

## EVENTS

February 10  
French Film Series: *Versailles*  
11:00 a.m.  
Clark Hall 527

March 6-9  
Foreign Language Week at  
UMSL

March 11  
Friends without Borders  
Conversation Table with  
Elders

March 16  
Bridge on the Bridge:  
Celebrating International  
Students

April 6  
Excellence in Languages  
Dinner for High School  
Students  
6:30 p.m.

French Film Series:  
*Les Chevaliers Blancs*  
7:00 p.m.  
Clark Hall 527

April 27  
French Film Series:  
*La Fille du Patron*  
7:00 p.m.  
Clark Hall 527

May 3  
Graduation Reception  
3:30  
Clark 527

Alumni Happy Hour  
5-7 pm  
Ferguson Brewing Company

## LANGUAGE GROUPS

China-America Corner

Chinese Language Table

Friends without Borders

Japanese-English

Language Exchange

Kaffeestunden

Lingua

Hispanic Latino Association

La Table Française

**UMSL** | Alumni

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI—ST. LOUIS

# Department of Language and Cultural Studies

SPRING 2017 NEWSLETTER

## Notes from the Chair

Welcome to another newsletter filled with stories and pictures that illustrate the remarkable accomplishments of the students, faculty, and friends of our vibrant department. As you can tell by looking at the pictures, our celebration of National Foreign Language Week was a huge success with record attendance. And LINGUA, our brand-new student organization, has already hosted its first big event to celebrate international students on our campus! In cooperation with many diverse student groups, they built a bridge of support for international students at UMSL. The study tour to Costa Rica was an exciting language immersion experience for all participants, and our expanded course offerings in blended and

online format are providing much needed flexibility for our busy student population. Please take a moment to read about summer classes and study tours, student/ alumni updates, and faculty accomplishments. We hope you will join us on May 3rd as we congratulate this year's graduates. We will begin our celebration at 3:30 pm on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of Clark Hall and then move to Ferguson Brewing Company around 5:00 pm to toast the graduates and celebrate with colleagues and alumni.

With best wishes for  
a rewarding Spring,

*Birgit*



## Featured Story: Foreign Language Week 2017



Photograph by Tiffany Seipel

Monday was packed with exciting events: a poetry reading by Language faculty entitled "Upheaval: Political, Social, Psychological, Environmental..." was followed by "A Taste of the World" kick-off celebration and a Japanese cooking demo of okonomiyaki and onigiri. Each subsequent day featured foods and activities from French, German, Japanese, Chinese, Latin America, and Spanish cultures. Read more at UMSL Daily: <http://thecurrent-online.com/features/national-foreign-language-week-2017-highlights-diversity-and-similarity-at-umsl/>

See more photos on page 2.

## Our new student Bridge on the Bridge

organization, LINGUA, marked March 16th as a day to connect domestic and international members of the UMSL community. "Brick by brick, they built a Bridge of support," sent hundreds of welcoming messages, and suggested ways to immediately create new international and intercultural friendships. Later in the day, students and faculty gathered in the Fireside Lounge to celebrate the Power of Language through international food and poetry readings in ten different languages. This student-driven event received cooperation and support from many different organizations, including the Graduate Writers Association, the International Student Club, SEMPA, Language and Cultural Studies, Gender Studies, International Friends, Sigma Tau Gamma and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Read more at <http://blogs.umsl.edu/news/2017/03/23/brick-by-brick/>



Photograph by Marowa Alzori

## Study Abroad

**Featured Program: Costa Rica** (December 29, 2016 to January 14, 2017)



Back at the capital, UMSL students met their host families and experienced first-hand the daily routines of a Costa Rican household. Immersed in this Spanish only environment, they acclimated quickly and gained confidence in their language skills. By combining classes at the Costa Rican Language Academy with dancing and cooking lessons, informal conversation groups, and home-stay activities, these students were soon living and dreaming in Spanish!

An unforgettable learning experience!



