Hi! My name is Maria-Claudia Tomany, and I will start working in my dual function as Assistant Professor of Scandinavian Studies and Director of the Interdisciplinary Scandinavian Studies Program in August.

I studied Scandinavian Studies, English, German, and History at the universities of Munich, Bergen, and Reykjavik, and received my doctoral degree in Scandinavian Studies from Munich in 2004. For the past three years, I have worked as a visiting scholar at the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (ACMRS) at Arizona State University where I have offered classes and reading groups in Old Norse. I also taught regularly in the Scandinavian Studies and German section of the ASU Department of Languages and Literatures.

Now, I am very much looking forward to coming to Mankato and carrying on the excellent work that Birgitta Hendrickson has done over the years. I have many plans for this new and enhanced program that MSU intends to build, and I am very excited to be a part of this initiative.

As professor of Scandinavian Studies, I plan to offer language courses in Norwegian and Swedish, as well as a wide range of courses on Scandinavian culture, politics, history, literature, and film.

As director of the Interdisciplinary Scandinavian Studies Program, I will seek to maintain existing collaborations with other departments, and to forge new ones. My goal is to establish opportunities for students of as many majors as possible to integrate a Scandinavian perspective into their studies. This should not only give them a sharper, stand-out profile for their professional careers but also provide them with access to the cutting edge approaches in Scandinavian education, industry, and commerce, as well as the excellent funding resources that Scandinavian countries and organizations offer.

Our program, I hope, will also reach beyond the campus. Scandinavian immigration has played a major role in the history of Minnesota, and this history deserves to be
Message from Dr. Tomany, continued

preserved, researched, and treasured. With an extensive outreach program, the Scandinavian Studies Program would not only provide an important service to the community that supports MSU, it could also help connect many students at MSU with their own family history and heritage.

I look forward to meeting you all in the summer! Until then, you can reach me at my present institution, at Maria-Claudia.Tomany@asu.edu. Hej då! Ha det bra så lenge!

Maria-Claudia Tomany

New Initiatives in the Department of Modern Languages

PARTNERSHIP IN ACADEMIC ADVANCEMENT

The Department of Modern Languages will be participating in the new Minnesota State University, Mankato program titled Partnership in Academic Advancement. This partnership program, between MSU and area high schools, offers qualified students the opportunity to earn University credit prior to high school graduation within the high school environment. To make this possible, the Department of Modern Languages plays a critical role. The Department reviews and approves high school teachers for appropriate knowledge, methodology and credentials for teaching university level courses. The Department assists in development of and approves the course syllabus, outcome assessments and instructional materials. In addition, the Department faculty enters into a mentoring relationship, assisting and guiding the high school teacher throughout the semester that the course is offered.

With this unique partnership, high school students experience increased academic challenges, gain college level critical thinking and language skills and earn university credit. The high schools gain increased curriculum rigor, access to university faculty and library resources as well as professional development for teachers. In addition, the University gains the opportunity of teaching highly qualified students and the development of new partners.

Patricia Lipetzky, Dean, Extended Learning

Perspectives from faculty in Modern Languages:

The Department of Modern Languages is participating in the new Minnesota State University, Mankato program titled Partnership in Academic Advancement. This opportunity is granted to a few departments only during this initial phase, in which we are exploring if there are sufficient qualified students and faculty and if there is sufficient desire to make this collaboration work.

In the Department of Modern Languages, French was first to establish concurrent enrollment and work has been done with students at East High School under the mentorship of Dr. John Janc.

Several goals stand out for this collaboration:

We want to attract qualified high school students to Minnesota State University, Mankato and in particular to the Department of Modern Languages. Secondly, we wish to provide further educational opportunities for students who have already accomplished much at high school within their disciplines and to increasingly challenge them at the university level. Furthermore, we want to attract bright young students to Minnesota State University, Mankato and our department to give them the opportunity to succeed in the classroom. While this will allow us to continue to work at the upper division level courses, it will take these students further and will prepare them for entry into the job market upon their graduation. Finally, we are also looking forward to the collaboration with our colleagues in different educational settings.

At this point the Department of Modern Languages has established new programs with Chaska High School for German and Spanish and with St. James and Wells High Schools for Spanish.

Jim Grabowska & Evelyn Meyer
The perspective of German teacher, Amy Hallberg, from Chaska High School:

I have taught German for 10 years at Chaska High School. Increasingly, I have seen many students who have enjoyed learning German and done well in my introductory courses decide they don’t have the room in their schedule to devote to upper level language courses. There are just so many required courses that there isn’t a lot of space left over for electives. Why choose to take an upper level language course when you could take an A.P. course in another subject that will get you college credit instead? We have had A.P. language courses here for some time, but the A.P. language tests are so rigorous that only students who have near-native proficiency and often have lived for some time in the country have a reasonable chance of earning college credit that way.

