

EVENTS SPRING 2018

February 15 - CMLL Language Expo

Guest Lectures:

March 5-6 – Dr. John Lobur

April 12-13 – Dr. Dylan Goldblatt

April 19 – Dr. Paul Canonici

ISOLC language tutoring:

Wednesdays 5:00-6:00 pm in Lee Hall 001

Language Clubs meet regularly during the year.

CMLL HOSTS A LANGUAGE EXPO FOR MISSISSIPPI HIGH SCHOOLS

On February 15, The Department of Classical & Modern Languages and Literatures will host the inaugural Language Expo targeted toward high school students interested in language learning. This event will broaden students' perception of the opportunities available with a foreign language degree.

The idea for the Language Expo came as Mrs. Anna Debicka-Dyer and Dr. Karina Zelaya were discussing ways the department could reach high schools students who might have an interest in languages. The Language Expo is an ideal way for CMLL to reach out to various communities in Mississippi, show high school students the benefits of language learning, and encourage them to pursue their studies in languages.

The CMLL Language Expo will provide students a forum to learn about various language programs available at MSU, give them a chance to show off their language skills in a supportive setting, and inform them about admissions guidelines, AP credits, and CLEP exams. The Language Expo will include several CMLL faculty-led sessions, opportunities to meet CMLL students, faculty, and administrators,

high school student presentations, a special session for language teachers, a chance to speak with Admissions and College of Arts & Sciences representatives, and an opportunity to meet current students and learn about language clubs and organizations.

There will be three morning sessions organized by MSU faculty and students. These sessions focus on a different aspect of languages and their interaction with other fields: business, culture, and the arts. The sessions will be followed by an Expo Fair, which will give students a chance to talk to current CMLL students involved in honor societies, language clubs and organizations. High school students will also be able to practice their language skills at Conversation Circles. Finally, some high school students will present their projects to show off their language skills or cultural knowledge. These projects include skits, posters, presentations, songs, and recitations. There will also be an opportunity for the attendees to listen to current MSU students speak some of the languages taught at CMLL.

The Language Expo is possible thanks to the great support from the Dean of College of Arts & Sciences, Dr. Rick Travis; CMLL Department Head, Dr. Peter L. Corrigan; as well as CMLL students, faculty, and staff. This event would not be possible without the generous support of our sponsors from within MSU and outside. [A.D.]



ALUMNI FEATURE: CHARVIS DAVIDSON

Charvis Davidson is a native of West Point, MS. In the small town of 10,000, he played high school football and graduated as West Point High School's valedictorian. Throughout his life, there has always been an emphasis on education, which led to his enrollment at Mississippi State University.



During a campus visit in high school, Charvis learned about the International Business program and thought that it would be great to build upon his two years of high school Spanish. After meeting other students interested in the language, Charvis was sold. His college career consisted of a business concentration in management and a language concentration in Spanish.

Learning Spanish led Charvis to studies abroad in Alcalá de Henares, Spain. During his summer study abroad, he was amazed at the power of language. He created long-lasting bonds with his host family, the locals that he met in Spain, and with his classmates who consisted of Chinese, Iranian, South Korean, Australian, and other American students.

“There was this mass breadth of cultures in a room and the only way that we could universally communicate was through Spanish. It was like an incredible superpower that carved a doorway into the personalities, challenges, and incredible joys of each other.”

Charvis realized that “language opens up worlds, bridges gaps, and creates infinite possibilities.” He returned to the States with an even stronger passion for language and graduated in 2014 with a degree in Spanish and International Business.

Upon graduation, Charvis began his career at International Paper in Memphis, TN as an Export Account Executive. In that position, he worked with customers from all over the world and of different cultures, with his core base being Central and South America. He worked with them hand-in-hand from sales to solving issues, as well as becoming friends along the way. He credits his success to the passion of the professors and his time in the CMLL. The Department taught him how to communicate, embrace, and learn from all of the different cultures across his customer base.

Charvis is now an Advanced Operations Analyst at International Paper, providing market performance and intelligence as he now works jointly with his global coworkers around the world. He also serves on the IP Recruitment team, recruiting and hiring for International Paper's Supply Chain Division. Charvis was named one of the top 100 graduates of Mississippi State's College of Business and is a member of its Young Alumni Advisory Board.

