Languages in a Global World

According to a 2018 report published by the Modern Language Association (MLA), the professional organization for the teaching of language and literature in the United States, between fall 2013 and fall 2016, enrollments in languages other than English fell 9.2% in colleges and universities in the United States. This was the second-largest decline in the history of the census (the largest decline, 12.6%, was in 1972). Of the fifteen most commonly taught languages, only Japanese and Korean showed gains in enrollments.

A recent article published in Inside Higher Ed, “L’oeuf ou la poule?” [The Chicken or the Egg?] states that it is unclear if the decline is because of “institutional disinvestment in language programs or waning student interest.” It notes, however, that those institutions that are investing in language study are “bucking the trend.” According to Paula Krebs, Executive Director of the MLA, despite college mission statements to internationalize their curriculum, foreign language enrollments continue to decline. She adds, “students continue to be interested in languages, ‘and when institutions support language instruction, students take language courses’.”

At Manhattanville College, we have seen a decline in enrollments in the European languages - French, German, Italian, and, to a much a lesser extent, even Spanish (First-year Japanese enrollments have been strong in recent years). Is this a case of the chicken or the egg, as the article suggests? Is the decline due to the lack of student interest in languages, or is it because in the past few years, students are running shy of registering for certain low-enrolled upper-level language classes for fear that they be cancelled? If we are educating students to be “ethical and socially-responsible members of a global community” (our emphasis), then the study of languages and cultures other than English is crucial. Having tangible institutional support for language study is important if we want a diversity of languages to continue to thrive at Manhattanville College.

The article cites the example of the University of Mississippi, “Ole Miss,” where all undergraduates are required to take two years of foreign language instruction. If a student enrolls with that level of proficiency, they are strongly encouraged to take more advanced courses. While Manhattanville does have a core curriculum language requirement - 2 semesters of introductory level language – it does not require additional language courses if students place out of the introductory level.

Another MLA report, “Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World,” suggests that language study should be broader and more interdisciplinary. To that end, the French major at Manhattanville has been revamped into a “French Studies” major. This major has students take 6 courses in the target language, and three courses in English from across the curriculum that deal with the history and culture of the French-speaking world.

The same study also recommends that the institution “establish language requirements (or levels of competence) for undergraduate students majoring in fields such as international studies, history, anthropology, music, art history, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and linguistics, as well as for students preparing for careers in law, medicine, and engineering.” At Manhattanville College, the Global and International Studies (GINS) Program requires it majors to achieve intermediate level proficiency in a second language, and the International Management major in Eco/Fin/Mgt requires its majors to complete a minor in a language. We could see the establishment of such levels of competency in a language expand across other disciplines.

The benefits of language learning have been well documented. It enhances brainpower, memory, decision-making, and also improves one’s command of one’s first language. We also know that language study is more than just grammar and syntax. It provides deep insight into other cultures. More importantly, given our global world, employers today are looking for graduates with language and culture skills. Over the years, the language faculty has heard from alumni that their language skills gave them an edge when it came to acquiring jobs. We hope that Manhattanville College will follow its mission statement and truly be a “Global Campus” by renewing its commitment to the teaching and learning of languages other than English.

- María José Luján (Professor of Spanish and Chair, WLL)
- Binita Mehta (Professor of French)
NEWS & EVENTS

Repertorio Español
By Evelyn Ferris

On May 4th 2019, Professor Lujan’s class went to see a Spanish-language play, El coronel no tiene quien le escribe (No One Writes to the Colonel) at the Spanish Repertory Theater, located on 138 E 27th street in New York. Founded in 1968, the Spanish Repertory Theater is a small and cozy place that showcases the best of Latin American and Spanish theatrical productions. The plays are performed in Spanish with simultaneous English translation. El coronel no tiene quien le escriba is based on a short story written by Colombian Nobel Prize-winning author, and father of magical realism, Gabriel García Márquez. The play takes place in the fictitious village of Macondo where the colonel and his wife wait for a letter and his pension to arrive in the mail. The sound, lighting effects, and the music created the perfect atmosphere. My experience at the Spanish Repertory Theater was positive and pleasant and I left the theater anticipating our next visit.