Often when students take just the minimum amount of language needed to get into college, they do plan to pick up where they left off once they get to college. However, the reality is, when you interrupt language study, there will always be some backsliding.

If you haven’t gotten very far in your studies in the first place, chances are high that you’ll simply have to start over again. The students who stay enrolled in upper level courses at high school are the ones who realize that by continuing on, they will be able to retain and build on their existing skills. When these students reach the college level, they can take those more interesting and exciting upper level courses instead of repeating courses they already took in high school. In the long run, they have a much higher likelihood of developing a strong degree of language proficiency. In our global world, more than ever, it is important for Americans to start achieving strong fluency in non-native languages.

This is why we at Chaska High School are so excited to embark upon this project with the language department at Minnesota State University, Mankato. We were hopeful that students would embrace this new opportunity and choose to continue in their language study without interruption. Our registration numbers for next year have shown that our expectations were well-placed. I have had more students sign up for this course next year than for any other upper level course I’ve offered in my ten years. I get to maintain the high standards I’ve already established, but now I have something more to offer than just the challenge of the learning and the satisfaction of a job well done. For me personally, another reward is the collaboration with another colleague to craft a quality curriculum for my students.

I’ve asked students if the college credit made the difference when they decided to keep going. Overwhelmingly the answer has been yes. The students who never liked studying a language probably still won’t continue on. This option just makes it easier for the students who do enjoy learning a language to justify devoting the time to taking this course. These are great students and I’m thrilled to be able to work with them. As I said before, we’re very excited. I think this will prove to be a highly beneficial and rewarding experience for the students and instructors alike.

Amy Hallberg

FOREIGN LANGUAGE INITIATIVE

A new student organization at Minnesota State University creates “windows of opportunity” to learn major languages of the world. The Foreign Language Initiative currently offers eighteen languages for free to anyone interested in acquiring a new language. Languages currently being hosted by the FLI include Arabic, Brazilian Portuguese, Cantonese, Chinese, Hebrew, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Nepali, Russian, Serbo-Croatian-Bosnian, Somali, Sri-Lankan, Swahili, Tibetan, Urdu, Vietnamese, & Yoruba. Please email the FLI at foreignlanguageinitiative@yahoo.com.

Michael Gieseke, Emissary, Foreign Language Initiative
Undergraduate Research: A Collaboration Between Dr. Contag & Rachel Goodloe

"Before studying in Cuenca, Ecuador, Dr. Contag spoke to me about working on an Undergraduate Research Project. My first thought was that it would be way too difficult and time-consuming to do. However, as she and I mapped out the process I became more confident that it would be possible. Much time has passed since we first discussed it and I now am working on the presentation for the conference on April 25th. I will be presenting information about the public and private school systems in Cuenca.

The project, as I mentioned, seemed too large at first. It has been extra work, but well worth it. I have been learning about the process of research, which could be of great use in the future if I continue on with my Master’s. The first step that I had to take was to decide what I would research. Since I am studying to be a teacher, we decided that I should research some element of the education system. Dr. Contag told me that I would probably be interested to find out the differences between private and public education in Ecuador. With the help of Dr. Contag, I created an interview in Spanish to learn more about the differences between the education systems and the advantages and disadvantages of each. I visited several schools, observed classrooms, and spoke with teachers about education.

I learned more about the education system in Ecuador than I ever would have by just reading about it. I also have learned more about the process of research. If you are considering a research project, I would recommend that you go for it. The experience is unique, valuable, and well worth your time."

Rachel Goodloe

Upcoming Events in the Department of Modern Languages

The Department of Modern Languages & The German Club of Minnesota State University, Mankato invite you to a public lecture by

Mr. Tony Clunn

one of the most important historical scholars of our time

"The Quest for the Lost Roman Legions"

"In 9 A.D., the 17th, 18th & 19th Roman legions and their auxiliary troops under the command of Publius Quinctilius Varus vanished in the wilds of Germania. They died singly and by the hundreds over several days in a carefully planned ambush led by Arminius (popularly known as Hermann the German) a Roman-trained German warrior determined to stop Rome’s advance beyond the Rhine River. By the time it was over, some 25,000 men, women, and children were dead and the course of European history had been forever altered."

Join us in discovering the significance of the Hermann monument in New Ulm, MN.

