

# Polyglot

Department of World Languages and Literatures

Summer 2018 Newsletter

## Greetings from the Chair



GINA L. GRECO

### Dear Friends of World Languages and Literatures,

2017-2018 was an active year for us in WLL. We held a variety of events for students and faculty, most of which were open to members of the greater Portland community: roundtables featuring our own faculty and Portland-area business leaders, lectures and readings by visiting scholars and writers, film screenings and festivals. In addition to the examples highlighted in this issue of Polyglot, this spring we were able to bring Turkish novelist and journalist Ece Temelkuran to our campus to speak with students and faculty about her latest novel (*The Time of the Mute Swans*) and current events in Turkey. We also held a screening followed by a discussion of *The Order of Things*, an Italian documentary about how Italy and Libya are exploring new ways to define and think about migration.

We have decided to use our alumni listserv to let our friends know when guest lectures, films, and other cultural events hosted by WLL will take place. You will

receive an invitation to “opt-in” to receive announcements. No need to worry—if you do not respond, you will not be placed on the list and will not receive notifications. But we do hope that some of you will “opt-in” and join us for these wonderful events!

Faculty recognize that cultural and academic events provide excellent enrichment opportunities for our students, and they seek grants to fund such activities. The department supports these faculty efforts to the extent possible. I encourage you to consider making a donation to our WLL general fund, or to a language-specific fund, so that we can continue to offer valuable extracurricular functions in the years to come.

Please stay in touch,

Gina L. Greco

## Endangered Language: A Lecture on Peru's Amazonian Iskonawan

“THE ISKONAWA IS AN ENDANGERED Community.” Those were the opening words of Tufts University Professor **José Antonio Mazzotti**’s presentation, “Myths of Origin and Survival: The Iskonawa of the Peruvian Amazon,” the inaugural event for the Andean and Indigenous Lecture Program. We often associate the term *endangered* with animal species at risk of disappearing, so it was unsettling to hear the word describe a community of people, in this case the Amazonian Iskonawa of Peru. Professor Mazzotti shared with students and community members his extensive knowledge of the Iskonawa indigenous people, their culture, oral traditions, and past and current issues such as deforestation and the exploitation of natural resources that endanger the existence of this people. The lecture, organized last May by **Enrique Cortez**, Associate Professor of Spanish, and funded by a generous donor who became interested in the topic while auditing courses at Portland State, highlighted the importance of linguistic diversity and the pressing need to learn and research languages that are threatened with extinction by modernization, evangelization, civilization, or “progress.” Professor Mazzotti also described the methods used to document the Iskonawan language by an interdisciplinary team from universities in Peru and the United States.



The lecture was followed by a bilingual poetry reading at Mother Foucault’s Bookshop presented by Professor Cortez and **Efraín Díaz-Horna** of Axiara Editions. The evening opened with introductions from WLL faculty **Isabel Jaén-Portillo** and **Craig Epplin** (pictured above with Professor Mazzotti), who read and interpreted their favorite poems from Mazzotti’s *Fox and the Moon*, a collection of poems in English and Spanish for which he was awarded the prestigious José Lezama Lima Poetry Prize from the Casa de las Américas in Cuba.

Professor Mazzotti’s visit concluded with a workshop on academic writing for MA students in Spanish. Professor Cortez hopes to offer more events of this kind: “Given PSU’s reputation for the study of sustainability and environmental issues, we could become a center for these types of intersectional conversations, fostering research and seeking financial support for workshops and lectures. Such events would generate interest in the study of indigenous peoples throughout the Americas, and especially in the Amazon, which does not attract sufficient attention from the academic community.” The department is very grateful for the donation that allowed us to offer students and community members these occasions for cultural and intellectual enrichment, and we are committed to providing students access to high-quality extracurricular opportunities that enhance their academic work.

