



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: DR. JUSTIN PINTA

by Magda Hernandez

Dr. Justin Pinta joined the department as an assistant professor of Spanish in 2022. We are thrilled to have him as part of the faculty. To learn more about him and his work, we asked him to answer a few questions. His responses follow:

Tell us about your background. When did you move to Starkville? Are there local restaurants or coffee shops you enjoy? What activities do you like to do in your free time?

I grew up in Decatur, Illinois. I did my undergrad degree at a small university there called Millikin University, my master's degree at the University of North Carolina, and my Ph.D. at Ohio State. I moved to Starkville in August of 2022. There are lots of restaurants I love here in Starkville, but I think my favorite right now is The Spotlight Café. Local barbecue in the South is, in my opinion, some of the best food on planet earth. I like to spend my free time in Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge, one of my favorite things about living here.

What does your research focus on? What are you currently working on, and what part of the research process do you enjoy the most?

I am a sociolinguist, and my work focuses on language contact situations involving minoritized languages, in particular indigenous languages of the Americas in contact with Spanish. I'm currently working on an article on the past, present, and future of an indigenous language spoken in Argentina called Argentine Guaraní, and I'm also beginning work on a project addressing language use among speakers of Mayan languages who have immigrated to Mississippi. My favorite part of the research process is working with speakers and communities. I also love conferences, where I not only get to share my work but also hear about the wonderful things that other linguists are up to.



Dr. Justin Pinta

What classes do you teach here at MSU? Can you tell us a little about them? What do you enjoy the most about teaching? What advice do you give students who want to take your class?

I primarily teach Spanish linguistics courses and Advanced Spanish Conversation. In my courses I strive to get students to think like a linguist – to see language as a complex but delightfully fascinating part of the human experience that is not just a tool for communication but also a fundamental part of how we see ourselves and others culturally and socially. We discuss not only the nuts and bolts of language (e.g., Why are Spanish and English grammatically different in the ways they are?) but also language variation and its social aspects (e.g., Why do different dialects exist, and why are some considered more “proper” than others?). My favorite part of teaching is introducing students to the wonderful world of linguistics and getting students to think about language in ways they never have previously.

To any interested students I'd say: if you're fascinated by languages and how they work, I can promise you'll have a good time in any of my classes! And even if you aren't sure, come take a step into the world of linguistics, and you may be surprised. The love of language is contagious, and I do my best to spread it far and wide!

Q&A WITH CODY FONDREN ON THE PRACTICAL USE OF GENERATIVE AI IN TEACHING

by Magda Hernandez

Cody, you recently spoke on a panel from the Center of Teaching and Learning on AI tools for teachers. Could you please tell us more about yourself?

Hi, I'm an instructor of German in the Department of Classical & Modern Languages and Literatures here at Mississippi State. I coordinate German I-IV classes and serve as the advisor for the German Club.

Can you please share your insights on the use of AI in education and address faculty concerns about it?

Certainly. One of the primary concerns faculty have about AI is the fear that students might misuse it to complete their assignments effortlessly. For instance, language models like ChatGPT and Claude can generate essays on any topic or in any language. While this concern is valid to some extent, I believe that instructors should consider integrating AI into their teaching practices.

Why do you think instructors should incorporate AI into their teaching?

I think it's crucial to prepare our students for the future job market, where AI will play an increasingly significant role. Reports by *Forbes* indicate that nearly 100 million jobs will revolve around AI, and there are thousands of AI startups in the United States alone, over 18,000 as of June 2023. By integrating AI into our lessons, we equip our students with the skills they'll need to remain competitive. AI is here to stay, and it's becoming more integrated into our lives. Faculty should embrace it as a tool that can benefit students.

Do you currently use AI in your classes?

At the moment, I haven't integrated AI into my courses, as it's a relatively new topic for me. I believe it's essential to thoroughly review and understand the tools before implementing them in the classroom. However, I do have exciting ideas for the future and plan to start integrating AI next semester.

Could you share some of those ideas with us?

Certainly! One idea is to have students describe artworks in German using simple paragraphs. After describing real paintings, I plan to have them write a paragraph about an imaginary painting and submit it to an image generator like Midjourney. This way, they can visualize their made-up paintings.

