

FALL 2021

THE POLYGLOT PRESS

A Publication of The Department of Languages and Culture Studies



Photo credit: Dr. Bobby Hobgood

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CHARLOTTE
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES
LANGUAGES AND CULTURE STUDIES

[Languages.charlotte.edu](https://languages.charlotte.edu)

Mission

The Department of Languages and Culture Studies offers graduate and undergraduate programs of study in strategically selected languages, literatures, and film to develop students' language skills, cultural knowledge, literacy, and critical thinking in order to prepare its graduates for participation and leadership in an increasingly global, multicultural, and multilingual society.

Vision

The Department of Languages and Culture Studies aspires to be known for the strength of its degree offerings, its flexible curriculum that balances tradition with innovation, and its unique programs in translation and interpreting, language for specific purposes, and film studies.

Diversity Statement

The core mission of the Department of Languages and Culture Studies is to prepare our graduates for participation and leadership in an increasingly global, multicultural, and multilingual society. We embrace the promotion, discussion and understanding of diversity through our coursework, scholarship, mentoring, and in our actions and procedures. In addition, we affirm a commitment to access and equity through inclusive actions around complex ideas and issues pertaining to all races and ethnicities; gender identities; political viewpoints; sexual orientations; special health needs; ages; belief systems; countries of origin; and socio-economic status.



Photo credit: Jules Geaney-Moore



A Note from the Chair: Michèle Bissière

After almost two years of remote teaching, we were all happy and a little bit apprehensive about returning to the classroom in August. The idea of teaching with a mask to a roomful of masked students was not very appealing, but we managed to overcome the disruptions due to COVID and get through the semester. Our wonderful staff deserves our gratitude for the incredible support they provided. Many thanks in particular to Jules Geaney-Moore and Bridget Stipicevic, who scheduled and proctored over 150 make-up exams throughout the semester! Thank you also to Bobby Hobgood, who single-handedly managed our Language Resource Center until we were able to hire a new Language Resource Center (LRC) Coordinator in December, and a warm welcome to Valentin Correa in this new role.

In the fall we welcomed a new cohort of MA Fellows in Chinese, French, and Spanish, new part-time instructors in French, Film, Spanish, and Translation, and a new DAAD Teaching Assistant from Germany. Several faculty members returned with new titles: Fumie Kato was promoted to Full Professor of Japanese; David Dalton and Chris Mellinger to Associate Professor of Spanish; Olga Padilla-Falto to Teaching Professor of Spanish; Aura Lawson-Alonso and Mary LaMarca to Senior Lecturer of Spanish and French, respectively; and Will Davis was appointed Director of Film Studies. Congratulations to all of them!

Once again, the pandemic limited our ability to organize our regular events, offer internships and study-abroad opportunities for our students, and travel to conferences and research libraries, but we have many accomplishments to be proud of. There were innovations in the classroom. Several colleagues integrated career competencies into their courses, and others offered virtual study-abroad opportunities to their students. We offered a few teaching-related events, including a virtual forum on teaching Business Japanese and language tables during International Education Week. The department was also active in scholarship and grant writing. Our faculty gave some 80 conference papers and invited talks in 2021, most of them virtual, and we submitted a higher number of collaborative grants with colleagues in other departments and at other domestic and foreign institutions. Several faculty members received awards and accolades, and we are also proud of the successes of our current and former students. There is not enough space to give adequate mention to everyone, but please read about some of these remarkable accomplishments in the newsletter.

As we get settled into our spring semester, I want to thank all of you, faculty, staff, and students, for your hard work and resilience and wish you a happy new year. A special thought for those of you who have been personally affected by the pandemic, in particular the family of our dear alumnus Joshua Nicholls. A special thought also for our German colleague Robert Reimer, who started phased retirement in July after a successful career of 50 years at UNC Charlotte. Robert will continue teaching in the fall semester for three years. Robert, it's been an honor working with you for over 30 years. Best wishes to you and Carol as you embark on the next stage of your lives. We will miss you this semester, but you certainly deserve a break!

Student Achievement

Areanna Nixon and Najir Johnson: Internship Program at Charlotte Lab School



Areanna Nixon and Najir Johnson are currently pursuing a master's degree in Spanish at UNC Charlotte. During Spring 2021, the Department of Languages and Culture Studies initiated a new partnership with Charlotte Lab School. Graduate students Nixon and Johnson served as translation and interpreting interns under the supervision of Dr. Mónica Rodríguez-Castro at UNC Charlotte and Ms. Johnson at Charlotte Lab School. Both students had the opportunity to translate a wide range of school-related materials and serve as interpreters at multiple parent-teacher conferences.



Before starting the graduate program, Nixon and Johnson had proved themselves to be highly talented undergraduates and Early Entry students in the Department of Languages and Culture Studies, Johnson was also an outstanding honors student. Both students are ready to graduate with a master's degree in Spanish (Translating and Translation Studies Concentration) in December 2021.

Their internship advisor, Dr. Rodríguez-Castro, wrote: "Even though it may be challenging for graduate students to accommodate internships or experiential learning opportunities, such experiences serve as a transition into the job market. These meaningful experiences add to the professional résumés of the students and allow them to have a more personalized education with the mentoring of a faculty member. More importantly, students get an opportunity to apply their skills while appreciating the value of serving the Charlotte community."

Nixon has already joined the team of third-grade teachers at Charlotte Lab and Johnson has found a full-time job before graduating. We wish Nixon and Johnson good wishes for their future endeavors, and we are confident that the best is yet to come for these graduating students!

