

2022 CMLL LANGUAGE EXPO

By Cody Fondren

On February 24, 2022, CMLL will host its third World Language Expo for high school teachers and students. The goal of this event is to provide high school students a chance to learn about languages as they relate to STEAM fields and the international workplace and explore the importance of biliteracy. This will also be a forum for students to learn about various languages available at MSU, admissions guidelines, and program offerings. We are expecting 150-200 students to attend the Language Expo in 2022, most of whom are high school juniors and seniors. The Language Expo will include sessions led by MSU students and faculty, opportunities to meet CMLL students, faculty, and administrators, poster presentations by the high school students, a chance to speak with College of Arts & Sciences representatives, learn about language clubs and organizations, and other groups on campus and in the community, and lunch. This event is free to Mississippi high school language teachers and students. Teachers may begin registering at the beginning of November. Please check our website for more details and to find the registration link in the coming weeks.



MISSISSIPPI SUPPORT FOR ONLINE LANGUAGE TEACHING

By Carly Bahler

While Summer 2021 saw unprecedented levels of leisure travel in the US, there were plenty across the country who stayed put...and stayed busy forging new connections and improving online education in Mississippi. Among them were Associate Profs. Kelly Moser and Sol Pelaez and Assistant Prof. Karina Zelaya in Spanish, whose professional development workshop this summer enabled roughly 50 K-12 World Language teachers representing 45 Mississippi schools to do just that.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic last March drastically altered the educational landscape in Mississippi and nationwide, as K-12 educators suddenly found themselves grappling with the immediate need for alternative instructional delivery methods in the face of an unthinkable public health crisis. By the same token, Moser, Pelaez, and Zelaya quickly recognized the equally pressing need for a longer-term solution to the gaps in preparedness for and effectiveness with technology-driven instruction across the state that the pandemic's advent revealed.

The product of a December 2020 grant from the U.S. Department of Education via the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund, MSU Support for Online Language Teaching (MSOLT) took place fully online from June 14-25, 2021, spearheaded by Moser, Pelaez, and Zelaya. This 40-hour workshop, bolstered by specialists from across the country, guided Mississippi educators from across the state through best practices in online language teaching, including finding, evaluating, and creating resources for use in fully online, blended, or technology-integrated in-person classes.

These approximately four dozen educators represented a wide range of languages: ESL at the elementary level, and Classics, French, German, and Spanish at the middle and high school levels. Furthermore, although the workshop itself lasted ten days, the fruit of their collective labors is a public online repository of resources for virtual language teaching that can benefit

teachers and students of all levels throughout Mississippi. Prof. Pelaez expressed that this summer, “the teachers were an extraordinary cohort and MSOLT was a great window for the Department into Mississippi teachers.”

The website, a research guide currently under construction with the help of MSU libraries, is aptly titled “Emergency Online Teaching – What Works for Mississippi”. As the website’s name suggests, it will contain teaching materials that have been tailored to fit the needs of Mississippi teachers and their students, as well as research publications pertaining to education at the state, regional, and national levels. As such, it is an asset not only to practitioners and students in Mississippi, but to public officials and policy makers alike. Prof. Moser hopes that we can see the finished product later this Fall, but for now, the following link will direct readers to a glimpse of what is to come: <https://guides.library.msstate.edu/vtcovid>.

Given that the current state of COVID-19 in Mississippi is far from what our imaginations would have entertained last Fall, this treasure trove of resources is as crucial now as it has ever been. Even as we look forward (longingly) to the day when COVID-19 recedes into the background of our daily operations, the pandemic has taught us all that importance of having a Plan B (and then some) in the face of an emergency can never be underestimated.

STUDY ABROAD TO SPAIN SUMMER 2021

By Julia Kraker

As we all know, life as we once knew it, clearly is no more; therefore, planning a study abroad trip in the midst of a pandemic was certainly no easy task. However, due to careful planning both with MSU and with the coordinator in Spain, Dr. Karina Zelaya, Asst. Professor of Spanish and Central American Studies ensured that 13 students would have the opportunity to expand their knowledge of the Spanish language and culture through a month-long study abroad experience to Alcalá de Henares, Spain. Since last year’s program was canceled due to COVID, Dr. Zelaya questioned if the program would even take place in 2021. Because the students’ safety is always a priority, she said that “all the added efforts to prepare for the program, endless hours writing letters to various local, health and academic entities, in addition to writing to Spanish government officials to get all the required permits and additional health insurances in order to come into the country, certainly paid off.” Not only did the students take courses in Spanish, but they also lived in the same floor of Lope de Vega Residencia Estudiantil, which Dr. Zelaya described as one of the “finest and most modern architectural pieces in Alcalá.” The students were able to interact with the staff in the residence and had a very family like atmosphere while practicing their Spanish and learning about culture.