Winter Languages Party
By Rebecca Boney

The annual World Languages and Literatures winter holiday party was a lively evening filled with music and games. The atmosphere was light-hearted and welcoming. There were a variety of performances from Japanese Christmas carols to an Irish dance. Students from the introductory French classes presented projects, and other French students sang traditional holiday songs. Students in various Spanish classes performed. Spanish songs and poetry. Professor Jerry Kerlin from the Music Department taught everyone a traditional Irish game and song, where participants had to catch a ball tossed in the air in between various dance moves. This was a fun way to get everyone up and involved in the festivities while learning about languages and cultures.
Trip to Le District

By Terissa Simental

This year, students from different French classes spent a lovely Saturday at Le District in the financial district in downtown Manhattan. Le District is a French market offering a variety of French foods. There are various options of traditional French food like crêpes, macarons, cheeses and dishes like ratatouille. The different sections of Le District include the market district, the garden district, and the café district. There is even a supermarché styled store with French foods and goods. There are different stalls such as Fromagerie, Poissonnerie, and Boulangerie. Students enjoyed the Canadian specialty poutine, French bread, and savory/sweet crêpes along with other artisanal desserts. A few of the students were taking introductory French, others were in advanced French, and a couple of exchange students from Université Paul Valéry Montpellier III, with whom Manhattanville has a direct exchange program, were part of the group. This adventure provided a casual and fun opportunity for the students to explore French culture and practice their French language together. A couple of the students had attended the French department trip to Le District last year while others were experiencing Le District for the first time. This is a nice event to get away from campus and explore the lesser known parts of New York City where students are able to get a taste, literally, of French culture without the expensive plane ride. I hope the French program is able to continue visiting Le District in future years.
Terissa Simental
Class of 2019
Major: International Studies & Philosophy
Concentration: International Political/Economic Relations
Minor: French

*Why did you choose to study languages?*
I chose to study French because I was interested in international relations and hoped to eventually work in the United Nations. I have always been fascinated by language and wanted to learn as much as I could for traveling and communicating with people from other backgrounds.

*Will you use language studies in your future career?*
For sure! I’m starting a master’s program in the fall and plan on learning Hindi, Bengali, and eventually getting a PhD. French will always be helpful and I will definitely need it in the future if not professionally then for traveling and cultural exploration.

*What were the highlights of your time at Manhattanville?*
There are so many! I’m from a small town in Washington State, so I really appreciate the academic and professional opportunities Manhattanville has given me like internships, study abroad, and attending academic and cultural events in New York City. I’m also grateful for all the friends I’ve made here and the support I’ve received from faculty and staff.

Rebecca Bonney
Class of 2019
Major: Communication and Media
Concentration: Journalism
Minor: World Religions

*Why did you choose study languages?*
I studied French and Spanish at Manhattanville. I took French in high school and continued to study it in college. I also decided to start learning Spanish my senior year because it is the second most spoken language in the world and my friends all speak Spanish. I chose to study languages because I wanted to increase my cultural awareness and I learned that speaking a second language will help me when I travel.

*Will you use language studies in your future career?*
Yes, my language skills will help tremendously. I plan on being a journalist and a travel writer. I need the skill of speaking multiple languages in order to advance in the competitive field of journalism.

*What were the highlights of your time at Manhattanville?*
My friends! Also, having internships and being so close to New York City.
Catherine Boozang-Hill

Class of 2019  
**Major:** International Studies  
**Minor:** French

*Why did you choose to study languages?*
I chose to study language because I always loved French in middle school and high school. My high school French teacher is the one who inspired me to get involved in black community activism. I also studied Italian for two semesters.

*Will you use language studies in your future career?*
I think it will! It has provided a lot of networking opportunities for me including an interview at the UN to work for the Holy See that I gave in English, French, and Italian.