**Join us this summer for three exciting study abroad programs:**

**Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic**

May 28–June 12, 2017

**Barcelona, Spain:**

June 3–June 17, 2017

**Strasbourg, France**

July 1–21, 2017

“Querida Costa Rica, gracias por darme unas de las memorias tan preciosas de mi vida. Gracias por unirme con maestros y estudiantes que me cambiaron. Fue una aventura que nunca olvidaré. Estoy tan triste de despedirse. ¡Hasta pronto y Pura Vida!”

Dear Costa Rica, thank you for giving me some of the most precious memories of my life. Thank you for uniting me with teachers and students who changed me. It was an adventure I'll never forget. I'm sad it's time to say goodbye. See you again soon and Pura Vida!”

—**Andrea Biermann**, a nursing student who also completed a Spanish minor, reflects on her experience in Costa Rica

These eleven students (above) joined Professor Susan Yoder-Kreger in San José, Costa Rica, for two weeks of linguistic and cultural immersion. During their first weekend excursion to the rainforest in the northeastern part of the country, the group went exploring by foot and by boat. Students got to visit a protected area of the beach where sea turtles came ashore to lay their eggs. They even met their own resident sloth that had made a tree near the cafeteria her home.



## International Students Visit with Elders

Twenty of our international students participated in conversations with retirees at the Sarah Community Naomi House Saturday, March 11. Table Wisdom, a St. Louis organization that connects mature Americans with English language learners for conversational English, welcomed these UMSL students and their tutor, Sarah Bell, for a unique conversation opportunity in the community.

The students enjoyed getting to know these retirees and are eager for similar conversation activities in the future. One student summed it up, “That [activity] encouraged me to change my mind and not stay at home too much during free time, to try and make small talk with native speakers. Then my speaking part of English will soon be improved.”





## Spring Course Highlights

**French and Francophone Studies** (French 3210/4310) focuses on academic communication skills through the study of French and Francophone texts. This semester, the course topic is “**Disobedience**” (Viola White).

**Introduction to Spanish Translation and Interpretation** (Spanish 3220) is a hands-on course that familiarizes students with translating and interpreting in professional settings, including business, health, and law (Martha Caeiro).

**Introduction to Hispanic Literature** (Spanish 3282) This new course surveys major contexts and movements of Peninsular and Spanish American literatures. Students will study texts from the early Hispano-Arabic through the modern Peninsular periods and from pre-Conquest through contemporary Spanish American literatures (Tim Abeln, Marité Balogh, Liz Fonseca).

## Summer Course Offerings

**French Language & Culture III** (French 2101) will provide meaningful communicative interaction and students will advance their understanding of Francophone culture through discussion of readings and visual media (Sandra Trapani).

**Intensive French** (2115A-C): An intensive study of French language and culture. Students will develop communicative skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Successful completion of all 13 credit hours fulfills the UMSL Language requirement (Anne-Sophie Blank).

**Special Topics in German Culture** (German 4311/5311) will feature “**Die Weimarer Republik**” in this new, **fully online** version of the course (Carol Jenkins).

**Spanish Language & Culture II** (Spanish 1002 with Yan Li) and **III** (Spanish 2101 with Tim Abeln), will be offered in **blended format**. Students will develop communicative proficiency through an interactive task-based approach. They will strengthen their language skills and cultural awareness by working with authentic materials in the target language.

## New Next Fall

**Chinese Language and Culture I** (Chinese 1001) will be offered **fully online** for the first time. The course emphasizes understanding, speaking, reading, and writing Mandarin Chinese. Students will acquire fundamental skills in grammar and syntax (Yan Li).

**Arabic Language and Culture** (1001) and (2101) with Laura Al-Albani. In 1001, students will acquire beginning language skills; in 2101 they will advance their understanding of Arabic language and culture through discussions, readings and written work.

## Featured Spring Course:

### Kanji: A Radical Approach (Japan 2170)

The Japanese section debuted this new and innovative kanji course this semester. Taught online, it systematically introduces the most common radicals and other key components of kanji (Chinese characters). Students are learning how to use radicals to interpret unfamiliar kanji, categorize them, and more efficiently commit them to memory. They also gain practical experience using a variety of learning strategies to develop an effective personal study plan. Fifteen students, mostly Japanese majors and minors, are taking the course this semester.

