



Our World

Foreign Languages and Literature Department - Spring 2020

Welcome to the Spring 2020 Semester!

IN THIS ISSUE

- This is us
- Let's celebrate!
- Clubs and societies
- Students in the community
- Students around the world
- Faculty making news
- Research highlight
- What's next?



In this newsletter, you will meet some of the people that enrich our department. You will also learn about exciting news and events that have kept us busy during the last half of the 2019 academic year and other activities and programs planned for 2020. For instance, our department was honored by having one of our former students in Spanish, Ms. Roxana Cortés Reyes, recognized as an Outstanding Alumni by the College of Arts and Sciences. Roxana and her career trajectory as a lawyer embody what we believe a Foreign Language major can do for our students. We believe that speaking a

foreign language is an investment that can complement and further any career or job in our increasingly globalized world by doing much more than creating a bridge for communication. Learning a foreign language grants individuals the opportunity to see issues from different perspectives and with greater nuance, it enables understanding of complex matters, and nurtures cognitive skills that are critical for success. Indeed, language shapes our thoughts. Language “is the palette from which we draw all the colors of our life, and people who speak multiple languages have a larger palette and richer set of colors to draw from than those who are monolingual (Jackson, 2012).”

In this new year, we invite you to visit us in ASH 301 and see what our department has to offer as we work on enriching and expanding our students' lives through language learning. You can also follow us on Facebook (UNO Foreign Languages Department) and Instagram (@uno_languages).

Dr. Cecilia Tocaimaza-Hatch

Assistant Professor, Foreign Languages & Literature and OLLAS Faculty

Jackson, A. (2012). There's more to language than speaking. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2012/01/29/is-learning-a-language-other-than-english-worthwhile/theres-more-to-language-than-speaking>.

THIS IS US: MEET OUR FACULTY AND STUDENTS



Jolene Martinez, Spanish student

Jolene Martínez graduated in December 2019 with a degree in Spanish and a minor in Chicano/Latino Studies. Her trajectory at UNO was different than that

of most of her peers. Jolene was 17 when she got married and dropped out of school. She returned to school when she was in her mid 30's. By then, she had three children and became a single parent when her husband was deported. The challenges and responsibilities of supporting and raising her family alone and taking care of her parents, whose health was quickly deteriorating, forced her to forego her educational aspirations for a time. However, after a few years, her mother passed away and Jolene went back to school. From that point on, she worked full-time, cared for her children, and became a full-time caretaker for her father while taking classes at UNO until her graduation in 2019. Currently, she is a bilingual parent educator at a non-profit organization where she performs various functions that support families by getting young children ready for school and arming parents with tools to advocate for themselves and their families. As she noted, her UNO degree has given her a sense of value and security. She feels like she can do anything, go anywhere and make a life for herself and her family. Despite the hardships, it was all worth it. Her children are now pursuing their own educational goals; she believes seeing what she has accomplished has set a path they can now follow.

Reiko Take-Loukota 武ラコタ 玲子 Japanese Instructor



"How does cranberry sauce taste like?" In 1989 an 8th-grade student asked me this question in class. I was a young English teacher in my hometown

Kagoshima, Japan. I could not answer her. How could I know? I had never seen cranberries nor turkey in my life. Well, this question changed my life.

To answer such questions, I decided to go to graduate school and study Applied Linguistics at the University of South Florida. I became a teacher of the Japanese Language. The reason why, it is too long a story.

I came to UNO in 1995. Currently, I teach the first and second-year Japanese language courses. During the summer, I organize a tour for Shizuoka University in Japan, which is a sister institution of UNO. Through the tour, students learn English, American culture, and history. I also participate in many cultural events with Friends of Japan, a student organization at UNO. Japanese and non-Japanese students work together to promote Japanese culture.

I enjoy seeing students grow to speak Japanese, or English, and feel comfortable in these two different countries. I am hoping to keep connecting these two nations and cultures.

In my spare time, I like to travel and taste good food on the way. I also love beautiful music and old movies. I try to be a good gardener, but have never been successful, not even growing cucumbers!

December 2019 Graduates – Congratulations!

B.A. in Foreign Languages

Pamela Brodman (Spanish)
Adriana Carias (Spanish)
Dominique Cook (Spanish)
Elba Flores-Castro (Spanish)
Trejo Granados (Spanish)
Jolene Martinez (Spanish)
Kylie McKain (Spanish)
Michael Thompson (German)
Tyquisha Valentine (Spanish)

Minor in Foreign Languages

Sage Evans (Spanish)
Katie Haynes (Spanish)
Sarah Jordan-Chowning (German)
Anna Pieper (French)

M.A. Language Teaching

Rhonda Lynn (TESOL)

LET'S CELEBRATE!



