

# THE AMBASSADOR

THE DEPARTMENT OF WORLD LANGUAGES & CULTURES

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## Notes from The Chair

Hello everyone and welcome to the Spring Semester 2025!!! Our department is very excited to share all the many events that involve our students as well as the community. I would like to mention some of the highlights, of which you will find more detailed information inside this newsletter.



The Department was busy organizing and preparing for the Second Annual World Language Day scheduled for March 4<sup>th</sup>. This was an event that had over 100 high school students and their teachers visit our campus and participate in interactive language mini-lessons, games, and a treasure hunt through our "stamp your passport" activity. They were also given a campus tour and had a chance to visit the University thanks to the involvement of the Admissions Office. The event was also open to university students, and anyone interested in world languages and cultures.

Our international teaching assistants are a wonderful asset to our department and the University community and have been involved in creating and hosting a series of events:

- Asian New Year Celebration, February 12, hosted by Erii Unuma (Japan) and Chih-Yi Wu (Taiwan) and featuring chopsticks competition, origami and Chinese lantern making, good food, and door prizes. Cosponsored by WLC and Asian Studies (Thank you Dr. Ann Pang-White!)
- Mardi Gras Celebration, a costume party and crepe making event, February 19<sup>th</sup>, hosted by our French FLTA Emma Leclercq, featuring food, games, and prizes!

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- From Ramadan to Eid: A Journey through Tunisian Traditions, March 12, hosted by Rym Ben Rehouma – Arabic Language Fulbright TA from Tunisia.

Our next International Instructor events include our annual TA Talks on April 3<sup>rd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, made possible by a Diversity Initiatives grant. Our final individual presentation of the year, *Ohanami o shiyoo! Let's Do Cherry Blossom Viewing!*, is scheduled for Monday April 14 and hosted by Erii Unuma – ALLEX Foundation Japanese Language Instructor

Last but not least, our ASL students went to St. John's church on February 16th for the monthly signed Mass. FOX News did a story on

them which was aired on the evening news! According to their instructor, Mary Ann Stefko, they signed beautifully and shared why doing this "outreach" was important to them.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all the faculty and staff of the WLC department, with special thanks to our Language Lab Coordinator Dr. Amy Kuiken for her enthusiasm and her tireless work in coordinating and organizing all the events that make our department shine!

Have a great Spring Semester!

- Dr. Marzia Caporale  
Professor of French and Italian  
Chair, World Languages and Cultures

## Graduate Assistant Spotlight

The Department of World Languages & Cultures welcomed Andrea Navarro this January as our spring 2025 Graduate Assistant in the Language Learning Center (LLC).



World Languages & Cultures Graduate Assistant, Andrea Navarro

Ms. Navarro is an MBA student, graduating this May with a concentration in Accounting. She finished high school in Mt. Pocono. Prior to that, she lived in Perú for seven years. Drawing on her multicultural background and diverse experiences, Ms. Navarro shared that she is “committed to helping students build their confidence and success in their language studies.”

The World Languages & Cultures GA is the face of the LLC. In this role, Ms. Navarro welcomes a cross-section of people (University students, staff, retired members in the community, newcomers to the area) to the Center. She has helped the LLC to develop a

multilingual connection with the Leahy Clinic, assisted other offices on campus with translation, and coordinated with other agencies in the area to meet the needs of ESL learners, among many other responsibilities. Without our World Languages & Cultures GA, these varied and valuable services would be difficult to organize and continue.

Ms. Navarro is also a constant presence and helper coordinating and connecting people, to make changes and updates in real time to the schedule, and to assist with welcoming drop-ins when all our other tutors are busy. In addition, Ms. Navarro carries out administrative tasks for World Languages & Cultures faculty, including scanning, emailing, and design.

Ms. Navarro continues the excellent work of our outgoing fall 2024 Graduate Assistant, Luiz Vasquez. Mr. Vasquez is currently completing a 600-hour internship this semester to satisfy his clinical program requirements. As the LLC strives to uphold its mission to foster the growth of individuals and work for justice in the community, we are grateful to benefit from such talented people.

We wish our 2024-2025 WLC GAs all the best!

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**“I am committed to helping students build their confidence and success in their language studies.”** - Andrea Navarro

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# Dept. of World Languages & Cultures Scholarship

## Faculty Scholarship

### Dr. Habib Zanzana

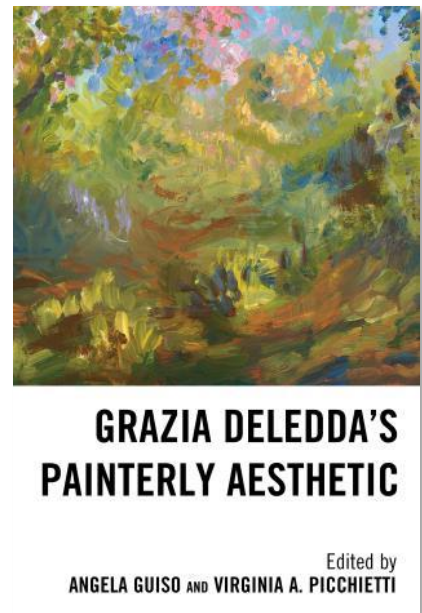
- Dr. Habib Zanzana presented two research projects on literature and film at the NeMLA (Northeast Modern Language Association) in Philadelphia in March 2025 on the following topics:
  - "Visual Suspense and Identity: A Cinematic Comparison of Italian Giallo and Ripley" at 2) NeMLA, Philadelphia, March 2025.
  - "Reconstructing Revolutions: Memory, Play, and Resistance in Etiópia by Mariana Mazover." NeMLA, Philadelphia, March 2025.

