

THE AMBASSADOR

THE DEPARTMENT OF WORLD LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

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Notes from The Chair

Dear Alumni, Students, Faculty, and Friends of World Languages and Cultures,

I hope this message finds you well as you transition into the Fall season. We are excited to share with you the latest issue of our Ambassador, which highlights the many exciting events and changes taking place in our department this semester. We are particularly thrilled to welcome a new group of Fulbright Teaching Assistants to our department this year. Sheila Mignolet (Argentina), Rahma Baklouti (Tunisia), Joshua Hartmann (Germany), and Héloïse Vérissi (France). We are also thrilled to have Ms. Naoko Omori on board to teach Japanese. All of them bring a diverse set of experiences and perspectives to our community. We encourage you to learn more about them in this issue and to attend the events they will be organizing throughout the academic year.

In addition to welcoming new faculty, we have had the pleasure of cosponsoring two events with the renowned Puerto Rican writer Yolanda Arroyo Pizarro, and we will be hosting a professional development lecture for our faculty with Dr. Ana López from Haverford College. You can find more information about these events in this issue. I am grateful for the hard work and dedication of our faculty, staff, and students who continue to push the boundaries of research

and learning in language, literature, and culture. I would especially like to recognize the outstanding service provided by the Director of the Language Learning Center, Hannah Grijincu, our Graduate Assistant Ximena Jiménez, and the Administrative Assistant JoAnne Jurkiewicz. And, of course, I am proud of our alumni who continue in their successful careers, as highlighted in our Alumni Spotlight. Finally, I would like to pay tribute to the Catalan writer Mercè Rodoreda on the 40th anniversary of her death. I'd like to share one of her poems with you:

Calypso's Lament (a sonnet)

I see you bare and burning land, deserted,
by the raging sea below a steep cliff,
your stone palace like an open mouth
and the wasteland where the wasp buzzes and the flock starves.

I am what is left, what flees and passes:
the breeze among the leaves, the star that has dimmed,
the torrent that laughs and cries and that tender mass
of honeysuckle that holds off the night a moment more.

I have wanted you mine forever, tired of sea and wave,
secure in my flesh, curve and exalted honey,
stranger returning to your own death.

Now I would like to be a lion that plays and kills
or the olive tree immobile in its twisted wrath,
but in my breast a scarlet scorpion agonizes.

Thank you for your continued support of the World Languages and Cultures Department.

Dr. Yamile Silva
Chair and Professor of the Department of World Languages and Cultures

Adjunct Faculty Spotlights

By: Ximena Jimenez

Franca M. Kelly



Professor Kelly was born in Italy and speaks Italian, French, English, and Spanish.

Her love for languages began when she traveled to England and worked in London. Due to her interactions with people from various places, her interest was sparked, and she soon began to study French and English at the University of Verona in Italy. She spent a year studying at the Sorbonne University in Paris as an exchange student. She learned Spanish while she was attending the University of Texas at El Paso. She had always dreamt of being a teacher ever since she was young. She graduated high school with a diploma in Elementary Education. She worked as a tutor for high school students while she was in college and worked with teenagers as a girl scout

leader in Italy. Kelly then began teaching Italian at the West Virginia University as a graduate student.

She began working at the University of Scranton in fall 2019. One of her favorite things about teaching here has been that it is a small university and classes are small where students are very studious and engaged in their classes. Her favorite thing about working at the World Languages Department has been meeting the Fulbright TAs from different countries. Kelly currently teaches Italian 101 and is teaching French in high school.

She believes the best way to learn and become proficient in a language is by immersing oneself in that culture and language. She strongly suggests finding opportunities for listening, speaking, watching movies and shows on TV, and reading in that language. Language is about communication, so talking to native speakers of that language is one of the best ways to improve speaking and comprehension skills.

Konstantin Lyavdansky

Which languages do you speak?

I was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, so Russian is my native language, and I also speak English.

When did you first start working at The University of Scranton?

In 1993, the school reached out to me because they were looking for a Russian professor, and I agreed to join.

Where did you study before you came to the University of Scranton?

I studied at St. Petersburg State University and majored in languages and philology.

What made you interested in learning and studying languages?

I wanted to know about other countries and how people live in different parts of the world. English seemed to be the most common at the time.

How old were you when you first started learning another language?

I was in elementary school when I first started learning English, but it became more serious once I entered university.

What made you interested in teaching and what has been one of your favorite things about teaching at Scranton?

