

EVENTS SPRING 2019

Distinguished Lecturer Series:

March 6, 4:00pm Dr. Chia-rong Wu. Old Main, Room 3300.

April 3, 4:00pm Dr. John Slater. Old Main, Room 3320.

ISOLC language tutoring:

Wednesdays 5:00-6:00 pm in McCain 190

Language Clubs meet regularly during the year.

FROM B.A. TO DEPARTMENT CHAIR: THE SUCCESS STORY OF DR. JEAN MARIE WALLS

Dr. Jean Marie Walls grew up in McComb, MS, studied languages at MSU and now serves as the chair of the Department of Language at Union University in Tennessee. We asked her to share with us the memories from her studies at MSU and tell us about her career in languages.

Why did you choose to study languages as an undergraduate?

I had enjoyed French in high school and was always curious about the branch of my family that immigrated from Quebec in the late 19th century. In college, I had multiple interests and had to narrow my fields of study down a bit. I graduated with about 168 hours fulfilling the requirements for both the B.A. and B.S. in order to have the option for teacher licensure.

Can you tell us about your language studies at MSU?

I've always loved reading and literature so adding another dimension to the scope range of my reading was exciting. I remember my first Survey of French literature with Dr. Edmond Emplaincourt and struggling to get a grasp on the language, but loving the challenge of working in another language. I did a minor in English so enjoyed taking courses that completed my studies in French such as the European Novel course with

Dr. Richard Patterson. When I was an undergraduate, language departments were focused on just literary study so all of my course work was oriented towards literature. The implementation of culture courses and other sorts of interdisciplinary courses came after my university studies.

Who were your teachers?

Dr. Edmond Emplaincourt, Dr. Zoltan Takacs, and Dr. Kitty Delle Robbins were the professors I studied with at MSU. Each brought something unique to the table. With Drs. Emplaincourt and Robbins having a specialization in medieval literature, I came out with a very strong background in Old French and literature of the Middle Ages. We were fortunate to be able to have two language courses in Old French offered in addition to the literature courses. Dr. Takacs brought interesting perspectives from his life before academia. Frequently in my teaching, I am reminded of the first time I confronted the works as an undergraduate language student and the classes in which I studied the texts.

All of the professors created a collegial and congenial department atmosphere with frequent social gatherings. The Emplaincourts graciously entertained us in their home on numerous occasions. Dr. Robbins even made the trek to Philadelphia to come to my wedding. All of my professors inspired me with their love of literature and teaching. I stayed on at MSU for my master's degree and was fortunate to deepen my study and relationship with these professors.

What made you continue on to graduate studies?

I did my M.A. right after my B.A. at MSU. It was strange going from being a student to being an instructor at age 22. I knew many of my students from my undergraduate days. After finishing my M.A., I went on from MSU to Louisiana State University where I began my Ph.D. in French. I had always wanted to be a teacher and that calling became even stronger as I gained experience in the classroom at both MSU and LSU. One difference going from the department at MSU at that point to LSU was the strong emphasis at LSU on critical theory. I had a strong literature background, particularly in medieval and 17th century, but the learning curve coming into a theory heavy department was a challenge. Ironically, after the initial hurdle and pushback on my part, I came to really enjoy the theoretical and philosophical aspects of my studies. I even chose to do my minor in philosophy, which would have been a great surprise to my undergraduate philosophy teacher at MSU.



What do you do now? Tell us about your work as a teacher, researcher, and administrator.

I came to Union University in 1987 ABD (all but dissertation). I was the only French professor so I had to teach an entire curriculum. Needless to say, the first few years were filled with intense preparation. I had to teach even those aspects of French literature that I had avoided (like the 18th century). I got very little done on my dissertation those first years. With children, a heavy teaching load, university responsibilities, and involvement in the foreign language teaching community in Tennessee, it was a few years before I got my dissertation done.

Your research includes many references to identity and cross-cultural perspectives. Can you tell us a little bit about your research? What drives your research interests?

