Letter from the Editor
Welcome to the first issue of Sam Houston’s very own World Languages and Cultures Student Newsletter. This newsletter is for everyone interested in the news and events related to the languages and cultures hosted in the WOLC department here at Sam Houston. While WOLC has a lot of things going on, not many students or faculty know about them. We are here to shed some light on those amazing opportunities, programs, and events.
Stay tuned for our next newsletter. Maybe you’ll be featured in it!
Emilie Grecula
Editor-in-Chief

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- New Faces – Interviews with the new faculty members
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We hope that you enjoy this issue. Feel free to contact us if there is anything you would like us to cover in the future (babel.wolc@gmail.com).
Kaylee Campbell: How did you discover Sam Houston?

Dr. Alamillo: I discovered Sam Houston State University when I was a graduate student at the University of Houston and I met classmates that were former students of Sam Houston. They told me about the Department of World Languages and Cultures and the classes offered in the B.A. and M.A. in Spanish. Later on, I started to collaborate in a publication with one of the faculty members of the same department, and that allowed me to know more about the faculty members, the research they were involved with, the Spanish clubs, and other outside classroom activities within the WOLC department.

How has your experience here been so far?
I am involved in several committees—such as the CHSS Diversity and Inclusion Committee—and I have presented in one international conference and one national conference. I have found that the Chair and the faculty members of WOLC department are really collegial and they are willing to help each other. This has made my transition easy and smooth. So far, I am enjoying my first semester at Sam Houston.

Which classes do you teach?
I teach lower-division Spanish courses—that is, Elementary Spanish I and II and Intermediate Spanish I and II. Some of my students are pursuing a major or minor in Spanish, and some others are pursuing a career in other fields within the humanities.

As an instructor, what goals do you hope to accomplish during your time here at Sam Houston?
My main goal as a language facilitator is that my students acquire functional uses of the Spanish language for communicative purposes in real life situations, as well as an understanding of the cultures of the Americas and Spain. It is important to me that my students develop skills that help them to better navigate the global, diverse and multicultural world that we live in.

What is your favorite thing about campus?
My favorite thing about Sam Houston is the diversity of its students, faculty members, and administrators. I enjoy walking around campus and seeing people from diverse backgrounds being a part of this community. I also enjoy that there is a lot of support for undergraduate research and numerous resources for students to succeed. Also, my students show enthusiasm in learning new things, and that is greatly appreciated.

Conner Flynt: Where did you grow up?

Dr. Frelier: I graduated from high school in Charlotte, N.C., although I moved around in my childhood a great deal due to my father’s job. I also lived in Mexico City for a period, which helped with achieving fluency in Spanish.

What are your main research priorities?
I research 21st century North African migrant writers. My dissertation is titled ‘Family Time’ and it argues that the writers I study provide us with new theories of family.

Where have you studied for your education?
My BA was achieved in Romance Languages and Literatures from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I studied for my Ph.D. in Romance Languages and Literatures at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. I also hold a Graduate Certificate in Women’s Studies from Michigan.

What publications have you written?
I have one publication out and three more at various stages of the pipeline. My first publication appeared in The Journal of North African Studies. A second is under review for Symposium: A Quarterly Journal in Modern Literatures. Two more are in progress. I am also adding to my dissertation and plan to publish it as a book.

Are you involved with any organizations on campus? Or national or worldwide ones?
I am involved with the CHSS Diversity Committee, the Common Reader Selection Committee, and the Aspire Faculty Mentorship Program at SHSU. I am also involved with the Modern Language Association, the National Women’s Studies Association, and the Middle East Studies Association, among many others.

What kind of activities do you enjoy outside of academia?
I enjoy reading non-fiction books, and I try to keep up with new additions to the New York Times non-fiction list. I enjoy running half-marathons and spending time with my dog.
Dr. Tracy Knight, ASL
By T.A.

Dr. Tracy Knight joined the Department of World Languages and Cultures this past August as an Assistant Professor of American Sign Language. She received her Doctor of Education degree from Lamar University, so she is no stranger to Texas.

T.A.: This is your first year at Sam Houston. What are your impressions so far?
Dr. Knight: The people are wonderful to work with. I am impressed with their professionalism and ethics. They made me feel very welcome here at SHSU.

Where did you come here from?
My family lives in Houston. I taught at Bloomsburg University in Pennsylvania for two years before I came here. During that time, I flew home every month so it’s nice to be closer to my family. I have four children.

