



# World Languages & Cultures

Elon University  
Fall 2019 Newsletter



A black and white photograph of a classical building facade. The image features a large, fluted column in the foreground, with another column visible to the right. Above the columns is a pediment containing the word "CARLTON" in capital letters. To the left of the main column is a multi-paned window. The overall composition is a low-angle shot looking up at the building.

CARLTON

*A Student-Authored  
Newsletter*

**04**

**MEET THE  
STAFF**

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# MEET THE *staff*



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# LANGUAGE SPOTLIGHT

**BY: OLIVIA KENDRICK**

The enrollment numbers for Chinese language classes at Elon continue to grow with a 13% increase since Fall 2018. According to Professor Binnan Gao, since Chinese is not an alphabetic language, the writing system is particularly challenging for her students. Professor Gao has noticed that her students are often stressed about weekly quizzes so she has found a way to use technology to assist them. She has begun administering quizzes on Moodle in order to allow students to relax at home and take the quiz up to two times.

Professor Gao says that this allows the students to take the quiz and then continue studying and try again if they are unhappy with their grades because she feels single evaluations shouldn't be the end of learning. This method not only allows students to evaluate themselves but also uses technology to free up time during the limited class periods. Another way that the students use technology is through a newly implemented online tutoring session two or three times per semester in order to work on speaking and listening skills. Lastly, this semester the 300 and 400 level classes have been combined as a total of 7 students that studied Chinese and Food within different sectors such as environment, politics, and health in order to incorporate studies on languages and culture.





# ELON STUDENTS ROCK ARABIC STUDIES

Over the fall semester, students of Arabic courses had several opportunities to demonstrate how their language study fits within their academic goals and experiences and shape their post-graduation and career goals. In October, the Arabic Language Organization ALO held its annual study abroad panel where Shariq Ali and Ashley Jutras shared their experiences in Oman and Morocco as CLS scholars over the summer of 2019. The Critical Languages Scholarship is a prestigious opportunity awarded by the State Department for students of critical languages. It is an 8-week intensive language study program that takes place in a country where the critical language is the native language. Students described how cultural competency was a major goal of the program and they each shared the highlights of their stays in the Middle East.

MacKenzie Hahn and Megan Noor Morocco talked about their study abroad experiences in Morocco and Jordan and answered questions about the advantages versus disadvantages of a homestay living. Nicole Plante and Taylor Garner shared their experiences volunteering and conducting research in Lebanon and Palestine and answered questions about expected vs. unexpected situations and how they handled them. In November, Dr. Sandy Marshall, professor of Geography, was a guest speaker in Intermediate Arabic I. Having native proficiency in Arabic, Dr. Marshall started his class visit with a friendly chat in Arabic with the students in attendance. He then shared with the students his journey learning Arabic in college and earning scholarships and fellowships for language study.

Dr. Marshall answered questions about his life in the Middle East as a student and a researcher as well as his travels to various countries. He was impressed by the language proficiency of ARB 221 students and commented on their serious interest in the language and culture of the Middle East as well as their ambitious plans for using the language in their future careers. The students later talked about how inspired they felt by meeting someone who was in their position and was able to accomplish native fluency. Elon's Arabic program is proud to announce that two students are currently semi-finalists for the 2020 CLS and should be hearing about the final selection in March.

**BY: DR. SHEREEN ELGAMAL**





# Winter Wonderland

ON DECEMBER 4TH, THE DEPARTMENT OF WORLD LANGUAGES AND CULTURES HELD THE FIRST EVER WINTER WONDERLAND EVENT IN FRONT OF ALAMANCE FOUNTAIN. THE HOLIDAY THEMED BAZAAR HAD TABLES FROM THE GERMAN CLUB, LATIN HISPANIC UNION, HEBREW, CLASSICS, AND ARABIC DEPARTMENTS. ALONG WITH HOT CHOCOLATE AND APPLE CIDER, HEBREW BROUGHT BUREKAS AND LATKES. THE EVENT FEATURED HOLIDAY CARD MAKING AND GERMAN CHOCOLATES FOR SALE. THE SPECIAL ATTRACTION OF THE CLASSICS DEPARTMENT TABLE WAS TEMPLES MADE OUT OF GRAHAM CRACKERS AND SATURNALIA COOKIES.



