

CMLL NEWS & VIEWS

Volume 5 / Issue 1



MISSISSIPPI STATE
UNIVERSITY™

DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICAL & MODERN
LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

FROM THE DEPARTMENT HEAD

Most of you readers of the CMLL newsletter are probably asking the same basic question: how are they possibly teaching world languages in the midst of this pandemic?! Well, the short answer is, in every way we can imagine! Yes, there is some face-to-face instruction. Much of our teaching is also online. And we have many hybrid options, as well. Our undergraduates remain fully engaged, motivated learners; our graduate students are very busy and productive; and our faculty exhibit all the professionalism, resourcefulness, and dedication that they always have.

Study abroad programs were, it's true, suspended. We were forced to postpone our biennial CMLL Symposium, and our Distinguished Lecturers series was temporarily placed on hold. But we're trying to make the most of our language clubs and honor societies, and we're redoubling our efforts at student recruitment. In short, we're investing our time and hopes in a post-pandemic world both where we can take our students abroad safely and when we can reap the full benefits of internationalism.

We rely on all our friends and alums for many excellent opportunities. If you have ideas about how to help current and future CMLL students, please reach out to me. I love possibility thinking -- especially in the frustrating age of this coronavirus!

Kind regards and best wishes for your continued well-being,

Peter



A TALE OF CMLL AND CORONA

by Rosy Nigro

Stardate, 97824.99 (Earth date, March 23, 2020, 8:00 am).

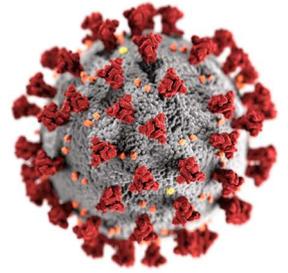
In a galaxy called MSU, there was a small and charming planet called CMLL. Everyone there was happy (more or less). The planet was inhabited by teachers, students, apprentices, and knights. The Federation of the Planets of Knowledge oversaw the galaxy and Admiral Petrus Corriganus was in charge of the planet. CMLL only had one mission: the exploration of all cultures and languages throughout the whole galaxy!

Unfortunately, they had an enemy, Monolingualism! A fearless adversary always trying to find a way to overcome them.

One day, a chance for Monolingualism struck from far away: Corona!

Corona was an infamous queen, crowned on a planet from a distant quadrant. Corona was always looking for lands to conquer. Her skill was to disguise as a deadly virus that would be spread from person to person into their lungs, causing great destruction.

Monolingualism was ecstatic! He joined forces with Corona and attacked MSU and all its planets, CMLL included! All classes were cancelled and everyone, fearing Corona, left the galaxy. Monolingualism's goal was achieved: nobody was able to learn other languages! He thought he had won the war!



Everyone was panicking; from now on people were cursed to speak only one language, their own, forever!

When everything seemed to be lost, Petrus stood up and said:

“Do not worry! I received directives from the Council of the Federation of the Planets of Knowledge: we will continue our mission no matter what! In order to keep teaching, we will mind meld with our students!”

Petrus ordered: “Our minds to their minds, our thoughts to their thoughts!” And so it was: teachers merged their minds with the essence of their students' minds, transferring their foreign language knowledge to them! It was not easy. Mind melding was very debilitating for both teachers and students. But the melder were so good in their task that they even transferred their enthusiasm and love of foreign languages to their students, creating a sense of euphoria among them!

Everyone was happy, although they had to hide in remote locations for a long time, waiting for Corona to go away. In fact, the maleficent queen was left without anyone to infect and had no choice but to leave the MSU galaxy.

Monolingualism was defeated one more time!

MULTILINGUAL MISSISSIPPI SISTERS: MENYA & NIKKI JEFFERSON SHARE EXPERIENCES FROM MSU AND THEIR LOVE FOR LANGUAGES AND TRAVEL

Being multilingual is never an easy task, but sisters Menya & Nikki Jefferson, who grew up in Gulfport, Mississippi, began studying languages when they were in high school and decided that learning just one new language wasn't enough. Inspiring teachers helped encourage both Menya and Nikki to continue the pursuit of language studies and not to stop with simply one language; therefore, Spanish and French became their focus.

