

# Polyglot

Department of  
Modern Languages  
and Classics

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA  
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

## NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

The 2011-12 academic year was a banner one for the Department of Modern Languages and Classics. Our faculty members published books, a professor was knighted by the French government, another professor was selected best Alabama teacher, and the list goes on.

Our students won top UA Premier Awards, the A&S Outstanding Teaching by a Graduate Student award, and numerous national awards including ones from Fulbright, the National Security Education Program (Boren Awards), and the State Department.

Our graduate students hosted a very successful second annual conference. The department added four new smart classrooms, launched a new website ([mlc.ua.edu](http://mlc.ua.edu)), and is renovating a large room in the former Biology building for GTA offices.

Last year we opened the Spanish House, a new living-learning community that joins the already-existing French and German Houses.

The department hosted French, German, and Spanish Language Days, which together brought approximately 1500 high school students and their teachers to campus for a day of competitions and activities in the target language.

We continued our service-learning activities, locally through Spanish Outreach and internationally with a trip to Ecuador. Departmental faculty administer the semester-long Alabama-in-Cuba program and, in the summers of 2011 and 2012, also led students to China, France, Italy, Japan, Germany, and Spain.

MLC hosted Spanish writer and filmmaker **Vincente Molina Foix**, one of Spain's leading artists. Other distinguished visitors included Argentine writer and literary critic **Elsa Drucaroff**; German Consul General for the Southeastern United States, **Lutz Görgens**; German writer **Cornelia Franz**; former Director of the German Academic Exchange Service for North America, **Manfred Stassen**; **Thierry Favier**, Professor of Music at the University of Poitiers, France; and A&S Distinguished Professor for the Humanities at the University of Oregon, **Evlyn Gould**.

I invite you to read more about these and other activities in the following pages of *Polyglot*. ♦



*Thomas C. Fox, Chair*

## PICONE KNIGHTED

**Dr. Michael Picone**, Professor of French, has been selected by the French National Ministry of Education to be a Chevalier des Palmes Académiques, one of the most prestigious honors bestowed upon individuals who have made a significant contribution to studying and spreading French culture.

The award originated during the time of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1808, and was originally given to highly regarded professors at the University of Paris. It was later reclassified as a civilian decoration, much like a knighthood, and since 1955 has been awarded to people outside of France who

have risen to a level of prominence in their field related to French culture.

The award is made by the prime minister of France, and individuals are nominated



*Michael D. Picone*

usually through French consulates in their area. Picone has worked closely on several projects with the French consulate in the Southeastern region of the United States.

"It is gratifying to have my accomplishments in my field recognized in this way, and it is humbling as well," Picone said.

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**Erin O'Rourke**, Assistant Professor of Spanish, and **Anastasia Tsakiropoulou-Summers**, Associate Professor of Classics, each co-edited books and **Ignacio Rodeño**, Assistant Professor of Spanish, edited a special journal issue.

**Michael Picone** was selected by the French government to become a Knight in the Order of the Academic Palms, the oldest French honorary society.

**Metka Zupančič**, Professor of French, received the AAFLT Outstanding Post-Secondary Teacher Award for 2012 at the Alabama Association for Foreign Language Teachers in January 2012.

**Zupančič** also received a \$24,000 grant from the Slovenian Research Agency to support collaborative research with other Slovenian scholars.

**William Worden**, Associate Professor of Spanish, received the Best of Alabama Award from the Alabama Association of Foreign Language Teachers (AAFLT) in April 2011. His talk titled "Staying in the Target Language While Teaching High School Language Classes" was selected the "Best of Alabama" for the conference (out of the over fifty talks given at the AAFLT Conference). As a result of this honor, he was invited to give the same talk in March 2012 in Atlanta at the SCOLT Conference.

In February 2012, **Worden** was also nominated for the "Last Lecture" for the second year in a row.

**Alicia Cipria**, Associate Professor of Spanish, was a member of the Fulbright National Selection Committee for Argentina.

**Douglas Lightfoot**, Associate Professor of German, was invited by the University of Mannheim, Germany, to give a presentation there. He also began serving as the President of the Alabama chapter of the American Association of Teachers of German.

**Ignacio Rodeño**, Assistant Professor of Spanish, began serving as President of the Alabama chapter of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish.

**Karina Vázquez**, Assistant Professor of Spanish, was elected to the position of Second Vice-President of the Alabama Chapter of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish.

