

The Foreign Languages Newsletter

Clark University • Worcester, Massachusetts

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FROM THE CHAIR

Despite the somber economic news that surrounds us, we begin 2009 on an optimistic note. Enrollments are high throughout the department, and Clark students are engaged in innovative language-based courses. As *Newsletter* readers know, our curriculum has long highlighted real-world communicative skills within an array of courses that emphasize the diversity of linguistic expression from formal to familiar discourse. Among the class offerings we want to highlight this semester are two film-related courses (Robert Tobin's German/Screen 250: German Film, and Michael Spingler's French/Screen 267: The New Wave), both of which provide students with broad exposure to linguistic and cultural diversity.

That communication/inquiry process is also carried through two other innovative classes: Carol D'Lugo's Spanish 141: Translation Workshop and Odile Ferly's French 168: Immigration in France

Of course, the Clark model is more than just a random cluster of classes to make language study more appealing. Our curriculum is shaped around the recognition that students who study foreign languages are not defined exclusively by that one skill but are engaged in a range of activities that lead them to move across the Clark curriculum to courses that complement their language study, such as those offered by the International Studies Stream, Government, Geography, IDCE and Communications. Thus Foreign-language study becomes one of a series of destinations along the path of a broad interdisciplinary education offered through Clark's curriculum.

Study abroad options have added special coherence to the kinds of interlocking program arrangements that an increasing number of our students take advantage of. The Study Abroad Office informs me that this semester marks the highest enrollment of our students at non-English-language study sites. A total of 31 students are currently studying in Clark-affiliated programs in six countries, including Beijing, China (3); Santiago, Chile (5); Santiago, Dominican Republic (3); Dijon, France (2); Osaka, Japan (1); Sevilla, Spain (6) and Madrid, Spain (11).

Those activities are further enhanced on campus through the new Academic Commons located in Goddard Library. Look for the new location for LARC. It's now on the second floor with attractive space for group screenings and individual language study sites.

In the next issue of the *Newsletter* we will focus on some of the innovative links language students have made in their community-based research through new technologies.

Marvin D'Lugo

Raymond Barbera and Bernie Kaplan: An Appreciation

We were all saddened to learn of the recent passing of two long-time friends of the Foreign Languages Department. Raymond E. Barbera and Bernie Kaplan were both instrumental in shaping the intellectual content of our Comparative Literature program.

Ray Barbera will be remembered as the first Director of the innovative B.A./M.A. Program in Comparative Literature. This was Clark's first experimental program in building bridges between advanced undergraduate study and Masters-level education, the forerunner of the present-day Fifth-year program. Ray served as the director of the Comparative Literature Program from its inception in 1972 until 1976.

Under Barbera's energetic leadership Comparative Literature attracted a diverse and talented group of undergraduate and graduate students who, through our program, were able to pursue avenues of study not otherwise available in more traditional literature majors. He was a believer in dialogue and was instrumental in establishing the Comparative Literature Colloquium which flourished for many years as a forum for the free exchange of ideas among faculty and students.

Trained in Spanish Golden-Age literature, Ray was a strong defender of literary theory as a disciplinary route to a richer understanding of literature and its relation to the arts. Many aspects of the cross-disciplinary, theory-based study of literature and the arts that are hallmarks of today's Comparative Literature curriculum at Clark found their origins in the rich period of Ray Barbera's directorship.

A long-time friend of Comparative Literature, Bernie Kaplan was attracted to our program because he saw in it a way to explore the deep connections between the Social Sciences and the Humanities in the quest for knowledge and understanding. He enthusiastically embraced our conception of Comparative Literature, not simply as the study of different national literary canons, but also as the exploration of the connections between language and literature and other disciplines — the visual arts, philosophy, music and psychology.

Bernie liked the way we reshaped what had formerly been separate small departments—Romance languages, German, Russian, Greek and Latin—into a unified and intellectually valid whole. He especially admired our ability to set aside theoretical, methodological, or pedagogical differences in order to work together. Bernie was very proud to be an Adjunct Professor of Comparative Literature and, like Gaston Bachelard, another philosopher-psychologist, he used literature to drive home his points. He came to us both to learn and to teach. He was an important intellectual presence in the early days of our newly unified department and we will miss him greatly.