After graduating from high school, Menya continued studying French and Spanish at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College for two more years followed by another at the University of Southern Mississippi where she pursued German and Italian as well. After a year-long study abroad in Montpellier, France, she began her graduate studies at MSU where she studied French, Spanish, and Russian, ultimately completing her master's degree in French. When asked what the study abroad experience taught her, she said, “The experience taught me a lot about myself and how the world is much bigger than just the US.” Her favorite memory from study abroad was her very last French class of the study abroad year. She said, “I remember walking in to take the final exam and for the first time all year, I understood the instructions. I actually knew what the teacher was saying; up until that point, everything was difficult for me to understand and I was really frustrated because everyone else around me seemed to be progressing. But when I came to take the final and understood the instructions, I knew that I had finally crossed that bridge between book knowledge and street knowledge.”



Menya Jefferson

After graduating from MSU in the summer of 2000, Menya moved to Moscow, Russia to begin a teaching job. After that, she returned to Gautier, MS where she taught French for 3 years in a public high school. Several years later, she moved to Seoul, South Korea where she spent the next 14 years teaching various language classes in Spanish, French, and Russian. In 2019, she moved to Singapore, where she is currently teaching Spanish at an International Community School.

Her travels have led her to 46 different countries, and no matter where she ends up, she has found her multilingual skills useful. “Whether it is at an airport helping a French tourist navigate their way through customs or in a post office helping a Korean family mail something home, I’ve been able to use all of my languages at some point in time outside of my profession.”

When asked what she would say to current students who are undecided about studying another language, she said, “I would tell them that in order to be really competitive in the job market in this day and age, you NEED to speak another language. And what better way to improve in your respective language than to study abroad?”

Nikki also studied French and Spanish in community college followed by a transfer to MSU to pursue her studies in both French and Spanish. In 1998, she recalls her study abroad trip to Quebec City where she was a student for six weeks. She said, “those 6 weeks were intense, but priceless.” One of her favorite study abroad memories from that trip was explaining flag twirling to a group of native French speakers. She also said that “being surrounded by native speakers from Francophone Africa was the perfect way to practice spoken French.”



Nikki Jefferson (middle)

Nikki’s career has included studying in Mexico, a year-long TESOL internship in Costa Rica where she taught ESL. Her experience has given her the opportunity to work with children of all ages, including nearly 6 years teaching Spanish in a local high school. She was a participant in a Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program in Mexico City where she had the chance to teach English to junior high students in a public school. During her time in Mexico City, she taught various grades and subjects and volunteered at the US Embassy Library. She has also taught virtual classes to Mexican teachers and led an English conversation club for visually impaired people from Mexico. She is an active participant in the Mexican Association of International Exchange Alumni and Mexican Fulbright Association and a team member on a US Department of State sponsored project. She currently teaches K-12 ESL on the coast and loves to travel internationally (currently working on passport #3) and dance Latin rhythms. Her advice to undergraduate students now is this, “Becoming fluent in a foreign language is not easy and is time-consuming. It is worth every minute and makes you more marketable in the job industry. It is an investment in your future. Communicating with someone in their language gives you a special bond and connection.” **[J.K.]**

Nikki’s career has included studying in Mexico, a year-long TESOL internship in Costa Rica where she taught ESL. Her experience has given her the opportunity to work with children of all ages, including nearly 6 years teaching Spanish in a local high school. She was a participant in a Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program in Mexico City where she had the chance to teach English to junior high students in a public school. During her time in Mexico City, she taught various grades and subjects and volunteered at the US Embassy Library. She has also taught

