

Waves

Connecting the World through Languages and Cultures

GVSU's Modern Languages and Literatures Magazine

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This year marks the first edition of *Waves*, which will be an annual magazine for the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures of Grand Valley. The title highlights the powerful connections that are created through languages and cultures within our world. With the exception of the article, "Paving the Way for a Future Career," which explores the benefits of learning a second language, all the articles in the magazine feature GVSU specifically.

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Letter from the Chair

MAJD AL-MALLAH



Photographed by Jillian Bowes

I am pleased to welcome you to our inaugural issue of Waves. I am happy to introduce you to our department and the multiplicity of languages and programs that we offer.

In the tradition of liberal education, the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures offers a variety of languages and degrees that are intended to prepare our students for life, not simply a job. Studying a language is one of the most rewarding endeavors because it opens one's horizons to the diversity and complexity of our global world and it opens up opportunities that are not readily available without the language. For example, we offer a wide range of study abroad programs that build on the language preparation gained here at GVSU. While these study abroad experiences are life-changing, they are even more rewarding and rich if a

student is able to connect with local culture through direct communication. Our students are able to weave through new and enriching cultural experiences primarily due to their ability to communicate with others in their own language. Our goal, ultimately, is to prepare our students to be global citizens, culturally aware and well-rounded to succeed in life, and to establish a rewarding career.

We often think of studying languages as leading the path to a career in translation, interpretation, etc., but the reality is that learning a language and a culture can open the door to a wide range of career options. Employers (including companies such as Verizon, BestBuy, and many others) are seeking well-rounded individuals, particularly those with a second language. I've heard this time and time again from my students who go to

job interviews: One of the first questions that potential employers ask them is to elaborate upon their experience learning a second language or studying abroad. These are the types of experiences that set our students apart from others, and we are proud to be able to provide that preparation for them.

As you read this magazine, enjoy the features, the beautiful pictures, and the many success stories that we bring to you. 🌍

Regards,

MAJD AL-MALLAH

Majd Al-Mallah, Associate Professor
Chair, Modern Languages and Literatures

Majd Al-Mallah is an associate professor of Arabic at GVSU. He teaches a variety of Arabic courses and leads the Jordan Study Abroad program, held in Amman, Jordan, during the Spring/Summer semester. Below is a picture of the 2011 Jordan study abroad group in Ajlun, Jordan.



Liberal Education and Modern Languages and Literatures

More than 1.5 million students are studying a language in the United States. Michigan is one of the top 10 states with the highest number of foreign language students at a university. To account for this increasing number of students, the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures (MLL) at GVSU is one of the largest departments at the university. With nine languages offered, we serve nearly 5,000 students per year. The graph below shows the breakdown of each language MLL offers with the title of our magazine, *Waves*, in the original script.

The three most common languages studied at universities are Spanish, French, and German, and our students at GVSU have the option to major or minor in them. MLL also offers minors in Arabic, Chinese, and Russian, as well as courses in Japanese, Italian, and Polish; occasionally, we offer courses in Korean.

Our curriculum is designed to provide students with a well-rounded education that prepares them for life and work after college. As such, there are four main areas of focus within each of our programs: language skills (listening comprehension, reading comprehension, speaking, and writing), cultural awareness, literary analysis, and linguistics.

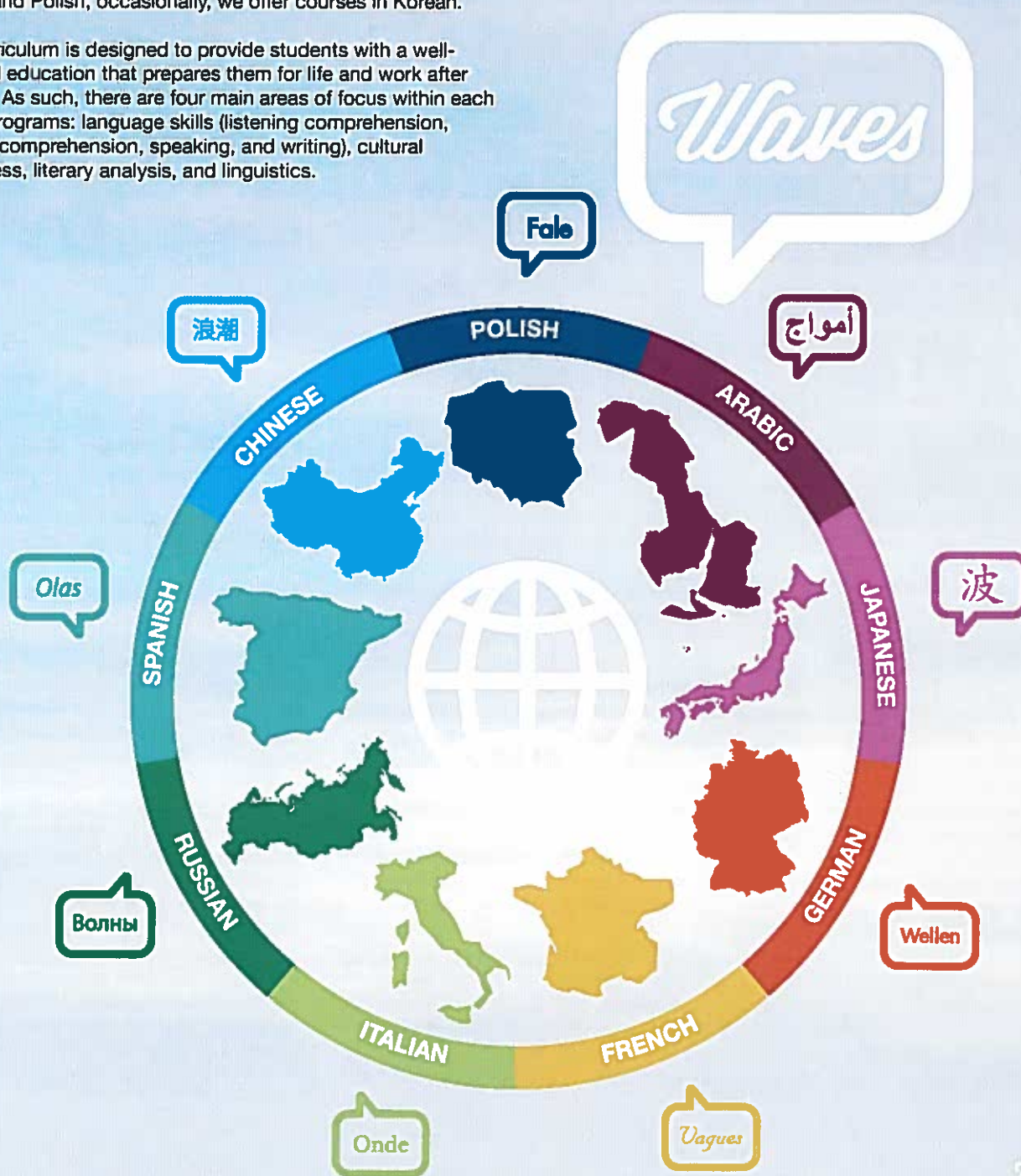
The Language Resource Center (LRC), a multimedia production facility specifically created for those studying foreign languages, is also housed in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures. A state-of-the-art facility, the LRC provides our students with the best technology and resources available to language learners.

