

Lingua Franca

News from Foreign Languages & Literatures Department

FLL Newsletter Purdue University Vol.1 Fall 2010

FROM THE HEAD



Dear students,

My thanks to the Graduate Students of FLL for inviting me to contribute to your Newsletter. I will share with you some of my thoughts about graduate school generally, then about your role in FLL and our university. Of all the schools and colleges of an American research university, the graduate school is more virtual than concrete, yet its impact and reality are quite real. Graduate school is a concept, an idea or a metaphor allowing you,

administratively speaking, to enter degree programs housed in the brick and mortar colleges.

I'm going to attend graduate school means: I will seek a graduate degree based on my undergraduate major. But does anyone these days know what graduate school is before he or she actually lives and breathes in this highly competitive, but underdetermined virtual space? Make the most of this atmosphere, which is left open for you by design: The only person capable of writing your thesis is you. FLL's graduate programs in Literature and Linguistics have their requirements, to be sure, but you are responsible for creating your degree. You will be helped by leading experts, both in the classroom and in your committees. What you make of this rare opportunity to interact with world class scholars is up to you. Do not forget that the Purdue name will accompany you (we don't forget), and that as much as we appreciate you, we want you to finish here and begin somewhere else. Your funding really is a form of scholarship

enabling you to (barely) afford a graduate education, and your teaching and research are on the job training.

On behalf of the faculty and staff of FLL, I wish you happiness and success in your creative endeavors at Purdue!

Adrian Del Caro,

Professor and Head
PhD German

FROM THE GRADUATE STUDENT COMMITTEE



Dear all,

It is a very exciting time to be part of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. On our own initiative, a group of like minded graduate students stopped wishing things were different in the department and decided to take action. Thus, the Graduate Student Committee was born. As a result of the meetings conducted during the spring 2010 search for our new department head, it became obvious that we needed more graduate student involvement and a formal organized body to oversee all of the activities and responsibilities of the graduate students.

After a series of idea exchanges, we channeled our enthusiasm to focus on some main goals: more involvement in preparing new students and TAs, an exciting graduate symposium, FLL specific preparation in professionalization, a boosted presence in and outside the department, more opportunities to get to know and

forge a better bond with fellow graduate students as well with faculty and staff. With these goals in mind, we developed subcommittees, making each one of us committee chairs, so that we could lead other graduate students in a higher level of participation. The result of these efforts is the following subcommittees: Orientation Week, Graduate Symposium, Professionalization, Newsletter, Recruitment & Publicity, and Social Events.

Starting this academic year, we are very pleased to be witnessing a rejuvenated energy radiating throughout the department. We have already had dozens of students volunteer to help the various committees, and numerous faculty and staff have offered their assistance and expertise. This is just the beginning, and already we have seen an enormous turnaround in the level of involvement in FLL. As an example, last year we did not even have enough student interest to host our annual interdisciplinary symposium. This year we have already had more than 20 students volunteer to help by sending announcements to universities across the country, securing Dr. Thomas Turino as our keynote speaker, organizing food

and refreshments during the conference, or soliciting funds from other departments at Purdue. None of this could have been done without the graduate students supporting one another. The symposium is just one example of many which showcases the change and dynamism that has begun this year; so many facets of graduate student life in FLL has been impacted directly or indirectly by this new movement. In order for us to maintain this momentum, it is essential that we continue our efforts to be involved. As has been emphasized since the inception of the Graduate Student Committee, we need everyone's support, and the more people we have as active participants, the smaller the responsibility that falls on any one individual. None of the progress we have made this year could have come to be without the cohesiveness of our department. As a committee we are very proud of what we have established, but we are more excited to see, feel, and hear the fresh spirit reverberating throughout Stanley Coulter.

Jennifer Gerndt

Co Chair, Graduate Student
Committee

PROFILES



Name: Jija Sohn

Occupation: MA Student, FLL

What s your favorite flavor of ice cream?

Tiramisu is my favorite!

With what cartoon character do you identify the most?

His name is Carimero.

What s the weirdest thing you ve ever eaten?

An egg that was about to hatch in the Philippines.

Do you have a guilty pleasure (something that you really like but you feel silly about it)?

11PM ice cream after working out! I know this is bad, but I do it every day.

If you could take a road trip, where would you go?

Definitely, to Colorado.

What chore do you hate doing?

To be honest, I hate checking HW.

What languages can you speak?

Japanese and English.

What s your favorite dessert?

Ice cream.

