

WORLD LANGUAGES & CULTURES TIMES

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Inside this newsletter:

A Night at the Hunter House	1	Lubich Fights for Liberal Arts	5
Believing is Seeing	2	Shining Star Recognition	6
Edwidge Danticat Speaks	2	Steitz Receives Gerald Westheimer	
End of the Semester Reception	3	Career Development Fellowship	6
First Annual Spanish Spelling Bee	3	Lubich's Book Makes Waves	7
Facer travels to Capitol Hill	3	Marken Goes Back to School	7
French Department Receives Curriculum Development Grant	4	Language Assistant Davis Speaks on Life in Lyon, France	7
French Innovation	4	Biography: Taylor Cooke	7
Japanese Education Leadership Workshop	5	Useful Apps . . . Excel in Learning a Foreign Language	8

A Night at the Hunter House

BY TAYLOR COOKE

French Professor Peter Schulman organized a poetry reading and discussion centered around Edgar Allen Poe, on the anniversary of his death, Oct. 7, 2015, at the Hunter House Victorian Museum in downtown Norfolk. Dr. Schulman was joined by Dr. Elizabeth Vincelette of the Old Dominion English department, a worldwide Poe expert, and Ron Smith, the current Poe laureate of Virginia, who is also a Poe expert and has taught Poe's work extensively.

The sold-out crowd had the opportunity to listen to different Poe readings and speak on different events that took place in the author's life. Smith discussed a number of the key events in Poe's life that brought out personal emotions in addition to delighting the crowd with some of his own poetry from his latest book, discussing Poe among other Virginian themes. Dr. Schulman also read some of his favorite works of Poe and connected those works to the appreciation that the French had for Poe's translated works, even when those in the United States thought nothing of them.

Dr. Schulman would like to thank the English department of Old Dominion for generously supporting Ron Smith's visit, providing Dr. Vincelette, for arranging a taping of the event for posterity and for a high school in Florida that heard the event was going on and asked to use it in one of their classes. And also many thanks to Jaclyn Spainhour for opening up the museum for this event as well. The reading and discussion that went on that beautiful fall night in the gardens of the Hunter House are sure to be etched into the memories of everyone who attended.



The World Languages & Cultures Department publishes the World Languages and Cultures Times newsletter to bring you updates on our students, alumni, new course offerings, faculty news, symposia and lectures, and any other newsworthy items. Please feel free to send in any information you have. Plus, we're always looking for a good feature story, so be sure to let the World Languages and Cultures Times know what you're doing.



4001 Batten Arts & Letters
Norfolk, VA 23529-0085
Ph: (757) 683-3973
Fax: (757) 683-5659
<http://al.odu.edu/lang/>

Be sure to contact us:
foreignlanguages@odu.edu

Believing is Seeing

BY TAYLOR COOKE

Rakugo is a form of Japanese storytelling that takes years of intense training to master. The lone storyteller will sit on an empty stage and portray at least two characters leaning to the left or right, depending on which character he wants to portray to the audience. He will be accompanied by only two props while on stage: a traditional cloth and fan. These items can be used to represent anything. They can be seen as a book, eating utensils or anything the performer wants, as long as the audience believes they can see it.

This fall Old Dominion University's Japanese Program was fortunate enough to have a trained Rakugo storyteller come to the University to put on two separate shows for middle school, high school and university students. On Sept. 29, the former school teacher led two interactive sessions open to the public and geared toward educating people about the traditional storytelling of the Japanese culture. The event was a great success among the students and other visitors. The event was

all about imagination and becoming closer to a culture, as students were invited to the stage to take part in telling the stories. The storyteller always sits on the stage during a Rakugo performance because it adds to the imagination of the performance. If he is sitting he could be doing anything, including flying, with a little imagination from the audience.



Japanese exchange students who are taking English at Old Dominion were also given the opportunity to help out at the event. On the way to and from the event, they engaged in conversation with the younger students who were taking

Japanese. This experience gave the additional excitement of using real language to the participants, who came all the way from Virginia Beach.

In the future, Professor Minori Marken wants to base a project in her Japanese classes on the Rakugo performance. Overall the event was a huge success and the students loved it so much, they want to attend more Rakugo storytelling events in the future.