Mr. Clunn will be speaking Wednesday, April 27, 2005 at 5 pm in Armstrong Hall 213.
Minnesota State University, Mankato invites you to participate in an interdisciplinary learning experience.

Keynote Address: John J. Allen and Patricia Finch

John Jay Allen and Patricia Finch present a quixotic journey from 1605 to modern day with text and images of *Don Quixote* from around the world in the last 400 years. John Jay Allen and Patricia Finch are co-authors of *Don Quijote en el arte y pensamiento de occidente. Madrid, Cátedra, 2004* (Don Quixote in Western Art and Thought). John Jay Allen will also present his new commemorative edition of *Don Quixote* with the nineteenth-century illustrations of Tony Johannot. Madrid, Cátedra, 2005.

Unraveling Myth(s)

Don Quixote, a seventeenth-century, Spanish burlesque parody of an older myth about chivalric ideals, inspired poets, dramatists, novelists, composers, choreographers, illustrators, painters, cartoonists, sculptors, graphic artists, cultural historians and philosophers to consider the impact of the quixotic in our world. The purpose of this conference is to explore the myths surrounding the novel written by Cervantes and the authentic new myths surrounding the reproductions, translations, adaptations and imitations of *Don Quixote* around the world and throughout history. This interdisciplinary learning experience will center on interactive discussions and workshops with participants representing their own disciplines. Electronic abstracts of papers, presentations, performances and workshops are due April 30, 2005. Notification of acceptance will be made by May 16. Completed working papers for discussion and materials for workshops must be submitted electronically with registration by July 25, 2005. Submission of selected of papers/presentations and workshop results for electronic publication are due January 6, 2006.

We invite presentations, papers, performances, workshops for unraveling myth(s) concerning *Don Quixote* in the following disciplines: Art, Languages and Literatures, Theatre and Dance, Spanish Culture and History, Music, Philosophy, Ethnic Studies, TV/Film Studies, Popular Culture, Feminist/Gender Studies.

Email your abstract to: Jim.grabowska@mnsu.edu or Kimberly.Contag@mnsu.edu
Why you might want to study abroad: reports from students currently overseas

**Melissa Olson writes on April 1, 2005 from Cuenca, Ecuador:**

I have been in Ecuador for almost 11 weeks now and am amazed that next week will be my last here before I return to the States. I have really enjoyed my experience here! I have learned so much about the Spanish language, the people, and a lot about myself as well.

My first 6 weeks here I lived with a family that had 3 young children. They were really nice but busy most of the time with their children, so I decided to live with a new family. They have been really wonderful and I truly feel as though I am a part of their family. It has been really interesting living with them! My host father Edgar has 11 siblings, most of whom live here in Cuenca, so it is not uncommon for us to have Sunday coffee at our home with about 40 other people. That is considered a small gathering! I love how the families here are so much closer and connected than they are back in the States.

My classes at Sampere have been challenging but not too overwhelming. My grammar and conversational Spanish has improved so much since I have been here, but I still feel that I have so much more to learn. I plan on traveling so that I can learn more Spanish after I graduate from MSU in May.

I love Cuenca so much! It is large enough so that you have plenty of things to do, but it is small enough that the city has a feeling of accessibility. The way of life here is so much more relaxed, so I have more time to go out at night, read, go to the movies, explore the city, and just relax. It is a wonderful change from the fast-paced and stressful way of life back in the States. I don't know how I am going to be able to go back to that!

The food here is one of my favorite things. I eat so much! I have gotten used to everything being homemade from fresh ingredients. I get to eat fresh bakery break and have fresh squeezed juice everyday. My favorite juices here have been blackberry, tree tomato, and pineapple. I have also learned how to cook many of the traditional dishes here in the cooking class we have on Thursday nights. I'm sure my boyfriend will be more than happy to be my guinea pig. Speaking of guinea pigs, I have not tried cuy here (guinea pig). I am a very open-minded person but the idea of eating them still is a kind of creepy to me!

Well, that is just a small overview of my experience here in Ecuador. I would recommend Cuenca and Sampere to anyone who would like to travel and learn Spanish. The people here are friendly, the weather is nice (even though we are in the rainy season at the moment) and Sampere is academically sound with great professors. I will miss Ecuador but hope to return soon!