ALUMNI NOTES

We recently received a newsy letter from BRITTANY PEHL DANIELSON. She writes us that “since graduating from Clark in 2007 I have been focusing both on raising my daughter, who was born while I was a student at Clark and is now a busy four-year-old, and also on starting a career.”

For the past two years Brittany has served as Spanish Editor/Junior Project Manager for Worcester-based Victory Productions. “As an editor and junior project manager at this small bilingual educational publishing firm, I was responsible for the coordination, tracking and execution of all phases of projects from manuscripting, translation and localization through to the final pass of editing. This requires thorough knowledge of the editorial process and the ability to organize and interface with editorial leads, translators in South America, outside editors, clients, vendors and upper management.”

At Clark Brittany expanded her interest in Hispanic studies by taking “Studies in the National Imagination” and “Latino Literature and Media Arts.” She supplemented her on-campus studies by direct immersion in Spanish-language environments, studying first at the Tandem Center in Madrid, and later (“since I could not get enough”) at the summer school of the Universidad de Guadalajara (Mexico).

Brittany describes herself this way: “I’m a creative person, but also with a perceptive and analytical side which I think allows me to sum up an issue and then present it in a pretty package. And luckily, now I am able to do so in two languages. Thanks to my education at Clark, I am 100% fluent in Spanish, a skill that will serve me no matter where I go or what I end up doing. It goes without saying also, that I have a fervent passion for Spanish and Latino culture. Reading in Spanish is not something that ended when I took my Senior Capstone. Whenever I can, I try to travel to Latin America. My most recent trips include Honduras, Mexico, Costa Rica and Puerto Rico, which for my daughter was her very first international trip. I maintain relationships with friends I have made abroad.

“Having recently moved on from my editing job, I’m hoping to take what I’ve learned in publishing, along with my background in Spanish language and culture and apply them to a graduate program of study in journalism. As of this moment, the jury is still out. Wish me luck, fellow Clarkies!”

FRENCH FILM SERIES

“Godard and Company,” a series of French New Wave films, will be screened Wednesdays at 7 p.m. in Razzo Hall at the Traina Center. Detailed schedules with titles of the films may be obtained in Estabrook 302. All are invited to attend the screenings.

TERTULIAS RESUME

The popular Spanish-language conversation hour, the TERTULIA, resumed on Wednesday, January 21 in Estabrook 310 from 3:00—4:30. Spanish-language students of all levels and native speakers are invited to participate. Refreshments will be served.

FACULTY NOTES

Maria Acosta Cruz, Associate Professor of Spanish, participated in the Puerto Rican Studies Association bi-annual conference at the Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe in Old San Juan. She read a paper entitled “Road Trip to Nowhere: El mapa existencial de Puerto Rico”. The conference took place Oct. 1-4, 2008.

Marvin D’Lugo, department chair and Professor of Spanish and Screen Studies, recently assumed the position of Principal Editor for *Studies in Hispanic Cinemas* (SHC), a journal of film criticism. SHC is the only international scholarly journal dedicated to study of transnational Hispanic film culture.

Everett Fox, Professor of Judaica, spoke at a Boston University conference celebrating the 80th birthday of Elie Wiesel. The title of his talk was “Elie Wiesel as Interpreter of Biblical Narrative.” He also wrote a piece for *Expositions: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities* on “Robert Alter and the Art of Bible Translation,” scheduled to appear in Spring 2009.

Michael Spingler, Associate Professor of French, continues to write for *La Revue Des Deux Mondes*. His article, “Obama et le Réve Américain” appeared in the review’s October issue. His previous article, “Chronique d’une election,” was the featured article on the review’s web site for the month of November.

Robert Tobin, Henry J. Leir Professor of Comparative Literature and German Studies, attended the annual conference of the Modern Language Association in San Francisco in December, chairing a session on eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century German literature and assumed the presidency of the Gay Lesbian/Queer (GL/Q) Caucus of the MLA, which represents gay and lesbian concerns at the organization.

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