CHAIR’S NOTES

This inaugural newsletter showcases student work, alumni accomplishments, and events organized or sponsored by the Department of World Languages and Literatures (WLL). WLL was formed in fall 2014 with the merger of the departments of French, German, Italian, and Spanish.

In 2014-2015, during the first year of the Department’s existence, and under the able leadership of founding chair, German and International Studies Professor Gabriele Wickert, WLL organized several events to celebrate languages and cultures from around the world. This year, the department organized and jointly sponsored various events - literary readings with Spanish writer José Ovejero, an interdisciplinary, international conference on Africa and the African diaspora, both with The College of New Rochelle, and Manhattanville College’s own annual International Film Festival. These events highlight collaborations between WLL and other departments and programs at Manhattanville and also between Manhattanville College and other academic institutions. Congratulations are also in order to students in the Spanish program who published two issues of the Spanish online literary magazine, *TintaExtinta*, during the 2015-2016 academic year.

Finally, the department would like to acknowledge the creativity, initiative, and hard work of WLL student assistant Phuong Le ’16, who is responsible for most of the writing, as well as the editing and layout of this newsletter. Phuongong, who graduated in May ‘16 with a double major in Communication Studies and English (Film Studies concentration) with a minor in French, commences her postgraduate career in the Masters program in Film Studies at King’s College, London this fall.

Binita Mehta, Chair, WLL
NEWS & EVENTS

AN EVENING WITH JOSÉ OVEJERO

In October 2015, in a joint effort with the Modern & Classical Languages Department of The College of New Rochelle, José Ovejero graced the stage of Pius X Hall with an enactment of some of his celebrated short stories. Some students were also able to attend a talk and a writing workshop hosted at the College of New Rochelle. Ovejero’s performance mixes a few props with superb acting skills, which help him narrate stories like “Julia, Pablo and the Rubik Cube.” Some students from the College of New Rochelle were present at the performance hosted at Manhattanville. The stories had been previously read and discussed in Professor Luján’s class, creating a perfect atmosphere for commentary once the show was over. In short, José Ovejero’s performance was a unique, inspiring, and even enlightening event that rewarded students who ventured out of their comfort zone to experience it.

Gabrielle van Welie ‘16

FOOD AS CULTURE: THE 4TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Manhattanville’s Annual International Film Festival, jointly sponsored by WLL and other departments and programs, returned for the fourth time this year beginning March 21st and ending April 14 with the absolutely delicious theme of food. Spanning across multiple time periods and continents, the six films shown in the festival centered on the cultural and historical significance of national cuisines. Additionally, each film screening was accompanied with dishes from the movie’s country of origin. On April 6, Professors Wickert and Mehta were respondents to the film, La Graine et le mulet (2007) (Secret of the Grain) by the French-Tunisian filmmaker Abdellatif Kechiche. Other movies that were screened at the festival were Like Water for Chocolate (1992), Hunger (1966), Eat Drink Man Woman (1994), Jiro Dreams of Sushi (2011) and Lunch Box (2013).

Phuong Le ‘16
WLL SPONSORS CONFERENCE ON AFRICA

Jointly sponsored by WLL and the departments of English, History, and the African Studies and International Studies programs, the “Word, Image & Power in Africa and the African Diaspora” conference, which took place from April 1-2, 2016, was a valiant re-examination of the African narrative. Images of Africa have long been associated with devastating aftermaths of famines and political upheavals. These views however no longer align with the country’s changing cultural landscapes and rising economic stability. The panels at the conference welcomed scholars from Africa, the Middle East, Europe, Canada, and the U.S. and tackled various aspects of the African experience that have not been widely discussed in the dominant discourse. The topics were varied, ranging from literature, cinema and communication and media studies. While panel discussions on April 1 were held at The College of New Rochelle, the conference co-organizers, those on April 2 took place at Manhattanville College and concluded with a reception and musical performance by a local Malian kora player Yacouba Sissoko.