Edwidge Danticat Speaks

BY TAYLOR COOKE

Dr. Lee Slater of the French department was thrilled to hear that Edwidge Danticat would speak at ODU as part of the President's Lecture Series. The two were graduate students at Brown University at the same time, while Slater was completing her Ph.D. in French studies and Danticat was completing her MFA in creative writing.



In his introduction of Danticat, French Professor Peter Schulman stated that Danticat is "... one of the most creative and powerful literary voices in America," and has been using her stance as a way to advocate for those who are being traumatized in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Slater has been teaching Danticat's work in her Understanding World Literature course at ODU for 15 years. As a part of her visit to the University, Danticat agreed to meet with a number of Slater's students and respond to their questions regarding her

work in general and her novel, "The Farming of Bones," which the class had just finished reading.

The event was a wonderful success! Eighty-three current and former FLET 100 students gathered in Constant Hall where they asked Ms. Danticat questions about her works for over an hour. The students asked Danticat more in-depth questions about the writing process, personal inquiry to research, the creation of her characters and the strategic pathway that she takes to chart the plot. It was a joy for the students to hear just how novels can create a space of memory, awareness and hopefully a change in conditions in Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Following the question and answer session with the FLET 100 students, the group stepped outside into the bright sun where Ms. Danticat graciously took selfies with the students and signed their numerous books. A number of them returned to hear her read later that evening. All of the students who attended understood that the personal contact they had with an author of Danticat's stature makes them a part of something much bigger in the world.

End of the Semester Reception

BY TAYLOR COOKE

On April 26, the faculty and staff of the College of Arts and Letters gathered in the Goode Theatre lobby for their annual Recognition Ceremony and end of the semester reception. There was a



great turnout and beautiful atmosphere where faculty and staff members celebrated each other, all while having a great time and dining on the great selection of food. Charles E. Wilson Jr., outgoing Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, was also recognized for his service to the college, along with the beautiful thoughts and reflections given for him. Dr. Wilson was presented with a portrait signed by the cast members of the hit Broadway musical “Hamilton.”

Facer Travels to Capitol Hill

BY TAYLOR COOKE

In February 2016, Senior Lecturer of French Betty Rose Facer traveled to Capitol Hill for the annual Language Advocacy Day and Delegate Assembly sponsored by the Joint National Committee for Languages (JNCL) – National Council for Languages and International Studies (NCLIS). Professor Facer is an official delegate and representative for the Computer-Assisted Language Instruction Consortium and the International Association for Language Learning Technology. On the Hill, she joined members of the Virginia delegation to meet with legislative leaders, including Sen. Mark Warner, Sen. Tim Kaine and Congressman Bobby Scott, to discuss the overall importance of world languages to the well-being of the nation.

A number of important issues were discussed on the Hill. One of the most important was the funding for Title VI of the Higher Education Act, which has been cut by 44 percent since 2011. The Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange (Fulbright Hays) Act was also discussed. The funding for Title IV, Part A of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) – the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants – which affect each state’s ability to competitively fund foreign language education; the continued funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Science Foundation, and a commitment to the World Languages Advancement Act, which ensures access to high-quality world language programming in America’s schools, were also discussed.

Professor Facer would like to thank JNCL-NCLIS President Marty Abbott, Executive Director Bill Rivers, and Maria Pulcini, policy analyst, for their support organizing the event.

You can stay informed and become an advocate for language education by signing up for ACTFL’s “Action Alert.” Your involvement can make a difference.

First Annual Spanish Spelling Bee

BY TAYLOR COOKE

The Old Dominion University Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures sponsored its first Spanish Spelling Bee on April 9, 2016, from 9 a.m. to noon. This initiative brought together high school students from the Hampton Roads area and the Old Dominion community to promote foreign language education and showcase our campus to prospective students.

The event included three levels of competition and a series of workshops in which all of the competitors could

participate. There was a pronunciation workshop where students could listen to and have conversations with native speakers and Old Dominion students majoring and minoring in Spanish. Another workshop included study abroad information and campus tours.

Several sponsors provided prizes, volunteers and supplies for the



competition. We would like to thank Santillana Publishing Co., Hispanos Latinos Unidos, Hispanic Latino Employee Association, NATO, Foreign Language Association of Virginia, and VISTA Higher Learning publishing company.

Next year, the department would like to hold the spelling bee with more levels of competition and categories, and to see more students from Hampton Roads participating.



