

The TTU Polyglot

Fall 2015

A Message from Interim Chair Mark Groundland

We're back in South Hall! After spending two years in Foundation Hall, Tennessee Tech's surge space, we finally moved back to South Hall in May 2015. It's great to be home! The Department of Foreign Languages is sharing the second floor with units from the College of Agriculture and Human Ecology. All of our foreign language classrooms, faculty offices, the departmental office and the Euro Café are once again located together to create a productive learning environment. We will be sharing a computer lab on the first floor of South Hall.



As you can tell, we are very happy to be back "home." Please feel free to contact us to arrange a tour of our floor. We would love to show it off!

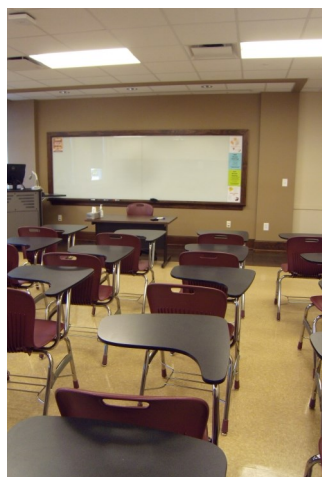
But wait, there's more! In addition to the news of our return, we are happy to report that South Hall has been renamed Oakley Hall in appreciation of the remarkable contributions which Millard V. Oakley and his wife, J.J., continue to make to Tennessee Tech. Their name may sound familiar. They donated a 1,400-acre farm to our university, which has become the Oakley Sustainable Agricultural Center. The Millard Oakley STEM Center and the J.J.

Oakley Health Services Center also reflect the Oakleys' generosity and the deep appreciation we at Tennessee Tech University feel for this family. The naming ceremony was held on Sept. 25, 2015.

The Department of Foreign Languages had a very productive and exciting academic year in 2014-2015. In this newsletter you will learn about what our current students and faculty are accomplishing. We are also proud to highlight the accomplishments of our alumni. If you have news or suggestions for our newsletter, please contact me at mgroundland@tntech.edu. I look forward to hearing from you. 🇺🇸

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Focus on Students



My Experiences as a Spanish Major

by Alison Wheatley

My sophomore year of high school, I took my first Spanish class. Unlike many of the other students, I was looking forward to the class. I had always been fascinated by foreign languages and cultures, and the possibility of becoming fluent in Spanish someday was so exciting!

Needless to say, the class did not disappoint; I found that conjugating verbs, using context clues to decipher word

meanings, and changing accents just came naturally to me. Halfway through the semester, I knew without a doubt that I was going to pursue foreign language studies beyond high school.

During my freshman year in college, I took Spanish classes as electives so I could see what else was out there; I didn't want to tie myself down without exploring other subjects. Then, as luck would have it, I was told about a trip to Valencia, Spain, to study abroad. It seemed too good to be true! I couldn't pass it up.

I went on the trip as one of the only students with previous Spanish experience, so naturally I took on the role of translator. The accomplishment I felt after four weeks of navigating a foreign country was overwhelming.

When I returned to Tennessee Tech, I changed my major to Spanish. Since then, my passion for foreign languages has only been solidified.

My professors at Tech have been so supportive and involved for the past three years. I am now a senior and will be graduating early this December.

After graduation, I plan to earn my master of business administration degree with a concentration in international business. Ultimately, I would love to work with a company which organizes and facilitates study abroad trips to Spanish-speaking countries. Regardless of where I end up, I know my experience with foreign language will help me excel in all that I do! 🇺🇸

"Regardless of where I end up, I know my experience with foreign languages will help me excel in all that I do!"



Life as a TTU French Major

by Chris Refer

I decided to become a French major because of my love for foreign lan-

guages and my experience in my first French course, Dr. Debbie Barnard's French 1010, during my first semester in college. I was solely majoring in history and was required to take 18 credit hours of a foreign language. I chose French because it makes one unique as an American to be able to speak it and because it is still very useful around the world.

During my first course in French, I fell in love with the French culture, the

language and its historical relationship with English. It still amazes me how much English and French share. The history between England and France, the relationship of the two languages, and Dr. Barnard's enthusiasm for teaching French all caused me to have an even stronger desire to learn more French than just the amount required for a degree in history. Therefore, I chose to pursue French as a degree in addition to one in history.

