This year Greece became the test case for all kinds of things. “We’re all Greeks Now” was the title of several articles in the international press. Prominent people used fancy Greek words such as “history,” “myth,” “tragedy,” and “crisis” to explain why the future of Europe, the euro, globalized capitalism, and even democracy hinges on what happens in Greece. This is not the first time Greece appeared so prominently on the world stage. Behind this year’s headlines was Percy Shelley’s famous line, “We are all Greeks,” acknowledging the strong ideal ancient Greece represented in Shelley’s day and the potential Shelley saw in the Greek revolution of 1821 to set off a wider configuration against the imperial European order.

Greece’s significance in public discourse makes it a powerful case study for teaching and research. An article in the pages of our Winter 2010 newsletter described the ways the U-M Modern Greek Program regularly collaborates with other constituencies on and off campus. The article stressed that these collaborations integrate the study of Greece in a broader framework for thinking about current ideas and events.

This academic year the U-M Modern Greek Program will pursue two initiatives that situate Greece on the front lines of global change.

**GREECE AND CHINA INITIATIVE**

The Program is working with the Confucius Institute, an important U-M resource, to put together a theme year on contemporary Greek and Chinese culture entitled “The Classical in Modern Times: A Year of China and Greece.” The Confucius Institute promotes substantive interactions with China’s arts. Joseph S. C. Lam, Professor of Musicology at the School of Music, Theater, and Dance and Director of the Confucius Institute, has observed that both China and Greece are very proud of their ancient heritage and have fashioned their national identity by invoking direct links to a classical past. His observation became the impetus for the Greece-China theme year. This is the first project of its kind in the U.S. and our most ambitious cross-campus collaboration so far.

Over the last decade but especially since the Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008 Olympics, ties between China and Greece have been growing. In the arena of business, the Chinese are making their presence felt through substantial financial investments, for example, in Piraeus, where Cosco, China’s state-owned shipping company, took control of Greece’s largest container facility one year ago. Here again we see Greece on the front lines, as this is China’s most important infrastructure deal in Europe to date and a strategic point of entry to introduce Chinese goods into Europe.

The exchanges between Greece and China have been most mutually satisfying in the domains of tourism, culture, and even agriculture (Greeks introduced the Xinomavro grapevine to Chinese soil last year), where antiquity is a shared source of inspiration. During our China-Greece year, we will examine how the modern nation establishes its sense of origin and destiny by claiming a particular kind of antiquity: the classical past. As the title of the series makes clear, the focus is on the role of the classical as a category, concept, and ideal in contemporary culture, and not on antiquity as such. Why is it that so much in Chinese and Greek society hopes to reconnect with ancient glory and itself become classical? Monthly events will feature how the arts and sciences excavate and reconstruct a classical past.

**UNDERGRADUATE MINI-COURSE ON GREEK MUSIC**

The second initiative is a one-credit mini-course on “Musical Nationalism in Times of Crisis: a Greek Case Study.” Dr. Yona Stamatis will teach the class from October 4 through November 22 in the Fall 2011 semester, when she will be Lecturer in Modern Greek, replacing Artemis Leontis, who begins a year’s leave as Hunting Family Michigan Fellow at the Institute for the Humanities. Dr. Stamatis’s course is open to all undergraduates. It requires no prior knowledge of Greek music or language.

In this innovative course, Greece functions as a case study. Situated on the margins of Europe, Greece is a focal point of contemporary crisis. Music is a piece of that crisis: both a symptom of and a tool for reflecting on and shaping reality, including political and cultural globalization; the economic crisis; the balancing of regional and national governance policies; and the shaping of national identity. Students will study various types of Greek musical expression, from the Eurovision Song Contest, nissiokia (island songs), and parody songs to rebetika, the urban popular song genre that functions today to express an alternative Greekness. The goal will be to develop a critical vocabulary for discussing music in its social context.