Phuong Le ‘16

WLL CLASSES INCORPORATE NYC INTO CURRICULUM

No language exists in a vacuum and classes in the WLL department at Manhattanville have always taken advantage of the College’s proximity to New York City where a multitude of cultural events take place every day. This semester, students in Professor Wickert’s Intro to German class enjoyed a trip to the Classic Stage Theater in the city to see Nathan the Wise by German writer Gotthold Lessing. Professor Mehta took students to a screening of Bande de filles (2014) (Girlhood) at the French Institute Alliance Française in NYC, as a part of her Discussing French Films class. These trips are not only opportunities to explore cultural institutions in the city but also for the students to engage with one another in exciting settings that are quite different from the formal academic classroom. They are also a testament to Manhattanville’s commitment to provide students with a well-rounded and global education.

Phuong Le ‘16
STUDENT PROFILES

ISABELLA BRASCETTA ‘18

Isabella Brascetta’s reason for studying Italian at Manhattanville College is a personal one. Since her father is Italian, her mother encouraged her to take classes in the language, which she has now come to love. A sophomore majoring in Communication Studies and minoring in Italian, Spanish, and Studio Art, Brascetta shows that her academic interests converge on fascinating multicultural subjects.

Brascetta’s journey at Manhattanville is full of happy twists and turns. An international student from Venezuela, she originally came to the College to study English for six months in the English Language Institute. When the time had arrived for her to finish her course, Brascetta had become so close to the Manhattanville community that she could not say goodbye. She decided to stay for another six months before finally choosing to pursue her college career here. Interestingly enough, her Italian classes sometimes remind Brascetta of home.

“My favorite thing about learning Italian is that it makes me think of my dad, all the time,” Brascetta shared with a hearty laugh. “Every time my professor (Professor Alessandro Daniele) talks, I just go, ‘Oh, my dad speaks exactly like you!’”

Among all aspects of the Italian language, Brascetta finds speaking to be the most difficult. Nevertheless, since her grandparents live in Italy, she has a chance to practice conversing with her relatives as well as her friends in that country. Brascetta also improves her skills by reading Italian books or enjoying Italian cinema. One of her favorite movies is La vita è bella (1997), a film that she describes as “absolutely beautiful,” just like its title.

Besides devoting her time to Italian and Spanish, Brascetta is incredibly passionate about her Communication Studies major. Recently, she has the opportunity to merge both her cultural expertise and her knowledge on media issues through a presentation on Venezuela for her Mass Communications class. During the first part of her speech, Brascetta discussed Venezuelan traditions and tourist attractions, or in other words, the beautiful side of her home country. In the second part, she turned to the political upheavals that plague Venezuela’s economic and social stability. Brascetta considers multi-faceted approaches like her presentation to be absolutely essential to understanding a country’s identity.
“I realized that I am always complaining about my country but at the same time, I love my country,” Brascetta said. “I think people sometimes don’t understand that despite all the issues, Venezuela is still an amazing country.”

In addition to her studies, Brascetta is also a conscientious and responsible RA who enjoys making crafty door tags for her residents. Her immediate future plan is to spend a semester studying abroad in Italy since, as a trilingual student, Brascetta deeply appreciates the opportunities and joys that engaging in multiple languages has brought her.

“One time when I was in the subway, a group of Italian tourists need help finding directions and it was so cool that I could understand and assist them,” Brascetta recalled. “Moreover, I can study here because I know English. I can talk to my relatives because I know Italian. It’s a truly a wonderful ability to have, both professionally and personally.”

MEGHAN HUGHES ‘17

Meghan Hughes’ love for learning languages sparked even before she enrolled at Manhattanville College. When Hughes first started high school, she took up French, but changed to Spanish during her senior year. She successfully continued her study of Spanish at Manhattanville where she has taken six classes in the subject. A junior with a major in International Studies as well as a minor in Spanish and a self-designed minor in Photography, Hughes strives to combine her language skills and her enthusiasm for community service.

