

# Lingua Franca

## News from the School of Languages and Cultures

SLC Graduate Students Newsletter Purdue University Vol. 5 Fall 2012

---

### MESSAGE FROM THE GRADUATE STUDENT COMMITTEE



We have many things to celebrate as we get to the end of the Fall and begin the Spring semester. We have participated in the welcome week for new graduate students and we have also organized two workshops delivered by Professor Jennifer Williams and Professor John Sundquist on paper presentation and academic conferences. We were amazed by the way graduate students responded to them! There were students from different languages and programs coming together to hear both professors, to get to know one another, and exchange experiences and ideas. We thank each one of you for attending! Our main goal in this academic year (Fall 2012-Spring 2013) is to create and consolidate an agenda focused on all aspects of graduate school in our field, on topics such as attending conferences, publishing, writing an academic CV, and getting a job! We hope to contribute to make the GSC of our School a great tool to help us all the way, but we cannot do that without your help and support. Welcome back!

Graduate Student Committee Officers

---

Tatevik Gyulamiryan

Teaching demands a lot of creativity and effort. Here are some ideas and tips from instructors in our department that can help us develop our lesson plans.



buy anything on Black Friday? 2) What will you get your friends and family for Christmas? 3) What was the worst present you have ever gotten? The students first discuss these questions in pairs and then with the whole group. They love this kind of activity!

**Peter Dy-Liacco**

Instructor of Spanish

With the ubiquitous nature of information technology in the classroom, something as simple as choosing large, interesting photos can make a big difference. To introduce long vocabulary lists, I search for images that the students don't expect to see. For example, I recently introduced vocabulary on food without showing a single picture of actual food. Instead, I showed things like a picture of a couple wearing bacon costumes for Halloween. I showed this picture and asked them what new vocabulary word is associated with it. The next slide showed the same picture but with the word for bacon at the very top. Because of my careful and creative image searches, I regularly get praise for my pictures on my teacher evaluations. Also, in class, my students sometimes are audibly sad when the pictures end.

**Christina Weiler**

Instructor of German

One activity I can recommend is what I call "Small Talk." I am teaching German conversation courses this semester, and I like giving my students 3-5 open-ended questions on current topics. They usually address things that I think the students would also enjoy talking about with their friends in the hallway between classes. For instance: 1) Did you

**Esra Coskun**

Instructor of French

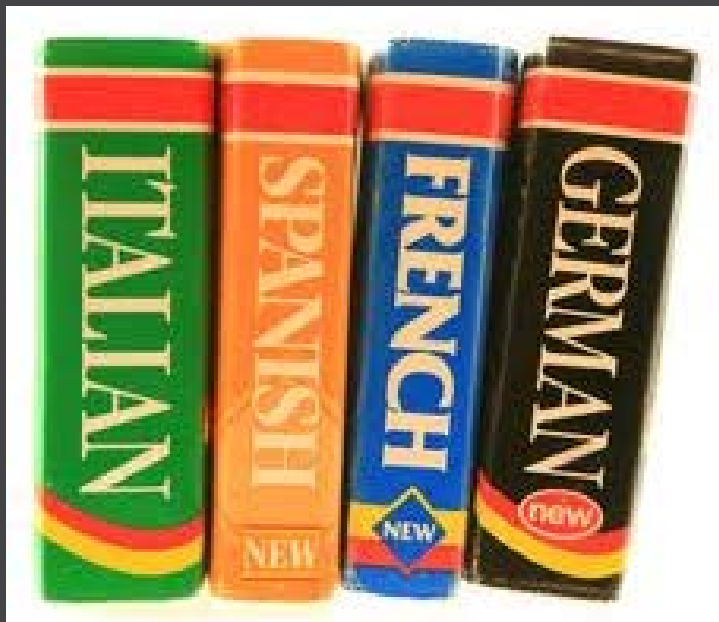


One good activity for a review class is "Olympiads." Each group of students represents a country. I provide them with "their" country flags to make it more fun. They have to compete against each other answering the questions provided by the instructor. The "country" that has more points wins. I have got a lot of positive feedback about this activity. Students think it is a fun and an effective way of reviewing the course material.

