

Spanish Department

Newsletter 2014 - 2015



News and Announcements!

Marjorie Agosín lectured at several universities this year, among them UCLA, where she spoke about the theme of diasporic writing. She was the keynote speaker at “The World Upside Down” conference at the University of California, Merced, in April and at the Illinois Holocaust Museum in May. Marjorie was invited by the city of Vienna and the Jewish Welcome Center to be their honored guest in March. She received the keys to the city of Vienna and read her poetry at the University of Vienna and at the University of Graz. This June, Marjorie will receive an honorary degree from Union College. Her novel for young adults, *I Lived on Butterfly Hill* received the 2015 Pura Belpré Award from the American Library Association. The novel has received several other distinctions, including being listed as a finalist for the Jewish Book Award and the International Latino Book Award.

While on leave during the Spring semester, **Verónica Darer** researched student learning and continued her work with BOW (Babson, Olin, Wellesley Collaboration). With her Olin colleague, Professor Yevgeniya Zastavker, she presented a workshop and a paper on using discourse analysis to understand classroom culture at the Frontiers in Education conference in Madrid, Spain. Verónica also participated in a panel on Gabriela Mistral as an educator at this year’s Massachusetts Poetry Festival. Her most recent research projects with Professor Evelina Guzauskite involve the assessment of courses that use Blended Learning as part of the curriculum. In the Fall, Verónica will continue her work with students at the intermediate level. She certainly has missed her students and looks forward to teaching next year!

Elena Gascón-Vera contributed an article, "La mujer desesencializada en *La piel que habito* 2011, de Pedro Almodóvar," to the anthology *Agentes de cambio. perspectivas cinematográficas de España y Latinoamérica en el Siglo XXI* by Fátima Sierra y Helena Talaya (Pliegos, 2014). Elena also traveled to Spain over the summer to give two presentations. In Salamanca, she spoke about "Pedro Almodóvar, a pioneer of fourth wave feminism" at the Third International Congress of History, Art and Literature in Spanish and Portuguese Film. In Segovia, she addressed the Conference of Spanish Professionals in America, Inc. on "The new feminist paradigm of the Spanish woman: novel, poetry and film."

Evelina Guzauskyte taught a new course, "Migration, Heritage, Identity: Eastern Europe and Latin America" (SPAN 321), which integrates innovative uses of digital scholarship for teaching and was featured in the Wellesley News. Students from SPAN 321 presented a panel at the Ruhlman conference, "Cultural Memory on the Global Stage: Mapping Ties to Eastern Europe in the work of Latin American Writers," in which they explored how intellectuals negotiate their subjectivities within the Latin American multicultural landscape. They also presented a digital mapping project that visualizes the precarious yet suggestive relationships between place, belonging, and writing. Evelina led the Andrew W. Mellon Blended Learning initiative at Wellesley College, which thus far has supported development of 20 blended courses in the humanities as well as organized a series of conversations, presentations, and workshops on the use of technology in the classroom. She published an interview with the legendary Lithuanian-American avant-garde filmmaker, film critic, and author, in the leading journal of literary and cultural criticism in Lithuania, *Metai*, entitled "As She Spun, Moira Sang: Interview with Jonas Mekas."

Koichi Hagimoto published two articles, in *Transmodernity* and in *Chasqui*, and delivered five conference presentations, including an invited talk at the "Global Asias Conference" at Penn State University. He also served as a keynote speaker for a cultural event at St. John's University in New York, where he discussed the lives and works of José Martí and José Rizal. In May, Koichi went to Cuba to attend a symposium and to evaluate a study abroad program. On a more personal note, Alaina and Koichi are expecting their first baby at the end of September!

Nancy Hall chaired a panel on the novels of Carmen Boullosa at the annual meeting of the Northeast Modern Language Association. Her paper presentation, "Beyond Virgil, Horace, Shakespeare and Shaw: Reimagining the Queen of Kings," explored the representation of Cleopatra in *De un salto descabalgó la reina*. Nancy will be on leave next Spring to complete her book on Boullosa, Mexico and the postmodern novel. During the election season of 2014, Nancy recorded promos that ran on Spanish language radio in favor of Proposition 4. She was delighted when the measure, guaranteeing paid sick leave for all employees in Massachusetts, passed by a wide margin.