The initial desire of learning about other countries converted into willingness to share about my own. What better way to share about your own country than to teach the language and history and literature of that country? Communicating with students has been my favorite. They are bright, full of great ideas, and genuinely interested in learning.

What's your favorite thing about working in the World Language Department? What has been the most rewarding?

One of them is teaching the students and meeting the Fulbright Teaching Assistants from all over the world. I also like the flexibility of my schedule and hours which makes a great work life balance.

Which courses are you teaching this semester? Which course has been your favorite to teach and why?



I am teaching intensive Russian, Introduction to Russian literature, and Russian culture and history. I like intensive Russian because at the end of the course I can see the progress and how students who come in with little knowledge emerge with the ability to communicate.

Do you have any projects you're currently working on and/ or any future projects you wish to work on?

I work with the commonwealth of PA in "Project GO." GO means global officer where I teach an intensive crash course of Russian to ROTC students from all over the country at Bloomsburg University.

What advice would you give a student trying to learn another language?

Be serious. Learn a little everyday and try to communicate from the beginning. Also try to watch news, movies, in the target language, and be positive about it.

Faculty Scholarship

Dr. Habib Zanzana

Dr. Zanzana presented two conference papers in summer 2023.

- 1) "Narratives of War, Trauma, Ruptures and Temporality in Isabel Allende's The Wind Knows my Name" at the London Centre for Interdisciplinary Research", July 29-30, 2023.
- 2) "The Intersection of Conflict, Language and Medicine in Abraham Verghese's The Covenant of Water," at the South Asian Literature and Conflict Studies Conference, Woxsen University, 9-10 August, 2023.

In fall 2023, Dr. Zanzana will be presenting a third paper titled,

- 3) "Black Italy in Contemporary Literature and Cinema" at the 48th Annual European Studies Conference, The University of Nebraska at Omaha, October 5-6, 2023.

Dr. Yamile Silva

Dr. Silva, an expert on the work of Abigail Mejía, was invited by the Dominican Government to attend the commemorative events held on September 28, 2023, in honor of the Dominican writer and suffragist in Santo Domingo. One of the main events was the transfer of Abigail Mejía's remains to the National Pantheon (Panteón de la Patria), where national heroes are buried. In the picture, we can see Dr. Silva along with Minister of Women Mayra Jiménez and Assistant Ambassador at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ylonka Nacidit Perdonó, at the National Pantheon.



Publications:

-Her article "Políticas domésticas en arenas (trans)nacionales: Abigail Mejía sobre la Invasión de Estados Unidos a la República Dominicana" was accepted to be published in the special dossier "Mujeres latinoamericanas en el tránsito al siglo XX: redes, feminismos, activismos y dinámicas de sociabilidad e intervención política en América Latina (1880-1930)" (Spring 2024) edited by Drs.

Morales-Pino (Universidad Católica del Perú) and Sofía Pachas-Maceda (Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos) and to be published in Les Cahiers ALHIM.

-Her chapter “La conquista del espacio en la relación de Gerónimo de Ypori” will be published in the volume “Literatura colonial en transición” published by the Argentine press EDUVIM (Summer 2024) and edited by Dr. Amber Brian (Iowa University).

Talk:

-Silva presented her talk “Abigail Mejía sobre la Invasión de Estados Unidos a la República Dominicana” at the Gender and Sexualities Association’s (AEGS) annual conference in Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro, México, October 5-7, 2023.

Service to the Profession:

- By invitation, Dr. Silva serves as program track chair (Literature and Culture) for the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) for the Annual Conference to be celebrated in Bogotá, Colombia, in June 2024.

-She serves this year as Chair of the Executive Council of the Colonial Section, Latin American Studies Association (LASA).

-Silva will serve as peer review panelist for the 2023 NEH. Humanities Connections Planning and Implementation competition (by invitation).

FLTA Introductions

Rahma Baklouti



Hi everyone! My name is Rahma Baklouti, and I am the Arabic FLTA. I come from Tunisia. Tunisia is a small country in North Africa. Tunisian culture is highly diverse. Indeed, a significant number of Jews and Christians have lived among a Muslim majority for years. This diversity is also seen in the architecture of the capital, Tunis. The city blends ancient Arab Souks, cathedrals, mosques, and modern office buildings. At the beginning of my studies, I was interested in the healthcare field, so I majored in midwifery. My second major was in English. I hold a Bachelor in English language, literature, and civilization. Moreover, I hold an M.A. in American Studies from the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences of Tunis. Currently, I am a Ph.D. candidate at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of Sousse, Tunisia. For three years, I worked as a teacher of foreign languages. I taught Arabic, French, and English in primary and secondary schools. Being a university teacher is my dream, therefore, I am here. I am jubilant and honored to teach at the University of Scranton, and I will do my best to help students learn about the Arabic culture and language.