### Dr. Virginia Picchietti

- The book that Dr. Virginia Picchietti co-edited with Prof. Angela Guiso (Sardegna, Italy), entitled *Grazia Deledda's Painterly Aesthetic* was published in March 2025 by Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. (See picture.)
 

Besides co-editing duties, Dr. Picchietti co-wrote the introduction and contributed the chapter "Marianna Sirca, Alexandra Bergson, and Marie Tovesky Shabata: Understanding Grazia Deledda and Willa Cather's Female Protagonists through Berthe Morisot's Impressionist Paintings."

A full-length article was dedicated to the book in the Italian newspaper, *L'Unione Sarda*.
- Dr. Picchietti organized and chaired the panel, *Women in War*, at the American Association for Italian Studies Conference held in Philadelphia, PA, in March 2025.



### Dr. Yamile Silva

#### Awards:

- Her book review of "*Santos Febres, Mayra. La otra Julia*" has been accepted to be published in the peer-reviewed journal *Chasqui. Revista de Literatura Latinoamericana*, in April/May 2025.
- She received an Intersession Grant (2025) for her project "Unearthing a Hidden Voice: Abigail's Mejía's Response to the US Occupation (1916-1924)"

(Scholarship continued →)

(Scholarship continued)

- Dr. Silva's essay proposal "Abigail Mejía's and her writings in the Catalan Newspapers (1915-1925)" was accepted for the special issue of the Chilean peer-reviewed journal *Revista de Estudios sobre Crónica y Periodismo Narrativo*.
- Two of her paper conference proposals have been accepted to be included in the following international conferences:
  - a. "Puesta a los reales pies de Vuestra Magestad, con el más profundo rendimiento": cartas de Claudia García de Arcos (1714-1716) desde Buenos Aires" to be presented at the Latin American Studies Association in May 2025. Besides presenting this paper, she was also the organizer of this panel.
  - b. "Feminismo y antiimperialismo: El pensamiento de Abigail Mejía frente a la invasión estadounidense" to be presented at the conference *Tramar la(s) democracia(s) en América Latina: perspectivas transdisciplinarias*. June 25–27, 2025. Sapienza Universidad de Roma, Italy.

#### Service to the academic community:

- Dr. Silva has been invited to be part of the Editorial Board for the Special Issue *El papel de la responsabilidad en redes de españolas exiliadas en América Latina* edited by Dr. Carmen Alfonso (Universidad de Oviedo, Spain) and Dr. Eugenia Helena Houvenaghel (University of Utrecht). This issue will be published by the peer-reviewed journal *Revista electrónica de estudios hispánicos*. Issue will be published early 2026.
- In her role as Editor for the Journal of Gender and Sexuality Studies <https://ojs.msupress.org/index.php/REGS/about/editorialTeam>, she is simultaneously managing two significant issues: Issue 51.1 (June 2025) and Issue 51.2 (Dec 2025).

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## Staff/ Instructor Scholarship

- A book chapter co-authored by Dr. Amy Kuiken with Dr. Blanken Webb and Holly Hanna, entitled "A Deweyan Foundation for Security Mindset and Cyber Education" in *Centennial Handbook on John Dewey's Human Nature and Conduct*, edited by Dr. Andrea English and Dr. Leonard Waks, has been accepted for publication in 2025 by Cambridge University Press.
- Dr. Kuiken attended the conference "Catholic Higher Education and AI" at the University of Portland on October 18-20. Along with Dr. Susan Mendez, Chair of the English and Theater Department, they surveyed ideas related to the use and impact of generative AI in higher education. Dr. Kuiken also focused on how World Language scholars and instructors might relate their work to enduring and timely discussions surrounding technology and humans.
- Professor Chih-Yi (Arena) Wu attended the 2024 ACTFL Convention held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from November 22-24. Professor Wu synthesized and shared information and insights from the conference in a presentation to her University of Scranton international instructor colleagues in December 2024.



# Student Spotlights

## Jaznie Belfont

**Year:** Senior

**Major:** Political Science

**Minor:** French and concentration in Latin American Studies and Legal Studies

*Were you exposed to another language growing up? What made you interested in studying languages?*

Crecí en Colombia, viviendo con mi mamá y mis abuelos. El español se convirtió en mi primera lengua, y el idioma que asocio con el amor y la familia. Cuando me mudé a Estados Unidos, tuve la oportunidad de vivir con mi papá y conocer a algunos familiares de Haití. Quería aprender criollo haitiano en la universidad, pero no lo enseñaban, así que lo más parecido era el francés. Desde entonces, también me he enamorado de esa lengua, aunque todavía me queda mucho por aprender.

*What has been your favorite language class? Why?*

Choosing is difficult because my Spanish classes with Dr. Silva made me feel at home and like a normal student for the first time. However, classes with TAs like Emma Leclecrq and Audrey Lecerf, along with Dr. Zanzana, made learning about the language and culture of France incredibly enjoyable. They inspired me to pursue the language through my passions, such as culinary arts and feminism.

