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We are beginning 2005 with a new newsletter format. We’re moving to a once-a-year publication in which we hope to offer you more detailed information about our programs, our faculty, and our students. Let us know what you think!

RLL is a busy place these days: we continue to host a series of distinguished speakers, including Michael Hardt, who joins us in March for the Keniston Lecture, and we look forward to hosting a major international conference in April on “What’s New: Transatlantic Luso-Spanish Debates and the Market of Ideas.” The conference will bring together scholars from Europe, Latin America, and the U.S. to discuss and debate recent intellectual and institutional shifts in the area broadly defined as Luso-Spanish studies. We anticipate that “What’s New” will generate a great deal of excitement and that it will also bring attention to our excellent programs in Spanish at the University of Michigan.

One topic of conversation at the conference will be the location of Luso-Spanish studies in Romance Languages departments. As you may know, many departments of Romance Languages in American universities have split into departments of Spanish and Portuguese and departments of French and Italian. At Michigan we see Romance Languages as an important unifying category for our research and teaching, and we are working to formalize collaborations across languages. This semester we’re initiating the first of what we hope will become a series of courses team-taught by faculty from different language groups in RLL. In “Versions of Autonomy,” taught as Spanish 430/Italian 422, Professors Santiago Colás and Vincenzo Binetti are examining modern Italian and Latin American examples of fiction, poetry, and film that focus on the relation between childhood and adulthood and on the passage from childhood to adulthood. Their goal is to explore with their students topics such as innocence, experience, imagination, knowledge, authority, and autonomy, and to think about the political and/or ethical implications of the various ways of conceiving these concepts and the relationships among them. Students will read in the original language when possible—they should be able to read Spanish or Italian, and we have a growing number of students who are proficient in more than one Romance language. We are eager to make possible teaching collaborations among language groups in the department and we feel that such collaborations allow our students to experience the intellectual life of our department more fully.

We would love to get your feedback on some of the projects described in this newsletter, and I’d be happy to offer more information about these programs or about our future plans.

With very best wishes,

Peggy McCracken

Check us out on the web: www.lsa.umich.edu/rl1

Department Chair: Peggy McCracken
Associate Chair: Cristina Moreiras-Menor
Graduate Chair: David Carron
Editor/Designer: April Caldwell

The Regents of the University of Michigan, David A. Brandon, Laurence B. Deitch, Olivia O. Maynard, Rebecca McGinley, Andrea Fischer Newman, Andrew C. Richner, S. Martin Taylor, Katherine E. White, Mary Sue Coleman (ex-officio)

The University of Michigan is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution.

What’s New:

Transatlantic Luso-Spanish Debates and the Market of Ideas

Over the last twenty years the Humanities in general have witnessed a series of profound and far-reaching transformations—in the ways departments think about themselves, their place in the university, and their relation to the outside world. The emergence of the cultural studies paradigm, with an interdisciplinary emphasis on the institutional and the intellectual, has opened up new avenues in the teaching and research of culture. It has also had important ramifications for the ways we think about the relationship between the world and the university. This new institutional configuration cannot be separated from recent shifts in national and international economic realities. The passage from the Cold War to so-called globalization is closely linked to how we think and act in the university. However, the connections between these two areas have not been sufficiently elucidated and/or theorized.

In the area of study loosely and insufficiently referred to as “Spanish,” institutional, epistemological, and economic shifts have coincided with an array of new paradigms, new theoretical approaches and new critical possibilities, as well as a remarkable upsurge in the demand for Spanish as a second language at the undergraduate level. The dramatic expansion of Spanish language programs throughout the country, together with the active integration in both the undergraduate and graduate-level curriculums of cultural, literary and film studies, postcolonial studies, race and ethnicity studies, gender, sexuality, and women’s studies, migration and Diaspora studies, Transatlantic studies, etc., put our field in a unique position both for the extension of intellectual debate on campus and beyond, as well as for the examination of the importance of cultural specificity within the Humanities in general.