**Koji Arizumi**, Director of the Critical Languages Program, was elected to the board of directors of the National Association of Self-Instructional Language Programs. ♦



*Metka Zupančič*

## OUTSTANDING POST-SECONDARY TEACHER

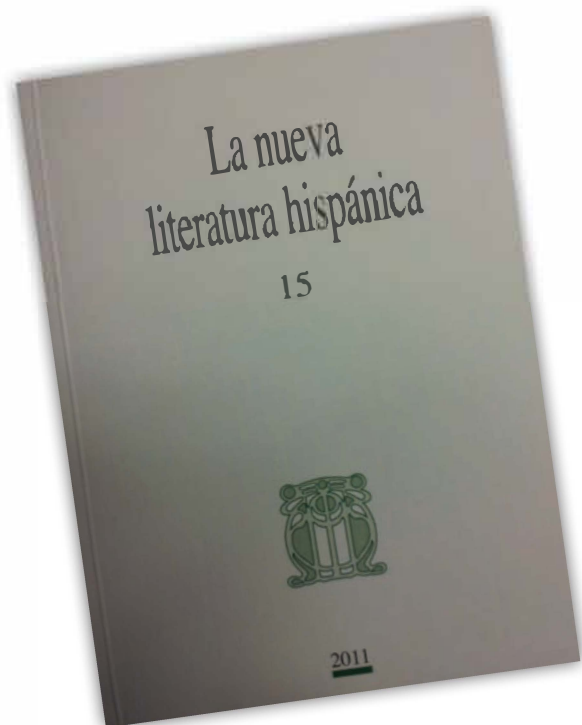
Dr. **Metka Zupančič**, Professor of French, was named the Alabama Association of Foreign Language Teachers' Annual Outstanding Post-Secondary Teacher for 2011-2012. She received the award on February 4, during the 2012 AAFLT Convention held at Auburn University-Montgomery. This is the second year our department has been honored in this fashion, as last year Dr. **Douglas Lightfoot**, Professor of German, received the award. ♦

## *KNIGHT, continued*

Picone is one of two people in the MLC French program to receive this prestigious honor, which is highly unusual. Dr. **Metka Zupančič**, Professor of French, was also honored with the title of Chevalier des Palmes Académiques.

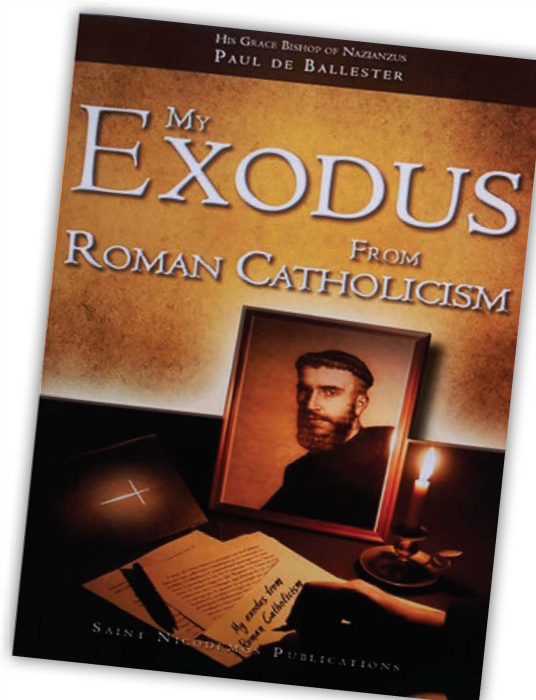
Picone has taught at The University of Alabama since 1988. He received his doctorate from the University of Paris-Sorbonne and specializes in the study of Francophone Louisiana and multilingualism in the history of the Southeast. A former department Chair, he is also the MLC Graduate Director, graduate advisor for the French linguistics program, and he frequently leads the Alabama in France study abroad program. ♦

Faculty members published 26 refereed book chapters or scholarly articles in the past academic year. Additionally, they co-edited two books and a special journal issue, described below. **Ana Corbalán, Douglas Lightfoot, Elaine Martin, Erin O'Rourke, Jean Luc Robin, Ignacio Rodeño, and Metka Zupančič** all published two or more scholarly articles or book chapters. In all, MLC faculty members had 39 publications of all kinds.

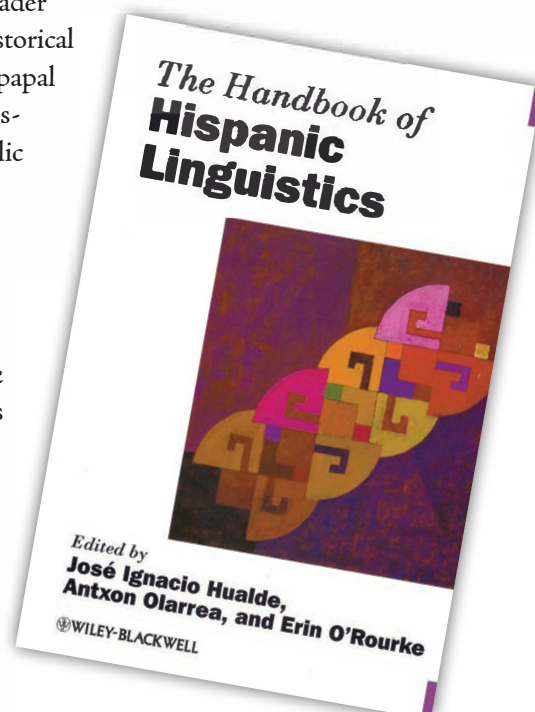


**Dr. Ignacio Rodeño** edited and contributed an article to "Pasaporte latino: cultura e identidad en la literatura hispánica," a special issue of the journal *La nueva literatura hispánica* published in 2011 by Universitas Castellae in Valladolid, Spain. The collection consists of nine essays. ♦