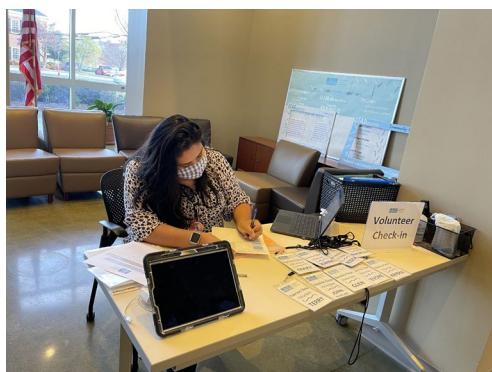
(Submitted by Mónica Rodríguez-Castro)

Alumni Achievement

Rocio Arguijo: Cabarrus Health Alliance's Volunteer Program



In February 2021 Rocio Arguijo was hired at Cabarrus Health Alliance (CHA), the public health department for Cabarrus County, as the volunteer coordinator. CHA had never had a volunteer coordinator before and the vaccine clinics had never had volunteers. In January when CHA started doing large vaccine clinics, staff members quickly realized that they could not take on this task of vaccinating the county alone. The human resources staff worked together to put out a simple volunteer application and coordinate those interested. The human resources staff were doing this on top of their regular responsibilities and realized that they not only did not have enough time but also did not have the expertise. Arguijo came in excited to put years of experience as a volunteer coordinator to use with such an important mission.



The same week that Rocio Arguijo arrived at CHA, she was tasked with all non-medical volunteer communications and scheduling and worked as the on-site volunteer coordinator at two vaccine clinics. At that time, they had an average of 60 volunteers at each of their clinics which happened two times a week and vaccinated around 1,000 community members. The number of volunteers at a single clinic eventually peaked at 96 and then began to wane dramatically until June when they had about 5 volunteers at each clinic. This slowdown gave her time to create a database of existing and past volunteers. This project took many weeks, but the outcome was really outstanding. Arguijo found that they had 79 clinics where volunteers worked, 771 volunteers had given at least 1 hour, 13,000+ hours were given, which was valued at over \$500,000. She presented her findings to the leadership team and secured funds to have a Volunteer Celebration for those volunteers who gave 20+ hours. (Continued)

Alumni Achievement

Rocio Arguijo: Cabarrus Health Alliance's Volunteer Program (Continued)



The slowdown with vaccine clinics also gave Rocio Arguijo time to focus on her second directive. Her first was to recruit and coordinate volunteers for vaccine clinics, but the second was much larger: build a vibrant and sustainable volunteer program for the organization. This project can seem daunting to some, but it was not to Arguijo. It was exciting since she had very specific experience doing this before through the service-learning class (Fall 2018) and the professional internship (Spring 2019) she did at Camino Community Center. For the service-learning class, she got to know the organization and met their volunteers. She used that introduction to plan an internship at Camino where she redesigned their volunteer program from the ground up. Her internship at Camino has been informing her time with CHA as she has a starting point for building all of the forms and manuals for volunteers to use. The tools and resources may be different, but with volunteer coordination there is still a basic truth that she sees linked through her internship at Camino, her previous employment as a volunteer coordinator, and now at Cabarrus Health Alliance. These include: having a system for tracking hours, a well-designed volunteer application, a clear onboarding process, and more. Of course, the service learning class and the professional internship are not the only tools that she is using from her time at UNC Charlotte. She also served on the executive board of HCAP for 3 years, which gave her excellent experience in managing volunteers. Arguijo took a medical interpretation class which provided her with principles she still applies whenever assisting a patient fill out the forms. She also took a translation class which has helped her build the foundation for translating to ensure that Spanish-speaking volunteers have the same information as English-speaking ones. (Submitted by Susana Cisneros)

Alumni Achievement



Delfina Erochenko: Publication

Delfina Erochenko graduated with a master's degree in Spanish (Translating and Translation Studies Concentration) in May 2020. Erochenko collaborated with Dr. David Dalton in the translation of a chapter that he had authored. The article was published in *La ciencia ficción en América Latina: Crítica. Teoría. Historia*, edited by Silvia Kurlat Ares and Ezequiel De Rosso (2021). Erochenko's translation, titled "Ciencia ficción versus realismo mágico: Estéticas oposicionales y discursos políticos contradictorios en *Un día sin mexicanos*, de Sergio Arau," (Science Fiction vs. Magical Realism: Oppositional Aesthetics and Contradictory Political Discourses in Sergio Arau's *A Day without a Mexican*) is a significant achievement for a recently graduated student. Congratulations, Delfina!
(Submitted by Mónica Rodríguez-Castro)

Alumni Achievement

Dr. Natalie Love: Spanish Major Turned Spanish University Professor

A Charlotte alumnus, [Dr. Natalie Love](#), is currently an Assistant Professor of Spanish at UNC Pembroke. Dr. Love was a Spanish and Latin American Studies double major in the Department of Languages and Culture Studies and earned a baccalaureate degree in Spanish in 2010. Dr. Love continued her studies at UNC Charlotte and earned a master's degree in Spanish in 2013. The title of her master's degree thesis is "The Other Side of Sadism: Women in *Don Quixote* and the Novellas of Maria de Zayas." The members of her master's degree thesis committee were Dr. Maryrica Lottman (chair), Dr. Allison Stedman, and Dr. José Manuel Batista. After earning her master's degree, Dr. Love was selected to be an MA Fellow in 2014, after which she successfully pursued a Ph.D. in Spanish at Chapel Hill and worked under the direction of Dr. Juan Carlos González Espitia. Recently, Dr. Love graciously granted her former advisor, Dr. Batista, an interview.

Where were you born and raised?

I was born in Binghamton, New York, but raised in Cary, North Carolina.

Why did you choose to attend UNC Charlotte?

I thought the university had a very nice campus and I liked the wide selection of classes. The university also has a very diverse student population. In addition, I really like the city of Charlotte in general.

When did the Spanish language become a part of your life?

I started studying Spanish in high school, where I became fascinated with the language, culture, and literature of the Hispanic world. This led me to continue my studies in Spanish in college and to eventually pursue a major in the field.