LANGUAGE LINKS: FRENCH

Despite the unprecedented circumstances of this academic year, the French concentration is delighted to report several positive developments that keep this language thriving at MSU. The French concentration continues to proudly house the largest master's program in the Department, attracting students from all over the world. CMLL has also welcomed two new Lecturers of French to the faculty. Ms. Maud Barthès, a native of France with family from across the Hexagon, is ABD at the University of Alabama. She brings to the French concentration her ten years of experience teaching French at various levels and her research interests in French and Francophone literature of the 20th and 21st centuries, particularly feminine and feminist texts as well as literature concerning immigration. She is teaching French II and French Civilization this semester and has another course in the works for next Fall, focusing on French civilization from the Revolution to the present day. Teaching French I and French IV this semester is Dr. Carly Bahler, who received her PhD in French Linguistics from Indiana University Bloomington in 2019, and taught online for the University of Evansville (Indiana) before joining CMLL. She specializes in North American varieties of French, and is particularly motivated by sociolinguistic and applied approaches. A look at the course offerings in the French concentration this Spring reveals an interdisciplinary program at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, and one that is more dynamic than ever. Prof. Karim Simpure will offer third-year Business French, whereas Dr. Keith Moser will give the graduate seminars *The 20th-Century French Novel* and *Introduction to Ecolinguistics*, the latter of which is taught in English. Additionally, both French Environmental Discourse (Dr. Moser) and *The Structure and Evolution of the French Language* (Dr. Bahler) will be open to undergraduate and graduate students alike. Finally, Stephanie Frerot continues to vitally serve Campus 5, including during MSU's new intensive four-week Winter Session to take place between the Fall and Spring semesters. While our summer program in Tours, France is on hold until 2022, we encourage our students to take advantage of other Francophone regions! Our partnerships with Université Laval (Québec City) and Université Liège (Liège, Belgium) afford our students the opportunity to immerse themselves in language and culture for a semester or an academic year at the rate of MSU tuition. In fact, credits earned abroad may transfer to other MSU programs. While students and faculty adjust to the demands of learning and teaching during COVID-19, the French Club is also on pause. However, thanks to our new team members and our sustained spirit of innovation, we look forward to resuming it in 2021, whether online, in person, or both! **[C.B.]**

CMLL STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Asian Studies at CMLL has two organizations to promote Chinese and Japanese language and culture at MSU. Japanese Club is advised by Dr. Fumiko Joo. It is funded by our university and by dedicated students committed to promoting Japanese language and culture. They have weekly meetings in a fun environment where they may watch movies and anime, invite guest speakers, play games, enjoy food, and discuss current events in Japan.

During Spring 2020, they got together at McCool building once a week. This Fall, to ensure social distancing and safety conditions for all the participants during the pandemic, Japanese Club is meeting on Wednesdays at 6:30 pm via the application *Discord*. The club is always accepting new members, and anyone interested should contact Michelle Owens, President of Japanese Club, at mo533@msstate.edu.

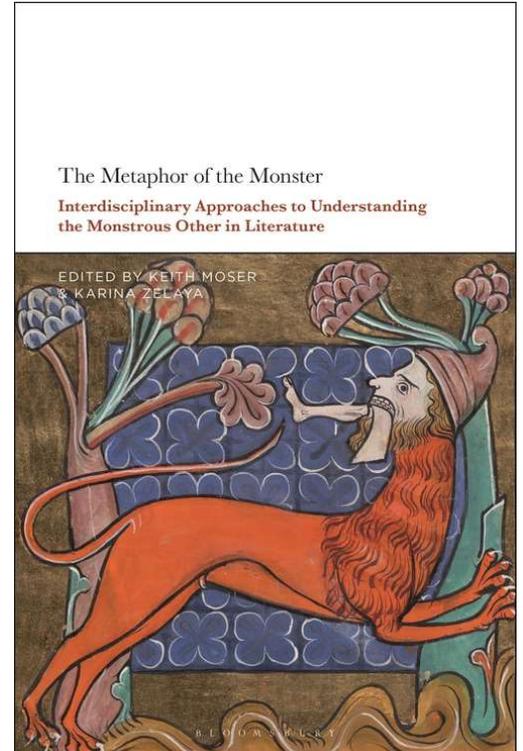
Chinese Table is another organization in our department, where students were meeting once a month to share and learn about important events in Chinese culture like the Moon Festival, New Year's, or Valentine's Day. Some other activities included writing Chinese characters by traditional Pen brush and a food tasting contest. Right now, the activities are on hold because of the pandemic, but the good news is that Chinese Table is in the process of becoming soon the official Chinese Club. For more details, please contact Liang – Yin Lin, ll1297@cml.msstate.edu. **[M.R.]**

