

Northern Accents

DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Faculty Led Trip to Argentina	1,3
Students Abroad Robert Bruggman	1,2
New Faculty Update Paloma Roggeman	4
Languages Lab Information	4

A JOURNEY TO ARGENTINA

Imagine wading through the crowds of Buenos Aires, Argentina, a city populated by roughly 12 million inhabitants, surrounded by a heavy mix of both Latino and European culture. There are restaurants to suit any appetite and architecture that would match that of any European city. What many call the “Paris of South America” is where Professor Amy Orf and seven of her students spent two weeks this past summer, exploring this amazing city and all that it had to offer.

After arriving on Saturday, May 30th, the seven students were sent to live with their homestay families, who were chosen by Universidad del Salvador, NMU’s program partner university in Argentina. Aside from the home-stays, the university there also provided the group with tours of the city and its museums, as well with classroom space where Professor Orf taught the students their Spanish courses.

It was also arranged that the students receive tango lessons during their stay, which concluded with a visit to an authentic Tango club. Professor Orf described the dance as fun and challenging, but nowhere near as easy as the Waltz. It’s an eight step dance with many stop and count moments that had the students running into one another during lessons. For some, Professor Orf commented, it was probably one of the main highlights of the trip.

However, students did have to earn credits during their two weeks, the core class being Survival Spanish for Travel. Through classroom exercises, the students practiced using vocabulary and expressions they would need in order to survive and maneuver through Buenos Aires on their own. A few of the assignments included calling an actual hotel and pricing out room rates. Another had each student calling Professor Orf’s hotel and asking the concierge to connect them to her room phone. Grammar, while addressed, was not the main focus. The goal was just to get the students out there and interacting with the locals, which Professor Orf found worked out rather well. **(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)**



LIVING ABROAD: TALKS ON GERMANY WITH ROBERT BRUGMAN

Robert Brugman, a student at NMU, spent the 2008-2009 school year in Oldenburg, Germany studying at Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg.

Robert had always wanted to do a study abroad program, but it wasn’t until his senior year that he decided to start investigating his options. With the help of Susan Morgan, Dirk Ahlers and Carol Sotiropoulos, Robert was to be the first student to participate in one of Northern’s new Direct Partnership programs with the university in Oldenburg. The exchange program with Oldenburg was brought about by Dirk Ahlers, who is originally from Oldenburg. It involved not only sending a student abroad, but also accepting a student in return. **(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)**



Robert Brugman Cont'd

It is no cookie cutter program. At Oldenburg's university, Robert was able to pick the program and classes that best suited him. What was really different for him, however, was the class structure. At Oldenburg, there is a lot more independent work. Students take more notes and complete outside research for their classes instead of doing homework assignments. Instructors expect the students to spend the semester preparing and re-researching for their final exam at the end, which accounts for the majority of their grade.

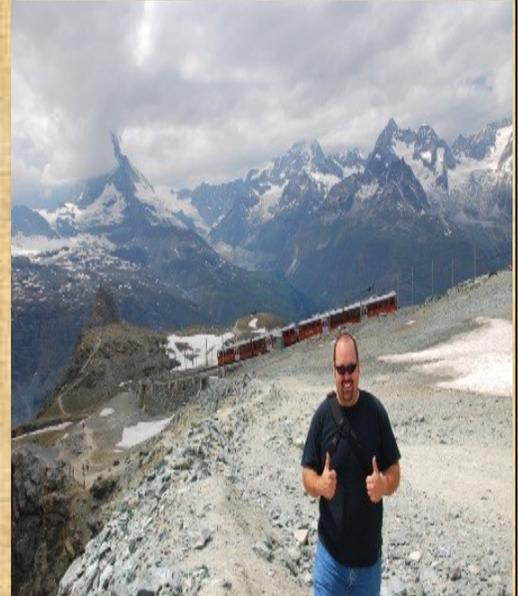
Although almost three-fourths of the classes taken each semester are in German, students are given a placement test upon arrival which determines what level German class they should be in. Robert, having already completed his German minor at NMU, was placed into the upper level German courses. Since he is a finance major at NMU, he enrolled in a business terms course to help develop his vocabulary in the field. Robert commented that learning the new vocabulary while taking the business courses was a difficult aspect of the first semester, but it paid off and helped him through the rest of the year.

Living on his own in an on-campus apartment complex which shared a kitchen and bathroom area with a few other students, Robert spent his free time becoming acquainted with the area. Oldenburg is a town of about 160,000 people; about eight times the size of Robert's native Marquette, Michigan. He describes Oldenburg as being "a big town with a small town feel."

Robert attended local festivals such as the Weihnachtsmarkt (Christmas Market) and the Ostereiermarkt (Easter Market). He also ventured outside of Oldenburg taking the opportunity to see the rest of Germany and quite a bit of Europe. His travels included Denmark, the Netherlands and a week on the beach in Sardinia. Robert also took part in a camping trip to the Swiss Alps and parts of Austria (which Robert has considered as a possibility for graduate school).

