



Newsletter of the Department of Modern Languages at The University of the Incarnate Word



Volume 17, Issue 1 – Summer 2019

UPCOMING LANGUAGE COURSES

Summer Session I (June 3 – July 5)

SPAN 1311-02	Elementary Spanish I	MTWR 8:00–10:15 AM
SPAN 1312-02	Elementary Spanish II	MTWR 10:30–12:45 PM

Summer Session II (July 8 – August 9)

SPAN 1311-01	Elementary Spanish I	MTWR 8:00–10:15 AM
SPAN 1312-01	Elementary Spanish II	MTWR 10:30–12:45 PM

Fall 2019

ARAB 1311	Elementary Arabic I	TR 4:30–5:45 PM
FREN 1311	Elementary French I	MW 3:00–4:15 PM and 4:30–5:45 PM
FREN 2311	Intermediate French I	MW 6:30–7:45 PM
GERM 1311	Elementary German I	MW 4:30–5:45 PM
IT 1311	Elementary Italian I	MW 9:00–10:15 AM
JAPN 1311	Elementary Japanese I	MW 1:30–2:45 PM and 3:00–4:15 PM
JAPN 2311	Intermediate Japanese I	TR 10:30–11:45 AM
KORE 1311	Elementary Korean I	MW 3:00–4:15 PM
KORE 2311	Intermediate Korean I	MW 4:30–5:45 PM
LATN 1311	Elementary Latin I	MW 1:30–2:45 PM
SPAN 1311	Elementary Spanish I (20 sections)	
SPAN 1312	Elementary Spanish II (10 sections)	
SPAN 2311	Intermediate Spanish I: Oral Communication – Dr. Gabriel Saxton-Ruiz	TR 9:00–10:15 AM
SPAN 3321	Introduction to Hispanic Linguistics – Michael Tallon	TR 3:00–4:15 PM
SPAN 3331	Spanish Literature to 1700 – Dr. Amalia Mondríguez	TR 12:00–1:15 PM
SPAN 3342	Spanish-American Literature since Modernism – Dr. Gabriel Saxton-Ruiz	TR 1:30–2:45 PM

NEW LANGUAGE COURSE

Beginning in Fall 2019, the Department of Modern Languages will offer first-year courses in Latin! In the Fall semester we will offer the first-semester course (1311), and in the Spring semester we will offer the second-semester course (1312). The courses will be taught by Dr. Tarcisio Beal, a theologian, historian, and polyglot.

PREVIOUS EVENTS

Día de los Muertos and Altar de Muertos

On Tuesday, October 30, 2018, students in Dr. Gabriel T. Saxton-Ruiz's Spanish 2311 class constructed an altar for Day of the Dead. On Sunday, November 4th, the 8:00 PM Mass was dedicated to the Day of the Dead. Afterward, Modern Languages professors served *pan de muerto* and hot chocolate in collaboration with Campus Ministry.

Intermediate Spanish II Class Book

The Intermediate Spanish II class in Spring 2019 had an emphasis on written communication. Throughout the semester, students researched a topic and brought drafts of their final paper for instructor and peer review. At the end of the semester, we compiled all of the essays into a book and each student created their own cover with recycled materials using a technique that was popularized by the Argentinian *cartonero* publishers.

Class Discussion with Claudia Salazar

In Spring 2019 students in Dr. Gabriel T. Saxton-Ruiz's Culture and Civilization of Latin American class spoke with Peruvian author Claudia Salazar via Zoom after reading her novel *La sangre de la aurora*. One of the final projects for the course involved preparing a dish from a Latin American cultural zone and writing a reflection paper on why that particular food is representative of that region.

A Conversation with Jorge Eduardo Benavides

On Friday, April 5, 2019, the Department of Modern Languages (co-sponsored by Casa de España) hosted a discussion with Jorge Eduardo Benavides, a Peruvian-born novelist, journalist and educator who has a permanent residence in Madrid, Spain, where he directs the Centro de Formación de Novelistas and writes frequently for publications including *El País*, *Letras Libres*, *Eñe* and *Mercurio*. A native of Arequipa, Peru, he studied law and political science in the mid-1980s at the Universidad de Garcilaso de la Vega in Lima. He worked as a radio journalist there until 1991 when he moved to Tenerife, Spain, where he spent more than a decade and was editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Siglo XXI* as well as a weekly columnist for the Sunday supplement of the *Diario de Avisos*. Benavides' narrative work primarily deals with representations of political violence, social justice and transatlantic history. His public lecture focused on transatlantic issues, primarily the history of Latin American cultural figures based in Spain.

La tertulia

During the Fall and Spring semesters, Dr. Gabriel T. Saxton-Ruiz organized and moderated La tertulia – a weekly conversation hour in Spanish held in the Student Engagement Center. This informal gathering allowed students of all different proficiency levels to practice their Spanish outside of class in a low-stakes environment.