# Sueño

**By: Lilly Rothschild**

This fall Professor Pous's SPN320 class read a text called *Yo Tuve un Sueño* (I Had a Dream). The focus for their class was to learn about the journey of Latin American migrants who crossed the Mexican border to come to the U.S. within the past couple decades. Their studies apply heavily to current day political issues in the news. They learned about the challenges that those migrants face as they make their trip as well as what occurs when they arrive to the US.

Professor Pous arranged a two-class discussion with Professor Teresa Irribarren in Barcelona at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya whose class also read the book *Yo tuve un sueño* written by a Mexican writer Juan Pablo Villalobos which highlights 10 stories of Central American children crossing the border. The class prepared and sent over questions for their discussion early on in order to have a successful discussion with the author Villalobos who was in Barcelona during the Skype conversation. The struggles that teenagers face who try to seek a better life are heart wrenching and it is an important topic to be learning in an upper level Spanish class in order to get a full understanding of the complexities of the migration process from Central America to the U.S."





## ELON ITALIAN STUDIES: “COME IL CACIO SUI MACCHERONI” [LIKE CHEESE ON MACARONI].... “JUST RIGHT!”

BY: ROBERT MARUCA

“Malcomune, mezzo gaudio” we say in Italian. Good company makes good times. In Italian Studies, both come about regularly with extracurricular culinary activities. Italian faculty (Dr. Samuel Pardini, Dr. Anna Love, Prof. Loredana Moccia, Dr. Mena Marino, and Dr. Brandon Essary) organize culinary labs each semester for students in ITL courses. With Prof. Moccia’s culinary leadership, they make from scratch biscotti and sip caffè, or even make their own fresh pizza’s with scratch-made dough, while learning culinary vocabulary and expressions. The culinary theme infuses also the ITL curriculum.

In spring 2020, Dr. Brandon Essary will offer the first-ever “Italian Cuisine and Literature” course. Students will study representations of cuisine in medieval and Renaissance literary works; compare and contrast them with contemporary regional cuisine; and, with the help of Jay Vetter (Aramark Executive Chef) and Amy Chilcutt (Assistant Director of Academic-Residential Partnerships for Dining Engagement), make (and eat!) regional cuisine several times during the semester. “We want to showcase what people love about Italian culture in and out of class” states Dr. Essary. “It’s a harmonious combination of language, literature, and cuisine that makes a delicious, memorable, and fun form of experiential learning.”





# DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

BY: ELLI KNOWLTON

The Day of the Dead, or Día de Los Muertos, is a three-day holiday celebrated in the country of México, starting October 31st and ending November 2nd. The holiday is dedicated to remembering the lives of relatives who have passed away. Many families and friends gather together to support their relatives on their spiritual journey. The Day of the Dead ceremony includes aspects from Indigenous Aztec culture, as the Aztecs believed that death was an important part of the life cycle. As a result, the traditions of Día de Los Muertos includes celebrating the lives of loved ones who have passed on into the afterlife.

The altar or *ofrenda* is an important part of the ceremony as it is a collection of objects displayed for the individuals who have passed, intended to welcome them to the altar setting. In October of this year, Elon University faculty hosted a Day of the Dead celebration in the Department of World Languages and Cultures by displaying an *ofrenda* in Carlton Commons for students who wish to participate and celebrate. Ricardo Mendoza, a Spanish professor, explained to his classes the cultural meanings of different elements on the altar. Students were able to participate by bringing a photo of a dead relative to honor and celebrate. The altar in Carlton Commons was decorated with paper flowers and beautiful colors, completed with delicate, intricately designed paper banners brought over from México.

The bright colors represent positive feelings and celebration, while the marigold flowers, with their sweet smell, act as a guide for the spirits to find a way to the altar. Framed photos of loved ones were placed on the table, accompanied by candles, food, and objects of importance to the loved ones. The practice of placing food, water, and special objects on the *ofrenda*, among the photos, is an important part of the Day of the Dead holiday, as the spirits need to replenish their strength to carry on their journey into the afterlife. The Day of the Dead altar gave students the opportunity to learn about this important part of Mexican culture, to offer words of remembrance for their past loved ones during the ceremony.