What kind of research do you do?
My research involves the study of social identity in hearing youth who have deaf parents.

What is your favorite part of teaching?
I love teaching ASL and Deaf Culture. I love watching how much the students learn from beginning to the end of semester.

How do you envision the future of the ASL/Deaf Studies Program here at Sam Houston?
I am hoping we would have a minor in ASL coming soon in the fall of 2019. In the future, I would love to establish a major in Deaf Studies. I also would love to see that we have “Deaf space” where all hearing students who are interested in learning ASL - deaf students, and children of deaf adults would hang out together and have their “comfort zone” near deaf professors.

Dr. Ryan Dux, GERMAN
By Emilie Grecola

Dr. Dux has been teaching German courses since 2009. He received his bachelor’s degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and his Ph.D. from UT Austin where he began his teaching career.

He decided to teach German after realizing his family was part German, so much so that his grandfather didn’t know a word of English when he entered first grade. He then took the language in high school, where he enjoyed it immensely. This led to majoring in the language in college and proceeding to continue learning about it through his master’s degree and Ph.D.

He has traveled to Germany many times—the first time in his third year in college and the most recent trip over the years of 2017-2018. Dr. Dux has already submitted a manuscript of his reworked dissertation that will be published as a book and is preparing an edited volume based on the workshop he hosted in Germany that involved many European scholars.

Dr. Dux came to Sam Houston this past semester. He teaches lower level German classes and added a new course for the spring 2019 - “The Texas Germans,” which is taught in English. “German Media,” a course that focuses on both language skills and cultural knowledge, is currently under development as well. Finally, Dr. Dux assists his students in their efforts to revive interest in the German Club. Events such as Karneval/Fasching festivities (similar to Mardi Gras) and meeting Germans who reside in Texas will be something to look forward to in the future.

“German is a good language to learn,” mentioned Dr. Dux, “because it is called the language of thinkers and writers. It is the most widely spoken language in the EU and it has one of the best economies. There are many business partnerships between the U.S. and German companies.”

Nadia Tuati, ARABIC
By Emilie Grecola

Originally from Libya, Nadia Tuati is currently a teaching assistant for Arabic Professor Dr. Samar Zahrawi.

She grew up in Tripoli, an urban coastal town with a population of 2.4 million. Going from Libya to Huntsville—about a 6,000-mile distance—can be quite jarring. “Huntsville is quite different. The people and the culture are something I’m still trying to understand. Texas is more diverse than back home.”

Nadia has been a faculty member in education since 2010. She began her journey as faculty working at Tripoli university and as an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) examiner for Cambridge University. She received her bachelor’s degree in Linguistics and Translation and her master’s degree in Linguistics.

Her goals are to obtain her Ph.D. soon and join the Libyan government to help “rectify our educational system in Libya.” Nadia came to Sam Houston to share her background with the students in Huntsville and to get rid of common stereotypes about Arab women and Arab culture, though she feels she has not yet finished this duty.

She keeps working toward this goal while she is a teaching assistant for beginning and intermediate Arabic classes. There is no better time to sign up to learn Arabic than with a teaching assistant who is from an Arab country herself.
Conner Flynt, our Assistant Editor, participated in the study abroad program in Costa Rica in June 2018. He interviewed the two WOLC professors who led the program and shared his impressions about the trip as well.

Dr. Andrist has taught study abroad classes in several Spanish Speaking countries for many years, the most recent country being Costa Rica. She took some of her undergraduate classes in Mexico, some post-graduate classes in Spain and received her Ph.D. from the State University of New York/Buffalo.

Conner Flynt: How do you incorporate the local culture into classes?

Dr. Andrist: I try to incorporate culture into my class as much as possible through all assignments and trips both in and around the country. I like this format so that students can have and process experiences that help their language skills and knowledge of the culture.

Where do you teach while on study abroad trips and how many students are typically in one of your classes?

I have taught on the campus of Conversa in the mountains of Santa Ana. It is a small language school founded in 1971 by Dave Kaufman, a 1960s Peace Corps volunteer with Dr. Koeninger’s brother! I typically have no more than 12 students in class. This past summer I had nine students in my classes, which are combined into one class that meets every day of the week from about 8 a.m. until 1 p.m.

What is the atmosphere like in Santa Ana, the small town where Conversa is located?

The best way to explain the atmosphere in the town is that it has a great mixture of traditional elements with contemporary elements. The town itself is very modern, but also has traditional elements. San José, the capital, is also a short ride from Santa Ana. It has amenities with which our students are familiar, such as shopping malls, theaters, and American-chain restaurants, and at the same time has the unique features of Costa Rican culture.

