



# The TTU Polyglot Fall 2018

*5th Anniversary Edition*

## A Message from Interim Chair Martin Sheehan

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We in Tennessee Tech's Department of Foreign Languages are happy to bring you our 5th annual newsletter!

The 2017-2018 academic year was another busy one for us. Perhaps most noteworthy was hiring Dr. Mike Olsen as assistant professor of Spanish. He joins us from the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point, and his appointment marks the first permanent full-time hire in the department in five years. The

department is very grateful that the administration granted us this search, which will mean more competent, competitive graduates across the state and nation.

Dr. Olsen will oversee our teacher licensure program, in addition to teaching all levels of Spanish (including a course on Spanish linguistics in spring 2019). As our licensure liaison, he will help train the next generation of foreign language teachers who, among other roles, will serve as advocates for multilingualism and as ambassadors for Tech.

The rest of the department also remains deeply committed to our students. We continue to innovate our instruction methods so that our students meet international standards of linguistic profi-

ciency, digital literacy and intercultural competency.

Our minors programs continue to flourish. Students across the university, especially in the STEM fields, are finding that foreign languages can help them stand out to future employers. Future nurses, engineers, lawyers, government officials and corporate executives are seeing how foreign language study can prepare them for the globalized world outside of Tech.

Please read more about all the great things our faculty and students are doing on campus and across the globe. Also, please consider visiting our website, contacting us with any questions or news or, if possible, stopping by the department to visit with us. Thank you for supporting our department and students.

## DFL Achieves Highest One-Year Percentile Increase in Degrees Conferred Across Entire Tech Campus for 2017-2018

According to data collected and analyzed by the university, the Department of Foreign Languages (DFL) had the highest one-year percentile increase (133%) in degrees conferred across the entire

university for 2017-18 (up to 14 from 6 the previous year). The DFL also had the highest three-year percentile increase within the College of Arts and Sciences (55.6%, or from 9 to 14).

Want to be a part of our exciting and growing program? Contact Martin Sheehan, interim chair, at [msheehan@tntech.edu](mailto:msheehan@tntech.edu) for ways you can be involved! We hope to hear from you soon.

## Departmental and Club News

### DFL Pilots Internship Program with Nashville-based Company

In August 2017 the Department of Foreign Languages began a new internship program for students with International Scholarship and Tuition Services (ISTS) in Nashville. Mark Groundland, associate professor of Spanish, and Debbie Barnard, associate professor of French, worked with Tech French alumna Lydie-Claire Kerrigan, who is a program manager at ISTS, in getting the initiative off the ground.

The program was developed to meet one of the DFL's stated improvement initiatives that came out of its 2017 program audit. The DFL agreed to look for internship and co-op opportunities for its students, a re-



Sara Marrero in Paris

quirement the internship course with ISTS met perfectly.

ISTS manages grants, tuition reimbursement, scholarships and other aspects of education management for an array of organizations, from Fortune 500 companies to community foundations, and needs program managers and specialists who speak French, German and Spanish.

Tennessee Tech FL majors Sarah Marrero, in Spanish, and Rebecca Franey, in French, worked 90 hours each at ISTS in fall and spring semesters, respectively.

"The internship was a great way to take my foreign language education outside of the classroom and apply it to a professional and practical setting," said Marrero. "I learned so much more than just a specialized vocabulary: I learned about how to interact with bilingual colleagues who also understand the culture and values of Spanish-speaking clients, and with monolingual colleagues who share a different culture than the Spanish-speaking



Rebecca Franey in Étretat, France

clients."

Franey also gained real-world experience at ISTS.

"Interning at ISTS taught me how to work in an office setting and effectively communicate with others," she said. "I was able to use my French to complete tasks for co-workers and learn more myself from interacting with new vocabulary and French websites. Although there is not a large French community in Nashville, ISTS gave me translations and research work relevant to the language."

Due to restructuring at ISTS the internship program is on hiatus for fall 2018, but is set to resume in spring 2019.

### Avant-Garde: French Club Hosts Crêpe Workshops, Conversation Hours and More in 2017-2018

*Avant-Garde* was busy in the fall and spring semesters. In fall 2017, club members traveled to Sparta to make crêpes with the French students at White County High School, held several conversation hours (both beginner and advanced), enjoyed the seventh annual Zombie Potluck at Halloween and celebrated the end of the semes-

ter with lunch at The Bull and Thistle.

Spring 2018 brought more conversation hours and another successful series of the crêpe workshops, where the club shared its crêpe knowledge with the larger community.