*What were the highlights of your time at Manhattanville?*
Highlights of my time at the Ville include the silent protest my sophomore year to urge administration solidarity not only among members of black communities on campus but Latinx students who feared for their safety and their families’ safety after these elections. I also was lucky enough to be a part of Manhattanville South, the a cappella group, for all four of my years here and serve as their president for the last two years. They were some of the first people to help me find my place freshman year.

Alex Maignan-Thompson

Class of 2021  
**Major:** Global and International Studies

*Why did you choose to study languages?*
I chose to go this far in world languages in college because of my major in Global and International Studies. I believe that with a language you can also learn so much more about a culture and become more well rounded in how you view the world. In high school, my best subjects were Sociology, French, and History, so I think the GINS courses in conjunction with the World Languages department has been something that I didn’t need to think twice about.

*Will you use language studies in your future career?*
Yes, hopefully. I’m planning to study abroad in Tokyo in the Fall 2019 into 2020, so my studies over the past two years will be put to good use! Thanks to the World Languages and Literatures department I have added Japanese to my skill set, which is very beneficial in the world and something employers seek.

*What were the highlights of your time at Manhattanville?*
The yearly language parties that we have every fall semester. It’s something that not many students know about, but it’s a great chance to try a variety of cuisines from the countries of the languages offered here. Also, you can showcase what you’ve learned in your classes (through songs, games, or even speeches).
Emely Salazar

Class of 2021
Major: International Studies & Sociology

Why did you choose to study languages?
When I was little I developed an interest in languages and cultures. When I was little I used to study French. At the same time, I was being influenced by Japanese culture through anime. During my high school years, I decided that I wanted to continue learning more about other countries.

Will you use language studies in your future career?
In the future, I plan to work for the United Nations and hope the knowledge of different languages will help with achieving that goal.

What were the highlights of your time at Manhattanville?
I really wanted to learn Japanese, I was really happy when I found out Manhattanville offered classes in Japanese. I wish more people decided to take Japanese. I feel like Japanese is a language that makes you memorize different things that help sharpen your brain. I really wish that Manhattanville offered more years of Japanese.

GRADUATING SENIORS

Spanish Majors:
Monica Keel
Rochelle Colindres
Halpaa Duarte
Valeria Oviedo

Spanish Minors:
Evelyn Ferris
Amber McGee
Evelyn Rodriguez
Brenda Cardenas
Marissa Bentivenga

French Majors:
Monica Keel

French Minors:
Terissa Simental
Catherine Boozang-Hill
Raphaella Brice
Tamara Bogoljubskij
Ivette Nouel

Italian Minors:
Michele Fusca
Valeria Oviedo
Jasmine Villegas

UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS

French:
Alaa El Hajjar

Spanish:
Halpaa Duarte
FACULTY PROFILE

Alessandro Daniele
Professor of Italian

I started teaching at Manhattanville as an adjunct lecturer in Italian in fall 2002 and became a full-time lecturer in 2011. In other words, I’ve been teaching Italian at Manhattanville for seventeen years. Before I came to the States I taught in Italy from 1992-2000 and was director of an art school. I recruited students to study Italian. My teaching experience in the US gave me invaluable experience in college education which was new to me. I had never taught before in an American college and it was a great learning experience for me in every sense of the term. Since then I have been teaching all levels of Italian languages here at Manhattanville as well as literature, cinema, Italian culture, and business.

I find Manhattanville College a very interesting place to teach. In this small college I felt very comfortable from the beginning. And what was fascinating for me was interacting with the students very closely. For me, coming from a big university in Florence, that was unimaginable. I started this new career here and I am proud to have been here all this time because I formed close friendships and bonds with my colleagues. I feel blessed to be working with Binita Mehta, María José Luján, Gabriele Wicket, Carolina Rodriguez, and Julie Dolphin.