Our curriculum is a very interdisciplinary curriculum so I'm constantly challenged to stay abreast on current issues and develop new courses and materials in order to keep things fresh and exciting for our students. Two of my favorite courses lately have been a course on Paris in the Age of Impressionism and a Food and Culture of France course. Both were lots of fun to develop and were great learning experiences. Being in a small department has given me a lot of opportunities for course development and curricular flexibility.

Another highlight of my career has been the relationship our university and other universities in Tennessee developed with the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi. For about 12 years, we took a group of students every summer to study in the Saguenay region. We worked closely with the university on a number of projects so the relationship spread to connections with faculty and universities in addition to the summer study abroad program. This experience also served to spark my interest in Quebec as a research field.

My teaching and research in Intercultural Studies also contributed significantly to my approach to teaching language and literature as well as my deep interest in interdisciplinary theory and approaches. I've been teaching Intercultural Studies courses at the undergraduate and graduate level for almost 20 years. Teaching in the M.A. in Intercultural Studies program and developing course work for that program was a very enriching and productive experience allowing me to draw on my background in language, literature, theory and interdisciplinary study. Developing course work for the M.A. contributed significantly to my knowledge of other disciplines and their theoretical groundings. One course I developed, Artistic and Intellectual Expressions of Culture helped lead me to my current research focus. More recently, last summer I developed a course called Creativity Across Cultures for our undergraduate curriculum.

I currently serve as Chair of the Department of Language and am fortunate to serve with a wonderful faculty of creative and collegial professors.

My research interests have evolved over the years, but I've continued to focus on issues on identity and intercultural studies. My M.A. thesis was on the French colonial literature of Indochina. That was before all of the focus on Francophone Studies so I was pretty far out on a limb undertaking a topic such as that one, but my professors were supportive of the interest. My husband was working on a project about American Viet Nam War literature at the time and began to find references to French works. That sparked my interest and I began my research on the French colonial enterprise and the literature surrounding that undertaking. I continued with the project for my dissertation. Interestingly, even though Francophone literature was beginning to be an integrated into the curriculum, my major professor at LSU was uncomfortable with my incursions into the perspectives of other disciplines. I've always been interested in border and disciplinary crossing, so I pursued and narrowed in to focus on narrative and representation in colonial literature. As much I enjoyed the topic and focus, in the years to come, life took me to Quebec. I would say my theoretical approaches have grown and evolved as I turned my field of study to Quebec, but they are still strongly impacted by my initial approaches and theoretical frameworks. I have been fortunate to have many opportunities for professional development to attend workshops and seminars in Quebec. My research focus now is on the development, evolution, and maintenance of the cultural infrastructure of Quebec during and after the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s. I spent my last sabbatical in Quebec working on part of the project and will hopefully be completing another aspect of the project on my sabbatical spring 2020. I've looked at elements such as the development of new museums, the emergence of the literary canon, and regional theater as factors contributing to the strengthening of Quebecois cultural identity.

We have many students who study languages alongside other disciplines. Could you comment on the role of language and cultural studies as they relate to other disciplines?

As a department, we strongly encourage our students to consider a double major. We feel that a language major can play a vital role in helping students become more interculturally competent and globally engaged. Studying the language, literature and culture of other people gives us a unique and special way of understanding others, our relationship to them and ourselves. Language study encourages and enables the mindful capacity to interact effectively, ethically and sensitively with other people. It opens our eyes to the beliefs, worldview and identities of people who come from different backgrounds and helps us to connect and respect cultural and linguistic differences. A knowledge of other languages also opens doors to career opportunities. Whether pursuing careers domestically or internationally, language study gives students an edge in the job market.

While we have many students who combine language study with other disciplines, political science, communications, TESOL, intercultural studies, education and nursing are ones that are very popular right now. In all of these areas, students see the vital connections and value-added dimension that language study gives to the undergraduate experience in preparation for the careers they want to pursue. [A.D.]