*Avant-Garde* finished the se-

mester by participating in Tech's international festival, Window on the World, where the club offered attendees the chance to win a macaron by correctly answering a trivia question about the French-speaking world.

The club finished the school year with another luncheon honoring graduating seniors.

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



## TTU Students Experience Language Immersion with Study Abroad in Germany with DFL Faculty

During spring break 2018, Julia Gruber, associate professor of German, and Martin Sheehan, interim chair of the DFL and associate professor of German, accompanied 12 Tech students on the latest exciting and educational trip to *Deutschland*.

Since 2009, Gruber has taken German students on spring break trips to Berlin

nine times. Students stay with German host families and explore the city and its surroundings with Stefano Rutigliano, a local teacher, and in small groups on their own. Highlights typically include visits to Potsdam and Sachsenhausen, excursions to the Turkish market and museums, and an outing to the oldest chocolate shop in the city.

During the spring 2018 trip, the group also met German author Tanja Dueckers, who showed them her favorite *Currywurst* stand in the city.

For 2019 Gruber is planning a two-week trip for Tech students to visit Vienna and Berlin in June. For more information about this upcoming summer trip, contact Gruber at [jgruber@tntech.edu](mailto:jgruber@tntech.edu).

## Der Deutsche Klub: German Club Looks to the Future with New Activities, More Members

*Der Deutsche Klub* sponsored many of their recurring impactful activities during the 2017-2018 year, such as *Oktoberfest* in the fall and selling German desserts at Window on the World in the spring. However, they choose to primarily focus on the present and the future rather than the past!

During fall 2018, the German club's membership has grown and active officers have hosted several well-attended *Stammtisch* meetings, during which students have played German Scrabble. Students also get together for "Netflix and Nuggets" to watch Netflix shows in German. A *Wandertag*

(hiking trip) is planned for November. In the spring, they will be baking heart-shaped desserts with sweet messages on them and selling them in the RUC. There has also been talk of a *Faschingsparty* and a curry sauce competition.

Check out *Der Deutsche Klub* in Spring 2019!

**Faculty Advisor:**  
**Julia Gruber, Ph.D.**  
[jgruber@tntech.edu](mailto:jgruber@tntech.edu)

## SPAN 4810: Contemporary Spanish Women Writers Explored



Manuel Villalba

Does a “feminine” literature exist? This was the central question that Spanish students tried to answer last fall using theoretical debates on feminine identity and feminist cultural theory as a starting point.

In class, a variety of theoretical readings helped students analyze and interpret the work of contemporary Span-

ish authors such as Roredora, Laforet, Aldecoa, Amat and Gopegui. Students also had the opportunity to contextualize the work of these authors within the cultural and historical framework of contemporary Spain.

The class was taught by Manuel Villalba, assistant professor of Spanish.

## Amigos: Spanish Club Works to Improve Cultural Awareness on TTU Campus

Last year *Amigos*, the Spanish club, continued working hard to improve cultural awareness and provide education to the Tech academic community. Students prac-

ticed their languages skills in a friendly environment through activities organized by the club. Innovative activities such as conversation hours, movie nights and the

*Dia de los muertos* celebration made a great impact on campus. Also, our *aqua de Jamaica* sold out very quickly during the Window on the World celebration!

**Faculty Advisor:**  
**Manuel Villalba, Ph.D.**  
**[mwillalba@tntech.edu](mailto:mwillalba@tntech.edu)**

## Honor Society, Awards and Capstones



## New Members Inducted into FL Honor Society

In April, 16 students and one faculty member were inducted into the Eta Psi Chapter of Alpha Mu Gamma, the national foreign language honor society.

Guest speaker at the induction ceremony was Lee Wiant, who has worked as a certified court interpreter in more than 100 courts.

### French

Charlotte McHugh  
Andrew R. Salyer  
Kayla Sircy  
Chase Walton

### German

Victoria Chaplin  
Steven Matthews  
Katrina Mauk  
Jacob G. Misenhimer  
Prinya Tep

### Spanish

James Lyle Adler  
Macy Arms  
Shannon Buford  
Jackelyn Carrillo  
Madison Dingess  
Dalton Hamlin  
Chassidy Overstreet

### Faculty

Cristina Humita, instructor of Spanish

## Scholarships Awarded to FL Majors for 2017-2018



College of Arts & Sciences  
Dean Paul Semmes and Senior  
Emily Alligood

**Marshall and Thelma Bertram Scholarship:** Emily Alligood, seeking a B.A. in Spanish and a B.S. in biology.

**Askey FL Scholarships:** McKen-

zie Graybill, seeking a B.A. in Spanish and a B.S. in communication, and Brian Kilgore, seeking a B.A. in German and a B.S. in biochemistry.