I’m interested in all literary aspects of Italian culture, but I especially like to teach the course on “Literature, Film, and Society.” We offer this course every two years and it explores Italian culture through cinema. Usually, it focuses on six-hour movies and teaches students about Italian social and political history and encourages them to evaluate the complexities of Italian society. The politics and history teaches students to develop some degree of understanding of Italian culture.

Why I chose to study and teach Italian has to do with my family background. I was born in an Italian family living in Germany. I grew up in a bilingual environment. From a very young age I had the opportunity to compare common and contrast two great cultures. I was born in Germany in a region that was almost bilingual in German and French, so I had the opportunity to learn a little French too. I would say that the passion for language stemmed from there. I decided early on to become a language teacher because of this background. I was always fascinated by linguistic and social traits, not only of Italian, but its correlation with other European languages and literatures.

From the early days of teaching in the US, I wanted to look at the infusion of Italian language and culture and I am interested in all aspects of Italian literature. When people think of Italian literature they think, of course, of Dante but there are also other engaging Italian authors. My interest spans from Dante to the contemporary authors. Recently, my interests are also in new Italian immigrant authors, the so-called “hyphenated writers” such as Senegalese-Italians or Algerian-Italians. That is a topic that interests me a lot as an immigrant and a son of immigrants. I also like to explore the vast Italian-American literature from John Fonte to Gay Talese.

I would recommend the study Italian for many reasons. Learning another language opens doors to another culture and enhances career opportunities for students, especially in the increasingly global climate. Countries are becoming more interconnected and the ability to engage in cross cultural communication will become ever more important. Knowledge of another language can pave the way for advance study in a wide range of fields. Italy has played a major role in the culture and social development of western civilization and has deeply influenced European culture. Italian is derived from Latin and knowledge of Italian will help also with the learning other romance languages. Another reason is related to art. According to UNESCO, Italy has 60% of the world’s arts treasures. Knowledge of Italian is vital to understanding the context of this art. From an economics point of view, Italy has the seventh strongest GDP in the world and is a member of the European Union. It remains an important strategic and geo-political force in Europe and in the world.
Al fondo de mi corazón

Al fondo de mi corazón
Te necesito decir que la ley de atracción no aplica entre nosotros

Al fondo de mi corazón
Te quiero seguir amando, pero yo misma necesito amarme

Al fondo de mi corazón
Tu no eres lo que yo pensaba, eres un malparido que trajo inconveniencias en mi vida

Al fondo de mi corazón
Estoy agradecida que tú me enseñaste mi valor y que no necesito estar con alguien amargado como el jugo de naranja en la mañanas cuando terminas de lavarte los dientes

Al fondo de mi corazón
Ya sé que estas arrepentido de cómo me traste pero ahora estoy brillando más que el sol, eso es porque apareciste en mi vida otra vez

Al fondo de mi corazón
No te necesito

-Cris S. Castillo
**Fue Una Dicha**

Fue una dicha el conocerte.

Y aunque no quedamos juntos,

Gracias por amarme un poquito.

Porque yo sí te amé,

A la mejor mucho, pero no me arrepiento.

Al final del día,

La pérdida más grande no fue mi dignidad,

Si no yo en tu vida.

Porque mi ausencia en tu vida

Te recordará lo mucho que te di,

Y lo poco que tu hiciste por mí.

**Viejo Imán**

¿Alguna vez te has visto en el espejo,

Y te has tocado en las partes que te tocó cuando estaba contigo?

Como un imán,

Tu mano tira rápidamente hacia tu corazón.

Porque de todas las partes que el probó,

Tu corazón fue en el que más huellas dejó.

Como espejo que encuentras en un centro comercial,

Marcado de huellas.

Huellas que no quiero limpiar.

Las carisias que me diseñaste en mi piel,

Cada una dejándome sin aire.

Tus labios escribiendo,

Te amo

y yo saboreando lo que es ser amada.

Nunca pobre olvidarte

Y aunque ya no eres mío.