*What is the best thing about studying a language at the University of Scranton?*

The best thing about studying languages at the University of Scranton is having small class sizes; it is beneficial because it allows professors to focus on you

individually, guiding you through your language journey. This set-up reduces the pressure to be perfect, enabling you to participate more often and learn more effectively.



*What is one of your favorite memories or things you have learned while working at the LLC?*

Some of my favorite memories happen after class during my shift. Instead of diving into homework, I often find myself chatting with my coworkers, friends, and even my boss. Sometimes we even have the opportunity to engage in lively discussions about the social, political, and economic issues facing our world today.

*How has knowing different languages helped you and what career are you aiming for?*

Knowing different languages has helped me connect with my community and also build relationships with influential people during my internships. I aspire to work at the UN, and being fluent in Spanish, French, and English (the main languages used in this organization for diplomatic purposes) is essential for my dream career.

## Camille E. Troy



**Year:** Sophomore

**Major:** Health

**Promotion**

**Minor:** Spanish

*Were you exposed to another language growing up? What made you interested in learning Spanish?*

When I was in elementary school, my mom put my siblings and I into an after-school Spanish program so that we could learn another

language. I thought it was fun, so when I reached high school, I decided to continue taking classes. And now, as a sophomore in college, I'm so glad that I decided to stick with it.

*What has been your favorite language class? Why?*

My favorite language class that I have taken so far was Introduction to Spanish Literature with Dr. Silva. I really enjoyed learning about different cultures and their art forms, reading poetry and theatrical works, and analyzing literature. It was a very intriguing class that

(Student Spotlight continued →)

(Student Spotlight *continued*)

taught me a lot more than just the language itself, but rather about the culture that surrounds it.

***What is the best thing about studying a language at the University of Scranton?***

The best thing about studying a language at the University of Scranton is the small class size, attentive professors, and welcoming environment. In each Spanish class that I have taken here at the U, all of the professors and students were so kind, and I felt like I was supported in my language-learning journey.

***What is one of your favorite memories or things you have learned while studying Spanish at the University of Scranton?***

One of my favorite memories was getting to tutor a local community member while working at the LLC. My Spanish classes helped me to teach English to those hoping to improve

their speaking, listening, and reading skills. One woman in particular was trying to earn her GED, and needed extra assistance with her reading and writing skills. It was so rewarding for me to be able to help her work towards her goals, and it will definitely be a memory that I will cherish for a long time.

***How has Spanish helped you and what career are you aiming for?***

Having the opportunity to learn Spanish has greatly influenced my life and has allowed me to interact with people that I never would have been able to before. It has helped me academically and socially, and opened my eyes to a variety of other cultures and experiences around the world. I'm hoping that I can use my Spanish skills in my future career to be able to communicate with a larger number of people.

## Language Learning Center Spotlight

### *A Farewell to our LLC Graduates*

The Department of World Languages & Cultures is grateful to our LLC staff graduates who have served as language tutors. Essential to the mission of the LLC, they have added so much our community with their time and talents. We thank them for their hard work and commitment to helping others grow. On behalf of everyone in the Department, congratulations to them for their tremendous accomplishments at the University of Scranton! We wish them everything wonderful in their future adventures.



**Madison Policare**  
Bachelors in Computer Science  
Minors: Japanese &  
Mathematics  
LLC Japanese Tutor



**Divya Nimala**  
Master in Business Analytics  
LLC German Tutor



**Jaznie Belfont**  
Bachelors in Political Science  
Minor: French  
Concentration in Latin American  
Studies and Legal Studies  
LLC Spanish and ESL Tutor



**Wei Lin (Renee)**  
Master of Business Administration  
LLC Mandarin Chinese Tutor

# Alumni Spotlight

## William Sender

- *We asked a friend of the Department and member of our recently founded Pardon Our French conversation group at the University of Scranton: “In what way has learning a language impacted your life?”*

During my time at university, I balanced a demanding course load of 16-18 credits per semester while working over 20 hours a week. As a result, I had little time for extracurricular activities.

However, a trip to France with my wife sparked a deep interest in the French language and culture. Wanting to immerse myself further, I connected with Fulbright scholar Laura Martinelli, who provided invaluable guidance.

Following her advice, I began auditing French courses for four years at the University of Scranton. Although I was not officially enrolled, I was fully engaged as a student—completing homework, taking exams, and actively participating in class.

This experience proved to be both enriching and deeply rewarding, expanding my cultural and linguistic understanding in many ways. I am now thinking about auditing Arabic courses at the University of Scranton to challenge myself further and explore another rich and complex language.



William at Bistro La Renaissance - Montmartre

## Visiting Instructors

The University of Scranton offers to learners what few other American universities are able: transformative educational opportunities to study more than half a dozen classical and modern languages on campus with experts who come to teach in the Department of World Languages & Cultures from across the globe. In this issue of *The Ambassador*, we feature our East Asian language instructors, Erii Unuma and Chih-Yi (Arena) Wu.

### Erii Unuma, ALLEX Foundation Japanese Language Instructor

- *What made you interested in teaching languages?*

When I was a junior high school student, I became interested in other languages and cultures. I really wanted to know about many things in the world, so I started studying English. It sparked my joy and broadened my horizons. And I came to like to communicate with many people from other cultures.