A photograph of a lecture hall. In the foreground, the backs of several audience members' heads are visible as they sit in rows of chairs. At the front of the room, a woman with short brown hair, wearing a patterned blue and white shirt and light-colored pants, stands near a black podium, facing the audience. Behind her is a large projection screen displaying a map of the Roman Empire with green lines indicating borders or routes. The room has a modern, curved wall with light-colored panels. The title "BOATWRIGHT LECTURE" is overlaid in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

# BOATWRIGHT LECTURE

**BY: ELLI KNOWLTON**

Mary T. Boatwright, a classical studies professor at Duke University, held a lecture at Elon's Center for the Arts to talk about her studies of the Jewish revolts against the Roman Empire in the first and second century era. Boatwright focused on three main Jewish revolts, which include The Great Jewish Revolt, The Diaspora Revolt, and the Bar Kokhba Revolt. These revolts, in large part, occurred in response to the expanding of the Roman Empire territory into the province of Judea, also known as modern day Israel.

Boatwright discussed how studying these historic events can help us understand the themes of militarism, imperialism, and antisemitism in ancient and modern contexts, and how connections can be made among the Jewish revolts of the ancient world and the societal issues of today's world. Professor Boatwright has also published numerous books on the early Roman Empire, and her work will be incorporated in the Elon Classical Studies 370 course taught by Tedd Wimperis.



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# FRENCH BOOK CLUB

The French book club represents the epitome of diversity of perspective and thought. It was hosted by Madame Choplin and co-facilitated by one of her students. The book that was read was titled *Le Livre D'Emma*, written by a Haitian woman named Marie-Celie Agnant. The book has been translated into multiple languages, so everyone who came to the meeting was able to read it in the language of their choice. Reading this book in different languages allowed for distinctive interpretations of the text and its symbols, which allowed for conversation and a deeper understanding of the reading as a whole.

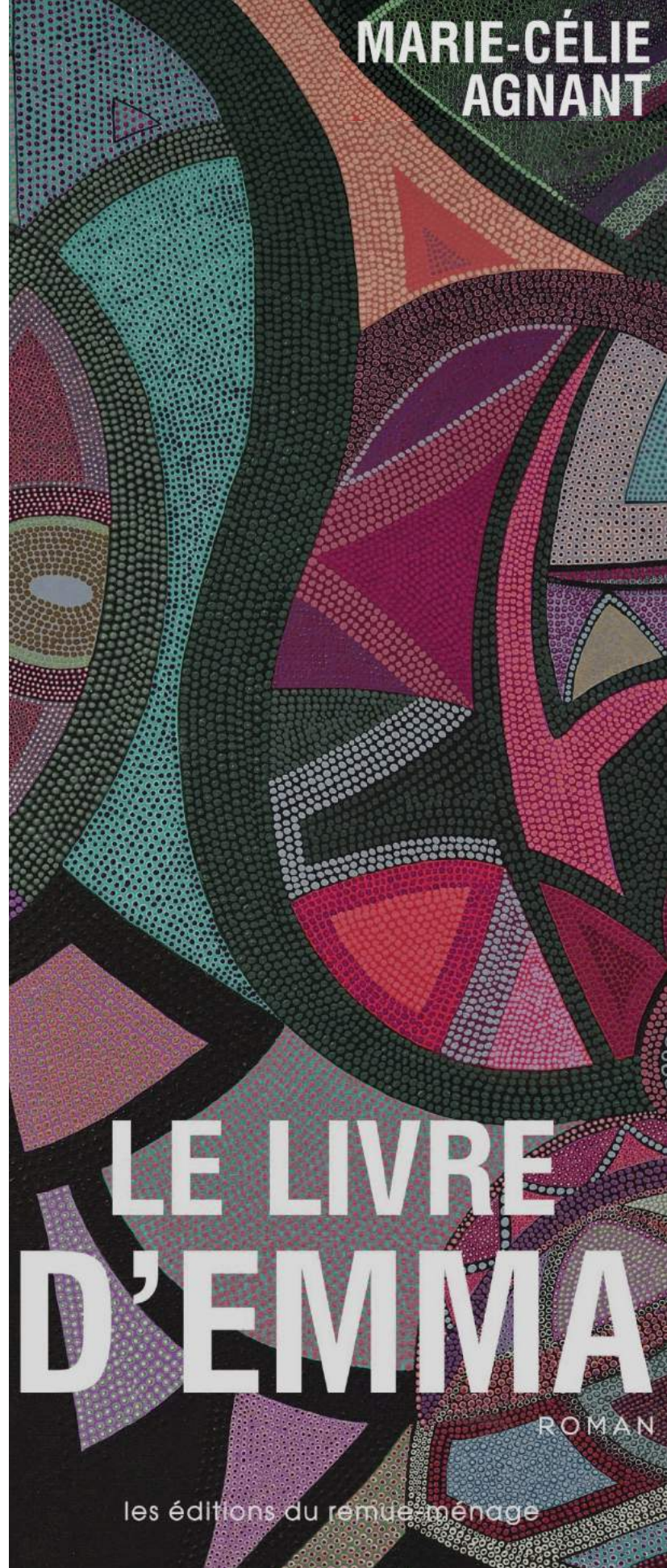
One of the quotes from the novel read “we speak the same tongue, but we don’t use the same language”, which emphasized the use of language in this book to portray the emotional meaning behind the main character, Emma’s, words. The importance of language in the novel was heavily emphasized within the text. Not only was there a diversity of interpretation because of the language, the book club was also comprised of both students and faculty in order to foster unique perspectives and discussion.