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One highlight of my French learning experience at Tech has been realizing that I am no longer limited to just learning the language, but I can now read literature, watch movies, listen to the radio – all in French. I realized this the summer between French 2020 (in the spring) and my subsequent beginning French 3000- and 4000-level courses the following fall. Since then, my abilities to read French literature, etc., have grown. This growth has prepared me well for a future career dealing with the French language. I expected to graduate knowing how to speak French at an advanced level and understand some French literature, etc. However, I can now (before having finished all of my French courses) converse with French natives on a variety of topics concerning France, speak about

French culture, history, literature and cuisine, understand often-complicated French phonetics, and much more. I am astonished at my abilities now as a result of my French learning experience with Dr. Barnard and Dr. Colleen Hays.

Another highlight is my ability to converse with the other French students inside and outside class in French. We often do this for practice or simply for fun, and it really does help build our language skills. One of my favorite memories from my time studying abroad in Lyon, France, has to do with this same fact. Another French major, Sarah Gillespie, and I studied at the same school there at the same time. While there, other students learning French were often surprised that Sarah and I spoke French with

each other instead of our native language. We both agreed that it is great practice but sometimes frustrating when trying to discuss certain subjects with a limited vocabulary.

Another memory of mine from France is when Sarah and I, along with a few other students learning French, rented a car and drove to Annecy, France, in the Alps. The town is beautiful. We walked around, ate lunch, then drove to a river gorge and went for a hike. We then stumbled upon a medieval castle which was hosting a festival, so we stayed for a while and enjoyed ourselves.

One more memory of mine is simply enjoying Lyon. It is a beautiful city with two rivers flowing through it. Each river has miles of quays where one can sit and relax, ride bikes, etc. 🇫🇷

“One highlight of my French learning experience at Tech has been realizing that I am no longer limited to just learning the language, but I can now read literature, watch movies, listen to the radio – all in French.”



Studying Abroad as a German Major

by Olivia Hendricks

I had the extraordinary experience this past summer of living

abroad in Germany. Prior to my stay in Germany, I had just completed my fifth semester studying the language and the culture(s); therefore, I felt as if I had strong, basic knowledge of the language and a basic understanding of the customs and cultures. However, one can read a plethora of books and articles and study copious amounts of vocabulary, but nothing will give you the

knowledge and the experience quite like being submerged into the language and the culture themselves.

A language is so much more than a list of vocabulary words and phrases; there are accents and dialects that also go along with the twists, turns and flows of the language. And of course there are also the feelings and connotations
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"I think that we can better ourselves and our country and world if we take the time to learn, explore, and understand different places other than the place that we call home."

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tions that are connected to language and words and phrases used; these are all things that one can only experience organically if engaged in the culture and language. And I can attest that my German and my understanding both improved since my plane first touched down in Frankfurt back in May.

One thing that I experienced and absolutely loved about Germany and its people as a whole, is that they're generally more prudent than Americans when it comes to the well-being of the Earth and themselves. Not a day went by that I didn't walk past a house with solar panels on the roof or wind turbines on nearby hills harvesting the energy of the wind.

Furthermore, if something can be recycled, it will be recycled! In my host fami-

ly's house alone they have about five different recycling bins. The parks, neighborhood sidewalks and walking paths adjacent to streets almost always have people doing some form of exercise or physical activity. And my host mother's health insurance even encourages and funds exercise classes like water aerobics and hot yoga for her... now how awesome is that!

Of course there are different social and economic factors in Germany than in the U.S., but nonetheless all countries can learn something from one another. I think that we can better ourselves and our country and world if we take the time to learn, explore, and understand different places other than the place that we call home.

But even if it's not your

goal to be able to speak another language, I would still highly encourage you to engage and learn about other countries and cultures. Once you learn and experience another culture you will learn more about your own culture and perhaps even experience and view it differently than you did before. You can gain so much knowledge being abroad.

With all of that being said, I immensely enjoyed my time in Germany. Naturally, while I was there, we embarked on a few adventures in the surrounding areas and countries!

