questions while directing a summer study abroad program in Florence (I’ve taken well over a dozen groups). In this way I continue to contribute to the internationalization of our curriculum, showing students there are other perfectly good ways of life that are very different from how we live in Michigan. The study abroad, of course, is an extension of my teaching, which always benefits from my research (in this instance, I’ve published several essays on Michelangelo and Machiavelli). The course I teach in Florence is an IAH, “The Renaissance in Florence.” I integrate subject matter with visits to all the monuments, churches and museums in the city that are of interest. The students (all of whom must take a language course) benefit from interaction with host families and other natives.