**Alberta Campana Memorial Scholarship:** Caroline Hunter, seeking a B.A. in Spanish and also enrolled in Tech's pre-med program.

**Fredrick Heina Memorial Scholarship:** Kate Trebing, seeking a B.A. in French and a B.S. in communication.

We would like to offer a special thanks to each donor who made possible these awards, including

Phillip Campana, Ph.D., professor emeritus of German and former chair of the DFL for more than 30 years; Michael Campana; Philip Bertram, M.D., and Thelma Askey.

The DFL Faculty and Alumni Scholarship was not awarded this past year, but we hope to resume the presentation of this award in spring 2019. Funds for this award, as well as for the Campana and Heina scholarships, come from alumni, faculty and friends of the department. When making a gift, donors should specify the name of the scholarship.



## Fifteen Complete Senior Capstones in 2017-2018

These are the students, their topics and the faculty with whom they worked for their Senior Capstone projects:

Yocelyne Angulo (w/Villalba), *La experiencia del inmigrante indocumentado latino en el Cine* [The Undocumented Latino Immigrant Experience in the Cinema]

Jackelyn Carrillo [w/Villalba], *La representación del género en la obra novelística de Mercé Rodoreda* [Gender Representation in Mercé Rodoreda's Novels]

Clark Dycus (w/Villalba), *Analisis de diferentes aspectos de la adquisición de segundas lenguas* [Analysis of Different Aspects of Second Language Acquisition]

Miranda Frogge (w/Villalba), *Comparación de tres teorías de la enseñanza de segundas lenguas: Vygotsky, Chomsky, and Krashen* [A Comparison of Three Second Acquisition Theories: Vygotsky, Chomsky, and Krashen]

Dalton Hamlin (w/Grundland), *La teoría social de conflicto de*

*Karl Marx en la causa de violencia del género en el cine español* [Analysis on Domestic Violence in Contemporary Spanish Film, through Marxist Lens]

Trey Henderson (w/Villalba), *Los paralelos entre Macondo y Colombia* [Parallels between Macondo and Colombia]

Olivia Hendricks (w/Sheehan), *Einwanderung: frühere Herausforderungen und aktuelle Gelegenheiten* [Immigration: Past Challenges and Current Opportunities]

Sara Marrero (w/Villalba), *La representación de la familia en el cine español* [The Representation of Family in Spanish Cinema]

Rosaura Mejia (w/Hays), *Les descendants d'immigrés musulmans en France* [The Descendants of Muslim Immigrants in France]

Bailee Michaels (w/Villalba), *Quien usa los pantalones: La representación de feminidad en Valor, agravio y mujer de Ana Caro* [Who is Wearing the Pants: The Representation of Femininity

in Ana Caro's *Valor, agravio y mujer*]

Julia Ponton (w/Villalba), *Cristina Peri Rossi "en disputa"* [Cristina Peri Rossi's Trouble]

Emily Savage (w/Villalba), *La vida y la contribución de Max Aub (en México)* [Life and Contribution of Max Aub (in Mexico)]

Samantha Seay (w/ Barnard), *Qu'est-ce que les États-Unis peuvent apprendre et utiliser du système pénitentiaire en France?* [What Can the United States Learn and Use from the French Penitentiary System?]

Madison Stremmer (w/ Grundland), *El patriarcado en algunas novelas españolas contemporáneas* [Examination of Patriarchy in 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Spanish Novels]

Matthew Shults (w/Sheehan), *Gesundheit GmbH: Medizin in Deutschland* [Health Inc.: Medicine in Germany]

## Alumni Spotlight

### Everett Dahl, German, 2013: 'DFL Prepared Me Well'



*Everett Dahl received his bachelor of arts degree in German in 2013. He recently took the time to fill us in on his experiences during the five years since his graduation from Tech.*

After earning my German degree at Tennessee Tech, I found my first teaching job in Columbia, South Carolina. This is my fifth year teaching German at the high school level. Prior to moving here I didn't know much about South Carolina, but living in the capital has been a great experience; Columbia is a diverse and politically charged city.