**Bailu Li**

Instructor of Chinese

Traditional classrooms are not extinct, yet integrating technology into classrooms is increasing. For example, in my class, the new social net-



## HOW DO TEACHING AWARDS WORK?

Interview with Prof. Kazumi Hatasa

Yasmina Vallejos

### 1. What are teaching awards?

They are mainly a recognition of excellency in teaching at the TA, lecturer, and faculty levels. I think the department used to give some monetary award, like \$50. I do not know how much exactly. There might have been some recognition plaque.

### 2. How long have the teaching awards been awarded and who came up with the idea?

They have been around for a long time, over twenty years. When I came here they were already there. It is not only in our department. Teaching awards are for TAs and faculty in several departments within the College of Liberal Arts and Purdue. Every department or school has its own awards.

### 3. How do Teaching Assistants apply?

First, there is a self-nomination and participation. All participants' classes will be visited by somebody who will then distribute the forms to students and collect them. We will tabulate and read the comments, and then choose the best candidates.

### 4. What is the procedure?

In terms of what we do, this is my first time around, so I am learning it as well. Primarily, course evaluations are an important aspect. Course evaluations are an objective measure and, at the same time, we rely on the canvass-

work sites are introduced as a supplement of reading and a way to enhance critical thinking. When we talk about new and serious topics such as the job market and gender equality in China, students are encouraged to find tweets from Twitter and Weibo (Chinese twitter). They are expected to compare and contrast the perspectives and reflections among different cultures and ideologies. The activity increases students' engagement and enhances critical thinking and deep understanding of Chinese culture and life style.

#### Yuko Ogawa

Instructor of Japanese

Last semester, I taught JPNS 102. Although sometimes students get confused, I (and some other TAs) keep speaking only Japanese to teach. Students look confused when they are asked some questions in Japanese at first, but they get used to it by the end of the semester. It is important that instructors use the target language while teaching, because that is a good way for students to practice their listening skills.



ing and comments from students. Earlier this semester, a call for nominations was made to everybody including faculty and graduate students. If you want to participate in this competition, you need to submit your name. After that, we have the list of faculty members, lectures and TAs who are in the pool for canvassing. At the moment, we are doing classroom visits. The reason why the canvassing is taking place right now is the college and university awards. We have to submit names in January. So in order to choose candidates for those outside of department awards, we do the canvassing. TAs, lecturers and

faculty are awarded at the end of the Spring semester.

#### 5. **What do they take into account?**

Number one is the overall rating from course evaluations. In these evaluations, there are common questions that all candidates get. I think five questions is the average number asked to everybody, so that is at least fair, plus the comments collected from canvassing. But the problem is that the number of students each individual is teaching is different; and the level of the students in each class is different too. You get 101 versus 301. This panorama gives you a situation where the students who are writing comments are not necessarily from the same group. Moreover, the language is different... Japanese students, Spanish students or French students. There are many uncontrollable variables that are inevitable. So we have to come up with our best objective judgments based on what students choose to write. Practically, I think it is the best to give those awards to as many graduate students as possible because it will be helpful when looking for a job.

#### 6. **What are the benefits of having an award for Teaching Assistants?**

It is probably advantageously for their job hunt and resume. For professors or lecturers it is less important but it is still a recognition. Primarily, the award has a practical value for graduate students. Once the nominees go outside of our department to the College of Liberal Arts or Purdue teaching awards, they will have to compete with a larger number of candidates in the pool from engineering. I think there is a monetary award that might be an incentive.

## “LANGUAGE IS ALWAYS THE COMPANION OF THE EMPIRE”

Erin O'Reilly

How the Spanish language is spoken today is due to the efforts of a 13th century king and his love for the language and the country. King Alfonso X, also called Alfonso the Wise, was driven by two things: ambition and patriotism. His goal was to unify Spain (the two main kingdoms were Castile and Aragon. Navarra, Portugal and the Muslims in the South held their own kingdoms as well) under one language, which he selected to be Castilian. Therefore, he wrote all of his books and legal documents in Castilian as opposed to Latin, and would say to justify himself, “siempre la lengua fue compañera del imperio” or “language is always the companion of the empire.” This phrase was used again over 200 years later when Antonio de Nebrija wrote it in his dedication to Queen Isabel when he presented her with his Grammar of the Castilian Language in 1492, the first complete grammar text of written and spoken Spanish.



## MOVIE: *GLOOMY SUNDAY* (1999)



Original Title: *Ein Lied von Liebe und Tod*

Review by: Liana Hakobyan

“An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth” goes the famous saying and so proves the spellbinding and emotionally moving drama *Gloomy Sunday*.