The College of Arts and Sciences honored five Outstanding Alumni for their outstanding early and mid-career contributions to their respective fields. We are very proud to announce that one of the alumni, **Roxana Cortés Reyes**, is a graduate of the Foreign Languages & Literature Department.

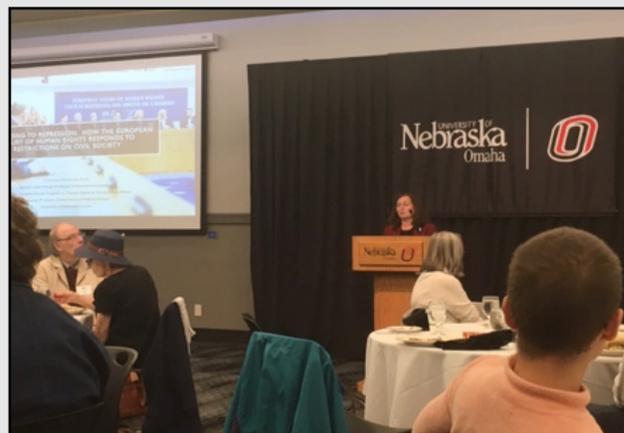
Roxana graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of Nebraska at Omaha with majors in Spanish, Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS), and Psychology. She earned her J.D. from the University of Nebraska Lincoln's College of Law.

Since her graduation, she has been working for the Immigrant Legal Center where she currently serves as a Rural Capacity Building Supervising Attorney. She is a strong advocate for immigrants' rights and is active in local campaigns to educate immigrants on their rights.

Roxana met with our students on November 1st to discuss her educational trajectory at UNO-including the importance of her language major and how that has influenced her career.

44th European Studies Conference!

The 44th annual European Studies Conference (ESC) was held on October 4-5th, 2019, and featured 24 panels that focused multifaceted perspectives on the present, past and future of the European continent. This interdisciplinary conference drew many participants from colleges and universities in the United States and from abroad. Areas of interest included art, history, languages and literature along with current issues and future prospects in cultural, political, social and economic areas, philosophy, music, theater, and film.



At the ESC Friday luncheon, Dr. Courtney Hillebrecht delivered a keynote lecture for conference participants and the UNO community. Dr. Hillebrecht is Associate Professor of Political Science, Waugh Professor of International Relations and Director of the Forsythe Family Program on Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. The title of her keynote address was "Responding to Repression: How the European Court of Human Rights Responds to Restrictions on Civil Society." Activities for the conference took place in the Milo Bail Student Center on the UNO campus.

Tearing down walls: A series of events commemorating the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall

"Tearing Down Walls: A Series of Events Commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall" was held Nov. 5-7 on UNO's Dodge Campus. The free events included "When the Walls Came Down: Freedom of Movement as a Human Right," a presentation by Drs. Jeannette Gabriel and Laura Alexander from the Schwalb Center and Goldstein Center for Human Rights respectively.

In addition, UNO welcomed Dr. Jeffrey Engel, nationally renowned historian and Director of the Center for Presidential History at Southern Methodist University, who delivered the keynote address, "We Were Lucky to Survive: The Real and Terrifying Story of the Berlin Wall's Unexpected Fall."

Along with the UNO events, the series included a Film Streams presentation of *Good Bye, Lenin!*, a 2003 German movie about an East Berlin family's experiences before and after the fall of the wall. The following afternoon, UNO art professor Dr. Adrian R. Duran hosted the workshop, "Political Paint: Graffiti and the Berlin Wall," which allowed students to paint graffiti on a simulated wall.



Dr. Jeffrey Engel



Sponsors included the University of Nebraska at Omaha, UNO College of Arts and Sciences, Humanities Nebraska, Film Streams, the Nebraska Cultural Endowment, and UNO's Goldstein Center for Human Rights. The events were made possible by the UNO Department of Foreign Languages & Literature, the Department of History, the Department of Art & Art History, and the Department of Religious Studies.