António M.A. Igrejas developed and taught Intensive Elementary and Intermediate Portuguese courses, and an Independent study entitled The Portuguese Speaking World Through Film, Music and Fiction at Wellesley College. Additionally, he taught similar languages courses at MIT. He hosted Professor Michael Baum, Executive Director of The Lusophone Development Foundation, and João Caixinha, Education Attaché from the Portuguese Consulate in Boston, at Wellesley College to speak to students about study abroad and internship opportunities in Portugal and the Lusophone world. He proposed and led efforts to make the Middlebury College School in Brazil listed as an approved study abroad program for Wellesley students. He also traveled to Brazil for two site visits in Niterói (Rio) and Florianópolis (Santa Catarina) in order to evaluate the Middlebury program in Brazil.

Jael Matos visited her family in Puerto Rico during Spring Break. In March, she participated along with her sister Mara, and our Language Assistant, **Nelia Losada García** in the MS CLIMB to the top of the John Hancock Building in Boston, to raise money and awareness for Multiple Sclerosis. Together they raised over \$1,600 and climbed over 1,200 steps to the top! WAY TO GO!

Eileen O'Connor translated poems from *Animal Concert* by Blanca Varela, which were published in *Asymmetries: Anthology of Peruvian Poetry* (Cardboard House Press, 2014). She will travel to Lima this summer to conduct research on Varela and finish a bilingual edition of the poet's collected works. Eileen also translated poems by Marjorie Agosín for an interdisciplinary music, dance and poetry performance by the Judy Dworin Performance Project in Hartford, CT, titled *Lighthouse*. Eileen gave a presentation at Wellesley, "Stitch a Square of Colour on the Darkness," about community quilting and reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

Carlos Ramos is serving his fourth and last year as Faculty Building Director of Founders and Green Hall. In May, he will also complete his three-year term as a member of the Committee on Faculty Appointments. In July/August 2014, Carlos was one of the invited participants at a graduate seminar on "Hispanism" at the Universidad Internacional Menéndez Pelayo (UIMP), in Santander. In January, he took sixteen students to Barcelona for his sixth Wintersession class, "Barcelona and the Spirit of Modernity, 1859-2015." In the Spring, Carlos taught an experimental class with professor Diego Arciniegas of the Theater Department, "Spanish Through Theater." In March, he participated in a public conversation with Spanish writer Javier Cercas at Instituto Cervantes at Harvard University. In April, he hosted Catalan visual artist Francesc Torres at the Davis Museum for the opening of "What does History Know of Nail Biting?" (on view until June 7). In May, he presented a paper entitled "Dawn poetry and the construction of subjectivity" at the NEMLA conference in Toronto. Carlos also initiated collaboration with the CWS to establish a summer internship at UIMP in Santander for one of our students and secured a summer internship for a department major at Instituto Cervantes at Harvard University, with funding from a generous donation by Betty Pforzheimer.

Among the many events that **Joy Renjilian-Burgy** organized as president of the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP), was a bilingual workshop on the Goya Exhibit held at the MFA for schoolteachers. She was also co-recipient of a grant from the Gulbenkian Foundation to edit a work on the Armenian genocide by feminist writer Zabel Yessayan. This Spring, PERA named the Joy Renjilian-Burgy Inspiration Award in her honor. The award was given to Field Hockey player Catherine Anderson '17; after battling Hodgkin's Lymphoma, Anderson return to class and also played in 13 games, demonstrating courage in the face of adversity. Both Catherine and Joy, who will return to Wellesley after bone marrow and stem cell transplant treatments for Lymphoma, are an inspiration for all at Wellesley to work hard, fight hard and live each day to the fullest.

Inela Selimovic advised two student panelists (Bernice Chen and Delia A. de León) for the Tanner Conference during the fall semester of 2014. She gave two talks at Wellesley College: "The Delights and Woes of Interdisciplinarity" and "Srebrenica's Filaments of Memory." Inela is scheduled to present a conference paper entitled "Patriarchies in Ruins in Albertina Carri's *La rabia*" at the 2015 LASA Conference in Puerto Rico. In January of 2015, Inela conducted a two-week-long research visit at the Centro Cultural de la Memoria Haroldo Conti in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

In this 400th Year Anniversary of the publication of Part II of Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1615), **Jill Syverson-Stork** loved discussing, analyzing, and dramatizing episodes of el Manco de Lepanto's timeless novel with her students. In Jill's Spanish 302 course this Spring were many seniors and Spanish majors who had studied in Chile and Córdoba during their junior year (see picture on page 9). In the Fall, Jill addressed the Northeast Regional Conference on Christianity and Literature with a talk entitled: *From Crack to Crack: The Devil in Cervantes*. Jill continues to serve as Faculty Advisor to Casa Cervantes and would love to hear from former residents who might be interested in connecting, sharing current news, and keeping informed about happenings at Casa at Wellesley.

