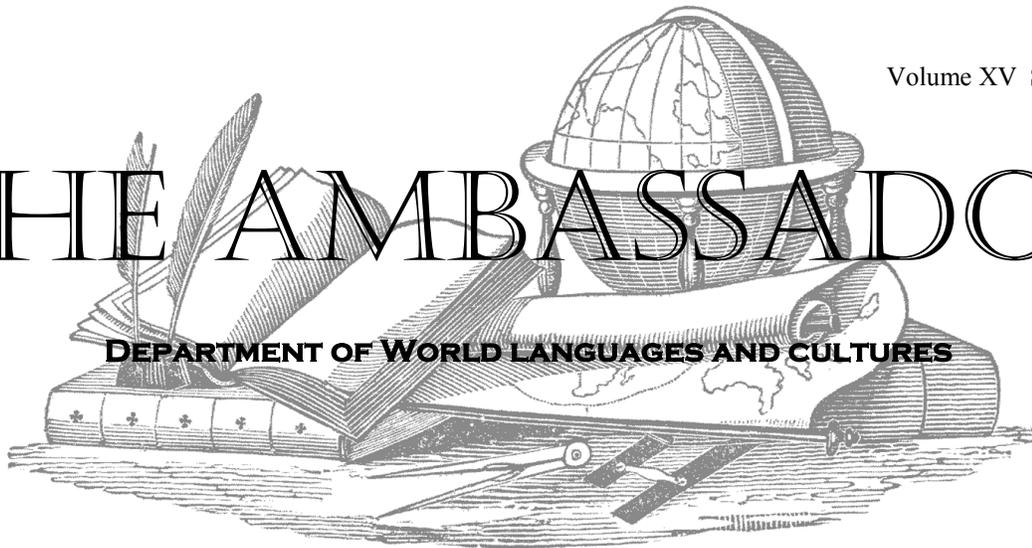


# THE AMBASSADOR

DEPARTMENT OF WORLD LANGUAGES AND CULTURES



## LETTER FROM ABROAD

### BEING A FULBRIGHT IN MADRID

I don't think I'll ever forget the moment that I found out I won a Fulbright grant to teach in Madrid, Spain. The venue couldn't have been more perfect. I was in Spanish class in Hyland Hall when I spied my cell phone in my bag, lit up by calls from Dr. Trussler, our Fulbright Program advisor, and by an email from the Institute of Education in New York. Jaime Meilán, the only professor from Spain in the World Languages Department, was teaching the class. At the time, I couldn't believe the irony; what were the odds that I'd be sitting in Spanish class, with one of the few Spaniards I knew, in the only University building I'd ever taken a language course in, when I learned that I'd soon be living in abroad for an entire year? After 5 months in Madrid, I realize that that moment wasn't so ironic after all. In fact, my experiences here are constantly colored by those I had at Scranton and by the encouragement that I am still receiving from the University.

I am working at a secondary school in Madrid, teaching not only English language but also science courses in English. Additionally, I teach a class called Global Classrooms, a model UN program designed to increase students' global awareness, to develop their critical thinking skills, and to improve their written and spoken English. The program culminated in a conference where 12 of our students represented countries such as France, Australia, and Kazakhstan and debated the topic of freshwater resources. One of our students was selected to represent Spain at the model UN conference in New York in May.

Because I am not a trained educator, I draw from my interdisciplinary education in science, Spanish, and philosophy to develop lesson plans. For classroom strategies, I try to mimic the style of my favorite professors. The most rewarding part of my experiences is having students thank me for helping them understand a topic they've struggled with. Outside of the classroom, the Fulbright scholarship has afforded me the opportunity to explore beyond Madrid. From the mosque-turned-cathedral of Córdoba in the south to the picturesque beaches of Basque Country in the north, I am slowly but surely imbibing the diverse landscapes, culture, and, of course, food that this beautiful country has to offer.

It's days like today—St. Patrick's Parade Day—that I miss Scranton the most, but reflecting on my experience reminds me of how grateful I am for my friends and professors that pushed me to apply for a Fulbright and for their continued support since the moment I received the grant. In the face of a struggling job market, I have had the opportunity to live and work in one of Europe's best-known capitals, thanks to the help of my favorite Pennsylvania *pueblo*.