Clubs and Societies

Sigma Delta Pi

Last Fall, UNO's Omicron Lambda Chapter of Sigma Delta Pi, the National College Hispanic Honor Society, welcomed all new student officers to its executive committee: Adam Bridges (President), Jamie Bish (Vice-President), Sunny Nakada (Treasurer) and Sarah Johnson (Secretary). Students participated in several events: a movie night, volunteering at the Intercultural Senior Center, co-sponsoring Tertulia (a monthly Spanish conversation hour). In addition, the chapter conducted an initiation ceremony on November 15th. The student executive committee is currently generating ideas for Spring events, so current and former students, contact us with your ideas! For more information contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Melanie Bloom at melaniebloom@unomaha.edu



Stammtisch

UNO German Program's Stammtisch (regular table) for German conversation has met every Thursday of the fall and spring semesters for ten years. It's a relaxing, enjoyable, and friendly way of practicing your language skills in a natural environment. Everyone is invited, whether or not you are currently taking German at UNO, and we love to see community members, alums, and those curious about German. If you're a beginner, please don't feel intimidated. Just coming and listening to the cadence of the language has its value. You do not need to feel pressured to speak. Please join us Thursdays, from 4 - 5:30 at Roast Coffee in Aksarben Village.



STUDENTS IN THE COMMUNITY: LEARNING BY SERVING

New French course: Introduction to Translation

Dr. Parnell offered for the first time an introduction to translation (from French into English) course. Undergraduate and graduate students started with translating sentences from the Belgian comic series *Tintin en Amérique*. Then they moved to paragraphs from articles of the bilingual newspaper *France-Amérique*. Once students became more proficient in the translation task, they were exposed to a variety of texts in different genres: administrative documents, recipes, sets of instructions, tourist brochures, and official texts or flyers.

Class time was also spent transcribing and translating French video interviews for a UNO graduate project. The course ended on the more complex task of translating scenes from *Camus' play Caligula* and short excerpts from the contemporary French novels: *Syngue Sambor*, *la pierre de patience* and *Tous les matins du monde*. The class was highly collaborative and interactive as students worked on specific translations at first within small groups then opening their discussion to the whole class, to reach the best translation possible.

Throughout the semester, students also translated five English documents such as: conversation flyers, student guidelines, learning style inventory, tutor requests into French for the benefit of the Omaha non-profit organization "*Learning for All*", who helps immigrants to learn English. Our city is home to many West Africans, who speak French at home. We also had a guest lecturer, Monsieur Frank Ebang, a professional translator and interpreter, who graciously answered all of the many questions from students. This popular event allowed our students to discover and explore new professional opportunities in this field.

STUDENTS AROUND THE WORLD

Japan

The Shizuoka Summer Tour celebrated its 40th Anniversary this year. This program allows Japanese students from UNO's sister university in Shizuoka, Japan, to embark on a summer tour to Omaha, central and western Nebraska, and South Dakota. This past August, eleven participants arrived in Omaha and spent the first week of the program studying English. After that, they traveled across Nebraska and South Dakota learning American culture and history. The UNO delegation, including Reiko Loukota (Japanese instructor), Chancellor Gold and Jane Meza (Associate Vice Chancellor for Global Engagement), visited Shizuoka in October and joined in the celebration of 40 years of friendship between UNO and Shizuoka University.



France

In Summer 2019, 15 undergraduate students attended the Centre de linguistique appliquée in Besançon to take French language classes with students from all over the world. Two graduate students also went to Besançon to participate in the CLA "Université d'été", where they took several workshops dedicated to pedagogy and teaching techniques for learners of French as a Foreign Language (FLE). As part of the program, students travelled to Strasbourg, Genève (Switzerland), Dijon and Lyon during the weekends. For more information on both undergraduate and graduate programs (Summer 2021), contact Dr. Juliette Parnell, jparnell@unomaha.edu

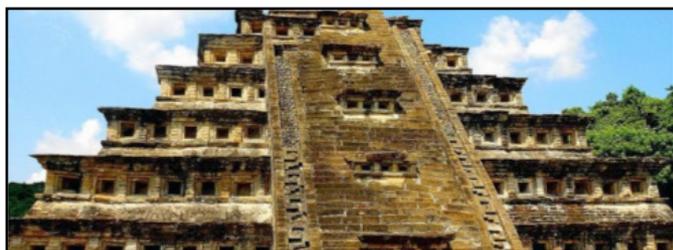


Spain



Seventeen students traveled to Soria, Spain, for a 6-week study abroad program in summer 2019. This language immersion program placed students at the heart of Spanish language and culture through intensive coursework, community service, and homestay, where each participant lived with a local family. For more information on this program (Summer 2021) contact Dr. Cecilia Tocaimaza-Hatch, ctocaimazahatch@unomaha.edu

Summer 2020



Quebec, Canada:

Improve your French skills, participate in extracurricular activities and earn UNO credits during a five-week immersion program at Laval University in beautiful Quebec City. The city itself, founded in 1608 by Champlain, has a great deal to offer both culturally and historically. Enjoy the “Festival d’été” in July and the “Fêtes de la Nouvelle France” in August, when hundreds of musicians give concerts throughout the city.