*Mississippi State Students
in Spain*

Even though strict travel restrictions were in place at the beginning of the program, Chris Little, Spanish Lecturer and co-coordinator of the program, went above and beyond to ensure that students did not miss out on an excursion to Madrid. Students also enjoyed excursions to other historic cities such as Segovia. After the third week of studies, Spain opened its borders and students were able to extend their travels to France and Italy.

Although the program faced many challenges, Dr. Zelaya commented that “our partner institution did an excellent job in supporting us and also having an excellent protocol, should an emergency had presented itself.”

In response to her thoughts about the program, student, Anna Narang said “the Alcala program was very well taught, and [she] learned not only more about the language but also the culture.” She continued by saying, “this program really immerses students into a program that promotes hands on and interactive learning.” She also said that she and other MSU students formed strong friendships with students at Alcala and other schools. Her advice to students considering this program is “to go on this trip if you are looking to expand your horizons and learn more about the Spanish culture.”

CMLL WELCOMES A NEW LECTURER

By Martha Roskelley

Monika Popovik is the newest addition to our department when she was hired as a Spanish lecturer this Fall. Since Monika attended MSU, we asked her some questions regarding her experience as a student and then as a worker.

You got a bachelor's degree in International Business and then a master's degree in Foreign Languages with a concentration in Spanish and a minor in Management Information Systems here at MSU. Why did you decide to get a master's degree in Spanish?

Languages and culture have always intrigued me due to living in Serbia and being surrounded by different opinions and languages. MSU had a great program, and I knew that the faculty would provide me with the best education.

You finish your master's program in the Fall of 2018. What did you do when you concluded the program?

I worked for the University of Mississippi Medical Center and was responsible for the programs accreditations that was governed by *Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)*. I worked on visas, on-boarding, graduation, financial reports, orientation, projects, but most importantly, I got to work with various people from different countries.

What did you learn during your master's program here at MSU?

The most important lesson that I learned in the MSU master's program is diversity and inclusion which I was able to apply while interacting with different cultures and I truly believe that helped me become a better leader.

Why did you decide to apply for a position as a Spanish lecturer at CMLL?

I missed being a teacher and using Spanish every day.

What plans do you have for the near future?

I want to be more involved in the department with projects, decision making and eventually be in a leadership role.

Your advice to CMLL students?

Have fun and that knowing another language opens up many opportunities.

Is there something interesting about you that you'd like our faculty, staff, and students to know about you?

I love to travel, and I also speak Serbian.



Monika Popovik

CMLL DISTINGUISHED LECTURER SERIES - DR. MICHAEL SAMAN

By Carly Bahler

On April 16, 2021, CMLL welcomed New York University's Dr. Michael Saman as part of its Distinguished Lecture Series. Michael Saman's talk, "The Movement of Power: Du Bois at the Opera," interpreted the chapter of W.E.B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) titled "Of the Coming of John," paying particular attention to the experience of the sublime that moves the story's protagonist during a performance of Wagner's *Lohengrin*, and that recurs in curious fashion at the close of the narrative as he is attacked by a white lynch mob. The question is, what does this recurrence mean? And what function can the sublime possibly have in such a context? Drawing on other writings in which Du Bois expounds the specific meaning

of Wagner and Lohengrin for him, as well as dramatizations of opera scenes in other writings, Saman's talk presented a detailed reading of the political implications of this narrative device, and of aesthetic experience in general in Du Bois's work.

Ties between Dr. Saman and CMLL's German program are nothing new. In fact, together with Saman, Associate Professor of German Sally Hatch-Gray organized and conducted a seminar for the German Studies Association (GSA) Conference in 2018 on Race Theory in Classical German Thought. If popular understanding perceives race within the German context to be necessarily synonymous with the early-to-mid twentieth century, the 2018 GSA Conference dared to explore race earlier in German intellectual and cultural history, particularly in the 18th century and early 19th century (e.g. in the writings of Immanuel Kant, Johann Herder, and Georg Hegel, among others). To be sure, Hatch-Gray's has been researching race theory in German thought for decades, including in Kant. However, she finds that the renewed prominence accorded to discourses on race in the US has lent an unprecedented timeliness to her research interests.

In fact, this Spring Hatch-Gray will be teaching FL 8113, an English-language Capstone Seminar on race in Classical German thought. Although Hatch-Gray has been interacting with this topic for decades, this will be the first time she is conducting a course in English on her research. The opportunity to reach a broader audience of students with themes that feel perhaps more relevant now than ever certainly promises to be a challenging and exciting one.

LANGUAGE LINKS: ЗДРАВСТВУЙТЕ! (HELLO!)