Meeting people from other countries made me want to go abroad, experience new things and see many things which we don't have in Japan in my own eyes.

Later, I found that my passion lies in helping people to learn Japanese, achieve their goals and make their dreams come true.



Erii Unuma, 2024-25 ALLEX Foundation Japanese Language Instructor at the University of Scranton

- *Would you recommend studying Japanese to a student at The University of Scranton?*

Yes! Because you can learn not only the target language itself but also its culture, customs, people's ways of thinking in the culture etc. through learning the language. That certainly



(Visiting Instructors Spotlight *continued*)

enriches your life. And, of course, we have excellent professors who can help you learn here.

• *How long does it take to become fluent in Japanese?*

If you study Japanese in classes for two years, you will be able to communicate with native Japanese speakers.

• *What tools do you use to bring the Japanese culture to your students?*

I use many pictures and videos of Japan and realia from Japan in my Japanese classes.

These tools can immerse students in the target culture and help students' understanding.

Also, I would like my students to experience Japanese culture, so I bring some Japanese traditional games, crafts like origami and foods into

the classroom sometimes. My students enjoy them and learn the language from them at the same time.

• *Is the college experience in Japan very different to the one in the USA?*

Yes. In Japan, students study very hard to pass the university entrance exam, but once they enter the university, they tend to focus on their part-time job or club activities more than their studies. In the US, university students study much harder than those in Japan. That is so impressive.

And, in Japan, the duration of a class is 90 minutes, but here in the US, it's 50 minutes.

As a teacher, class time passes so quickly when I teach here. That means I really enjoy teaching here! I hope my students feel the same way!

## Chih-Yi (Arena) Wu, Taiwanese Ministry of Education Teaching Chinese Abroad Program Mandarin Teacher

• *What made you interested in teaching languages?*

I travel sometimes and have met many people from different countries in hostels or on the street. Most of them are very fascinated with Asia or Taiwan and want to learn basic greetings in Mandarin. I found so much fun when having a language/culture conversation, especially seeing their facial expression changed while telling the philosophy and wisdom of old slang or classical literature. People get connected by languages. I like making more connections to the world.



• *Would you recommend studying Mandarin to a student of the UofS? How long does it take to become fluent in Mandarin?*

Yes, I strongly recommend students here to learn Mandarin. UofS is the only higher education institute around this area that provides a complete Mandarin Learning system from Ele-

mentary to Advanced course, even Independent Study. Mandarin courses are not only focused on textbooks, but also cultural practices, such as activities relevant to festivals, food, history, and folklore. You may take at least 3 years to speak fluently, but it depends on how ambitious and motivated you are. Accents in Mandarin are complicated. If you find yourself cannot understand some accents, don't be frustrated, sometimes it is hard even for a native speaker.

• *What tools do you use to bring the Taiwanese culture to your students?*

I like to make food for others. I did Taiwanese traditional breakfast, rice rolls, and flaky scallion pancakes, to my students and colleagues last semester. Food is always the best medium. I also read a legend about the Year beast in Mandarin. My students read the digital copy of the kids' book on my e-reader with my exaggerated voice. We had a lot of fun!

• *Is the college experience in Taiwan very different from the one in the USA?*

Many events are happening on campus at my university in Taiwan as well, but not free food! I am impressed that most of the events provide food, swag, and raffle. I like this culture! As for outfits, I found students here have a certain style with a hoodie, cap, UGG, and grey cotton pants. At my university, the most iconic might be plain T-shirts (many years ago).





## Visiting Instructor Reflection

### A Language Teaching Reflection – but Not about A Language

By Chih-Yi (Arena) Wu, Taiwanese Ministry of Education *Teaching Chinese Abroad Program* Mandarin Teacher

In Fall 2024, I came to the University of Scranton, beginning a new journey and participating in Dr. Kuiken's course, *ESEC 541 Specific Subject Methods: World Languages*, with Fulbright scholars from Germany, Tunisia, France, and Spain, and an ALLEX Foundation scholar from Japan. After I had taught a semester at Scranton at that time, I found it is significant to hold humanity in mind and practice concepts of educational psychology in teaching, which the ACTFL materials we used in class did not mention. I realized my job is to be not only a teacher but also a mentor.

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*"I realized my job is to be  
not only a teacher  
but also a mentor."*

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Among the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, 'Flexibility and Adaptability' deeply characterized my experience in my first semester at Scranton. Scranton is a Jesuit private school. I was told to be merciful and flexible on teaching schedules, especially when students had poor performance and attitude, and low motivation. Honestly, this is not how I was educated, but I knew every student comes from different families. No matter if it is full of love or sadness among their families, they are all in the same room, seeking growth in their own ways. I want to thank the people I met at work teaching me to dig for reasons before giving comments or judging.