What did you find in Hispanic literature and culture that you did not find in other pursuits?

I have a passion for analyzing Hispanic literature because there are so many different ways to interpret one single text. That is what drew me [to] the literary works I study in my doctoral dissertation, in which certain messages are veiled under prevalent medical discourses from the time. Literature can also illuminate diverse cultural, political, social, and economic aspects of a country/region at a particular moment. I became fascinated by Hispanic culture because several aspects are different from my own and I enjoyed observing these customs and traditions first-hand when living abroad.

Did you always want to be a university professor?

No, I was always passionate about Spanish, but I originally thought I wanted to major in International Business. I decided that I wanted to become a Spanish professor after studying abroad in Costa Rica and teaching English as a volunteer.

Alumni Achievement

Dr. Natalie Love: Spanish Major Turned Spanish University Professor (Continued)

How did your experience at UNC Charlotte (first as an undergrad, then grad, and finally, MA Fellow) prepare you for your career? life?

My Hispanic literature and culture courses during my undergraduate and Master's career helped me prepare for my doctoral studies significantly, since I learned how to think critically, conduct literary analysis, write critical essays, and give formal presentations. Writing my Master's thesis also prepared me for the process of completing my doctoral dissertation, since this was the first extensive academic paper I had ever written. Serving as an MA fellow equipped me with my first experiences teaching at the university level. This experience was invaluable, since I felt prepared when I began teaching my first classes in the doctoral program. In addition, the faculty mentoring that I received while working as an MA fellow helped me to gain experience presenting in academic conferences, preparing for further graduate studies, and creating professional documents.

Do you have any hobbies?

I enjoy traveling, hiking, going to the gym, cooking, and watching movies.

What is the title of your doctoral dissertation?

"The Hysterical Mirror: Staged Masturbatory Fantasy and Gender Transgression in Late Nineteenth Century Male Authored Literature of the Hispanic World"

How was the job search and job market?

The search was time-consuming and a little stressful, since it is an elaborate process that involves seeking jobs, preparing various documents, and interviewing. I was lucky to have so much support and guidance from my dissertation advisor, as well as other professors in the department who held workshops to revise application documents and held mock interviews.

Do you plan on publishing the monograph?

Yes.

What are you working on now?

I am working on [an] article about a short story titled "La Nueva Leda" by the Panamanian author Darío Herrera to show how the destructive autoerotic awakening of the female protagonist incarnates male fears surrounding the autonomous New Woman in early 20th century Latin America, who disrupted the male gaze to become an artist of her own desires.

What would you tell current Spanish majors at UNC Charlotte planning for their future?

To follow their passions, pursue a career in something that they truly enjoy, and to never give up on achieving their goals, even though the journey may be stressful at times.

(Submitted by José Manuel Batista)

Alumni Achievement

Kellie Giordano Completes her First Semester toward a Ph.D. in French Literature at Ohio State University

Tell us about your first semester in a doctoral program. Was it what you expected?

Kellie Giordano (KG): My first semester in my doctoral program was interesting—extremely challenging but equally as fulfilling—and above all it was an intellectually stimulating experience that I am grateful to have had. Fall 2021 was also my first time being back in the classroom since March 2020, though this time I was both a student and a professor. I took three courses in French (and Italian) literature, as well as taught the equivalent of a combined FREN 1201 and 1202 in the UNC Charlotte curriculum to freshman at OSU. Initially, I was not sure how to gauge my preparation as I started my Ph.D. directly out of undergrad, but I was pleasantly surprised at how I performed in the target language. Both in my writing and in my teaching, I received positive and constructive feedback from my professors, and was told that my previous training in primarily 18th-21st century French literature is serving me well!

In what ways did your undergraduate work in the French Program at UNC Charlotte prepare you for success?

KG: I was fortunate enough to take classes that trained me how to analyze some of the most seminal pieces of French literature, both at the level of the plot and beyond what a text overtly communicates in its prose. In the French program at UNC Charlotte, I was able to refine my command of French grammar, improve my pronunciation, and learn how to properly approach, contextualize, and interpret French literature. All of these aspects of the program have been invaluable to me at this higher stage of my career, though the experience that most shaped my time at Charlotte was my honors thesis in French that I wrote under the direction of Dr. Allison Stedman. In that project, I studied the role of luxury clothing in Stendhal's 1830 novel *Le Rouge et le noir*; and fashion theory and nineteenth-century literature are still my primary fields of focus for the Ph.D. Beyond discovering the genre and time period that I now study at Ohio State, the process of reading, writing, and revising a thesis taught me how to encounter texts, made me think about how and why I write the way I do, showed me how to seriously proofread my own work, and even led me to discover more things about myself than I could have ever imagined. This preparation, and more French coursework more broadly, really set me apart in my Ph.D. program, and helped me to start my graduate school career on the right foot.

How do you feel that the training you received at UNC Charlotte compared to that of your peers?

KG: It's hard to be "fully prepared" for a Ph.D., though I feel that I was very well prepared to the extent that I could be, and maybe even more so than my peers in their first semester. I think my readiness to study at this level is thanks to not only the courses I took in French literature, but from the mentorship of my professors. In particular, Dr. Allison Stedman and Dr. Mary LaMarca always pushed me to become a better version of myself as a researcher, writer, and language learner. They applauded me when I succeeded, supported me when I needed it, and motivated me to constantly improve throughout my time in the department—and I still follow their advice all the way up in Ohio!

Alumni Achievement

Kellie Giordano Completes her First Semester toward a Ph.D. in French Literature at Ohio State University (continued)

Many language programs no longer offer a literature-centered curriculum, however the French program at UNC Charlotte continues to do so. What do you think are the advantages of this kind of curriculum? Have the skills that you learned when analyzing literature helped you in other areas of your academic trajectory?