I wouldn't be where I am without Tech's foreign language faculty. Their guidance and support helped me develop into the educator I am today, and their influence is ever-present in my teaching. I share the same stories which Dr. Campana shared with us in our German culture course. When I teach students about definite articles and the nominative and accusa-

tive cases, I share the same "RESE NESE" mnemonic device Dr. Gruber taught us in German 1010. Completing my capstone project under Dr. Sheehan taught me how to write more professionally and to present research, something that has proven invaluable in my educational journey. When I first arrived at college, my major was English. I switched majors in my second year at TTU and never looked back. Now here I am, teaching German; I'd say they prepared me well!

Tech's Department of Foreign Languages also did an awesome job providing enriching cultural events. I only wish I had participated more. I was (am) a fairly introverted person, so getting involved was sometimes hard for me. Looking back, I had no reason to be apprehensive. The foreign language faculty are immensely helpful and want students to participate. They are there for you!

Tennessee Tech's *Der Deutsche Klub* [The German club] holds a special place in my memories. Students and faculty always came together so well to put on our events: *Oktoberfest*, *Wandertag*, *Stammtisch*, movie nights . . . there were always opportunities to learn. I was fortunate to serve as the vice president and later president. I encourage all students who take German to participate!

Another experience through TTU which helped my professional development tremendously was an internship in Frankfurt, Germany, in 2011. I was with a company called *Abenteuerspielplatz* [Adventure Play Place] that set up events in the city for children. This experience was a turning point for me. Living alone in a foreign country while learning the language forged a true feeling of independence within me. I wasn't nervous to speak anymore; I wasn't afraid of making errors. I knew that if I could survive there, I could survive anywhere.

Last year I started a master's degree in literacy, language and culture through Coastal Carolina University; I will be finished in May. I'm planning to continue my education further, but I'm not yet sure what path I'll take.

To any current Tech students considering a minor or major in a foreign language, my advice is: do it! The contrast between my previous, monolingual self and my bilingual self is immense. Learning another language — another culture — is the best way to understand the world and its peoples. It has provided me with lifelong friends and unforgettable memories, and has opened doors that were previously invisible to me. Communication is the cure to so many of the world's problems — and it all starts with language.

**"I wouldn't be where I am without Tech's foreign language faculty."**

## Faculty Spotlight

### Meet New Assistant Professor of Spanish



*Michael Olsen began teaching Spanish language, culture and literature courses at Tech in fall 2018. He also serves as the DFL's liaison with the teacher education program. He shares a little about his background, teaching, research and service.*

I am originally from a small farming community near Logan, Utah, but I lived in California, Ecuador, Pennsylvania, Montana and Wisconsin before moving to Cookeville. I earned a bachelor's in Spanish and a master's in second language teaching from Utah State University in 2006 and 2007 respectively, then a master's and a doctorate in Hispanic linguistics from the University of Pittsburgh in 2010 and 2013 respectively.

My primary research interests lie in understanding the cognitive processes involved in second language acquisition with the purpose of aligning teaching practices with those processes, thus facilitating language acquisition in the class-

room. My principle research has led me to ask several other general research questions. Target language input which language learners receive is crucial to the acquisition process, but we empirically know little about the actual input that learners are exposed to from their language teachers. Because my research connects learning and teaching Spanish, I am also interested in foreign language teacher education and how licensure requirements affect teacher candidates as they prepare to begin their careers.

Much of my research directly informs my teaching. As I have increased my understanding of the language acquisition process, I have incorporated teaching practices into my classes that help my students become lifelong language learners. These practices have also provided students the necessary background to enter their chosen careers with the ability to function in our global society.

As part of my research, I have recorded others and myself teaching Spanish classes to be able to analyze the language of Spanish teachers. My linguistics background has also allowed me to engage students in simple linguistic analysis of Spanish and enabled them to deepen their understanding of the language. My research regarding teacher education has helped me prepare my students to successfully complete the EdTPA, a performance assessment that

teacher candidates must pass for licensure, and obtain teaching positions in public secondary schools.

I hope to see TTU's Spanish program and the Department of Foreign Languages grow and flourish as I strive to make connections with the surrounding public schools and promote our programs. I believe the licensure program plays an important part in this growth. As our students graduate and become local foreign language teachers, they become recruiters for TTU. They encourage their students to attend TTU and to continue their language learning. I hope to see the licensure program grow to help meet the nationwide teacher shortage. As we emphasize and publicize the lifelong financial, educational and cognitive benefits of language learning in all career paths, we will see our foreign language programs strengthen.