Another idea involves using AI for simple question-and-answer activities related to food from different countries. One activity students need to do in class is match foods with their corresponding nationality adjectives. I'd use ChatGPT to help them with questions like "From which country is Food X?" The AI would provide answers in the correct language, allowing students to match countries with the corresponding nationalities. This isn't giving them the final answer but helping them through blocks they might encounter. They wouldn't need to ask about each dish, just the ones they are unfamiliar with.

My main goal is to incorporate AI as a tool in each chapter's lesson, not to have it replace student work, but to help them develop skills they can use in their daily lives and future careers.

That sounds like a great approach. For those unsure where to start with AI, what advice can you offer?

My advice is to dive in and experiment. ChatGPT is a versatile and user-friendly AI tool that's a great starting point. You don't need to start with complex tasks; you can begin by using it to clean up lists, make emails more formal or informal, or generate word lists. Once you're comfortable, you can explore more advanced applications, like creating practice tests or generating new reading texts based on ones already written. The possibilities are endless once you get the hang of it.



Left to right: Dr. Kasia Gallo, Cody Fondren, Dr. Jonathan Barlow

CELEBRANDO CON LA COMUNIDAD: DR. SOL PELAEZ

by Magda Hernandez

This Fall the Spanish Section of the Department of Classical & Modern Languages and Literatures, with the support of Sigma Delta Pi and the Spanish Club, organized a poetry reading at Mississippi State to celebrate Latinx Heritage Month. We asked Dr. Sol Pelaez, associate professor of Spanish, about this event.

Dr. Pelaez, can you tell us about your background and the focus of your work?

I am from Argentina and came to the U.S. to study comparative literature at the University at Buffalo, the State University of New York. I came to Starkville in 2009. I have been teaching Spanish and Latin American literature and culture at MSU since 2010. I love to share with my students my passion for stories, books, languages, and people.

What was the Celebrando con la comunidad event?

This year, CMLL, the Spanish section, Sigma Delta Pi, and the Spanish Club were invited by The Holmes Diversity Center to celebrate Latinx Heritage Month, and so we organized a poetry read out of Latin American and Latinx authors. The Latinx and Hispanic members of the section shared poetry from Guatemala, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Mexico, and the U.S. We have a very diverse faculty teaching Spanish at MSU, and we wanted to share our rich and wonderfully multicultural heritage. We had poetry in Spanish: Martha Roskelley, who is from Mexico, read a poem by Rosario Castellanos; Magda Hernandez, from Guatemala, read in K'iche and Spanish a poem by Pablo García; Daniela Patino, a Colombian graduate student, read a poem by indigenous author Anastasia Candre Yamacuri; and Pilar Martínez performed Nicolás Guillén's poem "Sensemayá." The audience helped with instruments and the chorus. I read a poem by J. L. Borges. Catalina Revelo, another graduate student, read a bilingual poem by Alma Flor Ada. Rosa Vozzo read a contemporary Dominican author, Rosa Silvero. The event was closed by Karina Zelaya with poetry by Poet Laureate Ada Limón. So, the Latinx and Hispanic faculty and some graduate students all participated.

Who attended this event? How do you think the MSU and Starkville community benefit from events like this one?

MSU students, faculty and their families, and members of the Starkville Hispanic community came to our events. We were proud of being able to share so many talented, moving, and diverse poets. There are many stereotypes about the Latinx and Hispanic culture, and events like this one help to shatter them. It shows that we are a vibrant and diverse culture, with many traditions, languages, and life experiences. But what is more important, it shows that we are here, we are living in the U.S., sharing every day our lives with the Starkville and MSU communities. We want our students and communities to experience our diversity, which also means to discover that their own community is diverse, as we are part of it. As CMLL faculty, we need to create spaces for cultural encounters that enrich us (students, faculty, the community at large), allowing us to grow as caring human beings and strong professionals. We need to build a "we" that is not monolithic, monocultural, monolingual. This would be a "we," a community, that respects internal difference and is grounded in sharing differences instead of erasing them.



