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Answer sessions after the screenings.

Off-Campus Trips

During Spring Break, Dr. Kai Wreck, Assistant Professor of German, Ms. Bianca Potrykus, Lecturer in German, and Ms. Brenda Baetcke of the German staff traveled to Germany with 35 students accompanied by Röllig. Röllig took the students through the Hohenschönhausen Prison, where he had been incarcerated,

through the Stasi Museum and to several other places important to his life's story. While in Germany, Röllig celebrated the anniversary of his release to the West and invited the

group from UNC Charlotte to the celebration. Finally, in April, Röllig accompanied a group of 20 UNC Charlotte German students and 9 German faculty members to New York to learn about the experiences and lives of German immigrants in the 19th and 20th centuries. Röllig made the most of his visit to the "Big Apple" by getting engaged to his boyfriend, Mr. Stefan Meyer, on top of the Empire State Building.



Mario Röllig at the Berlinale in Berlin.

Eyewitness in Residence

Mario Röllig spends Spring semester at UNC Charlotte

Life Story in Brief

Mario Röllig was born in East Berlin, in 1967. In 1986, at the age of 19, the Stasi began to pressure Röllig to become an informer. His boyfriend at the time was a politician from Bonn, West Germany and they had been spotted together while on vacation in Hungary. Refusing to become an informant and as the pressure from the Stasi mounted, Röllig saw no alternative but to flee the country. On June 25, 1987, he tried to cross into Yugoslavia from Hungary and was captured by the Hungarian border police who later turned him over to the Stasi. He was held captive and tortured in the Stasi Prison, Hohenschönhausen, in East

Berlin for 3 months before being released to the West. As a result of his imprisonment, Röllig has made it his life's mission to raise awareness about the crimes of the GDR dictatorship and to fight Human Rights abuses everywhere.

At UNC Charlotte

In January 2016, Röllig arrived in Charlotte to serve as the first Eyewitness in Residence program funded through a generous gift by Ms. Dale Halton. Acting as Eyewitness in Residence, Röllig shared his story on UNC Charlotte's campus at every opportunity. Speaking events included the CLAS Eyewitness in Residence Lecture Series at UNC Charlotte – a two part

series telling his story, visits to over 13 classes and several campus organizations including to Spectrum, which represents the LGBTQ community on campus.

Röllig had a busy schedule off campus as well, giving talks at several area high schools, colleges and community organiza-

tions such as the Alemannia Club, an organization of the German community in Charlotte. He was the Keynote

Speaker at the 40th Annual Conference of the Philological Association of the Carolinas. He presented at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, VA and participated in an anti-KKK rally while there. And while visiting San Francisco, he presented to the German International School of Silicon Valley.

THE GDR COMPLEX

In February, Röllig flew to Berlin to attend the premier of a documentary film called *THE GDR COMPLEX* at the Berlin International Film Festival, or Berlinale. The film is based on Röllig's life and includes footage from a visit Röllig made to UNC Charlotte in 2014 to speak on the 25th Anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. All three screenings of the film received standing ovations. Röllig and Dr. Aliaga-Buchenau, Associate Professor and Associate Chair, participated in Question and

"He never tired of bringing his story and his message to the hundreds of students, faculty, staff and community members."
— Anabel Aliaga-Buchenau, LCS Associate Chair



Dr. Fumie Kato Lauded

Dr. Kato receives the Foreign Minister's Commendation for work in Japanese Studies and

The Consul General of Japan in Atlanta, Takashi Shinozuka, and Consul, Tomoko Ohyama, visited UNC Charlotte on February 18th, 2016 to award the Foreign Minister's Commendations to Dr. Fumie Kato, Associate Professor of Japanese, Department of Languages and Culture Studies, in recognition of her contribution to developing the Japanese Studies major and successfully increasing student participation in the exchange programs between UNC Charlotte and Japanese universities.



Following the ceremony, the Consul general and Consul attended a session hosted by the Japanese Studies Program where they learned more about the program. Chikako Mori, Coordinator of the Japanese Studies Program, gave a broad overview and student representatives highlighted different aspects of the program. Students with study abroad experiences, representatives of student organizations, and exchange students from Japanese universities gave presentations about their respective experiences in or with the program.

After an opening speech by Dr. Christina Sanchez, Associate Director for International Programs, Chancellor Philip Dubois congratulated Dr. Kato on her award and praised her tireless efforts at the university. Olivia Eyring, senior Japanese Studies major, expressed her gratitude for the various opportunities she gained in the program.