**Dr. Erin O'Rourke** co-edited with José Ignacio Hualde (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign) and Antxon Olarrea (University of Arizona) *The Handbook of Hispanic Linguistics* (Wiley-Blackwell 2012). The volume contains 40 chapters on the state-of-the-art research in Hispanic Linguistics from authors based in the United States, Europe, and Latin America. The chapters, which include one by Dr. O'Rourke, cover both theoretical and applied issues, as well as new areas of growth within the field, including heritage Spanish, bilingualism, language variation and contact, second language acquisition, and language processing. *The Handbook* is intended to serve as a resource for both new and established scholars alike wishing to explore research in Spanish linguistics. ♦



**Dr. Anastasia Tsakiropoulou-Summers** co-edited the English translation of the book by Paul de Ballester, *My Exodus from Roman Catholicism* (Bethlehem, PA: Saint Nicodemus Publications, 2010), which was written initially in Spanish and then translated into Modern Greek. Her contribution was to correct the English translation from Modern Greek and translate the Latin included in the manuscript. The book is in electronic form at <http://www.oodegr.com/english/biblia/Ballester/perieh.htm>. The book is a narrative of the personal experiences of Bishop Paul de Ballester, a former Roman Catholic monk from Spain. His journey is as fascinating as it is informative, taking the reader through a labyrinth of historical documents, sources, and papal decrees that caused his disenchantment with Catholic doctrine. ♦





**Jesse Munoz** (Classics) scored a 95% on the national College Greek Exam and was one of only 3 students nationwide to win a medal. 486 students participated with an average score of 54%.

**Seema Kumar** (Spanish) received the Morris Lehman UA Premier Award and a Fulbright Grant for Spain.

**Cassandra Mahaffey** (French) was a Distinguished Undergraduate Scholar (straight A's).

**Steven A. Allon** and **Lisa M. Elizondo** (both Spanish) won the 2012 Alumni Student Award for Outstanding Senior.

**Alexandra Tucci** (French minor) won the Algernon Sydney Sullivan UA Premier Award.

**Florina Matu** (French) received the A&S Outstanding Teaching Award by a Doctoral Student. **Mathew Morris** (Spanish) won the award during the last academic year. **Mathew Morris** also received a Graduate Council Fellowship.

**Ian McQuistion** and **David Vogt** (both German) received scholarships from the Federation of German-American Clubs and spent this academic year studying in Germany.

**Andrew Sbrissa** (Italian minor) has been awarded a travel/study scholarship to Italy in the "Voyage of Discovery" Program sponsored by the National Italian-American Foundation.

**Elyse McLaughlin** (Italian minor) has been awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to teach English in Italy next year.

**Christopher Hydrick** (Russian minor) was awarded the American Council on Teaching Russian's Post-Secondary Russian Scholar Laureate Award.

**Lauren Marsh** (Chinese minor) has been selected as a Boren Scholar and will spend the next academic year in China. **Sam Guggenheim** (German minor) has also been selected and will study in Turkey.

**Harrison Zach Pector** (Arabic student) won a State Department Critical Language Scholarship and will be in Oman this summer. **Caleb Christian** (Hindi student) also won a State Department Critical Language Scholarship and will be participating in a Hindi class in India this summer.

**Nicholas M. McQueen** (Spanish minor) received the Dean's Award of Merit. ♦



Seema Kumar

## ALUMNA WINS FULBRIGHT

**Seema Kumar** of Shreveport, La., a recent graduate of MLC, has received a Fulbright Scholarship to study abroad during the 2012-2013 school year. While at UA, Kumar majored in Spanish and biology. She will study in Santander, Spain, where she will teach various subjects to local students ages 13 to 15 and serve as a mentor for the Global Classrooms program.

During her time in Spain, Kumar will also be conducting several projects that she presented to the Fulbright Commission during her application process. These projects are aimed at improving cross-cultural understanding and exchange.

Kumar is the recipient of two UA Premier Awards: the 2012 Morris Lehman Mayer Award and the 2011 William P. Bloom Scholarship Award. She served as a Creative Campus intern and a College of Arts and Sciences Student Ambassador, and was a member of The Other Club, The XXXI, and Mortar Board Society.

After completing this Fulbright, she will begin medical school in fall 2013. ♦



AMLC Student Organizers: from left, Fabian Fink, Laura Rojas-Arce, Seth Roberts, Larissa Clachar, and Forrest Blackbourn.