Hailing from Pennsylvania, Hughes, who is a field hockey team player, was attracted to Manhattanville’s small college environment and athletic spirit. She initially decided to major in Biology but ultimately switched to International Studies due to her interest in working for non-profit organizations. Among the courses that she has taken in Spanish, Hughes’ favorite was a translation class where she was tasked with translating Spanish articles to English as well as writing stories in both languages. One of her tips for mastering writing in Spanish is to make spreadsheets of the different tenses, verb conjugations, and English equivalences of idiomatic phrases. Whenever Hughes needs to study for a test, she relies on these helpful notecards, or on credible online sources such as WordReference.com or SpanishDict.com.

“Definitely, definitely not Google Translate though!” Hughes exclaimed. “It’s good for comparing your writings, but I would never just copy and paste from that site.”

While Hughes enjoys writing in Spanish, she admits that the toughest part of the language is speaking, since she is often confused as to which verb tense she should use. Hughes
combats this difficulty by watching Spanish movies, and even took a course where she could speak about the movies shown in class, in order to improve her speaking skills. Since one of the members on her hockey team is from Argentina, Hughes also talks to her friend in Spanish or enlists her help when she needs to go over grammatical mistakes in essays. Hughes’ most meaningful practice sessions come, however, from her volunteering trips to Costa Rica for the Foundation for Peace organization. Hughes has been going to that country for volunteer work since her high school years where she assisted in the process of building schools there.

“Before I interned for Foundation for Peace, during my high school trips to Costa Rica, I would work in the same town every year,” Hughes shared. “I got so close to everyone in the town that when I did finally become an intern and met with another group who went to that very same town, it was simply amazing to be able to see them again.”

Her relationship with Costa Rica promises to continue in the future since Hughes plans to go the country after graduation to either find a job in conservation, or to teach English. Without a doubt, her knowledge in Spanish will prepare Hughes well for her future ambitions.

Phuong Le ‘16

WLL 2016 PRIZE WINNERS

From left to right: Maria Gabriella Caram (Spanish), Meghan Hughes (Spanish), Isabella Brascetta-Guerra (Italian), Christine Santini (Italian), Julia Souto (German) and Maria Ponomarev (French)

Congratulations to this year’s winners of WLL’s departmental awards! The prizes, which recognize students who achieve excellence in their study of languages, were awarded on April 20th at the College’s Undergraduate Award Ceremony.
STUDENT WORK

Die Vergnügen des Lebens
By Frances Cruz (Introduction to German II)

Die Lebensmittel, das Fitnesscenter,
Frischer Schnee, ein Tag am Strand,
Die Morgen, die Sonnenuntergänge,
Die Musik, die Stille.

Mein bester Freund, der Hund
Ohne Schuhe gehen.
Im Regen tanzen,
Dass Mama auf mich aufpasst
Das Glück meiner Freunde und ihnen dabei zu helfen.

Spaß als Kind
By Michael McHale (Introduction to German II)

Aufstehen, die Sonne scheint hell
Frühstück mit den Eltern
Viele Pläne machen -- aufregend
Eis geniessen, kalt auf der Zunge
Wälder, dunkel und still
Wandern im Wald, herrlich und frei
Schwimmen gehen, Wasserball spielen
Wiesen: schönes, grünes Gras
Frische Luft, blauer Himmel
Wunderschönes Leben, viel erleben
Rote Äpfel pflücken
Freunde kommen viel öfters, zusammen Fußball spielen
Ferien – einfach, lang, angenehm
Keine Schule, keine Arbeit
Kein Zeitdruck, stressfrei sein
Alles nur Spiel und Spaß
Viel zu Hause sein und faulenzen
So war das Leben als Kind.
Análisis de la novela La increíble y triste historia de la cándida Eréndira y su abuela la desalmada y la película Eréndira

By Maria Caram Gonzalez (Latin American Novel and Film)