## Faculty Presentations & Publications

Professor **Marité Balogh** was invited as guest author to the All Write Festival at Webster High School in February, where she read poetry in a packed auditorium. She then took questions from students about the art and craft of poetry as well as Spanish language, linguistics, literature, and culture. She also presented on “Language Advancement Through Creative Writing” at the CSCTFL Conference in Chicago. She shared her teaching strategies that help students develop their language skills in a creative manner.



The State Historical Society of Missouri published an article in *Missouri Times* on Professor **Anne-Sophie Blank**'s work on a downed World War II gunner's papers, which she collaboratively translated with her students in the course French 4301: Methods in Translation. She presented a paper on the translation project at the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages in Chicago.

Professor **Rosa Brefeld** contributed a chapter titled “Practitioner Inquiry Group Explorations in Dialogic Teaching” to the book *English Language Education in a Global World: Research and Practices*, published by Nova Science in New York. The book will be released in summer 2017.

Professor **Viola White** published an article entitled “Le Maquis chez René Char, ou la poétisation de l'illisible” in the 12th volume of *Formes poétiques contemporaines*. In her article, she argues that René Char's participation in underground military action during World War II, and his decision not to publish his writings until the Liberation of France, dragged his poems into a poetic “maquis,” a new literary space that has since been praised as the dwelling of Poetry itself.

## Student & Alumni News

**Armin Cejvanovic** was awarded a summer internship in Germany by Cultural Vistas. He will be traveling to Berlin to intern with a German politician and governmental offices.



**Thomas Ruether** is one of just 75 Americans who were awarded this year's prestigious Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange Scholarship for Young Professionals. This year-long program in the German government is the perfect fit for Tommy, a public administration major and German minor.



Alumna **Shayla Hanneke**, who graduated in May 2015 with a major in Education and Spanish, loves to share stories about her classes and travels at UMSL with her students at Fort Zumwalt West High School. While she thoroughly enjoys teaching Spanish I and 2, she recently returned to UMSL to take graduate courses and hopes to teach more levels of Spanish at Fort Zumwalt very soon.



Having taught early childhood Spanish in St. Louis, Alumna **Mackenzie Dillon** (left) headed to Cusco, Peru for a backpacking trip through South America in October 2016. She is currently volunteering in a rural elementary school in Peru.



Alumna **Jen Huelman** is teaching Spanish to preschool and elementary students through STL Spanish Classes and the Spanish Clubhouse for Kids in Kirkwood. Jen said, "Going back to school to get my Spanish degree (and lucking out with some amazing professors) was really one of the best decisions I have ever made!"



Alumna **Myrta Vida** traveled to Cuba for a week of research to enrich her novel in progress. Left: Myrta at the Plaza de la Catedral in Habana Vieja

### We would love to hear from Alumni!

Please send us your career updates, recent accomplishments, and any other news you want to share. We are working on the "Alumni News" section for our Fall 2017 newsletter.

### DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE & CULTURAL STUDIES

University of Missouri—St. Louis  
554 Clark  
I University Blvd.  
St. Louis, MO 63121  
(314) 516-6242

jkarslake@umsl.edu  
<http://www.umsl.edu/lang>

## New Student Group: LINGUA

Lingua is a new student organization open to UMSL students of all proficiency levels who speak or are interested in multiple languages and who want to learn about different cultures. This group fosters foreign language skills by providing a platform for students to learn outside of the classroom. Its goal is to create friendships across all languages and cultures represented at UMSL. The organization brings together native and non-native speakers of all languages by promoting student interactions through cultural events. They recently hosted Bridge on the Bridge. See page 1 for more details. If you would like more information or are interested to join, contact [LinguaUMSL@gmail.com](mailto:LinguaUMSL@gmail.com) or find us on Facebook.



**Left:** Alumni Happy Hour at Ferguson Brewing Company. Next one is May 3. Come join us!

## Welcome Tiffany!

Our new office support staff, Tiffany Seipel, joined us in January and has already made our lives so much easier! She graduated from Oakland University with a bachelor's in German Language & Literature and has the computer skills we needed. She loves learning about new cultures and meeting new people from around the globe. In her free time, she enjoys kickboxing, watching movies and traveling.