LATINX
HERITAGE MONTH
Celebrando con la comunidad

WED, SEPTEMBER 27 TH, 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM
MCCAIN 175

Join our latinx and hispanic faculty and students as we celebrate the culture heritage of the latino/a/x community by reading poetry and literature

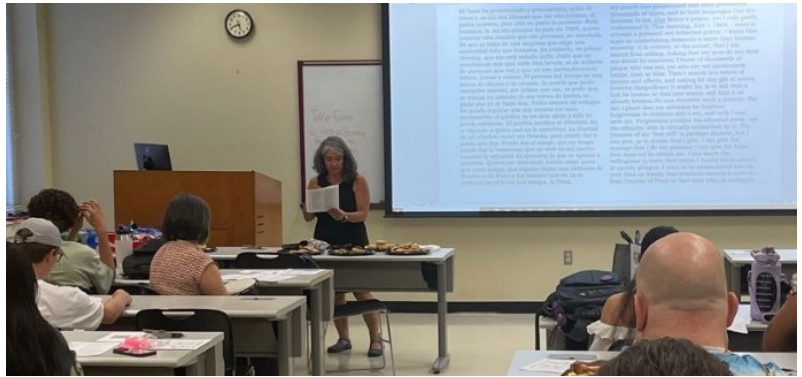
DANIELA CORAL P.	La changra - Anastasia Candre Yamacuri
MAGDA HERNANDEZ	B'alim B'oq'ochaj - Pablo García
PILAR MARTINEZ	Sensemayá canto para matar a una culebra - Nicolás Guillén
SOL PELAEZ	El remordimiento & una oración - Jorge Luis Borges
CATALINA REVELO P.	Bilingüe - Alma Flor Ada
MARTHA ROSKELLEY	Valium 10 - Rosario Castellanos
ROSA VOZZO	Una mujer puede cantarle a cualquier cosa - Rosa Silvero
KARINA ZELAYA	The last move & Instructions on not giving up - Ada Limón

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICAL & MODERN
LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

Dr. Sol Pelaez reading
El remordimiento & una oración
by Jorge Luis Borges



2022-2023 DISTINGUISHED LECTURER SERIES

by Aerynn Dighton



Raul Touzon.

The Department of Classical & Modern Languages and Literatures Distinguished Lecturer in Fall 2022 was Raul Touzon, a documentary and natural history photographer whose collection of dramatic photographs have been featured in *TIME*, *U.S. News*, *The New York Times* & *National Geographic*. His presentation, “Two Pillars of Faith,” was a visual exploration of the Day of the Dead in Oaxaca, Mexico, and Holy Week in Antigua, Guatemala. These stunning photographs constitute a decade-spanning illustration of those centuries-old traditions and celebrations utilizing a highly intimate and immersive approach of documenting the coexistence of the church’s pre-Hispanic cultural rites. At least 100 people attended, from students and faculty to members of the Hispanic community.



Day of the Dead in Oaxaca, Mexico.
Photo by Raul Touzon.



Holy Week in Antigua, Guatemala.
Photo by Raul Touzon.

Dr. Rose MacLean, associate professor of Classics at the University of California, Santa Barbara, was our Spring 2023 Distinguished Lecturer. She is the author of *Freed Slaves and Roman Imperial Culture: Social Integration and the Transformation of Values* (Cambridge, 2018). Her lecture, “Slavery, Freedom, and Geographic Mobility in the Roman Empire,” examined the impact of geographic mobility on the social status and lived experiences of the enslaved and freed people who worked in the Roman imperial bureaucracy, otherwise known as the *familia Caesaris*. Drawing on a range of literary and epigraphic sources, Dr. MacLean showed that mobility — together with wealth and political influence — elevated the prestige of these individuals while simultaneously challenging their ability to form stable families.