KG: There are so many benefits to learning how to properly study literature, though one of the most valuable aspects of Charlotte's literature-centered curriculum for me personally was that it has greatly informed my critical thinking skills. Literature, especially texts that are centuries old, also reveals what society was like when the text was written, which tends to be reflected in the textual economy and narrative patterns. Without this focus in Charlotte's French program, I think I would have lost the invaluable experience that has aided me in my path to becoming a French literary historian, as well as a writer and a teacher in a language program at-large. Reading is also a key source of input in second language acquisition. If you remove literature-based courses from a language program, students will not be able to make the form-meaning connections with grammar and vocabulary in the target language that they need to truly become fluent, whether that is in French or another language. An additional benefit of these courses for me was that they provided me with the ability to solidify and refine my knowledge of the historical context in which various French literary works were written.

Are there any words you'd like to leave us with?

KG: Thanks for featuring my experience, and I hope to see more current UNC Charlotte French and language students also go for a Ph.D. after undergrad!

(Submitted by Allison Stedman)



Alumni Achievement

Mary Baer becomes High School Japanese Teacher

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Photo Credit: Fumie Kato, Ph.D.

Mary Baer was hired and started to teach Japanese at South-Mecklenburg High School this fall semester. Mary graduated in May, 2021, with a double major, Japanese and Communication Studies, and Communication Health as major concentration.

James Bollinger begins work at Cleveland Yutaka

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James Bollinger, who graduated in 2015 with a Psychology major and minors in International Studies and Japanese, works at Cleveland Yutaka in Shelby after working as a Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) in the Exchange and Teaching (JET) program for four years in Japan!

(Articles submitted by Fumie Kato, Ph.D.)



Photo Credit: Yukiko Yokono

Special Events

Migrant X



This was the first Latinx play on campus, written for the Latinx Charlotte community and performed by Latinx Charlotte students and community leaders. Professor Carlos Cruz Casas from the Charlotte Department of Theater invited Georgina Hernandez Escobar (in 2019) to explore Charlotte, talk to students and learn the issues of immigration policy happening locally in Charlotte. After her visit, Georgina was commissioned to write a play that reflected the dynamic of the Charlotte community facing ICE raids. Cruz described it as “Latinx Futurism” because it combined elements of fantasy and science fiction although the authenticity of the story is clear.

During Spring 2021 auditions took place outdoors and Hilary Jauregui, a Biology major, Spanish minor, and a recipient of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program called DACA attended with the hope of getting the leading role. Hilary is originally from Peru and aspires to become a doctor, she has first-hand experience of what is to be a DACA student.

Hilary was cast in the main character’s role, ever. In the beginning, she was very excited, later on throughout the practices and rehearsal she felt that the story needed to be clearer to the audience about what a DACA student has to endure. She shared her view with the director Cruz Casas, who shared it with the playwright, Hernandez Escobar. As a result, additions were made to capture her words and all who she represents.

“I wish people knew the reality that Dreamers face daily. Mandatory out-of-state tuition, NO financial aid, NO loans, NO grants. DACA has to be renewed every 2 years and it’s NOT cheap. DACA is a limbo between being kicked out of the only place we’ve known as home and finally being accepted as *American*. DACA is a temporary relief from deportation granted to children who came here at age 16 or younger. DACA recipients known as Dreamers are allowed to legally work and drive. This can be taken away.”

These words were included in the play and Hilary was given credit for them. The play premiere was on campus on October 2-6, 2021, and students, faculty, and community laughed and cried with it. The audience experienced multiple feelings and emotions. They were part of the play and also part of the observance. All who migrated from scene to scene and finished the play could fully understand it. Many did not make it to the end, just like in the real story of migration. (Submitted by Susana Cisneros)

Special Events

Languages and Culture Studies Faculty Participate in the Summer Competency Institute

Chikako Mori (Japanese), Susana Cisneros (Spanish), Bianca Potrykus (German), and Paloma Fernández Sánchez (Spanish) were part of the Summer '21 cohort of the Summer Competency Institute, an initiative by the Career Center. It looks to collaborate with departments across the university to establish strong connections between what is done in the classroom and the student's professional goals. As part of the Competency Institute, instructors were asked to reflect on the competencies (communication, critical thinking, equity and inclusion, leadership, professionalism, teamwork, and technology) that are already found throughout the course they teach and make them explicit to the students. The Summer program aimed to provide instructors with the resources needed to do a more deliberate integration of the competencies into the classroom.



JAPN 2202 (Intermediate Japanese II) utilized the COIL (Collaborative International Learning) project with students at the University of Shizuoka in Japan to promote equity and inclusion, teamwork, and technology competencies. Prior to the project, Mr. A. J. Simmons, Assistant Director of the peer professionals from the University Career Center, came to class to present career competencies. Having the general ideas of career competency and the clear understanding of the objectives of the COIL project, students in this course started 5-week text (written) exchanges on Padlet on their selected cultural topics. Some managed to video conference using their selected platform, such as Zoom and Discord. The weekly discussions have been very active and the participants have built a welcoming learning community. Their end product will be a pair reflection video with their Shizuoka counterpart. I am looking forward to their perspectives on this project. (Submitted by Chikako Mori).

