

School of Languages & Cultures

2024-2025



School of Languages and Cultures

WELCOME TO SLC!



RJ BARNES
Lecturer in Classics



ANNA BLANCO
Bilingual Communications Specialist



VANESA CAÑETE
Clinical Assistant Professor
Spanish



YUWEN HSIUNG
Clinical Assistant Professor
Chinese Studies



ALETHA STAHL
SLC Visiting Assistant Professor



MAURICE TETNE
Clinical Assistant Professor
Francophone and African American Studies



LIJING YE
Lecturer in Chinese

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR COLLEAGUES IN THEIR NEW ROLES!



JOHN BORKOWSKI
Lecturer in ASL



JUNGEUN KIM
Visiting Instructor in Korean Studies



MEGI PAPIASHVILI
Lecturer in Spanish

SLC wins the Office of Engagement's inaugural "Engaged Unit" Award, Spring 2025!

As the recipient of this new university-level service award, SLC was recognized for its strong commitment to community engagement across all mission areas of teaching, research, and service. Through after-school programs like *SPARK for German* and *Ayuda y Aprende*, SLC provides transformative learning experiences for students while addressing community needs. Our partnership with *Aprendiendo a Leer*, informed by the research of Prof. Alejandro Cuza and his lab, exemplifies engaged scholarship by promoting literacy and language development in the community. Consistent engagement in public-facing events such as Spring Fest also contributed to SLC winning this award. *Congratulations to all of us on this great honor!*



Engagement Awards Ceremony (Left to Right: Kely Páez-Urbano; Elena Coda; Jen William; Vanessa Felten; Soledad Morales)

IN THE SPOTLIGHT:
YASMINE ALLEN
SLC Alumna and Advisory Board member

"Earning a master's degree in Spanish at Purdue has helped me tremendously in establishing a long and rewarding teaching career. My graduate studies and teaching assistantship were pivotal in helping me grow as a future teacher. From practicing communicative teaching strategies and developing cultural competency through literature, I immediately saw the value of a Purdue master's degree from the School of Languages and Cultures. Learning about other cultures through language will open more doors no matter where your Purdue degree takes you!"



Yasmine Allen is currently serving as a Spanish instructor and program coordinator at Phillips Academy, an independent boarding school in Andover, Massachusetts. She has a diverse range of experience in the education sector and previously served as the Associate Dean of Faculty and co-director of the Teaching Fellowship Program. She oversaw the onboarding process for new faculty, managed course planning and professional development grants, and developed the curriculum for teaching fellow seminars. In addition, Yasmine is an active member of the Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity in Action (IDEA) Committee and contributed to the Systems Committee for the Andover Anti-Racism Task Force. Yasmine has also acted as a faculty chaperone for the Learning in the World Program, accompanying students on trips to Mexico, Peru, and Puerto Rico. Yasmine holds a bachelor's degree in Spanish from DePauw University and a master's in Spanish Language and Literature from Purdue University. In her free time, Yasmine enjoys traveling with her family, exploring museums, and attending concerts.

*SLC thanks Yasmine for her dedication
to our School as an Advisory Board member!*

NEW BOOK PUBLICATION!



Professor Song No, Associate Professor of Spanish Literature, along with SLC graduate alumni **Daniel Carrillo Jara** and **Eduardo Huaytán**, co-edited the volume *Poéticas de la Invención: Ensayos sobre originalidad, testimonio y modernismo* (2025, Todos Tus Libros Press).

This book brings together a series of studies that explore imagination, creativity, and originality in Peruvian literature and film. The essays examine how writers and filmmakers reinterpret history, popular culture, and identity through innovative artistic forms, from portrayals of Indigenous figures and revolutionary poets to the creative use of Quechua testimony and modernist or avant-garde aesthetics. Contributions in this volume highlight the diverse ways Peruvian artists have reshaped cultural memory and expression.

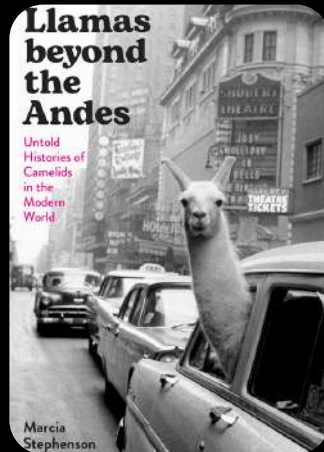
Congratulations to the editing team on their hard work and innovative volume!