Greece is on the front lines of major shifts taking place around us today. As teachers and scholars of Modern Greek, we are eager to explore with our students and colleagues questions of why and how “We’re all Greeks now.”
MODERN GREEK CULTURE AND LANGUAGE IN TIMES OF CRISIS: A MOMENT FOR INNOVATION, VISION, AND FURTHERING OF GOALS

This has been a year of many challenges worldwide: economic, political, and social. Greece stands at the forefront of this global turmoil; what happens in Greece today concerns everyone.

As faculty of a burgeoning Modern Greek program in the U.S., we see this crucial turning point as a teachable moment. Building on our mission and established goals, the significance of this historical moment opens possibilities for further engagement, communication and praxis, and affords new learning opportunities for students, faculty and community members alike. Developments within the academic world also conspire to that end. The French Department’s closing at SUNY Albany, for instance, and similar recent examples demonstrate that the old distinction between “commonly” vs. “less-commonly taught” languages in U.S. institutions (and, of course, Modern Greek was classified with the latter) is no longer valid. For the first time therefore, we face an open arena, where common and less common languages alike can now be perceived on the basis of pertinence, dynamic presence, and innovative learning practices. It is up to us to establish all this, and herein lies the opportunity. Furthermore, it is in the instances where language meets culture that we can seek to make a difference.

Since its beginning the U-M Modern Greek Program sought to combine instruction in language with immersion in Greek culture not only in the classroom but also through events, lectures and performances. Furthermore, via online resources we have been reaching out beyond the classroom. For example, our “Window to Greek Culture” on the Modern Greek website is constantly developed, and new material is being added. It is possible to build on such dynamic engagements even further now, making use of social media and other such resources (blogging, podcasts, peer-to-peer online communication, conference videos, etc.), affording access not just for students and U-M faculty but also the community at large. Furthermore, such online platforms permit direct communication between students and people in different Greek communities in the U.S., Greece, and elsewhere worldwide.

Another priority this year centered on language instruction. Already back in 2006, with the support of the Modern Greek Studies Association (MGSA), U-M Modern Greek spearheaded an effort to bring together Modern Greek university instructors so that we can begin outlining our shared goals, exchange teaching ideas, and foster a collaborative environment within which our students may be better nurtured. The effort resulted in biennial meetings of college and university faculty working to improve Modern Greek Language instruction. In 2010, we convened at U-Indiana, Bloomington. Colleagues from as far as Mexico and Greece participated in a two-day intensive workshop on curricula, learning methods and electronic tools. Turning theory into practice, the primary outcome of this meeting was a task force responsible for drafting common learning/curricular standards for Modern Greek language instruction at institutions of higher learning, building on established frameworks such as the U. S. National Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century, but also on comparable European-frameworks.

In the long-run the creation of national standards for Greek instruction will make the process of student placement or transferring credits smoother and more efficient. Furthermore, it will make it easier for faculty to share learning techniques such as the ones we plan to introduce in the coming years at Michigan, including peer-learning and culture-based/problem oriented language learning: techniques that not only place us at the forefront of language teaching but also speak to a new generation of students accustomed to social media and virtual online experiences. Our goal is to further support and encourage student creativity, autonomy, exploration, and personal discovery.

On a personal note, last year found me back at U-M among wonderful colleagues both in the Program and the Department of Classical Studies; many new ones and others who were old friends, although greatly missing one dear friend and distinguished colleague. This new academic year, while Professor Leontis is on a much deserved leave, having been awarded a prestigious U-M Humanities Institute Fellowship, I have the privilege to work as the Modern Greek Program Coordinator along with the Chair and Director, Professor Vassilis Lambropoulos, and two exceptional young colleagues, Dr. Yona Stamatis in the Fall and Ph.D. candidate Maria Hadijipolycarpou in the Winter.

Four years ago, I was writing a piece for this Newsletter, a sort of farewell, dedicated to our students, “the guys from Michigan,” whose energy and brilliance stimulates all that we do. Today, they are as dynamic, dedicated, engaged, and inquisitive as ever. What teacher would not immediately jump at this great opportunity and challenge? In short, it is wonderful to be in the classroom with such great students once again!