STUDENT NEWS

At the 2019 Department of Modern Languages' Honors Convocation, held on Tuesday, April 30th, in the UIW Mabee Library Special Collections Room, the following students received awards:

- **Antonio J. Vázquez-Colón** – Outstanding Spanish Major, in memory of Carolina Ballester
- **Laura González** – Outstanding Student in Intermediate Spanish, in memory of Joshua Stokes
- **Gisel Torres** – Outstanding Student in the Spanish Minor
- **Jorge Chávez** – Outstanding Use of Spanish in Service to the Community
- **Dr. Claudia Verdín** – Distinguished Alumna in the UIW Spanish Program
- **Sakina Tajkhanji** – Outstanding Student in Arabic
- **Alejandra Montemayor** – Outstanding Student in French
- **Jeffery Thomas Moss, Jr.** – Outstanding Student in German
- **Citlalli Guadarrama** – Outstanding Student in Italian
- **Victoria Paz** – Outstanding Student in Japanese
- **Lucas Tase** – Outstanding Student in Korean



Student award winners and faculty at the Department of Modern Languages 2019 Honors Convocation

A Message from former Japanese Student Johnny Esparza

When I first arrived in Kumamoto, Japan, I barely knew any Japanese. I went with the intention of studying and learning the language, but the first few months were a challenge I did not expect. I decided to study abroad during my third year at UIW and chose Japan as my destination. I had only taken a semester of Japanese prior to going, and I wondered if it was enough. I was told that the international office at the university in Japan spoke English, so I was able to breathe a sigh of relief.

Going alone to a new country was a challenge in itself, especially to a country with a huge language barrier. However, I wasn't alone. There were other students from English speaking countries who gave me advice and helped me when needed. And believe me, in the beginning, I needed a lot of help. Classes were difficult, it was tough retaining information, and there were times when I thought that I should just give up and go home. To help boost my confidence in speaking and learning Japanese and to help me break out of my shell a bit more, I decided to join both the swimming and aikido club at Kumamoto Gakuen University. I purposely put myself in

situations where I was the only English speaking person, and was thus forced to use Japanese. I'm sure I probably annoyed some people with my lack of understanding, but I pushed myself everyday.

Halfway through the school year, I was able to have short conversations on my own. Although it was a small victory compared to other exchange students, it was a tremendous success for me because it was a sign of my growth. Not only that, but I slowly began to realize that I didn't need someone with me all the time just to get through the day. The more I learned and practiced, the more self sufficient I became. It was a good feeling knowing that I could do so many things on my own in a new country, in a new language. Of course, I still stumbled here and there, but I took all those mistakes as learning experiences. At the end of the year, I had learned so much not just from my classes, but in speaking with the Japanese friends I had made by joining clubs. Even after returning to America, I continued speaking with those friends and continued studying Japanese.

I experienced so much in Japan and enjoyed my time there, but at the same time I felt like my lack of understanding of the Japanese language held me back from having even greater experiences. So I made up my mind to do what I could to go back. During my final year at UIW, I applied for the JET Program, and was selected to be an ALT, an Assistant Language Teacher, for two high schools in Fukuoka prefecture. Because my Japanese was stronger than when I was an exchange student, I felt a lot more confident. I could speak easier, I could communicate with teachers who didn't speak English, and my efforts in just trying were greatly appreciated by my coworkers, especially by the principal. I spent almost four years in Fukuoka, and the entire time I did not give up studying. I continued to push myself. I made connections with Japanese people. I joined groups around my area where I was, once again, the only person who spoke English. I went out in the town by myself to see what sort of adventure I would be having for the day. I even travelled to places such as Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto all by myself.

While experiencing much more of what Japan had to offer, I continued to grow and challenge myself. One of my proudest accomplishments comes from passing the JLPT, the Japanese Language Proficiency Test. It took me two attempts, but I now hold certification for Level 2. It is described as "being able to understand Japanese used in everyday situations, and in a variety of circumstances to a certain degree."

Passing that examination was a huge game changer for me. It opened up more opportunities in Japan outside of English teaching, and I decided to challenge myself once again.

Through the connections I had made this time around, I started going in for interviews, trying to find a Japanese company that would be willing to hire me. Last year, around Christmas, I went in for an interview to work as a front staff member for a hotel in Tokyo. The entire interview was conducted in Japanese, between just me and the manager. He also gave me a written test asking me to read the questions and give my answers in Japanese. Because I had been studying for around 5 years, my confidence in my abilities and my answers helped me tremendously during that interview. When it was over, the manager smiled, looked at me, and said "let's work together."

Once again, I had the feeling of accomplishment inside of me. I quit my job as an ALT and started working at my new job in Tokyo this year in March. This new job comes with its own challenges. I'm using Japanese far more often than before, not just with my coworkers, but with customers as well. I'm learning more humble, more business level Japanese and applying it everyday. Of course, working at a hotel does allow me opportunities to speak in English with customers from abroad, so there is some breathing room.

