New Spanish Course Offered with Prof. Dona Kercher

In June 2011 Dona Kercher, Professor of Spanish and Film, participated in a Faculty Development Seminar in International Business at the Darla Moore School of Business Executive Education at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, SC.

The week-long seminar, conducted entirely in Spanish, was led by Profs. Michael Doyle of the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill and T. Bruce Fryer of the University of South Carolina. Doyle and Fryer are the co-authors of Exito Comercial, fifth edition, which is the most successful Business Spanish textbook on the market.

As a result of this seminar Prof. Kercher plans to offer a new course in Business Spanish at level V in Fall 2012.

Welcome to Caroline Nyaga, Administrative Assistant

Caroline Nyaga joins Assumption College as the new administrative secretary for the department of Modern and Classical Languages and Cultures, Latin American Studies and Honors Program. After a few weeks of losing her way from one building to another, walking into the wrong offices, and being puzzled by identical hallways, she is more or less settling down and taking each day at a time and the challenges it offers as a learning experience.
Richard Bonanno has been hard at work teaching in Italian Studies and the college-wide Honors Program. The Italian Studies program is moving forward with strong enrollments and a growing number of majors and minors, several of whom have recently departed for programs of study in Italy. In May 2011 Prof. Bonanno presented a conference paper entitled “Blessed Be the Peacewagers in Gabriele Salvatores’ Mediterraneo” at the annual meeting of the Mediterranean Studies Association (MSA) at Ionian University, Corfu, Greece. He continues his research on St. Michael’s Cemetery, the topic of a talk that he delivered at the 2010 MSA Conference at the Universidad de Salamanca, Salamanca, Spain.

Recently, Prof. Catto led a guest lecture in Prof. Anthony Zielonka’s class “War in Film and Literature,” Thursday, Sept. 15, 2:30-3:45. She spoke on the difference between ancient and modern warfare, showed slides and led a discussion. She also gave two lectures at the Advanced Academy of Math and Science, Marlborough, MA on Nov. 17: “Latina Mythica and the Joys of Mythology” to two ninth grade classes and “The Attraction of Lucretius” to 5 classes of Latin I students in seventh grade.

Currently, Prof. Catto is still working on the second volume of Latina Mythica II which is essentially a Latin version of Homer’s Iliad geared towards intermediate students. Over the summer she completed Chapter 15 of approximately 20 planned chapters. She hopes to complete the book next summer. Prof. Catto participated in Foundations Colloquium discussing John Armstrong’s In Search of Civilization on Oct. 12. and also participated in the Paideia Colloquium of the Ecumenical Institute with Eva Brann on Homer on Nov. 8. This semester, Prof. Catto attended the American Institute of Archaeology Lecture at Mount Holyoke by Dr. Gregory Aldrete on Roman Linothorax Armor, Oct. 18 and attended the American Institute of Archaeology Lecture at Assumption by Dr. Jodi Magness on excavations at Masada on Oct. 27.

In June he will once again participate in the 2012 MSA Conference, to be held at Juraj Dobrila University, Pula, Croatia, with a paper dealing with Boccaccio’s “Decameron” and inspired by work with students in a comparative literature course dealing with the fourteenth-century masterwork. He has plans in the works for additional conference papers in 2012 and is exploring ways to creatively communicate the findings of his research on St. Michael’s Cemetery in non-print formats.

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Mary Bierfeldt

I suppose the most impressive information would be my longevity as an adjunct...24 years. My husband and I met here in the French MAT program in 1971. I came from Holy Family University, Philadelphia, PA and he from Manhattan College, NY to what was then considered one of the best graduate programs in French in the country, comparable to that of Middlebury College. We ended up staying in Worcester and raising our 5 children, four of whom are Assumption graduates. Besides teaching French part-time at Assumption, I have also taught French part-time in the Worcester public schools, Hudson Catholic High School, St. Gobain Company (formerly Norton Co.) and have done home and hospital tutoring in all secondary subjects for Worcester. I taught Confirmation CCD for 30 years for St. Joan of Arc Parish, Worcester and was New England Regional Director of the Williams Syndrome Association for 12 years.

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Stacy Giufre

Stacy Giufre received her Ph.D. in Romance Languages and Literatures from Harvard in March 2011. After finishing her dissertation, she began teaching Italian language and culture at Assumption and Holy Cross.

Her research focuses on twentieth century Italian literature, feminist theory, and women writers. An excerpt from her dissertation, “Hyperbole in the Work of Cesare Pavese: Textual Resistance and Bodily Defiance,” is forthcoming in Italica, and she will present on women’s autobiography at this year’s Italian Studies conference in Charleston.

