

Dr. Caporale to Present French Feminist Films

This spring, Women's Studies professor Dr. Caporale of the department of World Languages and Cultures is hosting the Tournées Film Festival thanks to a grant by the French American Exchange Council (FACE).

Of the films being shown, two are related to feminism and Women's Studies. The featured films are as follows:

- *Coco before Chanel* Tuesday, March 1
- *The Wedding Song* Thursday, March 3

Both films will be in Brennan 228 at 7:00pm, and they are open to the public thanks to a grant by the FACE French American Exchange Council.

Dr. Caporale discusses what she hopes students will take away from the films and more:

"I chose these films for several reasons, the main one being that they are both the work of two incredibly talented, world-



Latin American Studies Student Studies Abroad

Benjamin Courtney is a secondary-education Spanish major from Norristown, PA. He studied and lived in Puebla, Mexico, during the summer of 2010 and provided the following information about his experiences:

"I studied at La Universidad Iberoamericana, Puebla. The content of the classes was not too difficult, but it took me a week or two to become accustomed to how quickly Mexicans speak and to figure out words I had never heard. I lived with the wonderful Esmanjaud-Lopez family. I had an amazing immersion experience with them. From day one, I only spoke Spanish. My host mom, Lourdes, is a widow with two children. Her twenty-year-old son Julio is in many ways the

man of the house. He attends school in the morning and works afternoons and into the night in order to make ends meet. His seventeen-year-old sister, Maria Jose, does almost all of the household chores. They all work incredibly hard. My host mother spelled-out the rules of the house when I first arrived. But, of course, I was feeling a bit overwhelmed on my first day and I only understood bits and pieces. I thought she told me that Julio's curfew was 1AM and that I should also be back home by that time in order to experience Mexican culture. As it turns out, she actually said that even though Julio's curfew was 1AM, that I, as a guest of their house and culture, did not have a curfew. I went out with a few new friends from the University the next night and became completely paranoid when I looked at my

famous women directors; Anne Fontaine for the first and Karin Albou for the second. Both films are inspirational to women in different ways.

Coco before Chanel portrays the challenges of the early life of famous French designer Coco Chanel before she became known for her work in fashion.

The Wedding Song is the beautiful story of a deep and intimate friendship between two women who come from completely different religious and ethnic backgrounds at a time (World War II) when hatred and intolerance were promoted as 'positive values'.

I hope that students and viewers of the films in general will appreciate the incredible artistry of these two women directors who work outside the mainstream Hollywood-type of cinematography.

My personal favorite film out of all the ones we will be showing at the Film Festival is indeed *The Wedding Song*. Director Karin Albou does a superb job showing that women can operate a small scale revolution within their societies, even under the most adverse of circumstances. The performance by the lead actresses in the film is also phenomenal."



Mexican Coat of Arms

watch and it read 1:30AM. I thought I had broken the curfew. I immediately took a cab back to the house and ran inside to apologize to my host mother. She was perplexed and then explained differently that I *didn't* have a curfew. She then pointed out that the current time was actually 12:45AM, not 1:45AM. I had also forgotten to turn my

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Latin American Studies Cultural Programming, Spring 2011

Concerts

The Cuban Tres. Accomplished musicians of guitar, clarinet, and percussion will perform diverse Latin American styles, American pop, and original compositions. Friday, March 4, 7:00 p.m. Collegiate Hall.

Artistas y Músicos Latino Americanos. Educational Program and Salsa Fiesta. Wednesday, March 30, 7-9 pm, Collegiate Hall.

María Dolores Aguilar Vaca. Traditional Mexican music, most notably *ranchera* and *bolero*, Tuesday, April 19th at 6:30PM, Heritage Room in the Weinberg Memorial Library.

Guest Speaker

Dr. Nina Scott will present a lecture entitled "Painted Nuns: Dead, Live and Learned" on Wednesday, March 16 from 5:30-6:30PM, in Brennan 228.

Instructional Films

LAS will show four films during Spring 2011. These films are based around the theme "Gender on the Border." All movies begin at 7:30 PM and are held in Brennan 228.

- Tuesday, February 8 – *Cosas que dejé...*
- Thursday, March 3 – *De nadie*
- Thursday, March 31 – *Under the Same Moon*
- Tuesday, May 5 – *Paraiso Travel*

LAS Class Profile: Service in the Hispanic Community

Last semester, the World Languages and Cultures department offered a unique Spanish elective, Service in the Hispanic Community instructed by Dr. Parsons. Students were able to experience doing service within the greater Scranton area.

Dr. Parsons recounted how the course came into being, "I began teaching Service and the Hispanic Community course in the fall of 2004 after attending a conference on higher education collaboration and engagement with the Hispanic community in Philadelphia along with Drs. Ledford-Miller and Zanzana, and Denise Zuvic of EOTC (Employment Opportunity and Training Center), an important non-profit family service agency here in Scranton."

