

Northern Accents

Northern Michigan University

DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- MLL Faculty members Dr. Susan Goodrich, Dr. Nell Kupper, and Dr. Carol Strauss have played a significant role in the Internationalization efforts at NMU.
- The next meeting of the Internationalization Task Force will take place January 25, 2007.
- Visit www.nmu.edu/academics/curriculum21/itf for more information.

INTERNATIONALIZATION

Internationalization has been defined at NMU as “all activities and course work related to experiences either outside the United States or interactions between the United States and other cultures.” Efforts toward the internationalization of NMU have been in full swing since 2004 and significant progress has been made over the past few years.

Several forums have been held on the topic of internationalizing our campus and academic programs. Some of the main barriers keeping students from acquiring a global focus while at NMU were described as difficulties paying for and transferring credits from study abroad, not

enough promotion of international opportunities available for students, the lack of an international student and faculty presence on campus, and a lack of individual initiative on the part of the students.

An Internationalization Task Force was created and chaired by Dr. Louise M. Bourgault, a professor in the department of Communication and Performance Studies.

They presented their report, entitled “A Curriculum for the 21st Century,” on May 2, 2005. The report consisted of a set of recommendations to be implemented between 2005 and 2008, with their goals to be achieved by 2010. According to NMU President Les Wong, considerable time has been de-

voted to initiating relationships in China, Mexico, Sweden and Finland. His goals are to develop “the means to ensure a study abroad experience for each NMU student getting their baccalaureate degree from us...we need a viable infrastructure to serve these many students going abroad.” He also stresses the importance of our on-campus culture representing both domestic and international diversity. While much has been done towards achieving these goals, the process is ongoing. Everyone should do what they can individually to ensure that internationalization remains a primary focus of Northern’s development.

Contributed by Ginny Harris

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PLANET CHAT

The second Planet Chat of the year showed another great turnout! Over 80 students gathered in the Whitman Commons on November 14 to enjoy a complimentary picnic-lunch, beautiful pictures, and moving stories.

Eric Flasch talked about his

semester abroad in Heidelberg, Germany, Tyler Weber discussed his experiences as



Alicia McCauley with her mom and host family in Argentina

a volunteer in Tanzania, and Alicia McCauley shared her cultural encounters from a semester abroad in Buenos Aires, Argentina. During the winter semester, two Planet Chat sessions will showcase more NMU students that have had recent international experiences.

NEW FACULTY HIGHLIGHT

REBECCA ULLAND

Dr. Rebecca Ulland is serving a two-year term as a Spanish Professor. She obtained her Master's degree and Doctorate from the University of Minnesota. Her research interests include twentieth and twenty-first century Latin American literature written by women, with emphasis on the Argentine historical novel. She is also interested in the female comediantes of Spain's Golden Age and issues in women's studies.



Dr. Ulland has been studying Spanish since high school. She majored in Spanish as an undergraduate, spending a semester abroad in Mexico. She had always wanted to be an attorney, but the academic community and research involved in graduate school just looked like so much fun! Her interest in Argentine literature developed during her graduate studies at the University of Minnesota through influential advisors, seminars, and trips. At one literary seminar, she met dozens of Latin American writers and formed relationships that would shape her education and career forever. She became close friends with famous

Argentine writers Luisa Valenzuela and Maria Rosa Lojo. She also discovered the Argentine historical novel, a genre that is widely popular in Argentina, but not yet studied by the academic community.

Dr. Ulland is very excited to be at NMU. She loves the community, and she really enjoys the regional nature of the area. When she is not on campus, she spends her time traveling and keeping up with her one and a half-year old son, Liam. So far, she has had a very positive experience at Northern. Teaching SN 312: *Latin American Civilization and Culture* this fall allowed her to utilize her extensive background. She also loved

teaching the introductory Spanish courses. She said "it is fun to be in contact with new language students ... I want to help them feel connected to the University."

This winter semester, in addition to teaching introductory courses, she will have the opportunity to teach SN 400: *Advanced Spanish Grammar and Composition*. Dr. Ulland was a consultant for the Spanish Writing Center in her last position at the University of Minnesota, and she sees SN 400 as an opportunity to apply the knowledge she gained from that experience and to help NMU students gain confidence in their Spanish writing skills!

JOSHUA ARMSTRONG

Joshua Armstrong is serving a one-year term as a French instructor. His research interests include French and Francophone literature, especially the literature of France, Quebec, the French Caribbean, Haiti, and Belgium. His master's thesis on Samuel Becket's trilogy of novels received special mention from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

Instructor Armstrong is also an active creative writer in

English and French. His recent works are short stories told in the first person, each conveying a personal crisis with its own authentic voice. He has

publications in *SIRR*, *The Southwestern Review*, and *The Modern Word*.

Joshua Armstrong has enjoyed many French immersion experiences over

the past few years. He spent a year in Marseille, France teaching English to French high school students, he has traveled throughout Quebec and Southwestern France, and he attended Graduate School in Cajun Louisiana.

Instructor Armstrong really enjoys the Marquette area, and he is looking forward to cross-country skiing and ice fishing if we ever have a winter!