Dr. Koeninger grew up in Huntsville but has lived in Puebla, Mexico for over 25 years. She first began teaching at the Universidad de las Américas-Puebla where she received her Master’s degree. She then earned her Ph.D. in Spanish Literature from UT Austin where she taught as well until she moved back to Huntsville to teach at Sam Houston.

Conner Flynt: What is your favorite part of study abroad as a professor?

Dr. Koeninger: My favorite part of study abroad is seeing students interact with their families at the end of the month. Tears often flow when we are leaving. It gives me a lot of satisfaction to see that there is such a meaningful connection between Sam students and their "tica" families.”

In your classes, how do you think study abroad helps students to develop their Spanish skills?

I teach students who have taken two courses on campus (SPAN 1411 & 1412). The study abroad program (SPAN 2311 & 2312) helps them most in their speaking and listening skills. The experience gives them the push that they need to get up to a higher level of proficiency. All this is due to two factors: their hard work in intensive classes (at least four hours on school days) combined with a lot of interaction with their families, staff at school, and people in town. These daily contacts in real situations motivate them to want to communicate more. I think that this experience makes them realize, also, that accuracy is important. Inaccuracy in pronunciation, grammar or vocabulary can interfere with communication; therefore, they become more motivated to improve their Spanish skills in all ways.

How dramatic is the difference in students’ Spanish skills when they return from study abroad?

For students at the intermediate level, the improvement in their Spanish skills is very dramatic. We have been measuring their speaking skills, before and after, for several years. The evidence demonstrates that they usually advance several levels, from novice to intermediate high.
Conner had the opportunity to learn Spanish in Costa Rica with Dr. Andrist.

I loved study abroad in Costa Rica because I got to experience a culture that I had never interacted with. I also had never been outside of the United States and this was such a beautiful place for my first trip abroad.

As for my skills in Spanish, I went from a low level to a much higher one because I was forced to change my primary language to Spanish while in Costa Rica. There are many people that speak English, but in order to go to businesses and succeed in class, I was forced to use Spanish. No matter how much class time in Texas I was given, nothing can compare to this experience. I also noticed that I improved my Spanish accent, which I could not have done in Texas alone.

Although these were big things, my confidence boost was major. Before I went on study abroad, I did not have the confidence to talk to native Spanish speakers, especially those that did not speak English. After this, I can confidently talk with these people and it has made a world of difference.

There are many opportunities for scholarships and grants to fund your study abroad experience. Just always ask and apply for everything.
Every year at Sam Houston, a book is chosen to be presented at the Diversity Reader event. This year the selected book tackled an interesting—and some say—much needed topic. On Oct. 18, the author Moustafa Bayoumi came to discuss his book titled “How Does it Feel to Be a Problem: Being Young and Arab in America” for its 10th anniversary of publication.

Moustafa Bayoumi is originally from Switzerland, although he lived most of his life in Ontario, Canada. He then moved to Brooklyn, New York where he became a professor of English at the Brooklyn College, City University of New York.

This book includes the perspective of seven different Arab Americans and their experiences. All seven live in Brooklyn, New York, but are originally from many different Arab countries. Their experiences of racism and bias range from always being stopped at the airport, not being allowed to run for president in high school because of religion, and not getting hired because of an Arab sounding name.

After reading a few sections from his book, Bayoumi engaged the audience with questions. These questions stimulated conversation within groups in which people shared their personal experiences and their thoughts on the experiences Arabs have had in America. Many people mentioned they had no idea of the racism and hatred Arabs face on a daily basis.

He ended the event with a book signing, where many eager people lined up to get a customized sentence in their personal book. Next fall there will be another Diversity Reader. The future book has not been chosen yet, but students can recommend options to the WOLC department.
The caller then starts announcing individual cards. If your board contains that image, you place a mark on it. To win, depending on the round, you have to get 4 images horizontally, vertically, diagonally, or get the full board. If you think you won, you have to yell “Lotería!”

Lotería is similar to Bingo. The game set consists of a deck of 54 cards with different images on each, boards with 4x4 image combinations for players, and chips/marks (or raw beans on this night) to be placed on boards to indicate the image that has been announced by the caller. Each player gets one or two boards.