A variety of events are available for our students and campus community throughout the year. These include lectures, language circles, conversation hours, and a variety of other options.

Check out our website at gvsu.edu/mll or the [GVSU events calendar at gvsu.edu/events](http://gvsu.edu/events) for up-to-date information.

There has been a 14 percent increase in the number of students studying languages at GVSU since 2007.

Source: This information is provided by the GVSU "Lantern."





PAVING THE WAY FOR A FUTURE CAREER

Photographed by Elise Rechlin

IS LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE THE ANSWER?

By: Jessie Miller

Recently, at a Senate hearing on May 21, 2012, Institute of International Education President Allan E. Goodman testified about the importance of learning a foreign language in schools and universities. Dr. Goodman argued that studying foreign languages is critical to national security and to meeting the demands of the global workforce.

In the U.S., more than 55 million citizens speak a language other than English, a total of more than 165 languages. The CIA World Factbook calculated that though English speakers are the majority in the U.S., only 4.8 percent of the world's total population speaks English as a first language (refer to Figure 7.1).

There are indisputable benefits to learning a second language. Not only does the ability to speak a second language make people more open and approachable, but it also gives them a marketable edge in their professional careers. In fact, many

companies and businesses prefer those with language experience.

In the workforce, those with second-language knowledge will also have a higher earning potential than those with no language experience. Nearly 20 percent of the United States population speaks a language other than English at home—a number that has doubled since 1980. As this accounts for a significant portion of the U.S. population, businesses need insight and help on bilingual marketing to cater to this growing population. Verizon Wireless, for example, holds specific career fairs to recruit employees with experience in more than one language, since the demand for second language skills has increased dramatically within the past 10 years.

While people often associate second-language knowledge with certain career paths, such as interpreters and translators, in reality, students who know more than one language can qualify for a number of job positions that are

not necessarily considered “language specific.” Such professions include international relations, journalism, law, medicine, and education, to name a few. These professions often require the use of second language skills, as their employees interact with a diverse audience.

One of the key reasons businesses hire those fluent in more than one language is because there is a link between second-language acquisition and increased overall health and intelligence. Ellen Bialystok, a cognitive neuroscientist and research professor of psychology at York University in Toronto, has spent the last 40 years studying how bilingualism affects a person's brain functions. According to her research, the regular use of a second language can improve cognitive functions and even prevent against dementia. In the brain, there is a system called the executive control system that allows people to hold two things in their mind at a time and then switch between them. This “exercises” the brain and makes



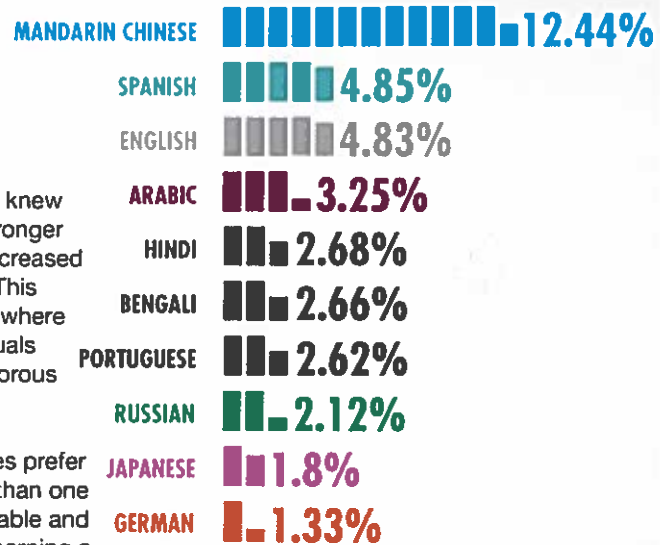
Photographed by Jillian Bowes

The MLL office and the Language Resource Center are located in Mackinac Hall on GVSU's Allendale campus.

THERE ARE OVER 6,900 KNOWN LANGUAGES IN THE WORLD, WITH MORE THAN 80 OF THESE LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN THE GRAND RAPIDS AND SURROUNDING AREAS.

Figure 7.1
THE WORLD'S MOST USED LANGUAGES

Source: This information was retrieved from the CIA World Factbook and shows the distribution in percentages of the most used mother tongues throughout the world.



it stronger, so a person can continue functioning at a higher level.

Job employers highly value those with multitasking abilities, and in Bialystok's research, she found second-language learners were able to perform tasks under distractions better than the monolinguals. While Bialystok's research focused specifically on bilinguals, the training and practice of using a second language still utilizes the executive control system of the brain; therefore, anyone learning a second language has the propensity to become a better multi-tasker than those with knowledge of only one language.

Additionally, people who know more than one language often have more confidence and a stronger self-esteem, since they are able to connect with a wider variety of people. Researchers Jonathan W. Pesner and Frank Auld from the University of Windsor studied a total of 124 high school students, comprised of 57 bilingual students and 67 monolingual students. Using the Janis-Field scale of self-

esteem, they found students who knew more than one language had a stronger self-esteem, measured by their increased self-confidence and social ease. This can be applied to the job setting, where employers seek confident individuals who are capable of handling a rigorous workload.

At the most basic level, businesses prefer candidates who can speak more than one language because they are adaptable and willing to try new things. People learning a second language will have the opportunity to pursue study abroad options or work within another country more easily than others. Students can gain college credit while studying in a foreign country and professionals can expand their repertoire to include work outside of the U.S. Many U.S.-based multinational companies such as Best Buy and Hewlett-Packard are expanding their companies overseas. In a work environment, the flexibility to relocate based on second-language skills is an asset that can be used to a person's advantage. Second-language learners

can bring knowledge of other countries to the company, which can help the company target a new population.

Aside from increasing the professional edge, languages also foster an open-minded approach to life. While learning a language, one can gain access to its history and culture. Learning another language teaches people about the past. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Language is the archives of history." It serves as a connection to the past, and yet it is

constantly changing to mirror the culture of the time period.

With the knowledge of another language comes the cognizance of other cultures and norms, sparking fresh perspectives on the world. From political views to an exotic dish, cultures are intricate—and vastly different. In Toledo, Spain, many of the citizens specialize in sword-making, a custom unique to their local community. In Germany, when visiting a friend for dinner, it is customary to bring flowers or a bottle of wine. And in Japan, there is no tipping in any situation, not even for cabs or restaurants. Instead, they consider the items and services to be covered by the prices they have determined. Learning about these different cultural practices eradicates any ethnocentricity and reminds people there is something to be gained from each culture.