Outside of the classroom, she leads the Tavola italiana and advises the newly formed Italian Club.

Juan Carlos Grijalva

Prof. Juan Carlos Grijalva has recently been promoted to Associate Professor of Spanish. Currently, he is on a sabbatical year (2011-2012). Among other academic activities, Professors Grijalva and Michael Handelsman (University of Tennessee) finished their edited book, De Athahuapca a Cuauhtémac. Los nacionalismos culturales de Benjamín Carrión y José Vasconcelos, which was funded and will be published by the Fundación Museos de la Ciudad de Quito, Ecuador.

Currently, Professors Grijalva and Emmanuelle Si

Arlene Guerrero-Watanabe, MCLC Chair

Professor Arlene Guerrero-Watanabe, Associate Professor of Spanish, teaches Spanish language at all levels, along with courses in contemporary Latin American literature. Prof. Guerrero was appointed the Modern and Classical Languages Department Chair at the beginning of this academic year, and by and large, this new position has been keeping her quite busy ever since.

After many years of service as Director of Latin American Studies, Prof. Guerrero left this position, but she continues to teach and to be actively involved in the program. Prof. Guerrero served as Chair of the Faculty Appeals Committee last year, and she is representing MCLC in Faculty Senate this current academic year.

Prof. Guerrero will be presenting current research at the XI Congreso Internacional de Literatura Hispánica (XI International Conference on Hispanic Literature) this March in Cuzco, Peru. Her presentation is titled “Haunted by the Past: The Fantastic and the Reconfiguring of Cuban Identity in Daina Chaviano’s La isla de los amores infinitos.” Her presentation analyzes how Chaviano’s text draws on elements of fantasy and the Uncanny to rewrite Cuban foundational myths. Prof. Guerrero’s analysis focuses on how this novel represents national identity in relation to an individual’s sense of place/displacement. Prof. Guerrero is also in the process of writing an article entitled, “Parody and Power in Roberto G. Fernández’s “The Augustflower.” The short story “The Augustflower” works to question the inequalities promulgated by U.S. immigration policy, specifically the Wet Foot/Dry Foot law that applies to Cuban immigrants. Prof. Guerrero is interested in how this text uses parody to challenge hegemonic perspectives on immigration.
Elisabeth Howe, professor of French at Assumption since 1991, has had a lifelong passion for the language, culture and literature of France. Her research is in the field of French poetry of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

She has published articles and given presentations at conferences on poets such as Stéphane Mallarmé, Paul Valéry, Jules Laforgue, Pierre Reverdy and Henri Michaux. She has also published three books: *Stages of Self: The Dramatic Monologues of Laforgue*, Mallarmé and Valéry (Ohio University Press: 1990, winner of the NEMLA/Ohio University Press: 1990), winner of the Mallarmé and Valéry Dramatic Monologues of Laforgue, three books: *Michaux*. She has also published French poetry of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Her research is in the field of culture and literature of France. Her long passion for the language, teaching French in college and to her in contact with Colombian women and film at U MA- Amherst. Besides scholars from the US, UK and Spain the scriptwriter Alicia Luna and the filmmakers Mar Coll and Inés Paris also participated and presented their films screened during the conference.

In November Prof. Kercher travelled to San Sebastián, Spain, to speak at a conference on Basque Cinema and Exile at the University of Deusto. She presented a paper entitled “Alex de la Iglesia y los desplazamientos al centro” [Alex de la Iglesia and the displacements toward the center]. Although De la Iglesia, a major Spanish director who received the national Cinematography prize in 2011, was born and raised in the Basque Country references to his Basque heritage only appear sporadically and indirectly in his films. Kercher’s visit coincided with a retrospective of De la Iglesia’s works at the Fermin Azkarraga Cultural Center in San Sebastián.

This fall the MCLC Dept. sponsored a Spanish film series, which was organized by Prof. Kercher. All three films in the monthly series dealt with ways in which the main characters confronted challenges and took risks. The audience favorite was the Colombian film *The Colors of the Mountain* about a young boy who loses his soccer ball in a minefield. This movie will also be shown during the Worcester Latino Film Festival of which Assumption College is a co-sponsor.

An Assumption College Faculty Development Grant enabled Prof. Kercher to travel to Bogotá, Colombia, this summer to conduct film research at the Cineteca Distrital, Office of the Patrimonio Filmico Colombiano and the Biblioteca Nacional. She investigated the original reception of Alfred Hitchcock’s movies in Colombia as part of her continuing book project “Latin Hitchcock.” Sergio Becerra generously provided her with contacts and resources, as well as many recent publications, and she led her daughter to travel with her the Faenza in the 80’s, too. She has promoted French culture in various ways: she runs the French Club, which meets about once per month to play games in French or eat French food, view movies and, of course, speak French.