One of my students became defensive every time I pointed out mistakes and misunderstandings. I did not bluntly say they were wrong, but they nevertheless always tried to defend themselves with excuses and irrelevant reasons and emphasized that they had been working hard. When I looked back at the conversations we had in class, I realized this student seldom talked about their family, they seemed unwilling to talk about the time they spent at home on holidays. Before the semester ended, I decided to talk with the student. I speculated they didn't have a supportive family and didn't get along well with teachers before college. (In Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, if needs of 'Safety and Security' and 'Love and Belonging' are not satisfied,

'Self-esteem' can be strong but vulnerable.) The student became silent, and tears flowed when I said, "Maybe you didn't have a good time with teachers in the past, but it is okay to make mistakes here. I always make mistakes, but I always try to fix them." I felt sorry for this situation, but I hoped this provided a secure environment for them to see it was a safe place to show weakness.

Students in college are struggling with adapting to life with more responsibilities to fit into adulthood. My student reminded me of my own life at university. I was ambitious, but chaotic and disappointed in school, family, and relationships, meanwhile hoping there was someone trustworthy to tell all my worries.

In Social-emotional Learning, it is important to establish the foundation: self-awareness, to get to know themselves more with a good self-concept, and to observe their emotions and behaviors when certain situations happen. 'Responsible decision-making' is not only for being responsible to yourselves but also for being respectful to others. It is a great knowledge that how to keep the balance between being responsible and yourselves before making a better decision. Or sometimes the only thing you can do is to sacrifice one of them. It might be the cost of growth.

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*"Teachers must take care of themselves.  
Teachers are not invincible."*

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I have talked about some theories about facing others as an educator. However, teachers must take care of themselves more. Teachers are not invincible. We not only work while teaching, but also work while preparing, grading, and assessing, even at night or on weekends. Sheryl Lee Ralph, an American actress, reminded teachers to 'reclaim your weekends' at the 2024 ACTFL Convention opening. I was there and had a very deep feeling that we take so many responsibilities on our shoulders, we take care of others' kids but forget to take care of ourselves. We are not Wonder Women or Iron Men. I wish all the teachers may find joy in their careers and be valued more.

# Recent Events



**Enhorabuena** to World Languages & Cultures' *Spanish Fulbright Language Teaching Assistant* from Spain, Fabián Bizcocho! Professor Bizcocho hosted an informative event in the Kane Forum on October 29, 2024. His presentation included a truly memorable blueprint for getting into Aztec Paradise, as well as a Spanish dessert recommendation – *huesos de santo* (the bones of saints). In Professor Bizcocho's typical endearing style, he helped the audience compare and contrast Day of the Dead beliefs and practices in Mexico with All Saint's Day perspectives in Spain to help us all grow in our understanding of other peoples, other times, and other places. With over 75 people in attendance, competition was fierce as participants vied for a thematic Funko Pop doll and various prizes during a culminating Kahoot! activity. *Muchas gracias* to all who were able to join the event.



**Herzlichen Glückwunsch** to World Languages & Cultures' *German Fulbright Language Teaching Assistant*, Oliwia Doroszko! Professor Doroszko hosted a lively crowd at her event "Bridging Cultures: The German-Polish Christmas." Through visuals and song, Professor Doroszko regaled the audience with a harmonious blend of German and Polish traditions. After describing Saint Nicholas and the *Krampus*, she helped participants determine if they were on the naughty list. The cookies, tea, and other refreshments were an absolute delight for the senses, with a memorable moment of the event being the discovery of a *Weihnachtsgurke* – or German Christmas pickle – underneath Dr. Caporale's seat. One lucky participant took home an advent calendar in the wake of a competitive game, and everyone had the opportunity to participate in the sharing of *oplatka* – a traditional Polish wafer that left us showering one other with good wishes and blessings. Finally, we are grateful to Professor Doroszko for reminding us of the power of a song in the midst of war. *Danke schön* and *dziękuję*!





**Félicitations** to World Languages & Cultures' *French Fulbright Language Teaching Assistant*, Emma Leclercq, who hosted approximately 85 people at her event "Mardi Gras: A Costume Party." Professor Leclercq pulled out all the stops; in facilitating multiple student-led hands-on educational experiences prior to the event, she worked with her French learners to create a panoply of stalls and stations (8 kinds of crêpes, cheeses, a scavenger hunt, a French pronunciation bistro, mocktails with glitter, mask-making, portrait-taking, and a high-stakes Kahoot! with baguette, beret, and Eiffel tower keychains on the line). Fearlessly, Madame Leclercq also enlisted the help of World Languages & Cultures faculty (no Dr. Caporale, Dr. Zanzana, or Professor Kelly = no crêpe-maker, beret, croissants, or King cakes). Finally, we are grateful for the costumes and revelry that Professor Leclercq gave us an excuse to jump into. The second half of winter left many of us tired. It turns out that the antidote was a bit of joy in the form of an unforgettable lesson on French and North American Mardi Gras celebrations. *Merci beaucoup!*



**Mabruk!** to World Languages & Cultures' Arabic Language Fulbright Teaching Assistant from Tunisia, Rym Ben Rehouma! More than 60 people were involved Professor Ben Rehouma's event *From Ramadan to Eid: A Journey Through Tunisian Traditions*. Professor Ben Rehouma transformed the Kane Forum with strings of lights, inflatable installations, and sprawling tables of Tunisian delicacies. Professor Ben Rehouma spent hours of preparation in the kitchen to delight us with tagines, salad, mint tea, and more. Our Tunisian Fulbright's sense of humor combined with her expertise are characteristic of how she has led her classes throughout the year. With patience, Professor Ben Rehouma helped others understand the challenges and rewards associated with fasting for Ramadan. Because of Professor Ben Rehouma's thoughtful approach, those in attendance gained a better idea of how to support friends and colleagues celebrating the month.