What’s New: Transatlantic Luso-Spanish Debates and the Market of Ideas will examine intellectual and institutional shifts in “Luso-Spanish Studies” over the last twenty years, paying particular attention to the relation between the astounding expansion and extension of new critical paradigms within the university, and within the field of “Luso-Spanish” in particular. Some of the most important researchers on Spain, Latin America, Brazil, and Portugal will be present. Some of the topics to be addressed include “The Political Economy of Cultural Production,” “Social Movements and the Role of the Intellectual,” “Nodes of Knowledge Produced by Literature and the Arts,” and “Theorizing Culture.”

The conference will bring scholars from Europe, Latin America, and the U.S. together with colleagues and graduate students from the University of Michigan. In addition to panel presentations by guest speakers, round table discussions designed to recap the discussion of the day and carry it forward to new areas of reflection will include RLL graduate students and faculty in addition to invited speakers. A performance by Josefina Baz will close events.

EVENT: What’s New: Transatlantic Luso-Spanish Debates and the Market of Ideas

WHEN: April 1 & 2, 2005
WHERE: Rackham Assembly Hall

Cristina Moreiras-Menor
Associate Professor of Spanish

EDUCATION: Ph.D. University of California, Davis, 1994
AREAS: Modern and Contemporary Spanish Literature (XIX to the present), Film, Cultural Theory, and Women’s Studies
RECENT PUBLICATIONS: Culture, Honda: Literatura y Cine en la España Democrática (Editorial Libertarias/Produhito 2002).
Giorgio Bertellini and Ivonne Del Valle Wiarco

Ivonne Del Valle Wiarco

Assistant Professor of Spanish

EDUCATION: M.A. and Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley 2004

AREAS: Colonial Latin American Studies, History and Historiography, Postcolonial Theory


Spending her summer in Madrid, Wiarco attended the University of Milan, where she specialized in urban film culture. In 2001, she received a national award for her bachelor’s thesis, from Mexico’s Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia.

She joins the department as a specialist in Transatlantic Cultural History and Theory, with plans for research on images and ideas of America in Spain, and on instances of “extreme contact” between indigenous peoples and Spaniards on American soil. By looking primarily at Guadalajara and Jerez de la Frontera, she plans to expand her research to include other contexts.

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"I have a deep interest in history and the way social, political, and economic movements shape writing and vice versa," says Professor Del Valle. "I am also particularly intrigued by the status of language and writing, and the traces material culture leaves on them at any given place and time.

Giorgio Bertellini

Giorgio Bertellini received his Ph.D. in Cinema Studies from Tisch School of the Arts at New York University in 2001, after receiving a degree in philosophy from the University of Milan. A fellow at the Michigan Society of Fellows from 2001 to 2004, Bertellini is currently researching the racial fabric of early American cinema for a book he plans to write on Southern Italians’ film representation and experiences in Italy and New York City at the turn of the 20th century.

He has completed two essays on urban film culture in the US, respectively "Divorced: Placed Rhetorics of Masculinity, Racial Identity, and Politics Among Italian Americans in 1920s New York City" (Journal of Urban History, 2005) and "Black Hands and White Hearts: Italian Immigrants as Urban Racial Types in Early American Film Culture" (Journal of Urban History, 2004). The latter will also be reprinted in a forthcoming anthology titled Mob Culture: Hidden Histories of the American Gangster Film (Rutgers University Press, 2005).

Expanding the same research toward other contexts of urban film culture, Bertellini spent the summer of 2003 in Buenos Aires, investigating Southern Italians’ contribution to and experience of silent cinema on Argentina.

Visiting Professors

"I'm half Chilean and half Finnish. I studied in Santiago de Chile and in New Haven, Connecticut. My field is very contemporary Latin American Literature and Culture (late 20th and early 21st centuries). I have also studied in Argentina at La Plata and in the New York University Department at Yale University. I am now working on my dissertation on the Argentine film industry in the 20th century. I have been teaching in the University of New York for 20 years."