La novela corta La increíble y triste historia de la cándida Eréndira y su abuela la desalmada, de Gabriel García Márquez, narra la trágica vida de una joven quien, luego de accidentalmente causar un incendio, es obligada por su abuela a prostituirse para así reponer los bienes que destruyó. La película Eréndira es una adaptación cinematográfica de esta novela, dirigida por Ruy Guerra. La película mantiene prácticamente todos los detalles de la novela, y solo agrega unos pocos elementos. El realismo mágico es uno de los elementos más dignos de mencionar del cuento, y uno de los más difíciles de traducir a la pantalla. Sin embargo la película logra mantenerlos casi todos en la adaptación.

A mi parecer, el tema principal de la historia es la crítica al capitalismo, representado por la figura de la abuela, a quien solo le interesa tener riquezas y aumentarlas sin importar el costo. Es la codicia de la abuela que causa la desdicha de la joven Eréndira, y no es hasta su muerte que ella se libera de sus desgracias. Al inicio de la historia, la abuela muestra una obsesión con rodearse de objetos de valor, a pesar de que son muy antiguos y poco prácticos. La grotesca obesidad de la abuela también se puede ver como algo que exprese la codicia de la abuela: no solo le interesa coleccionar una enorme cantidad de bienes, sino también consumir una enorme cantidad de comida.

Cuando un incendio destruye la casa de la abuela y todos sus contenidos, la abuela no duda en responsabilizar a Eréndira de aquella perdida. La abuela le asigna un valor monetario a su propiedad, y declara que su nieta se lo deberá pagar sin importar el tiempo que le tome. La abuela también decide que la única manera en que Eréndira le puede pagar esa deuda es a través de la prostitución. Y es así como la joven adolescente termina convirtiéndose, a la fuerza, en una trabajadora sexual.

A través de la historia Eréndira logra convertirse en una sensación nacional. Las filas de clientes que esperan por ella se empieza a hacer tan grandes que aparecen varios negocios para entretenérselos mientras hacen sus turnos. Algunos de estos negocios son contratados por la misma abuela (como los músicos). Eventualmente la abuela logra coleccionar suficiente dinero para contratar a varias personas a su servico, y mejorar sus condiciones de vida. En la película podemos ver como la residencia de Eréndira y la abuela pasa de ser una pequeña tienda hecha de telas andrajosas, a una enorme tienda hecha de telas de lujo. Eventualmente, la abuela logra tener suficiente dinero para vivir de la misma manera que lo había hecho anteriormente. Sin embargo, cualquier oportunidad que tiene para hacerse de más dinero, ya sea aplicando descuentos ridículos a sus empleados o aumentar la deuda de su nieta. El único interés de la abuela es siempre tener más, sin importarle sacrificar el
bienestar de Eréndira. Esto se manifiesta hasta en la muerte de la abuela: su sangre es color verde, el color del dinero.

Tanto en la novela como en la película se puede interpretar a la abuela como una figura capitalista-- y la causante del sufrimiento de Eréndira. Sin embargo, la película expande el comentario político, que en la novela era un tema secundario. Al hacer esto, la película critica no solo el capitalismo a través de la abuela, sino también al sistema político a través de Onésimo Sánchez. Personalmente disfrute mucho esas adiciones, ya que le dan más profanidad y realismo a la historia. Sin embargo, a pesar de ser una excelente adaptación, disfruté más la lectura de la novela.

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**Ma Famille**

By Jose De Santiago (Introductory French II)

Cher Thomas,


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Phuong Le ‘16 (French minor) received an award at the Alliance Française of Greenwich’s Bourses et Prix award ceremony on May 9, 2016. Congratulations to her and to all graduating WLL seniors!
I have three words for anyone who is contemplating studying abroad: "JUST DO IT!" One of the main reasons that students do not even imagine studying abroad is because of finance. Luckily Manhattanville has direct exchange programs with plenty of countries - one of which is my current home, Montpellier, France! I attend the Université Paul Valéry Montpellier III, where I take six courses: four are French language and culture courses, and the other two are cinema courses. In only two months, my French has effectively improved because all of my courses are entirely in French.