## ALABAMA MODERN LANGUAGE CONFERENCE

The graduate students of the department of Modern Languages and Classics hosted their second annual conference. The event was organized by Forrest Blackbourn, Larissa Clachar, Fabian Fink, Seth Roberts and Laura Rojas-Arce, all graduate students in the Spanish, French and German programs. The second annual AMLC included

participants from over 15 universities in the United States, Germany and Colombia. The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Osvaldo Cleger from The Georgia Institute of Technology. This type of initiative speaks highly of our graduate students and their commitment to our program. Our third annual conference will be hosted in February of 2013. ♦

## SPANISH HOUSE OPENS

The Spanish House is a Living-Learning Community that opened in August 2011. It was located in the Bryce Lawn apartments during its first year, and for 2012-13 it's joining forces with French House in a Small Group House near Frat Row. The goal of the Spanish House is to increase oral proficiency in a fun and relaxed environment. Students live together and are guided by a live-in native (or near native) speaker, and they speak Spanish as much and as often as possible. They also dedicate two hours each week to full immersion in a group context to build community and help students to develop their Spanish language skills. Faculty adviser in 2011-12 was Dr. Sarah Moody. ♦



## ARABIC

Arabic classes experimented with different activities to teach the four skills in learning. For listening, students made regular use of the language lab and occasionally communicated with other universities in the Middle East through the internet in order to explore chances of receiving scholarships to study Arabic abroad, for example at the ALIIM Institute in Morocco. For speaking, Arabic speakers from the English Language Institute partnered with US students to practice and improve their English while American students improved their Arabic. This took place in the newly constituted weekly Arabic Café. For writing, students participated in writing workshops consisting of groups of four. For reading, students used the internet to obtain news from Arabic language media. At the end of the semester the teacher presented certificates to both American and Arabic students to acknowledge their effort. Present and future students of Arabic attended this end of semester party, which included delicious Arabic food.

## CHINESE

**Lauren Marsh**, a minor in Chinese, recently received a prestigious Boren Scholarship to study in China. The scholarships provide undergraduate and graduate students with resources and encouragement to acquire language skills and experience in countries critical to US security (<http://uanews.ua.edu/2012/06/ua-honors-students-receive-boren-scholarships-for-international-study/>). The Chinese program continues to have a successful summer program at Xiamen University, China.

## CLASSICS

**Alumni News.** The Classics program congratulates several of its recent graduates on landing jobs and promotions. Former GTA **Ashley Flubacher** (BA, Latin; MBA) has been working for marketing firm dunnhumby in both Minneapolis and Cincinnati, but now reports that she is being transferred by the company to Izmir, Turkey for a two-year work assignment. **Sara Chesler** (BA, Latin) has taken the Latin job at Vestavia High School, while former GTA **Christin Byars** (BA, Latin; MEd with a specialization in Latin) has taken the Latin position at Mountain Brook Jr. High. **Jennifer Joy Davis** (BA, Latin; MA, History) is teaching Latin at Altamont School in Birmingham. Former GTA **Samantha Dansby** (BA,

Classics; MLS) has taken a librarianship at Chattahoochee Valley Community College in Georgia. **Sara Watkins** (BA, Greek) has finished her Ph.D. at Florida State University. The Classics program would love to keep up with all of its former majors. They are invited to join the Facebook group, "UA Classics Alumni."

**Excursion to the Vulcan Museum.** The Academy, Classics Club, and the UA chapter of Eta Sigma Phi, the national honorary society for Classics students, traveled to Birmingham in April to view the exhibit "Beyond Barbecue and Baklava: The Impact of Greek Immigrants on Birmingham's Culture and Cuisine." Since most of the students are well versed on the continuity of Greek culture from antiquity through modern times, they had the chance at this exhibit to identify multiple visual points of connection with the life of Greek immigrants in Birmingham in the late 1800s. Greek immigration to the States, one student noted, was very similar to the mode of Greek colonization. Starting with a predominately male group, they quickly established vibrant communities, centered around the Greek Orthodox Church and expanded to several "firsts" —for example, the first person to bring bananas to Birmingham was Mr. Alex Kontos, the ancestor of a large Birmingham family.

## CRITICAL LANGUAGES CENTER

The CLC promotion project has been going well with **Rachel Caver** and the CLC administration team. Many more UA students now realize they have an opportunity to learn a variety of less commonly taught languages at CLC. Some languages such as Korean, Brazilian Portuguese, Hebrew, and Swahili have large enrollments thanks to the CLC advising team. Not only that, the team also advises on the improvement of teaching techniques and classroom management.

**Laurie Arizumi** and the CLC online tutors are further developing the programs for Arabic, Chinese, and Japanese. The enrollment in online Japanese and now online Chinese has grown with the inclusion of Early College students. Online students come from all over the world. Students in the program have come from places such as Germany, Ecuador, Norway, Korea, and Japan.