We now live in an exciting new era because language curriculums are expanding to incorporate previously overlooked disciplines such as art,

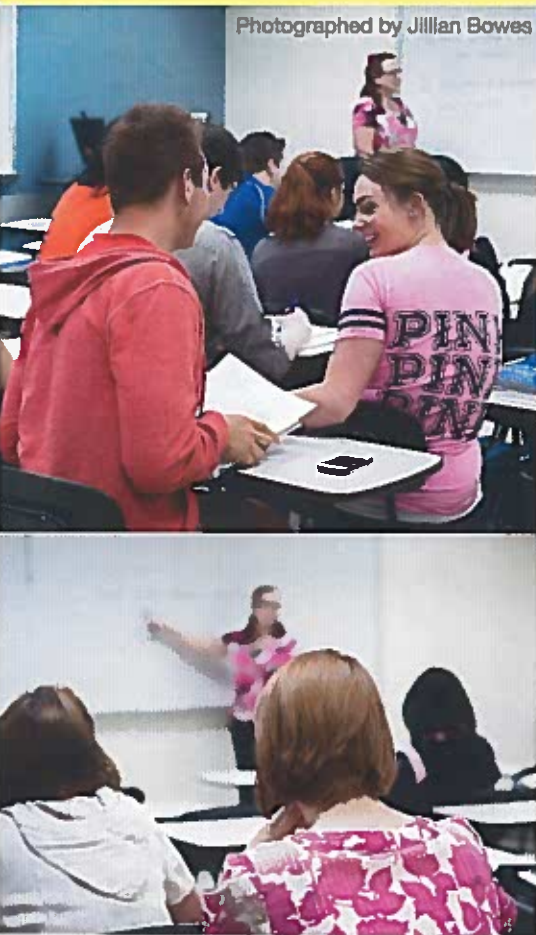
*"Language is the archives of history."
Ralph Waldo Emerson*

music, history, culture, literature, and more. The Department of Education bases its foreign language standards on the national standards they refer to as the five Cs: Communication, Culture, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. Language courses now meet each of these standards to develop an encompassing curriculum for their students (see Figures 8.1 and 8.2 for national language course enrollments compared to those at GVSU). In particular, these language programs especially cover cultural aspects, introducing students to other ways of living. When people study a language, they are exposed to the diversity of different cultures, which can expand their perspectives and enrich their lives. Whether it's learning the recipe for homemade tortillas or speaking Russian

in Moscow, learning about the different cultures of the world gives people a cultural awareness that is both respectful and enlightening.

In the conclusion of his written testimony following the Senate debate, Dr. Goodman wrote, "Languages convey more than facts; they enable people to reach conclusions in different ways and are the standard bearers of cultures from which we can also learn. It has never been more important for more Americans to know that, especially as they prepare for and enter careers..." His testimony conveyed a sense of urgency for continued education in foreign languages, and with good reason.

Learning a language prepares students for life and work after college. Language experience paves the way for a future career, and with the pressing demands of the global workforce and national security, languages are a valued necessity. 🌊

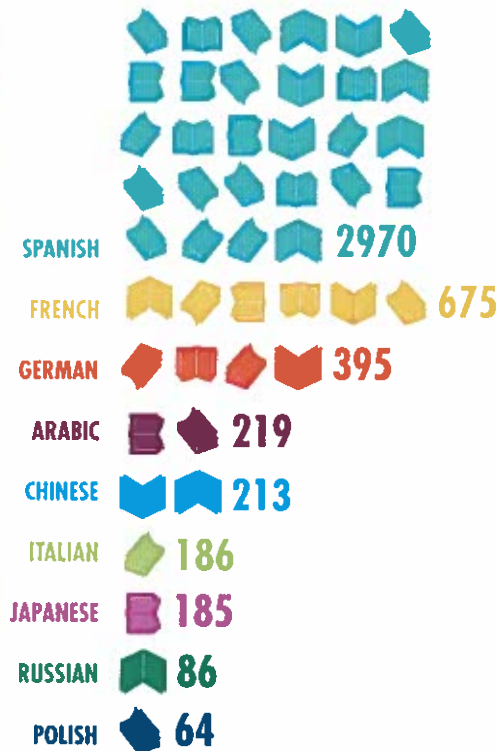


Photographed by Jillian Bowes

MLL classes provide students with an active-learning environment, where students interact with their fellow classmates and learn through instruction and classroom activities.

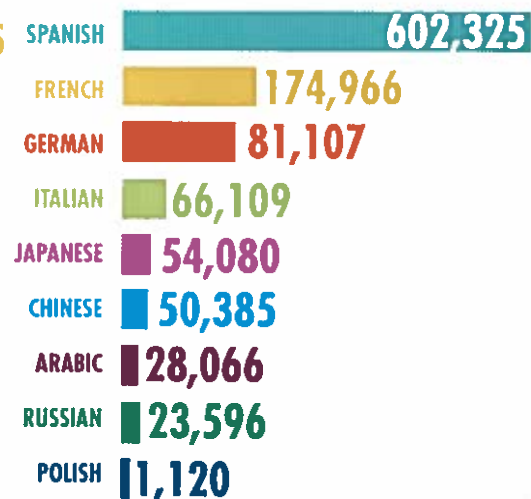
**Figure 8.1
FALL 2011 & WINTER 2012
GVSU ENROLLMENTS**

Source: Estimates calculated by MLL. This information shows how many students enrolled in language courses at GVSU during the 2011-2012 school year.



**Figure 8.2
NATIONAL UNDERGRADUATE
LANGUAGE COURSE
ENROLLMENTS IN 2009**

Source: Estimates calculated by Nelly Furman, David Goldberg, and Natalia Lusin in the article "Enrollments in Languages Other than English in United States Institutions of Higher Education, Fall 2009" for the Modern Languages Association. The graph shows nine of the most studied languages in the U.S. and their respective national enrollments as of fall 2009.



Kolik jazyků znáš, tolikrát jsi člověkem.

"You live a new life for every new language you speak. If you know only one language, you live only once."

(Czech proverb)

CONNECTING THE WORLD ONE JOURNEY AT A TIME

Studying Languages and Cultures Abroad

By: Jessie Miller and Tessa Hilgendorf

One of the most rewarding experiences is studying abroad. Not only does it give people the opportunity to visit a culture and country different from their own, but they return with life-changing experiences, as many of our students describe it. Here in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, students are encouraged to study abroad.

MLL works closely with the Padnos International Center (PIC) to provide students with a number of study abroad opportunities. PIC is devoted to providing study abroad and internship opportunities for students in more than 4,000 locations around the world. In collaboration with PIC, MLL offers summer study abroad programs where students are accompanied by a faculty member; longer stays are also an option due to GVSU's institutional ties with colleges and universities throughout the world.

Since there are numerous study abroad programs available, MLL and PIC will assist students in the process. Students can receive academic credit for their major, minor, general education courses, and/or theme classes while studying abroad, even if they participate in non-GVSU programs.

To accommodate students' preferences, MLL and PIC help students plan and prepare for their study abroad experience. Students can attend first-step meetings throughout the year, which provide them with the basics for their trip. For one-on-one assistance, students can schedule appointments to meet with an adviser to discuss their plans. There are also financial aid options and scholarships students can earn to help finance their travels.

For more information regarding study abroad or financing a trip, visit gvsu.edu/studyabroad or gvsu.edu/mli.