Spanish will always be a passion for Charvis, and he occasionally thinks back to his experiences in the outskirts of Madrid, Spain and how it transformed the way he sees the world. **[A.M.]**

FACULTY FEATURE: DR. SALLY HATCH GRAY, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF GERMAN

Dr. Sally Hatch Gray joined our department in Fall 2006. She came to us by way of University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where she earned her Ph.D. in German Literature. Dr. Gray is the long-time coordinator of our German Study Abroad program in Berlin and one of just four faculty members in our German concentration. In this issue of CMLL News & Views, we'd like for our readers to learn more about Dr. Gray.

What would you say is your overall and/or current research focus?

My focus has been on the interconnections of German philosophy of science, early anthropology, and aesthetics, as expressed in German literature of the 18th century and early 19th century. My work has focused on travel narratives, novels, poetry, alongside of treatises on aesthetics, natural science, and philosophy.

What are you currently working on?

I am working on three articles, or book chapters, focusing on three different thinkers as they read and critique the philosophy of Immanuel Kant: Friedrich Schiller, Heinrich von Kleist, and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Kant was instrumental in helping to articulate divisions between fields of study in the modern research university, specifically divisions between philosophy, poetry, and natural science. Yet, not everyone was on board with this at the time. I am very interested in how different thinkers express a rejection of these disciplinary boundaries, and how this informs their views of the human experience. My idea is that disciplines are overly segregated, which leads to some blindness in an understanding of nature and of humans in nature.

Do you think this will lead to a bigger project, or is this more of a solo project?

This project could expand to include other thinkers such as Heinrich Heine and Friedrich Nietzsche. So yes, I am working on a book.

How have you seen the German program change since coming here?

The German program has grown tremendously. When I started we had two full-time faculty and one part-time. Now we have three full-time and one part time. Then we offered German I and III only in the fall and German II and IV only in the spring. Now we offer these courses every semester. We have a very active German Club and a vibrant study abroad program in Berlin. It's been exciting to see the German program grow and thrive. When I speak with other German professors abroad and at conferences, they are amazed at how many students that we have who can read and speak German. [...] It's very exciting to be witness to students' joy as they become fluent in a language. I love what I do.

With technology being more and more integrated into everyday life, how do you feel apps like Duolingo and Memrise have effected classroom learning?

Fundamentally, students learn a language by using it. So technology is useful in serving student production of the language. I find that Memrise is effective as a study tool. I've had some students also get some use out of Duolingo, but we do not use that program in our syllabi. Technology can be very helpful for the use of sound and pictures in



the classroom, in keeping the context clear and in keeping the class hour in the target language. But in the end, what is most important is students speaking with one another, that is human to human contact. The teacher creates an environment in which that can happen. Technology can really help with that.

What's something interesting about you that you'd like our faculty, staff, students, and alumni to know about you?

I suffer from Wanderlust. I traveled for several years after I graduated from Kenyon with a degree in Philosophy in 1986 and before changing my major to German and going to graduate school. In the fall of that year I traveled to China with a friend who had a position there. I was on a month-long tourist visa, but I managed to renew it for three months before I had to leave. I then traveled alone on the trans-Siberian railway across Russia and landed in Helsinki after a couple of weeks. It became clear during that long and snowy train ride that Gorbachev would be ousted soon, as the officials confiscated any vodka that people had after their allotted amount. So when we had to deboard the train at the customs stations, there was nowhere to put one's feet in the hallway for all of the vodka bottles.

If you weren't a professor, what would your profession be?

As a girl, I always wanted to be a scientist. I went to college deciding between Chemistry and Biology before discovering Philosophy. Then focusing on analytic philosophy, I became convinced that a person really needs to study a second language before accessing any broader understanding of the human condition. I loved ancient Greek and continental philosophy too. I changed my major to German for graduate school, as the German philosophers were most influenced by the Greeks and had fascinating ideas about the creation of reality and of a spiritual nature. Putting all of this together, I would say that if I weren't a professor now, I would want to write science fiction and fantasy novels. Indeed, I still plan on doing that one day. **[D.D.]**

CMLL STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES

In November 2017, Victoria Lightner, a CMLL and IB student majoring in Spanish, received the College of Arts & Sciences, Henry Family Undergraduate Excellence Fund award. This award is given to allow undergraduate students to pursue their experiential opportunities such as study abroad.