"I am coming from Cornell University, where I did my doctorate work in comparative literature, specializing in Latin American literature. I have also studied in Argentina at the Universidad de Buenos Aires and in the New York University Department at Yale University. I now have the opportunity to continue my intellectual engagement and growth at the University of Michigan. The department is one of the finest—full of exciting scholars and teachers working on a variety of innovative projects, some interdisciplinary, some deeply disciplined, all interesting. It is also full of great students. I look forward to engaging with them all, both on a professional and a personal level, and learning the ways of Anne Arbor."

Ivonne Del Valle Wiarco

Assistant Professor of Spanish

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In their own words:

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Let's brag a little. After all, we have good reasons to...

Our Ph.D. programs are more vibrant than ever. As the word is getting out that our department proposes a unique, cutting edge approach to graduate studies in Romance literatures and cultures, our pool of applicants has been growing steadily. Of course, the rebirth of the Italian program has played a crucial part in adding to the diversity and enthusiasm of our recent entering cohorts, and we look forward to seeing it grow. But in Spanish and French too, a greater proportion of the students we admit decide to accept our offers—which accounts for the surprisingly large cohorts of the past few years. Our competitive package has much to do with it, and we hope to be able to keep it up in the future. But it is our innovative philosophy, made of dialogue between the disciplines, flexibility in coursework, and expansion beyond the traditional fields of study, that has attracted bright and intellectually creative students who know that Michigan is the place for them to thrive. In fact, more and more of our colleagues send us their top students. Why wouldn't they? Our spirit of collaboration and mutual support, the unusual availability of our faculty, the nurturing of new modes of scholarship... all this makes us a very special intellectual community.

Our graduate students are an active bunch, too. There’s RLGSA and the reading groups; there are publications and conference papers; and, yes, a few parties as well. I’ll spotlight one telling event: last year’s impressive Fraker conference. As professionally organized as any conference I’ve ever been to, it also included two prestigious keynote speakers for the first time. The fact that both our students’ top choices immediately accepted to participate says it all. And of all the panelists coming from all over the country, our students were the best. I told you we would brag.  

David Caron

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Graduate Student Funding

Graduate student funding is a strong priority for RLL in the Michigan Difference Campaign. Our goal is to offer every entering student a first year fellowship; students receiving first-year fellowships are better positioned for success in a rigorous graduate program because they do not have to manage teaching responsibilities along with the intense demands of the first year of study. We also seek to fund fellowships for research abroad, since most of our graduate students need to spend at least one semester abroad for dissertation research during the second half of their doctoral career. This research, along with the experience of living in the culture they will eventually teach, is crucial to our students’ research and teaching success. The department’s development priorities are described at http://www.lsa.umich.edu/lsa/alumni/campaign/depts/.

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Spotlight: Romance Languages Graduate Student Association (RLGSA)

The Romance Languages Graduate Student Association (RLGSA) helps to create a social and intellectual community for graduate students at all stages of their studies and in all language fields taught in the department. It provides a space in which department students can connect with each other outside of their coursework and teaching.

This year, RLGSA has continued to host both a film series and a set of very successful roundtable discussions on texts of interest to students. These activities, coupled with the annual Charles F. Fraker graduate student conference, contribute to the intellectual life of the department. In some cases, gatherings through RLGSA bring students together with faculty members and lecturers, such as was true of the memorial for Jacques Derrida, in which a range of department members shared their experiences of reading and working with this philosopher and theorist. It is also through this association that students choose their representatives for the department’s graduate and executive committees. Lastly, RLGSA helps pair members of the incoming grad student cohort with a returning student to create a mentoring relationship.

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Meet the new Grad students

Daniel Arroyo (Spanish)
B.A., Universidad de Sevilla
Interests: 20th-century Penninsular Studies

Federica Colleoni (Italian)
B.A., Università di Bergamo
M.A., Indiana University
Interests: 20th-century Literature and Culture

Joy Collman (Spanish)
B.A., Lewis & Clark College
Interests: 20th-century Literature and Culture

Talia Dajes (Spanish)
B.A., Universidad Católica Perú
Interests: Pop culture, Peru, Gender Studies

Elena Dall’ Torre (French)
B.A., Università degli Studi del Piemonte Orientale
M.A., University of Tennessee
Interests: Queer Studies, Quebecois Literature