Faculty News

Artemis Leontis will be the Hunting Family Michigan Fellowship at the U-M Institute for the Humanities for 2011–12. She will use the fellowship to complete “Greek in the Flesh: The Alternative Archaeologies of Eva Palmer Sikelianos,” a book-length cultural biography on the most influential western visitor to Greece after Lord Byron. A wealthy New York heiress and cosmopolitan visionary, Palmer spent all her money reviving the Delphic Festivals in 1927 and 1930. Leontis’s research uses Palmer’s creative reconstructions of Greek weaving, dance, music, and tragedy to uncover entanglements between archaeology, gender, modernism and Greece in the 20th century.
We are featuring three U-M Seniors who graduated with High Honors in Modern Greek: Penelope Filyo, Christina Tzortzinis, and Helen Zaharopoulos. Students must have a minimum 3.5 cumulative grade point average to pursue honors. They receive six credits during their Senior year to define, research, write, and orally defend an Honors Thesis (minimum of 40 pages). We asked each of our Honors students to summarize her project and explain why she took it on and what she learned in the process.

Penelope Filyo

“A Nation Framed: Greece’s Symbolic Capital and the Media” explores the relationship between contemporary events in Greece and the international press. Greece is a country with significant cultural and symbolic capital—capital deriving from its classical antiquity. The media repeatedly uses this symbolic capital as a framing device. The ancient Greek past reappears in headlines and broadcasts when Modern Greek events are discussed in the news. At times, the media is skeptical, questioning whether Greece can be a good caretaker of such an ancient, glorious past. When compared and contrasted to its classical past, Greece often finds itself ranked below ancient Greece. This repeated media framing of Greece has the ability to influence perceptions and opinions of the country.

My thesis explores three different cases. The first chapter focuses on the media’s reaction to the opening of the new Acropolis Museum and contest over the Parthenon Marbles. The next chapter looks at the Athens 2004 summer Olympic Games, when journalist coverage was relentless in using ancient allusions to bridge the gap between the past and present. The third chapter explores the economic crisis of the present day. In this case, the media is skeptical, questioning whether Greece can financial trouble into the frame of the ancient past, even where there is no direct relevance.

I embarked on the journey of writing a Modern Greek Honors Thesis for several reasons. My studies in the Modern Greek Program increased my awareness of ancient Greece’s presence in our own advanced day and age. Greece’s history appears in the most unexpected but also some obvious places. With a double concentration in Communications Studies, I began noticing certain trends in the media’s representation of Greece, especially the way the media was framing Greece’s “tragedy” during its current economic troubles. The Honors Thesis gave me an avenue to explore these trends in depth across several case studies. Through careful, comparative analysis, I found that the allusions to the Greek mythology and antiquity were no coincidence, but strategically placed by journalists to draw on Greece’s symbolic and cultural capital. I began to question the allusions to the Greek mythology and antiquity were no coincidence, but strategically placed by journalists to draw on Greece’s symbolic and cultural capital. I began to question

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Acknowledging our Donors

Mr. Joshua Q. Ahsoak, Mr. Carl and Nancy Anderson, Ms. Bridget K. Ballint, Mr. Alan L. Boegehold, Ms. Caitlin E. Britsbois, Mrs. Rosanne Ehrlich, Ms. Angela Evangelinos, Mr. Kurt and Charlotte Hemr, Richard M. Goodman, Mr. Nicholas L. Karamanou and Evelyn Karmanos, Donat R. Leclair, Jr., Ms. Annie Lutes, Mr. Gregory J. Madden, Robert L. Marsh, Mr. Jonathan S. and Karen Martin, Dr. Jonathan L. Marwil, Mrs. Aurelia E. Michaels, Mr. William H. Race, Dr. Kenneth R. Sladkin, Ms. Katrin Stamatis, Terence Vogel and Daphne Swabey, Mrs. Barbara Buckman Williams

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historical lessons with a distant and often vague connection to current events. As I looked through an extensive collection of newspaper articles, I realized that the use of Greece’s symbolic capital is a way for the press to simultaneously legitimize and delegitimize the country’s modern role. I learned that despite Greece’s efforts to move forward in modernity, the press continues to paint a picture suggesting that Greece will not be able to live up to its legacy.