Special Events

Languages and Culture Studies Faculty Participate in the Summer Competency Institute (continued)

GERM 1201 has a fixed syllabus that cannot be easily augmented since all 1201 classes taught by different instructors follow the same progression and cover the same topics. After a personal consultation with Dr. Madsen, the approach that was taken allowed for an unaltered syllabus but still fostered the integration of the different career competencies in the classroom, namely problem solving, communication, teamwork, technology application, leadership, professionalism, self-awareness, and global & intercultural awareness. The students received an introduction to the career competencies on the first day of classes, so they understood these competencies and their professional application inside and outside of the classroom, as well as in their future careers. Over the course of the semester, the students kept a personal reflection journal in Canvas with eight entries assigned over four months. Each reflection journal entry specifically focused on one of the career competencies and started with a prompt. Each prompt explained the career competency in question and asked the student to reflect on the competency and identify it in their course work. The students' entries were then read and answered by the instructor, engaging the students in further reflection and discussion of the career competency. This approach allowed the students to become fully aware of all the vital skills they learn while studying German and articulate the purpose and application of these skills for a professional context. For the instructor, the entries proved particularly helpful to understand the students' perceptions of their course work and the overall purpose that they assign to their learning experience in the classroom. As a first attempt to include the career competencies in a 1201 classroom with a binding syllabus, the approach was successful. In the future, I envision an even more interactive approach allowing for reflection and discussion involving all students simultaneously. (Submitted by Bianca Potrykus)

SPAN 3202 (Advanced Spanish Communication and Composition) has been evolving and adapting to its current format as a leadership experiential course in Spanish. Speaking and writing with confidence can be challenging in any language, therefore, practicing leading yourself, your thoughts, and your actions in Spanish is at the core of this course. The Summer Competency Institute validated some of its components as well as increased opportunities for incorporating discussions regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion. At the beginning of the course, students were asked to select a leader that inspires them. We discussed leadership traits and models, and students examined their own traits as well as their leader's. Students gained a deeper understanding of themselves and boosted their confidence in explaining themselves in L2, which created a strong emotional connection with their developing oral and written Spanish.

Special Events

Languages and Culture Studies Faculty Participate in the Summer Competency Institute (continued)

Throughout the course, students were given unique opportunities to become aware of the diversity of Spanish-speaking countries, for example by choosing native speakers from one or more countries to discuss topics such as DEI crucial conversations in the workplace. At the same time, they worked with an assigned student from the University of Cantabria, Spain, or Universidad Tecnológica Nacional Rafaela, Argentina discussing similar topics on the Language Exchange program eTandem. During class time students worked in different teams and presented on a different topic. Lastly, students were supported by Spanish Language Communication Consultant students who had taken this course the previous semester. (Submitted by Susana Cisneros)



SPAN 3203 (Spanish for Heritage Speakers) students work on a semester-long project in which they create a TED talk-like presentation about a topic relevant to them and the Hispanic community in the USA. Many of the students choose to work on the need of bilingual, bicultural Hispanic professionals in the field they want to work in the future.



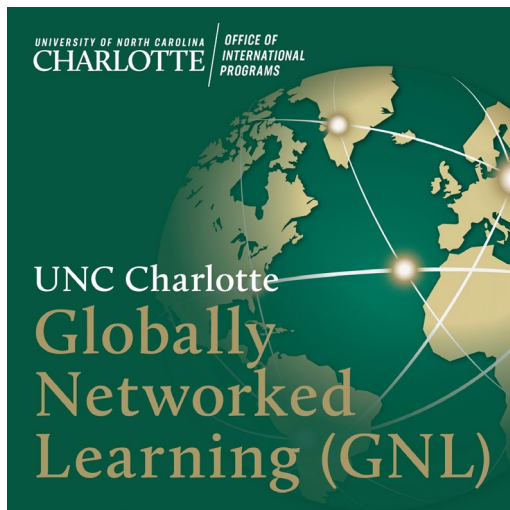
Through the Summer Competency Institute I got in contact with several Hispanic leaders and professionals in the Charlotte area and the SPAN3203 class was able to have very inspiring mentoring sessions with two of them (Rosa Vega-Vazquez, CDP-Prospánica, and Griselda Bailey, CEO-LACCC). The former discussed the importance of (re)presentation, and the latter tackled networking. Students read the presenters' CVs, prepared questions for the speakers for the Q&A portion and submitted a reflection afterwards. They were amazed and inspired to interact with professionals that look like them and have gone through many of the experiences they are going through. I am looking forward to continuing to bring speakers to my classrooms.

(Submitted by Paloma Fernández Sánchez)

If you have any questions on career competency integration into your curriculum, contact Dr. Patrick Madsen, Executive Director at the University Career Center pmadsen@uncc.edu. We are also willing to share our experiences with you so feel free to reach us at cmori@uncc.edu and pfernan2@uncc.edu.

Special Events

Global Networked Learning (GNL)/COIL Project



Senior Lecturer of Spanish, Aura Lawson-Alonso and Lecturer of Spanish, Maria Lorena Delgadillo Latorre are collaborating with UNIMINUTO University through the Office of Global Education and Engagement (OGEE). UNIMINUTO is located in Bogotá, Colombia and implements Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), also known as Globally-Networked Learning (GNL). This model brings international experiences to students through intercultural dialog in the virtual environment.

Dr. Joseph Hoff, Director of OGEE, and Professor Javier Iván Guerrero Escobar, Coordinator of Development and Evaluation of Professors at UNIMINUTO, matched the Spanish American Civilization and Culture course offered by Languages and Culture Studies and the course titled Entornos Educativos Emergentes (Emerging Pedagogies) at UNIMINUTO. Based on their shared interests in discussing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Lawson-Alonso and Delgadillo Latorre have been working with Professor Maryuri Agudelo Franco of UNIMINUTO to implement this project in Spring 2022.



Students enrolled in SPAN 3210: Spanish American Civilization and Culture will have the opportunity to collaborate with students from Colombia over several weeks through synchronous and asynchronous activities. The project will start with an icebreaker, then students will move on to discussing the SDGs together, and wrap up with a reflection phase. (Submitted by Aura Lawson-Alonso and Lorena Delgadillo Latorre)

Special Events

Riding a Tandem through the Pandemic: An intercultural exchange with the *Technische Universität Berlin*

A side effect of the pandemic has been the feeling of isolation and loneliness for many students. However, there have also been a number of virtual intercultural exchanges that allowed students to come together, discuss ideas, and learn in an internet-based community. One such project took place in the spring semester when Professor Anna Un-Kyung Choi from the *Technische Universität Berlin* and I cooperated on a virtual language tandem exchange. Students who studied English at the *Technische Universität Berlin* were paired with students from our German program to meet weekly in an online setting to practice their respective L2s and learn about their respective cultures.