## Languages and the Professional World

ON MARCH 1ST, THE DEPARTMENT OF WORLD Languages and Literatures hosted a roundtable on the importance of language diversity in the workplace. **Annabelle Dolidon**, Associate Professor of French, organized the event with the goal of introducing students to community leaders who could share their success stories, tell how they benefited professionally from their linguistic skills, and testify more generally that knowledge of multiple languages is a skill valued by their companies.

Professor Dolidon opened the evening by explaining that language studies are often neglected because of the priority given to STEM, yet students who incorporate a second language into their curriculum can benefit professionally and personally, and develop important cognitive skills. Roundtable participants were **Kristina Kermanshahche**, the global director at Intel Corporation, **Denise Dodson**, a representative for the Qatar Foundation International, **Virginia Joplin**, CEO of the Verbio Group, and **Pasquale Madeddu**, the co-owner of Caffè Umbria (pictured right). During the post-presentation reception students were able to meet the speakers, ask questions informally, and explore further the ways learning a second language can benefit them in the workforce.

WLL student **Kelsey Hurst** described the event: “There was a diverse group of professionals who talked about their jobs, the paths they took getting to where they are, and how they saw languages as helpful and even necessary to the globalized workforce of today.”

**Morgan Ferris**, another WLL student, reflected on the importance and benefits of language study: “learning a language can improve your memory, improve your native language, boost your self-confidence and boost creativity.”

According to Professor Dolidon, students were able to understand that studying world languages develops valuable professional skills: “Sometimes, students ask us what they can ‘do’ with a degree in French, in Japanese, in Italian... because - and rightfully so - they are concerned that learning languages will not lead to a job. At this roundtable, I hope they understood that knowledge of world languages and cultures is an asset for employers because it teaches valuable skills: the ability to function in a foreign environment, cultural sensitivity, empathy with people who come from a different mindset, and of course, the ability to communicate in a different language.”

Pleased with the feedback she received from both the students and community leaders who attended, Professor Dolidon concluded by saying “students left this event excited about what they chose to study, comforted in their choice to study a language, and empowered.” The department plans to organize similar events that complement the academic curriculum with professional development and mentoring.

## EYE ON ALUMNI: WHAT ARE THEY DOING NOW?



Robin Bird came to PSU from the University of Oregon because of the WLL minor in Persian. A recipient of the Gary & Patricia Leiser Scholarship (2016 & 2017) and the Persia House Scholarship (2016), she graduated this spring from PSU with a minor in Persian and post-bac major in International Studies. Accepted to multiple graduate programs, she will pursue an M.A. in Persian and Iranian Studies at the University of Arizona. Robin attributes her success to hard work and the individualized attention and mentoring she received from the Persian program.

## THANK YOU TO DONORS

Thanks to our longstanding partnership with *Nordic Northwest* (formerly called the Scandinavian Heritage Foundation), we can offer classes in Norwegian language and Scandinavian cinema.

Generous annual donations from the *Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation* allow us to offer Swedish language classes.

We appreciate the *Max Kade Foundation*’s major financial support for both faculty and cultural events at the *Deutsche Sommerschule am Pazifik* summer program for German Studies.

## Student News

### FARRENS SCHOLARSHIP

The recipient of this year's Farrens Endowed Scholarship for Overseas Studies, **Isabella Marengo**, will study in Bilbao, Spain in spring 2019.

### ARABIC

Noury and Lamia Al-Khaledy Endowed Scholarships were awarded to **Gabriella Pereira**, **Samantha Schultz**, and **Marena Riggan**. Marena Riggan also received the Arabic Studies Scholarship funded by Elie and Nayla Kassab.

### FRENCH

**Matthew Stahlman**, French minor, will enter the Master of Arts Program in the Humanities at the University of Chicago this fall, after studying intensive German at U Chicago's Summer Language Institute.

**Meagan Peckover** is the recipient of the Claudine G. Fisher Endowed Scholarship.

**Silvy Kerzman** was recognized for her work as an intern at the French American International School.

### GREEK

The 2018 Rumpakis Scholars of Ancient Greek are **Brianna Fisher**, **James Godard**, and **Michael Maly**.