All of the members brought up interesting questions about the book that allowed the other members to cultivate a new understanding of the novel. Some of the major themes in the novel were the importance of language, the dichotomy of racism versus colorism, questions of memories, and the silencing of certain people’s voice. All of the readers noted the captivating quality of the book from the first page, and the complex themes kept them hooked. Although the novel was written in 2004, the themes can be seen in culture today.

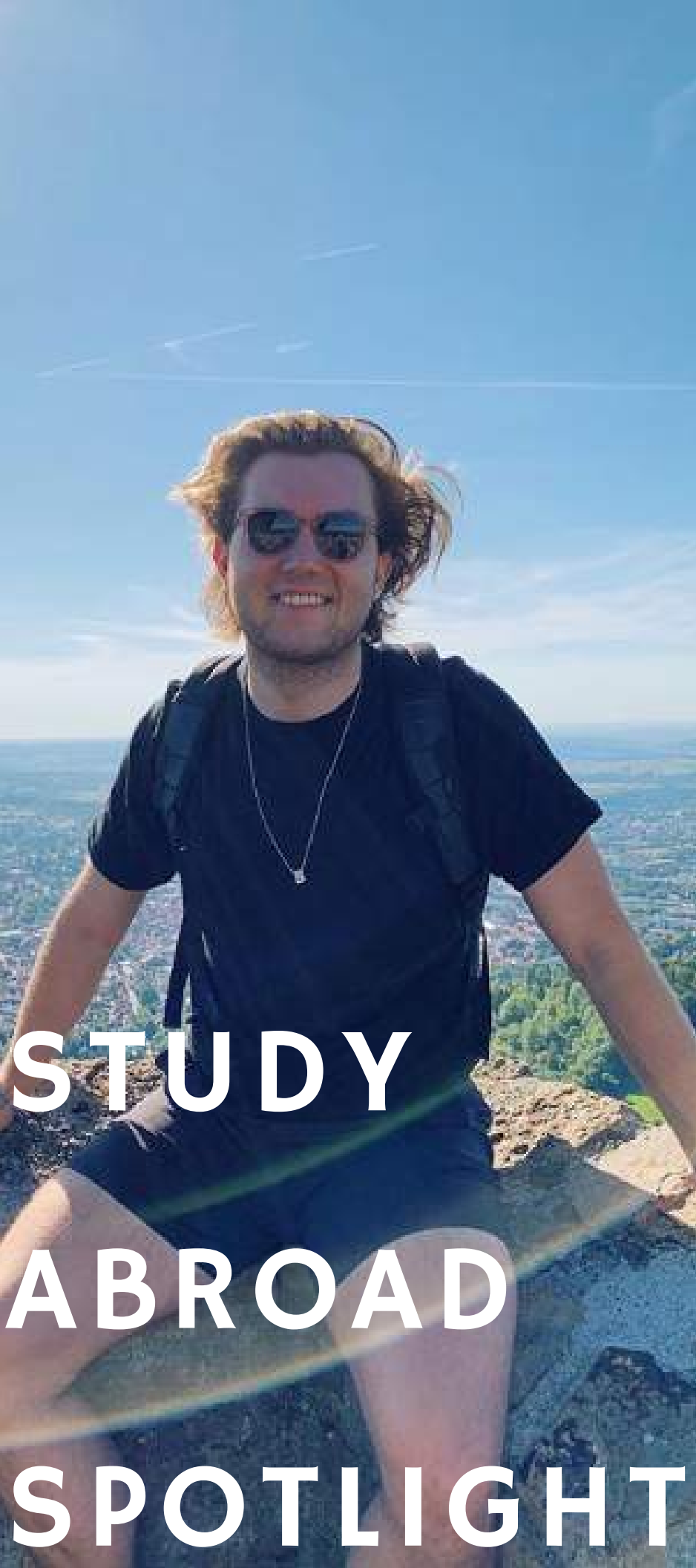
Marie-Celie Agnant dedicated her writing to allowing those who have been silenced to speak their truth, because “a silent story is a murdered story”. This book club embodies the cultural diversity and understanding that the Department of World Languages and Cultures hopes to nurture. It allowed for everyone’s perspectives to be heard in an equal manner and allowed an academic novel to become the source of a communal atmosphere.