**Kathleen Lavelle**



**Ms. Lavelle graduated with a double major in biochemistry, cell and molecular biology/Hispanic studies and a minor in philosophy.**

#### Inside this issue:

- Faculty Activities
- Film Series Spring 2013
- Current and Upcoming Events
- Studying Abroad: Taiwan
- Alumni News
- Studying Abroad: Florence

### The Writer's Dilemma

**Dr. Robert Parsons** attended the annual Joint National Conference of the National Association of African American Studies and its affiliate organizations, one of which is the National Association of Hispanic and Latino Studies in Baton Rouge, LA where he presented a paper on February 15. The title of the paper was "The Writer's Dilemma: Enrique Serna's Writings on the Impact of Economics, Politics and Popular Culture on Literature." Serna is a satirical writer from Mexico City who has published seven novels, two collection of short narrative fiction, two collections of essays and miscellaneous writings, and an anthology of Mexican short stories over the past twenty years. He is the winner of the 2000 Premio Mazatlán de Literatura for his novel *Seducer de la patria* on the nineteenth century Mexican dictator Antonio López de Santa Anna. The paper analyzes Serna's opinions on the state of literature and readership in contemporary Mexico as reflected in several of his essays and two short stories.



### Exploring issues of ethnicity, gender and religion

**Dr. Marzia Caporale** presented a paper at the Studies in French Cinema International conference at King's College in London, England, last June. Her paper was titled "Strategies of Resistance: Re-gendering Greek Tragedy and The War Hero(ine) in Denis Villeneuve's Film *Incendies*." The film by this québécois director is a poignant commentary on the atrocities of war and on the devastating effects of ethnic conflicts in the Middle East. Additionally, Dr. Caporale continued to work on Karin Albou, a Franco-Algerian director whose work explores issues of ethnicity, gender and religion. Albou's second feature film, *The Wedding Song* was nominated for 6 awards and won Best Film, Best Depiction and Best Director at the 10th edition of the International *Images* Film Festival. Caporale's article "Women (mis)reading Religious Texts in Karin Albou's films *La petite Jérusalem* and *Le chant des mariées*" was published in the latest issue of *Women in French Studies* (2013).



### *La vita è bella / Life is Beautiful*

**Dr. Virginia Picchiatti** is on sabbatical this year. She is working on a series of new projects, including writing a book on the representation of the Shoah in Italian children's literature, co-editing a volume in Italian Women's Studies, and writing an article on Roberto Benigni's *La vita è bella (Life is Beautiful)*, probably the most internationally acclaimed movie of the Italian actor and director.

In November 2012, Dr. Picchiatti was invited to present a paper titled "Present Absences in Roberto Benigni's *La vita è bella*" at the Conference of the American Association of Teachers of Italian (AATI), that took place in Philadelphia, PA. Additionally, her article "Questions of Complicity, Acquiescence, and Identity in *La vita è bella*'s Representation of the Italian Shoah" has been accepted for publication in the volume *Roberto Benigni, Actor and Film Maker*. She will also be chairing in May the next conference of AATI, in Strasbourg, France.



### Aesthetics of solidarity in Cold War East and West Germany

**Dr. Jamie Trnka** is currently on sabbatical and living in Maastricht, The Netherlands. During her time there, she has completed work on a book about the aesthetics of solidarity in Cold War East and West Germany. This February she took part in a two-day workshop entitled "Visions and Visualizations. South America in Visual Media of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century," which was held at the Ibero-American Historical Institute at the University of Cologne, Germany. Attended by scholars from Europe and the Americas, the workshop offered an excellent opportunity to discuss her ongoing comparative work on German engagements with Latin America. This summer she will spend time in Berlin and Potsdam, Germany, where she will conduct research on Chilean-German cultural collaboration during the 1970s, with an emphasis on Carlos Cerda's screenwriting. She will present her findings at conferences in the U.S. and Chile after her return to the U.S. and to The University of Scranton this Fall.





### International research and presentations

**Dr. Linda Ledford-Miller** was part of a three-member team invited to review CIEE's programs in Valparaíso and Viña del Mar, Chile in October. She and her two colleagues spent an intense few days visiting university offices, sitting in on classes, and meeting host families before writing their collaborative report. She greatly enjoyed her visit to the renowned Chilean poet and Literature Nobel prize laureate Pablo Neruda's house, La Sebastiana. You can visit it here: <http://www.plataformaarquitectura.cl/2012/01/24/clasicos-de-arquitectura-la-sebastiana-de-pablo-neruda/>.

She also served as a Referee to new journal, *L'Érudit franco-espagnol* (LEF-E), an Electronic Journal of French and Hispanic Literatures ( [www.lef-e.org](http://www.lef-e.org)). She is currently working on a chapter for a book on actor Robert Downey Jr.'s films, dealing with his two Sherlock Holmes recent movies.