*Shukran jazeelan!*





(Recent Events *continued*)

The November 2024 “Money Talks” event, co-hosted by the Department of World Languages & Cultures and the Office of Financial Aid, sought to attract both monolingual and bilingual Spanish and/or English speakers from both the wider community and the University of Scranton. Advertising this event to multiple populations was not only an effort to serve more people; the integrity of the event itself hinged on the possibility that different groups might find a common place to come together, overcome language barriers, and be served together in a linguistically reimagined environment with no second-class citizens. Special thanks to Ian Fabricatore and Luis Vasquez for their interpreting skills.



Thank you to Jose and his team at Multicultural Center, who graciously provided the venue for “Money Talks.” This event was co-hosted by World Languages & Cultures and the Office of Financial Aid.



*Congratulations* to Professor Chih-Yi Wu for her delightful “Mandarin Mixer” event this March. Nearly 50 people came out in the middle of the day for a 60-minute trial lesson in Mandarin, which is often seen as one of the most difficult languages for English speakers. However, Professor Wu pointed out that students may already know some Chinese phrases borrowed from English. During the event, participants learned fun facts about basic Chinese characters and got a Chinese name for, too. Dance to Taiwanese pop music, Chinese food from a local restaurant, games, and Professor Wu’s energy made for a memorable day.



In November 2024, students in Professor Unuma's Japanese classes banded together to help provide meals to children in need.

Professor Unuma spearheaded an engaging learning project with her Japanese language students to help them think about healthy diets, the central role of rice in Japanese culture, and our ability as individuals to make a positive impact on those around us.

Students made *onigiri*, a Japanese rice ball. For each photo they posted of their onigiri creations, #OnigiriAction provides five school meals to children in need around the world.

With just some rice, seaweed, and seasonings, Professor Unuma and her students put the U on the map by participating in this annual global effort to serve others.