Javier Entrambasaguas (Spanish)
Law degree, Universitat de les Illes Balears
Interests: Film Studies

Jessica Pineda (Spanish)
B.A., New York University
M.A., New York University (Madrid)
Interests: Cuban Studies

Pedro Porben (Spanish)
B.A., Centro U de Pinar del Rio
M.A., Bowling Green University
Interests: Latin American & Caribbean Studies

Roberto Robles (Spanish)
B.A., Universidad de Burgos
M.A., Western Michigan University
Interests: 20th-century Literature, Penninsular Studies

Ofelia Ros (Spanish)
B.A., ISE Psicologia
Interests: Psychoanalysis, Linguistics

Kevin Smith (French)
B.A., Dartmouth University
Interests: 16th-century Literature

Robert Wells (Spanish)
B.A., University of Kansas
Interests: 20th-century Literature

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In Remembrance

With great sadness, we note the passing of our colleague, graduate student and friend, Maggie Caygill-Brouwers, on January 25, 2004, following a long and valiant struggle with cancer. Maggie was a vibrant person, with a contagious smile and enthusiasm for life that we all found inspiring. At the memorial service we hosted in Maggie’s honor, many department members shared memories, including these words from Professor Alejandro Herreño. “For one of my seminars, Maggie wrote a compelling essay on the ‘silencing’ experienced by women writers in Latin America...Maggie, don’t you fret, you will never be silent or forgotten in our memory.”
In Spring 2004, 14 students from the University of Michigan along with faculty member Andy Noverr and graduate student Annie Hesp laced up their boots, pulled on their backpacks and headed to Spain to walk the Camino de Santiago (St. James Way). The goal of this project was to analyze how the concept of community intersected with the Camino while traveling along the trail.

The Camino de Santiago is a 1000-year-old pilgrimage that traverses Northern Spain, starting in the Pyrenees and ending in Santiago de Compostela, where the remains of St. James are said to be buried in the cathedral.

Before setting out, few of the students had ever been abroad, much less hiked 200 miles, so nobody quite knew what to expect. It was, however, the unexpected events that made this trip so memorable. The first occurred our first night on the Camino in the town of León where we sang Vespers together with Sister Ana and the nuns who ran the albergue, one of the special hostels reserved for pilgrims.

Soon into our trek we met Machi, a doctor from Chile who was walking the Camino barefoot. Machi quickly became an integral part of our Camino family. As we walked together during the mornings he told us stories about life in Chile. At night he helped us cure our never-healing blisters that developed from walking approximately 15 miles each day for 15 days straight.

In Tricastela, we met Luis, the owner of one of the town’s albergues. In the afternoon he took us on a tour explaining the history and architecture of the town. As a former architect, Luis was the perfect person to teach us about the Galician architecture. Later that night, he prepared for us a quinomada, a ceremonial drink that requires chanting a special incantation as the beverage is lit on fire.

By the time we reached our final destination, the Cathedral at Santiago, we were all experienced pilgrims and we had the credentials to prove it: you could see the exhaustion on our faces, the grime on our clothes, and blisters on our feet.

Since returning to campus, the students have been sharing their experiences with the university community in a variety of ways: some have given presentations in classes, some are preparing a photo exhibit to take around to different venues, and at least one student is planning to return to the Camino this time as a volunteer at an albergue.

Without doubt, this program would have never occurred without the generous funding provided by GIEU (Global Intercultural Experience for Undergraduates). Although Andy and Annie aren’t planning another trip this year, look for the Camino program to return in 2006.
Robert A. Holtzman (M.A. Spanish '61) retired as professor and chairperson of the Foreign Language Department at Schoolcraft College in May 2004. She has been listed in Who's Who in the World (Marquis 2004).

Barbara J. Pomey (Spanish '66) just wanted to comment, "It was nice to see the names of the award recipients. Louise Conlon, a recipient of an RLL Book Award, is one of my former high school students. Congratulations to her!"
E-mail: bpomey@comcast.net

Zaiga R. Hauserman (M.A. French '59) has retired after teaching French and Spanish at Lincoln Park High School for over 39 years. He notes that he enjoyed taking his students and colleagues abroad for many trips. He adds, "I have fond memories of Monsieur Carduner at UM."