Many more recent and archived SLC publications can be found on the [SLC Bookshelf](#)



School of Languages and Cultures

EMERITI FACULTY NEWS



Emerita Professor of Spanish **Marcia Stephenson**'s monograph *Llamas beyond the Andes* (University of Texas Press) has made a big splash and has been widely reviewed since its publication in December 2023, for example in the *Latin American Review of Books*: <https://latamrob.substack.com/p/camelid-colonialism>.

A review by Regina Duarte in the *Journal of Latin American Geography* highlights the fascinatingly interdisciplinary nature of the book: "The book offers a sophisticated and nuanced analysis that explains how llamas crossed oceans worldwide as exotic creatures or essential commodities. This is precious reading for social, environmental, and scientific historians, as well as cultural geographers, anthropologists, and veterinarians" (p. 211). Reviews of *Llamas beyond the Andes* have also appeared in *Isis*, *American Historical Review*, *Hispanic American Historical Review*, *Choice*, and *American Ethnologist*.

Professor Stephenson was interviewed about the book by the New Books Network, a recording of which can be found here: newbooksnetwork.com/llamas-beyond-the-andes. Her related article "Hybridity and the Domestication of Wildness: Creating the Paco-Vicuña in Early Nineteenth-Century Peru" was published in the *Hispanic American Historical Review* (103:4, November 2023), pp. 617-649.

Congratulations on the excellent reception of your work, Dr. Stephenson!



*Dr. Stephenson and
her editor-in-residence, Jack*



CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER!



Prof. Daniel Conner

Daniel Conner was promoted to Associate Professor of Teaching in Classics in 2025!

Olga Lyanda-Geller, Assistant Professor of Russian, received the Kofmehl Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching Award from the College of Liberal Arts in Spring 2025.

Daniel J. Olson, Professor of Spanish and Linguistics, received the 2025 College of Liberal Arts' Outstanding Graduate Teacher Award.

Jen William, SLC Head and Professor of German, was appointed starting January 2025 to a three-year term as the co-editor (with Muriel Cormican of TCU) of the flagship German Studies journal *The German Quarterly*, one of two major publications of the AATG (American Association of Teachers of German).

Tatjana Babic Williams, Senior Lecturer in Italian, won the "Design Champion" Award from Edstutia, LLC for earning the highest judges' score for the final projects of the course on Instructional Certification in XR (extended reality) in Summer 2024.



Olga Lyanda-Geller was the recipient of the 2025 Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching Award



Daniel J. Olson received the CLA Outstanding Graduate Teacher Award for 2025



GRADUATE ALUMNI UPDATES

- **Gwénaél Jouin** (PhD in Comparative Literature, 2025) holds a Limited-Term Lecturer position in French and the Cornerstone program in CLA at Purdue.
- **Lorena Piña Palacio** (PhD in Spanish Literature, 2025) is the new Assistant Professor of Spanish at Truman State University in Kirksville, Missouri.
- **Regina Abu** (MA in French Literature, 2024) has started in a PhD program at the University of Miami.
- **Hitomi Kurita** (MA in Japanese, 2024) has secured a position at the Japan Foundation in Madrid, Spain.
- **Bruno Staszkievicz** (PhD in Spanish Linguistics, 2024) became a Core Lecturer at Indiana University, Bloomington.
- **Hernán Matzekvich** (PhD in Spanish Literature, 2021) has a new position as Associate Faculty in the Department of Spanish & Portuguese Studies at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.
- **Lang Wang** (PhD in Comparative Literature, 2021), was awarded a semester-long fellowship in Chinese University of Hong Kong. She will be working on research in Sino-French literary and cultural comparisons.
- **Katie Roseau** (PhD in French Literature, 2018) was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure at Mercer University.
- **Tatiana Artamónova** (PhD in Spanish Linguistics, 2017) has accepted a position as Language Program Coordinator of Spanish 100-200 level at Texas A&M University.
- **Felipe Fiuza** (PhD in Spanish Literature, 2017) received tenure and promotion to associate professor in the Literature and Language Department at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, TN.
- **Dan Jones** (PhD in German Literature, 2017) is the new Associate Director of Immersive and International Programs with the Carl H. Lindner College of Business at the University of Cincinnati.
- **Argelia García-Saldívar** (PhD in Spanish Literature, 2016) has been promoted to Associate Professor at the University of the Ozarks, Arkansas.
- **Kelly Suero** (PhD in Spanish Literature, 2014) was named the Chair of the Dept. of World Languages and Cultures at Troy University in Alabama in August 2024.