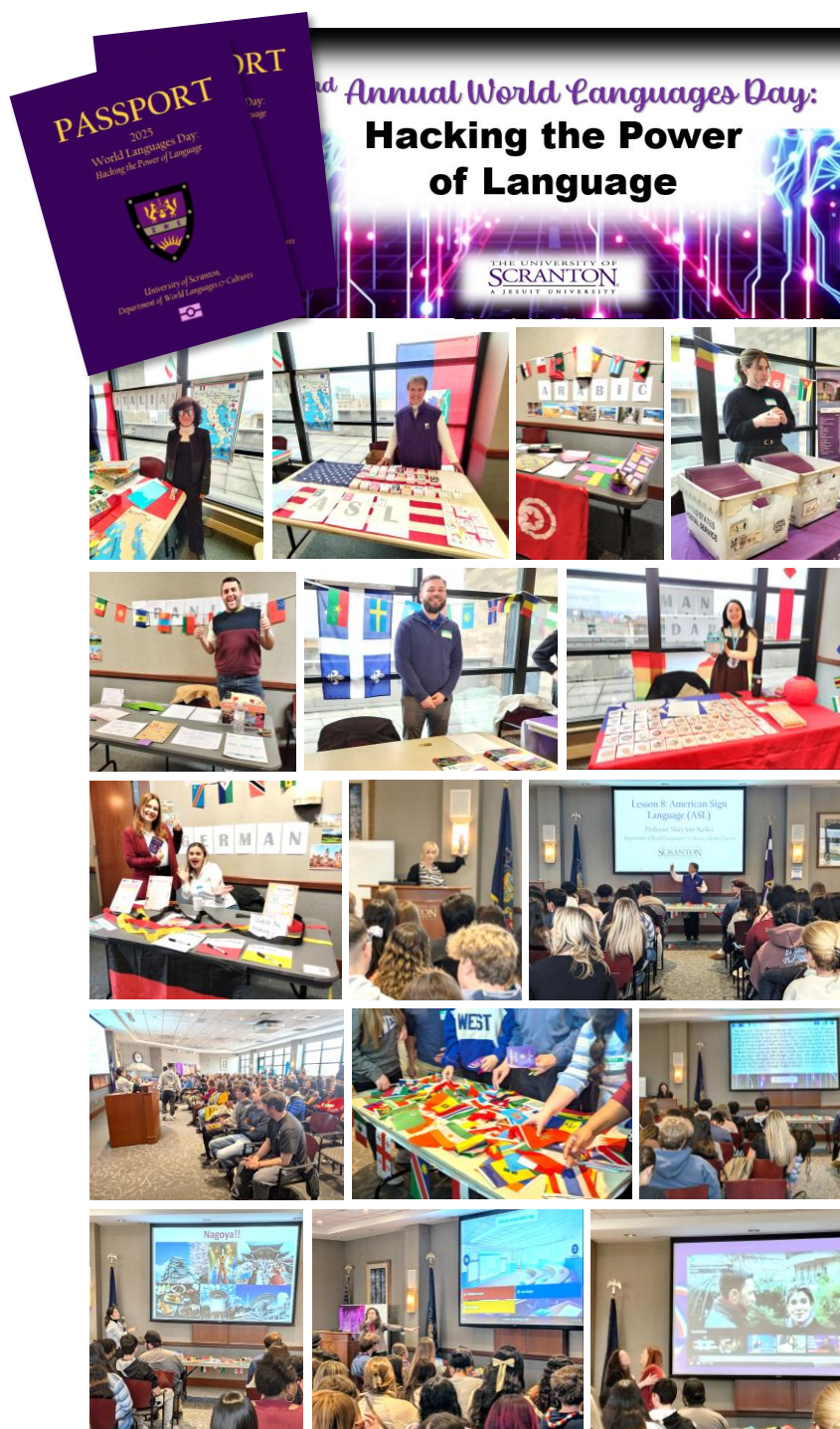


**"Together, we can make the world a better place."**

- Japanese Language Professor Erii Unuma

Instagram account: UOS.JPN.CLASS





## World Languages Day 2025

*"We wanted people to come away with a sense that...languages can be really powerful."*

- Amy Kuiken

Coordinator of the Language Learning Center

The theme of this year's the 2nd Annual World Languages Day event hosted by the Department of World Languages & Cultures was *Hacking the Power of Language*.

Participants considered the advantages of language learning – as languages are systems that make infinite creativity and strategic communication possible.

In addition to nearly 120 visitors from local high schools, over 50 faculty, staff, and students attended the event on March 4, which was held in The Rose Room on the fifth floor of Brennan Hall.

Eight different presentations in Italian, Mandarin, Spanish, German, Japanese, French, Arabic, and ASL reinforced the notion that languages are a powerful tool for human interaction.

Thank you, Dr. Caporale, Professor Wu, Professor Bizcocho, Professor Doroszko, Professor Unuma, Professor Leclercq, Professor Ben Rehouma, and Professor Stefko for transporting us to a peaceful, hopeful place wholly set apart. We are grateful to an entire team at the Office of Admissions, and the experts in Facilities, IT, the Printing and Mailing Services, Scheduling, News and Media, Parking Services, and Catering. Special thanks as well to Ian Fabricatore, Sharon Olechna, Andrea Navarro and the LLC Staff for uplifting and encouraging in countless unsung ways.

- Students and teachers from 6 different high schools in 5 different districts (Riverside, Scranton, Valley View, Wallenpaupack Area, Western Wayne) attended.
- What did participants say they enjoyed? "The diversity and learning environment" ▪ "The people and languages" ▪ "How very nice everyone was." ▪ "Communicating with people my age with language immersion." ▪ "The engagement everyone had with the cultures of every country" ▪ "How amazing the teachers are" ▪ "All of it :)"

In the media:

WVIA

WBRE/WYOU News

FOX 56 (story by Scranton alumna Samantha Durante '24)

Royal News

(Recent Events *continued*)

### Asian New Year Event – Happy Lunar New Year!

The University of Scranton's Asian Studies Program, Department of World Languages and Cultures, and Asia Club hosted an Asian New Year Festival and Workshop for students and area residents on campus on February 12.

At the celebration of the Year of the Snake, participants sampled traditional Asian food and engaged in hands-on activities to learn about Chinese and *Kanji* calligraphy, Japanese origami, and other New Year traditions such as lantern decorating. A chopstick competition with prizes was also part of the evening, led by Dr. Ann Pang-White, Director of Asian Studies.

Professor Unuma and Professor Wu (pictured left to right) also shared with the audience various ways people in Japan, China, and Taiwan celebrate the New Year, focused on blessings and good fortune. The legend of Nian Beast was read out loud in Mandarin by Professor Wu.

- For more information about our Japanese and Mandarin classes, visit [Department of World Languages & Cultures Course Offerings](#) online. For more information about the Asian Studies Program, please contact [asianstudies@scranton.edu](mailto:asianstudies@scranton.edu).



## Upcoming Events



The World Languages & Cultures annual TA Talk series, featuring the University of Scranton's Fulbright Language TAs and Visiting Instructors, are made possible by the Diversity Initiatives Grant.

- Dine with Fulbright Language Teaching Assistants – Oliwia Doroszko from Germany, Fabian Bizcocho from Spain, and Emma Leclercq from France – for a luncheon talk 11:30 - 1:30 on Thursday, April 3, 2025 in The Rose Room (Brennan 509). Hear our international instructors share perspectives on their experiences in the United States and at the University of Scranton. Learn what "care for the whole person" can look like in other countries and cultures. Due to limited capacity, lunch guests must RSVP in advance. *Danke! Gracias! Merci!*

- TA Talk #2 is scheduled for Tuesday, April 29 on campus from 4:30 - 6:30 PM, April 3, 2025 also in The Rose Room. Presenters include ALLEX Foundation Japanese Language Instructor Erii Unuma, Taiwanese Ministry of Education *Teaching Chinese Abroad Program* Mandarin Teacher, Chih-Yi (Arenia) Wu, and Arabic Fulbright Language Teaching Assistant from Tunisia, Rym Ben Rehouma. Registration required in advance for this evening talk and dinner buffet.