College is mostly about studying, but sometimes a little break from schoolwork is quite welcome, especially, if it allows you to: hang out with your friends, meet new people, have fun playing a game, learn some words in Spanish and win prizes. Yes, there are activities that combine all that!

On September 19, 2018, three student organizations, Latinx Club, LULAC, and MSA, hosted a Lotería Night, and a large crowd gathered to have fun and compete for the many prizes prepared by the event hosts.

Lotería Night
By T.A.
Coco (2017), an Oscar-winning animated movie, left a lasting impression on many people. This movie reflects one of the most important traditions for the Hispanic community - Day of the Dead. While for the most part this day is associated with Mexico, other countries in Latin America celebrate it in their own way.

The tradition itself goes back to pre-Hispanic times. When Europeans arrived in our continent, the indigenous peoples buried their dead with some offerings, such as food, drinks, weapons, even servants if the person was rich, to make their journey to their final destination easier.

Nowadays, to honor their deceased relatives and friends, people visit cemeteries, clean and decorate the graves, and set up altars (“ofrenda” in Spanish, which means “offering”) in their homes. But you probably have already seen all that if you have watched Coco.

The SHSU community took part in this fascinating tradition as Latinx Club, LULAC, and Ballet Folclorico, led by their advisor Dr. Montse Feu, brought to life the theme of the movie during CHSS Hispanic Heritage Month. On Thursday, November 1, students, faculty, and staff were invited to join the Day of the Dead celebration.

The student groups made a small replica of an altar so the guests could learn a little about this beautiful tradition. The evening began with a performance by Ballet Folclorico, followed by a screening of Coco. At the end of the movie, Dr. Feu encouraged the guests to get into small groups and share memories about their departed loved ones.

WOLC Department looks forward to continuing this tradition and hosting Day of the Dead on campus each year for students and local community to enjoy.
Were there any professors or fellow students who helped you with your research?
Dr. Bouamer provided invaluable assistance in suggesting sources and readings, specifically those dealing with gender theory and the fascist mentality. Gender theory uses a different methodological approach than most historians are familiar with, and Dr. Bouamer’s patience in reading my drafts and guiding my conceptual interpretation was greatly appreciated.

What was your initial reaction to finding out your article was going to be published?
I was incredibly excited, of course. Publications are a critical component to graduate school applications, so I was also a bit relieved to be able to prove that I was capable of producing scholarship that merited publication. I also thought that most of the hard work was behind me, but then I got to experience the review process.

Do you have any further plans for researching/writing?
Absolutely. I am currently conducting research for my master’s thesis on the establishment of a working-class identity in nineteenth-century Stockholm, which hopefully will become a part of my Ph.D. dissertation in a few years. As a graduate student, it feels like every day is spent researching and writing!
Conner Flynt, originally from Llano, Tx, is a senior majoring in History and minoring in both French and Spanish. Flynt recently succeeded in publishing one of his articles in a collegiate journal.

Kaylee Campbell: Which journal were you published in and what is the name of your article?
Flynt: My paper is titled The H.L. Hunley and Confederate Ideals in Modern America and is featured in The Measure: A Journal of Undergraduate Research, which is put out by the SHSU College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

What inspired your publication?
I was inspired by my strong interest in nautical archaeology. I had to do a research paper for a class and I decided to do it on a submarine. I have always been interested in shipwrecks and their discovery, and once I learned about the Hunley, I knew I could write a great paper on the subject.

Were there any professors or fellow students who helped you with your research?
Dr. Brian Jordan was my biggest help with editing and giving me confidence to pursue this topic. It was the term paper for his American Civil War class. His vast knowledge of the Civil War helped me a great deal, especially with finding newspaper articles and other research aids.

What was your initial reaction to finding out your article was going to be published?
I was in Houston buying a car and I saw the e-mail that told me I was selected for publication and I felt elated! I could not believe that my writing was good enough for publication at this level. I had just submitted my paper hoping, but not expecting, to be published. Once I saw the paper copy of the journal, it finally hit me that I was a published author. I could not have been happier to share that with the academic community.

Do you have any further plans for researching/writing?
I do not plan to do any more research on this topic, but I am going to graduate school to study archaeology and anthropology. I will be studying the ancient Mayan Civilization of Mesoamerica. My main research interests in Mesoamerica lie in the languages of the Mayan peoples and their ancient hieroglyphs, as well as the modern day languages of Latin America.
Conner Flynt: What does your club do in regard to the French language and culture?
Hawkins: One thing we’ve made a point to get across to the student body here at Sam Houston is the fact that we’re a club that promotes francophone culture. We are the French Club, but we are also the French and Francophone Club. We like to promote the fact that the French language is something that serves as a commonality for beaucoup geographic regions within the world; North Africa (Maghreb region), Canada, the Caribbean, and even in the United States—close to home.
During our meetings, we like to incorporate presentations in order to showcase something that is francophone-related. We are always discussing something that has relevance to our purpose of showcasing diversity.