NEWS FROM CURRENT SLC GRADUATE STUDENTS

PhD student in Spanish and Portuguese, **Thiago Brito Santos**, has accepted a full-time teaching position at a high school in Manhattan, KS, teaching Spanish and ESOL, with the possibility of adding French in the future.

PhD student in Francophone Literature, **Amaka Megbulem**, at the Youth Summit with the World Bank in Washington DC in May 2025. Amaka worked with a team solving real-world problems and meeting people from the UN, UNESCO, IFA, and the World Bank. Amaka said, "It was so humbling and inspiring to see young people doing great things!"

PhD student in Francophone Literature, **Shalom Kpetsu**, is serving as the President of the Purdue Graduate Student Government (PGSG) in 2025-26!



Amaka Megbulem at the Youth Summit
with the World Bank in DC



Shalom Kpetsu with Purdue President
Mung Chiang

NEWS FROM PAST AND PRESENT UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

Elijah (Eli) Marburger, current Degree+ student who is double majoring in Industrial Engineering and Japanese, has been awarded the Japanese Government Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) Undergraduate Student Scholarship, one of the most prestigious scholarships in Japan, for the coming year!

Emily Primm, 2024 BA in Spanish and SLC's Outstanding Senior for 2024, received an ETA Fulbright Award to teach English in Mexico, 2024-25.

Erin Rockhill, 2023 BA in German, received an ETA Fulbright Award to teach English in Niedersachsen, Germany, 2024-2025.

Congratulations to our talented students and alumni!

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH NEWS

SLC Success at the Purdue Undergraduate Research Conference (PURC)!

Winners of the Literature, Linguistics, Languages, and Culture Colloquium

2024

- **1st Place:** “The Importance of Slang When Teaching a Second Language” by **Emma Niecikowski** (Mentor: Jessica Sturm)
- **2nd Place:** “The Language of Thought: How Language Affects Thought in Dystopian Literature” by **Tessa Stahly** (Mentor: Elena Coda)
- **3rd Place:** “Anton Chekov’s Observation of Suffering on the Island of Sakhalin” by **Emily Gervais** (Mentor: Olga Lyanda-Geller)
- **3rd Place:** “Metamorphoses I.294: Context and Implications in Roman Literature” by **Sophia Cross** (Mentor: Marianne Blickenstaff)
- **3rd Place:** “Analyzing Social and Cultural Determinants of Cancer Outcomes in Latinx Communities” by **David Arteaga** (Mentor: Cara Kinnally)

2025

- **2nd Place:** “Laughter in Exile: The Concept of Laughter in Chekhov” by **Emily Gervais** (Mentor: Olga Lyanda-Geller)
- **3rd Place:** “The Power of Linguistic Landscapes in Indiana’s Libraries” by **Claudia Kayleen Albrecht** (Mentor: Lori Czerwionka)



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Two SLC students of Korean participated in the 6th annual Midwest Korean Speech Contest in Chicago in April 2025. **Nurin Ibrahim**, a mathematics major and Korean Studies minor representing us at the intermediate level, won first place! She received \$800 and was awarded a fully funded study abroad opportunity at Sungkyunkwan University in Korea. **Rachel (Anh) Phuong La**, our advanced-level representative, placed third! Rachel is majoring in computer science and minoring in Korean Studies. She received \$300 for her achievement. Congratulations to both students, and thank you to Dr. Huai-Rhin Kim and the Korean instructors for their excellent mentoring!



Representing the Korean Program at Purdue



Nurin and Rachel receiving their awards

Kerri Easton, German Teaching major, completed the Goethe Institut's Sommerakademie intensive language and culture program in Dresden, Germany in summer 2024! She also received an award in December from the Indiana German Heritage Society (IGHS) as the winner of an essay contest for her essay "Wheatland as the New Wunderthausen: The Germans of Wheatland Iowa," which was published in the IGHS newsletter (Winter 2025, pp. 8-9). Kerri also received a \$300 award!