When I look back at everything that's happened in the past few years, I can't help but be amazed at myself. I went from not knowing anything to living my own life in Tokyo. I wouldn't be here today if I hadn't pushed myself. I wouldn't be here if I didn't branch out and start making connections. It's true what they say, "you can do anything so long as you put your mind to it."

You may stumble. You may fall. But what's important is to always get back up and try again. Don't give up, and don't lose hope. You have the potential inside of you to make your dreams come true.

And above all, don't be afraid of making mistakes. My Japanese isn't perfect. I don't always understand 100% of what I'm told. But because I see it as a new learning opportunity, I don't let that stop me. I do the best that I can, and my efforts don't go unnoticed. As long as you believe in yourself, as long as you are confident, and as long as you are willing to keep learning, the opportunities are endless.

ありがとうございます！

エスパーザ ジョニー

FACULTY ACTIVITIES

Dr. Sally Said, professor emerita of Spanish, presented a paper “Placebo Effect and the Rhetoric of Navajo Ritual Healing” at the Western States Rhetoric and Literacy Conference on Matter and Mattering at New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, on November 2, 2018.

Dr. Gabriel T. Saxton-Ruiz presented “Distopía viral: La Lima posapocalíptica en *El limpiador* de Adrián Saba” at the Universidad EAFIT in Medellín, Colombia, in November 2018. In April 2019 he presented “Feminine Memory and Political Violence: *Blood of the Dawn* by Claudia Salazar” at the Conflict and Aftermath: Trauma and Women's & Gender Studies Symposium at UIW. He also hosted a visit by Peruvian writer Jorge Eduardo Benavides. During the Fall and Spring semesters, Dr. Saxton-Ruiz organized and moderated *La tertulia*, a weekly conversation hour in Spanish.

Michael Tallon received funding from the Graduate Research Assistantship Program from the UIW Faculty Research Awards Committee, providing him with a graduate student research assistant for the 2018-2019 academic year. In November 2018, he presented “Language Learning Beliefs in Heritage and Non-Heritage Spanish Students: A Preliminary Investigation” at the research roundtable session at the American Council on the teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) 2018 Conference in New Orleans. On April 10, 2019, he presented “A Social Justice Project in a Beginning Spanish Class” at the UIW Research Week Poster Presentations. From July 5–8, 2019, he attended the 101st Annual Conference of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP) in San Diego, California, where he presented “Reducing Foreign Language Anxiety and Increasing Student Engagement in Spanish Heritage Students.” In May he concluded his three-year appointment to the UIW Core Advisory Council (CAC); he continues to serve as a FIRST Faculty as well as an Alpha Faculty Member for first-generation college students at UIW. In Summer 2019 he once again served on the Meet the Mission Planning Committee.

Goodbye

We say goodbye to Professors **Yuping Tai**, **Jeanne Johnson**, and **Julie Winkler** and wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

Welcome

We are pleased to welcome the following new part-time faculty members to our department in Fall 2019: **Stephanie González**, **Patricia Chmielewski**, **Dr. Angela Guzmán Palacios**, **Esther Harris**, **Iván Martínez**, and **Sergio Martínez** (who started in January 2019). And we are happy to welcome back **Luis Perea**.

DID YOU KNOW?

From The ACTFL SmartBrief (January 29, 2019):

Virtual reality allows students to take field trips

A class of Nebraska high-school students is using technology to take virtual field trips to several national parks without leaving the library. The virtual-reality headsets give students a 360-degree view of the park's scenery and allow teachers to highlight areas of interest for their lessons.

Ashley Bebensee writes: “Mark Dethlefs’ ninth-grade geography class at Bertrand High School ventured on Tuesday to Mount Rushmore, Yosemite National Park and Yellowstone National Park. The students didn’t have to traverse the country or pay for airfare. They never even left the school’s library. They were able to have an immersive experience of the national parks via BoBoVR headsets - virtual reality headsets each student wears during a virtual field trip. The headsets have been in use at the library since 2017, but the students still are enthralled by the adventure.”

To read the entire article, visit: https://www.kearneyhub.com/news/local/new-technology-takes-bertrand-students-around-the-country-on-virtual/article_667a52d0-1d99-11e9-ac48-4f392deee357.html

UIW DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES WEB SITE & FACEBOOK PAGE

Be sure to check out our web site for information about our language programs and our faculty, previous newsletters, and other information! Also, find us on Facebook by searching for “University of the Incarnate Word Department of Modern Languages.” Be sure to “Like” our page so that you can keep up with our departmental happenings and stay in touch with faculty and both current and former students!

<https://www.uiw.edu/chass/academic-programs/modernlanguages/index.html>

If you have any comments about this newsletter or would like to include information in the next newsletter, please contact Michael Tallon at tallon@uiwtx.edu or 210-805-5891.

“As a hawk flieth not high with one wing, even so a man reacheth not to excellence with one tongue.”

-- Roger Ascham