CMLL TO POSTPONE THE INTERDISCIPLINARY SYMPOSIUM ENTITLED “THE POWER OF IMAGES” SCHEDULED FOR FALL 2020

—**Reflection on the publication** *The Metaphor of the Monster: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Understanding the Monstrous Other in Literature*

The symposium committee is set to meet soon to discuss a new date for the future conference, but according to Dr. Keith Moser, the head of the CMLL Symposium organizing committee, it will likely be rescheduled for the Fall of 2021. Co-editors Dr. Keith Moser and Dr. Karina Zelaya did provide an update on their recent project and publication from the previous conference entitled *The Metaphor of the Monster: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Understanding the Monstrous Other in Literature*. In response to the significance of the project, Dr. Zelaya says, “the significance of this volume is monumental on various levels. In terms of its contribution to the field of Monster Studies, the collection, as my colleague Keith notes in the introduction provides nuances and fresh perspectives related to multiple representations of monstrosity. The multiplicity of approaches presented makes this publication a uniquely transdisciplinary work, and truly groundbreaking, offering new directions for studying the social construct of the “monster.” In a more immediate context and perhaps more tangible measure, *The Metaphor of the Monster: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Understanding the Monstrous Other in Literature*, evidences the importance of research in the Humanities and the continuous commitment to research of faculty in CMLL and at Mississippi State University.” She continues by saying that it was an overall very positive experience, which reflected collaboration at the departmental level. Dr. Moser reflects on his experience as co-editor of this unique publication by discussing its significance and some of the challenges faced with editing a volume of this nature. He states that, “What separates this ambitious project from other seminal works in the field of Monster Studies is its radically unapologetic interdisciplinarity. The scholars who contributed to this volume constantly engage in transdisciplinary ‘bordercrossing’ in an effort to shed light on the hegemonic function of the social construct of the ‘monster.’” Dr. Moser also notes that this was a new experience for him to collaborate with a colleague from MSU, but that it was a very positive one. Both Dr. Moser and Dr. Zelaya agree that publishing with a top-tier publisher like Bloomsbury “cannot be overstated at the departmental, college, and university level.” With regard to the greatest challenge he faced with this project, Dr. Moser said it was “teaching myself a new interdiscipline.” He also says that “although it is always a daunting task to branch out or bifurcate in new direction, it is also extremely gratifying. *The Metaphor of the Monster: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Understanding the Monstrous Other in Literature* has further expanded my wheelhouse allowing me to become even more innovative and original with new frames of reference.”

Where to purchase: The book can be purchased directly from the Bloomsbury website: <https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/the-metaphor-of-the-monster-9781501364341/> or on Amazon starting on October 15th, 2020 and it may be pre-ordered now. **[J.K.]**



CMLL WELCOMES NEW FACULTY

Another semester is here and a new beginning for everyone is under way, especially for our new faculty who recently joined the department. We want to give a warm welcome to Carly Bahler (Lecturer in French), Maud Barthès (Lecturer in French), Aerynn Dighton (Instructor in Classics), and Hugo Guerra (Lecturer in Spanish). They certainly will make a great contribution to our department. **[M.R.]**

CMLL NEWS & VIEWS NEW STAFF

The fifth year of CMLL News & Views is beginning with new staff entering the editorial team. Joining me this year are Carly Bahler, Julia Kraker, Rosy Nigro, and Martha Roskelley. I am excited to have all of them join me to bring you departmental news and give the newsletter a new direction. Their contributions, ideas, and new perspectives are already proving to be a breath of fresh air and I look forward to seeing the changes they bring with them.

