International visiting professors enhance language learning opportunities

"Students who enroll in foreign language classes during the summer are a very special and highly motivated group. My students bring such enthusiasm to the classroom. Teaching at PSU is a dream come true for me as an educator."

Professor Natalia Zhitoglouva
Linguistic University of Nizhny Novgorod, Russia

By Diane Hofland

Most students look to summer as an opportunity to relax, travel, or earn money for their college expenses, but every year an impressive number of students take a different path and immerse themselves in intensive foreign language classes at Portland State University. The Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures supports this striving for academic excellence and invites distinguished educators from around the world to teach summer classes in their native languages.

Four international professors offered an exciting range of foreign language classes at PSU this summer. Anna Baldini, from the Institute Lorenzo de Medici in Florence, Italy, taught a class in Environmental Italian Literature which highlighted the literary history of Italy of the 20th century, and focused on novels and poetry that embrace the world community through the lenses of natural environment and sustainability.

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News Briefs:
Academic recognition and awards abound

Students and faculty celebrated academic achievements at the annual FLL Graduation and Award Reception held on June 12, 2009.

HONORED FACULTY:
Nila Friedberg (Russian) and Ines Warnock (Spanish) received Outstanding Teaching Awards, and Johanna Fedde (Norwegian) received Instructor Emerita status for her extraordinary contribution to PSU and to the community.

STUDENT AWARDS:

HONORED 2008-09 FULLBRIGHT TEACHING ASSISTANTS:

PUBLISHED:

GRANTS:
ScanDesign contributed $15,000 to subsidize instruction in Danish for the current academic year. The Foundation also offers two scholarships ($5,500) for students interested in studying in Denmark in 2009-10.

NEW HIRES:
Ona Aliaj (Spanish), Jenny Ceciliano (Spanish), and Anna Yatsenko (Russian).

LEAVING FACULTY:
Susan Mernit (Italian), Gladys Pérez (Spanish), Ma-Ji Blee (Korean), and Manya Wubbold (Spanish) will all be sorely missed.

FACULTY SEARCHES:
The FLL Department is currently conducting searches for new positions in Japanese, Spanish, and Computer Assisted Language Learning.

FLL office has moved to Neuberger Hall 491

Over the summer the Foreign Languages and Literatures office moved to NH 491. Sierra Voller, FLL Scheduling Coordinator and Graduate Admissions Specialist, is pleased with the department’s relocation to the fourth floor of Neuberger Hall because “the new office space is so much more welcoming for faculty, staff, and students.” The FLL office is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Drop by for a visit when you’re on campus!

Images from “Icons of a Border Installation”

The 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall demanded notice, and last spring the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures hosted the touring photo exhibit “Icons of a Border Installation” to commemorate this historic event. This moving photographic tribute was designed and implemented by students of the University of Paderborn, Germany, and was displayed in PSU’s Miller Library from March 5 to April 14, 2009. Co-sponsors included Die Deutsche Sommer Schule am Pazi, The German American School of Portland, The Goethe Institute of San Francisco, and The German American School of Portland.

The Writer in America: Our Courses on the PSU Docket:

Maggie Elliott (Spanish), Inger Olsen (Spanish), and The Goethe Institute of San Francisco.

The Appeal of Teaching at PSU: Student Diversity. PSU students come from such a wide variety of backgrounds. I’m excited to have the opportunity to work with students who have significantly different language abilities (from traditional second language learners to heritage and native speakers). I’m also looking forward to helping develop PSU’s innovative Russian Flagship Program.

When Not at PSU: Enjoys growing flowers and “struggling” to paint watercolor landscapes.