Do you think there is intelligent life on other planets?

Yes, I want to believe it.



Name: Adrian del Caro

Occupation: Head, FLL Dept.

If you were a superhero, what would you call yourself?

Certainly not superman, which is a mistranslation of German Übermensch. More modestly, superhuman.

What s your favorite flavor of ice cream?

Just about anything with chocolate in it.

With what cartoon character do you identify the most? Probably The Brain (cf. Pinky and The Brain)

What s the weirdest thing you ve ever eaten?

Alligator I suppose. Unless it was actually chicken one eats differently in Baton Rouge.

Who would you like to star as you in a movie of your life?

Jack Nicholson

What chore do you hate doing?

Filing papers, filing anything (except with a metal file there is some satisfaction to working wood and metal).

What languages can you speak?

This may be disputed but Italian, German, very fractured French, and a smattering of English.

Do you think there s intelligent life on other planets?

This is my fervent hope even for the Earth.

Do you have a hidden talent?

I do indeed, but I can t find it.

INTERVIEW



Professor Floyd Merrell

How has your experience at Purdue been?

I have been at Purdue for 37 years, a long time. This University has given me plenty of time for research. This is a research university. If you want to, can, and are predisposed to, they allow you to do it. I have had a lot of good students during these years and I cannot really complain. This University let you develop your career in the best way possible.

How is your relationship with Latin America?

I love Latin America. My wife is from Mexico. I have spent a lot of time in Mexico. Since 1998, we spent two or three months in Brazil every year. We have travelled through Argentina, Uruguay, Central America, and Mexico. I studied in the UNAM for

eight months. In Brazil, I was invited to teach in the Catholic University of São Paulo. I taught there for nine summers while I was teaching at Purdue during the Spring and Fall semesters. First, I taught Latin American Literature and Culture and then I taught Semiotics. I consider them completely apart. However, I have discovered ways to integrate Semiotics into my studies of popular culture and creation, especially in Brazil with Capoeira and in Mexico with Virgen de Guadalupe.

How do you relate Chemistry and Physics with Semiotics?

In my interpretation of Semiotics and my theory of Semiotics, I use a lot of Philosophy of Science and Philosophy of Physics. I integrate cultural studies in Latin American and Semiotics. So indirectly my cultural studies are influenced by Physics and Chemistry. Science has to do with Semiotics.

Getting into the Semiotic topic, why Pierce and not Saussure?

When studying culture, and culture is much more than language, Pierce's Semiotics includes extra-linguistic or non-linguistic phenomena, much more than Saussure. Whenever people use Saussure to study culture, they study culture from a linguistic model and Semiotics is richer than that. Culture is more

than a linguistic model since there are non-linguistic signs.

Is there a physical or real world outside from signs?

There is a world out there, but it is not what it is without us and all living organisms because we co-participate with it. If the world changes, we change. In order to try to understand that world, we mediate between ourselves and the world. That world becomes something different from what it simply is outside of us. It is impossible for the world to exist insofar we understand it as the world of our understanding. But it exists. It is just that it does not have a meaning. Our world is always an interpreted world.

What are the limitations of language from a Semiotic viewpoint?

Language is basically set up to distinguish objects, acts, and happenings in the world. These are distinctions that we made. Language is limited because it makes distinctions. However, semiosis is a process. To use language to describe this process is impossible. Everything is process and there is nothing we can linguistically talk about because even the language that we use is part of the process. Of course, distinctions are part of the process too. There are distinctions that we make for our understanding of the process.

Once we make distinctions, we categorized them, and it is no longer part of the whole process.

Is language always linear?

Language is linear. It is a generation of sentences, spoken or written sentences. You cannot avoid it. However, to understand language, you have to have a non linear perspective. Because the meanings of words in the language, especially the ones that involve cultural phenomena, require a non linear understanding.

Is language enough for the individual?

It has to be enough for our understanding, linguistically speaking, but of course, understanding is also not linguistic. Naturally, understanding can be expressed in different ways. When you drive a car or ride a bicycle is part of non linguistic understanding. We

take it for granted; we know what it is. But to put that in words is difficult. To explain how to grow plants, if you are not a biologist, is hard. We cannot linguistically explain as the biologist does. We know it because we have seen it all. How poets write poetry? It describes pain, intuition, anguish, love, hate. We can talk about it and explain it but always there is something else that we cannot completely describe. However, we have to have a language. Otherwise, we couldn't communicate between us.

What is the role of paradoxes and contradictions in your work?