Siempre te querré a lo beuno

-Maricruz Herrera
Soy Yo, Maricruz

Te voy a contar una historia de lo que es amar a ciegas. Que cuando lo leas, digas, “estabas bien pendeja o en verdad esta ciega” Y no lo voy a negar, que cuando lo cuento me da un coraje que hay veces que me quiero jalar mi propio pelo. Pero, esta es la historia de mi primer amor. No fue algo tan lindo. En realidad, fue la peor época de mi vida. Yo lo conocí cuando tenia 15 años, el tocaba el contrabajo y yo la viola.

Y cada que tenía el tiempo, él me tocaba la mano y me decía, “Que linda eres, y mira esa sonrisa de oro.” Y yo como pendeja me lo creía. Y sí, él se lo decía a cada muchacha que se le pasaba por enfrente. La diferencia era que yo intente responder con una Amistad en vez de con la calenture que la otra tenia entre las piernas.

Comenzó con unos mensajitos por la noche, mientras comía, mientras caminaba de clase en clase. Porque no estábamos en la misma escuela. Baboseando hacia el teléfono cuando me mandaba uno de esos mensajitos tan cursis que quieres vomitar después de leerlo. Pero una, como nunca ha tenido un amiguito de manitas sudadas, se nos movía el tapete.

Bueno, así fue por unos meses hasta que él me dijo algo que ahora comienzo a entender. “No te enamores de mí, porque yo no sé amar.” Y mira cómo me salió el cabronsito. Que no me enamore de él, después que me sale con las mamadas bien cursis. Y yo como siempre teniendo que aguantar mis sentimientos para complacer a otros. Y pordese, ya ni quiero querer. No quiero ser querida, y tampoco quiero saber cómo se siente ser amada.

-Maricruz Herrera
Un Calligramme

La Lune

Elle reste avec étoiles souvent incomplète

La lune est toujours dans le ciel mais parfois vous ne pouvez pas la voir

- Terissa Simental
Leah Bromberg  

**Class of 2019**  
**Major:** Communication and Media  
**Minor:** Women’s and Gender Studies

*Where did you study abroad?*

I studied abroad in Japan.

*Why did you choose Japan?*

I’ve always been interested in Japanese food and culture. I was really bad at Japanese class but I got really good at conversational Japanese like asking for directions and making small talk. I actually overheard a bunch of teenagers on a train once, they were speaking Japanese and I laughed at their joke to myself and they were so surprised I understood them. And we all laughed really loud.

*Where else did you travel?*

So, I visited South Korea. I highly suggest doing research on countries you plan to visit. I didn’t do any research beforehand and I was SO lost. It was a poor decision on my part. Also, try to travel with someone from that place. I traveled with two Americans who didn’t know anything about Korea past Kpop (yikes) and it was a disaster. When I was in Korea, I ordered “fresh octopus” and it was *moving octopus*. It was *that* fresh. They took it out of the tank and it was so fresh that the nerve endings were still moving. I had to eat it because everyone in the restaurant was staring at me and I wanted to cry.

*Do you have any advice for students who are interested in studying abroad?*

My advice for traveling in Japan: find at least one Japanese friend to ravel with from your school. At Kansai Gaidai I had a “speaking partner” and I would say fully take advantage of that opportunity as a study buddy and a travel buddy. The best trips I took were with Japanese friends.
Monica Keel
Class of 2019
Major: Spanish & French
Minor: Sociology

Where did you study abroad?
I studied in Montpellier, France.

Why did you choose France?
I chose France because I was stuck between Spain and France, but I wanted to choose what was best for my education. I chose France because there are fewer French speakers in the US compared to Spanish ones.

Where else did you travel?
I traveled mostly throughout the south of France, but I also went to Italy and Barcelona.

Do you have any advice for students who are interested in studying abroad?
My advice would be to save as much money as possible to travel while you are there. Don’t spend money on things like clothes because when most people travel in Europe they wear two variations of the same outfit.
Hi, language students of Mville! Congrats on making it through the fall semester, and I'm excited for you to push through the spring one.