*"I Now Have a Hunger for Travel"
A Spring in Jordan
with Rachael Luce*

While Jordan features popular landmarks such as Petra and the Dead Sea, the most exciting part of Rachael Luce's study abroad experience wasn't the landscape, it was the people. Luce, a senior majoring in geography with a minor in Arabic language, traveled to Amman, Jordan, during May/June 2011 on a study abroad program led by Arabic Professor Majd Al-Mallah. While there, she was touched by the Jordanians' hospitality and cultural pride.

"In ... Jordan people are inviting and they want to share everything; they were so hospitable. I loved how the Jordanians embrace their culture. It made me value



my own," Luce said.

While learning about the culture and meeting new people, she was excited to witness a culture so proud of its own heritage, and said it made her aspire to be like them.

Luce, who had previously studied Spanish and French, chose the less-commonly taught Arabic language during college out of a desire to experience a language and culture that was new to her.

"I liked the challenge that Arabic presented, and learning a language so different from English was interesting," Luce said.

In Jordan, she conversed with the natives and learned more about their culture and heritage.

"After my travels, I have a better understanding of a small portion of people and how they live, and it makes me hungry to travel and learn more," she said.

This first trip sparked a hunger for travel in her; in the past year she traveled to Morocco for a semester abroad during the fall of 2011, and to Peru for the 2012 summer program.

Traveling helped her realize she wanted to learn more about cultures through their geography. In Peru, she conducted geographical research on the rain forest. She mapped the forest re-growth and the types of vegetation, while also conducting her senior research project, which involved mapping the home gardens in the area.

Luce plans to continue using her language skills even after college.

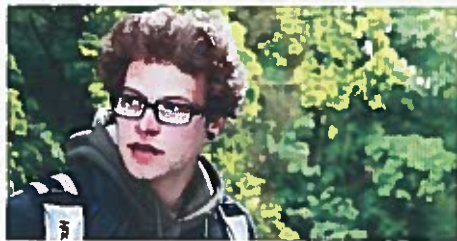
"I want to continue to travel and connect with the world through my studies," she said. "Whether in contract work, or travel and research, I will use the language and culture skills I've learned in classes and while studying abroad." 🌊



*"I Made Friends Who Will Last a Lifetime"
A Spring in Germany
with Jason Lohman*

Schwäbisch Gmünd, Germany, has more than 1,800 years of history; erected in the second century A.D., surviving buildings up to eight centuries old surround the city's historic downtown area. Home to nearly 61,000 people, this town attracted Jason Lohman, a math major with a double minor in elementary education and German. Lohman studied abroad in Schwäbisch Gmünd with German Professor Donovan Anderson and 14 other students during the 2012 spring semester.

After traveling to Germany once before and falling in love with the country, Lohman said the decision to go on this



study abroad trip was a no-brainer.

"My experience there was amazing," Lohman said. "We traveled to so many different cities that it was hard to keep track of them all, but they were all wonderful."

His favorite experience, a trip to Berlin, gave him the opportunity to explore the city during his free time on top of learning about the city's history and culture.

"I had friends in Berlin who I met up with, too, which made it that much more wonderful," he said. "Even for those without previous friendships, there is always room to make new ones."

For Lohman, making new friendships was an integral part of this trip.

"All of the people that I came into contact with in Germany were extremely

pleasant," he said. "My host family was so incredibly wonderful ... I will definitely be back to visit them at some point. I also made a lot of friends at the university there – all super nice people, many of whom I am still in contact with over Facebook."

In addition to making new friends, Lohman said his learning experiences were extremely valuable, as well.

"Study abroad affected my perception of the world by opening my eyes to new things ... I have learned so much more about how to deal with situations abroad – good and bad – but most of all I learned a lot of German."

As for future plans, Lohman hopes to get a job teaching at an elementary school, and perhaps teach German children one day. One thing he does know is this trip to Germany will not be his last.

"No matter what my career is, my future will always involve travel back to Germany and other nations, as well." 🌊



*"It Gives You a Greater Appreciation for Differences"
A Summer in France
with Allison Jennings*

Located in the southeast coast of France, Nice is the second-most visited site in France, right after Paris. From its Mediterranean climate to its bays and subtropical landscape, Nice was the ideal destination for Allison Jennings, accounting major and French minor, who traveled there in the summer of 2011 on a faculty-led study abroad program with French Professor Anne Caillaud.

Because Jennings thought being out of the country for a full semester seemed too long, she opted for a program that lasted six weeks. In Nice, she stayed with a host



family and took language and culture classes with other students from GVSU and around the world. She was able to get a taste of the culture and lifestyle in Nice, and on top of her experiences, she also earned six college credits she transferred back to GVSU.

Besides taking classes, Jennings took many excursions with her classmates, which she said was one of her favorite parts of the trip. They traveled to cities like Monaco, Cannes, St. Paul de Vance, and (of course) Paris. Although the program lasted only six weeks, Jennings was able to soak up the French culture.

"I love the French language and culture and it was so amazing to see and experience it first hand, and see all of the history the country has," Jennings said.

In addition to learning about the French way of life, Jennings' language skills

improved immensely as a result of her experience abroad. Although she used to be afraid to speak up in her French classes, the trip helped her gain the confidence she needed.

"My time abroad really helped me to become more independent and confident, not only in my French language skills, but in my ability to problem-solve and survive in a completely different culture than at home," she said. "There was a challenge every day to figure out where I needed to go, how to get there, what to eat, and how to communicate with others, especially if I didn't know the right word for something ... It got me out of my comfort zone and allowed me to grow in knowledge, language skills, and as an individual."

For students who are undecided about studying abroad, Jennings shared a bit of advice: "Go!"

"You will regret it if you don't ... It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity [that] will help you appreciate the differences in all people. When you're in a place where you don't belong, it gives you a greater appreciation for those differences." 🌊



*"I Didn't Speak a Word of Chinese, so I Knew I Wanted to Go"
A Winter in Taiwan
with Randy Strobl*

Once known as Ilha Formosa, or Beautiful Island, Taiwan is home to more than 200 mountains and eight national parks. Taiwan's alluring natural landscape and rich culture enticed recent GVSU graduate Randy Strobl to visit, even though he didn't speak a word of Chinese. In the 2012 winter semester, Strobl spent a semester studying abroad in Taiwan for a pilot program led by Chinese Professor Curtis Smith.

"I didn't really even know where Taiwan was," said Strobl, who majored in film and now works for PBS.



Although studying abroad in a country where he didn't speak the language could have been very difficult, he said it turned out to be better than he imagined.

In Taiwan, Strobl took language and culture classes with a group of students Monday through Friday in the capital city of Taipei. The program was intensive, and the students would often practice language skills in the real world they had only learned earlier that day, such as ordering food in a restaurant. Although he says it was intimidating at times, and he had his fair share of embarrassing moments, he wouldn't trade this immersion experience for anything.

"[Learning the language] was survival for me," he says.

Luckily, he had lots of help and support during the trip. Throughout the program, each student was paired with a Taiwanese

buddy to practice language skills and show them different aspects of Chinese culture.

"[The culture] was a whole dark area of my knowledge that was really enlightened by going there," he said.

And to top off the experience, Strobl was able to apply the credits he took abroad to his university requirements, which allowed him to graduate on time in April 2012. Although it required jumping through some hoops, he said the staff at GVSU was helpful in making this possible for him.