This has been an exciting time for Dr. Fumie Kato who was also awarded the Phi Beta Delta Faculty Award for International Education as well as the Bonnie E. Cone Early-Career Professorship in Teaching, and was a semifinalist for the Bank of America Award for teaching, all within the last two years.

What students said about the event:

Gen Hirota: "I didn't realize how valuable and prestigious the award was, so I was excited to attend the event...My favorite part was the speech by the UNC Charlotte student Olivia Eyring (photo to the right)...I am an exchange student from Japan. After graduation from my university, I would like to join an MA program."



Christian Walton: "I came to support Kato Sensei...What impresses me most is Kato Sensei's involvement and contribution to American-Japanese relations and her passion for assisting students in their language learning....I have known Kato Sensei for a year and a half. I respect her very much. Her passion for teaching Japanese and desire to strengthen American-Japanese relations is very inspiring."



Benjamin Dizon: "I was most impressed by the fact that the newly appointed consulate came all the way up to UNCC to visit our school...I have a great amount of respect in that she built up the Japanese major program to one of the strongest and prominent language programs within the state of North Carolina...I plan to apply for the JET program before graduating in 2018."



About the Award

→ Dr. Kato was among 28 individuals and 14 groups to receive the Foreign Minister's Commendations in Honor of the 70th Anniversary of the End of the War.

→ The commendations were made to individuals and groups with outstanding achievements in the promotion of friendship between Japan and the United States.

→ In addition to the award certificate, award winners were presented with commemorative gifts wrapped in pure silk furoshiki, which are traditional Japanese cloth often decorated with traditional Japanese designs or colorful tie-dye patterns.



The 2016 International Film Festival

Department of Languages and Culture Studies
screens 25 films from countries around the world

The Department of Languages and Culture Studies hosted the 4th annual International Film Festival, which began on March 14 and ran through April 9. This year's line-up included 30 screenings of 25 films from 17 countries and included as many as 12 different languages. The event was a collaborative effort including twenty faculty who were directly involved in the planning and introduction of films. All events were free and open to the general public.

This year's festival was made possible by multiple grants including funds from a Chancellor's Diversity Challenge grant, a grant from *Pragda* Spanish Film Club and a *Tournées* grant among others.

By all accounts, this year's festival was a tremendous success. Festival organizer and founder Dr. Michèle Bissière, associate professor of French, reported

that overall attendance was better than in previous years thanks in part to the increased publicity generated by the combination of a website, Facebook page, flyers and community outreach efforts all dedicated to the promotion of the festival. The campus screening of the animated film *Tales of the Night*, for example, drew about 175 people and the Center City screening of the film drew about 80 people.

The festival culminated with the screening of four films at UNC Charlotte Center city, including the Italian film by Mario Monicelli, *La Grande Guerra/The Great War* (1959). The screening of this film was sponsored by Professor Claudio Carpano, the Honorary Consul of Italy to North Carolina, was presented by Daniela Cunico Dal Pra of UNC-Charlotte Department of Languages and Culture Studies and was followed by a reception and live music in Italian, Russian, and Spanish from the Mebanesville Band.

Guest Speakers

Massoud Hayoun

is an award-winning journalist who has covered a wide range of topics primarily in China, but also in the Francophone and the Arab-speaking worlds. He has also reported for *The Atlantic*, *Agence France-Presse* and *South China Morning Post*. In Summer 2015, he published an article on the French film *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (1959) based on an interview he conducted with the actress Emmanuelle Riva. Hayoun spoke to the audience about his career as a multilingual journalist and his commitment to representing news stories from multiple sides.



Kazuhiro Soda, A Peabody Award-winning filmmaker known for his observational style and method of documentary film-making, spoke to the audience prior to the screening of his documentary film *Peace*. Soda's talk and the screening were highlights of an event titled, "Evening of Documentaries from East Asia."



Irina Ugolnikova, a producer at Corner Work Production Company (Russia), spoke to the audience about the movie, *Battalion*. *Battalion* is the story of the first "Russian Women's Battalion of Death," formed as part of a propaganda campaign by the Russian Provisional Government during World War I.