She has organized several French Film Festivals over the years. Together with her colleague Professor Anthony Zielonka, she has taken groups of students to the south of France during Spring Break. Professor Howe teaches courses in French language, Cinema, and literature.

This October Prof. Kercher gave a presentation, “Un Hitchcock feminino: los arcos genéricos de Isabel Coixet and Icíar Bollain,” at the conference “Gynocine: Mujeres, Dones y Cine” on Spanish women and film at U MA – Amherst. Besides scholars from the US, UK and Spain the scriptwriter Alicia Luna and the filmmakers Mar Coll and Inés Paris also participated and presented their films screened during the conference.

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Dr. Maryanne Leone received tenure in Spring 2011 and was promoted to Associate Professor of Spanish. She is on sabbatical and is residing in Madrid, Spain, for the 2011-2012 academic year with her husband and seven year-old son.

Maryanne is working on a book project titled *Borderland Identities in Contemporary Spain*, which looks at narratives that address the changing borders of Spanish identity in the post-Franco years (post-1975). In October 2011, she presented the paper “Feminist Agency and Transnational Subjectivity in Urban Spaces: Lucía Etxebarria’s Cosmofobia (2007)” at the annual conference of the Asociación Internacional de Literatura y Cultura Femenina Hispánica in Barcelona, Spain. She will continue to explore the politics of place, subjectivity, and voice in this novel and other contemporary Spanish immigration narratives.

In addition to her research, she is enjoying running in the Retiro, and delighting in the cafés, terrazas, cultural activity and city life right outside her balcony.

**Esteban Loustaunau**

Professor Loustaunau specializes in contemporary Latin American literature and culture. In particular, he explores the role of literature and art in representing alternative ways of belonging and collective identity in countries like Mexico and Ecuador. His most recent publication addresses these two issues from the perspectives of Ecuadorian immigrants in the United States and Europe as they challenge mestizaje as the dominant discourse of national identity. His essay, “Imaginar la ecuatorianidad en tiempos de crisis: Cartas al Ecuador y la representación cultural de la migración contemporánea,” will appear in the upcoming book *De Atahualpa a Cuauhtémoc: El nacionalismo cultural de Benjamín Carrión y José Vasconcelos*, co-authored by professors Juan Carlos Grijalva and Michael Handelsman. Currently, Professor Loustaunau is presenting the photography exhibit “Immigrant Perspectives of Life in Worcester,” at the Emmanuel D’Alzon Library. This collection of photographs is the result of a community service project on Literacy Through Photography involving students in SPA 381 and ESOL adult students from TRA-Inc., a local non-profit organization.

**Anthony Zielonka**

• **Amber Fournier** is in Mississippi in the Teach for America Program.
• **Lizzie Benestad** is teaching Latin at the Portsmouth Abbey School in Rhode Island.
• **Holly Engvall** is teaching Latin at the Abbey Kelly Foster School in Worcester.
• **Maureen Moriarity** is teaching Latin and French at Grafton High School.
• **Nicole Lavallee** is a special education teacher in Holden as is pursuing a Master of Elementary Education at Fitchburg State.
• **Sierra Calla** is teaching Latin in New Hampshire and recently posted some interesting photos of the new Pompeii exhibit at the Boston Museum of Science.
• **Deryk Goodrich** is doing his student teaching at The Boston Latin School.
• **Jim Brehany** is teaching Latin at the Stony Brook Middle School in Westford.
• **GiGiAnne Douillard** is still living in Virginia and has been teaching and substituting French in the pubic schools.
• **Ashley Rode** is an Acoustiguide at The United Nations and is working on a MA in Library and Information Technology at The Pratt Institute. Last spring she gave the address at the departmental dinner for majors and minors.
• **Denis Deriev** completed a Ph.D. in Ancient History at The University of California.
• **Chris Halligan** received his law degree from Roger Williams University and is now practicing law in Mass. and Rhode Island.
• **Michael Valalik** is attending nursing school at Yale University and claims his Latin is really helpful! He already knows the terminology!
• **Bill Borowski** is a V.P. for Wealth Management at Merrill Lynch.
• Prof. Catto ran into **Malcolm Asadoorian** on a ferry back from Nantucket to Woods Hole this summer! He is now an Associate Dean of Academic Affairs for Assessment and Faculty Development at Lynn University in Florida.
• **Dan Vecchio** is studying philosophy at Marquette University.
• **Heather Brandi Mauer** is an administrative assistant at Shell Oil in L.A.
• **Jean Slavkovsky** is an Information Librarian at the Malden (MA) Public Library.
• **Jennifer Monahan Werner** is at stay-at-home mother with an adorable daughter.
• **Heather MacLeod** is spending the 2011-12 academic year as an assistant teacher of English in a French high school in Clermont-Ferrand, through the French Government Assistant Teacher Program. Each year, one or more of our majors/minors in French goes to France to teach English for a year.
• **Mairin Brunt** (pictured during study abroad in Paris in spring 2009 on p. 9) graduated in 2010 and is now teaching French at Chelmsford High School.