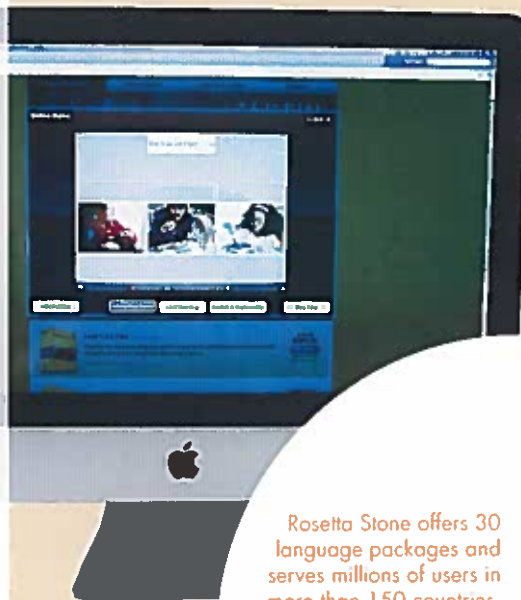
Overall, Strobl says the experience was much more valuable than credits on a transcript.

"I don't know how I got so lucky to be in this specific program ... It showed me I can do anything." 🌊

OP-ED

THE ROSETTA STONE MODEL AND WHY IT DOES NOT WORK

LEARNING A LANGUAGE IS MORE THAN JUST MEMORIZATION BY: MANDY MENKE*



Rosetta Stone offers 30 language packages and serves millions of users in more than 150 countries.

ROSETTA
STONE



What does it mean to know a language? Is it enough to know the words of the language, memorize all the verb conjugations and grammar rules, or pronounce all the sounds correctly? No. Proficiency in a language entails the ability to use the above knowledge (and more) to engage in effective and creative communication in culturally appropriate ways.

The process of learning a second language is not the same as acquiring a first. Research has identified several key elements of instructed second language acquisition, among which are extensive input, opportunities for production and interaction, and appropriate feedback on both the content of produced messages and their form and clarity. According to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), well-designed second-language classrooms do so by providing learners with opportunities to practice real-life communication through interactive, meaningful, cognitively-engaging learning experiences.

With technological advances and increased access to computers and the Internet in recent years, individuals are seeking alternatives to the traditional classroom experience. Multiple self-study software applications, both free and fee-based options, are now available to learners; Rosetta Stone is one such product which is marketed as an “easy, effective, and fun” learning solution. Rosetta Stone bases its instructional design on the Natural Approach, where learners are exposed to oral and written input, associating words and phrases to

images. Learners have the opportunity to play games, practice pronunciation, and participate in a small-group 50-minute interactive “coaching session” at the end of each unit. The graphics and videos, flexibility to learn at your own pace and on your own time, and accessibility options appeal to a variety of individuals, yet there is currently no research that proves this path to be as effective as or more effective than instruction with a qualified language teacher.

A 2009 report from Rosetta Stone projects that 70 hours of study with Rosetta Stone Spanish is equivalent to the first semester in a university program¹, and that more than half of students increase oral proficiency at least one sublevel after 55 hours of study². The pace of progress and effectiveness at higher levels (even second or third semester) and learning for other languages has yet to be documented. Researchers Katharine Nielson and Suzanne Freynik report several problems with self-study, computer-assisted language learning programs such as Rosetta Stone: Significant attrition, lack of cultural relevance, few opportunities to practice using the language in context, and difficulty understanding text and grammar without some explicit instruction, most notably in non-Roman languages such as Chinese and Arabic. Moreover, multiple reviews note Rosetta Stone does not incorporate principles based on second-language acquisition research, perhaps most importantly the need for authentic task-based activities that require students to use language in context. In other words, learners are not prepared for real-life communication after

self-study with Rosetta Stone.

While Rosetta Stone, and other such computer-assisted language learning software programs, have the potential to meet some of the needs of some learners, developing proficiency in a second language requires more extended opportunities for interaction than one 50-minute interactive session per unit affords. A communication-driven, language-rich, cognitively challenging classroom environment offers repeated opportunities to encounter the language in authentic, meaningful ways and for learners to interact with others in the second language.

Rosetta Stone provides language-learning opportunities that would otherwise not exist for some learners, but it cannot replace instruction with a highly qualified language teacher, interaction with highly proficient speakers, or immersion in a target language community. 🌊

*Mandy Menke is an assistant professor of Spanish at GVSU.

¹ This number is projected for programs that have a three or four semester sequence (such as at GVSU) based on the finding that 55 hours are needed to place into second semester Spanish in programs with a six-semester sequence.

² Oral proficiency was measured on the ACTFL Oral Proficiency scale via the computerized version of the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPIc). Participants in this study were not typical college students; the average age was 41 years and 75 percent had at least a college degree.

WORKING WITH THE ARAB WORLD

Q & A

WITH ALUMNA ABIGAIL BOORSMA



Boorsma at Nucraft Furniture, where she works with Middle Eastern clients.

Photographed by Jillian Bowes

Growing up, Abigail Boorsma, a 2011 GVSU graduate, didn't know much about the Middle East before she came to the university, except what she had heard in the news. At GVSU, she took three years of Arabic and went on a summer study abroad program to Jordan. Through her studies, she improved her Arabic and found a way to blend her language experience with her collage credentials.

After graduating in December, she was hired as a sales intern with an international focus for Nucraft Furniture, a Grand Rapids company that works closely with partners in the Arab World. After two months as an intern, Boorsma was then hired as a literature fulfillment representative for the literature department. Boorsma said the company appealed to her because of its forward-thinking mentality and professional-yet-creative environment.

The following is an interview with Boorsma about her work at Nucraft and her experiences at GVSU:

What is the extent of Nucraft's work and connections with the Arab World?

Nucraft has exclusive dealers in the Middle East in eight different cities in the gulf region: Abu Dhabi, Doha, Dubai, Jeddah, Khobar, Kuwait, and Riyadh. These dealers help to sell Nucraft products in the region. Our company has completed several high-profile projects, including participation in the 20th World Petroleum Congress in Doha, Qatar, where we provided 65 High-Tech lecterns with a built-in touchpad control and a front-mounted display monitor.

Explain to us a bit about your job at Nucraft. What is it that you do?

In the internship, I was hired with the understanding that I would be working to help build Nucraft's Middle Eastern ties. I completed research projects, updated contacts, and researched international shipping. The biggest project I completed was a newsletter I wrote that targeted the Middle Eastern partners. It contained new product information and provided information on what Nucraft had been doing, such as the NeoCon Furniture Show in Chicago.

After my internship, Nucraft hired me as a literature fulfillment representative, which supports the sales, marketing, and customer care teams. I am hoping to continue working for this company, and eventually become a part of the international team.

How did your studies in Arabic language and culture help you land this job?

The language skills helped me because we never know where our company is going to break into next, and it's good to be prepared for anything. With my knowledge of Arabic, I feel more comfortable working with the Middle Eastern contacts, since I am familiar with their relations and correspondence.

Why did you choose to study abroad in Jordan?

