

Department of World Languages
and Literatures
Post Office Box 751 (WLL)
Portland, Oregon 97207-0751

Return Service Requested

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



In 2013, **Joshua Hunt** graduated from PSU with a B.A. in Japanese and a B.A. in communication studies. He worked as a freelance journalist for *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker*, then earned his M.S. at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, where he was a Toni Stabile Investigative Journalism Fellow in 2014-15. Joshua worked for a year as a foreign correspondent for Reuters in Tokyo before leaving to focus on research for his first book, which will be published by Melville House in 2017.

How would you describe the
Department of World Languages and Literatures at Portland State University?
Here's what past contributors have said:

Dynamic • Nurturing • Kaleidoscopic • Multi-Cultural
Inclusive • Stimulating • Collegial • Professional
Diverse • Accommodating
Friendly • Alternative
Multi-Lingual • Engaged
Committed • Caring
Eye-Opening
Ground-Breaking
International • Collaborative • Research-Based • Success-Oriented
Experimental • Evolving • Green • Hands-On • Inspiring • Fun

Dear Friends of World Languages and Literatures,

I would like to introduce myself as the new Chair of the Department of World Languages and Literatures. For those who don't know me, I am a Professor of French with a specialty in medieval literature and a secondary interest in West African film. I also teach language, from First Year French to the History of the French Language. Last year I served as Presiding Officer of the PSU Faculty Senate, and am now pleased to accept a three-year term as Chair of this wonderful department. Building on the work of my predecessors, I hope to continue raising the profile of our language, culture and literature programs.

In the current climate, in which the humanities in general, and recently even a university education, have been under attack, our department needs to communicate the value of our programs. As the lead article in this issue details, we recently held a successful event to inform PSU students, faculty and advisors of the very real cognitive, professional and economic advantages—in addition to the personal pleasure and cultural enrichment—that result from acquiring competence in new languages. We are one of the largest departments in the university, but would like to serve an even greater number of students, and wish all students at PSU could reap the benefits of language learning. We have a

dedicated faculty, deeply committed to both the language/culture enterprise and the success of our students. Plus, there are numerous studies that document the rewards of language study.

For some students, however, the issue of rising costs keeps them from enrolling in language classes, or precludes them from study abroad. For that reason, we have established and continue to build upon a variety of scholarship funds. I feel passionately about making education available to everyone who is motivated to pursue it, and I feel the same about making sure any student who wishes to continue language study has the means to do so. If you share this passion, I invite you to consider the opportunities for giving to specific scholarships, language programs, or the department at large: pdx.edu/wll/support-world-languages-and-literatures. Your support at any level will help us carry out the vital work of the department.

Please keep in touch,

Gina L. Greco

**Greetings
from the Chair**



GINA L. GRECO

Join our alumni listserv at
pdx.edu/wll
Click on "Alumni"
and follow the prompts.

Follow us!
[@PSUWLL](https://www.facebook.com/PSUWLL)
[@PSU_World](https://twitter.com/PSU_World)

Polyglot

Department of World Languages and Literatures

Fall 2016 Newsletter
pdx.edu/wll

Advocacy for World Language Education

FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION TOOK CENTER STAGE ON October 17th when the Department of World Languages and Literatures hosted two consecutive events as part of 2016 Portland State of Mind: a special guest speaker on the value of language education followed by a World Languages Fair promoting thirteen of the languages taught at PSU.



Students participate in a mock Japanese Tea Ceremony at the 2016 World Languages Fair at PSU.

The speaker at the first event was Dr. William Rivers, Executive Director of the Joint National Committee for Languages and the National Council for Languages and International Studies—or, as he likes to explain, America's language lobbyist. Originally a linguist specializing in Russian, he now takes a top-down approach to language education, working to change language policy at the federal level. This task involves convincing policymakers and top military officers, who are accustomed to traveling with personal interpreters, that it is crucial that the United States increase its national language capability, and that to do so requires adequate funding.