GERMAN CAMPUS WEEK: "A FOCUS ON IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEES IN GERMANY"

On November 5-9, 2018, CMLL hosted a German week on MSU Campus sponsored by the German Embassy. Dr. Sally Gray wrote for CMLL News & Views an overview of the events that took place.

On Wednesday evening, November 7, 2018, Dr. Phillip Conner of the Pew Research Center, captivated a full lecture hall in McCool as he told the stories behind the statistics of what is a new global phenomenon: that the number of displaced persons now outpaces population growth. The audience sat enthralled as he presented a series of non-partisan, colorful charts and accompanied statistical analysis alongside historical events, relaying that in 2016, when around four million migrants congregated at borders in Europe, mainly as a result of five years of civil war in Syria, Chancellor Angela Merkel responded to this need by placing no limits on asylum seekers applying to enter the Federal Republic of Germany. Dr. Conner's lecture was one of six events over a ten-day period sponsored by a grant from the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Washington D.C. On the next evening, CMLL was honored to host a talk by Mr. Stephan Jacobi, Major (res.) in the German Army, a civil servant and lawyer who is currently contributing his expertise in the German National Security environment at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in Washington, D.C. where he serves as the Liaison Officer to the German Ministry of the Interior.



Mississippi State was one of a few universities to receive this grant. The events reached the community and included participation of students from two local high schools, 160 MSU students of German, as well as hundreds of students in other fields. We used film, a poster exhibition, the two lectures followed by panel discussions, and helped to sponsor a high school play to provide the community an engaging space to discuss immigration and refugees in Germany as a global phenomenon. Clearly, our discussions highlighted many repercussions for both Germany and the United States.

The Principle Investigator was Dr. Sally Hatch Gray, Associate Professor of German. She teamed up with Dr. Brian Shoup, Associate Professor of Political Science and Public Administration, to join CMLL with PSPA, as well as the College of Arts and Sciences and a local German-owned business, Eurocopter, all in partnership with the German Embassy in Washington, D.C. to help sponsor the events.

2019 CMLL DISTINGUISHED LECTURER SERIES

This spring, the Department of Classical & Modern Languages and Literatures will host Dr. Chia-rong Wu and Dr. John Slater as part of the department's ongoing Distinguished Lecturer Series. On March 6th, our first guest, Dr. Chia-rong Wu will speak on "Postloyalist Writing in Taiwan" at 4:00 PM in Old Main, Room 3300. The following month, on April 3rd, Dr. John Slater will be speaking on "Leakages: Promiscuity and Patriarchy from the Seventeenth Century to the Information Age" at 4:00 PM in Old Main, Room 3320. [H.B.]

Dr. Chia-rong Wu is an Associate Professor of Chinese Studies at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee. He received his Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Dr. Wu specializes in modern Chinese literature and cinema and Sinophone studies. His research interests include strange fiction (志怪), ghost-island literature (鬼島文學), cultural geography, and ecocriticism. Dr. Wu is the author of *Supernatural Sinophone Taiwan and Beyond* (Cambria Press 2016).



Dr. John Slater is an Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Spanish & Portuguese at the University of California, Davis. His research examines the histories of science, medicine, and literature in seventeenth-century Spain. Dr. Slater is the author of *Todos son hojas: Literatura e historia natural en el barroco español*, and is co-editor of *Medical Cultures of the Early Modern Spanish Empire*, as well as two plays by Calderón de la Barca: *En la vida todo es verdad y todo mentira* and *Sueños hay que verdad son*. His articles have appeared in *MLN*, *Social History of Medicine*, *History of Science*, and elsewhere.



CMLL STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS FOR SUMMER 2019

CMLL offers study abroad opportunities every summer for MSU students. Programs range from four-week to two-month experiences led by our faculty. These programs are designed to improve language skills, provide cultural immersion, and showcase each area's rich tradition and history. [A.D.]