### Women and Gender in the Early Modern World

**Dr. Yamile Silva** will present a paper in the XVIII *Congreso Internacional de Hispanistas* in Buenos Aires, Argentina in July 2013. Over the past year, she published two articles in peer-reviewed journals and was invited to write a chapter for the peer-reviewed book *Women and Gender in the Early Modern World* that will be published by Ashgate Publishing. She has a book review that is under consideration for publication in *Letras Femeninas*. Additionally, she is currently co-editing an anthology with Dr. Hank Willenbrink, Department of English and Theatre, of Spanish and Portuguese writers who attended the Festival de la Palabra in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Drs. Willenbrink and Silva presented this anthology at the 2013 NoPassport Conference at NYU Gallatin on March 1, 2013. Finally, she is collaborating with Dr. Mary Berg (Harvard University and Brandeis University) on an anthology of previously unpublished petitions by women written to Spanish authorities in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.



### *Danke, merci, gracias, grazie!*

**Dr. Monika Moyrer** has been continuing her work on several projects dedicated to collage poetry in recent German literature. After a long process, her article about the transnational trajectories in Herta Müller's German and Romanian collages will be published. At the invitation of colleagues from Lebanon Valley College, she gave a workshop about newspaper clippings in recent literature and the arts. On the AATG Study Trip Award committee, she has joined Jennifer Redmann and Anthony Jannotta in the selection process of the best high school students in our chapter. She will be attending a seminar on the European Union in Freiburg, Germany, this coming June. Dr. Moyrer will be leaving the University of Scranton after the spring semester, and she wants to take the opportunity to thank the third floor of O'Hara, namely, my colleagues, the lab assistants, and our secretary for their professionalism, wit, and humor. What a great place to work! *Danke, merci, gracias, grazie!*



### SHANNON LAVELLE AND ANTHONY DUCHNOWSKI RECEIVE THE DEPARTMENT'S MODERN AND CLASSIC LANGUAGES AWARDS

The Department of World Languages and Cultures gave this year's departmental awards to the students Shannon Lavelle, in the category of Modern Languages, and Anthony Duchnowski, for Classic Languages, recognizing their outstanding student performance and contributions to the community. Ms. Lavelle will be graduating in May with a double major in Biology and Hispanic Studies. Mr. Anthony Duchnowski, will also graduate this semester, with a double major in Secondary Education and Latin.

## ZEN WALK AND POETRY READING-LIVING IN THE NOW MINDFULLY FOR PEACE

### Zen Walk May 3, 11:00 am at the Dionne Green

We walk every day. Normally people are in a hurry to walk to their destination. Sometimes you see people chat with friends while walking; other times you see people stop on their way to enjoy the beautiful scenery of Scranton (like me). It's so easy to be mindless and drift away on thoughts and fantasies while walking, just like when you sit in a Chinese class. In many religious traditions, walking is a spiritual practice. Mindful walking is meditation in action. It can keep you to be in touch with your body, to lift your spirit and nourish

your soul. There are times in life when it's difficult to focus and be still, when we walk mindfully, the mind comes to rest naturally and easily. Come and join us to walk and feel your soul and nature peacefully. This is a good chance to relax before the finals.

### Poetry reading with Mr. Zheng May 3, 5:30 pm at BRN 228

Since his extraordinary debut with "*Above the Space of Dreams*" in 1955, Zheng Chouyu has become one of the most widely read and best loved poets in the Chinese language. His poems speak with the primordial language of the human soul and marry classical

and vernacular Chinese in a new poetic form which unlocks the true musicality of the language. His work is considered an essential part of Chinese literature and language teaching in Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Chinese communities around world, with his poems appearing in standard textbooks alongside those of Tang Dynasty poets Li Bo and Tu Fu. His work has been translated into English, Japanese, Korean, German and French.

**For further information on both events, please contact Visiting Lecturer Allison Lai at [Allison.lai@Scranton.edu](mailto:Allison.lai@Scranton.edu)**

## LANGUAGES TEACHER WORKSHOP

The annual World Languages Teacher Workshop will be held on **Mon. April 29** from 8:30am to 2pm in Brennan 509. Each year the Dept. of World Languages and Cultures holds a teacher workshop to provide updates on current theory, teaching strategies, resources and technology. Teachers from all area public, private middle, high school and universities are invited to participate. This year's focus is one of the main goals of the Standards for Language Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Interpersonal Communication. The topic will focus on the importance of providing comprehensible *input* and chances for creative, consistent and engaging opportunities for student "pushed *output*" in the classroom. The workshop includes hands-on involvement using effective "pushed output" strategies, and new resources and technology, that help language teachers challenge and energize students.