Finally, CLC director **Koji Arizumi** was elected as a member of Board of Directors (2012-2013) for the National Association of Self-Instructional Language Programs (NASILP), which oversees all CLC-type programs in the US.



## FRENCH

During the 2011-12 academic year, students in the French Program were actively involved not only in their studies of French but also in many events and venues that helped create a larger sense of community. Seven students lived in the French House on Bryce Lawn. They were often involved in the French Club events, such as the Mardi Gras "crêpes" party, and also in the discussions at the weekly French Table. Graduate students helped with both, and especially with the French film series that is to continue in the future.

During this academic year, three doctoral students successfully defended their dissertations in French Literature: **W. Brad Holley**, **Robin S. Miceli**, both in fall 2011, and **Florina Matu** in February 2012. Three MA students in French Linguistics successfully completed their final exams: **Thomas Carlton**, **Kari DeBois** and **Jennifer West Fuqua**. During the honors week, four students (FLLT FR majors), **Cassandra Mahaffey**, **Megan Monroe**, **Andrew Rutkowski** and **Sara Seaton**, were inducted in Pi Delta Phi during the April 6, 2012 ceremony. The French program also honored a number of outstanding students: **Kelcey G. Armstrong** (UG), **Allison Hiss** (MA), **Sandrine Hope** (Ph.D.), Prix d'excellence en français; **Cassandra A. Mahaffey**, James McCann award in French; **Kalilah C. Anders**, Outstanding Major in French;

**Aubrey E. Edkins**, Outstanding Freshman in French; **Florina Matu**, Outstanding Teaching by a Graduate Student in French; **Margaret L. Schneider**, Outstanding Minor in French.

It should be noted that **Florina Matu's** recognition within the French program was coupled by other excellent honors: she was nominated for the Graduate School's Outstanding Teaching by a Doctoral Student Award competition. With this nomination, Florina became the recipient of the Outstanding Teaching Award by a Doctoral Student for the College of Arts and Sciences.

**Dr. Metka Zupančič**, Professor of French/Modern Languages, was selected by the Board of Directors of the Alabama Association of Foreign Language Teachers as the AAFLT Annual Outstanding Teacher Post-Secondary for 2012.

**Dr. Michael Picone** was knighted by the French government.

The French program and the department sponsored **Dr. Evelyn Gould's** visit on November 1, 2011. The guest lecture by Gould (The University of Oregon), titled "La Vie Bohème, or Art Regenerating Life on the Battlefields of Culture," was organized by **Dr. Carmen Mayer-Robin** and was held at Gorgas Library. The French program also hosted a guest lecture by Professor **Thierry Favier**, from the University of Poitiers, France. Prof. Favier is a leading specialist in French music from the late 17th century through the 19th century. He delivered a public lecture in French, with audio-visual musical examples, titled "Poésie et prononciation dans la musique française du XVIIe siècle," on Tuesday, April 10, 2012.

## GERMAN

The German program welcomed **Dr. Viktoria Harms**, an assistant professor specializing in the Age of Goethe, in fall 2011. The program also welcomed instructor **Steve Krause** back to assist with teaching needs at all levels. Instructor **Jeffrey Guenther** finished his appointment in December 2011 and now pursues another path in higher education. The faculty thank him for his years of service.

MA candidate **Laura Buder** served as lead teacher for the WILD (Weekend Immersed in Language Development) event in November 2011. MA candidate **Fabian Fink** assisted, and **Rasma Lazda** was a guest presenter. The event supports high school learners of German in a full immersion experience, and is

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**LA VIE BOHÈME** or Art Regenerating Life on the Battlefields of Culture  
A Guest Lecture by Dr. Evelyn Gould

Tuesday, November 1, 2011  
Gorgas Library, Room 205  
3:30-5:00 p.m.  
An hors d'oeuvres reception will follow the talk.

Evelyn Gould is College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professor in the Humanities and Professor of French at the University of Oregon in Eugene, Oregon, USA. She also holds a B. A. degree in Dance, has performed in classical and character ballet, and serves as cantorial assistant at the synagogue. Her work focuses on 19th century French literature, culture, and the performing arts, as well as on issues in Jewish and European Studies. She is the author of *Virtual Theater from Diderot to Mallarmé* (1989) and *The Fate of Carmen* (1996, 2001), both with the Johns Hopkins UP; and she is co-author and co-editor of *Engaging Europe: Rethinking a Continent in Change* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2006, 2007). Gould's new book, "Turning Around Dreyfus," is forthcoming.

Sponsored by The Department of Modern Languages & Classics (MLC), The French program of MLC, The College of Arts & Sciences, New College, Capstone International Programs, The Department of History's Bankhead Endowment and The School of Music

co-sponsored by the Alabama Humanities Foundation, a state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities. **Fabian Fink** also co-organized and presented at the second annual Alabama Modern Language Conference in February, and fellow graduate student **Tina Lorenz** is the current recipient of a Fulbright grant.

