



THE POLYGLOT

March 08
Volume 6, Issue 1

A MESSAGE FROM DEPARTMENT CHAIR, DR. JIM GRABOWSKA

Greetings from the Department of Modern Languages!

The Changing Face of the Faculty

This is a time of change and growth in the Department of Modern Languages. This past year we said good-bye to Professor Pat Peterson (ESL/TESL and German) and wished her well in her retirement after her 19 years of service and leadership.

We will soon be saying good-bye to Professor Patricia Longwell at the end of this academic year. Professor Longwell will retire after more than 42 years of service to the university, and she will be missed.

Since our most recent newsletter, we have welcomed five new faculty members to our roster! Professors Evan Bibbee in French and Chui-kian (Esther) Smidt in ESL/TESL arrived this fall. They join professors Cecilia Pick and Nadja Krämer in German and Greg Taylor in Spanish, all of whom joined the faculty last year. Modern Languages will benefit from the expertise and teaching excellence that these faculty members bring to our department.



Andreas Award: New Opportunities in Scholarship and Research

Thanks to the 7.5 million dollar gift to the College of Arts and Humanities by the Andreas family, Modern Languages will also benefit from an investment in research and scholarship.

Faculty members with 2 or more years of service will be able to compete for a generous grant to help fund research activities that will be shared with all in a public forum. The gift also provides funds to invite scholars to campus who will likewise share their knowledge with students, faculty, and the broader community. We are all very excited about how these opportunities will enrich our programs.

Table of Contents

Chair's Message	1	Study Abroad News	5
Changing face of the Faculty		Program Highlights	3
Andreas Award	1	> Chinese	
New Faculty Sound bites	2	> German	
Dr. Greg Taylor		> ESL	
Dr. Nadja Kramer		> French	
Dr. Cecilia Pick		> Spanish	
Dr. Evan Bibbee		> Scandinavian	
Dr. Esther Smidt		Spring Activities	5
Fall Activities	3	Honoraries	5
Barbara Timm Visit	3	Hispanic/Chicano/Latino Conference	
Film Series	5	Scholarship News	
International Poetry Recital	4	Student News	
Language Club News	4	Faculty News	





Dr. Evan Bibbee, French



"Why did you choose to study French?" This question, often posed to me by students, is one for which I have no easy answer. To the best of my knowledge, there are no traces of French

ancestry in my personal pedigree, nor do I hail from one of those areas in the deep south or extreme northeast of our country where French is still spoken in homes, local restaurants and neighborhood churches. Though I wish I had something better to offer, I usually tell them that I

first took French because it just 'felt right.'

Admittedly, this is rather vague and less than awe-inspiring. Fortunately, the many things that French has given back to me, the ways in which dedicated study of francophone culture has changed my life for the better are much easier to list: exciting travel, fresh ideas, new friends, and even my wife. Since that first linguistic leap of faith, French has become an essential part of my identity, one without which I would no longer – for lack of a better expression – feel right.

I share this anecdote with you because Minnesota State University in general and the Modern Languages Department in particular have, from the beginning, just 'felt right.' I am therefore confident that this institution, its students, and my new colleagues will, in turn, become a vital part of who I am, both as a teacher-scholar and a human being. I shall do my best to return the favor. Evan Bibbee

Nadja Kramer, German



Hallo! My name is Nadja Krämer, and I started working as an Assistant Professor of German in August 2006.

I have studied German literature, culture

and German studies, as well as American Studies at the universities of Frankfurt and SUNY Buffalo and received my doctorate from Indiana University, Bloomington. Before coming to

Minnesota State Mankato, I worked at Carleton College for several years. I am very interested in German studies, minority and popular culture, and on issues of race and identity in Germany with a focus on memorialization and representation of historic trauma. I am also interested in film studies, urban studies and the practice of place. In my spare time, I enjoy kayaking, camping, cooking and traveling and watching foreign films.

Now I am very excited to continue the excellent work of my predecessor Dr. Evelyn Meyer along with my new colleague, Dr. Cecilia Pick and we have many plans for this German program that Minnesota State Mankato has expanded with the hire of two positions.