### HEBREW

**Madeleine Marcus** is the recipient of the Aspen Mitzvah Fund Scholarship.

### ITALIAN

**Maeve Stier** and **Nicholas Wavers** were awarded the Giovanna Franci Scholarship.

### JAPANESE

**Abbey Kruska** and **Molly McCarthy** are the recipients of the 2018-19 Asian Studies Scholarship.

**Belinda Hall**, **Dean Leininger**, **Erin Theuninck**, **Evan Corbett**, and **Michael Schuetz** were selected for the 2018 JET (teaching English in Japan) program. **Ethan Cohn**, Japanese minor, was also selected and will work as JET's Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) in Japan.

**Graham Smith**, Japanese minor, successfully defended his honor thesis, "Terrace House Versus The Real World: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Participants' Approaches to Conflict in Japanese and American Reality Television Programs," under the supervision of **Suwako Watanabe**, Professor of Japanese.

**Kumiko Takizawa**, MA in Japanese, will enter the Ph.D. program in Japanese Pedagogy at the Ohio State University this fall.

### PERSIAN

**Evan Smith**, Persian program, was admitted to the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver.

**Madison Inman** is the recipient of Persia House Scholarship.

**Robin Bird**, Persian minor and post-bac in International Studies, will begin an M.A. in Persian and Iranian Studies at the University of Arizona.

### RUSSIAN

Three alumni of the Russian Flagship Program, **Ashley Moe**, **Colton Hennick**, and **David Shirayev** collaborated with **Anna Alsufieva**, Professor of Russian to translate the State of Oregon Driver's Manual into Russian

**Asya Volkova**, Russian minor, published a translation of Evtushenko's poem "I'm different" in *The Birch*.

**Hope Ovcharenko**, a recent Russian Flagship Alumna, was awarded the sole Gold Medal for the fourth-year and higher level in the 19th Annual American Council of Teachers of Russian National Post-Secondary Russian Essay Contest.

Russian Flagship student, **Ramona Kline**, was awarded the prestigious David L. Boren Scholarship to support her academic year abroad at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University in Almaty, Kazakhstan in 2018-19.

**Yves Wienecke** is the first awardee of the Sandra G. Freels Endowed Scholarship.

### SCAN|DESIGN

**Ellen Koukel** was awarded the Scan|Design Foundation Scholarship for Study in Denmark.

### SPANISH

**Ana Wu**, **Rhiannon Broyles**, and **Yuliana Castillo** are the recipients of the Hulda A. DeVaughn and Jeanne DeVaughn Endowed Scholarship.

**Aria Ramus** will pursue an M.Ed. in Educational Policy at the University of Washington.

Four students received a prize in the 2018 Heritage Spanish Language Contest: **Ariel Iannone-Roma** (Jury Grand Prize), **Eglantina Sloan-Zuniga** (Jury Accessit Prize), **Génesis Arambula** (Editors' Grand Prize), and **Sarah Carranza** (Editors' Accessit Prize).

**Brennan Thorpe**, who graduated in 2017 with a double major in Applied Linguistics and Spanish and a minor in French, was admitted to Georgetown University-Walsh School of Foreign Service.

## Highlights from the WLL Graduation and Awards Ceremony, June 13, 2018



## WLL Faculty Present at Multnomah County Library's "Everybody Reads"

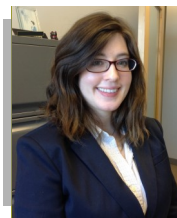
THIS PAST WINTER, WLL FACULTY PARTNERED with the Multnomah County Library to hold a series of events surrounding their annual community reading project, "Everybody Reads." The book chosen for 2018 was Mohsin Hamid's acclaimed novel *Exit West*. **Pelin Basci**, **Craig Epplin**, **Carrie Collenberg-Gonzalez**, **Angela Zagarella**, **Isabel Jaén-Portillo**, and **Silvia Boro** (pictured below) held a roundtable discussion on the themes of *Exit West* such as migration, refugees, technology, family, relationships, and the impacts of war across boundaries. The WLL faculty spoke from the diverse perspectives of their professional and personal backgrounds: Turkey, Germany, Spain, Italy, and Central and Latin America.