This is Physics. In Newtonian science, the assumption was that the word could be understood, that it could be quantified and qualified. It could be understood in terms of Mathematics and rational thinking. Everything could be understood. Since the time of Newtonian Physics in the twenty

century up to the present, we have other forms of Mathematics. Mathematics is no longer considered to be simply rational, reasonable, non contradictory, non paradoxical. There are contradictions and paradoxes that we are not simply aware of. We try to resolve them by creating other contradictions and paradoxes. In Physics, in the Relativity and Quantum theories, as in other sciences as well, you have paradoxes. When we try to express paradoxes with ordinary use of language, we find that language is limited. There are paradoxes. That is the way the world is. The only way to express the world is by using paradoxes and contradictions, linguistically speaking. That is the basic limitation of language. This is the basis of Semiotic, the basis to try to understand semiosis and life in general.

INTERVIEW

Study Abroad in Madrid



Massimiliano Giorgini with Purdue study abroad students.

Massimiliano Giorgini

What is the best experience you got working in the summer as a TA?

The most impressive thing was that even when I thought students were getting overwhelmed with all the historical information, it surprised me they wanted to see more. Many moments happened when students ended up getting very excited and inspired by the history around them.

What did you learn over there that you would like to incorporate in your teaching here at Purdue if you haven't done so yet?

I think even more I want to incorporate culture into the

classes because, although, I have always known culture is a big part of language and it is hard to learn language without understanding culture, I think it became more obvious being there. It is very exciting. I think it is important to include some of those little tidbits, those little flavors in the class. So, more culture in the classroom.

Now that you mention food, what is some typical meal you tried and would like to share with us?

Well, I can say that the *sepia* (cuttlefish) was probably my favorite. It is a type of mollusk. It was very very yummy. And I loved *pimientos de padrón*, which are these peppers that, most of the time, are not spicy. They have a little bit of a tingle but you can eat the whole pepper. It is fine. But every five or six you get one that wakes you up. It kind of surprises you, it is very spicy. It was a very funny experience.

What functions did you serve in the program?

I helped the students in their classes. For example, they would go to classes and maybe not understand something the teacher said. The professors there were regular college professors at the university level, and some of the students that were in the program were just out of 202. So, they would miss words or not

understand some concepts, so I would help to explain them to them. I would also call myself a lifesaver, or a lifeguard, because sometimes students would get lost and I would get calls at 3am, with a student asking me, Where am I? I would reply that I don't know where you are but if you describe it, I can help you get to where you need to go.

What is one of your most memorable moments from this trip?

When the program ended a couple of students and I stayed and got to see the arrival of the winning world cup. How perfect! I am in Spain, the FIFA world cup starts three days after I get there, ends two days before I leave, and Spain wins. I got to see the parade into the city streets. It was a beautiful and wonderful experience.



Study abroad students, Summer 2010.



Josh Frank

Congratulations, Josh, on your Teaching Assistantship for the Study Abroad program next summer. How do you feel?

Thank you. I am very, very excited. I have never been to Spain and I have heard such great things even from the people that are there all the time. I am very grateful with this Department for the opportunity. And I look forward to put in a hard work now so that I can enjoy the time, the six weeks this summer.

What do you expect to accomplish?

Well, this program is not for me, it is not for the director; it is for undergraduate students, intermediate to higher levels, entering the 300 levels. The main

thing we want to accomplish is to get students excited about continuing on with a minor or even a major. So, that is, I think from a departmental perspective, our main desire.

What, if anything, are you nervous about?

Well, there is a lot of responsibility with being a director or the assistant to the director. I mean, in the end, what happens is that you have teenagers and young 21 year olds under your responsibility. Not that I am so old, right? But you have some people that are out of the country for the first time. And it is a huge responsibility for me to make sure they are safe, to know where they are going, etc. I am not an expert on the city of Madrid. Luckily, our director, Ana María Gómez Bravo, is. She is from Madrid.

What is something the previous TA recommended?

I can tell Mass (Massimiliano) has been a great help. We have spoken about recruitment. He has suggested Facebook pages, PowerPoints, handouts, and which classes to speak with. Just, in general, to have a lot of energy

and smile all the time. That is from the recruiting perspective. He also mentioned that places like Pamplona might not be such a good idea. Why? Because it is all tourists and you do not get much of an authentic experience. And a lot of people drink all day, so, that is not exactly the environment you want to promote.

Is there anything you plan to do once you are there?