Carlos A. Vega assumed his third turn as Department Chair this year. Despite the growing number of bureaucratic obligations, he feels blessed to head a department with such brilliant and diverse majors. This year, Carlos travelled to Mexico, Spain (most notably Córdoba, where he has taken an important role in the evolution of the PRESHCO program), Chile (where we have an exciting new collaboration with Middlebury College), and Brazil. He spoke to Wellesley alums in such diverse places as Tampa, Fairfield CT, Arizona, and as part of the yearly Reunion program. His primary focus of interest continues to be the lives of medieval and how their stories can serve as sites that address not only religious devotion, but also societal tensions regarding gender, the erotic, and popular belief. Carlos has been teaching more and more in the Writing Program. In the Fall, he taught his ever-popular Writing 141, "Love Manuals: Medieval and Modern," and in the Spring, Writing 148, "Sex in the Middle Ages." He continues to serve on national and international academic boards, including the Association de Programas Universitarios Norteamericanos en España (apune.org) and the Committee on Honors and Awards of the Modern Language Association of America. Those who know Professor Vega know how much he believes in making learning fun, and we have enjoyed several special evenings for students and faculty this past year.

Portuguese @ Wellesley College

Our Portuguese program continues to grow under the leadership of Professor António Igrejas. This year, ten students studied Intensive Elementary (103) and Intensive Intermediate (203) Portuguese. In Fall 2015, the department will offer a new course, Introduction to Lusophone Studies (Portuguese 241), which will serve as a transition between language learning and study of the cultures of the Portuguese-speaking world. The Portuguese Lecture Series also flourished, welcoming speakers Onesimo T. Almeida and Carlos A. Almeida to classes that were open to the entire Wellesley community. Onésimo Almeida - author, philosopher and professor of Portuguese Studies and Renaissance and Early Modern History at Brown University - discussed his short stories, plays, and crónicas, a genre that is specific to literature in Portuguese. Professor Carlos Almeida, who teaches Portuguese, Cape Verdean Creole and Spanish at UMASS Dartmouth, spoke about Cape Verde and the Cape Verdean diaspora here in New England.

Professor Igrejas has taken advantage of blended learning initiatives to provide opportunities for his students to speak Portuguese with people from all over the Lusophone world. In April, students in Portuguese 203 dialogued via Skype with Lieutenant Colonel Diógenes Gomes - Brazilian Exchange Officer and Instructor of Portuguese for the United States Military Academy at West Point - about how the Brazilian government is dealing with violence in the “comunidades” of Rio de Janeiro.



Portuguese Program Students Obtain Prestigious Internships

This summer, Leilani Stacy, who took Portuguese 103 and 203 with Professor Igrejas, will be interning in the Press Office of the Secretary General for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Lisbon, Portugal. As the Ministry's first foreign intern, her duties will include reviewing news from various international sources in order to compile the daily foreign media report in Portuguese. Leilani will also be taking a class provided by the Study in Portugal Network (SiPN), which facilitates the internship and provides housing. Leilani says she looks forward to using her Portuguese “for conversations and office communication, as well as composing my reports on the foreign presses.” In the future, Leilani may pursue further studies in Portugal. She also hopes to travel to other Portuguese speaking places, such as Brazil. In the meantime, she plans to speak to other Portuguese speakers whenever the opportunity arises.

As an intern at the Jaques Delors Center in Lisbon during the summer, Silvia Pera will translate between Portuguese and English and help connect Portuguese businesses to opportunities provided by the EU. Upon her return to Wellesley, Silvia will take an independent study in order to continue working toward her goal of becoming fluent. “Portuguese is a critical language according to the State Department,” notes Silvia, who hopes to someday use her language skills working for the U.S. government.