Sheila Mignolet

¡Hola a todos! My name is Sheila Mignolet, and I was born in Cipolletti, Argentina. Cipolletti is a small city in the Rio Negro province, located at the top of the region called Patagonia. It is best known for its apple and pear exports, but you can find beautiful hidden places nearby such as Isla Jordan, Cueva del León, the riverbank, etc. I was born and raised in Cipolletti, but I lived for five years in the city of General Roca, where I studied to become an English teacher. I graduated from the University of Comahue in 2017, and I



have been working as an English teacher since then. I have also participated in research projects that dealt with technology and good practices in education. This is the first time that I am teaching Spanish as a Second Language, but I am eager to accept the challenge. I love reading books, dancing and making different types of crafts. I also enjoy learning about new cultures through their music and films, so my playlists often feature a mixture of languages. I am keen on bringing my knowledge into the classroom and making the most of my time at Scranton. I hope my students and I can learn from each other during my time as part of the Fulbright Teaching Assistant Program.

Héloïse Vérissi



Hi everyone! I am Héloïse Vérissi, and I am from Paris, France. You may have heard of my city a couple of times. Between the beautiful architecture, great food, and a lot of cultural events, I do not think that it is possible to ever get bored in it! But France is a lot bigger than Paris and all our regions are so interesting and so unique. If you like French cuisine, definitely check out the food from the South-West! I graduated from the University of Paris with a BA in English with a focus on English History, and then I graduated from Université Paris Cité and University College Dublin last June with an MA in European History with a focus on Celtic History. It is my very first time teaching, and I am very excited to have been chosen to teach here for a year. I hope that I will be able to make my students as excited to speak about France and the French language as I am, and I will be more than happy to answer

any questions you may have about my language or culture.

Joshua Hartmann

Hallo! My name is Joshua Hartmann, and I come from Radeburg, which is a very small but lovely town near Dresden, Germany. I've been studying English and Geography for Secondary Education at the Technical University Dresden for four years now (I would by the way deeply recommend visiting Dresden if you should ever have the chance to do so, it's a beautiful place!). I've been playing soccer since I was a kid, and I enjoy any other kinds of sports and outdoor activities as well. I also have a passion for music and like to be creative with it. Having the opportunity to be a Foreign Language Teaching Assistant, I am very happy and excited to share my culture with you and to guide and assist you on your journey of learning German, I hope to learn more about your culture as well! So feel free to reach out to me anytime. I'm looking forward to it!



Visiting Instructor Introductions

Naoko Omori

My name is Naoko Omori. I was born in Kobe, Japan. After graduating from university, I went to Australia for one year, worked for a scent marketing company, and worked for a shared office company in Japan. I like eating, traveling, Japanese calligraphy, wearing a kimono, and reading. Please let me know your favorite restaurant in Scranton! I am looking forward to spending this year with you!



Chiang Yun

大家好！ My name is Chiang Yun. You can just call me Yun, or my English name, Lily. I was born in Taipei, Taiwan. You may not know where Taiwan is. Taiwan is a little island between China and Japan. Taiwan is a multicultural island from China, Japan and Southeast Asia. Taipei is the capital of Taiwan with a lot of delicious food and motorcycles. Have you tried bubble tea and hot pot? Try it and you will love it! I graduated from Zhong Yuan University with a bachelor's degree in teaching Chinese as a second language. After graduation, I taught at an international Chinese school in Korea for six years, so I can speak Korean and I also like watching Korean dramas. While I was working, I went to the National Taiwan Normal University to gain my master's degree in teaching Chinese as second language. It was hard work, but worth it. I like Chinese since it's a beautiful language with a lot of culture and history. I also like to experience different cultures. I am honored to teach in Scranton. I wish to bring my knowledge to the students because I believe students can learn from me and I can learn from them too.



Student Spotlights

By: Ximena Jimenez

Mollie Murphy

Year: Senior

Major: Secondary Education- Spanish Studies

Minor: Latin American/Latinx Studies Concentration

Were you exposed to another language growing up? What made you interested in studying Spanish?

Not really, I took my first Spanish class in kindergarten, and I remember loving it. We moved and Spanish was no longer offered until middle/high school. I loved the idea of connecting with people in their own language. I also love seeing where the languages have similarities in meaning and structure.