I am having an absolute blast in Europe. The lifestyle is very laid-back, which is gives me a chance to truly enjoy the experience instead of always being on the go. The French have an expression that they live by: Profiter de la vie. This literally translates to "to profit from life." It doesn't mean to make money as most would think, but it means to savor and to enjoy every moment of happiness and pleasure in life.

I know that sometimes study abroad can seem impossible because of the long visa process, leaving your friends and family, and finances, but it is absolutely achievable. Being a young traveler and student of the world is beyond liberating. I cannot express in words how much this opportunity has influenced my personal growth. Now it's your turn, relinquish your fears and just do it!

Nasir Fleming '18
If you told me I was going to travel to 10 different countries and over 30 different cities while studying abroad during my junior year of college, I would not have believed you. It took three and a half months of learning both in classrooms and in new, unfamiliar surroundings to conclude that studying abroad is one of the most rewarding and memorable moments anyone can have.

I believe that classes at Manhattanville helped me learn in new environments with various teaching styles and opened me up to meeting new people. For instance, classes in Salamanca are mixed with native Spanish speakers who are at a higher level than those who are learning Spanish as a second language. This challenged me to improve my Spanish. While working on my Spanish or Castilian, I also learned a lot about the Spanish culture from siestas (time in the middle of the day where families eat lunch [comida], relax, or nap) to fiestas (the parties that can go from midnight to 8 in the morning). In Spain, the Spanish accent is very different from the Latin American one. Moreover, some of the autonomous communities in Spain have an additional official language other than Spanish. For example, in Galicia, the most northwestern community, they speak Gallego. Becoming familiar with the Spanish norms intrigued and helped me see things in a whole new perspective.

Here are some of the highlights of my study abroad experience: teaching children and young teenagers English at a school two times a week; visiting my aunts, uncles, and cousins who live in Geneva, Switzerland and who I have not seen in years; seeing the Cliffs of Moher and one of the Aran Islands in Ireland; riding a camel at both the medieval market in Salamanca and along the Mediterranean Sea in Tangier, Morocco; climbing all 463 steps of the Duomo in Florence, Italy to watch the sunset; traveling with fellow Valiant, Roselore Marseille to Marseille, France; zip-lining over the Tagus River in Toledo, Spain; experiencing Nochevieja Universitaria, one of Spain’s largest parties in Salamanca to welcome the New Year with over 44,000 people; getting lost biking all over Valencia, Spain; and making many new friends from all over the world along the way.
ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Karina Edouard, ’15 (French minor) currently acts as AmeriCorps volunteer at a non-profit organization African Communities Together where she focuses on communications outreach. She has been admitted, on a full scholarship, to the Masters in Public Policy program at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public & International Affairs at Princeton University where she will begin in fall 2016.

Adolfo Yunes ’11 (French minor) had the opportunity to do several internships in different industries, from insurance and banking, to fashion and luxury in Paris while pursuing a law degree at Sciences Po. After deciding to continue one more year in the Management program at Sciences Po, he was able to intern for the French bank Société Générale, Burberry, and L’Oréal. As recent management graduate, Yunes is in the process of interviewing for jobs in the French fashion and luxury sector.

Soraya Martino MAT ’05 MS ’13 (Spanish-Education double major) returned to Manhattanville College in 2013 to enroll in the Educational Leadership Program where her Educational Leadership Portfolio passed with Distinction. She is working at Scofield Magnet Middle School in Stamford, CT teaching Spanish in grades 6-8.

Maria Camilla Pava ’15 (Italian minor) founded Saudade Design, a jewelry and fashion line, as a hobby during her time at Manhattanville. After almost a year working in EXPRESS, Soho, in New York, she returned to Colombia to continue following her dream and got the support of two investors and a partner. Right now, she is the Co-founder and Marketing Communications Director of Saudade Design.