My family is my life outside of my job. My wife, Alexis, and I have four children ages 12, 10, 7 and almost 4. We enjoy the outdoors and have acquired an addiction to donuts (Ralph's and Big O's) since moving to Cookeville. In a past life, I was the director of percussion for a high school in Utah, where I led the creation of indoor percussion productions, wrote/arranged marching percussion music for the school and taught private lessons. I also actively fulfill church leadership responsibilities. I rarely experience a dull moment!

**"As our students graduate and become local foreign language teachers, they become recruiters for TTU."**

## Selected Accomplishments of DFL Faculty During 2017-2018

In addition to time spent teaching classes, advising students, overseeing FL club activities and performing other departmental and university duties, fulltime faculty members do extensive research, make presentations at foreign language conferences and publish in professional journals and books. Here are just a few of their outstanding accomplishments during the past academic year.



**Debbie Barnard** presented papers at the 89th Annual South Modern Language Association Convention

in Atlanta and at the Mountain Interstate Foreign Language Conference at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington.



**Mark Groundland**, associate professor of Spanish, was appointed by the Modern Languages Association (MLA) Executive

Council to serve a three-year term on the Advisory Committee of the *MLA International Bibliography*. This committee is charged with assessing the direction of the bibliography, with reviewing its policies and procedures and with helping to recruit potential bibliographers.

Groundland is a Distinguished Bibliographer and has been indexing Spanish literature journals for more than 20 years.



**Julia Gruber** published an edited volume entitled "Reading between the Blood Lines," a collection of interviews with contemporary Austrian and German authors on the family novel. Together with colleagues in the history, English and sociology/political sciences departments and the Office of Multicultural Studies she started the planning stages of a workshop on "Crime, Race and Justice" slated for spring 2020.

**Colleen Hays** received a non-instructional faculty research grant for 2017-2018 to work on her project "Fictional Representations of Jihadism in France: A New Filmic Genre Born of National Crisis." She went on a research trip to France in May 2018, where she developed a more specific topic, "Screening French Female Radicalization: The Jihadist Conversion of Women in Narrative French Film," after she saw the wide societal concern with French female Jihadis. A forthcoming book chapter is entitled "Foucault's interpretation of communitarian versus the humanitarian forces as is portrayed in the dArdenne Brothers' *La Promesse* and *Le silence de Lorna*."



**Michael Olsen\*** presented his research at several academic conferences in fall 2017.

He conducted a roundtable workshop for language tu-

tors working with a county-wide literacy council. He also had a book chapter published, "Specific challenges faced by world language teacher candidates, cooperating teachers, and program coordinators in development of edTPA portfolios," in spring 2018. During summer 2018, he rated the Language and Culture portion of Spanish AP tests.

\* Note: although Michael Olsen just joined the TTU faculty in August 2018, he shares some highlights from the 2017-2018 academic year at his previous institution.



**Martin Sheehan** co-chaired a seminar on how photographs function in German movies at

the German Studies Association meeting in Atlanta. In May, the publisher Berghahn accepted his proposal for a co-edited volume on photographs in German cinema. The anthology will feature new essays written by critics in the fields of German studies, media studies and film studies. In July, a German-language article, "*Sprachliche Vorstellung und Entstellung in Die Kasette von Sternheim*," was published in *Archiv*, the oldest German studies journal in the world. He served as leader for the session "Twitterbots Done Quick" at The Humanities and Technology (THAT) Camp at Vanderbilt.



**Manuel Villalba** published a book in 2018: *Correspondencia (1924-1974)*: Jorge

*Guillen/Americo Castro*. He also presented a paper entitled "*Cervantes y cubism: el multiperspectivismo en Jusep Torres Campalans de Max Aub*" at the 71st Kentucky Foreign Language Conference at the University of Kentucky in April.



**Meet Cristina Humita**

Maria-Cristina Humita, instructor of Spanish, began teaching at Tech in fall 2017. She holds a master's in Spanish and Latin American literature from the University of Cincinnati and is fluent in three languages.

"I like teaching a foreign language to help students connect with other cultures and open their eyes about what's going on in the world," Humita said. "I enjoy meeting students from different backgrounds, and I'm always learning new teaching methods to help with language acquisition." She said she also welcomes the opportunity at Tech to teach different levels of Spanish.

In her spare time, Humita enjoys traveling and trying new cuisines.

### Looking Ahead . . .

See the hard-copy insert or the extra email attachment for a list and description of our Spring 2019 FL courses!