- Monday, April 14, 2025, 5:00 – 6:30 PM

*Ohanami o shiyo! Let's Do Cherry Blossom Viewing!*

Presented by Professor Erii Unuma  
ALLEX Foundation Japanese Instructor

The Kane Forum (Leahy 235)



File: Sakura and Moss Pink - 桜(さくら)と芝桜(しばさくら).jpg - Wikimedia Commons



# Best Wishes & Farewells

*The Department of World Languages & Cultures would like to thank the following individuals for their tremendous contributions of vision, time, talent, skill, and care as they take on new adventures -*



Following an impressive career in the Foreign Service, **JoAnne Jurkiewicz** began a new chapter at the University of Scranton to serve as the Department of World Languages & Cultures' Administrative Assistant. After the better part of a decade, JoAnne recently made the decision to move on and pursue other interests. While JoAnne will be missed, we are happy for her once again to be able to enjoy the excitement of beginning yet a new chapter.

The Department of World Languages & Cultures would also like to recognize **Professor Jaime Meilán Del Río** for his years of dedicated service, inspiring a love for language learning and Spanish in particular, among countless students. We wish him all the best and everything wonderful as he retires from the Department of World Languages & Cultures. His kindness, wit, and care – which he always extended to students, faculty, and staff alike – will be greatly missed.

We are also sorry to see the time come to an end for the 2024-25 Fulbright Language Teaching Assistants (**Rym Ben Rehouma** from Tunisia, **Fabián Bizcocho** from Spain, **Oliwia Doroszko** from Germany, and **Emma Leclercq** from France) and the 2024-25 ALLEX Foundation Japanese Language Instructor (**Erii Unuma** from Japan). While these international instructors will be moving on to other adventures following this semester, the Department is thrilled that our Taiwanese Ministry of Education *Teaching Chinese Abroad Program* Mandarin Teacher, **Chih-Yi (Arena) Wu**, has the opportunity to stay at the University of Scranton for one more year. Best wishes and gratitude to all!

Finally, we would like to congratulate **Dr. Joseph Wilson** on his upcoming sabbatical. *Gratula tibi and bona fortuna!*



## Special Thanks

To Sharon Olechna, who graciously agreed to assist The Department of World Languages & Cultures after the departure of full-time Administrative Assistant, JoAnne Jurkiewicz. At that time, Sharon was already serving two other departments. To take on a third administrative assistant role – even temporarily – was to march straight into the unknown. But Sharon didn't walk away from the opportunity to help at a crucial time for the Department. We have been so grateful for her cheerfulness, support, and professionalism as we wait for the permanent administrative position to be filled. Thank you!

# Fall Course Offerings

## World Languages courses typically offered during the fall semester:

- Elementary Arabic ARAB 101 (CF) ▪ Intermediate Arabic 1 ARAB 211 (CF)
- American Sign Language 1 ASL 101 (CF, D) ▪ Elementary Chinese 1 CNS 101 (CF)  
Intermediate Chinese 1 CNS 211 (CF, D) ▪ Advanced Chinese 1 CNS 311 (CF, D)
- Beginning French FREN 101 (CF, D) ▪ Intermediate French FREN 211 (CF, D)  
French Conversation FREN 311 (CF, D)
- Beginning German 1 GERM 101 (CF) ▪ Continuing German 1 GERM 211 (CF)
- Elementary Greek 1 GRK 111 (CF) ▪ Greek Lit & Mythology GRK 213 (CL, D)
- Beginning Italian ITAL 101 (CF, D) ▪ Intermediate Italian 1 ITAL 211 (CF)
- Elementary Japanese 1 JPN 101 (CF) ▪ Intermediate Japanese 1 JPN 211 (CF)
- Elementary Latin 1 LAT 111 (CF)
- Elementary Spanish 1 SPAN 101 (CF) ▪ Intermediate Spanish 1 SPAN 211 (CF, D)  
Spanish Conversation SPAN 311 (CF, D) ▪ Intro to Literacy Studies SPAN 320 (CL)

## Courses taught in English:

- Intro to World Lit LIT 105 (CL, D)
- Global Aesthetic Care LIT 107X (FYS, CL, D)

# LLC Information

The Language Learning Center, located in O'Hara 306, offers language learning support for students and community members learning Spanish, French, Italian, German, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, ASL, and English. Services available include language conversation hours, language tutoring, a database of language resources, Chromebooks available for use in the Center, and more. The LLC also provides ESL tutoring to adult English learners in the community. This semester, the LLC is also proud to offer "Pardon Our French," a French conversation group open to anyone who can say *bonjour* (Thursdays from 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM in O'Hara 306) as well as a new Game Night (Tuesdays from 8:00 PM – 10:00 PM) led by our LLC Italian tutor Paul Colapietro.

LLC staff contribute to events for local students and community members such as the annual TA Talks, various cultural events hosted by our Fulbright TAs, and high school immersion days. The Center also helps connect people with volunteer opportunities, including assisting with Spanish interpretation at the Leahy Clinic.

Throughout the academic year, the LLC benefits from the dedication of many student staff members and volunteers. Curious about how the Language Learning Center can help you learn a language or improve your language skills? Contact Dr. Amy Kuiken at amy.kuiken@scranton.edu or 570-941-4711.

# Social Media

Stay up to date with the Department's activities, events, news, and highlights!



← [https://www.instagram.com/uofs\\_worldlanguages/](https://www.instagram.com/uofs_worldlanguages/)

Scan to visit the World Languages & Cultures website →