French Department Receives Curriculum Development Grant

BY TAYLOR COOKE

French faculty members were awarded the 2016 TalkAbroad Curriculum Development Grant to redesign the Beginning French II course curriculum at Old Dominion University. The private grant incorporates meaningful telecollaborative conversations using TalkAbroad. The course will also put emphasis on pre- and post-surveys as well as post-task reflection activities using Google e-Portfolios. This telecollaboration is said to have a positive impact on learning outcomes, including the students' communicative and intercultural competence, social courtesies, motivation to continue language learning, and consideration for study abroad opportunities, digital literacy, and learning autonomy. Telecollaborative conversations will also better prepare students to transition from beginning to intermediate levels

of study. In addition, the instructors will gain valuable insight on successful project design and implementation practices, as well as the skills necessary to facilitate and offer effective feedback to students.

The grant recipients and collaborating faculty members include: Dr. Elizabeth Black, assistant professor of French; Dr. Barbara Jessome, adjunct assistant professor of French; Nathan Owens, adjunct instructor of French; Dr. Lee Slater, senior lecturer of French and FLET; Dr. Ouafaa Zouali, adjunct assistant professor of French; Dr. Denise Tahhan, adjunct professor of French; Dr. Peter Schulman, professor of French; and Betty Rose Facer, senior lecturer and director of the Language Learning Center.

French Innovation

BY TAYLOR COOKE

Dr. Lee Slater, senior lecturer of French and foreign literatures in English translation (FLET) classes, has created a new way to study the language through the French 320 course, Contemporary France Through the Media. In the course that she designed, Dr. Slater has been able to help her students learn French language and culture through access to daily French media, from official state addresses to blog posts. Instead of using a traditional textbook, students analyze news reports from outlets such as newspapers, broadcasts, advertising, film and social media. As a result, they are introduced to social, political, economic, intellectual and artistic expressions of France and French-speaking societies today. The course is taught entirely in French and was held in Gornton Hall, where each class meeting was recorded and archived for students.

One important aspect of this course is its focus on the current trends and shifts in French industry. The students researched debates and announcements from the French press surrounding new models of industry represented by companies with big name recognition such as Uber, but also smaller companies and nonprofit organizations creating great impact in French-speaking countries such as Senegal. Students also study French industry innovations that are touted by the French government

in areas such as robotics, driverless cars and aerospace engineering.

Every class period is unique. All of the students' work throughout the semester leads them to the final capstone project, which allows them to tackle a problem or societal issue and find a solution for it. In order to be successful, the students must research French and francophone websites to learn how to create a strategic plan for a nonprofit, then present this plan in a video/PowerPoint format. This project will open the eyes of anyone who completes it. There were a number of outstanding capstone projects recently, including a program designed to bring attention to and prevent domestic violence that used a slogan: "Donner une voix à celles réduites au silence."



Japanese Education Leadership Workshop

BY TAYLOR COOKE

Japanese Professor Minori Marken worked as a leader of the Mid-Atlantic Association of Teachers of Japanese (MAATJ) with four other Japanese teachers who represent other associations, to develop a leadership workshop for the Japanese education articulation that was held at Old Dominion July 8–10, 2016. It was co-organized by the American Associations of Teachers of Japanese (AATJ) and the Japan Foundation. A budget proposal for \$14,906 was accepted, meaning Marken and other members of the associations could begin planning the workshop. The workshop offered a leadership class for about 20 Japanese instructors representing middle schools, high schools and universities in their locality. Marken hopes that the leadership workshops will also help teachers and professors to further develop and refine their individual teaching styles. She hoped that the workshops would bring together Japanese teachers and professors from across the country and that new programs and items, such as a nationwide newsletter, could be products of the gathering.



Frederick Lubich Fights for Liberal Arts

BY TAYLOR COOKE

In October of 2015, German Professor Frederick Lubich responded to a letter to the editor published in the *Virginian-Pilot* titled “Paying for Meaningless Degrees.” In the open letter, a mother, who is also a school teacher, stated that she tells her students [...] not to go to college unless they have a real purpose and that she would not pay for her own son’s tuition if he chooses a major that is in the liberal arts.

In his response to this letter, Professor Lubich stated that the author has a “[...] short-sighted view of the world” by comparing higher education in the United States to higher education in Europe, where universities nurture “a deep appreciation of its cultural treasures and scholarly traditions” to enrich students with an understanding of the past and to prepare them for the future. Dr. Lubich believes that students and young adults should be able to explore their own interests and that this exploration is a part of the American Dream of freedom and democracy where everyone, including young adults, can pursue their interests.