STUDENT SUCCESS REPORT: AUTUMN LOWE

by Autumn Lowe (Asian Studies, BA 2022)

In summer 2022, I did an internship in Washington, D.C. with the Washington Center, a non-profit organization that gives students the opportunity to pursue internships with a diverse range of companies there. My internship was at the historic DACOR-Bacon House, named for the early 20th-century New York senator, Robert Low Bacon, with DACOR standing for Diplomatic and Counselor Officers, Retired. DACOR is an organization that works with Foreign Service Officers and others who work in Foreign Affairs. Within this organization, I worked in the library and helped organize books and pamphlets that were either written or donated by DACOR members. Along with my co-worker, who was also a Washington Center intern, we documented over 500 books and were able to upload them into a digital database. While we did not finish cataloging the whole library, we were able to begin a project for the next interns to continue after us.

Along with cataloging these books, we also participated in many other activities within DACOR. My supervisor, Jared Hughes, encouraged us to interact with the other members of the DACOR community and explore D.C. During our time there, we were able to visit the State Department and learn more about the history of Foreign Service Officers and the work that they do. We were also able to visit the capitol and talk with former diplomats and people within the many different careers of Foreign Affairs. At the end of our internship, all of the Washington Center interns at DACOR were also able to curate an exhibit showcasing the different memorabilia from important figures we found during our time there. The memorabilia were from people like Jimmy Carter, J. Edgar Hoover, Herbert Hoover, and more! During my time with DACOR, I was able to work on my communication skills and learn more about the different avenues within the Foreign Affairs field.

Then, near my internship's end with the Washington Center, there was a notice for a new program being offered, the Building the Tomodachi Generation, Morgan Stanley Ambassadors Program. It was created out of the 2011 Tohoku Earthquake in Japan, a time when Japanese and American forces joined to help those affected by the tragedy. The program's aim was fostering friendships between Japanese and American citizens, training them as leaders working together to sustain their bonds. The program, offered in 2022 for the first time since the pandemic, would last for two weeks. Participants would live with Japanese college students and jointly participate in leadership projects, team building exercises, and, ultimately, creating a project focusing on a social issue in Japan.

I became excited and immediately applied to the Building the Tomodachi Generation program. While participating meant I would stay in D.C. a few days after the fall semester started, I believed it would benefit me because of my Asian Studies Concentration. I and five other American students were selected to participate. We met regularly with the nine Japanese student participants, learning about one other and our respective countries.

During this program, we learned a lot about the non-profit sectors within America and Japan. At first, we all thought that the histories of each country would be extremely different, but we started to realize that there were a lot of similarities. Similarities also emerged within us. Several workshops enabled us to learn about the types of leaders we saw in our partners and ourselves. This exercise was exceptionally helpful for me because sometimes the definition of a leader seems narrow. To be a leader, I feel like there is an image of someone who is always energetic and straightforward. However, during this exercise I learned that being supportive and encouraging is also a form of leadership.

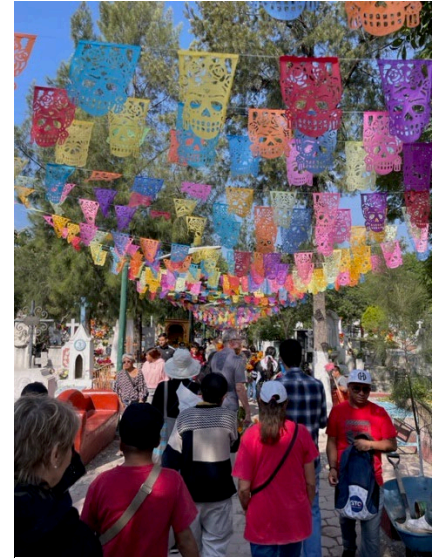
Along with our workshops, we also had many opportunities to hang out as friends and bond through our cultural differences. The Japanese students were able to enjoy D.C. and learn more about American culture outside of what they heard or saw on TV. We did the same, asking questions about Japanese culture. I was extremely happy that I had a background in Asian Studies! Because I studied Japanese, I was sometimes able to help explain cultural differences and misunderstandings in my project. I was told this was helpful in creating an inclusive and calm atmosphere on both sides.

Overall, I'm very glad I took this opportunity in Washington D.C. This summer was intense and scary, but I had the support of my family, as well as that of the faculty at Mississippi State to help me get through it. At the end of it I made new friends and connections from all over. I came back to Mississippi State with more confidence on the impact I can have on others and my capability to get through anything.