**Ian McQuiston** has been studying abroad in Mannheim, and **David Vogt** in Erfurt, Germany, for 2011-12 through the Federation of German-American Clubs exchange, and each was awarded a travel scholarship by Mercedes-Benz USI. **Sam Guggenheimer**, a German minor, has been awarded a Boren scholarship to study in Turkey. **Tori Marriott** was the 2012 high school winner of German Day and the recipient of the Mercedes-Benz USI \$1,000 scholarship for best incoming student.

Our faculty continue to be active in service, teaching, and scholarship from the local to international levels. Some highlights of these distinguished activities include: **Thomas Fox** continues his Board of directors appointment as Vice-President for Culture for the Alabama-Germany Partnership; **Rasma Lazda** concludes her 2009-12 term as an Arts and Sciences Distinguished Teaching Fellow; and **Douglas Lightfoot** serves as President of the AL Chapter of the American Association of Teachers of German, and presented an invited lecture at the University of Mannheim in Germany.

Faculty further remain supportive of the learning and teaching of German in the state by hosting the annual German Day, serving as a certified Goethe Institute testing center, annually inducting students into our local honors chapter, Delta Phi Alpha, and by maintaining contact with teachers throughout Alabama.

The German program and department hosted several distinguished guests over this academic year. Dr. **Lutz Görgens**, the Consul General of Germany, spoke on campus in September 2011 on "Germany and the Future of Europe." The talk, open to the community, enlightened listeners about the current financial climate in Europe and globally.

Dr. **Manfred Stassen** (Johns Hopkins University), former director of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), North America, gave a public presentation on "The Twilight of Transatlantic Relations" in October 2011. The open talk challenged those present to critically examine the dynamic nature of American-European relations.

The program hosted author **Cornelia Franz** of Hamburg, Germany, for a public reading of her works. Some of Franz's novels for young readers are used in schools, including some in Alabama, and her visit was in conjunction with other schools and institutions throughout the state. Franz's words and ensuing discussions raised important points about a variety of topics, including authorship, coming to terms with the past, and conflict in school settings.

The Department has established the new **Barbara Fischer Memorial Fund** in support of student scholarships and honoring our colleague: The Barbara Fischer Memorial Fund, The University of Alabama, Box 870101, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0101.

## ITALIAN

The Italian Program at UA marked its twenty-second year in 2011-12 with a classic film series in the Fall sponsored by the Italian Club. The Program, which offers a minor concentration in Italian, serves approximately 600 students annually. We teach a full array of undergraduate language and culture courses, and popular film and literature courses. Faculty in the Italian Program also offer seminars specializing in Medieval and Renaissance studies through the Honors College and the Blount Undergraduate Initiative. Students interested in going beyond the minor may also complete a depth study (equivalent of a major) through New College.

**MONDAY NIGHT ITALIAN FILM FESTIVAL**  
**FERGUSON CENTER @ 7:00PM**  
 Sponsored by the Italian Club

 Monday, September 26	 Monday, October 3
 Monday, October 10	 Monday, October 17

Contact: [gmerriman@bama.ua.edu](mailto:gmerriman@bama.ua.edu) - Gabriella Marconi-Meniman



Summer study in Italy through the UA in Italy program celebrated its 20th anniversary this year, with a group of 17 students traveling to Florence in the month of June. In the fall, two UA students will spend a semester in Milan through the ongoing UA exchange program with the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, and two UCSC students will be hosted on our campus. We continue to be very enthusiastic about these highly successful study abroad opportunities!

Auguri! Special congratulations to the recipients of honors in Italian this year (**Michaela Butler, Russell Guin, Averil Hayes, Barton Lee, Timothy Mooney, Casey Stephenson, Alexandria Vawter, Drew West, and Lee Williams**), and to all of our graduating seniors. Three graduating seniors have also been initiated into the Phi Beta Kappa honor society (**Catherine de Vore, Barton Lee, and Matthew Tucker**) and one freshman in Italian, **Andrew Sbrissa**, has been awarded a travel/study scholarship to Italy in the "Voyage of Discovery" Program sponsored by NIAF, the National Italian-American Foundation. One of our recent graduates in Italian, **Elyse McLaughlin**, has been awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to teach English in Italy next year. Brava Elyse—bravissimi tutti!

## JAPANESE

The Japanese Program was extremely active and grew greatly this year. The enrollment is bigger than ever and includes online Japanese courses managed by **Laurie Arizumi**. We have a new Japanese Room / Library established in the main office by Laurie Arizumi and **Rachel Caver**. Many advanced students have recently completed their studies in Japan as exchange students, and were all highly praised by their professors in Japan. Several students took the JLPT N2 (Japanese proficiency exam) this year, and have achieved good results.