**Krista Jo Benrud writes on March 29, 2005 from Guanajuato, Mexico:**

Things in Mexico are going very well for me. My Spanish is improving everyday and the difference is day and night from when I first arrived. I have met so many great people from here in Guanajuato and other places around the world. I met my best friend here the second week of classes and she is planning to study at the University as well. Today we found a house to live in and are very excited about it. As of now I'm planning to stay until December, but who knows maybe I'll never leave. I'm getting a lot out of this experience that will benefit me in my future job search. I will have lived in a foreign country for almost a full year, should be fluent in the language, and will have studied International Business with the locals. I am thoroughly enjoying myself and would recommend this to anyone.
Nick Staber writes from El Puerto, Spain:

I’m having so much fun in El Puerto, It’s the best school ever. Marissa, the new sub-director, is great and the environment of the school is wonderful. I have a really good teacher named Fabiola, and we have class in the mornings so there is plenty of time to go to the beach. The family is great and the host mom is so cute and nice. She happens to be the cook of the school when we have cooking classes, and her food is always great, and there is always a lot of it. My Spanish has improved in the classroom here but I miss my friends and a girl that I met in Madrid. I practiced my Spanish on the street more there with my friends so that is the reason why I’m returning to Madrid later in the program. It’s a difficult decision because I like it here so much, but it’s the best thing for me right now. I’m really glad I did this trip and I know I will come away with friends from Madrid, Segovia, and even Florida, USA. This was awesome.

John Judd writes from Madrid, Spain:

Things are going pretty well for me. I have made some native friends and find it easiest to practice Spanish with them instead of with other Americans or other non-native speakers. I still am not used to the Spanish way of partying until 6 or 7 in the morning.

I have learned a lot and I can feel that my Spanish has improved. My señora has commented on this as well. I am starting to get more confident in both listening and speaking, although I still have a ways to go. The señora treats me very well, we are currently living with a Swedish guy, and a Japanese girl. The place we are living in is in a nice part of Madrid, I feel very safe there. Our señora told us our apartment is worth about 1.2 million dollars, so I feel lucky to be there. Oh we also have a maid that does our laundry and makes our bed and cooks lunch, so that is nice too! I am really starting to become familiar with the city, which is pretty easy, especially with the metro system. I purchased a month long pass so that I can use it whenever I want as many times as I want.

I am pretty sure I am going to stay in Madrid the entire time. I will probably go to visit the folks in Alicante and El Puerto next month. I just want to concentrate on my studies. I am comfortable where I am at now, and I don’t want to go through the whole process again of being uprooted and adapting to new surroundings.

During Spring Semester 2005 the Spanish Study Abroad program has

• 16 students in Guadalajara, Mexico
• 2 in Guanajuato, Mexico
• 10 in Spain (Madrid, Alicante, Salamanca, and El Puerto de Santa María)
• 7 in Cuenca, Ecuador.

Rachel Goodloe reflects on her experiences in France and Ecuador:

“Why do you want to study abroad?” I was asked this question several times before my trips to France and Ecuador. The answer for me was easy: to experience different cultures, meet new people, expand my view of the world and, as a modern languages major, to improve my ability to communicate. I knew I wanted to study abroad before I came to Mankato. I had been dreaming about going to France since the first time that I read Madeline. I actually decided to come to Mankato because of the excellent French program offered. My dream came true this summer during my six-week trip to France with Dr. Janc. I was able to go into places that I had only read about and dreamed of being in for so long. I experienced the culture that I had only heard about from my teachers. My positive experience in France fired me up for the next country that I was to
Rachel Goodloe, continued

visit three weeks after returning to the States. Ecuador became my second destination and all over again I felt the wonder of experiencing, not just reading about, a different culture while learning the language. I chose to go to Ecuador after speaking with Dr. Contag about her time in Ecuador.

Though some days I longed to be back in the comfort of my own home, I typically found myself in awe of the new environments that I became immersed in. Each day was a new adventure and I learned more in my two trips abroad than years of simply studying textbooks. Not only was I learning about the language, new people, and the culture, but I also learned a lot about myself. I began to question previous views that I held about the world and ways that I, as an American, handled various situations. I realized that there is more than one way to accomplish a task and that one way may not necessarily be better than another. I was pushed to become more flexible, open-minded and patient. Language barriers were difficult to overcome, but the barriers created in my mind of my perception of the world and the “way things should be done” were far more challenging to overcome. What was even more of a jump into cold water was returning to the States, only to find out that my old world wasn’t as perfect as I once thought it was and that I had changed, but everything here was relatively the same. I would not say that these difficulties were negative, however. Without struggles, we would not be forced to grow and question.

Becoming immersed in a new culture is an exciting, challenging experience. I would jump at the opportunity to go again. Studying abroad is different from site seeing or reading a book; it is experiencing. The lessons learned and stories formed through these trips become a part of the student and will never be forgotten.

Language Club News

French Club Activities:

The French Club had a movie night in February. On April 3, the French Club held its annual “Dîner de Gala”. The French Club participated in the International Festival, where they sold crepes to raise scholarship funds.