A nostalgic trip to Budapest turns out to be a tragic one for former Nazi official Hans Wieck (Ben Becker) as he returns to his favorite restaurant to celebrate his 80th birthday. As usual, he orders his favorite beef rolls and asks the violinist to play the “famous” song. In almost ecstatic enjoyment of the beautiful melody, Hans drops dead while gazing at an old photo of the woman who had inspired the song 50 years prior.

Narrated with flashbacks and set in Budapest in the 1930s, *Gloomy Sunday*, under the brilliant direction of Rolf Schuebel, tells the story of an unconventional love triangle between Laszlo Szabo (Joachim Krol), a Jewish-Hungarian restaurant owner, his gorgeous sweetheart Ilona (Erika Marozsan), and a charming young composer Andras (Stefano Dionisi). The unusual relationship between the three becomes even more complicated when the young German businessman also falls for Ilona. Spinning around the intricacy of these relationships, *Gloomy Sunday* unfolds a true story about an eponymous song composed in 1933 by Hungarian composer Rezső Seress. The melody that brought fame to its composer soon gained enormous notoriety for triggering a chain of suicides across Europe and beyond.

Andras, who plays the young composer, is tormented by the growing number of suicides and the hidden message that his song is desperately trying to send him. The dark and melancholic waves of the piano-based *Gloomy Sunday* float across Hungary causing more than 150 suicides in just two weeks. Dramatic and sorrowful, the melody seems to scream out in despair and creep under one’s skin until it takes possession of oneself and delivers the message.

As the “cursed” melody makes its bloody conquest throughout the world, *Gloomy Sunday* depicts the tragic events of the annihilation of the Hungarian Jews by the Nazis.

(Info and pictures) <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0155722/>

## INTERVIEW WITH PROF. ELENA CODA



Alejandra Vela

1. **How long have you been teaching at Purdue?**

Eight years.

2. **Where are you from originally? Trieste?**

No, I am not from Trieste.

3. **You have been working with writers from this city. Do you think graduate students should**

**be encouraged to work with literature of their hometowns, or should they broaden their research fields?**

Students should broaden up their fields of research. I started working on Trieste because I wanted to incorporate in my research my interest for German and Austrian literature. (I have a BA in German literature and I studied in Germany for a year as an undergrad). Trieste until 1918 was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It was an interesting urban space, the most important port of the empire and it attracted people from all over the world. It was a fascinating cosmopolitan city and it produced some of the most interesting authors of the early 20th century: Italo Svevo, Umberto Saba, Carlo Michelstaedter, Scipio Slataper and many others... They have direct access to German literature (they all speak German) and so are able to incorporate in their texts the ideas of Freud, Nietzsche, Weininger, Simmel, etc.

4. **What are your research interests?**

Italian women writers active in Trieste at the turn of the last century. They are now pretty much unknown and forgotten in spite of the fact that when they were writing they were critically well received and pretty popular. They present a different view of the modern city they inhabit.

5. **In the talk you gave some weeks ago “Utopia and Disenchantment in Claudio Magris’s *Blindly*”, you mentioned that in our days we have to face reality, to look at the eyes of the Medusa. Can you develop this idea further?**

Magris comments that the trend in contemporary narrative is to reduce the novel into a consolatory placebo, which evades, negates or smoothes over the tensions present in our world even when super-

---

ficially it depicts the darkest and the most dramatic plots. Instead, the novel must be able to stare true evil in the face: 'Every true book measures itself with the demonical nature of existence' (1999a: 51). Magris's narrative approach might be understood as an overturning of Italo Calvino's well known theory of lightness. Whereas Calvino affirms that, in order not to be petrified by the weight and opacity of the world and be reduced to silence, as a writer he must be like Perseus, who never stares at Medusa directly, but looks at her only in the reflection of his shield (Calvino, 1995: 631-635), Magris underscores the necessity of a direct approach, one that requires the will to unveil 'the Gorgon behind the pink rouge of reassuring falsifications' (Magris, 1999a: 48). There is much more goodness in the ability and courage to probe unbearable truths and to descend into the most intolerable darkness than in any 'conciliatory bonhomie' (1999a: 51): only in so doing it might be possible to fight the evil that plagues our social, historical or individual fabric. As he already noted in his collection of essays entitled *Utopia e disincanto*, this literary tactic is particularly important in our time, when all the overreaching philosophies of the past, with all their illusions of grand totalities and coherence, have crumbled and unveiled that 'now the future of the world seems instead at the mercy of

a chaotic and unpredictable upheaval, indifferent to ambitious designs and perspectives' (Magris, 2001: 41). So he underscores the necessity to look directly at the 'authentic horror of reality' (Magris, 2001: 40) without using the oblique and reassuring reflection of the mirror conceived by Calvino and to travel, instead 'like Céline to the end of the night without sweetening the pill' (2001: 40).