Films shown at the 2016 Festival included:

The Past (Iran, France)



Nominated for Best Foreign Language Film at the Golden Globes in 2014, Asghar Farhadi's complex, intricate drama shows the desperation and anger of acting in the present while having to

atone for past mistakes.

Mr. Kaplan (Spain, Uruguay, Germany)



In Uruguay's official selection for Best Foreign Language Film at the Academy Awards, director Alvaro Brechner tells the story of a grumpy, old Jewish man in Uruguay who encounters an equally old bar owner whom he immediately suspects of being a runaway Nazi.

My Love, Don't Cross that River (South Korea)



Director Moyoung Jin's camera acts as a fly-on-the-wall, capturing a deep love painted through simple acts of affection from a good-natured leaf fight to a gentle caress of the cheek. No film-making tricks are necessary, as the honest and tender feelings emoted by this husband and wife are all that are needed to tell this story of true love.

My Italian Secret (Italy)



This documentary is a journey through time and memory of a few individuals, who risked their own lives to rescue innocent people. It is the story of some of the many Italians who helped Jews during World War II. The film revolves around the cycling champion Gino Bartali, whose full involvement in this story just became public.

SPRING ACTIVITIES



Japanese students participate in year-end presentations.



Nhora Gómez-Saxon speaks at Hispanic College Awareness Program at South Meck High School.



Nine UNC Charlotte students participating in Study Abroad program in Santander Spain.



24 German majors receive scholarships to study abroad in Germany this summer.



German Career Fair draws together major corporations and language majors.



Students participate in the Spring Spanish Legal Panel.

Faculty Recognized in Spring 2016

- **Susana Cisneros:** Nominated for Outstanding Teaching by a Part-time Faculty Member by the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences and given the President's Volunteer Service Award at the CMPD awards banquet
- **Dr. Concepción Godev:** Nominated for Integration of Undergraduate Teaching and Research by the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
- **Nhora Gómez-Saxon:** International Women's Day Nominee
- **Dr. Fumie Kato:** Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendations (See p. 2)
- **Sandra Watts:** Given the Distinguished Service Award by the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese



Chair's Note

Interim Department Chair, Dr. Ann González, reflects on the 2016 Spring Semester

Greetings faculty, staff, students, and community partners and supporters:

We have had an extremely busy and productive academic year and should all take pride in our hard work. In December we had almost 50 students graduating with majors in French, German, Japanese, and Spanish and another 50 with minors in all those languages plus Chinese, Italian, Russian, Film Studies, and Francophone Studies. We expect this May to graduate some 60 majors and over 80 minors. We have about 25 students going on study abroad trips this summer to Costa Rica and Limoges. We offered spring break trips to Tokyo, Berlin, and Northern Italy and a donor sponsored a field trip to Ellis Island to study German immigration. We have given out about \$100,000 total in scholarships this year and students have received numerous awards, been accepted into prestigious programs and internships, landed wonderful jobs, published articles, presented at conferences, and participated in so many events that we cannot list them all here.



Gonzalez speaks at the Japanese year-end presentations.

Our faculty organized a plethora of activities this year: a poetry slam, two legal panels, a poverty simulation, a career fair, a translation open house, a visit from the FBI linguistics division, plus the 4th annual International Film Festival with 25 films from all over the world. Our language clubs and our faculty hosted conversation tables, weekly coffee hours and tertulias, visiting scholars, an Eye Witness in Residence (Mario Röllig, former Stasi prisoner), wrote grants both external and internal, sponsored two conferences (CATI and PAC), invited speakers from all over the world, organized fundraisers, participated in Ifest and International Week, Explore

UNC Charlotte, Majors Day, Convocation activities, and SOAR—all this while teaching some 200 classes this spring and publishing 27 books, articles, translations, encyclopedia entries, and book reviews.

What is more, the department has made major curricular changes: the German major was completely overhauled and streamlined; the graduate translating certificate was revised to include French, German, Japanese and Russian as well as Spanish; Japanese added an undergraduate translating certificate to their offerings, Spanish added a new concentration that will make double majoring much simpler, and the MA program made significant changes to make dual degrees possible. One of the most exciting changes in our fall schedule is the addition of two new classes in Spanish interpreting, one graduate and one undergraduate. By adding interpreting to our offerings we are responding to the huge demand our students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels have expressed. We hope to begin to expand this area of instruction to the other languages as well.

We wish all of you a wonderful and peaceful summer and look forward to another exciting and productive year. See you August 15.



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