COSTA RICA

Central America's culture and history are vibrant and diverse, despite the region making up a relatively small portion of the Americas. For students interested in Latin America, a knowledge of Central America is essential for understanding their world, and for seeing the ways in which Central America has influenced the culture of the United States, as well as how the United States' history has intertwined with that of Central America. Partnering with the Costa Rica Institute of Technology, students will complete coursework while participating in excursions to cultural, historical, and natural sites including Orosí Valley and the Arenal Volcano. Students will have access to ecotourism sites and have the chance to visit other sites on optional excursions.

FRANCE

Learn French in the heartland of France! Spend four or six weeks in the city of Tours, a vibrant university town of 300,000 in the Loire Valley, located just one hour southwest of Paris. Immerse yourself in French language and culture through intensive classes at the Institut de Touraine. While living with local French host families, students will explore the historic medieval district in Tours and soak up regional culture, including one full-day excursion and two half-day excursions to the famous châteaux of Touraine. Students will also discover the City of Lights, with a three-night stay in Paris, visiting major cultural sites such as Notre-Dame, Arc de Triomphe, Montmartre and world-class museums.

GERMANY

Learn German in Berlin! Spend your summer studying German while experiencing the sights and sounds of one of the most dynamic, historically rich, and happening cities of Europe! In this adventure, students will learn a great deal of German both in the classroom and out. They will be hosted by a German family, escorted to cultural events and museums by German hosts and taken out on the town by natives their age. In addition to enjoying all that Berlin has to offer, students will make a day trip to Potsdam, an over-night trip to Dresden, as well as a weekend trip to Weimar, Buchenwald, and Erfurt.

SPAIN

Earn FLS credit hours by studying this summer in Alcalá de Henares, Spain! You will take classes from the Spanish faculty at Alcalíngua and go on cultural and historical excursions to Madrid and Segovia, all with time for travel and cultural immersion. Alcalá de Henares is a city of roughly 200,000 people, located within easy travel distance of nearby Madrid, and with very good connections to transportation to all parts of Spain. This program is suitable for undergraduate students who have completed Spanish III (or equivalent), including students in languages, International Business and students from throughout MSU wishing to complete a Spanish minor.



Study Abroad group in Germany

CMLL FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS AND AWARDS

Brian Davisson published the following articles: “Flotando en las nubes: la vanguardia literaria en las narrativas de viaje de Salarrué.” *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research* and “Space, Place, and Nation in Exilic Discourse,” in *Displacement in Language, Literature and Culture*.

Scott DiGiulio published the following article: “*Monumenta rerum ac disciplinarum?* Varro’s Reception in Gellius’ *Noctes Atticae*.” *American Journal of Philology* 139.2 (2018): 311-341. (doi: 10.1353/ajp.2018.0015). He was an instructor in June 2018 for the Latin Epigraphy Program, offered by the American Academy in Rome.

Cody Fondren received two grants in 2018: *Deutsch macht Spaß* Grant, AATG, and FL-A-CH Mini-Grant, AATG. As part of the latter, German Club at Mississippi State University hosted a Swiss-themed event called “Swiss Fest” on Dec 5th. About 40 students and community members were in attendance. A local farmer, born and raised in Switzerland, provided MSU students with stories about growing up in Switzerland and how the food prepared for the event played a role in her childhood.

Sally Gray received a grant from the German Embassy for hosting the German Campus Week focusing on immigration. Together with Michael Saman of New York University, she convened a three-day seminar, “Race Theory in Classical German Thought,” at the German Studies Association conference in Pittsburgh, PA, September 27-30, 2018. Her article “On the Organism and Freedom: Revisiting Goethe’s Problem with Objectification in Natural Science” was pre-circulated and presented at the Mississippi State Institute for the Humanities workshop on the Environmental Humanities February 8, 2018. Then she presented it as a conference paper for the Southern Society for the History of Technology Conference held at Mississippi State University March, 2018. She was invited to be a panelist by the Institute for the Humanities at Mississippi State University, Oct. 2018, for a campus-wide discussion of “Ecologies of Destruction: a Discussion of Science, Art, and Nature.”