" We wanted to raise the visibility of world languages by coming out of classrooms, and hope non-language-major students become interested in learning another world language."

Professor Suwako Watanabe

Dr. Rivers addressed a crowd of approximately 120 students, university administrators, and faculty from World Languages and Applied Linguistics. He spoke about the importance of language education in the modern world. According to Dr. Rivers, practically minded people will be pleased to learn that 45% of HR managers give an advantage to job applicants equipped with second language proficiency. Additionally, one of the main points that Dr. Rivers emphasized during his talk was the striking cognitive and educational advantage that learners of a second language possess. For example, he cited studies that show that people who speak a second language have higher graduation rates than monolingual speakers, at every level of education. The benefits are clear



Dr. Rivers presents to students, faculty, and administrators in the SMSU Browsing Lounge.

even later in life - research shows that being bilingual delays the effects of Alzheimer's disease.

Immediately following Dr. Rivers' talk, the room transformed into the 2016 World Languages Fair represented by 13 of the language programs at PSU: Classical Greek, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latin, Persian, Russian, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, and Turkish.

Almost every booth offered delicious cuisine from the culture represented, and many invited visitors to participate in hands-on activities. The Japanese corner was especially lively, with students partaking in impromptu calligraphy lessons and tea ceremonies. The Swahili booth provided students with an opportunity to learn a bit of the language through a word matching game. It turns out most people already knew the answer to the first question: lion in Swahili is simba! According to co-organizer Dr. Suwako Watanabe of the Japanese section, "We wanted to raise the visibility of world languages by coming out of classrooms, and hope non-language-major students become interested in learning another world language."

Although the event was a success as a whole, when asked about current events in their departments, some faculty

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Challenging Times in Turkey: Student and Faculty Experience

A COUP D'ETAT AND MAJOR TERROR attack over the summer of 2016 left a lasting impact on Turkey. Several faculty, students, and alumni of PSU's Department of World Languages and Literatures were in the country while these events unfolded.

Lana Noble had completed her study of Turkish at PSU, and was visiting archeological sites in Turkey right before the bombing of the Atatürk airport. Lana narrowly avoided the terrorist attack; she was returning to the US and had landed back in New Jersey just as the events commenced:

"It was sad knowing that some of the clerks who had helped me at that airport might be dead or injured. Not to mention everyone else. The feeling was eerie to say the least."

PSU alumnus **George Rohrich** was in Turkey teaching at an English language camp for children when the coup d'état occurred. He was en route to the city center in a taxi with some friends when he heard the news:

"Our taxi driver actually got a call on his personal cellphone letting him know that the bridges had been closed due to a military injunction."

At first George and his friends didn't think much of the closure—it could have been one of the many instances in Turkey when a terror attack had been thwarted. However, the situation quickly grew frightening as more information trickled in. Eventually, they

made their way back to their residence where they watched the events unfold on television.

Dr. Pelin Basci, Associate Professor of Turkish, was pursuing her research on modern Turkish literature and culture while staying with family when she heard news of a coup d'état on television. Having lived through several of Turkey's previous political upheavals, Dr. Basci did not feel personally at risk, but the lack of information about the situation did create a sense of concern. She compared her emotions to what she felt one night, years ago, when she was stranded in New York at JFK airport:

"I was with thousands of passengers in JFK—and with a baby. In the end, even if you are not with family, you are with other people, who are literally and figuratively fellow travelers in this life. One hopes that such things do not happen, but I trust that one finds the resources, both in oneself and in fellow travelers, to deal with adversity."

As she noted, uncertainty creates anxiety, but it also draws people together and, in the best of circumstances, leads us to reflect on our shared humanity.

The initial ordeal may be over for these members of our PSU World Languages community, but the aftereffects of the coup d'état still reverberate throughout Turkey and may continue for some time to come.

ADVOCACY FOR WORLD LANGUAGE continued from page 1

from less commonly taught languages lamented the lack of funding and the loss of students in their already limited programs. This disinvestment in language diversity highlights the importance of Dr. Rivers' work advocating and lobbying for the resources students and educators need for language programs to flourish. Furthermore, his talk reaffirms the significance of the Department of World Languages and Literatures' role in achieving PSU's objective to "provide a quality education and prepare students for careers and life in a global context."