EL DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS

by Julia Kraker & Rosa Vozzo

One of our goals in the Department of Classical & Modern Languages and Literatures at Mississippi State is to enhance students' awareness of the culture and celebrations within the languages we teach. Hispanic Heritage Month, which is celebrated every year from September 15 to October 15, provided the perfect opportunity to introduce students and community members to the rich culture and traditions celebrated by many of our faculty. In order to engage more members of the community and to encourage students to learn outside the classroom, members of the CMLL faculty, along with the Spanish Club and the Spanish Honor Society, are hosting an exhibition in the Mitchell Memorial Library showcasing an authentic representation of an *ofrenda* 'altar,' in celebration of *El Día de Los Muertos* 'The Day of the Dead'. Visitors may interact with students involved with Spanish Club and the Spanish Honor Society to understand the process of creating an altar and what each element represents. Our hope is that students will leave with a greater knowledge of this spiritual and festive event. The event is open to everyone from October 26 to November 7 on the 2nd floor of the Mitchell Memorial Library near the entrance.



People entering the cemetery in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico on November 1.



Rosa Vozzo and her photography group in the cemetery in Oaxaca, Mexico.

The decision to showcase an altar began during a discussion amongst faculty as a way to showcase an often-misunderstood celebration to students and others in the community. Sol Pelaez led the organization and project along with Rosa Vozzo, myself (Julia Kraker), and Pilar Martínez, who, as a native Oaxacan, has firsthand knowledge of *El Día de Los Muertos*. After Rosa Vozzo and I returned from an *El Día de Los Muertos* workshop in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico in the fall of 2022, we had a desire to share this beautiful tradition on campus. This was not Rosa's first encounter with this celebration. She had traveled to Oaxaca, Mexico several years prior to attend a photography workshop with a National Geographic photographer, returning with incredible photos capturing the artistry and pageantry of *El Día de Los Muertos*. San Miguel de Allende, however, offered a new perspective, as traditions and celebrations vary from city to city in Mexico.

Flower-covered doorways greeted us as we strolled the narrow and steep streets of San Miguel, and the *papel picado* 'perforated paper' gently swayed with the breeze between many buildings. From the markets filled with *calaveras de azúcar* 'sugar skulls', *velas* 'candles', sweets, *Catrin*as (the ubiquitous female skeleton character associate with *El Día de Los Muertos*), to the *ofrendas* 'altars' placed in open squares or in front of stores or houses, we could sense the intensity and festivity of the upcoming celebration. Of course, the final celebration ends in the cemetery on the actual Days of the Dead, November 1 and 2.

Rosa and I concluded our journey with one of the most beautiful scenes I have witnessed, as hundreds of people carrying flowers poured into the cemetery to clean and prepare the gravesites for their loved ones. Families, both rich and poor, including children, grandchildren, aunts and uncles, great-grandmothers and others, gathered throughout to place flowers and decorate the tombstones. Their faces may have appeared somewhat solemn, but one thing I noticed is that the only person with tears was me. My experience of this beautiful picture of the celebration of death will be one I never forget.



Family member placing flowers and candles near the grave on the evening of November 1 in Oaxaca, Mexico.

FEATURED ALUMNA: ISABELLE TELLKAMP

by Jessica Li Zhi Bao (French, MA 2025)

Our featured alumna this semester is Isabelle Tellkamp, who graduated from the International Business program in 2006 with degrees in French (MA) and Business Administration (MBA).

What have you been up to since graduating from Mississippi State?

I am the Director of Global Supply Chain for Emerson Discrete in Florham Park, NJ. I live in Manhattan, NYC, and travel globally for work. I lead global supply chain activities with primary responsibility for global elastomers, plastic molded parts, resin, machined parts, die castings, stampings and electromechanical coils, as well as logistics, indirect materials, new product development, supplier performance, quality, the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, and continuous improvement. My team handles about \$320 million in spending and drives key strategic dual sourcing, insourcing, and sourcing programs, to name a few. Previously, I led Global Operational Excellence and prior to that, I was the Global Logistics & Supply Chain Services Manager for Emerson Discrete.