Professor Choi and I prepared an introductory group session for all students to familiarize them with the guidelines and goals of the virtual exchange. After this group session, the students met with their individual partners once a week for the period of one month. For the duration of an hour, the students spoke with their partner about topics Professor Choi and I prepared in advance and sent the students at the beginning of each week. Half the meeting was devoted to discussing the weekly topics in English to then switch to German to allow both students equal time to practice their respective L2. These unsupervised sessions allowed the students to not only talk about the assigned topics but to also address any other subject of their choice in their L2 with a supportive and patient peer in a relaxed atmosphere. At the end of the month, we ended the virtual tandem exchange with a final group meeting to allow the students to reflect on their experience. Professor Choi and I felt that the work invested in the intercultural tandem exchange paid off. Not only did all students successfully finish the Tandem Exchange, they also expressed appreciation for the intercultural learning opportunity, and planned to stay in touch with their partner after the project.

(Submitted by Bianca Potrykus)

Special Events

Jbusiness Forum

The Japanese Studies program organized and administered the JBusiness Forum-- a 90-minute event -- on Friday, November 12, 2021 via zoom. The co-organizers and sponsors were the Consulate-General of Japan in Atlanta, the Japan Foundation in Los Angeles, and the Japan-America Society of North Carolina. The objective of this forum was to allow the students to present their Japanese business culture-related projects and learn from the business insiders. The event called out for projects from university students across the USA, and selected four to present. One UNC Charlotte alumnus and two guest speakers from Japanese firms in the USA, were invited to share insider views on the Japanese business culture. There were 86 participants.

The JBusiness Forum was a virtual event that allowed many participants from different states, cities, and overseas to join without traveling. 78% of the participants were students, 8.6% were instructors, 7.6% were others, and less than 7% were business-related people.

Dr. Bobby Hobgood of the Department of Languages and Culture Studies created the website, and Jules Geaney-Moore from the administrative support team composed the poster. The event was in collaboration with the American Association of Teachers of Japan (AATJ), the Southeastern Association of Teachers of Japanese (SEATJ), the Japan-America Society of North Carolina (JASNC), the Japanese Association in Charlotte, the UNC Charlotte Department of Languages and Culture Studies, Career Center, Belk College of Business, and Japanese Studies Program.

Overall, this event was a success, and there was active participation from the audience. The organizers collected much positive feedback from the audience through the questionnaire conducted at the end of the event. Most participants had praise for the depth of information they received and the exciting outlook on the business culture. There was also feedback suggesting that they wanted to hear more about new approaches to teaching Japanese business in the 2020's.
(Submitted by Enika Banerjee)

Faculty Achievement

Bank of America Award for Teaching Excellence Recipient: Anabel Aliaga-Buchenau



Dr. Anabel Aliaga-Buchenau, professor of German and Comparative Literature, recently received the Bank of America Award for Teaching Excellence. The recipient of the honor, UNC Charlotte's top teaching award, was named at a special reception in August 2021. As the associate chair for the Department of Languages and Culture Studies, Aliaga-Buchenau always finds time and energy to help her colleagues and students. She is known for her selflessness and enthusiasm in helping any student or alumni needing assistance in furthering a career in languages.

Aliaga-Buchenau has described herself as a teacher in every aspect of her daily life. This was reiterated in her acceptance speech when she noted that she became the teacher's helper as early as first grade. Her commitment to teaching has long been recognized by the University community. She was the Bonnie E. Cone Early Career Teaching Professor for 2009-12, an award that honors superior achievement in teaching among new faculty. One of her students described Aliaga-Buchenau as a professor who "injects students with knowledge and practice and infects them with enthusiasm for and a desire to learn German." Without her presence, the student continued, "I would lack the direction and confidence I have gained not only as a student, but as a person."

Aliaga-Buchenau has been credited with an increase in recruitment and retention of German majors at UNC Charlotte. Through a partnership with the German Language and Culture Foundation, she procured more than \$60,000 in three years to send 35 students to Germany for one month of intensive language instruction.

Aliaga-Buchenau also leads short-term study abroad programs to Europe. The most meaningful, emotional and memorable course she has taught occurred when she traveled with students to Berlin and the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in Poland in 2011. She and the students toured Auschwitz with emerita faculty Susan Cernyak-Spatz and listened as she recounted her experiences as a prisoner there. For Aliaga-Buchenau, the Holocaust is an important element of her German identity, and she has made it her mission to ensure that those who enter her classroom confront the human capacity to commit, and also to overcome, horrific atrocities. She helped design the minor in Holocaust, Genocide and Human Rights housed in the Global Studies Department in order to teach the importance of tolerance.

The faculty, staff, and students of the Department of Languages and Culture Studies stand proud beside Dr. Anabel Aliaga-Buchenau as she receives this much-deserved recognition. *Some content in this story was obtained from stories printed in other University publications, such as Inside UNC Charlotte.*

Faculty Achievement

Drs. Rodríguez-Castro, Zhou and Shaikh: Awarded Summer 2021 Seed Grant



Dr. Lina Zhou, professor in the Department of Business Information Systems and Operations Management (BISOM) in the Belk College of Business, Dr. Mónica Rodríguez-Castro, Associate Professor in Spanish, and Dr. Samira Shaikh, Assistant Professor in Cognitive Science in the Department of Computer Science, were awarded a grant for the project entitled *English-Spanish Code Switching for Information Manipulation in Online Communication* as part of the Summer 2021 Seed Grants for Data Science. Drs. Zhou and Rodríguez-Castro initiated a research project on code switching and its implications for cybersecurity. In Summer 2021, UNC Charlotte's School of Data Science (SDS) announced its fourth round of Seed Grants for Data science. The internal grants were established to help nurture early-stage research in the field and to foster cross-disciplinary collaborations.