I hope this article was a wee bit motivational and sparks your wanderlust! College is a great time to travel and there are many opportunities through Tech. Just something to consider, and I hope you all are having a great semester at TTU! 🇺🇸

Schneider Electric Event: Advantages of a Foreign Language in the Workplace



Panel from Schneider Electric meets with TTU students and faculty

On Jan. 29, 2015, business executives from Schneider Electric visited Tennessee Tech University to speak to

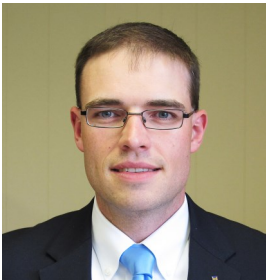
students and faculty about the advantages of attaining linguistic and cultural proficiency in a foreign language in the global workplace in general, as well as the personal and professional benefits they have derived from speaking another language. The event was organized by the Department of Foreign Languages and the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers. 🇺🇸



Juan Meneses, Global Training Manager at Schneider Electric, speaks to the importance of knowing foreign languages and cultures in today's global marketplace.

Alumni Spotlight

Camron Rudd



In December 2014, Camron Rudd (Mechanical Engineering and German double major, 2005) became the president of Hörmann, LLC, one of the world's leading door manufacturers. He graciously took some time out of his busy schedule to share his experiences in the Department of Foreign Languages and shared the following thoughts:

I started at Tech in 1999 strictly as an Engineering student. During fall semester 2000, I took a German 1010 class in order to fulfill my humanities requirement and fell in love with the students, faculty and coursework in foreign languages. I

was always very comfortable with numbers and technology, but it wasn't until I completed that first class in German that I realized I had a real, passionate interest in the German language.

Following that first semester, I made it a point to incorporate a German class into each semester's schedule 'for fun.' After completing my second 3000-level class, Dr. Phillip Campana asked me who my foreign language advisor was; when I told him, "no one, I'm an engineering student," he said that we needed to talk.

When I met with him later that week I was surprised to learn how close I was to getting a second degree in German. From that point forward, I made a concerted effort to balance my Mechanical Engineering and German studies so that I

could graduate simultaneously with both degrees.

During my time in the department, I was very involved. I was the creator of the "Euro Café," which I understand has been remodeled. I worked as the department's technical support as a work-study student. I was president of the German Club and chaired several committees for various special programs like Window on the World, an Oktoberfest fundraiser and other small programs to raise funds for the Café.

All in all, I thoroughly enjoyed my college years, which were made all the more special by great people: the faculty, staff and students of the foreign language department. It has proven to be an invaluable experience both personally and professionally. If given the chance, I'd do it all over again in a heartbeat. 🇩🇪

"All in all, I thoroughly enjoyed my college years, which were made all the more special by great people: the faculty, staff, and students of the department of foreign languages."

In Memorium: David Viera



We are saddened to report the passing of David J. Viera, Ph.D., professor emeritus of

Spanish at TTU, on Sept. 11, 2015. He was 72.

Viera was a professor in Tech's Department of Foreign Languages for more than 30 years, from September 1973 until his retirement in 2005.

"He was a prolific researcher, a fine teacher and a superb colleague," said Phillip J. Campana, TTU professor emeritus of German and chair of the Department during most of Viera's tenure at Tech.

Viera received his bachelor's degree from Providence College in Education - Foreign Languages. He graduated with a master's degree in Spanish and a

doctorate in Iberian Studies from the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. His scholarship led him on extensive travels to the Azores, Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, Austria, Canada and Great Britain.

A first-generation Portuguese-American, Viera published more than 90 articles, six books, and 25 book reviews on Spanish,

Portuguese, Catalan and Italian language and literature.

Viera is survived by two sons, John M. Viera and Robert Hampton Viera, daughter-in-law Megan Viera, and two granddaughters. He also leaves one sister and brother-in-law, two nieces, and special cousins Eugene and Beverly Barboza. 🇵🇹

Alumni News

Mary Manneschmidt (French and IBAC, 2014) lives in Knoxville, Tennessee and works for 21st Mortgage Corporation. She and TTU Foreign Languages alumnus Chase Finley (French, 2013) were recently married. She also enjoys several hobbies, such as making miniatures.