Also in February, **Angela Zagarella**, Senior Instructor II of

Italian, organized a staged reading of "That Morning in Lampedusa" at the North Portland Library. In March, PSU hosted a screening of *Stuck in the Doorway*, a documentary about refugees trapped in Greece. In April, **Anousha Sedighi**, Professor of Persian, organized a talk on campus, "The Limits of Whiteness: Iranian Americans and the Everyday Politics of Race," with **Neda Maghbouleh**, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Toronto University.

The department's extensive participation in "Everybody Reads" embodied the PSU mission to Let Knowledge Serve the City, and provided students with extracurricular opportunities to learn more about the world. **Pelin Basci**, Professor of Turkish, reflected on the events: "For faculty, this was an excellent opportunity to collaborate with each other. Events like these also serve to remove the invisible wall between the campus and the community. They give faculty and students an opportunity to engage Portland's larger community and showcase departmental expertise to the campus and the city."



## FOCUS ON FACULTY

**Karen Curtin**

*Assistant Professor of Japanese*

### PERSONALS:

I was born and grew up in Columbus, Ohio.

### LIFE ALTERING EXPERIENCE:

While living in rural Japan teaching English, where I was often treated as an oddity, it was easy to believe that I could not improve my linguistic skills beyond simple conversational Japanese. That changed the day I met Dr. Charles Quinn of The Ohio State University (the other OSU): He spoke so fluently that most people could not distinguish him from a native speaker. He inspired me to train at OSU in the Performed Culture Approach (PCA) of language pedagogy, the same method that we use at PSU.

### CREDENTIALS:

BA in Japanese Studies from Earlham College (2003); Teacher Training Certificate from The Ohio State University (2007); MA in Japanese Pedagogy from The Ohio State University (2008); Graduate of Stanford's Inter-University Center for Japanese Language Studies (2010); ACTFL OPI Workshop Training (2013) Ph.D. in Japanese Pedagogy from The Ohio State University (2016).

### SPECIAL INTERESTS:

Japanese language pedagogy, Japanese sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, working memory and language, learning material development, Japanese politeness behavior development in L2 learners.

### WHEN NOT AT PSU:

When I have time, I love to cook and share food with my friends. The Portland Farmer's Market is just wonderful, which makes even a novice chef's food taste good.

## FACULTY UPDATES

**Anousha Sedighi**, Professor of Persian, received a Faculty Enhancement Grant to work on an intermediate language textbook, a sequel to her successful elementary Persian language textbook, *Persian in Use: An Elementary Textbook of Language and Culture* (2015).

**Cassio de Oliveira**, Assistant Professor of Russian, was awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer Stipend for the months of July and August 2018. He is conducting archival research for a chapter of his book manuscript, entitled *Writing Rogues: Collective and Individual Identity-Formation in the Soviet Picaresque, 1921-1938*.

**DeLys Ostlund**, Professor of Spanish, published a critical edition of *La prueba de los ingenios* by 17th-century Spanish playwright Lope de Vega with Juan de la Cuesta Hispanic Monographs.

**Steven Thorne**, Professor of Second Language Acquisition, co-edited two volumes, *Volume 9: Language, Education, and Technology. Encyclopedia of Language and Education, 3rd Edition* (2017) and *Engaging the World: Social Pedagogies and Language Learning* (2017).

**Timm Menke**, Professor of German, retired in December 2017. We thank him for his contributions to the department.

**William Fischer**, Emeritus Professor of German, published a book *When God Sang German: Etymological Essays about the Language of Bach's Sacred Music* (2017).

**William Comer**, Professor and Director of the PSU Russian Flagship, received an award from the national organization American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages for the textbook *Между нами: A Comprehensive Introduction to Russian*, an open-access comprehensive online course for beginning Russian.