As a student who grew up in the 1990s with the rise of Internet communication, I am a member of the last generation to remember a world without computers, cell phones or social media. Connecting my knowledge of the recent past with that of the radically different present became an integral part of my understanding and learning as I proceeded with this project. My research is, in a very real sense, an homage to our globalizing world.

Christina Tzortzinis

“Expressions of Greek America” is a multilayered study about key moments in foreign policy when Greek and United States interests came into opposition, challenging the place of Greek Americans in U.S. society while also inspiring lasting community-building efforts. My thesis charts Greek American reactions to events abroad through the Junta government 1967-74, the Cyprus crisis of 1974-75, and the more recent community outcry over the Macedonia naming issue. I argue that the significance of Greek identity in the diaspora is not a tenuous connection to static, distant heritage, but a continuing interaction in which changing homelands and diasporic communities influence each other in meaningful ways.

I was initially drawn to this project for the challenge of developing a multidimensional research topic that could integrate my interests in the dynamics of American society, my passion for Modern Greek studies, and my training as a History major at U-M. This study matters because the past is an integral part of the present, just as the present builds the future. I think that reflecting on past changes in communities is an important way for them to understand how circumstances shaped them and how they can move forward from those experiences to build upon them in the present, and this is very relevant to the changes happening with U.S. society today. I find historical and social complexities compelling. I was also excited to link my own experience as a Greek American with the grounding of a sustained academic study, and I welcomed the opportunity to work closely with faculty members to shape my own research project and add something to the field.

Working on my thesis was an even more valuable experience than I had anticipated when I began the process: not only did I gain valuable knowledge about life during one of the most revolutionary periods in American social history, the 1960s. I also learned how to work with an archive to develop a focus for my research. I had the fortune to shape my project with the richness of the primary source documents in James Pyrros’s collection of Greek Junta papers housed in U-M’s Hatcher Graduate Library Special Collection. I read the words of those who had been active in the community during this time, and it became very important for me to showcase their voices in my work. My thesis contrasts the materiality of the archive—paper telegrams, personal letters, and newspaper clippings—with my sources from the current millennium, which are nearly exclusively web-based and therefore exist electronically. I found it really interesting to look at these shifts in media and examine their effects on community building in Greek America.

As a student who grew up in the 1990s with the rise of Internet communication, I am a member of the last generation to remember a world without computers, cell phones or social media. Connecting my knowledge of the recent past with that of the radically different present became an integral part of my understanding and learning as I proceeded with this project. My research is, in a very real sense, an homage to our globalizing world.

Eleni Zaharopoulos

At the conclusion of my third year as an undergraduate, I started thinking about developing a senior Honors Thesis in the Modern Greek Program. My motivation stemmed from a combination of things: the prestige of potentially graduating with Honors from the reputable U-M, the opportunity to increase my knowledge of my ethnic culture and identity, the participation in the strong mental exercise of developing a piece of scholarly research. Furthermore I anticipated that I would find personal satisfaction in challenging and exceeding my academic standards. Above all, I thought of the honor and pride it would bring to my Greek parents, who taught me about my heritage and instilled a strong educational value deep within my roots.