Well it is funny, you know, because the program is excellent. Every weekend you go somewhere else. We have constant tours around the city. I am just going to take part in that. It is an opportunity I have. I certainly plan to be an intermediary between students and director, and enjoy the experience.

What are you bringing with you?

It is funny. I have not thought too much about that yet. We are in the recruitment phase which is probably the busiest phase. So, I am taking my suitcase and definitely lots of change of clothing because I do not want to do much laundry while I am there. I want to sightsee instead.

GREAT PICNIC!



When one first arrives at Purdue it can be hard to meet new people and make friends. Even oldies do not have time or opportunities to better know others in the department. The Social Committee, whose chair is Kelly Suero, promotes socialization among students, faculty, and staff. One of these

initiatives is the Fall Picnic. This year, in collaboration with Prof. Fukada, the picnic took place in Happy Hollow Park, where people from FLL had the opportunity to share a wonderful meal and a great time. One great facet of our department is our diversity, which could be seen in the foods that we tried that day. The picnic was a great opportunity to mingle with everyone from the department.

ORIENTATION WEEK

With the many changes to FLL this academic year came the addition of graduate student involvement

in Orientation Week. For the first time, experienced graduate students were on hand to assist incoming students with questions about their new adventure. The hallway presence of the Orientation Committee made a difference for many in easing the leap into graduate school. Additionally, a popular Bagel & Juice morning was provided as a way to get to know students that may otherwise never meet during the semester. The committee hopes to become a permanent fixture in the activities and sessions of Orientation Week.

GET TO KNOW: PROF. ADRIAN DEL CARO, THE NEW DEPARTMENT HEAD OF FLL



On Wednesday, November 3rd, 2010, the Purdue Linguistics Association organized an informal talk with Professor Adrian del Caro, FLL's new Department Head. The session aimed to get to

know Professor del Caro, who addressed issues relevant to students' academic and professional lives at Purdue.

Drawing from his own experiences as a graduate student and teaching assistant of German at the University of Minnesota, Professor del Caro now values the teachings and relationships created with his academic advisors, professors, and fellow students over the years.

While the focus of this talk was his view of linguistics and its

importance in all aspects of language instruction, his comments and suggestions were geared toward anyone working in the Humanities. Professor del Caro's insights focused on time to completion in graduate studies and professionalization of graduate students. His emphasis on preparation for future faculty in the Humanities is an effort that the Graduate Student Committee has also embraced; the committee will be offering Professionalization Workshops throughout the academic year.

LET'S GET PROFESSIONAL

An exciting addition to the department through the Graduate Student Committee is the inception of an annual series of workshops to prepare students for their future, particularly in an academic career. The Professionalization Committee has reached out to a number of faculty members and asked them to share their expertise on topics such as the following: Dissertation Writing, Publishing, CV Writing, Interviewing, Salary/Job Negotiations and Dual Career Couples. All talks are informal and consist of a panel from a

variety of research backgrounds including both Linguistics and Literature. Each panel will also represent our diverse language sections.

GRADUATE STUDENT INTERDISCIPLINARY SYMPOSIUM IS BACK

After a one year hiatus, the otherwise annual Graduate Student Interdisciplinary Symposium is back with a rejuvenated enthusiasm. The theme is Identity & Culture which allows for a variety of presentation topics from

diverse areas of research. Dr. Thomas Turino, professor of Musicology and Anthropology at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign, is this year's keynote speaker. The symposium committee will be accepting abstracts related to the theme until December 15, 2010. New this year will be the online publication of the proceedings. For details, please refer to the FLL homepage or contact the chairs of the graduate symposium committee: Karen Morgan (ymorgan@purdue.edu) Shogo Sakurai (ssakurai@purdue.edu).

TEACHER'S TOOLBOX

The idea of the Teacher's Toolbox came in 2003 when Christopher La Cross started as a teacher. It is a product of his interest in the development of teaching materials, methods, strategies, and activities to help teachers across many languages.

One area that teaching is lacking is the availability of easily accessible quality materials and activities. In short, there is no central and easily accessible knowledge base from which teachers can draw. Instead, teachers are typically forced to learn by experience and/or attending conferences and

workshops, which may not always be feasible.

Beginning as well as advanced language instructors are faced with the often daunting task of finding how to effectively teach their languages while keeping students interested and motivated.

Thus, the Language Teacher's Toolbox is designed for teachers of all languages. Activities and materials presented on the site may feature a specific language, but are all designed with broad and flexible application in mind. Thus, German teachers may find

interesting an activity for Spanish and vice versa.