I'm Nasir - I graduated in May 2018, and most of my time at Mville was spent in the WLL department. Since graduating, I've taken advantage of every opportunity to travel, both near and far. The best advice I can give you all (as language students) is to explore, explore, explore. I just spent three months working in Spain at a hostel, where I meet travelers, young and old, who inspire me every day. The best part? My Spanish language skills are improving rapidly. This time next week, I'll be in Argentina, so I'll continue to perfect the language. If you're looking for a cheap way to travel and to practice a language, definitely consider volunteering abroad. Maybe the WLL department will give you extra credit for it or can be a part of a project? Here's a resource to get you started on your journey - www.workaway.info.

Besides hopping around from country to country, I work as a content manager for a travel brand (Shut Up and Go) where I inspire broke 20-something-year-olds (like myself) to take advantage of adopting an international lifestyle. Especially as language students, it's suuuuuuper important to get out there and to see the world. What was the point of spending 4 years perfecting a language if you don't have the opportunity to use it? Definitely check out our website for resources and programs that'll get you ready to travel for cheap during and after college.

Since graduating, I've learned that there are opportunities, resources, and people out there that'll help you to create the life you've always wanted to live. It's going to take a bit of work, but it's certainly possible! The perfect place is to start with asking your language professors, they're always excited to help!

Best,
Nasir Fleming
Maria Ponomarev  
**Class of 2018**  
**Major:** Psychology  
**Minor:** Cognitive Behavioral Neuropsychology & French

I graduated Mville in 2018 with a BA in Psychology and two minors in Cognitive Behavioral Neuropsychology and French. I graduated Summa Cum Laude with a 3.9 GPA and also played 1st violin in the orchestra. I plan to graduate with my masters in 2020 and same year begin attending a PhD program... if all goes well.

Isabella Brascetta Guerra  
**Class of 2018**  
**Major:** Communication and Media  
**Minor:** Spanish & Italian & Marketing

My name is Isabella Brascetta Guerra and I graduated back in May 2018. I majored in Communication Studies and minor in Spanish, Italian, and Marketing. I am currently working for a NYC wedding planner, which has always been my dream. I am her main intern/assistant which means I am hands on working with her clients, vendors, etc. I am learning so much and doing what I love every day. I am also living with my friends near the city and applying for a couple of schools to pursue my masters. I am an international student from Venezuela, and I wouldn't have been able to chase any of these dreams without my family’s support during my years at Mville. I just want to be able to help them during these rough times back home, so I am going to work hard to succeed in the wedding industry; that’s my goal.
Fernanda Moscoso
Class of 2018
Major: Spanish
Minor: History & Latin American Studies

My name is Fernanda Moscoso. I graduated from Manhattanville College in 2018 with a B.A. in Spanish. I also have two minors in History and Latin American Studies. I am now working on my master’s degree in education. My goals are to become a Spanish teacher and later to get a PhD in Spanish and Latin American Literatures. I am currently working as a tutor at White Plains High School. Interesting facts about me: I love to write poetry and I have published some of my works. Additionally, I had the opportunity to be the editor-in-chief of TintaExtinta 2017-2018, the Spanish-language magazine at Manhattanville College.

Briyit Orellana
Class of 2018
Major: Spanish

My name is Briyit Orellana. I am a 2018 graduate student of Manhattanville College. I majored in Spanish and I am currently finishing my master’s degree on Education. Since my graduation, I had been involved in school tutoring programs like the Manhattanville/Centro Hispano Outreach program, AVID, which is a college readiness program, and as a mentor for middle-school students in the Eastview Middle School of White Plains. In addition to pursuing my educational goals, I got married last year and this year I am a mother-to-be. I am continuing my Education classes and if everything goes as planned, I will graduate in May 2019 with a beautiful and blessed family.

The Department of World Languages and Literatures thanks graduating senior Terissa Simental for her devotion to the study of languages other than English, and for her hard work in designing and editing this newsletter.