I traveled to Jordan in the spring semester of 2011 and took classes at the University of Jordan in Amman, the capital of Jordan. I wanted to learn the Arabic language better and experience Arab

culture. I also wanted a study abroad experience that was unique and would help me to grow by studying in a country different from the United States.

What have you learned about the Middle East through your studies and travel abroad, and how does this knowledge help you in your current job?

What I took from Jordan that most impacts me now is confidence and maturity. I went to a place where I barely knew the language and I had to be on my toes every day. Because of this, now I can be more assertive and ask for help. This experience impacts me now because I have an easier time with clients.


Studying abroad also changed my perception of the world by forcing me to face my ethnocentricity. I didn't even know I was ethnocentric until I traveled to Jordan and then it became obvious. It helped me to realize that although cultural differences are obvious, we also have so much in common. I learned that the Arab people have the the same daily worries about employment, family, health, and safety as Americans. This is why studying abroad is so important, and I would urge Grand Valley students to study abroad in an unconventional place, like Jordan, because so much growth and learning can take place when you go outside the box.

Being aware of ethnocentricity helps in business because it reminds us that we are not the center of everyone's world, and other people's problems and ideas matter, too.

What advice do you have for someone following in your footsteps?

Be willing to seek out advice. Go to professors and the career center and find mentors because those relationships will make the difference when you need to land a job.

Nucraft gave me actual responsibilities and put me into real business situations, and it helped me to succeed. So once you get an internship or job, always remember you're there to prove yourself. No matter the task you have to complete, if you always do more than was expected, people will notice.

Lastly, the professional environment requires a whole different level of communication, so be confident. 

PURSUING A DREAM THROUGH CULTURAL IMMERSION

MATT BRAINOVICH RECEIVES BOREN SCHOLARSHIP FOR \$20,000 TO STUDY ABROAD IN RUSSIA

Matt Brainovich, a senior majoring in international relations and Russian studies, has been awarded the Boren Scholarship, a prestigious award specifically for students interested in learning languages deemed critical to national security.

The award, funded by the National Security Education Program, an organization which promotes the education of U.S. citizens through scholarships and fellowships, grants Brainovich \$20,000 to study abroad for the 2012-2013 school year. All applicants for the Boren Scholarship must select the location where they would like to continue their language education. Brainovich chose Novosibirsk, located in South Siberia, Russia, for a year of intensive language programs at Novosibirsk State University.

The selection for the Boren Scholarship is intense and highly competitive. This year marks the record for highest number of applications. Of the 1,014 who applied for the award, Brainovich is one of 161 recipients from across the nation. In exchange for funding, recipients of the award must find a job within national security factions of the government following their return to America.

As Brainovich has always wanted to work for the government, he sees the Boren Scholarship as a unique opportunity to expand his cultural knowledge while permitting him the access to government positions at the same time. Now with this award, he has a way of landing one of his dream positions.

"What I originally wanted to do was go into the state department, even before I had heard of the Boren scholarship. Now it's a perfect fit," Brainovich said. "It's a path to getting a permanent career in one of those agencies."

To accept his award, Brainovich traveled to Washington, D.C., over the summer where he met with the U.S. senators and their staff. During the conference, he met the other recipients and attended seminars on national security.

"We had an information session in the morning; then we split off into groups for Q&A sessions about the scholarship requirements and service requirement. And of course, we got to meet with our congressional representatives, which was very cool," he said.

GVSU had another Boren Scholarship winner, Meagan Roche, along with an alternate, Shawn Wooster, who will receive Boren Scholarship funding should another student in the program decline.

Brainovich plans to spend a year in Russia so that he can become fluent in the language. He chose Novosibirsk because it will give him ample opportunities to speak the language.

"Novosibirsk is not really as connected to Europe and the West, so there are less English speakers ... I'm expecting almost no one in that area to speak English, except those within the university," he said. "That will probably really help me. It'll be challenging at first, but it'll force me to study the language faster and improve my conversational abilities."

With a population of 1.5 million people, Novosibirsk is the third-largest city in Russia, and the capital of Siberia. Novosibirsk is also the largest metropolis of Siberia, and features several attractions such as The Local Studies Museum and an endless selection of diverse restaurants. While Novosibirsk is a popular tourist location for Russia, the majority of the population only speaks Russian.

Fortunately, Brainovich has been studying Russian since his first year at GVSU.

"For people with [international relations]

majors, it's great to have an area of language study," he said.

The Bachelor of Arts cognate for international relations majors requires fourth-semester proficiency in a foreign language. However, this wasn't Brainovich's primary reasoning for continuing his studies in languages. An emphasis in language studies sets international relations majors apart from others, and increases their marketability in scholarships and careers. In Brainovich's case, his Russian studies helped him earn the Boren Scholarship.

Soon after Brainovich began learning Russian, he became intrigued with the language, and in the summer of 2010, he participated in a seven-week study abroad program in Petersburg, Russia. He enjoyed the experience so much he knew he wanted to return and visit other parts of Russia.

Through his experience in study abroad and the language curriculum at GVSU, Brainovich feels prepared to take on the journey to Novosibirsk. While there, he plans to travel around Siberia, practicing the Russian language and learning about the culture.

"I'm excited to meet new people, not solely within the program, but also Russian students at the university," he said.



Brainovich in Petersburg, Russia, during his seven-week



A Passion for Languages

To encourage the importance of studying a language, each year MLL selects a few incoming freshmen who express a unique interest in language, and several of the applicants are awarded the Seeger Scholarship for \$1,000, which they can put toward their education.

The recipients of this award showcase academic excellence, as they must have at least a 3.5 GPA and an ACT score of 26 or higher, as well as a desire to study languages. While it is not required for these students to major in a language, they must show how they can apply the study of a language into their chosen major.

This year, 60 incoming freshmen applied, and of those students, nine were awarded the Seeger Scholarship. The three recipients shown below exemplify the passion for languages that will be a driving force in their educations.

Q & A

with Seeger Scholarship Recipients



Name
Major
Minor
Language Planned to Study

Amber McClain
Undecided
Spanish
Spanish

Kyle Meppelink
International Relations
Middle Eastern Studies
Arabic

Eric Donoghue
Criminal Justice
German
German

What makes you passionate about languages?

Studying this language will allow me to make connections, equip me with tools necessary to make an impact, and most of all, allow me to follow my heart.

I find languages to be interesting [and] I enjoy learning about how different cultures communicate. If I could retain a vast amount of information, I would take every single language class in the world.

I want to study German because a few of my family members live in Germany ... and I have been studying German for five years. I wanted to understand my heritage and be able to communicate with my relatives.

How do you plan to use languages in your future?

My ultimate dream is to live in South America, teaching the members of society. Knowing their language will equip me with better means to relate with the people and thus have as big of an affect as possible.

I really want to go into a career that will utilize a foreign language each and every day. I want to be able to speak in Arabic for my career and thus become fluent through this. In other words, I want my career to help me achieve my goal of becoming a fluent Arabic speaker.

I plan to use German to support my planned career in some aspect of government protection. I hope to be able to use my knowledge of German to assist in investigations and help set me apart from other candidates applying for the job.

