

DEPARTMENT OF

Modern Languages

Newsletter

Celebrating 150 years of
Grove City College

ONCE UPON A LANGUAGE
A History of the Modern Languages Department

Inside this issue:

- From Barcelona to Kampala: Student Journeys Abroad
- Faculty Research Across Europe
- Course Spotlight: French Poetry
- Alumni Reflections and Department Legacy



*French-Spanish Club
Spring 1958*



Dr. Melissa Carruth joins Modern Languages majors and minors at the department's annual Spring Banquet

Dear Students, Alumni, and Friends of the Modern Languages,



Dr. Jason S. Killam poses with a statue of literary icon Don Quixote during his research sabbatical in Spain

Greetings! We have had an eventful year in the department. I am so grateful to the students we serve and the faculty alongside whom I serve, and writing this letter in Dr. Madsen's stead while she is on sabbatical is humbling. The first word that comes to mind when I think about this year and especially the spring semester is "Team."

The spring semester started off smoothly, mostly due to the extensive work that Dr. Madsen completed before she started

(who covered my classes in the fall while I was on sabbatical), welcomed baby boy, Liam, to join his brother, Luka! Thanks to Liam for waiting for the semester to end!

This summer, I find myself trying to fill Dr. Madsen's shoes, and it is not easy! The many tasks help me appreciate what Dr. Madsen has been doing for the past five years as chair. She has worked tirelessly to enable our department to be successful, and so much of it is behind the scenes. Thank you!

In all, I am grateful to my colleagues and our students, and mostly for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Through the birth of two new honorary department members, I am in awe of the humility that Jesus showed to leave His throne, be born as a baby, and live among us. The passing of my father on Palm Sunday, so close to our celebration of Easter, was a stark reminder of the pain of death that Christ suffered, but in it, we see His victory, and we get to say along with the Apostle Paul, ⁵⁵ 'O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?' ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:55-57 ESV).

Wishing you all a blessed summer.

**In Christ,
Jason Killam**

her sabbatical. Then came March. March 23-27 was a busy week with the Global Education Celebration Week. Faculty and students from the department helped organize and/or lead events happening throughout the week such as an international praise and worship event organized by Dr. Carruth, a cooking demonstration led by Spanish Club president Lia Grande, Irish dance led and poetry readings led by Dr. Ruane and bilingual Spanish/English praise music hour organized by Dr. Studeny.

Toward the end of that week, my father had a stroke and passed away shortly after. With the departmental majors and minors banquet approaching, Dr. Carruth was so kind as to pick up the slack and make sure the event was a success. Two weeks later, while at my father's memorial service, Dr. Studeny gave birth to her baby girl, Sofia! Dr. Velázquez helped organize Spanish TAs to help to make sure courses were covered. Shortly after the semester was over, Dr. Velázquez and his wife, Shayla

On the Cover

Past meets present on this issue's cover: Natalie Gilkinson during her study abroad semester in Spain, alongside a 1958 photograph of the French-Spanish Club—an early chapter in the Modern Languages Department's long tradition of global learning.

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Members of Alpha Mu Gamma at the International Praise and Worship gathering during the Global Education Celebration Week

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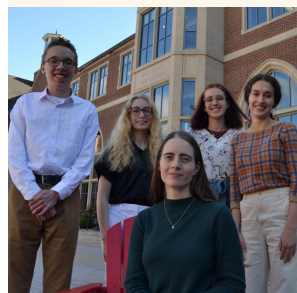
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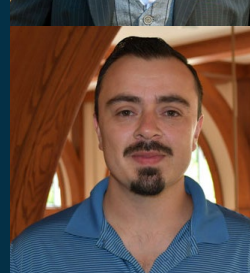
Dr. Jason S. Killam

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Associate Prof. of Spanish



Dr. Gustavo Velázquez Lazcano

Assistant Prof. of Spanish

FREN 331: Poetry

Dr. Aileen Ruane

Students studied the biographies and selected texts by nineteenth- and twentieth- century poets from France and the francophone world: Hugo, Nerval, Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Verlaine, Rimbaud, Valéry, Senghor, and Césaire.

FREN 331 is a survey course touching on French and Francophone poetry from the Middle Ages through the Twenty-first century. This is the first time the course has been offered since the departure of previous Department Chair and Professor of French, Dr. Rebecca Harmon in 2020.

During each class meeting, we have three objectives: learn more about the context and literary movements of different historical periods, learn how to scan some of the most impactful poems written by French and Francophone authors, and learn the vocabulary specific to the study and analysis of poetic forms. In doing so, students have an opportunity to see why and how the poems that exemplify various movements from the Troubadours to Les Lumières, and from the Romantics to the Poètes engagés respond to the crises of their day. For each movement, we want to know who is talking to who and why? Romanticism and Symbolism share many traits, yet the Symbolists, for example, react against what they see as excessively rigorous devotion to form in the Romantics, who, oddly enough, are themselves responding to the perceived artificiality of the Classiques and the pedanticism of Les Lumières.