Leilani Stacy and Silvia Pera each were awarded a \$500 scholarship from the Study in Portugal Network / Fundação Luso-Americana para o Desenvolvimento to help fund their internships.



We've Moved!

Green Hall – Summer 2014 Renovation

This past summer, Green Hall went through some notable changes as part of the Wellesley 2025 Renovations. The French, East Asian Languages & Cultures, and Spanish Departments now look quite different. As part of the first phase of the renovations in Founders and Green Halls, the Spanish Department acquired a new common space on the fourth floor of Green Hall. It includes a seminar room, a copy machine area, and a kitchen. There are also public spaces with seating and tables for students outside professors' offices, which are now distributed between the third and fourth floors of Green Hall. There are also three completely renovated classrooms in the vicinity of the department. Robert Olson + Associate Architects and project manager Deb Spielman worked closely with the department to develop the plans and prepare for the move and the construction phases. Take a look at the pictures, and make sure that you visit us when you come around.

Here is what some professors had to say about their new offices:

Nancy Hall - The new office spaces designed by Rob Olson are magnificent! It is such a pleasure to finally be able to work with abundant natural light and fresh air streaming through the beautiful mullioned windows. A tree-top view of Founders, ample bookshelves, great track lighting, and room for a table around which to meet with several students at a time complete the design that has had me pinching myself since last September. Many, many thanks to everyone who helped make these spaces a reality.

Jael Matos – I love our new space! It is so bright and spacious! We were always a very welcoming department no matter the space, but now we are even more welcoming to our students and visitors. Having the outer lounge space is great for students to study, wait to meet with their professors, or just hang out.

Inela Selimovic - I would like to thank Professor Carlos Ramos for running such a smooth transition for us into our new offices. My current office allows me to hold meetings with students in a pedagogically comfortable way. My previous office was not big enough for two people to enter and sit down. The new office space is spacious, well lit and has been a wonderful working space for teaching preps, meetings and research.



**Green Hall 3rd Floor
Spanish Department**





**Spanish Department
new location, 4th Floor
(formerly known as the
Student Employment Office)**



<--One of the new offices on the 4th Floor



Before



After



**GRH
4th
Floor
Hallway**



Alumnae Spotlight

Claire Fogarty '12 – Spanish Major



Q: After graduation you went to Mexico on a Fulbright Fellowship -- can you explain why you wanted to go to Mexico and what you were doing there?

A: I received a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship (ETA) to Mexico for the 2013-2014 academic year, and moved to Mexico City to teach middle school English at a large public school. My interest in the Fulbright ETA position was inspired by my academic studies of Mexico and Latin America as a Spanish major, but also by the support I received while struggling to learn Spanish. Thanks to guidance from amazing professors and fellow students, I became proficient in Spanish and could explore my passion for Latin American culture, literature, and history. Serving as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant allowed me to help other language learners in the same way.

Q: How did your experiences as a Spanish major at Wellesley prepare you for your work in Mexico as a Fulbright Fellow?

A: My experience studying abroad in Puebla, Mexico as a Spanish major at Wellesley prepared me for my work in Mexico as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant. There, I was immersed in Mexican culture while studying at a local university and living with a host family. My familiarity with Mexican culture helped me while I was thrown into teaching and apartment hunting upon my arrival in Mexico City. Reconnecting with study abroad friends made it easier for me to make friends upon my arrival and settle down into a comfortable routine.

Q. Upon returning to the U.S., what did you do?

A: I have worked as an aide at a public library since coming back to the U.S. Public libraries are fascinating places to work - they are a microcosm of communities where all kinds of people are drawn to opportunities to read, learn, engage in exploration, go to programs, and take advantage of a variety of resources. As an aide, I process books and provide customer service to library patrons. My fluency in Spanish and familiarity with Latin American cultures has helped me connect with Latin@ patrons and provide tailored book recommendations.

Q: You will soon begin graduate school for library science. Why have you decided to pursue this path?

A: I will be starting my Masters in Library and Information Studies at the University of British Columbia in the fall of 2015. My background is in public libraries, but I look forward to exploring careers in academic libraries while in graduate school. Ultimately, I would like to work in a library setting where I could use my interest in Latin America and my Spanish language skills to provide services to diverse communities.

Q: What is the most important lesson you learned during college?