This internal grant allowed UNC Charlotte PIs to hire two graduate research assistants to help with corpus compilation, annotation, and data analysis over Summer 2021. The results of this study will be used to submit grant proposals in the future. (Submitted by Mónica Rodríguez-Castro)

Fumie Kato Receives Japan-America Society of North Carolina Community Service Award



Dr. Fumie Kato, Professor of Japanese, was awarded the 2021 Japan-America Society of North Carolina (JASNC) Community Service Award for her achievements with the Japanese program at Charlotte. Dr. Kato joined Charlotte as a visiting assistant professor two decades ago, at a time when Japanese was offered as a minor and there was only one adjunct lecturer. Under her leadership, the program grew steadily, and the major was established in 2010. Nine years later, the program ranked fourth in the United States for the number of degrees awarded, behind universities in Hawaii and Los Angeles, whose locations ensure high enrollment rates in Japanese (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2019). Today, the Japanese program has more than 500 students, approximately 150 majors and nearly 90 minors. In recognition of these achievements, the JASNC invited Dr. Kato as one of its guest speakers at its 4th annual conference, and the board unanimously chose her as the recipient of the 2021 JASNC Community Service Award. She received the award and a plaque during the JASNC Annual Dinner Gala on December 10, 2021. (Submitted by Fumie Kato)

Faculty Achievement

Dr. Javier García León Invited by UNAM and UNCW

The Centro de Enseñanza para Extranjeros at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México invited Dr. Javier García León as a guest speaker for its Spanish as a Foreign Language Seminar (September 27, 2021). Dr. García León presented his talk titled “Lenguaje inclusivo y no binario. Una mirada glotopolítica para la clase de ELE”. The purpose of the talk was to locate the debates on inclusive and non-binary language in the current socio-historical context using a glotopolitical approach. During the talk, Dr. García León also offered some insights on how to promote inclusive and non-binary language in the Spanish as a second language classroom.

Similarly, the Centro Hispano at UNC Wilmington invited Dr. Javier García León as a guest speaker on October 3, 2021. Dr. García León presented his talk titled “Latinx Students at the intersection of Language and Identity: Some Critical Insights”. The purpose of the talk was to discuss current approaches to understand the issue of language and identity in the US Spanish-speaking community. During the talk, Dr. García León also offered some critical remarks on how to promote inclusive education for Latinx Spanish speakers and students. This academic presentation was also part of the Hispanic Heritage Month celebrations at UNCW. (Submitted by Javier García León)

DR. JAVIER GARCÍA LEÓN
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
OF SPANISH
UNC CHARLOTTE
(HE/HIM/ÉL)

**LATINX STUDENTS AT THE
INTERSECTION OF LANGUAGE
AND IDENTITY:
SOME CRITICAL INSIGHTS**

JOIN US IN THIS SESSION WHERE WE
WILL EXPLORE LANGUAGE & IDENTITY
WITHIN THE STUDENT LATINX
COMMUNITY

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 13 | 3:00PM -
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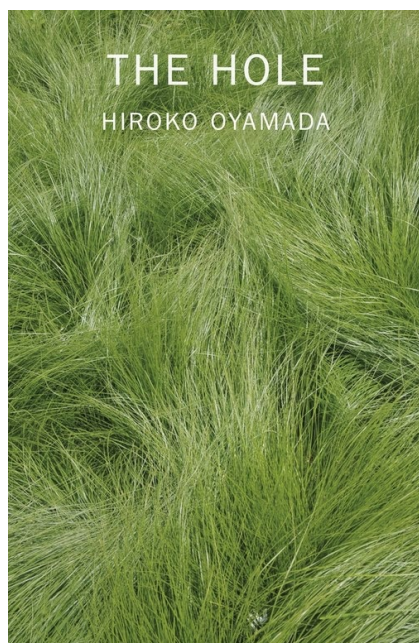
CENTRO
HISPANO
UNC WILMINGTON

Photo Credit: UNCW - Centro Hispano

Faculty Achievement



Winner of the JUSFC Translation Prize for 2021-22:

David Boyd

Assistant Professor of Japanese David Boyd has been awarded the 2021-2022 Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission Prize for the Translation of Japanese Literature for his translation of *The Hole* by novelist Hiroko Oyamada. The prize is sponsored by The Donald Keene Center of Japanese Culture at Columbia University.

In 2018, Dr. Boyd won the same prize for his translation of *Slow Boat* by Hideo Furukawa.

The Hole, which was published in late 2020, is Dr. Boyd's second book-length translation of Oyamada's fiction. The first, *The Factory*, was published in 2019. *The Factory* centers on the absurdities of the workplace. *The Hole* tells the story of a housewife who lives out in the country and spends the majority of her time at home.

"What seems to grab most readers of *The Hole*," Dr. Boyd says, "is not any particular scene, but the atmosphere: suffocating heat, buzzing cicadas... There's a lack of momentum in the book. The narrator's stuck at home, and her perception of time soon starts to warp. This is what made it such a joy—and a challenge—to translate. A few reviewers have pointed out that the English translation of the novella [which was originally published in 2014] has taken on a new significance by appearing during the pandemic, when so many of us are spending our days inside, just like the story's narrator."

Dr. Boyd's third book-length translation of Oyamada's work is scheduled to be published in late 2022 by New Directions.