The response to Lubich’s article was overwhelmingly positive. The majority of those who commented agreed with his statements and believe that a large majority of those pursuing higher education would be disappointed in their career choices without having the chance to explore what one wants. According to Dr. Lubich, everyone should have an experimentation period where they can learn about the things they truly enjoy.

Shining Star Recognition

BY TAYLOR COOKE

At the end of every semester, Old Dominion students who appreciate their professors have the opportunity to nominate them for a special award thanking them for all of their hard work. The Shining Star award recognizes professors and acknowledges everything that they have done over the course of the semester in order to help their students succeed. It is a special touch because the Shining Star nomination can only come from students who feel that their professor has gone above and beyond in their efforts to help them in and out of the classroom. This year, there are ten Shining Star award recipients: Elizabeth Black, Bethea Garcia, Fermin Garcia, Luis Guadano, Minori Marken, Antonella O'Neal, Maria Padilla, Peter Schulman, Lee Slater and Paloma Sugg. The Old Dominion Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures would like to congratulate all of our Shining Stars!



Kerstin Steitz Receives Gerald Westheimer Career Development Fellowship

BY TAYLOR COOKE

In May of 2015, Assistant Professor Kerstin Steitz was awarded the Gerald Westheimer Career Development Fellowship from the Leo Baeck Institute in New York for her current book project on literary and film responses to the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial. The Westheimer award is a grant that is personally given to professionals who are in the early stages of their careers, or before they have gained tenure. This professional must be one whose proposed work deals with topics within Leo Baeck's mission, dealing with historical or cultural issues of the Jewish experience in German-speaking lands.

The Gerald Westheimer Career Development Fellowship is one of the most prestigious and highly remunerated national fellowships in the field of German-Jewish studies. It was a great honor for Dr. Steitz to receive the \$19,999 award. Because of the generosity of the fellowship, Dr. Steitz was able to conduct archival research in Germany for an article and for her ongoing book project. She then was able to present her scholarly work at major national and international conferences such as the Modern Language Association Conference in January 2016 in Austin, Texas. She also was able to make significant progress on her book project.

Frederick Lubich's Book Makes Waves

BY TAYLOR COOKE

Frederick A. Lubich has edited "Transatlantische Auswanderergeschichten. Reflexionen und Reminiszenzen aus drei Generationen" [Transatlantic Stories of Emigration. Reflections and Reminiscences from Three Generations], a Festschrift, or collection of celebratory contributions, in honor of Robert Schopflocher (Königshausen & Neumann: Würzburg, 2014, 675 pages). The Festschrift contains contributions and congratulations from circa 100 authors, students and scholars. The Festschrift celebrates Schopflocher, a German Jew whose family was forced out of Nazi, Germany due to their religious beliefs, ultimately settling in Argentina. The Festschrift takes a deep look into the life of Schopflocher and the activities that he enjoyed in addition to writing. These activities included painting, storytelling, woodworking and raising chickens, a skill which he turned into a bestselling book. In addition to the life story of Schopflocher, the Festschrift also takes a look at representative lives of the second and third generation of Germans living abroad since World War II.

Dr. Lubich first became acquainted with Schopflocher after meeting him in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 2001. Schopflocher sent Lubich his first book of short stories in German. Because Schopflocher was one of the last representatives of German-Jewish culture driven out by Hitler, Lubich took notice and began reading. He became fascinated with the life and work of Schopflocher.

The response to "Transatlantische Auswanderergeschichten" has been astounding. The Festschrift – whose contributions are mainly written in German, but also in English, French and Spanish – has sold copies all over the world. With entries from Old Dominion students, Holocaust survivors and literary scholars, all the way to the Auma Obama, sister of our current President Barack Obama, readers from the United States and Germany are taking notice, and it is clear to see that Dr. Lubich's hard work has paid off.

Minori Marken Goes Back to School

BY TAYLOR COOKE

Five years ago, Japanese Professor Minori Marken had the idea to begin sending the Japanese exchange students studying English at the ODU English Learning Center to volunteer in local middle and high school classrooms that offer Japanese. The program has sent Japanese students to nine different schools for five years and last December, Marken visited four classrooms with a Japanese student, where she was able to witness firsthand just how effective her program has become.