A: One of the most important lessons that I learned at Wellesley was that it is okay to ask for help. I struggled as a first year student in Professor Syverson-Stork's 201 class and ended up meeting with her frequently for extra tutoring. This set the bar for my involvement with the Spanish department, even after I finally mastered the difference between "ser" and "estar." My time at Wellesley was full of challenges and joy and my Spanish professors supported me along the way. They encouraged my academic exploration and continue to give me personal and professional guidance. By asking for help, I developed a strong support network that stays with me to this day.



Why I became a Spanish Major

Two of our majors share why they are passionate about studying Spanish

Katie Sheridan '15

Q - Why did you decide to become a Spanish Major?

A - Speaking Spanish opens up a whole new world I never would have access to otherwise, both in the U.S. and in the rest of the world. It's important to me to know Spanish to really understand the U.S. since we are and always have been a multicultural country of immigrants.



Q - Is this your only Major at Wellesley College?

A - I'm a double major in Spanish and Linguistics.

Q - What was your first Spanish class at Wellesley, and what are you taking now?

A - I started with Spanish 101 my first semester here. I loved it, and I took 102 and 201. As I wanted to study abroad in Uruguay with Middlebury, which required a literature class, I skipped 202 and took 241 right before going to Uruguay. My senior fall I took Modern Mexico and I'm currently taking Almodóvar, my last Spanish class at Wellesley!

Q - How are you putting your Spanish major to use, at school and in the world?

A - Studying abroad in Uruguay was an amazing experience. I improved my Spanish a lot and I can now talk to people in my hometown that I never really could communicate with before. I currently have a part time job teaching Spanish to first through eighth graders at a school in Wayland, MA and I plan to use my Spanish after graduation when I go into the field of immigration assistance.

Julie Barron '16

Q - Why did you decide to become a Spanish Major?

A - Because as a native speaker, I know that there are so many Spanish speaking countries that create rich content, whether it be novels, poetry, or films. I love learning and seeing what connects Spanish-speaking countries through literature and art, and what makes them unique.



Q - Is this your only Major at Wellesley College?

A - No, I am also a Physics Major pursuing a Mechanical Engineering degree from Olin.

Q - Any advice to current and future students on why they should become a Spanish Major?

A - Whether you want to move to a Spanish-speaking country, want to communicate with a large population in the U.S., or just learn a beautiful language, there is no down side to becoming a Spanish Major.



Charlando con Nelia Losada García

Our Teaching Assistant from the University of Córdoba, Spain, shares her thoughts about her experience this year at Wellesley



Q: Was this your first time in the U.S.?

A: It was. This is actually the first time I'm living outside Córdoba.

Q: Was it hard to get used to life in the U.S. and at Wellesley College?

A: I wouldn't say it has been hard. I was excited to come and live in a completely different country and culture, so I wouldn't call it hard but intriguing. I won't deny I had a really hard time getting used to American timetables (I sometimes have lunch at 3:30, how can you have dinner just a few hours later?!) and, especially, the weather. Córdoba is one of the hottest cities (if not the most) in Spain, so dealing with snow for more than 5 months has been extremely tough. Also, Americans in general are very different not only from Spaniards, but from Mediterranean people in general. Family and friends play a major role in our society, while America seems to have a more independent lifestyle. I have had to get used to your culture and social life and, even though I would never replace mine (a drink and tapas with your friends on a sunny day, who would replace that?!), I have come to know it and appreciate it. So much so that I wish I didn't have to leave so soon!

Q: What will you miss most about life here at Wellesley College?

A: This is easy: everything but the food and the winter! During these months, I've met incredible people who I can now call real friends. Wellesley has become my second home. I have learned a lot from the professors and colleagues in the department and have really enjoyed my interactions with students. This has allowed me to appreciate my language and my culture even more, and I have never felt so proud of being a native speaker of Spanish. WC has helped me to grow not only as a professional, but also personally, and has opened my eyes to so many issues, such as tolerance and diversity.

Q: Any advice for other TAs?

A: Enjoy every minute of this experience and be curious. This has undoubtedly been the most enriching experience of my life, and I hope the next TA enjoys it as much as I have!

Upcoming End of Year Events

Graduation Breakfast, May 29, 2015 @ 8:30am, GRH 438

**Alumnae Weekend Reception
June 6, 2015 @ 3:30pm, GRH 438**

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