(Submitted by David Boyd)

Farewells

Dr. Robert Reimer Retires



Dr. Robert Reimer is retiring from the Department of Languages and Culture Studies after 50 years of teaching, research and service at UNC Charlotte. How do you even summarize someone's career that spanned fifty years at an institution? The impact of a person like Robert Reimer is just not easy to put into words. Robert Reimer came to UNC Charlotte in 1971 after completing his Ph.D. in German at the University of Kansas. Since coming to UNC Charlotte Dr. Reimer was an outstanding teacher as shown by the way he worked tirelessly for the educational experience of his students. He also supported his colleagues and mentored countless faculty members shaping careers and facilitating success among us. His prolific research is well respected in the profession and his service to the university spans most aspects of the academic experience.

Dr. Reimer's reputation and influence have had a global reach. He was a former Fulbright scholar who has taught at the Pädagogische Hochschule in Ludwigsburg, Germany, at Kingston University in the UK, and for two years at the Université de Limoges in Limoges, France. Dr. Reimer never shied away from a challenge and loved teaching abroad as much as sending students abroad for their studies.

He has impacted both the CMS school system and the Charlotte film scene. Dr. Reimer has shaped our department significantly by serving as department Chair for seven years, in addition to being a coordinator of the German program and Director of the Film Studies minor. Upon coming to UNC Charlotte, Dr. Reimer taught German classes and got his students excited about studying abroad. A partnership with the Pädagogische Hochschule (teachers' institute) in Ludwigsburg, Germany allowed students to experience German culture first hand. He also personally endowed a scholarship for German majors, together with his friends and colleagues, Drs. Karl Gabriel and Susan Cernyak-Spatz, so that students who cannot afford it on their own might be able to study abroad.

After earning tenure, Dr. Reimer turned much of his scholarly attention to film. Dr. Reimer's research interests are film and language methodology. He has co-authored six books on German cinema on such topics as National Socialist film, postwar film, the Holocaust in film, and German film history. Dr. Reimer's enthusiasm for German film extended to cover film studies in general. This helped secure a diverse group of affiliated faculty members and the Film Studies minor was created in 1992. The Film Studies program, which he directed for almost 20 years, recently added a Certificate in Video Production. These programs are now housed under Interdisciplinary Studies and more than 100 students are currently minoring in Film Studies. (continued)

Farewells

Dr. Robert Reimer Retires

The Charlotte community has benefited greatly from Dr. Reimer's dedication and vision. He served on the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Committee for Language Immersion. He assisted in starting the German Language Immersion program at Bruns Avenue Elementary after receiving a grant from the American Association of Teachers of German to survey parents on interest in German. He also received grants to create materials for German language immersion instruction. Working together with the Pädagogische Hochschule in Ludwigsburg, Germany, and the Office of Education Abroad at UNC Charlotte, he initiated a program to bring in native speaking assistants for language immersion instruction in CMS schools. He also supervised UNC Charlotte German students interning at Bruns Avenue Elementary. In addition to language immersion, Dr. Reimer has actively promoted German and film in the Charlotte community. He was a founding member of Alemannia, a German language cultural association in Charlotte, and served as vice president of the Charlotte Film Society.

Most importantly though, Dr. Reimer has been an inspiration. He always backs the underdog, whether in soccer, in the classroom, or among colleagues. His sense of justice is unparalleled and he protects those who need protection. He is also an idealist and believes that sending students to the ballet, with tickets he donated generously, will make a difference in their lives. Dr. Reimer is one of the most loyal and generous people.

For me personally, Dr. Reimer has been the equivalent of what the Germans call Doktormutter or Doktorvater literally the mother or father of the doctorate or dissertation, except he was my academic father figure, after the doctorate. He impacted my academic career like no other colleague. He taught me how to think about the whole, to see how the pieces in the puzzle fit together. Dr. Reimer facilitated my becoming German coordinator and then later Associate Chair. If I have learned anything about administration, it is from Dr. Reimer. You take care of your people and you make things run. You always keep a little rebellion in your back pocket because too much authority is never good. Thank you for your friendship, collegiality and leadership, Robert. You have made all the difference. We hope that this phased retirement gives us two more semesters of your teaching in the department. But more importantly, we wish you to enjoy many soccer matches and championships all over the world, film premieres at home and abroad, and time with your beloved wife, Carol and your children.
(Submitted by Anabel Aliaga-Buchenau)

Farewells

Joshua Nicholls



Photo Credit: Arthur Rogers, III. Alumnus of 2018

Joshua Nicholls, who graduated in 2018 with baccalaureate degrees in Japanese Studies and Political Science in addition to the Japanese Translation Certificate, passed away due to COVID-19 in August 2021. Joshua always had a passion to learn Japanese culture and languages, and he studied abroad for two semesters at Doshisha University in Japan in 2016. After graduation, he moved to Japan to start his career and got married.

His father, Scott Nicholls wrote to say:
"Joshua was driven to learn the Japanese culture and language. This started at an early age (2nd grade) with the intention to eventually move to Japan. At first we (his parents) thought it was a passing phase but as he grew older his resolve only became stronger. We are so thankful to UNC Charlotte for encouraging him in his dreams. His time abroad at Doshisha while still a student at UNC Charlotte was his confirmation that he wanted to live there. Through it all, he was always excited to meet many individuals with similar interests. It has been so nice to hear from people that Joshua had the opportunity to be around and get to know. The fact that he touched so many lives has helped us in our grief."

The love and joy that Joshua brought to us will never be forgotten. His big heart and personality were inspiring to all. We are lucky to have known him for the time that we had together at UNC Charlotte.

Our Sincere Condolences,
All instructors of the Japanese Studies program
The Department of Languages and Culture Studies



Photo credit: Dr. Bobby Hobgood

**Articles written collaboratively by the faculty and students
of the Department of Languages and Culture Studies
Managing Editor: Jules Geaney-Moore**

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