Beth Pinzur (Spanish & History, 2015) is doing an internship with an international Spanish school at their campus in Cusco, Peru. She works with English and Spanish in Marketing, Public Relations, General Administration and Translation.

Dylan Martin (German, 2007) is currently working as a project manager at RR Donnelley's Language Solutions branch in New York City. From 2008-2010, he attended graduate school in Salzburg, Austria, and Bowling Green, Ohio, graduating with an MA in German literature. In 2013, he graduated from Kent State University with a second M.A. (in translation studies).

Brent Simpson (Spanish, 2010) teaches high school Spanish at Livingston Academy.

Everett Dahl (German, 2013) teaches German at

Ridge View High School in Columbia, South Carolina.

Lydie-Claire Brown (French, 2014) has accepted a position with International Scholarship and Tuition Services (ISTS) as a bilingual French customer care specialist. Her job includes assisting English-, French- (and occasionally German-) speaking students with the scholarship application process. ISTS administers about 650 different scholarships for a wide variety of nationally known companies and foundations.

Send your alumni updates to: mgroundland@tntech.edu 

Study Abroad: Professor Hays' Class Trip to Southern France




In May 2015, Colleen Hays, with chaperone Rita Barnes, led a student trip to France. A background in French was required. Students were based in Nice in the first days of the trip and from there took day trips. They first saw the sights in Nice, and the next day visited both Vence and Monaco. The highlight of the visit to southern France was the day at Cannes. The film festival was going on and stu-

dents were able to see a film that was scheduled for directors' viewing and were able to see stars including Woody Allen and Emma Stone on the red carpet.

The next day it was on to Paris, where they arrived in time for the Night of Museums, where almost all museums are free in the country. They were able to see the beautiful tapestry, "*Dame à la licorne*," (Lady

with the Unicorn). They also visited *Le musée Orsay*, which houses the Impressionists, as well as Notre Dame, Sainte-Chapelle and a student favorite, the Eiffel Tower. Some even elected to climb the stairs!

For the duration of the trip, the students were very happy with their French meals and tried a variety of well-known French dishes, such as Steak Tartare, escargots, and croque-monsieur sandwiches. One French major, Samantha Seay, summed up the trip in the following words: "It was the best week of my life!" 

Senior Capstone Experiences

capstone (noun) \ˈkɑp-
ˌstɒn\

The high point; crowning achievement

[Merriam-Webster.com. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 23 Sept. 2015. <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/capstone>>.]

All foreign language majors take the Senior Capstone course during their senior year. It is their culminating experience in the Department of Foreign Languages. In addition to assessing their language proficiency in this course, students work one-on-one with a faculty member to research a literary, cultural or linguistic topic, produce a 15-20 page research paper, and give a 20-minute presentation in front of faculty and peers at the end of the semester.

Below you will find the names of the students who have successfully completed their capstone experiences in 2014-2015, their topics, and the faculty members with whom they worked.

Brandon Day (w/ Gruber), "*Volkswagen -*

Geschichte eines Unternehmens" [Volkswagen - History of a Company]

Jared Duke (w/ Sheehan), "*Das Bauhaus kommt!: Industrielles Design in Deutschland*" [The Bauhaus is Coming! Industrial Design in Germany]

Jenna Dyer (w/ Groundland), "*Las toreras: La historia, la discriminación y la lucha*" [Female Bullfighters: History, Discrimination, and Challenges]

Camron Gray (w/ Villalba), "*El desarrollo de la música española nacionalista desde 1898 hasta 1945*" [The Development of Spain's Nationalist Music Scene from 1898 to 1945]

Lora Hall (w/Laurila), "*El racismo: Las similitudes entre Costa Rica y los Estados Unidos*" [Racism: Similarities between Costa Rica and the U.S.]

Mara Keeling (w/ Villalba), "*Las tradiciones de Semana Santa en España*" [Holy Week Traditions in Spain]

Danielle Moore (w/ Groundland), "*El feminismo generacional en La casa de los espíritus*" [Generational Feminism in *La casa de los espíritus*]

Bethany Pinzur (w/ Laurila), "*Los factores sociales y lingüísticos que determinaron la vida y la muerte de las lenguas de los inmigrantes judíos en Argentina*" [Determining Social and Linguistic Factors in the Life and Death of the Languages of Jewish Immigrants in Argentina]

Jenna Wakefield (w/ Laurila), "*El cambio de la imagen ideal de la mujer en los medios de comunicación*" [Change in the Ideal Image of Women in the Media]

In addition to the Capstones above, Beth Pinzur (History & Spanish degrees) worked with professors Barnard & Groundland to complete her honor's thesis, "Mobile Identity: The Role of the Sephardic Jews' Language in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Spain and Morocco."