He then explained the logistics of last semester's course and the affiliated community organizations involved, "This past semester I had an exceptionally dedicated and hard-working group of students. In all they logged over 700 hours of service primarily to the local and regional Hispanic communities though such agencies as EOTC, Project Head Start, SCOLA (the Scranton Council of Literacy Advance), Big Brothers-Big Sisters of Lackawanna County, and others. Some of the students

worked with Sr. Joan Thompson, who organized a series of English language classes for adult non-English speakers living in the South Side. Our efforts were supported by Pat Vaccaro and Lori Moran of the University's Community Outreach Office, and this year for the first time we were fortunate to work collaboratively with the University's Leahy Center."

Among the students who participated in the class was junior Marie Perry, a double major in Environmental Studies and Philosophy. Marie Perry told her story, "I chose to do my service at the Leahy Clinic located on campus in McGurrian Hall. Specifically I worked in the food pantry and clothes closet. ...Most often the individuals who came to the clothes closet were Hispanic. It was a great opportunity for me to work on my Spanish and help other individuals. Oftentimes I was nervous because I feared my Spanish speaking ability was inadequate, but I got used to it. I loved being able to talk to the children who came. The best part despite language barriers and imperfect Spanish or English, was the human communication I experienced. I could



communicate with another and form a bond with a person for a small instant because we had a mutual understanding beyond words; we were just happy. We had a level of respect, hope, and well wishes for each other that needed no verbal communication."

Another student, Jude Krushnowski, a double major in Psychology and Spanish, now graduated, discussed the bond he formed through service, "This past semester, I volunteered as an ESL tutor with the Scranton Council of Literacy Advance (SCOLA), and I must say that it was an immensely rewarding experience for me. As an ESL tutor, I had the opportunity to interact with people from all over the world. I learned about their customs, listened to their opinions, salivated a bit over

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Women's Studies Student Shares her Experience in Rwanda

Written by Stephanie Pisko

During intersession, eleven University of Scranton students and two professors went to Rwanda for sixteen days as part of the Women's Studies program. The course, titled "Gender Equity in the U.S and Rwanda," focused on Rwanda's efforts to include gender equity considerations in all aspects of their development policies. Given the United States's struggles with obtaining formal gender equality and Rwanda's recent progress, it was an exciting country to visit and to compare the differences in formal and informal gender practices.

We arrived in Kigali, Rwanda on January 6th after a long flight and immediately found ourselves captivated by this entirely new culture. The never ending hills, the abundance of motorcycles (taxis), and the constant presence of people walking on the streets were my first impressions. The morning after we arrived

we had the opportunity to meet young students from the Akilah Institute, which provides a three year program for women seeking jobs in the hospitality industry with an emphasis on developing English speaking skills. The young ladies spoke to us about their family and educational background. Many of them included heartbreaking stories of residual difficulties endured from the 1994 Genocide.

After the genocide of the Tutsis, many in the global community questioned whether or not reconciliation was possible, but we were able to see the unification and recovery efforts first hand especially on the Kigali city tour, which included a visit to the Genocide Memorial museum. The tour guide touted the extensive growth of people, businesses, housing, hotels, restaurants, and foreign investment in the city, which, considering the previously depleted condition of the country, was astonishing.

To learn what their role was in this



exciting growth, we wanted to further explore women's economic power and contribution to the country's development. In Kigali, we visited three women's cooperatives: Nziza, Amahoro, and Burunga. The women of these cooperatives were not only contributing to their own economic stability, we found that they were giving back to their communities by including and training other women to join their cooperatives and earn money for the families. We also visited a woman's basket making cooperative during our weekend stay in Musanze.

While there, we did service work for

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Events of Interest to Women's Studies Faculty and Students

Thursday, February 24, 2011, 11:30am-1pm, TDC 406
Women's Studies full faculty meeting. Lunch will be served.

March 1, 2011, 7 pm, Brennan 228
Tounees Festival (French films). *Coco before Chanel*. Sponsored by the Department of World Languages and Cultures.

March 3, 2011, 7 pm, Brennan 228
Tounees Festival (French films). *Le Chant Des Mariées/The Wedding Song* Sponsored by the Department of World Languages and Cultures.

March 8, 2011, 12 pm, Rose Room, Brennan Hall
The State of Gender Equality in the World Today featuring Mary Ellen McNish, president and CEO of The Hunger Project. Schemel Forum Luncheon Series. **Pre-registration required**; free for University faculty and students. Call 941-7816 to reserve a place.

Wednesday, March 16, 2011, 5:30pm-6:30pm, Brennan 228
Guest lecturer, Dr. Nina Scott, will present a lecture entitled "Painted Nuns: Dead, Live and Learned."

March 30, NEW Leadership Pennsylvania- Deadline to Apply
"NEW Leadership Pennsylvania is a residential program that gives college women the knowledge and skills to become effective leaders in politics, public policy and public service."
Chatham University, Pittsburgh, PA, June 5-10, 2011
Apply online at: <http://www.chatham.edu/pcwp/newleadership>

March 31, 2011, Evening time tba., Comerford Theater, Marywood University

Film documentary "*The Greatest Silence: Rape in the Congo*"; fundraiser for the NGO Women for Women. For additional info contact Rosemary Caolo at rosemary.caolo@verizon.net.

Friday, April 1, 2011

-Teach-In on Peace & Reconciliation.