The following students will become members of the French Honor Society, Pi Delta Phi: Rachel Banfield, Trevor Fleck, Rachel Goodloe, Carla Jensen, Terrijo Hanna Mikulich and Lindsey Pauline Thompson. Congratulations!

German Club Activities:

With only one officer continuing on from Fall Semester, the German Club nonetheless continues to be active and even more productive than in the past, thanks to the enthusiastic and hard work of the new team of officers. Jerome Schmidt continued on as president of the Club, joined by Andrew Thompson as vice president, Grete Laingen as secretary and Matt Denn as treasurer. This semester alone, the German Club held two successful pretzel sale fundraisers outside of Sandella’s and delivered pre-ordered pretzels to faculty offices around campus. In February, the German Club enjoyed a bit of fun and friendly competition at pizza and bowling night. Each month the German Club has had a movie night, showing: “Good Bye Lenin” and “Luther” so far this semester. Every Wednesday from 5 – 6 pm German Club members get together for German Conversation in the comfortable atmosphere of the upstairs space in the Hub Café (especially reserved for the Club during that time).
German Club Activities, continued

German Club participated in the International Festival in April held at East High School in Mankato. The German Club sold Bratwurst on a bun with authentic German Sauerkraut, mustard and Apelschorle and also put together a cultural display.

Upcoming Club activities: the bi-annual field trip to New Ulm, MN on April 30 & cleaning our section of the “Adopt a Highway” section on April 20, 2005. Please contact the German Club at kontakte_1@yahoo.com for further information.

And the winners of the scholarships awarded by the Department of Modern Languages are:

Sponberg Scholarship: Rachel Goodloe will receive a $500 scholarship.

Waldorf Scholarship: Stacie Torigian and Sara Lipetzky will each receive a $200 scholarship.

Kaufmanis Scholarship: Andrew Thompson will receive a $300 scholarship.

Congratulations to all the winners!

Dr. Birgitta Hendrickson, Scandinavian and German faculty member, will retire at the end of Spring 2005 after 29 years. We want to thank her for her dedication and hard work with the Scandinavian and German students and her colleagues in the department and the university. We wish her the very best in her retirement and hope that she will stay in touch!
Faculty News

Dr. Kimberly Contag and Dr. Jim Grabowska spoke at the Lenten Lecture Series at Centenary United Methodist Church in Mankato on 3/15 and at Alexander Mitchell Library in Aberdeen, SD on Thursday, 3/17. The topic of their presentations was Latin-American German Internment History during WWII. The presentation in Mankato was recorded by KMSU radio for broadcast on 3/21. The presentations were tied to “Where the Clouds Meet the Water” a work of creative non-fiction that they co-authored and that was published in September of ’04. The book traces the experiences of Dr. Contag’s father’s family during their forced exile from Ecuador to Germany between 1942-46.

Dr. John Janc attended the annual conference of the Minnesota Council on the teaching of Languages and Cultures on October 29-30 in Bloomington, MN. He served as Show Manager and gave two presentations. He had articles dealing with contemporary France published in the winter and spring issues of the Minnesota Language Review. On March 10-12, he attended the annual meeting of the Central States Conference in Columbus, Ohio, where he gave a presentation on teaching French.

Dr. Evelyn Meyer served as judge for the MN-AATG High School Competition in March 2005, interviewing outstanding students from the German High School programs around the State of Minnesota who competed in-state and nationally against each for scholarship trips to Germany and other prizes.

Dr. Enrique Torner joined the American Translators Association (ATA) and the Upper Midwest Translators & Interpreters Association (A Chapter of the ATA). Thereupon, the president of the UMTIA invited him to offer a lecture at their upcoming conference, an invitation he accepted. The session was entitled “Translating for the Publishing Field,” 3rd Annual Conference (November 6, 2004). Furthermore, he edited the book Cocina Mexicana Saludable for Appletree Press before they printed their second edition. He also reviewed a Spanish Peninsular Civilization textbook for Pearson, entitled Cuéntame cómo pasó. Finally, he re-translated a medical brochure for Immanuel Saint Joseph for pregnant mothers and their families, which had been found to be a very defective translation.

Alumni News

Terry Rodenberg, Executive Director of International Programs, Central Missouri State University, graduated with his masters from Mankato back in 1973. He received one of the Andrew Heiskell Awards for Innovation in International Education in 2005. This award is one of the major awards in the country for innovation in international education, and his university (Central Missouri State University) has won this for a unique teaching/study abroad program that he developed in the Netherlands. See http://www.cmsu.edu/mcts for details. Congratulations!