**6. You are the Chair of Arabic, Classics, Hebrew, and Italian (ACHI). What are the programs, activities, and opportunities that ACHI offers to undergraduate and graduate students?**

We offer minors in Arabic, and we are considering the possibility of creating a minor in Hebrew. We also offer minors and majors in Italian and Classics. Our undergrad students participate in coffee hours, clubs activities, film nights, and other activities that enrich their academic life. We also have different study abroad opportunities for our students; and I would also like to mention that there is a new scholarship available for Italian undergraduate students studying abroad in Italy: The Lorraine K. Lawton Scholarship is a scholarship, based on merit, for undergraduate students with a major or minor in the Italian Division of the School of Languages and

Cultures, and participating in a study abroad program in Italy. For more info go to: [http://www.cla.purdue.edu/academics/scholarships/Languages\\_and\\_Cultures.html](http://www.cla.purdue.edu/academics/scholarships/Languages_and_Cultures.html)

As for graduate students, we are always available to do directed readings/independent studies, plus we offer different courses, usually cross-listed with Comparative Literature and/or other IDIS programs on topics relevant to our interests and research. So, for instance Prof. Rankine recently taught CLCS 593 "The Classics and Black Literature." In the past couple of years I have taught grad seminars on Essayistic narrative and on modern and post modern urban landscapes. In the Fall semester, I will probably teach a graduate seminar on women and modernity.



---

## GET REWARDED FOR TEACHING @ SLC

Heidi Parker

Did you know that Purdue offers a “Graduate Teaching Certificate” (GTC) through the Center for Instructional Excellence (CIE)?

As SLC instructors we have an advantage over TAs in other departments due the extensive amount of teaching experience that we get; and many of the requirements to get the GTC are already fulfilled by working here:

- Teach at least two classes at Purdue (they can be two sections of the same class).
- Receive end of semester student evaluations as conducted by Purdue CoursEval (all SLC TAs get this evaluation).
- Have a faculty/staff member from SLC observe your class and give you feedback (this happens in most classes/levels, but it can be easily setup if that is not the case).
- Have participated in a week long TA orientation (you just need a SLC faculty/staff member to verify that you participated in the SLC orientation program and attach a copy of the schedule with your application).

Additional things you need to work on:

- Conduct early feedback in the two classes that you list on the application (known as the GTC Teaching Report).
- Participate in 6 hours of “instructional development” which consist of seminars/workshops/meetings related to teaching topics (CIE offers several workshops throughout the semester and taking 4 of their workshops will fulfill this requirement).
- Participate in a Micro-teaching workshop as conducted by CIE (give a seven-minute presentation to a group of fellow TAs while being videotaped; followed by a meeting with a CIE staff member to watch your tape and get additional feedback).
- Write three one-page reflections based on the different types of feedback that you got during the process: from peers, CIE staff members and your own videotape observation (Micro-Teaching); from a SLC faculty/staff; and from your students.
- Completing the GTC Teaching Report with the required signatures and supporting documents.

You can work on this certificate at your own time, and once you’ve completed the GTC Teaching Report, you simply drop it off at the CIE main office located in Young Hall 730 for their review. Once approved you will receive an e-mail inviting you to the yearly awards ceremony where you will get the certificate.

Please visit the GTC FAQs page to find more details about the requirements and to download the GTC Teaching report: <http://www.purdue.edu/cie/gradtadev/graduate-teacher-certificate.html>

---

## CREDITS

**Newsletter Chair:** Alejandra Vela

**Design:** Alejandra Vela

**Writers:** Heidi Parker, Yasmina Vallejos, Erin O'Reilly,  
Tatevik Gyulamiryan, Liana Hakobyan, and Alejandra Vela

**Proofreading:** Jennifer Gerndt