Contact Dr. Patrice J. Proulx for more information at: pproulx@unomaha.edu

Xalapa, Mexico:

Experience the city of Xalapa, Mexico during the Spanish language immersion program with UNO and La Universidad de Veracruz. Explore the historical and natural landscapes of this beautiful city while improving your Spanish and earning UNO credits. Students will enhance their Spanish languages skills through intensive Spanish and culture courses, homestays, and cultural activity.

Contact Dr. Laura Walls for more information at: lwalls@unomaha.edu

Dr. Melanie Bloom delivers graduate course and public lecture at BYU

Last Fall, Dr. Melanie Bloom delivered a one-credit graduate course on experiential learning to pedagogy, linguistics and literature students in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Brigham Young University (BYU). In addition to working with graduate students, Dr. Bloom gave a public lecture entitled, “Integrating experiential learning opportunities across the curriculum” in which she highlighted projects conducted by several faculty in UNO’s Department of Foreign Languages and Literature. As BYU is beginning a new experiential learning initiative, both the graduate course and the lecture were well received by faculty and graduate students interested in integrating new experiences in their language courses.



Dr. Steven Torres: New book and Invited Talk



Dr. Steve Torres's latest book is titled *Spain After the Indignados/15M Movement*. This publication, which was edited in collaboration with Dr. Pereira-Zazo (UNL), explores how the aftershocks of the 2007 Great Recession restructured Spain's political sphere and political imaginary. The volume brings together a representative sample of Spain's leading progressive voices, including two of the five founding members of the Podemos party. The essays herein explore the areas of economics, politics, ecology, social change, media, and cultural politics in order to present a broad, critical account of contemporary Spain, with a special emphasis on emerging forms of sociopolitical contestation, self-organizing, democratic participation, and radical politics.

In their concluding remarks, the authors argue that Spanish cultural studies—which originally gravitated toward celebratory accounts of capitalist modernization, the cultural Movida and the advent of a postmodern Spain—must continue to build a new cultural politics that not only challenges the accepted narrative of the Spanish Transition to democracy, but that is committed to confronting the civilizatory challenges currently faced.

In addition, in October, Dr. Torres was an invited keynote speaker in the “LANGUAGE, IMAGE, POWER: LUSO-HISPANIC CULTURAL STUDIES THEORY AND PRACTICE” Conference at Texas Tech University. His talk was titled *Cultural Studies Counter-Practices of Emancipatory Research and Education*.

What's Next?

New Classes

Spain after the Great Recession

Through a variety of documentaries, fiction films and texts, *Spain after the Great Recession* explores key themes in the areas of economics, politics, ecology, social change, media and culture, in order to present a broad, critical account of contemporary Spain, with a special emphasis on recent and emerging forms of sociopolitical mobilization and democratic participation at various levels. Beginning on May 15, 2011, hundreds of thousands of (mostly) young people filled the squares of the largest cities in Spain under the motto “No nos representan” (“They [the politicians] do not represent us”). What happened during the following months could well be described as the discovery of participatory democracy by a significant swath of the Spanish population. This seminar course explores the precedents, causes and consequences of the economic crisis that began in 2007-2008, leading up to the 15M/Indignados movement, as well as the cycle of social mobilization that ensued.

Spanish 1100

Beginning Spanish for Healthcare Professionals

Our beginning Spanish courses often include students who seek to pursue a career in health, and who wish to gain some expertise in Spanish to better communicate with patients and clients. Spanish 1100: Beginning Spanish for healthcare professionals is a new course specifically designed for these students as it provides novice Spanish learners a sociolinguistic foundation that will facilitate linguistic exchanges with Spanish speakers on matters related to health. As such, the course is different from other beginning Spanish courses in that it includes relevant vocabulary to healthcare, linguistic tasks resemble those common between healthcare providers and patients, and cultural content targets aspects of Hispanic culture in the US and Latin America that are essential in providing care.