The middle and high school students are able to use the language with native speakers and they can ask the exchange students questions about their lives and send thank-you cards in Japanese. In addition to getting to use the language, the high school students are able to gather more information on the Japanese program at Old Dominion while they are still making their college decisions. This exposure is not only good for the middle and high school students, it is beneficial to the exchange students as well. After working with the middle and high school students, some of the exchange students through the years have discovered a love for foreign language teaching and have turned their attention toward careers in education.

Language Assistant Davis Speaks on Life in Lyon, France

BY TAYLOR COOKE

Nitia Davis is an English language assistant who is currently working at two middle schools in Saint-Priest, a suburb of Lyon, France. For 12 hours every week, Nitia splits her time evenly between the schools, encouraging the students to speak in English and helping them to develop their English speaking abilities. Working with 12 to 15 students at a time, Nitia gets to see first-hand how much the students are growing, thanks to the time that she has been spending with them in the classroom.

Even though she is fairly new to Lyon, Nitia is excited about the different experiences that she has had so far. She is grateful for the teachers she is working with and loves the fact that she can travel and explore the city of Lyon when not at work. Nitia says that so far, her favorite aspect about the job is getting to see just how intrigued the students are by the United States and American English.

Nitia loves that the Teaching Assistant Program in France (TAPIF) has given her the opportunity to be a cultural representative for the United States. And even though she has not been in Lyon for a long time, she is looking forward to all of the new experiences she is going to have and the impact she is going to have in the lives of her students.

Biography: Taylor Cooke is currently a freshman at Old Dominion University majoring in English education. Along with her love of writing and desire to try something new, with help from the LEAP student assistance program, Taylor began writing for the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. While she is studying at Old Dominion, Taylor plans on getting involved in more writing-intensive events on and around campus.



Useful Apps that can Help Anyone Excel in Learning a Foreign Language

BY MS. BETTY ROSE FACER
DIRECTOR OF THE LANGUAGE LEARNING CENTER

2016 Language Learning Center Recommendations:

1. **Pronunciator** is a fun and free way to learn any of 80 languages with self-directed lessons, live teachers, movies, music and more. The ODU community has free, unlimited access. Access the new language study database from the ODU Library webpage and click on: <http://learning.pronunciator.com/getstarted.php?library.id=32973>.
2. **Learn Italian** is an easy-to-use Italian phrasebook app that provides a good start to those who are interested in learning Italian. Learn Italian is recorded using native speakers. This app is recommended for tourists and business people visiting Italy. Free categories include: greetings, general conversation, numbers, directions and places, transportation, eating out, and emergency.
3. **Educreations** is a unique interactive whiteboard and screencasting tool that's simple, powerful and fun to use. Annotate, animate and narrate nearly any type of content as you explain any concept. Teachers can create short instructional videos and share them instantly with students, or ask students to show what they know and help friends learn something new.
4. **Explain Everything** is a whiteboard/screencasting app to create slideshows from imported documents, images, videos, sound files and browser windows. This app allows users to make a series of slides with audio narration. It also allows users to "record" movement with a stylus or finger while it records audio. It is great for explaining animated concepts.
5. **iSprak** is an online activity generator designed for foreign language educators. This web-based application automates speech evaluation for second language learners. The instructor sets up the activity by selecting the language of instruction and including a short text for students to read. The student then practices speaking and is given immediate feedback, along with audio help from native speakers for problematic words. The best way to learn more about iSprak is to try it out yourself!
6. **Vocaroo** is a browser-based recording tool that is extremely easy to use. You can download and save the recording in various formats (emailed, downloaded or embedded). It works well on Chromebooks.
7. **LangChat** is dedicated to the discussion of topics associated with issues and trends in world language instruction and learning. Educators, administrators, learners and aficionados of world languages are encouraged to participate and share their experiences on various topics such as new ways to teach vocabulary, using music in the language classroom, and making standards-based grading valid. This chat is also unique in that it brings together language educators worldwide and from different contexts (elementary, secondary, higher education, etc.) and languages. #LangChat
8. **Shadow Puppet** is a fun app to create narrated slideshows that are exported as video. Students can make videos to tell stories, explain ideas or document their learning. The app has an integrated search tool for photos from the Library of Congress, NASA, Met Museum and Creative Commons, as well as allowing imports from the device's camera roll. Ideas supporting Common Core make it easy to get started.