Joshua Armstrong in France near the Tarn River Gorge region



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT
AMY PESOLA



B.A. in Spanish (03)
M.S. in Criminal Justice (05)

Amy Pesola has wanted to be a special agent for the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) for quite some time. After years of preparing herself, a 2-year long application and testing process, and months of training, she finally achieved her goal earlier this month. On December 17, Amy flew to Puerto Rico to begin her first assignment enforcing drug laws and leading investigations in San Juan.

Amy graduated the rigorous DEA training (the same used for FBI) alongside 44 other agents. The DEA is a highly selective agency, and Amy is very happy to have been selected. She attributes her success to her determination and the education she received at NMU. She believes the Spanish-language skills she gained at Northern gave her the competitive edge necessary to make the cut, especially during the recent freeze in government hiring.



Amy Pesola after her last day of physical training

At Northern, Amy was an outstanding student with diverse interests. In addition to Spanish and Criminal Justice, she studied Biology, Psychology, and Theater.

She has definitely left her mark in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures. After her plans to study abroad in Puerto Rico fell through in 2002 due to complications with the participating university, she needed a directed study to complete her major. Consequently, she translated *The Golden Coin: Freud or Jung* by Ignacio Solares under the supervision of Dr. Tim Compton. She even acted in a special performance of the translation

for the visiting playwright.

Amy has fond memories of her time at NMU. She loved the environment, but upon leaving she realized that it can be more difficult for NMU graduates to find jobs due to Marquette's geographic isolation. However, she believes that a go-getter attitude can overcome that inconvenience. She had to drive to from NMU to Detroit over 10 times during the lengthy DEA application and testing process. It was a bit of a risk to dedicate so much time to one opportunity, but all of her preparation and dedication paid off once she was accepted (and now that she is finally in Puerto Rico!).

Amy's advice to language students is to have clear goals and a target career early in your education. Once you establish that goal, dedicate your energy toward achieving it! It will make your education more meaningful and your job search after graduation more fruitful.

NEW LATIN DANCE CLUB A HIT!

During the Fall semester, the Latin Dance Club was founded by three Spanish majors: Alexandra Holley, Brian Brinkman, and Alana Stuart.

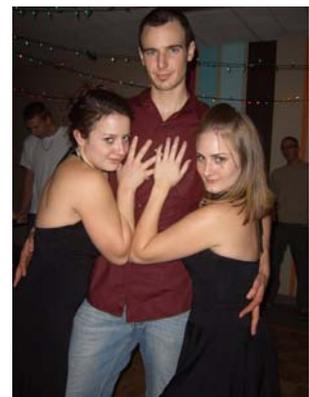
Alexandra and Alana were excited to practice the dances that they had learned while studying abroad in Latin America, and Brian Brinkman had a background

in Ballroom dance. The three students put together regular lessons teaching salsa, tango, bachata, merengue, and the most recent addition to Latin music and dance, reggaeton.

The Spanish Club has hosted Latin dances in the past and the Ballroom Dance Club occasionally teaches salsa or tango, but when the three

students started a club devoted solely to Hispanic dances they realized there was an overwhelming interest at NMU. Almost 50 students attended their first meeting and they maintained high attendance at their Sunday night lessons throughout the semester.

Alexandra, Brian, and Alana at the Latin Dance night on November 10 in the UC



WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.NMU.EDU/LANGUAGES



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Knowledge of languages other than English and sensitivity to other cultures are becoming increasingly important as we start the twenty-first century. Efficient transportation and instantaneous communications make contact with people from around the globe more and more frequent and vital. Technological advances offer exciting new opportunities. Northern Michigan University's Department of Modern Languages and Literatures seeks to open doors to students in their wide-ranging pursuits through the study of languages and cultures.

INSIDE TODAY'S LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Advances in technology and global communication have drastically changed language study over the past 10 years. The internet has made instantaneous communication between all corners of the world possible and advances in media technology have made language learning more accessible.

In the past, students had to sit in language lab cubicles to listen to cassette tape recordings. Now audio programs on CD-ROM are included with most language textbooks and supplementary videos are available to students online. These advances have made it much more convenient for students to listen to native speakers and practice their language skills outside of class.

Furthermore, many NMU language professors are incorporating technology into their classrooms in unique and exciting ways. In Carol Strauss's GR 101 class, students correspond with German families through an exchange program on yahoo.com. Similarly, other professors have required their students to find a pen pal from another country on the internet.

Now that video cameras have become so accessible, Dr. Susan Goodrich and Dr. Strauss are able to have their conversation classes create short videos. Students form small groups, each group selects a topic, writes a script in the language of study, and finally each group member must speak in the video. The video assignments are quite a fun and unique

way for students to practice their language skills.

Technology, however, could never replace human interaction in the language classroom, and professors use technology to supplement their curriculum rather than replace it. German students still celebrate St. Nicolas Day every year with fruit, nuts, singing, and gifts. Dr. Compton's Mexican Theater class performed two plays this year for the NMU community, and Dr. Nelly Kupper always requires her advanced French students to lead French conversation tables throughout the semester. These creative interactive assignments, along with the opportunities created by technology, have made the language classroom a very exciting place!

*Northern Accents Editor
Nicole King*