Foreign Language Clubs

French Club (*Avant-Garde*)



Avant-Garde members prepare crêpes for Cookeville Breakfast Rotary's annual international night.

In October 2014, Avant-Garde took a tour of Del-Monaco Winery and also sponsored its annual Zombie Potluck. In addition, this year the club collected donations of shoes for the charity Soles 4 Souls.

In November, Avant-Garde members traveled to the High Museum in Atlanta to view the exhibit "Cézanne and the Modern: Masterpieces of Art from the Pearlman Collection." After visiting the museum, the group had lunch at Bistro

Niko, a French restaurant.

The Club's traditional end-of-the-semester meal was held at the Bull & Thistle, where members Katie Randall and Mary Mannes Schmidt were recognized for their upcoming graduation.

In January 2015, the club made and served crêpes as part of Cookeville Breakfast Rotary's annual International Night. This year featured France, so Avant-Garde was happy to

participate.

February brought Movie Night, featuring the film "Paris je t'aime." In April, Avant-Garde participated in TTU's international festival, Window on the World, as it has for many years.

May 2015 brought another end-of-the-semester celebration at the Bull & Thistle, and the culmination of a busy year for the French Club! 🇫🇷



French club members in front of the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, GA

Faculty Advisor:
Debbie Barnard, Ph.D.
dbarnard@tntech.edu

German Club (*der Deutsche Klub*)



German Club president Olivia Hendricks speaks at Oktoberfest 2014.

The German Club's annual Oktoberfest took place on Oct. 27, 2014. More than 60 students, faculty and community members at-

tended the event and enjoyed bratwurst, potato salad and sauerkraut prepared by Tech German students. German Club president Olivia Hendricks kicked off the event by discussing how Germany continues to be a strong economic and cultural force in the world.

During Spring Semester 2015, the German Club sold *Kaffee und Kuchen* (coffee and cake) at this year's WOW festival on April 11. Tech German students followed authentic German

recipes to create a delectable variety of apple cakes, chocolate tortes and lemon bars for festival goers. 🇩🇪



The German Club's homemade baked goods are always a big hit at Window on the World, Tennessee Tech's annual international festival.

Faculty Advisors:
Julia Gruber, Ph.D.
juliabaker@tntech.edu
Martin Sheehan, Ph.D.
msheehan@tntech.edu

Spanish Club (*Amigos*)

Traditionally, the conversation hour has been the Spanish Club's core activity. This year the club started having different sections for beginners and advanced students. This activity has helped many TTU students practice and sharpen their conversational skills and take them to the next level.

In Fall 2014, Patrick Stone, the club's secretary, led a piñata workshop. Amigos also celebrated the *Día de los muertos* holiday. Many

friends of the club came to Foundation Hall to take part in this Mexican tradition with Hispanic food and a DJ that had everyone dancing. It was an educational and social occasion to remember.

In April 2015, the Spanish club participated again in Window on the World (WOW). In addition to the cultural information shared with the visitors, this year the Spanish club offered Hispanic food to the com-



Spanish Club making piñatas

munity: tacos, quesadillas, tamales, panes ... Yocelyne Angulo did an incredible job preparing the food. All the proceeds went to the club so that they can keep organizing activities for the next academic year. 🇺🇸

Faculty Advisor:
Manuel Villalba, Ph.D.
 mvillalba@tntech.edu

Alpha Mu Gamma



On April 12, 2015, TTU's local chapter of Alpha Mu Gamma, the national foreign language honor society, inducted 13 new members. Brent Simpson (Spanish, 2010), a Spanish teacher at Livingston Academy, was this year's guest speaker. He spoke about his journey with the Spanish language and Hispanic cultures, what they have meant to him, and how he has incorporated them into his life. During the induction ceremony, each new member was recognized for his or her outstanding achievements while learning French, German or Spanish here at Tennessee Tech. Inductees were:

FRENCH

Sarah Gillespie*
 Saylah Ann Johnson

GERMAN

Rad Cuebas
 Matthew Shults
 Mark Brytan Wilson

**also inducted in German*

SPANISH

Yocelyne Angulo
 Tina Driscoll
 Osama Elekany
 Erick Juan Demetrio
 Kapamas
 Autumn McNeese
 Jennifer Leigh Montgomery
 Danielle Moore
 Alison Wheatley 🇺🇸

Faculty Advisor:
Martin Sheehan, Ph.D.
 msheehan@tntech.edu



Brent Simpson, Spanish teacher at Livingston Academy and TTU alumnus, speaks to new Alpha Mu Gamma inductees in April.

Faculty Spotlight

Martin Sheehan



Martin Sheehan began teaching German language, culture and literature courses in Fall 2011. Our German students have certainly benefited from his enthusiasm and breadth of knowledge. He graciously answered the following questions about his teaching, research, service and career.

Please tell us where you are from and your educational background.

I am originally from the small town of Aiken, South Carolina. Despite its size, Aiken was a great place to grow up. A satellite campus of the University of South Carolina and nearby nuclear power site similar to Oak Ridge insured that my hometown had a steady influx of families with varying cultural and academic backgrounds. This, in turn, raised the educational standards, which benefited — and continues to benefit — every child in town. Additionally, my parents were both educators, which developed in me a deep respect for effective teaching in the classroom.

German was always a rewarding intellectual, creative, and social outlet for me. It was fun to speak German in the classroom and to encounter authentic German texts with the help of my high school teachers, Herr and Frau Lader.

When I was a sophomore, my performance on the National German Exam earned me the Langenscheidt award, given to the best German student in South Carolina. A study abroad program, GAPP (German American Partnership Program), allowed me both to host a German student and to be hosted in Germany for a month.

My biggest regret about that month abroad was my hesitancy to talk with native Germans for fear of making a grammar mistake. Later, I would learn that while grammar is an important aspect of communication, it is not the only aspect. Language is much more than a system to be learned, and my early experience abroad continues to influence my teaching. Although language control issues like grammar are important, at times I am much more interested in getting students to express themselves than in how correctly they express themselves.

The watershed moment for German and me came at the University of South Carolina-Columbia. Having excelled in math and science, as well as the humanities, I was uncertain what I should study. When I considered future job prospects, engineering seemed like a good idea, so I enrolled in engineering intro classes. The engineering track, I would find out, offered few opportunities to explore the subjects that I wanted to explore: literature, language and history. Thus, when my engineering advisor exclaimed, "Good news! You'll never have to take German again!" I knew engineering was not for me. Now, here at Tech, many of our German majors are also engineering majors, which will give them an advantage on the job market.

A semester abroad in Erfurt, Germany, coupled with AP credits, allowed me to graduate from USC-Columbia in three years. I was certain that I wanted to go to graduate school, but took a year off. During that time, I joined an improv comedy troupe in Columbia, South Carolina, worked at a late night sandwich shop and was an assistant to a local photographer. These experiences played an important

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"Language is much more than a system to be learned, and my early experience abroad continues to influence my teaching."

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role in my creative, emotional and intellectual development.

Improv comedy helped me develop my performance skills, which I employ to varying degrees in my classroom here at Tech. Working late nights in the sandwich shop reminded me that I am a morning person and that I prefer more intellectual pursuits. It has also helped me better understand Tech students, as so many of them have to work service industry jobs while pursuing their degree.

While a photographer's assistant, I printed and developed thousands of images. In a pre-Instagram world, it was the best way to cultivate an eye for visual composition while deepening my sense of the mechanical and chemical sides of photography. This semester, I'm applying this knowledge as I research how photography and drama intersect on the German stage.

Halfway through that year out of school, I was accepted into the Germanic literatures and languages program at the University of Virginia. My time in Charlottesville was intellectually stimulating and frustrating at the same time. It has taken me years to understand why. Working with so many smart professors at

the top of their field is difficult because they often don't remember what it was like to be a graduate student. Their analytic abilities were so ingrained that they were hard to describe to others. Thus, when I would write a good term paper, they did not fully articulate why it was good, just as they could not clearly tell me how to strengthen my weaker papers.