Keith Moser published ten edited volumes in 2018. Moreover, he also published numerous articles in the following journals: *Green Letters: Studies in Ecocriticism*, *Pacific Coast Philology*, *Contemporary French Civilization*, *Dalhousie French Studies*, *Mosaic*, *Semiotica: Journal of the International Association for Semiotic Studies*, *Interdisciplinary Environmental Review*, and *Humanities*. Moser was also invited to submit two book chapters. He serves on boards of *The Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics*, *Cognizance*, and *The International Ecolinguistics Association*.

Kelly Moser, Cody Fondren, and Lydia King received the honor of 'Best of Mississippi' for their presentation entitled "Reaching 90%: Strategies for Teaching in the Target Language," at the 2018 Mississippi Foreign Language Association Conference at the University of Southern Mississippi.

Kelly Moser was elected to serve as the Vice President of Programs for the Mississippi Foreign Language Association. In this position, she will be responsible for collaborating with other members of the Executive Board to plan and organize the 2019 MFLA Conference that will be held in Starkville at The Mill Conference Center on November 8 and 9, 2019. She co-authored a publication "Teaching English Language Learners: A Mainstream Response to Rural Teacher Education," in the *International Journal of Teacher Education and Professional Development*. Dr. Moser also presented the results of a national survey study along with colleagues from The University of Kansas (Paul García) and The University of Tennessee (Patricia Davis-Wiley) at the 2018 American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Conference in New Orleans.

Karim Simpore published “Francophonie et enjeux: états des lieux et perspectives” in *International Journal of Francophone Studies*. 21(1-2) 101-117(17) and presented the following papers: “The Multifaceted Image of the ‘Monster’ in the Christian Spiritual Tradition: Symbols and Representations” at the 2018 Classical & Modern Languages and Literatures Symposium, September 2018; and “Frontières et immigration sous le prisme de la Francophonie” at the 90 South Atlantic Modern Language Association (SAMLA), Birmingham, AL, November 2018.

Karina Zelaya gave an invited talk at California State University Dominguez Hills “Imagining Cuzcatlan: Stories, Myths, and Indigeneity in the Making of Salvadoran National and Cultural Identity.”

FACULTY FEATURE: DR. SCOTT DIGIULIO

Scott DiGiulio came to Mississippi State in 2016 after completing a Ph.D. in Classics at Brown University in 2015. His primary teaching and research focuses on Latin language and literature, and he also serves as the faculty advisor for the newly-formed Classics Club. [A.M.]

What is your research focus and interest?

I've always been fascinated by how we read and why – it's something that stands out today, as people are reading more and more on the Internet or E-Readers, and these new technologies are changing how we interact with the written word. In the ancient world, we can see something similar going on as we move from writing on stone, to papyrus rolls, and ultimately to the codex book; each of these media really requires you to read them in a different way, and I'm really interested in exploring these changes in the ancient world. The Greeks and Romans were aware of the ways in which what they were reading shaped how they read it, and I'm interested in seeing how those ideas come out in the literature produced in the Roman Empire. My work ultimately explores the intersection of poetry and prose, literary and material evidence, and the process of canonization, in an attempt to understand how the ancients read and interpreted their literary tradition.

Could you talk about your teaching interest?

My main teaching interests are broad, but center on the history and literature of the Greeks and Romans. I'm excited to teach Latin and Greek language and literature at all levels, but also courses introducing students to the rich cultures of antiquity in English translation, including courses on Classical mythology, ancient drama, and the history of Greece and Rome. One of the most exciting things for me is to be able to explore these cultures with students. Since the Classical world has had a strong influence on modern culture, we tend to think of the ancient world as something relatively familiar – but once you start reading the literature of the Greeks and Romans, you realize just how foreign their experiences were from our own, and I really enjoy exploring these differences with students.

What are you currently working on?

At the moment, I'm working on finishing a book on the *Attic Nights* by Aulus Gellius, a second century CE collection of excerpts, dialogues, and other notes on reading and culture in imperial Rome. It's a challenging work to read, because it defies a lot of our expectations for what a literary work actually is – it really is a collection of often disconnected items, and what I'm suggesting in the book is that these questions about how to read these different pieces of the text together is really central to the work itself. Beyond this project, I'm also working on various smaller articles, including one on the imagery of kissing in imperial literature, and another on how certain ancient scholars and their works were used and reused throughout antiquity.