How has learning a language impacted your life?

By learning Spanish, I am able to relate and connect with people outside of my ordinary realm. I am much more susceptible to new ideas and more apt to welcoming and investing in unfamiliar cultures in my own community.

I've had experiences where speaking a foreign language has helped me to help others, such as speaking Spanish at a food drive, or Japanese and French at my waiting job. Other than that, it has shaped how I view the world, how learning a foreign language is beneficial to relating with others.

Learning German has helped me to be able to better understand the affairs of other countries, such as Germany. I have learned that people in different countries have varying views on many topics and live life differently. I learned that the "American way" is not the only way. It has broadened my perception of other cultures.

BLOGGING ABOUT LITERATURE ADVANCING STUDENT LEARNING THROUGH TUMBLR

Photographed by Jillian Bowes

As part of the active learning emphasis of MLL courses, Spanish Professor Natalia Gómez dove into the engaging world of technology this past year in an effort to connect students with foreign literature in new and exciting ways.

Gómez centered her Survey of Spanish Literature course curriculums on blogging through Tumblr, a popular social networking site most commonly used for personal blogs. With the help of staff from the Language Resource Center (LRC), Gómez had students blog in groups of two or three throughout the semester, in which they analyzed literature, interviewed students and professors, and produced short videos and audio podcasts. They then uploaded their work to Tumblr to share their experiences with the rest of their classmates and dialogue about what they had learned.

Gómez's work is part of a growing trend occurring within MLL; many professors are conducting projects similar to hers. Currently, they use the LRC with their students most frequently to create

projects such as podcast radio shows, documentaries, videos, and role play skits. While using the technology provided, students expand their language skills, and professors can build upon each other's ideas and tailor them to their specific classes.

David Shultz, director of the LRC, and Kevin Timmer, assistant director, work alongside professors to incorporate multimedia production technologies into the course curriculum. To do so, they work to utilize as many of the four language competencies (reading, speaking, listening, and writing) as possible, and gear the projects to integrate these skills effectively.

For Gómez's class, the LRC staff taught students how to use the available technology, and provided ongoing technical support. In the LRC, students can augment their skills in many ways: they can make simple recordings of themselves using a program called DiLL, create more elaborate audio recordings using GarageBand, and produce movies using iMovie. They can also access thousands of foreign movies through

eVideon. The blogging in Gómez's class proved to be an enjoyable and educational experience for her students. Students ended up putting in more work than was assigned, said Gómez. And since Tumblr is accessible from home, the learning extended beyond the classroom.

With the help of three of her students – Emily Fairless, Penny Johnson, and Christine Sauer – Gómez compiled their experiences into a case study called "A Literary/Creative Blog as a Learning Tool for a Successful Intermediate Latin American Literature Spanish Class." She presented these findings at the 5th Annual International Conference on Literature, Languages and Linguistics located in Athens, Greece, at the Athens Institute for Education and Research on July 9-12, 2012. The case study detailed the benefits of incorporating technology into the classroom. They found using technology students are familiar with encouraged them to become involved with literature in a way that revitalized their interest.


In the upcoming years, Gómez plans to continue implementing this technology in her literature courses.





Photographed by Jillian Bowes
Timmer, Shultz, and Gómez (from left to right) worked together to teach students how to use Tumblr and the LRC technology for class.

FACULTY AND STUDENT PROJECTS


{ 2011-2012 } FACULTY PUBLICATIONS |


 **Majd Al-Mallah,**
Associate Professor of Arabic
Published book *In the Shadows of the Master: Al-Mutanabbi's Legacy and the Quest for the Center in Fatimid and Andalusian Poetry* in 2012

 **Dan Golembeski,**
Associate Professor of French
Published article "An Introduction to Mayotte: France's New Overseas Department in the Indian Ocean," in *French Review* in February 2012


 **Sebastian Maisel,**
Associate Professor of Arabic
Published book chapters:
"The Construction of Virtual Identities: Online Tribalism in Saudi Arabia and Beyond" in *Anthropology of the Middle East and North Africa: Into the New Millennium* in 2012

"Who is Right? Legal Representation within the Tribal Society of Saudi Arabia" in *Nomadismus in der 'Alten Welt'* in 2012
"Kingdom of Saudi Arabia" in *The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa* in 2012

 **Natalia Gómez,**
Associate Professor of Spanish
Published book of poetry *Sinfonía de silencios* in 2011

 **Curtis Smith,**
Professor of Chinese
Edited book chapter "Su Shi" from the book *Classical and Medieval Literary Criticism* in 2012

Edited book *Classical Chinese Writers of the Pre-Tang Period (Dictionary of Literary Bibliography)* in 2011

 **Médar Serrata,**
Assistant Professor of Spanish
Published journal article "Poética de la dictadura: El poder de las palabras en la Era de Trujillo" in *Pais Cultural* in 2011

Published poems in 2011 in:
Antología: La poesía del siglo XX en República Dominicana
Antología di poesía dominicana contemporánea
Palabra cargada de futuro: (antología poética)

A Forgotten Legend

The Revival of the Golden Age Play “Antona García”

Photographed by Jan Lewis
Yancey designed and created the masks his Spanish students used in their entremeses performances.

When the theater department approached Spanish Professor Jason Yancey about translating a play for them, he was a bit reluctant. He had never translated a play before, and wasn't sure which one to select. He wanted a timeless piece that hadn't been overdone, but finding this proved to be near impossible; that is, until he landed on the Golden Age Spanish play called “Antona García.” Even though most of the Golden Age scholars had never even heard of it, Yancey saw the potential in this play.

“No one had translated it, only one published edition of it exists from the '50s, and it had never been performed that anybody knew of in Spanish or English. So doing a translation of this play mattered,” Yancey said.

Together with James Bell, assistant professor of theater, and Theater Professor Karen Libman, Yancey devised a plan to turn the forgotten legend, written by Tirso de Molina in 1635, into a

“Participating in the Entremeses was an eye-opening experience. For starters, I learned ... about the Siglo de Oro, especially about traditional Spanish language and culture. I gained experience in the world of theatre; having never participated in a theatrical production, I was delighted to partake in something novel and so fun. I also had the incredible honor of working alongside classmates and professors that turned into friends along the way.”
-Megan Drahos, Entremeses



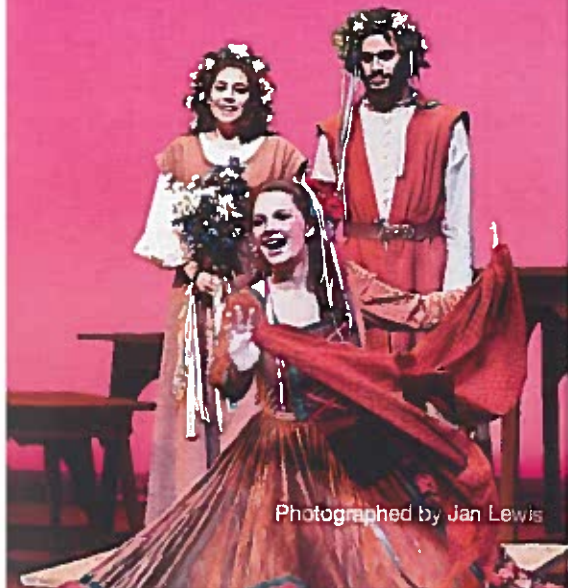
household name. Molina is best known for his creation of the character Don Juan; however, this play was an adaptation of the story of Antona García, a real woman who died in battle during the Spanish Revolution in 1474 after leading a revolt against the Portuguese leadership in her village.