## 8TH ANNUAL TA TALK / DINNER

The Department of World Languages and Cultures hosted the 8th Annual TA TALK dinner event **Thursday March 21** at 4:30 p.m. in Brennan Hall 509. The event featured talks by Adjunct Professor of Spanish Ignacio Díaz, from México, and by current departmental Teaching Assistants Imen Neffati from Tunisia and Rika Kawahara from Japan. Funded by a Diversity Initiatives Grant this event was a unique opportunity to learn about other cultures from the perspective of these enthusiastic young ambassadors. Each shared surprising insights into what makes their countries so special to them. The TA Talk / Dinner, organized by **Professor Marie Karam**, was free and open to all area teachers, administrators and student guests.

## GERMAN POETRY SLAM

"I don't believe there is anything in the whole earth that you can't learn in Berlin except the German language" Mark Twain once said. He wrestled and fought but appreciated German literary traditions. A few brave students from our Campus haven't given up either. They are currently learning German and will be gathering on **April 25** at 7:00pm in the International Center (Study Abroad) to celebrate German-speaking poetry. The floor will be open for recitations of classical ballads, such as Goethe's famous *Erlkönig* (Erlking), excerpts from Wilhelm Busch's legendary children's tales *Max und Moritz*, or contemporary poems. A jury will hand out prizes, but the main goal is to share what wise people have beautifully formulated about emotions, love and despair, nature, and their complicated existence.

## ALPHA MU GAMMA INDUCTION 2013

On **May 7** the Theta Iota Chapter of the Foreign Language National Honor Society Alpha Mu Gamma will celebrate the induction ceremony of its new members. The ceremony will take place in The DeNaples Center 405, from 11:30 am to 1 pm. Inductees will receive their certificates of membership and society pins, and graduating seniors will also receive their gold honors cords.

Requirements to become a member of this society are: a) for a full membership, two consecutive A's or A-'s in language courses at the Composition and Conversation (311-312) levels or above; b) for associate membership, two consecutive B+'s or better at the same level, or a noteworthy academic record in more than one language. Applicants must have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0.

## MOVIES THAT DO NOT THINK IN ENGLISH



Scene from the Spanish movie *Even the Rain*, directed by Icíar Bollaín

The spring semester brought the chance to watch numerous movies from different countries. The following are some of them.

### Spanish Film Club

The Spanish Film Club series focused on the impact of food and water on issues of sustainability, economics and class struggle. On Feb. 21, it showed *From the Land to Your Table* (2009), a documentary about the conditions and cultural diversity of produce markets in Iberoamérica.

*Even the Rain* (2010), a film within a film directed by Icíar Bollaín, was screened March 19. In this movie, a Spanish film crew goes to Bolivia to make a revisionist epic about the 16th century conquest of Latin America. The film explores the effects of Spanish imperialism, which still resonates in the struggle against oppression by indigenous people.

The series will end April 25 with *I Travel Because I Have To* (2009), directed by Karim Aïnouz and Marcelo Gomes. This film is a first-person travelogue of José Renato, a 35-year-old geologist, on a field trip to an isolated region of Brazil to assess

possible routes for a water canal from the region's only voluminous river. For many inhabitants, the canal will be a lifeline, the chance for a future and a source of hope. However, for those living on the canal's course, it means only requisitions, departure and loss.

### Italian Film Series

The Italian Film Series opened in February with *Pranzo di Ferragosto*, a movie about a middle-aged man living in Rome with his imposing and demanding elderly mother. His only outlet from her and the increasing debt into which they are sinking are the increasingly frequent quiet sessions at the local tavern.

March was the month for *Nuovomondo*, a movie that tells the story of the poor Mancuso family, and its quest to emigrate from Sicily to the U.S. at the turn of the 20th century. They dream of a land of opportunity, but at Ellis Island, the family undergoes extensive and humiliating examinations and questioning.

*Io e Te* will be screened April 24-25 in O'Hara 307. The film, directed by Bernardo Bertolucci, is the story of Lorenzo, a disturbed 14-year-

old boy who hates school. One day Lorenzo decides to hide from his mother in the house's basement while pretending to be on a skiing trip organized by his school. Things get complicated when his half-sister, Olivia shows up, needing a place to stay. Olivia fascinates and horrifies Lorenzo with her attitude problem, her smack addiction, and some dark hints about their father.