Victoria is a junior from O'Fallon, Missouri. She is studying Spanish and International Business. She chose Spanish because wanted to be able to communicate with more people in her career. She received the Henry Family Undergraduate Excellence Scholarship, upon recommendation from Dr. Rosa Vozzo, to enhance her education outside of the classroom.



Victoria Lightner visiting Seville, Spain

Victoria is currently studying abroad in Alcalá de Henares, Spain. She arrived there on January 3rd and will be there until the end of May. She is taking Spanish and Business courses at the university in Alcalá and is spending her weekends traveling across the Iberian Peninsula. After graduation, she plans on going to graduate school and earning her CPA. She wants to earn a master's degree in International Accounting and is looking for the best programs all over the world. **[A.D.]**

STUDENT ORGANIZATION CLOSE-UP: RUSSIAN CLUB

This semester's Student Organization Close-Up is on the Russian Club at MS State. This student organization is advised by our very own Russian Lecturer and Fitness Instructor, Ms. Ekaterina "Kate" Fabel. The goal of the Russian Club is "to promote interest in Russian language, culture and history; [they] have both native Russian speakers, those learning language, and those just being Russophiles as members of the club."

Any MSU student is welcome to attend a regular club meeting or even sit in on one of Ms. Fabel's Russian courses. And everyone is invited to visit the club's Facebook page, "Starkville Russian Club," and attend any Russian culture or language event sponsored by the group.

Ms. Fabel says the Russian Club will be participating in the International Fiesta, where they will be selling Russian food, performing a Russian song, and promoting our Russian program. The club also works closely with Dr. Stephen Brain, Professor of Russian and Soviet history, who leads a Study Abroad program in Russian. They also plan to host a regular Russian Table on Tuesdays so that students can work together to practice conversational skills outside of the classroom. Also, members of the Russian Club regularly offer Russian language tutoring as part of the CMLL ISOLC tutoring held every Wednesday at 5:00 PM.

The club is always accepting new members and interested individuals should contact Ms. Fabel at efabel@cml.msstate.edu or stop by her office hours for more information. [D.D.]



Top: Russian Club meeting. **Bottom left:** Starkville Russian Club mascot. **Bottom right:** students sharing their enthusiasm for Russian culture at the International Fiesta.



CMLL AT MFLA AND ACTFL

Fall 2017 was a busy time for CMLL Recruitment. As part of the effort to create more connections with foreign language teachers in Mississippi and in the country, CMLL sent representatives to the Mississippi Foreign Language Association conference on November 3-4 in Oxford, MS and the American Council for the Teaching Foreign Languages convention on November 16-18 in Nashville, TN. Both efforts were successful, providing the department with numerous connections, and gave exposure to our programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. In addition, setting up tables at these conferences gave us an opportunity to catch up with some of our alumni. We look forward to continuing our cooperation with these organizations and strengthening our ties with language teachers at other institutions. [A.D.]



Top left: Anna Debicka-Dyer meeting MSU graduate Janet Bunch. **Top right:** Scott Truesdale and Gerardo de Ruz, CMLL GTAs, ready to connect with ACTFL attendees. **Bottom left:** Amie Russell and Anna catching up with Joanna Savage, a recent CMLL graduate. **Bottom right:** Amie and Anna representing CMLL at MFLA.



DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICAL AND MODERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

The Department of Classical and Modern Languages and Literatures at MSU, consisting of faculty members in Chinese, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Russian, and Spanish, offers Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts Degrees in Foreign Languages with concentrations in Classics, French, German, and Spanish.

East meets West, Classical languages converge with Modern languages giving our students the experience that will allow them to embrace diversity, while maintaining a solid sense of their own historical identity.

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