Dr. Cecilia Pick, German



I joined the Department of Modern Languages in Fall 2006 after teaching at Eastern Oregon University. With a Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin,

my main research is about women of early modern Germany and the textual and visual images of authors in their printed works. I heard German as a child at home from my mother and grandmother, and I began to study the language in high school.

At MSU, I like to get to know students through classes and German Club activities, and to help open doors for them. I am happy to see students progress so much so that they can study or intern in a German-speaking country or even use their German in the workplace.

Dr. Greg Taylor, Spanish



Greg Taylor, assistant professor of Spanish, joined the Modern Language faculty in the fall of 2006. He had previously taught at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, IL. Dr. Taylor received his Ph.D. in second language acquisition

and instructional technology from the University of South Florida in Tampa.

His research interests include foreign language teaching and learning, and sociolinguistics, in particular, speech act theory. He recently published an article on the effects of elementary school foreign language instruction on overall scholastic achievement, which will appear in the spring volume of the journal Learning Languages.

Dr. Esther Smidt, TESL

The first time I knew I wanted to be an "English teacher," I was in first grade. However, to a seven-year-old born and raised in Malaysia, my understanding of an English teacher was an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher. I spoke English at home and at school, read children's books in English, and learned school subjects in Malaysian language! ESL in Malaysia had a very different face from the one here! Many years later, I completed part of my undergraduate education in England, and was shocked to realize that my British classmates considered my English "wrong" because of its American influence. Still later, now in the United States, my English is again commented upon because of its British influence! Is English my second language? You decide!

On a slightly more serious note, because of my varied experiences, I revel in the diverse opportunities available here at MSU Mankato! I love being able to teach and build relationships with international and domestic students, graduate and undergraduate students, practicing and novice teachers, and native and non-native speakers of English. I also love preparing ESL teachers who are passionate about educating immigrants and refugees here in Minnesota and educating ESL learners worldwide. This is not surprising considering that I first came to the United States as an international student and stayed as an immigrant, and my dissertation was on immigrant identity. However, I am also very interested in Computer-Assisted Language Learning, TESL Methodology, and Research Methodology. I'm looking forward to exciting days ahead!

Fall Activities

Visitor Barbara Timm (Berlin, Germany)

A co-founder of the Stasi (East German State Security) Museum in former East Berlin, freelance photographer and activist Ms. Barbara Timm visited MSU in November 2007. Her first talk, "The Stasi – Atrocities of the East German Secret Police 1949-1989," featured photos from a demonstration that opened the gates to the Stasi headquarters in 1990.

Her second presentation followed the screening of the Academy Award winning film, "The Lives of Others" ("Das

Leben der Anderen"), which was introduced by Dr. Nadja Krämer. Ms. Timm talked about the spy tactics of the Stasi and its effects on the East German population. During her visit, our guest also led German class discussions on, for instance, the "Pioniere," an East German scout group to which she belonged and on Wolf Biermann, a songwriter and journalist whose citizenship was revoked by the East German government. A number of MSU students currently enrolled in Dr. Krämer's course on Berlin can look forward to a special tour of the Stasi Museum by Ms. Timm in May 2008



Spanish Club Update



The Spanish Club members have been very active this academic year. We started with a celebration of the Day of the Dead in early November. Later, we organized "Vive el

Español", an event that gathered about 100 Minnesota State University, Mankato students who were eager to dance and play games in Spanish. Thanks to the support of the MSU community and the team effort of the club members, we raised money to go to Minneapolis and see the Frida Kahlo exhibit at the Walker Art Center in December. We started the year 2008 with "ritmo y sabor" (rhythm and flavor). Merengue and salsa dance lessons are an important part of our meetings as we prepare to go to Minneapolis in April and hit the dance floor of a salsa club. We are also exploring Latin American cuisine, films and traditions. Join us and experience the fun of the Spanish language and culture. We meet every Tuesday at 4:00 pm in CSU 202. For further information, e-mail Erin at erin.framstad@mnsu.edu

International Poetry Recital

Held on Tuesday November 13, 2007 the International poetry recital presented a broad range of languages, from Italian to Nepalese, in 40 poems around the world. The theme of this year's event was "Crossing Boundaries", it was organized by Maria-Claudia Tomany (Scandinavian Studies).