What has been your favorite Spanish class? Why?

Dr. Curiel's Bad Bunny Course. It was so cool to explore themes of race and gender through the lens of music. I also enjoyed learning the history of reggaeton.

What is the best thing about studying a language at the University of Scranton and what is one of your favorite memories or things you have learned while studying Spanish at the University of Scranton?

I have loved all of my professors in the world language department; they are all so engaging and understanding. My favorite memories have been when Dr. Zanzana acts out the plays and stories in class.

How has knowing Spanish helped you and what career are you aiming for?

Spanish has helped me make connections to other people in my personal life, and knowing another language makes everyone more desirable in the job market. High School Spanish Teacher is the career I am working towards.



Where do you see yourself in ten years?

I see myself teaching Spanish to high school students, and hopefully I will have completed a masters in Spanish or Linguistics and maybe be working toward a doctorate.

Luke Capper

Year: Senior

Major: Applied Computing and History

Minor: Spanish

Luke Capper, a Spanish minor at the University of Scranton, attended Trinity High School. He began taking Spanish classes in fifth grade and enjoyed it more than French. He continued studying Spanish into high school and eventually college.

He explains that knowing Spanish has been helpful when looking for a job as it is something employers tend to look for. In his personal life, it has helped him with conversation and even helped him with the understanding of the English language. Career wise, he is hoping to work with archives in a museum or a job involving cybersecurity.

His favorite Spanish class has been Spanish Conversation with Dr. Curiel because he gained a lot of knowledge and improved his conversation abilities in Spanish. The best thing about studying a language at the University has been the amount of resources available. His favorite memory from studying a language was when he watched movies from Latin America in his Latin American Culture and Civilization course.

In ten years, Luke hopes to have traveled to Spain and Latin America as well as have a job in the area. He advises those trying to learn another language to not be discouraged and to not fear asking for help.



Study Abroad Spotlights

Valerie Gibau



This summer, I was lucky enough to find myself studying abroad in Taiwan. Being an International Language-Business major and a Chinese minor, I found that studying Chinese in Taiwan was very helpful to me. Having access to convenient transportation in Taiwan was the highlight of my experience as it was easy for me to explore places and practice my language skills in public. Exploring Taiwan was especially fun because I got to do things with the most amazing friends I had ever met! Even though I came to learn about Chinese language and Taiwanese culture, I was able to learn about even more cultures as my schoolmates came from all different backgrounds. My friends and I would often go out to eat out at night markets and small businesses. I got to enjoy interesting Taiwanese staples such as beef noodle soup and bubble tea. Upon returning to the United States, I was able to flaunt the great memories I made in Taiwan and my improved Chinese language skills!

Chloe Devero

I had an absolutely incredible experience while studying at the University of Navarra in Pamplona, Spain this past Spring! Academically, all of my classes were Spanish language-focused in courses that don't have direct equivalents (but still earned me credits!) here at Scranton, which was absolutely integral for me as a Spanish language major—my personal favorite was my Spanish Pronunciation class. For those who aren't majoring in a language, though, don't worry—there are plenty of classes and even full programs in English in the majority of the countries Scranton has to choose from. If in doubt, check our university's study abroad website! I also had the pleasure of staying with a host family for a more authentic Spanish day-to-day experience. It was so incredibly helpful to know I always had at least a few people to rely on when navigating an entirely new country became too daunting. While I was quite pleased with my choice, I do also want to mention that university housing was also an option if I had chosen to select it. In sum, Spain was a lifechanging experience for me; I can't wait to go back! For anyone even slightly considering studying abroad, please take this as your sign to do so.



Alumni Spotlight

Carolann Trotta



Graduating Class: 2011

Major: International Languages- Business

Concentration: Italian

How has learning a language helped you?

After graduating the University of Scranton, I went on to travel abroad inspired by my interactions in the LLC working alongside all of the wonderful TAs from around the world. I utilized my language skills in the corporate world for nearly a decade, eventually landing where my passion aligned; I became an Italian language educator. In 2020 amidst a pandemic and a pregnancy, I graduated with my Masters in Linguistics from UMass Boston; this allowed my language learning journey to come full circle. Most importantly, however, it solidified my connection to my roots; as a first-generation college graduate, I know my grandparents would be proud.

Linda Neilan

Graduating Class: 1994

Major: Secondary Education & Spanish

In what way has learning a language impacted your life?