By Rosy Nigro

Did you know that Russian is the 8th most spoken language in the world with circa 200 million speakers in 16 countries? It is also learned as a second language in much of Eastern Europe. Mississippi State University is among the many colleges offering a Russian Language. Although small, the Russian program at CMLL is vibrantly led by Mrs. Kate Fabel! Before Mrs. Fabel started teaching Russian at CMLL in 2010, the Russian program in our department was small and classes were not taught on a regular basis. Mrs. Fabel tells me that, while she was an MSU graduate student in 1996, David Sites was teaching Russian. Then the program died, only to be resuscitated around 2008 when Oksana Gilbo (from Ukraine), who was a graduate student in French, was designated by Jack Jordan to teach Russian. After Gilbo left, and the Russian lecturer position opened in 2010, Kate Fabel became our Russian lecturer.

Mrs. Fabel is originally from Tashkent, Uzbekistan. She came to the USA in 1991 to pursue her graduate studies; she holds a MA in English (Mississippi College), a MA in French (MSU), and an MA in International Business (University of Memphis). Russian is her native language, and she has taught both Russian and French as a graduate teaching assistant.

Because she is the only Russian educator here, Mrs. Fabel is a very busy teacher. In the fall, she teaches two sections of Russian I, a Russian III, and a Russian V course. In the spring, she teaches Russian II, Russian IV and Russian VI. Thanks to Mrs. Fabel's devotion to the Russian program, CMLL is now able to offer a Russian minor that can be completed by taking six semesters of Russian (18 credit hours) or by taking 4 semesters and participating in a study abroad program. We usually have 2 or more students completing their Russian Minor each year. Moreover, Mrs. Fabel often teaches DIS to allow students complete Russian Minor requirements.

CMLL also has a Russian club that meets once a month during the semester. The club welcomes Russian native speakers who live in Starkville or those who have travelled to Russia in the past and can share their experience with students. Mrs. Fabel's higher-level students often interview them as an assignment. The Russian club members always participate in the International Fiesta, both by playing traditional Russian songs and holding a booth. Mrs.



Mrs. Kate Fabel



Starkville Russian Club, November 2019

Fabel has also held a Russian poetry reciting contest and Russian Mardi Gras celebrations. Russian language and culture were also represented in the last Language Expo held for high school students by the department.

Strong ties with former students are another feature of the Russian program. In fact, CMLL graduate Stacy Watson, who has lived in Russia for 8 years now, often shares her experience with Mrs. Fabel's students by virtually answering and giving advice during class.

There are many good reasons to learn Russian. Just to cite few of them, knowing the language makes it possible to truly appreciate the culture. Reading the great Russian literature, for example, means to gain a deep understanding of it. Knowledge of Russian, being a Slavic language, can also help set the stage to learn Ukrainian, Belorussian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Polish, Czech, and Slovak. These languages all use either the Cyrillic or Modified Latin alphabet.

Another important fact is that Russia is one of the largest producers of natural materials in the world, like natural gas, petroleum, copper, gold, silver, platinum, diamonds, and more. Knowledge of the Russian language means being a potential asset to companies that do business in any of these areas. Russian has also been defined as a priority language by many federal agencies, including FBI, CIA, FCC, and Homeland Security.

Learning a new language can be difficult and Russian is said to be one of the hardest languages for English speakers to learn. CMLL's Russian program, led by Mrs. Fabel, can make this process a great learning accomplishment!

CHRIS LITTLE WINS ONLINE TEACHING AWARD

Chris Little, Lecturer, was awarded the Online Teaching Award, one of the newest awards given out by Mississippi State. Chris teaches online Spanish courses from his home in Spain and was the co-coordinator for the 2021 Spain Study Abroad program. Congratulations, Chris!

DR. SCOTT DIGIULIO WINS COLLEGE TEACHING AWARD

Dr. DiGiulio, Assistant Professor of Classics, was the recipient of this year's College of Arts and Sciences Teaching Award. This award annually recognizes one faculty member from each of the three discipline areas (Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Natural and Physical Sciences) for their outstanding contributions to the teaching mission of the College. Dr. DiGiulio, who teaches broadly across all levels of the Classics curriculum, was this year's recipient for the Humanities. Congratulations, Dr. DiGiulio!

FRANCES CRAWFORD WINS GRADUATE AWARD

Frances Crawford, one of our recently graduated MA students in German, was named as one of the two graduate students of the year by the College of Arts and Sciences! Additionally, she was the only master's degree student to be honored with this award this year. We are very proud of all of Frances' hard work in her time as a graduate student in the department, and we are thrilled that the College has recognized her for her accomplishments. Congratulations, Frances!



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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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