WELCOME NEW FACULTY MEMBERS!

This fall, the **Russian** section welcomed three new colleagues. Dr. Cassio de Oliveira is an assistant professor with research interests in Soviet literature and film. Daria Aleeva and Marina Tsylyna are instructors, and their research interests are in Russian language pedagogy.

The **Japanese** section welcomed Dr. Karen Curtin as an assistant professor. Her research interests include working memory in the L2, the influence of study techniques, pedagogical material creation, and the performance and uptake of Japanese politeness behavior.

RETIREMENTS

The following faculty members retired in June 2016:

Dr. Patricia Wetzel, Japanese
Dr. Martha Hickey, Russian
Galina Kogan, Russian

We thank them for their contributions to the department.

SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE

Our endowment scholarship funds in honor of Emerita Professors Claudine Fisher and Sandra Freels are still accepting donations. Please visit pdx.edu/wll and click on 'Support Us'.

Thank you to
E. John and Cleo Rumpakis
for your generous donation that
established a scholarship for
students of Ancient Greek

News Briefs

Professor **Pelin Basci** (Turkish) presented a guest lecture entitled "Film and Television in the Remaking of the Turkish Nation (2000-2010)" as part of the Department of Asian Languages and Civilizations' Fall 2016 lecture series on West Asia, at Seoul National University, Seoul, South Korea on October 27, 2016.

9 students of Japanese were accepted into the JET program and left for Japan this past summer to teach English at elementary and secondary schools in Japan: Ivan Reihsmann, Jessica Murrell, Ian Hippe, Josh Adams, Michael Okada, Jared Ridabock, Andrew Echeverria, Gabriel Friedman.

Congratulations to two students of the **Persian** program for getting admitted to graduate school: Sean Namei (B.A. in Philosophy, Minor in Persian) was admitted to the Near Eastern Languages and Civilization M.A. program at the University of Washington and Dina Yazdani (B.A. in Conflict Resolution) was admitted to the graduate program in Conflict Resolution at King's College, U.K.

Professor emerita **Claudine Fisher** taught French language, modern French literature, and Canadian studies at PSU for 30 years. After retiring in 2011, she has been publishing historical novels centered around the revolution of 1848. The first volume "The Reluctant Paris Rebel" is available on Amazon, and more are coming soon.

Originally a student of Spanish, PCC alumnus **Isabelle Mcrae** developed an interest in Turkish after spending several months in Turkey volunteering in small villages. Her study of the Turkish language was given a boost in 2016 when she was accepted into the prestigious Critical Language Scholarship program. She currently continues her studies as an outstanding second year student in PSU's Turkish program.



FOCUS ON FACULTY

Carrie Collenberg-Gonzalez

Assistant Professor of German

PERSONALS:

Born and raised on a dairy farm in Humboldt County, tucked away between the coast and the redwoods.

LIFE ALTERING EXPERIENCE:

"I lived with my Romansh-speaking relatives in a remote alpine area of Switzerland for three months. Part of that time was spent tending sheep on the Greina Plateau. I learned to speak German and how to walk slowly."

CREDENTIALS:

B.A. in German and English Literature from Humboldt State; M.A. in German from CSU Long Beach; Ph.D. in Germanic Studies from the University of Minnesota. Research and study abroad years in Oldenburg, Fribourg (Switzerland), and Berlin. Held positions in German at CSU Long Beach, Williams College, and Longwood University.

SPECIAL INTERESTS:

My research focuses on the aesthetic representation of terrorism, on the relationship between photography and film, and on how national narratives and collective memory are related to the history of representation. It is important to me to enable students to think critically about the world and their place in it.

WHEN NOT AT PSU:

Exploring the great PNW with my husband, our two children (ages 4 and 7), and our dog. I also volunteer in my community.