Kerri with her certificate at the Semper Opera in Dresden

COMMUNITY, CAREERS, AND OUTREACH

Aprendiendo a Leer is an after-school literacy program for Spanish-English bilingual children from kindergarten through 5th grade. The goal of the program is to help bilingual children maintain and develop their native language and culture and communicate better with their family members. The program runs every year in collaboration with the Tippecanoe School Corporation in Lafayette, Indiana. Dozens of children are participating in the program each semester, with Purdue students who are majoring or minoring in Spanish doing the teaching.



Aprendiendo a leer classroom

Ayuda y Aprende is a mutually beneficial program in which Colombian undergraduate research interns and Purdue intermediate Spanish students meet weekly for two-hour sessions to practice conversation in both Spanish and English. This model of experiential learning allows language development to extend beyond the classroom in ways that direct instruction alone cannot achieve. For Purdue students, AyA offers a meaningful first application of their language studies. For the Colombian participants, it provides essential English practice that supports their immersion into campus life.



*Ayuda y Aprende students
with their certificates*

This past June, SLC hosted the *STARTALK Russian Language Camp* at Purdue, funded by an NSA grant (PI Professor Olga Lyanda-Geller). The morning sessions were dedicated to language instruction for all levels: beginning, intermediate, advanced, and heritage learners. The afternoon sessions featured lectures in physics, chemistry, biology, neuroscience, computing, and engineering by bilingual invited speakers (Purdue STEM and Linguistics professors), with scheduled visits to research laboratories and various scientific and engineering centers on campus. The camp welcomed students from as far as New York, Florida, Texas, and California—and undoubtedly some future Boilermakers!



2025 STARTALK Campers



EXCITING NEWS FROM AROUND STANLEY COULTER HALL

SPRING FEST

The annual celebration of the Purdue Spring Fest took place on April 12th this year. Despite the chilly weather, the following SLC department didn't hesitate to participate: Arabic, Chinese, Comparative Literature, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish/Portuguese. Thanks for representing us to the community!

ANNUAL INITIATION CEREMONY AND NEW MEMBERS OF PI DELTA PHI

The purpose of the honor society is to recognize outstanding scholarship in French language and Francophone literatures, to increase the knowledge and appreciation of Americans for the cultural contributions of the French-speaking world, and to stimulate and to encourage French and Francophone cultural activities. *Félicitations!*

OPEN HOUSE FOR HIGH SCHOOLERS

Students from different local high schools—such as Eastern, Northwestern, Tippecanoe Valley, Tri-Central, West Lafayette Jr/Sr High School—and some of their teachers attended our 5th annual SLC Open House for high schoolers on September 18th, 2024. The event had a huge turnout of a few hundred students and teachers, and the SLC community planned creative, fun activities for the students. A big success!



Purdue Spring Fest 2025



Prof. Jessica Sturm and new members of Pi Delta Phi



SLC Open House



Pizza lunch celebrating SLC graduate students and TAs in May 2024. Thank you to our anonymous donor who sponsored it!

IN MEMORIAM



SLC extends its deep and heartfelt condolences to the friends and family of our recently deceased colleague.

Dr. Fritz G. Cohen, Professor Emeritus of German, passed away this year at the age of 102. Fritz was a Holocaust survivor and World War II veteran who educated many people about this horrible time in history by talking freely about his own experiences. Fritz was on the faculty in German at Purdue for 35 years, and he continued to contribute to the intellectual culture here long after his retirement in 1993. One memorable example was when he presented Leni Riefenstahl's infamous film *Triumph of the Will* to a packed room of around 100 captivated audience members in the West Lafayette Public Library during our World Film Forum's inaugural year of 2006.

On September 9th, 2025, Purdue alumnus Dr. Thomas Stratton (PhD in Materials Engineering; residing in Germany) returned to speak to our German program students in two different classes and at the *Kaffeestunde*. In Professor Allert's GER 401 course, Dr. Stratton paid tribute to Fritz Cohen by discussing his biography, *Ein Amerikaner zurück in Deutschland* (An American Back in Germany, book cover pictured here), as well as the impactful conversations that the two of them had prior to Dr. Stratton's graduation in 2010. Fritz's legacy thus continues through the current generation of students and his SLC colleagues who remember him fondly!





GIVING TO SLC

enriches our students' experiences
by funding many activities and
events that enhance their learning
of languages and cultures.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!



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