WRITTEN BY  
**ANNA VAN JURA**

**MARIE-CÉLIE  
AGNANT**







# STUDY ABROAD SPOTLIGHT

Justin Whaley is a business dual-degree student who spent his first two years at Elon University and is now at Reutlingen University for the next two years of his college career. He is studying International Business. Whaley started his first semester at Reutlingen this past fall. He is already getting involved in clubs and activities, which he accredits has made his transition much easier. “Things are going very well with both the program and my life in Germany,” Whaley said. “I have built many friendships with people from all over the world.” Whaley is motivated to learn all he can and soak in the experiences the dual-degree provides.

“My first few days here when I was introducing myself to people, most of them would assume I was German because of the way I spoke the language,” Whaley said. “That greatly impacted and motivated me to keep trying to learn and work through failures.” His biggest takeaway thus far is that the hardest part of any goal is to start and then take it one step at a time. His next big step is starting a six-month internship in Hamburg at KPMG. “I am very excited about the opportunity to work in such a global company and cannot wait to get started.”

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**BY: WHITNEY MILLER**



# SIGMA DELTA PI

## *Induction*



**BY: ANNA VAN JURA**

On the 13th of November of 2019, 16 new members were inducted into the Spanish Honor Society - Sigma Delta Pi Chapter Rho Eta in the McBride space in Numen Lumen. This is an honor society that values significantly the Spanish language but also that its members remain active even outside of classes and have passion, values, and courage. This was portrayed during the ceremony with candles to create a metaphor about how it only burns once it's lit up, but also through various songs, poems and speeches. The members learned the history of the society, as well as its importance for them as individuals but also as a community. One of the most special parts of the induction was the poem "Muere Lentamente" by Martha Medeiros read by Professor Ricardo Mendoza, as this is a poem that reflects how one should be living their life to the fullest by being kind, traveling, listening to music, reading etc. and overall being a member of society that will endure ups and downs. Additionally, after the ceremony, the members and their mentors shared a meal together to begin creating lifetime bonds. And overall it was a very touching and special ceremony in which its new members will never forget.



# Faculty Spotlight

Written by :

Paola Leger Gaeski

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**Juan Leal-Ugalde** is a new assistant professor at Elon from Chile who has dedicated his career to further understand how photography plays a significant role in showing Latin American history. With this being said, he has focused on researching photography in the 20th century in Latin America, which also includes a large analysis on the Indigenous people of Chile and their role in Latin American history. While getting his Ph.D. in Romance Languages and Literatures (Spanish) at the University of Michigan, he wrote his dissertation about photography in armed conflicts in the 20th century, and is currently working on Andean photography where he conducted his research at the Ibero-Amerikanisches institut in Berlin, Germany.

Additionally, he is working on another research project that focuses on the archives that are located in Amsterdam, entailing the violation of human rights. These projects and his yearly articles are all part of a book he's putting together to create a general view of Latin American history through photography. In his first semester at Elon, he has been teaching SPN 358 - In Search of Identity. Currently, the class is studying contemporary issues such as the worldwide immigration crisis and how photography plays an important role in showing the emotions and struggles of immigrants. Elon has been a place that he describes as "the perfect union" between his love for teaching, working on his research, and also getting feedback from his students as he uses his own material to teach.