*Immigrant Perspectives of Life in Worcester: a photography exhibit by ESOL students at TRA-INC. in collaboration with CSL students in Spanish 381. D’Alzon Arts presentation produced collaboratively with Esteban Loustaunau. February 6 - April 13, 2012*
Upcoming Events in the German Program
By Elisabeth Solbakken

German 104 once again put on an amazing performance at the end of the spring 2011 semester: Hänsel und Gretel in their own interpretation. Professor Solbakken recorded the play, and students can admire their own accomplishments on DVD.

This year the German program was proud to produce another German Major: David Paradise ’11. He spent a productive semester in Salzburg, Austria during his Junior Year, and acquired a great Austrian accent. David encourages his fellow Assumption students to take advantage of the study abroad opportunity in Salzburg. He is featured on the Assumption College website, where he tells about his experience in Austria.

Erin Rodriques ’12 is graduating with a major in German this coming spring. Erin was part of a group of Assumption students, which included David Paradise, who traveled with a history class to central Europe for Spring break. Erin reported great success in communicating in German during the stay in Vienna. Two graduates from last year’s class, Lauren Keating ’11 and Natalie Geeza ’11 (Natalie also had spent a semester in Salzburg), came by to visit the Advanced German class in November. It happened to be Vienna day, and there was Linzertorte and Sachertorte to make the visit even more festive. Natalie is continuing with German in graduate school at UMass Amherst, where she studies History, with particular emphasis on German history. She is looking forward to going to Berlin to further her research.

Lauren Keating is now a graduate student at Assumption, in the Master’s program for Special Education. She went to Germany and Austria this summer to celebrate her graduation with her family, and loved her time there.

Every fall sees an Oktoberfest in the German program: the German bakery in Hillsboro, New Hampshire is our supplier for authentic pretzels, baked by their Swabian baker. We had Obatzter, Bavarian cheese, sausages and breads. And where else than in Germany would they have cookies named after a philosopher! The Leibniz Kekse are another staple of our Oktoberfest tradition.

Professor Solbakken was delighted when a group of students decided they did not want to stop their German language experience with German 104, and decided to lobby for a Special Topics Advanced German class. We have had a great time together, and we are all sad that the fall semester is ending soon.

Erik Gallup’12, who together with Anita Dossabhoy ’13 and Emily Cox’14, had the idea for the Advanced German class, is graduating with a minor in German. His expertise in French as well as in German makes him a very language-minded Jane Austen fan indeed! Literature is his great passion. He is always willing to share his insights about literature and movies, be they English or German.

Katie Burns’12 is graduating with a minor in German. Her semester in Salzburg, Austria in the spring of her junior year was particularly productive. She perfected her already very good German, and traveled extensively. Her travels have resulted in great weekly German reports that make everyone want to explore Europe. Professor Solbakken has been admiring Katie’s amazing work ethic, and knows she will keep up with German in graduate school as well.

Nicholas Helpa’11, our consortium student last year, is a musical philosophy student, and performs regularly at the German restaurant in Worcester, which happens to be called Nick’s. Yes, there is a German restaurant in Worcester! The food is great, and the music and the décor are also worth the trek over to Kelley Square.

For the enthusiastic German 101 class there was a German Christmas party with Lebkuchen and Stollen enjoyed before finals week. Many of the students will be attending Ibsen’s Table, the Comparative Literature/German class on food and literature with Prof. Solbakken this spring, and some will even do an independent study to keep up with the German language as well.