Prior to joining Emerson in 2019, I was with TechnipFMC, and led Global Logistics and Trade Compliance, and lastly, I started my oil and gas career as an Import/Export Regional Quality Manager for Kuehne + Nagel International AG. I have a broad background in academics: I served as professor of Business at Southern Nazarene University and professor of Business and Foreign Language at Southwest Christian University. I have a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Mississippi University for Women and a Master of Business Administration along with a Master of Arts in French from Mississippi State University. I am fluent in multiple languages, and I'm now pursuing a Ph.D. in Business Administration from the University of Dallas. I am an active runner and have completed multiple marathons and an ultramarathon, and I enjoy tennis as a former ITF and WTA world-ranked player.

How would you say that your experiences at MSU – whether academic, professional, social, or personal – prepared you for the next stage in your life? Is there anything that you're particularly grateful for?

Learning is an amazing thing, but learning in a new place from a new perspective is both rewarding and eye-opening. I was blessed by having amazing professors in both the French & Business programs. The university experience has shown me how important and fulfilling it is to interact with others, collaborate and converse with people from all walks of life, and appreciate their experiences. The greatest successes occur through teamwork.

What are your plans for the near future? What can we expect to find you doing?

My next goal is to make vice president in the very near future followed by a senior executive role.



Isabelle Tellkamp

What advice would you give to students new to MSU? Is there anything that you would tell your younger self?

Critical Thinking: Figuring out how you work best, looking for problems to solve, thinking through how to solve those problems in a step-by-step process, etc. No job will ever come with a step-by-step cookbook, especially when you move up into a leadership role, you simply have to figure it out!

Power of Mentorship: I have been blessed with amazing mentors during my time at Emerson, and it is reflected in my professional journey. It opened up the ability to pursue opportunities, tap into resources, and create a feedback loop that was essential in my professional journey and progression.

Networking: A strong professional network can have a significant impact over your career success. When it's done well, networking will not only help you land a job faster, but it will give you a competitive edge throughout every stage of your career.

Is there anything else that you'd like to share?

Always be kind, and pay it forward. I would not be here today had it not been for the kindness and generosity of certain individuals, and there were several. And I do not say this lightly: I will always be grateful.

SEMESTER IN REVIEW: EXPLORING GERMAN CULTURE IN GERMAN CLUB

by Cody Fondren

The German Club at Mississippi State has been in full swing this semester, with a packed schedule of engaging events and activities that allow students to dive deep into the rich culture of Germany. With bi-weekly general meetings, movie nights, trivia victories, and active promotion on campus, the German Club has been a hub of excitement and learning for its members.

Our bi-weekly general meetings have been nothing short of amazing. Each session is dedicated to various aspects of Berlin and East and West Germany. Even better, these meetings come with a special treat – the chance to win souvenirs from our study-abroad adventures in Berlin.

The German Club has been hard at work outside of our meetings, too. You may have spotted us on the Drill Field, advocating for our club and the German classes we offer.

As we head further into the semester, the German Club is gearing up for more action. You can find us participating in the university's Halloween Carnival. We are also excited to be part of Global Night, hosted by the International Student Advisory Board on November 8. This is another opportunity for us to showcase the vibrant and diverse culture of Germany and its cuisine to the wider campus community.

Our efforts have not gone unnoticed. With meetings and events consistently attracting 20-25 students, it's clear that the German Club is a place students can come together to learn, grow, and have fun. We look forward to welcoming even more members in the future.



Hunter Pope and Emma Swann

UPCOMING EVENTS: SPRING 2024

CMLL WORLD LANGUAGE EXPO 2024: EMBRACING LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

by Cody Fondren

The World Language Expo, hosted by the Department of Classical & Modern Languages and Literatures, returns for the fourth time on February 15, 2024, at Mississippi State. This event continues its mission of educating high school students about the importance of language learning. For the Spring 2024 Expo, the theme is International Women's Day.

With an expected attendance of 250 high school juniors and seniors, the Expo offers informative sessions led by MSU faculty and students. These sessions shed light on MSU's language programs, admission criteria, and program offerings. High school attendees will also connect with the CMLL community, which fosters inspiration and knowledge exchange.