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# EMILY FORD AT AACU

WRITTEN BY: ANNA VAN JURA

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Emily Ford is a student here at Elon University who presented research at the AAC&U Global Learning Conference. She is majoring in Elementary Education with a Spanish Minor. Emily conducted research as a part of a “Students As Partners” in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning project with Professor Choplin. Her research focused on the effects of study abroad programs and how reintegration works best for students after these programs. She did this research with Professor Madame Choplin, a French Professor in the World Languages and Cultures Department. Emily was enrolled in the WLC pre-, during-, and post-study abroad course with Professor Choplin throughout 2017-2018, when Professor Choplin invited Ford to help her redesign the course based on student feedback, research on study abroad reintegration literature, and analysis of student work produced in the first cohort. Language major/minor students coming back from study abroad programs tended to learn a lot about cultural competency and how to immerse themselves in a completely different culture, but there wasn’t enough space for them to process this experience after they came back to the United States.

Ford and Professor Choplin’s research has focused on the importance of reintegration programs after study abroad; the WLC offers courses for students rooted in allowing students to reintegrate and use what they have learned abroad in an American context. Ford has found that these debriefing courses have been extremely beneficial for all of the students in their understanding of what was difficult about study abroad, how to talk about what they learned, and how to talk about study abroad in a job interview. The goal of the research is to maximize the benefit of the course for students’ integration of the study abroad experience into their overall personal and academic trajectories. Ford was particularly interested in this topic because she had just studied abroad and was in a debriefing course when she turned her interest into research. Additionally, the student-professor partnership allowed for different perspectives on how to redesign the course to maximize student growth. At the AAC&U conference, Emily Ford presented alongside other researchers who work on helping students with reintegration post-study abroad, including Professor Choplin, Professor Buckmaster and Professor Vandermaas-Peeler.

# Happy Lunar New Year



Sponsored by the Asian-Pacific Student Association, this year's Lunar New Year event celebrated the beginning of the year of the rat. The McBride Gathering Space was filled with tons of people enjoying the well-known event, which hosted a variety of cultural activities such as calligraphy, lantern decorating, origami, and trying different traditional Asian cuisine.

Everyone also enjoyed a live performance by dancers from the Cambodian Culture Center of North Carolina. Their dance represented the beauty of the lotus flower, and the dancers embodied grace and beauty in their movements. The Lunar New Year event was a great opportunity to learn about Asian heritage and celebrate the beginning of a new year.

By: Elli Knowlton



# **COURSE**

# **HIGHLIGHTS**



## **CLA 370**

The Classical Studies 370 course, taught by Tedd Wimperis, focuses on race and ethnicity and applies these concepts to ancient Roman and Greek times. The course has two main goals. One is to introduce students to the many cultures and civilizations, other than Greece and Rome, that existed in the ancient Mediterranean world. The course is designed to highlight the lesser-known histories of these civilizations and study how they existed in the ancient world. The second goal is to provide a historical context of societal issues, such as racism, imperialism, immigrant rights, nationalism, and citizenship. These issues were alive in the ancient world just as they are today, and studying the experiences of people in the past can help us approach our own society with new insight and sensitivity. This course will enrich students understanding of the ancient Mediterranean world, and also connect historic civilizations to our own modern society.

## **SPN 452**

Spanish 452 - Trends in the 20th and 21st Century Narrative taught by assistant professor Pablo Celis-Castillo explores the thematic, stylistic, and political tendencies present in the work of Latin America writers born after 1970; such as the search for "authenticity," an interest in certain genre conventions, and an open questioning of nationalism. The syllabus for the course includes the short stories "En la estepa" by Samanta Schewblin and "El chico sucio" by Mariana Enríquez, both from Argentina, as well as the novels La distancia que nos separa by Peruvian Author Renato Cisneros and La fila india by Antonio Ortuño from Mexico. The course also features theoretical readings by Tzevan Todorov, Annette Kuhn, and Judith Butler. All these materials, connected to the complicated current sociopolitical environments in Argentina, Peru and Mexico, make this a rigorous yet fascinating course.

## **IDS 214**

Taught by Samuele Pardini, this course explores the experience of Italian-Americans in a comparative fashion focusing on three issues including: family life, religion, and social relationships. Particular attention is paid to cultural assimilation, historical acclamation, media representation, and the gangster trope. Literary, cinematic, and artistic supplements such as M. Mazzucco's Vita, Jerre Mangione's Mount Allegro; Emanuele Crialese's Golden Door, Francis Ford Coppola's The Godfather, Martin Scorsese's Goodfellas, Peter Miller's Sacco & Vanzetti, MTV's Jersey Shore; music by Frank Sinatra and Madonna, and paintings by Ralph Fasanello.