Novelist, Poet, and Critic Alicia Borinsky
Gives Reading of Recent Work

In February, Alicia Borinsky, the Argentinean novelist, poet and critic, visited Assumption to give a bilingual reading from her latest book of poetry Frivolous Women and Other Sinners [Frívolas y pecadoras] (Swan Island Press, 2009). The event was jointly sponsored by LAS, MCLC and Women’s Studies. Alicia Borinsky is Professor of Latin American and Comparative Literature at Boston University where she began and led the Writing in the Americas program. She has known—and even been an inspiration for—many Latin American writers. She considers Jorge Luis Borges as one of her teachers. Some of Borinsky’s papers were recently acquired by Amherst College and given an archival exhibition in their library.
Novità in Italiano

Summer Study in Southern Italy

Prof. Bonanno served as faculty member in the MSA Summer Study Program in Rome and Southern Italy. The program featured four days in Rome with an extensive walking tour of the eternal city and visits to a variety of museums and churches, a homestay in the town of Nocchiano in the Regione Abruzzo, study in the Castello di Nocchiano, travel to archeological sites in Pompeii and Paestum, and a two-week stay at the Università di Messina featuring day-trips to Sicilian cities and archeological sites. The program offers courses in Italian, Art History, Painting, and History. Students participating from Assumption included Leanna Blanch and David Mailing who are both Italian Studies major were joined by Pamela Dunton, and Nicole Smith. Both students and professor were thoroughly impressed; professor Bonanno has agreed to participate in 2012 and David Mailing was quick to reapply for the 2012 session. For additional information on the program contact Professor Bonanno directly or consult the website: (https://mediterraneanstudies.org/).

Visit by Novelist Guido Pedrelli

In October 2011, writer Guido Pedrelli visited Assumption College and met with students during class meetings and also with Tavola Italiana participants over lunch at Charlie’s. Author of the recently published Evelina (Società editrice il Ponte Vecchio; Cesena, 2011,) Mr. Pedrelli gave a dramatic reading of an excerpt from his novel Le Stelle di Asmara (Società editrice il Ponte Vecchio; Cesena, 2009,) and discussed the art of writing, the subjects of his books, current events in Italy, and the importance of Italian literature in the world of arts and letters. Both students and faculty enjoyed the visit. Grazie Guido per essere venuto!

Italian Club and Tavola Italiana

Thanks to the hard work of Beatriz Jimenez (President) and Marian Murphy (Vice-President), Assumption College’s Italian Club has been reformed. The first official events held in the Fall 2011 semester included screenings of the Disney Classic “Il Re Leone” and of Roberto Benigni’s award-winning “La vita è bella.” For the Spring semester and upcoming years the Italian Club has a variety of activities in store, such as an Italian game night, dinners with Italian food (of course!), and fieldtrips. All are welcome to attend!

Grazie Guido Pedrelli! Students in ITA 120 meet with Guido Pedrelli. Left to right: Giuliana Franchetti, Leanna Blanch, Justine DiDonato, Josh Boucher, Katherine Vachawski, Guido Pedrelli, Beatriz Jimenez, Caroline Knowles, Meghan Mascola, David Mailing, Caitlin Sewall.
The French Club held a welcome buffet dinner on October 5, and an International Christmas Carol Sing-Along, with the participation of Prof. George Aubin, Prof. Bonnie Catto and the Classics Club, on December 7.

The Richard J. Testa Scholarship Fund was established in 2002 by the French Cultural Center and Alliance Française of Boston in conjunction with Richard Testa’s widow, Janet Testa. It is awarded each year to two students from Assumption with Franco-American background in order to continue their French studies and reinforce their heritage. The scholarship allows the two students to study at the Alliance Française in Paris for a month in the summer, all expenses paid. Recent recipients have been: MARIE EBACHER and ALAN MARTINEAU in 2010; MEGHAN SURETTE and MICHELA MITSOCK in 2011.

La Fédération Féminine Franco-Américaine:  

Our Junior French Major STEPHANIE CHERY was awarded this scholarship, offered by the Saint-Jean Baptiste Foundation of Woonsocket, R.I., and received a framed certificate and check for $1,000 in December 2011. She is currently studying at the University of Grenoble, France (Spring ’12), with AIFS.

Senior French Minor ALEXANDER COURY was awarded the Clapin Scholarship, offered by the same Foundation, in January 2012, receiving a framed certificate and a check for $250.

MARIE EBACHER (Junior, Major in French) is studying at the University of Dakar, Senegal, in Spring ’12.

The National French Honor Society (Pi Delta Phi) Initiation Ceremony, inducting new members, will be held in the Marriott Room of Taylor on Wednesday, April 25 from 4-5 p.m.

The French Club held its annual Mardi gras Crepes evening on Tuesday, February 21, from 5.30 to 6.30 p.m.


This newsletter was produced by Amanda Bollacker Class of 2013 and Richard Bonanno