6-9 pm, the Vintage Theater, 119 Penn Ave.

-Pro-Peace Art Show Opening, organized by two women's studies students in conjunction with Take Back the Night

Thursday, April 28, 2011

Take Back the Night. Contact the Jane Kopas Women's Center x 6194 for volunteer opportunities and full schedule of the day's events.

Sunday, May 1, 2011, 6 pm, Home of Dr. Sharon Meagher

Annual Women's Studies Banquet. All women's studies students and faculty are invited. Please come to honor our graduating seniors.

Tuesday, May 24, 9 a.m.

LA/W/S full faculty meeting, All Latin American Studies and all women's studies faculty are expected to attend

Tuesday, May 24, 2011, 10:30am- 12pm

Women's Studies full faculty meeting.

Rwanda, cont'd

orphans and widows and even found some time to attend a traditional Rwandan wedding. We built mud structures to house a women's cooperative handicraft store as well as a home for a widow, her two children, and two orphans she plans to adopt. Our weekend service trip was funded by the University's Office of Development, which raised money by sending e-mail Christmas cards rather than using the postal service.

In the more rural area of the country, we found less gender equity in cultural practices than in the capital of Kigali. Throughout our countryside travels, we saw the enormity of women's workloads which includes getting water, cooking, cleaning, breastfeeding, caring for children, washing clothes, tending to the fields, and retrieving wood for cooking. Additionally, Rwandans faced greater economic hardships and less access to essential basic resources such as water, transportation, and education.

The poor rural villagers we met were a contrast to the financially well-off students we came to know at our night classes at the Kigali Institute of Education's Centre for Gender, Culture, and Development. The course in which we participated in, led by Dr. Sharon Meagher and assisted by Dr. Linda Ledford-Miller, was beneficial to both the American and Rwandan students.

Many of the Rwandan Master's program students had successful careers and the University of Scranton students had the opportunity to shadow different students overnight and at their place of work for twenty-four hours. Dr. Ledford-Miller facilitated reflection discussions for us U of S students on various afternoons and evenings to allow us the time to discuss what we observed and experienced in light of assigned readings.

We all came to respect the enormous sacrifices that the stu-

dents made in order to balance their careers, families, and educations. Even at the primary level, we found young students at a Jesuit primary school attending classes for many hours of the day with small amounts of breaks. We donated hundreds of desperately needed books to the St. Ignatius primary school while visiting the children. To me, the happiness and excitement of the children we met at the orphanage, the school, in the villages and in the cities were highlights of the trip.

Other memorable moments while in Rwanda included a day trip to Akagera National Park, visiting the national museum in Butare, going to a Batwa village, shopping for local handicrafts, eating at various restaurants, and enjoying the warm presence of local Rwandans. Concerning gender equity, we discovered progress being made and progress that needs to be made. We all gained complete admiration for the local women by witnessing their unbelievable strength and resilience and I am confident they have the ability to keep improving gender equity in Rwanda.

Being immersed into a vibrant African culture was an unforgettable experience and I could not imagine a better way to spend intersession than in Rwanda with a group of eleven outstanding students and two dedicated professors.



Service in the Hispanic Community, cont'd

their cuisine, and, to the best of my ability, explained our quirky language, so as to enhance their experience in this country. The most salient of my students was a man named José from the Dominican Republic. I was inspired not only by his dedication to learning, as he had been coming to SCOLA every day after work for the past two years, but also the levity with which he lived, never missing an opportunity to be a comedian and make people laugh despite the language barrier. During one of our lessons, I used my years of Spanish here at Scranton to clarify a concept which wasn't coming across too clearly, and he was overjoyed that someone had shown interest in *his* language. From then on, our lessons turned into a mixture of laughter and "Spanglish", which, thanks to Facebook, hasn't ended."

Dr. Parsons concluded, "It is not easy to leave one's comfort zone and venture out into underserved parts of the community; these University students showed great fortitude and dedication, as evidence by the fact that almost a third of them, that I am aware of, have continued their service from last semester into the current term. I am very gratified and proud of their work."

Service in the Hispanic Community will be offered every fall semester, so keep an eye out!

LAS Study Abroad, cont'd

watch back an hour to account for the time difference between Scranton and Puebla. Another one of my fond memories was seeing the *luchadores* (professional wrestlers) live every Monday evening. We sat in the front row and interacted with them. On a different cultural note, I also enjoyed going to the magnificent pyramids at Teotihuacan. I highly encourage LAS students to study abroad. Talk to the people, learn the language, and speak it whenever possible. Try to stay away from the touristy spots and go where the locals go. Perhaps my only regret is that I didn't keep a journal of my experiences. I still keep in touch with my Mexican friends and we speak all the time. Looking back, I feel that my professors at Scranton prepared me well to take full advantage of my study abroad experience in Puebla."

**Interested in Latin American Studies? Contact the Director, Dr. Penyak, penyaky2@scranton.edu,
Interested in Women's Studies? Contact the Director, Dr. Meagher, meaghers1@scranton.edu,
Want to contribute to the LA/W/S Newsletter? Contact the editor, Ashley Michini, michinia2@scranton.edu!**