Robert returned to Northern Michigan University in August 2009 and is focusing on completing his degree and graduating in May. He recently gave a presentation at this semester's Planet Chat; an event sponsored by the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures in which students who have recently studied abroad tell about their experiences. More than 100 people attended this edition of Planet Chat. He said people asked a lot of questions about financing a study abroad and about using a foreign language. His advice is to not worry so much about the finances, because while it may be expensive, it's worth it. As for the language, his program, along with many others, offer placement tests and go from there, helping students learn the language as they go.

When asked what key piece of advice Robert would give to a student getting ready to go abroad, he said, "You kind of have to leave your comfort zone behind and jump into it; use the language, accept the traditions. Get into the German mindset and not the American living in Germany".



Argentina Cont'd

And while the students and Professor Orf enjoyed the many sites and sounds of the city, probably the most heavily impacting experience was seeing the mothers of Plaza de Mayo. Professor Orf explained that back in the late seventies and early eighties, the country of Argentina was going through a lot of serious political problems. It was during this time that some 30,000 Argentines were kidnapped and tortured by their own government. Outraged and wanting answers, the mothers of the victims started to march on Plaza de Mayo; a huge ordeal since people were not allowed to openly protest the government. Regardless, mothers marched with diapers on their heads, because signs were not allowed, and pictures of their sons and daughters hanging around their necks, demanding answers to the whereabouts of their children.

This march still takes place today, and the women have become known as the Asociación de las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, or The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo. Professor Orf and her students were fortunate enough one day, to see this demonstration; a present look into a dark part of Argentina's past and a reminder as to how strong of a people they really are.



Another great example of this strong will would be Hotel Bauen, which left such a strong impression upon Professor Orf. It was one of many businesses shut down when Argentina hit hard financial times and local businessmen thought their stores and hotels would not survive. However, shutting down these establishments meant that many Argentines lost their jobs. But instead of sitting back and letting it happen, the employees took it upon themselves to reopen the hotel, agreeing to one level of pay, having no one employee earning more than the other. Business owners who laughed and thought it wouldn't work were soon proven wrong as the hotel employees succeeded and run the hotel to this day. And this wasn't the only instance. In fact, workers started reopening businesses all over the city. These cases are proof that it doesn't just take money to get something done as many CEOs would think; it just takes hard work and effort.

Having the students see these events and places first hand during these two weeks had a much greater impact on them than if they had read about it in a book. However, all good things must come to an end and the group had to return home on Monday, June 15th. But this won't be the last adventure to Buenos Aires. Professor Orf is planning a return visit with another group of students during the summer of 2010. This time, the group will stay four weeks instead of two. Which will give them more time to experience all that Argentina has to offer.

If you are interested in being a part of the next group and would like more information, feel free to contact Professor Amy Orf either by email aorf@nmu.edu or by stopping by her office in Whitman Hall room 170.



NEW FACULTY UPDATE *PALOMA ROGGEMAN*



Image taken from CIA World Fact Book
Instructor photo not available at time of press.

Meet Paloma Roggeman, our newest Spanish instructor for the 2009-2010 school year. Paloma is a native from Madrid, Spain. Before moving to Marquette with her two children 16 years ago, she worked for the Spanish government and studied at a local university.

After arriving in Marquette, Paloma decided to go back to school and received her Bachelor's Degree in Secondary Education from NMU. However, teaching jobs were hard to come by at the time. Undeterred, Paloma started tutoring Spanish at local schools and at the YMCA. It wasn't until this past summer that she finally got a chance to teach her own class.

Dr. Compton, head of the Modern Languages and Literatures Department at NMU called and asked if she would like to teach a section of Spanish 101. It didn't take Paloma long to think on it and then agree to take the position.

Now, a couple months later, Paloma says that she loves the experience of teaching college students. She glows when she talks about how interested they are in her home-country and the language. Her students and her learn something new about each other every class session. And now her class has become a family affair with her son and daughter are always wanting to help her out with lesson ideas.

Even though she has been in the States for awhile now, she still remains a citizen of Spain. The pride for her country is evident when she talks about home. And her and her children try to go back as often as they can to visit family there.

When she's not teaching her class, Paloma works as a social worker for the Women's Crisis Center here in Marquette.

NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY'S LANGUAGE LAB

There's no doubt about it. Learning a new language is challenging. It's like starting to read, speak and write all over again-in some cases, with entirely different alphabets. Whether you are first-year student of Chinese or a third-year French student, students may need some extra resources to help them along. We have the audio CDs needed to complete their lessons. We have a nice collection of books, international news and entertainment programming and movies too. Most importantly, we have friendly and apt tutors that are more than willing to give students help that the other resources are unable to provide. The Language Lab is happy to help lan-

guage professors as well. Students may even need a nice quiet place to study or to try out their conversational skills with one of the tutors.

The Language Lab is located in Jamrich Hall, room 203.

Winter 2010 Hours of Operation:

Sunday—3pm-7pm

Monday—11pm-7pm

Tuesday—11am to 7pm

Wednesday—11pm to 7pm

Thursday 11am-7pm

Friday—Closed

Saturday—Closed



Kylynn, a tutor in the lab.