This charged drama was the perfect choice for Yancey, and in May 2011, he translated the work from Spanish to English, providing a literal interpretation. But he didn't stop there; he collaborated with Bell, who had done previous adaptations of plays, to make the work “playable,” as Yancey put it. That meant changing the ending, combining characters, and adapting the lines.

In the original version, Molina never finished his masterpiece—he ended the play with an anti-climatic foreshadow to a sequel. The last line of it reads, “Yet

this is only half of the story. Our poet has reserved the most perilous adventures for the second half. I invite you to return for the next volume of Antona de Toro.” But a second half never came, so Yancey and Bell had to find a new one.

They turned to Spanish Playwright Jose de Cañizares, who wrote another version of the Antona García tale in 1755, and this time it had a satisfying ending that resolved the major conflicts. In the GVSU adaptation of the play, they combined Cañizares' ending with the original version, adapting the play as they saw fit. Eleven drafts later, they had a play worth performing.



Photographed by Jan Lewis



Directed by Libman, “Antona Garcia” took the stage for the first time at the international Siglo de Oro Drama Festival at Chamizal National Memorial in El Paso, Texas, on March 7-8, 2012. The festival is the oldest continuous festival for Golden Age drama, and this year the GVSU performance was one of two groups to perform. The other theater group, a professional ensemble called Cambalache Teatro, hailed from Murcia, Spain, and had performed many times at Chamizal’s Siglo de Oro Festival in the past.

Usually the festival is reserved for professional performing groups from around the world, and it typically avoids translated work. However, GVSU’s original idea piqued its interest and earned the group a spot at the festival. The Chamizal National Memorial contributed a grant of \$20,000 to help bring the production’s cast of 30 to the festival and the CLAS Dean’s Office, the School of Communications, the Center for Scholarly and Creative Excellence, and the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures all contributed funding to help this production achieve success.

Following their return from El Paso, the

group began rehearsing for their GVSU performances on March 30 – April 7, 2012. They added additional cast members and included new battle scenes to impress the crowd.

“Where it really mattered to give a good show was here [at GVSU],” Yancey said.

After practicing for an entire semester, the cast wanted to showcase the work they had done, while also put on a good show to everyone who had supported them throughout the year.

The play itself was cast with members of the theater department, but Yancey taught a Spanish class called Entremeses, which performed comical shorts in Spanish between each of the three acts. This class was modeled after actual entremeses, which were common in most Spanish plays. These short performances were designed to make the audience laugh between acts. They were so popular that some would even come to see the play solely for the entremeses.

Within his Spanish class, Yancey worked with 11 Spanish students, most of whom had no previous acting experience.

To create unison between the theater department and Yancey’s Spanish students, the two groups ultimately worked together on their performances.

“My Spanish students are literature students, but not only did they have practice reading a text like a piece of theater and learning how theater works, but they went over to the theater side and had this hardcore lesson on what it is really like [and] they did a great job,” Yancey said.

Even after the performances are over, there is still a future for “Antona Garcia,” according to Yancey.

“What James and I are going to do is work on the play a bit more and get it ready for publication ... Then we’d like to shop it around to different theater festivals,” he said.

After a whirlwind of a year, the revival of the “Antona Garcia” play continues, and the forgotten legend is now a lively piece of the GVSU culture.



The cast of 30 and Yancey (bottom right) celebrate the success of the first-ever performance of “Antona Garcia.”

A YEAR IN REVIEW | A SYNOPSIS OF KEY EVENTS FROM FALL 2011 AND WINTER 2012

Animoto, Oct. 17-21, 2011
 During the 11th annual "Week of the Italian Language in the World," Italian Professor Gisella Licari had her students create digital poems in Italian on the topics of history, photography, and geography. They then presented these projects to the Italian Consul, Marco Nobili, who traveled from Detroit for the occasion. The project was in celebration of the 150th anniversary of Italian unification.

Trip to the Polish Consulate in Chicago, Dec. 2, 2011
 The Polish faculty and students at GVSU visited the Polish Consulate in Chicago to attend the Christmas reception organized by General Consul Zygmunt Matynia. During the event, they sang Polish carols, tasted traditional Polish dishes, and met the General Consul, his wife, the Vice Consul, and the U.S. Vice Ambassador.

Habitar las Palabras, April 9-14, 2012, and May 1, 2012
 The Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, in conjunction with Latin American Studies, organized "Habitar las Palabras," which included poetry, performances, films, lectures, workshops, and readings. The event showcased the importance of the Spanish word.

The Table Talk, Dec. 9, 2011
 To bring students from all the Modern Languages programs, honors student Anna Marotti presented an event called "The Table Talk," with the help of MLL. Students came to practice their language skills with native speakers in each of the languages offered at GVSU. This presentation introduced a new approach to foreign language learning.

Fête la Francophonie, April 14, 2012
 The French Club, a student-run organization, put on "Fête la Francophonie," a Francophone, also known as French-speaking, festival comprised of food, games, dancing, and French speakers, which was open to all GVSU students.

Poetry Workshops led by Zulema Moret, May 1, 2012, and May 8, 2012
 Over the past year, Spanish Professor Zulema Moret held two poetry workshops in the Grand Rapids community, teaching students and adults how to write poems in Spanish. The workshops were designed to spark people's interest in Latin American poetry.

Taste of the Arab World, March 22, 2012
 The Arab Culture Club organized its annual "Taste of the Arab World," which included authentic food, artifact exhibits, Arabic poetry readings by students in the Arabic program, and also music and dancing. More than 300 students attended and participated in the festivities.

Bi-weekly Film Series, Winter 2012
 The Japanese program held a bi-weekly film series, which featured Japanese films such as "The Taste of Tea" and "Symbols" open to all students. The series was led by Japanese Professor Jeremy Robinson, and the films were selected based on their portrayals of Japanese cinema.

Mélo die, Nov. 10, 2011, and April 18, 2011
 The French program put on a musical series called "Mélo die" this year, which consisted of two evenings of song, music, and poetry. Performers came from the French and Music Departments, as well as outside of the university. Don Sikkema, a distinguished musician, sang "Mélo dies" for the first performance, and then played the piano for the spring performance.

German Events, Fall 2011-Winter 2012
 During the school year, the German program and German club hosted several events including an awareness table at Campus Life Night, a weekly conversation table in the international house, a "Mini-World Cup" soccer tournament in the turf building, along with a Christmas party, a film evening, and a cuisine evening. They also took a group of students on a day trip to the authentic German Christmas Market in Chicago, Ill.



Klub Polski (top) in Chicago, Ill., where they met the Polish General Consul. Students gather around tables (bottom left and right) to practice their French at the event "Fête la Francophonie."



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