Studying Spanish at the University of Scranton and studying abroad in Spain during my junior year gave me language skills that led to job opportunities that would not have otherwise been available to me. Whether volunteering as a paralegal with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps in San Francisco, teaching high school Spanish in San Francisco, practicing law in New York, or serving as a Foreign Service Officer in Brazil and Mexico, my language skills were crucial to getting those opportunities.

What career advice would you offer a student?

Figure out what you're good at and what interests you and become an expert in that. Be honest with yourself about your strengths and weaknesses. Play to your strengths. If you are interested in public service and living overseas, consider volunteering after graduation with the Peace Corps, Jesuit Volunteer Corp, or similar organizations. Look at Fulbright opportunities. Consider taking the Foreign Service Exam if you're interested in a career overseas and public service.

Recent and Upcoming Events

Anime in Real Life



Anime is the most popular form of entertainment in Japan and one of the most popular forms of entertainment around the world, attracting viewers of all ages and backgrounds. Even though people from all over the world watch anime, it is primarily created and focused on Japan and displays Japanese culture. On September 27th, Japanese visiting instructor Naoko Omori introduced students, faculty, staff, and community members to the genre of anime. They watched a few clips of a popular anime called Ginatama, and Omori showed how anime is connected to Japan and Japanese culture. According to Omori, “There are a lot of people who watch anime for fun, but from anime you can learn about Japanese culture, ways of thinking, and the way of life that Japanese people take for granted. Since I am living in Scranton for a year and I’m from Japan, I wanted to share this with everyone from the University of Scranton.”

At the event, students learned about how Japanese history and politics are reflected in anime characters and storylines. Attendees also watched the cherry blossoms blooming in the anime and got to drink cherry blossom tea, try Tamagoyaki, or Japanese omelets, from the anime, eat Japanese candy, and more. This introduction to anime showed students more about anime and just how much

they can learn about Japan by watching it. Omori ended the event by teaching the students to play “Jan Ken Pon,” or rock-paper-scissors, a game played almost every day in Japan, and sharing her favorite anime for them to watch.

Omori shares, “I was very happy that I was able to hold an event and not only had students who were taking Japanese language classes come, but also students who don't normally speak Japanese, and I was able to talk with teachers from local high schools.”

Yolanda Arroyo Pizarro



Yolanda Arroyo Pizarro, renowned Puerto Rican novelist, presented at two events on Writing the Ancestras: Journaling decolonization thru Afrofeminism and Afrofuturism at an event cosponsored by the Slattery Center for the Humanities and the Department of World Languages and Cultures.



World Languages Open House



On October 3rd, the World Languages and Cultures department hosted their Open House where students from various language classes including Spanish, Arabic, Japanese, and German visited the Language Learning Center. The students were each given passports which encouraged them to engage in conversation with the Foreign Language Fulbright Teaching Assistants, language tutors, and instructors from the Department. Light refreshments were also offered to those who attended.

Community ESL Grant



The Language Learning Center Community ESL program was awarded a \$2,000 Critical Needs Grant from the Scranton Area Foundation last year to fund the purchase of new textbooks for the local English language learners who visit the center and meet with tutors to improve their English proficiency.

Upcoming Events

This year, the Department of World Languages and Cultures is proud to host the following events:

- Fulbright events:
 - October 19th at 4:30 p.m. in Kane Forum: Fall Folktales from Argentina led by FLTA Sheila Mignolet.
 - November 13th at 4:30 p.m. in Kane Forum: German Cultural Event led by FLTA Joshua Hartmann.
- Dr. Ana López Sánchez presents Through Multiliteracies and Learning-By-Design- Pedagogies professional development workshop on October 18th in DNC 406 at 4:30pm.

Language Learning Center

The Language Learning Center, located in O'Hara 306, offers language learning support for students and community members learning Spanish, French, Italian, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and English. Services available include language conversation hours, a computer lab, language tutoring, a database of language resources, and more. The LLC also offers English as a Second Language tutoring to adult English learners in the community and hosts events for local students and community members such as the annual TA Talks, various cultural events hosted by our Fulbright TAs, and high school immersion days. Curious about how the Language Learning Center can help you learn a language or improve your language skills? Contact Hannah Grijincu at Hannah.grijincu@scranton.edu or 570-941-4711.

Social Media

Stay up to date with the Department's activities, events, news, and highlights by following the World Languages and Cultures Department's Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages listed below!



<https://www.facebook.com/uofsworldlanguages>



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