The Fall 2010 Language Teacher's Toolbox Conference was designed to give the opportunity to expand people's own repertoire of teaching skills as well as share their knowledge with fellow colleagues. It was intended as a way for graduate students to share various activities, teaching tips, and strategies, as well as any relevant research findings in short presentations representative of the spectrum of world languages offered at Purdue.

EMERGENCY LOANS

Did you know Purdue offers emergency loans to all registered students? These loans are very useful in cases when we run out of money and need to pay something immediately related to our education. What exactly is an Emergency Loan? It is a loan from Purdue to you that is interest free and for education related emergencies. Loans can be for a maximum of \$400 and must be repaid within 30 days.

Where can you apply for an emergency loan?

Office of the Dean of Students
207 Schleman Hall
765 494 1237
Mon., Wed. Fri.
8:30a.m. 11:30a.m.
Mon. Fri. 1:00p.m. 4:00p.m.

Loan options: Check and direct deposit.

Payment options: Payments can be made online or by check, cash, or money order in the University

Collections Office, SCHL 344.
There will be fees for loans not paid by the due date.

You will need to: Show a PUID or other valid picture ID and complete the application online. (Additional personal information, such as SSN, may be requested when using the online system).

CALL FOR PAPERS

What? Third Conference on Orientalisms and the Asian and Arab Diasporas: Imaging the Oriental in the Americas and the Iberian Peninsula

When? April 22nd and 23rd, 2011

Where? University of California, Merced

How? Submit 1 page abstract to Dr. Ignacio López Calvo: ilopez_calvo@ucmerced.edu

What? 17th Annual Carolina Conference on Romance Literatures.

When? From March 24th to 26th, 2011

Where? University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

How? Submit 250 word abstract by December 15, 2010 online: <http://ccrl.unc.edu>

What? 1st International Hispanic Conference of the Day of the Dead: Monsters, Ghosts & Devils in Latin American & Peninsular Literature, Film, and Music

When? From October 31st to November 1st, 2011

Where? Florida Memorial University, Miami

How? Send 1 page abstract (Spanish or English) to: zclark@fmuniv.edu

Guidelines: <http://www.hispanetjournal.com>

What? 24th Annual GRAFIS Symposium, Department of French and Italian

When? April 15th and 16th, 2011

Where? The University of Wisconsin Madison

How? Submit 200-250 word abstract by February 4th, 2011 to: gafisabstracts2011@gmail.com

What? Lucero, a Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies

When? Submit papers by January 28th, 2011

Where? University of California, Berkeley

How? Lucero seeks original manuscripts of 20-25 pages in English, Spanish, or Portuguese. Submit an MSWord electronic copy of the manuscript to: lucerosubmissions@lucerojournal.com

What? Tropos, Graduate Journal Conference, Otherness and Subjectivities: Construction of Class, Nation, and Gender in Literatures and Languages

When? March 19th, 2011

Where? Michigan State University

How? Submit 200 word abstract by January 17th, 2011 to: tropos@msu.edu

What? Science and Magic: Ways of Knowing in the Renaissance

When? April 29th and 30th, 2011

Where? Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey

How? Submit 350 word abstract by January 15th, 2011 to: smfranci@princeton.edu

What? 21st Annual Graduate and Professional Symposium on Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Literature, Language and Culture, Las fronteras a través de los tiempos

When? From February 17th to 19th, 2011

Where? University of Arizona

How? Submit 250 word abstract in English, Spanish, or Portuguese by December 5th, 2010 to: symposio@email.arizona.edu

FELLOWSHIPS

What? Bilisland Strategic Initiatives Fellowship

When? Deadline: Friday, February 4, 2011

Where? To register for the workshop go to www.gradschool.purdue.edu/workshops

A complete fellowship announcement can be found at <http://www.gradschool.purdue.edu/funding> Under the *Funding Opportunities* tab.

What? Inter American Foundation (IAF) Grassroots Development Fellowship

Who? Ph.D. candidates can receive funding for up to a year to conduct research on grassroots development issues in Latin America or the Caribbean.

Where? www.iie.org/iaf For additional information on the session, please contact Christal Musser at the Graduate School Fellowship Office, or contact Christiana Kasner, Senior Program Manager for the IAF Fellowship Program: ckasner@iie.org

Newsletter Committee: Alejandra Vela, Heidi Parker, Laura Williams, Miguel Angel Rincón.