Faculty KUDOS in 2007

- Grabowska, J. A., & Contag, K. E.** (Eds.). (2007). *Cross-disciplinary essays on Don Quixote: Celebrating the 400th anniversary of Miguel de Cervantes' masterpiece*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.
- Gunnarsson, O.** (2007). *Nobody like me* (M-C. Tomany, Trans.). Göttingen: Steidl Verlag.
- Janc, J. J.** (2007). *Que se passe-t-il en France: hiver 2007*. *Minnesota Language Review*, 35(4), 25-29.
- Tomany, M-C.** (2007). *Destination viking*. Cultural Studies Series. Munich: Herbert Utz Verlag.
- Tomany, M-C.** (2007). *Orkneyinga saga: Historiography and regional identity in Orkney*. Cultural Studies Series. Munich: Herbert Utz Verlag.

TESL Updates

In our TESL program, we are privileged to have a strong international presence, whether in the form of students in our MA TESL program or through our service of the incoming international students in our ESL courses. I know that our students have appreciated having diverse classmates in their courses, and we have attempted to collaborate with faculty in other departments at a small scale to make this happen. Last Fall, I collaborated with Rachel Droogsma from Speech Communication to bring together our ESL 101 and SPEE 4/513 students for conversation, an international film, and international food.

We are also cultivating potential international relationships, with Norway, China, Thailand,

and Korea, among others.

This summer, we will continue our study abroad with Thailand and Korea, in effect providing international opportunities for our TESL students.

This diversity of experiences is also occurring with our domestic minority students, in that we are offering ESL 210 for domestic ESL students this semester.

Another event of note was our attendance at the MinneTESOL Conference in November. We went up in two vans, plus numerous cars, and this was a first conference experience for many of our TESL students. We also had our first Alumni gathering here, where we had the opportunity to meet TESL graduates, including many who are currently teaching in K-12 schools. **It is good to be a part of the TESL program.**

Ongoing activities

Modern Languages Film Series

All languages taught in the Department of Modern Languages are represented in the new Modern Languages Film Series, which was launched in Fall 2007. Faculty and Graduate Assistants select and show films in their original language with English subtitles. Admission is free. In Spring 2008, the series features two films each from China and France, as well as from

Argentina, Spain, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and the USA.

Scholarship

Hanna Reátegui-Zirena has been selected as the first recipient of the NECTFL/Marjorie Hall Haley Graduate Student Travel Scholarship. She will be traveling to New York in late March to attend the 55th Annual Northeast Conference on the teaching of Foreign Languages.

Spring activities

Hispanic/Chicano/Latino Conference
"El Pueblo Avanza": Education: The Gateway to Success.
March 6-7, 2008

Latino night
The hottest night in town
March 7th, 2008
Authentic Peruvian food, D.J., entertainment and much more !

Awards and Achievements

Kimberly Contag, who received her BA in Spanish and International Studies at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa, was awarded the Alumni Educational Achievement Award for 2007 on October 18, 2007. Contag's research on WWII research that involved German Ecuadorian internment and exile was featured in the September 2007 issue of *Vistazo*, a national magazine of Ecuador.

Contag's presentations/roundtables:
December 29, 2007 "Mentoring the Undergraduate Scholar/Motivating the Faculty Mentor." Modern

Language Association Annual Meeting. Chicago. November 2-3, 2007" A Changed environment: My changing role as leader and educator." (discussion leader) Fulbright Conference: People and the Planet. Washington D.C.
April 2007 Internados y canjeados alemanes-ecuatorianos en la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Universidad Casa Grande. Guayaquil, Ecuador.
March 29, 2007 Alemanes ecuatorianos exiliados, internados o canjeados en la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Universidad del Azuay. Cuenca, Ecuador.

Study Abroad News

Department of Modern Languages
Minnesota State University, Mankato
227 Armstrong Hall
Mankato, MN 56001