How does someone get involved in the club?
Simply come to the meetings! We are always open to new members. One can start by coming to our last Movie Night event, which will be after Thanksgiving on Wednesday, Nov. 28. We will be having a discussion briefly after the movie about LGBT rights in France. We want our fellow peers to come out and participate in the discussion. We want this movie night and film to facilitate discussion and learning.

What kind of events do you have for members?
As previously stated, we do have Movie Nights. These are held last Wednesday of each month. We try to incorporate an educational aspect when selecting a film to show, and we are always open to movie suggestions. Of course, one does not need to know French because we do watch the movies with English subtitles.
We do socials in order to make the environment of the French Club friendlier. We tend to do cooking socials, which is a great idea in my opinion because food has the ability to bring people together. We incorporate the cultural aspect by making foods from francophone regions within the world. In the past, we have made couscous, which is a popular Maghrebi dish. It can be seasoned many ways, so there are many possibilities when making it.
We are also in the process of planning a big cultural feast for the upcoming semester. We hope to be able to collaborate with other cultural clubs here at SHSU, and I’m very excited about it!

What are your favorite things about the French Club?
My favorite things to do with the French Club would definitely be getting to know our members. I know it’s not an event, but for an officer, it’s important to be able to interact with members and get to know them as well. I think it’s great seeing the amount of diversity when it comes to the people interested in French. Considering the officers alone—we have Mass Communication, Animal Science and Theatre majors. I’m actually a Pre-Vet major. I personally love seeing the juxtaposition of our majors and the fact that we’re all genuinely interested in French.
Shining Bright
By Kaylee Campbell

Kaylee Campbell is a sophomore English major. The following poem was inspired after she read Shakespeare’s Sonnet 73 and noticed that the last word of each line could be combined to create a new poem. The words used from Shakespeare’s original piece are in bold, and some of the words had to be changed to fit the context of the new poem.

Shining Bright:

**Behold** the **hanging** **cold**
that **sings** as the shining light of **day** settles in the **west**, fading **away** into a temporary **rest**. The crown of **fire** **lies** in her bed **expired**, but by morning dawn she will be **strong** once more and catapult **long** into the sky like she did the day before.

Shakespeare’s Sonnet 73:

That time of year thou mayst in me **behold**
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do **hang**
Upon those boughs which shake against the **cold**,
Bare ruin’d choirs, where late the sweet birds **sang**.
In me thou see’st the twilight of such **day**
As after sunset fadeth in the **west**,
Which by and by black night doth take **away**,
Death’s second self, that seals up all in **rest**.
In me thou see’st the glowing of such **fire**
That on the ashes of his youth doth **lie**,
As the death-bed whereon it must **expire**,
Consum’d with that which it was nourish’d by.
This thou perceiv’st, which makes thy love more **strong**,
To love that well which thou must leave ere **long**.

If you would like to showcase your talent in our next issue, contact us at babel.wolc@gmail.com. We accept literary and visual works. We are particularly interested in works that are focused on the languages and cultures represented in the WOLC department.
Announcements

**Logo Design Contest**

WOLC department is looking for a new logo and it needs your help! All current SHSU students are invited to participate in the contest for a chance to win a $150 Barnes and Noble gift card and receive recognition. The selected logo design will be used for communication, publicity, and on merchandise to represent World Languages and Cultures.

The contest is open until March 18.
The winner(s) will be announced on April 4.
Contact Vianey Gutiérrez (vxg017@shsu.edu) if you have questions.
Visit the WOLC website for the Rules and Instructions as well as the Entry Form.

**WOLC Ambassadors**

WOLC has established its Ambassador Program to increase awareness about the department, its programs and initiatives, as well as overall benefits of linguistic and cultural competences among SHSU current and prospective students, faculty, and staff. The first student cohort has been selected and has already started participating in the department’s recruitment events. If you want to learn more about the program and how you can become a member in the future, contact Dr. Tatiana Artamonova, the program’s faculty advisor (txa034@shsu.edu).

**Thank you for reading our newsletter!**

BABEL team:
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