### German Club Films

March 7, the German Club offered *Das weisse Band* (2009), a German, Austrian, French, and Italian co-production directed by Michael Haneke about some inexplicable events that disturb the quiet life of a Northern German protestant village, just before World War I.

*Schulze gets the Blues* (2003), directed by Michael Scorr, was screened March 19. Schultze is a recently retired salt-miner who finds himself restless with much spare time. A series of upheavals in his life inspire an interest in American Zydeco and Cajun music. Eventually, he travels to the US, immersing himself in the music and culture of the Bayou.

## 'OLD' FACES IN NEW PLACES: NEWS FROM OUR FORMER STUDENTS



From the left, Benji Brust, Maureen Grady, Katie Doremus, and C.J. Libassi, former World Language Department students.

**Benji Brust** graduated from the University of Scranton in 2012 with majors in Latin and Education, and a minor in Spanish. He. Nowadays, he is teaching Latin in Trumbull High School, in Trumbull, Connecticut. He is currently writing a Latin textbook.

**Maureen Grady**, after graduating *magna cum laude* in May 2012 as a major in History with a

minor in Spanish, is currently working as the Curatorial Assistant at the Everhart Museum of Natural History, Science, and Art, in Scranton. She has plans to teach English in Spain with CIEE starting September 2013.

**Katie Doremus**, graduated in May 2011 with a double major in German and Secondary Education. She is currently living in East Stroudsburg, PA after receiving a Fulbright grant

and working as a teaching assistant in Germany in 2011-2012. Of her experience abroad, she says “is the most incredible thing I’ve ever done, and probably that I’ll ever do.”

**J.C. Libassi** graduated *magna cum laude* in 2010 as a triple major in English, Spanish and Philosophy. He received a Fulbright grant that brought him to Madrid, Spain, where he currently works as teaching assistant.



From the left, Elizabeth Joyce, Melissa Olsakowski, Rosemary García, Leo DeBarba, Alexis Burgess, Briana Wertalik, Shannel Julius, Samantha Ciappa, and Laura Fay. Not pictured, Shannon Labelle.

### TEN STUDENTS WENT TO THE 15TH MEXICO INTERSESSION PROGRAM

The departments of World Languages and Cultures and Political Science ran the 15th annual Mexico intercession program from January 7 to January 27, 2013. The travel/study course, led by professors **Robert Parsons**, and **Yamile Silva**, featured home stays with Mexican families for the 10 participating University of Scranton students (left photo) and courses in Spanish language and Mexican political culture at the Universidad Iberoamericana, a Jesuit institution located in the beautiful city of Puebla. The trip included a number of interesting excursions. Among these were a half-day tour of nearby Cholula that featured a climb to the top of the world famous Cholula pyramid, and weekend trips to the southwest city of Oaxaca and the nearby archeological site of Monte Albán, and to Mexico City, where the group visited the historical Castillo de Chapultepec, the world-famous Anthropological Museum, the Basilica de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, and the impressive pyramids of Teotihuacan. Students interested in participating in the 2014 program, currently in the planning stages, should contact Dr. Silva at [yamile.silva@scranton.edu](mailto:yamile.silva@scranton.edu), or Prof. Jaime Meilán at [jaime.meilandelrio@scranton.edu](mailto:jaime.meilandelrio@scranton.edu).

## THE ASIAN EXPERIENCE OF MABEL DE LA CRUZ



From the left, Mabel de la Cruz, Becky Wei, Aimee Miller, and Jessica Wen, one of Ms. De la Cruz's language exchange partners, holding a lantern, where they wrote their wishes, before lighting it up and releasing it into the sky.

My name is **Mabel de la Cruz**, and I am studying Language/Business-French at the University of Scranton. On May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012, I embarked on a life-changing journey to Asia. It started in Taiwan, a sweet potato shaped island, off the southeast coast of China, named by the Portuguese as "Formosa" ("beautiful") for the beauty of its landscape, food and people. Words cannot describe my excitement as I stepped off the plane in the Taipei airport and saw the big poster that welcomes you to this nation. As I sat in the airport and waited for the other U. of S. group, I saw many people staring at me. Interestingly enough, they never looked away whenever I caught them staring; they continued in till they were done dissecting every inch of my body with their eyes. I heard about the "staring phenomenon" before, but getting the first hand experience was beyond ordinary, especially since I was not an usual "*waiguoren*" (term given to foreigners) with fair skin, straight blond hair and blue eyes. I, on the other hand, have really curly dark brown hair, tan skin and deep brown eyes, so to them I was out of this world. This continued throughout the six months I spent in Asia.