Now at Tech, I work to give my students actionable advice that clearly indicates the strengths and weaknesses in their work. We discuss at all levels what goes into an interesting thesis, central claim or even topic sentence. In my lower level German classes, we see how simple words like "but," "therefore" or "although" can show connections or disconnections between ideas, thereby making the students' ideas stronger, denser, and more complex even in German 1010!

What are your research interests?

Ever since I was a child, I have been obsessed with comedy in all its forms. It should come as no surprise then that I have written and published on forms of German comedy, specifically dramatic comedies. I find that how German comedic texts are structured is very interesting and says much about

the culture.

Since I started at Tech in the Fall of 2011, I have been researching Visual Culture, a diverse field that investigates how we make meaning (aesthetic, social, cultural, historical) from what we see. This is the perfect field for me, given my interest in art history, film studies and even video game studies.

My central focus at the moment is photography and methods to interpret photographic images. As an amateur photographer myself and as an individual in this Internet age, I am used to taking and consuming countless images. But exploring what a photograph means and what it means to make (or take) one is another fascinating issue for me.

How do you combine your research with your teaching?

In my German culture courses, we develop tools with which we can productively interpret images from German history. We might look at how Dadaist collages critique the image of women in Weimar Germany, we look at how gothic architecture encouraged medieval Germans to be visually literate if they were not general literate, and we look at how institutions like education, religion and politics are reflected in images produced

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"... at Tech, I work to give my students actionable advice that clearly indicates the strengths and weaknesses in their work."

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by Germans for a German audience. These visual culture exercises deepen the complex intercultural perspective that we develop within my culture course.

Likewise, visual culture is vital in my German language classroom. Most sessions begin with examples of a communication goal or grammar point in a visual context. Examples might come from German websites, advertisements or art. Many times, my students and I draw pictures of sentences they have created to connect the visual and verbal dimensions of communication. Last semester, my German 1020 classes posted around the room images illustrating sentences they had created. We

then pretended we were in an art gallery and discussed the most creative and clear visualizations.

In spring 2014 I taught an honors colloquium, "Laughing Matters: Comedy in Society." Students explored and analyzed major themes and theories in comedic texts ranging from early Greek theater to the Coen Brothers' film "The Big Lebowski." Inspired by my research interest in photography, I am currently developing an honors colloquium entitled "What is a Photograph?"

Where do you see the German section and the Department of Foreign Languages in 5 years?

The German section at Tech

is growing and Dr. Julia Gruber and I will do all we can to help that trend continue.

Increasingly more engineering, computer science and international business majors are expressing interest in double majoring in German, so we will continue to help them make the best decisions for their careers.

That is not to say that German is only for double majors! All German majors are important to Tech, so we will continue to seek out study abroad opportunities as well as internships for our students. Many are interested in our dual degree program with the University of Aachen, and when the first students return to share their experiences, I expect that program to really take off. 📌

Select Faculty Achievements in Department of Foreign Languages

Debbie Barnard published "*Ironie, alterité et racisme dans Le Café de Madame Ben Djamil de Claude Kayat.*" *Expressions maghrébines* 13.2 (2014): 15-27. Print.

Mark Groundland continues to index journal articles on Spanish literature for the Modern Languages Association International Bibliography and is a member of the editorial board for *The Coastal Review*.

Julia Gruber was invited to UT Knoxville in April 2014 to give a presentation entitled, "Reading between the Bloodlines: Family Stories in Germanic Literature," stemming from her current book project on this topic.

Colleen Hays presented "Beur-French Romances in French Comedies: Post-Colonial Mimicry or a Challenge to Essentialist Identities?" at the

American Comparative Literature Association meeting in Seattle in March 2015. She also led a travel abroad trip to southern France in May 2015.

Marketta Laurila was selected to be the Academic Audit Team Leader of the Foreign Language program at Chattanooga State Community College in 2014-15.

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Manuel Villalba published "*Ansiedades sociales, historicismo y democracia en Días de llamas de Juan Iturralde.*" *Anales de la Literatura Española Contemporánea* (2015). Print. Forthcoming. 📌