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

The most notable thing to me has been the growth in the program, both in terms of faculty numbers as well as students. More and more students have been joining the program, either as majors or minors, which has really been great to see. I've been really happy to see the ways in which our Classics curriculum has expanded since I've been here – we're now offering a broad range of courses in ancient history and culture, which have been drawing students from across campus. It's made for very vibrant discussions in class, and I've been really pleased to see how enthusiastic students across campus have been to study the ancient world. Some of this excitement has also contributed to the forming of the undergraduate Classics Club, which is providing another avenue for students to explore their interests in the ancient world, and to open up the Classics to more and more people on campus.

Thinking ahead, where would you like to see the program in the near future?

Overall, I'd like to see the program continue to grow over the next few years, both in terms of bringing in more students and in expanding the curriculum even more. I'm also hopeful that we'll be able to add study abroad opportunities for our students to study in the Classical world – I remember how striking it was to be able to study the ancient world in the places where all the history that I was learning about had happened, and I'd be very excited to share that experience with our students.

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

When I was younger, I used to fence pretty seriously – I started with a group of friends in middle school on a lark, but stuck with it and then competed through college, even winning a few titles along the way!



GERMAN CLUB PARTNERS WITH LOCAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

MSU German Club is an active student organization with many engaging events planned throughout the year. Led by faculty advisor and German lecturer Cody Fondren, the goal of German Club is to find common ground for German students to meet and get to know each other. In addition to regular meetings, the club's weekly conversation hour allows members to practice their German conversation skills. Every two weeks, they host *Stammtisch*, an event at a restaurant off-campus where members can get to know each other outside of the classroom. Fondren said they are planning a German Club slow roll bike ride for the students to bike around Starkville before *Stammtisch*, as well as a few German movie nights during the semester. The club will also be participating in the International Fiesta on April 6th.



Fondren's favorite thing about German Club is their weekly visits to Sudduth Elementary School, where club members volunteer to teach German to first grade students. This partnership began in spring 2018, when the club reached out to the school principal about teaching German. So far, they have taught numbers, colors, the alphabet, commands, action verbs and much more. Club members will be working with two first grade classrooms each week this semester, and their first German lesson will be about weather and seasons. The club received a grant last semester to help purchase supplies for lessons, which included funds to purchase bilingual coloring books for the students.



“Seeing how much fun the first graders have learning German is a real treat,” Fondren said. “The students look forward to seeing us each week, and that’s really exciting for us. When we are walking down the hallway, one of the students will always see us and scream ‘German Club’s here!’ and the students cheer and race to their seats.”

German Club currently meets every other Wednesday at 5:00 p.m. for organizational meetings on campus, every Thursday at 4:00 p.m. for conversation hour, and every Wednesday that there is not a general meeting at 6:00 p.m. at Moe’s Original BBQ for *Stammtisch*. For more information, please contact Cody Fondren at ccf63@cml.msstate.edu. [L.K.]

STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES: CHASE MCGILL AND FRANCES CRAWFORD

Chase McGill, a former MSU student, received two nominations for Grammy awards this year. He studied German at MSU and recently said in the article published in The Reflector that Dr. Sally Gray was one of his favorite teachers while he was at MSU. Dr. Gray reflected that it was clear to her “that he had a musical ear, as his pronunciation was always very good, and he could learn by listening. Musicians have a special talent for languages. He was a joy to teach.”

Dr. David Hoffman, MSU’s Fulbright Program Administrator shared with CMLL that Ms. Frances Crawford, a double major in English and German, was recently selected by the National Screening Committee of Fulbright as a semi-finalist for the Germany –ETA (English Teaching Assistant) program in 2019-2020. Her proposal has been forwarded to the country level commission and she awaits the decision. [A.D.]



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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