The high reputation of our program is now firmly established throughout the South. Dr. **Koji Arizumi** has been elected as the president of a newly founded Japanese teachers association called SCATJ (South Central Association of Teachers of Japanese including Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, and other Central Southern states). The SCATJ will also be developed with the help of **Laurie Arizumi** (webmaster), and **Chika Kobayashi** (Committee member). Koji Arizumi also serves as the chief judge of the Japanese Speech contest by the Consulate General of Japan Atlanta / Georgia Chamber of Commerce.

## RUSSIAN

For the academic year 2011-12 we have reached a level of 28 declared minors plus another three students at the advanced level who have yet to declare officially. Our students continue to participate in study abroad programs or in intensive summer programs in the US. The program proudly notes that UA students in Russian who participate in these programs continue to test at or above their level in comparison with students nationwide.

Honors for 2011-12 include three students inducted into Dobro Slovo: **Caitlin Christine Weaver, Kelcey G. Armstrong**, and **William A. Lee**. The ACTR Post-Secondary Russian Scholar Laureate Award went to **Christopher Hydrick** (Chris was also recognized by the department at the A&S ceremony this year.) **Caitlin Christine Weaver** was accepted into and attended the 2011 summer program in Russian at Middlebury College. The following students studied abroad: **Kelcey G. Armstrong**, spring 2011 semester in St. Petersburg; **Darya Makarenko**, summer 2011 in St. Petersburg; **Kyle E. Davis**, fall 2011 in St. Petersburg; **William A. Lee**, fall 2011 in Nizhny Novgorod; **Zachary J. Knight**, summer 2011 in Ufa. (This followed his acceptance into and participation in the 2010 summer program in Russian at Middlebury College.)

## SPANISH

There are now approximately 265 majors in Spanish and in this past academic year the Spanish Program signed up 46 new majors and 28 new minors.

**Research.** Dr. **Erin O'Rourke** co-edited with José Ignacio Hualde (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign) and Antxon Olarrea (University of Arizona) *The Handbook of Hispanic Linguistics* (Wiley-Blackwell 2012). The volume contains 40 chapters on the state-of-the-art research in Hispanic Linguistics from authors based in the United States, Europe, and Latin America. Dr. **Iñaki Rodeño** edited and contributed an article to "Pasaporte latino: cultura e identidad en la literatura hispánica," a special issue of the journal *La nueva literatura hispánica* published by Universitas Castellae in Valladolid, Spain. Dr. **Janiga-Perkins** spent part of her spring semester sabbatical in Bogotá, Colombia doing archival research on her project focused on the spiritual autobiography of nuns in Colonial Latin America. In the spring semester

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Drs. **Corbalán**, **Schnepf**, **Rodeño**, **Baquero-Pecino**, **Worden**, and **Vázquez** participated in the celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the Alabama-Cuba Initiative, a weeklong series of talks and events held in Havana.

**Awards and Service.** **Seema Kumar**, a Spanish major, was awarded a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship for the coming year. Seema will be teaching English in the region of Cantabria in northern Spain. **Katie Tolle**, a first year MA student, was awarded a McNair Graduate Fellowship. **Matt Morris**, a doctoral student, was named recipient of a Graduate Council Fellowship for the past year. This comes one year after Matt was selected as the winner of the Outstanding Teaching at the Doctoral Level award from Arts & Sciences. Dr. **William Worden's** 2011 talk at the Alabama Association of Foreign Language Teachers Conference, titled "Staying in the Target Language While Teaching High School Language Classes," was selected the "Best of Alabama" for the conference. As a result of this honor, Dr. Worden was invited to give the talk in March of 2012 in Atlanta at the Southern Conference on Language Teaching. Dr. **Iñaki Rodeño** is now the President of the Alabama Chapter of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese and Dr. **Karina Vázquez** serves as the chapter's 2nd Vice President. Dr. **Michael Schnepf** continued to run the semester-long Cuba program.

**Teaching.** This academic year saw the opening of the Spanish House, a Living-Learning Community located on campus in the Bryce Lawn apartments. The faculty advisor is Dr. **Sarah Moody**. Undergraduates living in the Spanish House were able to increase their oral proficiency in a fun and relaxed environment guided by a live-in graduate student of the Spanish Program who organized weekly cultural activities. Dr. **Baquero-Pecino** directed both the Spanish Club and the Film Series, which screened seven movies from a diverse number of Spanish-speaking countries including Cuba, Spain, Colombia, Chile, Peru, Mexico, and Argentina. In both the fall and spring semester students from SP 353 (Spanish Conversation) and SP 376 (Latin American Literature II) participated in two different Community Based Service Learning Projects with ESL

students from Faucett-Vestavia Elementary School. In the fall a group of fifteen UA students adapted and performed two plays in Spanish for an audience of twenty children, all of them native speakers of Spanish. In the spring fourteen UA students did a series of Spanish readings for the same group of students. Both projects have been valuable in contributing to the children's bilingual literacy and appreciation for their cultural and language heritage. In the spring the Spanish Program once again hosted the Alabama Spanish Convention, a day-long event which brought over 800 high school students to campus for competitions and performances focused on the Spanish language and the cultures of Spanish-speaking countries.