At the CMLL Expo in 2023: Hiroko Clay, lecturer in Japanese, teaching high school students about Japanese numbers.

Poster presentations by high school students, interactions with College of Arts and Sciences representatives, and the chance to explore language clubs and organizations enrich the Expo experience. Importantly, the event is free for Mississippi high school language teachers and students, promoting linguistic and cultural understanding within the community.

The CMLL World Language Expo provides a valuable opportunity for high school students to delve into the world of languages in an engaging and informative way. For more information on the event and to register your language class, contact Dr. Aerynn Dighton at atdighton@cml.msstate.edu.

**THE POTENTIAL FUTURE OF THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE:
AP ITALIAN COURSES IN MISSISSIPPI’S SCHOOLS**

by Rosy Nigro

Foreign Language AP Courses Offered in Mississippi 2007-2023	
Italian Language and Culture	0
Chinese Language and Culture	3
Japanese Language and Culture	0
French Language and Culture	25
French Literature	1
German Language and Culture	1
Latin	5
Latin Literature	2
Spanish Language and Culture	43
Spanish Literature	2

As the coordinator of the Italian language and culture program in the Department of Classical & Modern Languages and Literatures, I have observed that there is a great opportunity in Mississippi to make Italian one of the course offerings that our high school students can access. Knowing the Italian language can open a new world to students and provide a base for future study in a variety of academic disciplines. However, when I researched the Italian language teaching situation in the state of Mississippi, I uncovered a set of circumstances that certainly needs improvement. In fact, the lack of Italian language classes in our state is very significant. I also discovered that, as an obvious consequence, we currently do not offer any AP Italian courses (see table at left). In the meantime, despite the dire conditions that foreign languages currently face nationwide, Italian course offerings are currently growing in other states across the U.S.

Source: apcourseaudit.inflexion.org

For this reason, I decided to join forces with the Director of Education of the Consulate General of Italy in Miami, FL, and the Director of Education of the Consulate General of Italy in Philadelphia, PA. We are organizing a one-day meeting at MSU to demonstrate to any interested school districts in the state

of Mississippi the opportunities to create and support AP Italian classes. Also, we will talk about potential funding opportunities from the Italian government that could cover the cost of implementing an AP Italian course. We will also discuss the Mississippi Seal of Biliteracy Guidelines, the purpose of which is to provide assistance, examples, and resources to local school districts for awarding and recognizing students who have attained proficiency in one or more world languages and English by high school graduation. The State Board of Education recognizes and honors students who have attained proficiency in two or more languages.

Our meeting is scheduled for February 23 at Mississippi State University, hosted by CMLL. We will provide lunch for all participants. All school districts in Mississippi are invited to attend and take advantage of this opportunity. For more information, please email me, Dr. Rosy Nigro, at rgn1@msstate.edu.

SPRING 2024 DISTINGUISHED LECTURER: YAMEN MANAI

by Aerynn Dighton

In April 2024, our department will welcome the novelist Yamen Manai for the Distinguished Lecturer series. Manai is a writer and full-time engineer from Tunisia, currently living in Paris, France. His novels have won several distinguished literary awards in both France and Africa: the Comar d’Or Prize for his debut novel, *La Marche de l’incertitude* (2010), the Lycéens Coup de Cœur de Coup de Soleil Prize, the Biblioblog Prize, the Alain-Fournier Prize, and the 4th Orange Book Prize; he was also nominated for the prestigious Cinq continents de la Francophonie Award in 2017.

During his visit to our campus, Manai will read excerpts from his novels in French and English before signing books for attendees. He will also participate in a round-table discussion with students in Dr. Keith Moser’s North-African French Literature seminar.



DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICAL & MODERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

The Department of Classical & Modern Languages and Literatures (CMLL) at Mississippi State University consists of faculty members in Chinese, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Russian, and Spanish. We offer Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees in Foreign Languages, with concentrations in Asian Studies, Classics, French, German, and Spanish.

East meets West, and Classical languages converge with the Modern: our students explore and experience the diversity of world cultures while maintaining a solid sense of their own historical identity.

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