-Ania Dębicka-Dyer



Carly Bahler

Bonjour! As Martha indicated above, I am new to MSU this semester, am delighted to be part of the CMLL team and the newsletter! The pandemic has certainly challenged the ease with which I could get to know my new colleagues by simply running into them in the office. The newsletter thus provides me a great opportunity to feel more connected to the Department, and by extension, MSU as a whole. I look forward to meeting new colleagues every month and learning more about all of the languages CMLL has to offer.



Julia Kraker

My name is Julia Kraker, and I have been a Spanish lecturer in CMLL for the past 13 years. I love teaching Spanish I and II and encouraging students to develop a love for the language and to continue studying more in the future. I am enjoying being a part of the newsletter because I really enjoy connecting with former MSU students to see where they are living and how knowing another language has impacted his/her life.



Rosy Nigro

Ciao, my name is Rosy Nigro and I am the CMLL Italian Instructor. This is my first semester as a contributor to the CMLL newsletter. I am glad I can participate to maintain you informed of our Department's happenings!



Martha Roskelley

I came to the department in 2016 as a student in the M.A. in Foreign Languages. After graduating in 2019, I started working as lecturer teaching Spanish. At that time, I considered myself "new faculty" in the department, and I thought I needed to focus all my time and my energy exclusively to my classes. However, after the pandemic hit us and we had to isolate from friends, students, and colleagues, I felt like I had to do something different this time. I accepted the invitation to be part of this project as a way to connect with colleagues I already know, as well as to meet new people. I think this project is a fun and great way to learn, grow and serve as a member of MSU community.

SWEET ENDINGS: ROSY NIGRO SHARES AN ITALIAN FAVORITE

Salame Turco is an Italian salami-shaped **dessert**. *Turco* in Italian means ‘Turkish’; however, the adjective does not refer to the origin but to the color of this dessert. In the past, in fact, Sicily was occupied by the dark-skinned Moors, also known then as *Turks*.

Historical fact: In 827, the Moors occupied Mazara on Sicily, developing it as a port. They eventually went on to consolidate the rest of the island. Differences in religion and culture led to a centuries-long conflict with the Christian kingdoms of Europe, which tried to reclaim control of Muslim areas; this conflict was referred to as the Reconquista. In 1224 the Muslims were expelled from Sicily to the settlement of Lucera, which was destroyed by European Christians in 1300 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moors#Moors_of_Sicily).

Features: The chocolate makes this dessert dark, and when it is cut, the crumbs and the nuts resemble the minced fat component of the salami – hence the name. Although it is a traditional Sicilian product, it is prepared throughout Italy with some regional variations using local ingredients.

Ingredients

10 ounces dark chocolate chips
6 tablespoons unsalted butter
1-2 tablespoons heavy cream or milk [if necessary]
1 cup mixed nuts chopped (pecans, walnuts, pistachios, hazelnuts, or slivered almonds) [optional]
2 cups plain biscotti crushed
1 teaspoon orange zest or orange extract
1 tablespoon cocoa powder
2 tablespoons rum or Amaretto [optional]
Powdered sugar for coating

Equipment

Parchment paper
Kitchen twine



Directions

Melt the chocolate and butter over low heat or a double boiler until smooth and all chocolate has melted. If the mixture is too thick, add cream or milk. Remove from the heat.

Add the remaining ingredients except for sugar. Mix well. Let cool.

Spread half the mixture onto plastic wrap or parchment paper and shape into a log. Roll up the paper and twist the ends to seal. Roll back and forth on a work surface a few times to make the log evenly round. Repeat with the remaining chocolate mixture. Place the logs in the refrigerator until firm, about 1 hour.

Roll each log in the powdered sugar to coat. Brush off excess sugar. Wrap up in kitchen twine to give it an authentic salami look (optional).

To serve, let the logs sit at room temperature for 10 minutes. Using a serrated knife, cut the logs into 1/2-inch thick slices. Keep refrigerated.

You can use Nilla wafers or digestive biscuits (about 2 cups) instead of biscotti and any nuts you have on hand.

Don't get tempted to form this into one large and thick salami. It will break and crumble when you try to cut it.



DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICAL AND MODERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

The Department of Classical and Modern Languages and Literatures at MSU, consisting of faculty members in Arabic, 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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