“Greek American Identity Under Historical, Social, and Literary Transformation” encompasses three generations of Greeks in Michigan and analyzes Greek identity within and through these generations. I used Yiorgos Anagnostou’s book, *Contours of White Ethnicity*, as my theoretical base model; I questioned, analyzed, and developed his argument by suggesting that Greek American identity constantly changes throughout each generation via circumstance, social environment, or political atmosphere (just to name a few factors). I examined three different texts: *Legends and Legacies* by Pearl Kastra Ahnen, *My Detroit* by Dan Georgakas, and *Middlesex* by Jeffrey Eugenides. I discovered in these texts distinctions in literary richness. As we move from pure fact in Ahnen’s work, to memoir in Georgakas’s text, to fictionalization in Eugenides’ novel, the level of flexibility in identity interpretation increases. In other words, the more fiction involved, the more room there is for interpreting identity. This suggests that Greek identity is extremely fluid and is constantly questioned and developed depending on circumstance.

Although I felt discouraged and was on the brink of giving up multiple times, my thesis writing process was well worth the struggle. The long cycle of drafting chapters, then revising, editing, and proofreading taught me discipline and stamina. I learned that a thesis is more than just writing a 50-page paper; it is a research process that constantly changes. To this day, I feel there is still more I can do to develop my thesis; my paper was a mere drop of water in an ocean of scholarly work. I discovered that there is always more to learn and develop within an academic framework as well as in personal terms within myself.

Looking back at the long hours at the library, the push to work harder, the criticism and comments, the constant questioning, I would do it all again in a heartbeat. I grew as an intellectual as well as a person. This is the first step of many in my trek to better understanding the research that encompasses my heritage and culture. At the conclusion of this journey of Honors Thesis writing, I encourage my younger peers to realize the value and pride that comes with writing a thesis, so that they too can experience even a fraction of what I felt throughout this process.
Languages have always been a passion of mine, but Greek has held a special place. From early on, as I was growing up in Bulgaria, I was introduced to different elements from our southern neighbor. My mother had a special influence since she played Greek music and had a strong interest in Greek cinema. Even in those early years I was mesmerized by the beautiful sound of Greek. I set a goal to speak it one day! When we moved to the U.S., the beautiful sound of Greek. I set a goal to build on what I have learned so far about Greek culture and the Balkans as a whole.

Looking back on the last four years, I consider being part of the Program to be one of my most enriching decisions. I’ve had the opportunity to learn from some of the best faculty, who actively supported my pursuits. I’ve also made lasting friendships. Through my deeper knowledge of Greek and Greece, now I also have the tools to look at my own culture through a comparative lens and reflect on my personal and cultural surroundings. My Modern Greek concentration has provided me with a wide range of knowledge and skills, but most importantly, it has left me with an undying thirst to build on what I have learned so far about the Greek culture and the Balkans as a whole.”

*Awarded in memory of Calliopi Evangelinos, recognizing the most outstanding undergraduate senior who excels in the study of Modern Greek.

Helen Ioannou, Contexts for Classics Undergraduate Translation Prize for “Translating Womanhood: Voices from Greece” (poetry by Kiki Dimoula and singer-songwriter Efstathia)

Aphrodite Roumanis, Modern Greek 1 Translation Award

Helen Ioannou, Modern Greek 2 Translation Award

2011 GRADUATES: CONCENTRATORS, MINORS, HONORS

Maria Antonova Atanasova, B.A., Modern Greek; Psychology. She and her husband welcomed baby Dimitar on May 25!

George Bekris, B. A., Program in the Environment; Minor, Modern Greek.

Dimitra Boutsikakis, B.A., Modern Greek; Economics. She will be applying to Public Policy schools for a MPA in Environmental Policy.

Penelope Filyo, B.A., Communications; Modern Greek with High Honors (Artemis Leontis, thesis advisor, Vassilios Lambropoulos, reader). She is exploring career opportunities in the field of broadcast journalism.

Nicholas Fotio, B.A., Modern Greek. This fall he is entering the 4-year Doctor of Chiropractic Degree Program at the National University of Health Sciences in Chicago.

Marisa Frink, B.A., Psychology and International Studies; Minor, Modern Greek. She will be working for Proctor & Gamble in Fayetteville, AK as Walmart account manager in the beauty and health business.