The Spanish Program hosted two distinguished speakers this year. In the fall semester **Vicente Molina Foix**, a Spanish novelist who has won Spain's National Narrative Prize, gave a talk titled "Why I Did Not Want to Be a Filmmaker, But Ended Up Becoming One," after which he screened his latest film: "El dios de madera." In his talk Molina Foix discussed his experience as a young man working on a film in Spain, after which he abandoned cinematic projects to dedicate himself entirely to fiction. Years later, as the author explained, he returned to the world of cinema and has now written and directed two films. Molina Foix's presentation touched on topics including the life of a writer, the differences between fiction and film, and the current state of the film industry in Spain.

In the spring semester Professor **Elsa Drucaroff** from the University of Buenos Aires gave a talk titled "Captured in the Tower: Reflections on Fiction, Politics, and Reality." Professor Drucaroff, who has published both short stories and novels, specializes in Contemporary Literature in Spanish and works most particularly on issues related to gender and class. In her presentation she discussed her research on Argentinean narratives written by what she has termed the "post-dictatorship generations," authors who started to write in the immediate aftermath of the last dictatorship (1976-1983) and those who began writing after the social crisis of 2001. Her presentation gave insights into the current connections among literature, politics, and reality. ♦

**VICENTE MOLINA FOIX**  
 Spanish writer, critic and film director,  
 winner of the National Prize of Literature and many other prestigious awards,  
 author of 12 novels, 3 plays, 2 books of poetry, 2 books of film criticism,  
 director of 2 movies, and weekly columnist for national newspapers

**WILL GIVE A LECTURE** **November 16, 2011**  
**3:00 PM**

**IN 118 GRAVES HALL**

"Why I did not want to be a filmmaker, but ended up becoming one"

Followed by a screening of his latest film: "El dios de madera"  
 (In Spanish with English Subtitles)  
 A reception to follow.

**FREE EVENT**  
**open to the public**

Sponsored by Modern Languages and Classics,  
 English, Gender and Race Studies, New College,  
 Blount Undergraduate Initiative, International Honors Program,  
 Capstone International and the College of Arts and Sciences.



Dr. Viktoria Harms

Dr. **Viktoria Harms**, Assistant Professor of German, is a native of Germany and holds a Ph.D. in Germanics from the University of Washington in Seattle. In her dissertation, she analyzed the representation of masculinity in works by Goethe and Schiller, with a particular focus on the problematic figure of the soldier. Her current research focuses on women writers around 1800 and their contribution to the debate on gender, as part of a book-length project on the crisis of masculinity at the time. ♦



Dr. Karina Vázquez

Dr. **Karina Vázquez**, Assistant Professor of Spanish, has a BA in Sociology from the University of Buenos Aires (Argentina), and a Ph.D. in Latin American Literature from University of Florida (2008). She specializes in 20/21st-century Latin American literature, particularly Southern Cone (Argentina, Brazil, Chile). She published *Fogwill: Realismo y mala conciencia* (Buenos Aires, Ediciones Circeto 2009), and has articles on Latin American poetry and narrative in journals of Argentina and the United States (*Luso Brazilian Review*, *Explicación de textos literarios*, *A Contracorriente*, *El Interpretador*). Her main research topics have been realism in recent Latin American narrative and the representation of labor and masculinities in 20th-century Argentine narrative. Her current work concerns the representations of domestic labor in Chile, Argentina, and Brazil; the representations of work in Argentine narrative of the 20th and 21st centuries from the female perspective; and the iconography of the political militant in Latin America. ♦





*UA students and faculty in Ecuador*

## SERVICE-LEARNING IN ECUADOR

In May of 2012 Assistant Professor Dr. Alvaro Baquero-Pecino and Ph.D. candidate Larissa Clachar, both from Spanish, accompanied a group of thirteen undergraduate students from the Honors College to Ecuador. They served as chaperones and participated in all of the activities of Alabama Action Abroad (AAA) while in Ecuador. The trip included leadership activities as well as service projects in recycling and reforestation in the Andes and Amazon regions of Ecuador. The class and trip were led by undergraduates Colbie Davis, Davis Hill and Lauren Scoggan, all Spanish students in our undergraduate program. Throughout the Spring semester Baquero-Pecino and Clachar collaborated with Dr. Shane Sharpe, dean of the Honors College, and with AAA students as they prepared for this trip. This is an example of the outreach and growth opportunities our faculty and students experience through teaching and learning of Spanish. ♦

## 12 POLYGLOT

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