The next morning, **Aimee Miller**, a fellow student at the University of Scranton, and I went exploring before meeting up with the rest of the group. At first, Taipei seemed strangely familiar. Its many mopeds and scooters, their non-traffic law abiding citizens, loud groups of people, and island atmosphere reminded me of the town I grew up in the Dominican Republic. It was like being back home but instead of people speaking Spanish, they spoke Chinese and instead of "chicharrón" (fried pork fat), they sold dumplings in the streets. Aimee and I got "dangbing" (a rice pancake wrap dish that is eaten for breakfast) at a local restaurant and then hit the stores. To my great surprise, the owner of the store spoke Spanish; she actually has family in Nicaragua and often travels there. I was relieved to find out there were other Latin Americans in Taiwan, and later I would discover that I was not the only Dominican on the island. The next day, we started classes at Fu Jen Catholic University. Through this program, I made many friends including a group of Dominicans, which told me there were 60 of them in Taiwan (many more than I expected) and a family from Guatemala. I also became very good friends with three local Taiwanese girls, who were my language and travel partners.

In Taiwan, I got the opportunity to travel throughout the country. I visited **Allison Lai** in her hometown. Then, with my Taiwanese friends, I travelled from the north to the south and around to the east coast. In total we visited eight different places. We stayed with my friend Jessica's parent in the city of Kaohsiung, by far my favorite city in Taiwan, and went to the beautiful mountains of Tairoku, where I learned the most about the Taiwanese people. In the southern part of Taiwan, they still speak Taiwanese, which is nothing like Mandarin. What made a great impact on me was the niceness of the people. Everywhere I went, they received me with open arms and helped me in every way possible. Taiwan can be described as a diamond in the raw, waiting to be polished and valued by the rest of the world.

## THE ITALIAN EXPERIENCE: “SUMMER IN FLORENCE” PROGRAM 2013



From the back, back row, Moira Parkinson, Dr. Picchietti, Katelyn Darrenkamp, Dr. Caporale, Stefanie Crosta, Samantha Zarro, Patrick Jaraique; and front row, Stephanie Lauko, Tim McCormick, Bethany Reynolds, Michelle Cain, Colleen Long and Katie Cavazzini, during the 4th “Summer in Florence” program.

*Timothy McCormick participated in the 4th annual “Summer in Florence” program, led by Dr. Marzia Caporale and Dr. Virginia Picchietti. Below, he reflects on his experience in the Jewel of Tuscany.*

The spring semester ended and before I knew it, I was preparing for classes again. This time, however, it was a little bit different. I had the opportunity to partake in a faculty-led study abroad program in Florence. Ten other students and I traveled to the history-filled city with Dr. Caporale and Dr. Picchietti. The group was comprised mostly of strangers, but this unique experience would quickly mold us into a tight-knit and adventurous group.

The three courses offered during the trip were Italian Language, Italian Culture through the Image (a photography class that encouraged a new perspective on culture shock), and Dante’s *Inferno* and the Florence of his Times (a class which looked at the political history of the city with many opportunities to explore and see landmarks referenced in Dante’s works). I opted for Italian Language and Italian Culture, though I honestly wished I could have squeezed the third course into my schedule!

I’m convinced Florence is the most beautiful city in the world; I spent a month in the city and still had more to see! From standing at the feet of Michelangelo’s world-famous and colossal David to scaling the steps to the top of the Duomo (463 in all), Florence’s sites are incomparable.

What’s truly special about Florence, however, can’t be included in the tour books or history books. It is the spirit of the city that makes Florence a lifelong home for all who visit it. My apartment was in Oltrarno, the “other side of the Arno.” While the whole city feels like a living history lesson, this district’s feel is different than the city’s center. Every day on the way to class, I would pass an artisan in his workshop hand carving frames, just before I crossed the Ponte Vecchio. On the way home, I’d stop for a homemade gelato, in a shop far off the beaten path.

Florence takes the traveler on a journey through space and time. I invite you to take the opportunity to explore; in Firenze there’s an adventure around every corner!

*For information or to participate in this year’s 6th annual “Summer in Florence,” contact Dr. Caporale (marzia.caporale@scranton.edu).*