Barbara Sue Dickson Carlson (Spanish '73) has taught middle school world languages for Wayne-Westland schools for 15 years. She has also served as a cooperating teacher for seven student interns through the UM MAC program.
E-mail: sdickson@aol.com

Mary L. Rosseel-Jones (French w/ Honors '73, M.A. French '76) is currently a retired staff counsel member from DMC. She was a teaching assistant in French when she earned her Master's and worked in law for 15 years doing international and personal injury, and product liability cases. Married to a law school friend, she has one child and homeschools her.

Jan Kozma (Spanish '68, M.A. '70, Ph.D. Italian '73) is a Professor of Italian at the University of Kansas. She recently published her translation of Grazia Deledda's novel, Arias, with Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. Her translation of Deledda's Marianna Sirca will be appearing next year. Deledda was an Italian novelist who wrote in the late 19th and early 20th century and won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1926.
E-mail: jkozma@ku.edu

Paul O'Donnell (B.A. '76, M.A. '78, Ph.D. Romance Linguistics '86) is the co-author of Intro to Spanish: Un Curso Practico and Spanish for Professionals textbooks. Twice chair of the Department of Foreign Languages at UM Flint, he has published over 30 articles and is currently teaching a new course, Spanish for the Professions.
E-mail: podonnell@umflint.edu

Jennifer Bostrom (Spanish 2004) is currently working as an intern at Motorola in corporate human resources in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. After her internship, she plans to move to the Bay Area of California.
E-mail: jenniferbostrom@yahoo.com

The University of Michigan has launched a fundraising campaign with the goal of $2.5 billion. The Department of Romance Languages and Literatures is featured along with other LSA departments in the campaign, and RLL’s campaign priorities are listed at http://www.lsa.umich.edu/lsa/alumni/campaign/depts/. With your help we seek to expand our strengths in interdisciplinary literary and cultural studies through strong commitments to a variety of study abroad and experiential opportunities for our students and support for faculty research.

RLL’s development priorities include fellowship support for graduate students, study abroad and internship abroad support for undergraduate students, and a departmental strategic fund that will allow us to mount biannual conferences, invite visiting scholars and writers to campus, offer research grants to support faculty and students, support undergraduate travel to international conferences, and supplement faculty recruitment and retention offers.

These priorities are described in detail on our campaign webpage. In order to continue our innovative, engaging programs of study and to promote the research of our excellent faculty, RLL must be able to increase the variety of learning experiences we offer to undergraduates, offer fellowships to top graduate students, and support faculty and visiting scholars.

Campaign website for RLL: http://www.lsa.umich.edu/lsa/alumni/campaign/depts/
The Keniston Lecture series was created from a generous endowment made by the Keniston family to honor Hayward Keniston. Born in Sommerville, Massachusetts in 1883, Hayward Keniston was considered a courageous and principled man by his friends and colleagues. He received both his A.B. and Ph.D. from Harvard, later teaching at Harvard, Cornell and the University of Chicago. He worked for the American Embassies in Rome and Buenos Aires during World War I and WWII. Keniston came to the University of Michigan in 1940. He was named Domingo Faustino Sarmiento University Professor of Romance Languages and served as dean of the College of LSA from 1945 to 1951. Keniston retired from UM in 1952, but continued his teaching and scholarly work until the age of 80.

Started in 1971, the Keniston Lecture series promotes the academic exchange that characterized Hayward Keniston’s work at the University of Michigan. RLL is very pleased to welcome Michael Hardt as the guest speaker for the 25th Annual Keniston Lecture.

Michael Hardt is an Associate Professor of Literature and Romance Studies at Duke University. He is the author of Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy and he also co-authored Multitude, Empire, and Labor of Dionysus. This year he will present his lecture “Thomas Jefferson’s Democracy”.

Date: March 10, 2005

Speaker: Michael Hardt, Duke University

Where: Rackham 4th floor Ampitheatre

*Reception follows in the Rackham 4th floor Assembly Hall

Time: 4pm