Matthew Jones, B.A., Psychology; Minor, Modern Greek. He is working in a U-M Psychology research lab and intends to pursue graduate studies in Public Administration.

Andreas Karatsinides, B.S., Cellular & Molecular Biology; Minor, Modern Greek. Andreas is working as a Laboratory Technician at U-M Comprehensive Cancer Center studying prostate and bladder cancer lines. He has applied to dental schools for fall 2012.

Ana Kotsogiannis, B.S., Nursing; Minor, Modern Greek. Ana is working as a Registered Nurse (RN) at Georgetown University Hospital in the Surgical Intensive Care Unit (SICU).

Anastasia Mitropoulos-Rundus, B.A. (Fall 2011), Organizational Studies; Minor, Modern Greek.

Nina Nicole Pappas, B.A., Modern Greek. Nina will continue her studies at Seton Hall University School of Law.

*Christina B. Tzortzinis, B.A. (Fall 2011), History; Modern Greek with High Honors (Artemis Leontis, thesis advisor, Despina Margomenou, reader). She will continue her research on ethnic community building in the age of the internet before pursuing graduate studies.

*Eleni Anne Zaharopoulos, B.A., Political Science; Modern Greek with High Honors (Vassilios Lambropoulos, thesis advisor, Despina Margomenou, reader). This fall she will be working at a law office as a paralegal before attending law school in the fall of 2012.

*Completed an Honors Thesis in Modern Greek

GRANTS FOR SUMMER STUDY

Molly Clark, Undergraduate pursuing a Modern Greek Concentration, received a Foundation for Modern Greek Studies (FMGS) grant to attend the College Year in Athens (CYA) Summer Study Abroad Program.

Alexander Melidis, Undergraduate in Engineering pursuing a Modern Greek Minor, received a FMGS grant to attend the CYA Summer Study Abroad Program.

Leigh S. Saris, PhD Student, Department of Anthropology, received a Constantine A. Tsangadas Trust grant to attend the Institute for Balkan Studies International Summer School for Greek Language, History and Culture.

Colton Babladelis, Undergraduate pursuing a Modern Greek Minor, received a FMGS grant to attend the CYA Summer Study Abroad Program.

Recep Gul, PhD Student, School of Music, received a Tsangadas grant to attend the Summer Course in Modern Greek at the National and Kapodistrian U-Athens.
THE CLASSICAL IN MODERN GREEK TIMES:
A YEAR ON CHINA AND GREECE
2011-12 Event Schedule

2011

THURS., SEPT. 22, 2011 AT 4:00 PM
2175 Angell Hall, Classical Studies Library
435 S. State Street, Central Campus, U-M
Prof. Alexander Beecroft, Comparative Literature, South Carolina

WED., OCT. 26, 2011 AT 7:00-10:00 PM
Auditorium D, Angell Hall
435 S. State Street, Central Campus, U-M
Greek Movie Night, “Never on Sunday”
Visit the lsa.umich.edu/modgreek for upcoming details

NOV. THROUGH JAN., 2011
Location TBD
Photography exhibition on excavations
Visit the lsa.umich.edu/modgreek for upcoming details

2012

WED., JAN. 25, 2012 AT 7:00-10:00 PM
Location TBD
Chinese Movie night, Title TBD
Visit the lsa.umich.edu/modgreek for upcoming details

MON., FEB. 20, 2012 AT 4:00 PM
Location TBD
Combined lectures by Dr. Laurie Talalay, Kelsey Museum, and a Chinese Specialist on China and Greece in popular culture
Visit the lsa.umich.edu/modgreek for upcoming details

FRI., MARCH 30, 2012 AT 4:00-8:00 PM
Michigan League Ballroom
Roundtable discussion of U-M Faculty and Gala

SAT., APR. 7, 2012 AT 8:00 PM
Stamps Auditorium, Walgreen Art Center
North Campus, U-M
Concert of Chinese and Greek Lament

New and improved site, same location!
Visit us, lsa.umich.edu/edu/modgreek