For students (and faculty!) the study of poetry can also be intimidating due to poetic forms that characterize the works of many of these movements. The structure of a sonnet is not the same as a *poème en prose*, which is not the same as a *rondeau*, and so on. Then there is the issue of all the different rhetorical strategies of which poets avail themselves to create the desired effect on the reader or listener. Correctly identifying the *comparé* versus the *comparant* in an extended metaphor

addressing the poem's central themes and, thus, the poet's intentions. In the end, this is what we try to focus on during class: being able to identify structural elements is not an end unto itself. Rather, it is a means to get to the heart of a literary work destined to reveal the inner workings of the soul. Students at GCC tend to agree with the poet, writer, and cinéaste Jean Cocteau here: "Je sais que la poésie est indispensable, mais je ne sais pas à quoi"

On the first day of class, I have students discuss with a partner what qualifies a work of literature as a poem. Students often cite familiar elements such as rime, meter, rhythm, onomatopoeia, etc. This then leads to the deceptively simple, "So, what? Why?" Why have poetry, indeed. At this point, hopefully, students have taken a little inspiration from the literary stars of Francophone world, which is deliberate: too often, the focus remains on « Français de France » as opposed to la Francophonie, whose poets continue to shape what we define as poetic. To that end, I will end with the words of Quebec's most celebrated *poétesse*, Anne Hébert:

La poésie est une expérience profonde et mystérieuse qu'on tente en vain d'expliquer, de situer et de saisir dans sa source et son cheminement intérieur. Elle a partie liée avec la vie du poète et s'accomplit à même sa propre substance, comme sa chair et son sang. Elle appelle au fond du cœur, pareille à une vie de surcroît réclamant son droit à la parole dans la lumière. Et l'aventure singulière qu'elle commence dans les ténèbres, à ce point sacré de la vie qui presse et force le cœur, se nomme poésie.



Spanish Club Updates Lia Grandi, President

This year, Spanish club has contributed to multicultural education on campus with providing active credited for students. In the fall semester, we hosted several conversational events including Kahoot which is one of our biggest events with an average of 25 people in attendance. In December, the club hosted an event talking about Christmas traditions across Spanish-speaking countries and compared them to those in the United States.

In the spring, the Spanish club exec team visited Iglesia Si3n, a Spanish-speaking church in New Castle. The club hopes to partner with Iglesia Si3n in the future for community outreach.

The Spanish club also participated in The Office of Global Programs Global Education Week, where participants prepared and shared a chocotorta, an Argentinian chocolate cake. Students learned the steps in Spanish alongside culture and had the opportunity to try an authentic dish.

Before Easter break, the club offered an event talking about Spanish Easter traditions from Spain and Venezuela. Participants also learned the Lord's Prayer in Spanish. On behalf of the Spanish club, we are very excited for next year and are grateful for the support of the Modern Languages Department in our endeavors.



French Club Updates Dr. Ruane, Advisor

French Club engaged in various activities this academic year, including baking and selling *les gâteaux des rois* for Mardi Gras and conducting a cooking demonstration during the Global Education Celebration Week. The club also elected a new executive committee, including Ruth Wile as president, Grace Stolkovich as vice-president, Amelia Sobota as secretary, Abigail Calkins as treasurer, and Hannah Stine as member-at-large. We would like to thank the outgoing executive for all of their hard work over the past year (and years!): Katelyn Livorse as president, Ruth Wile (who courageously took up the post as vice president in order to shadow Ms. Livorse), Marcus Henry as treasurer, Sonya Campbell as secretary, and Kendra Schoepner.

The French programme also screened three films this year. In the fall 2025 semester, we screened the 2024 blockbuster hit *Le Comte de Monte Cristo*, which was introduced by Dr. Ruane and was screened in conjunction with the Institute for Faith and Freedom. Additionally, as part of Dr. Ruane's FREN 305 class (*Penser le Québec, Penser au Québec*), we screened *Une Histoire sur le goût de la langue* (2022), a documentary about the evolution of the French language and language rights in Quebec. Finally, as part of the Global Education Celebration Week, we screened the 2011 Cannes festival winner, *Des hommes et des dieux*.

The Count of Monte Cristo

Hosted by the
Department of
Modern Languages &
the Institute for
Faith and Freedom



Thursday
Sept. 25
6-9 pm
Crawford

The 2024 French
blockbuster adaptation,
subtitled in English.
Popcorn provided!





Dr. Jason Killam visits the iconic Avenida 9 de Julio and the Obelisk of Buenos Aires during his research trip to Argentina



Pastor Cristián accompanies Dr. Killam to Ezeiza International Airport following his research visit to Buenos Aires



Dr. Killam reconnects with Dale, his former mission organization leader, during a return visit to Edinburgh, Texas

Differential Object Marking

A Quantitative Linguistical Analysis of Differential Object Marking in the Spanish-speaking World

Dr. Jason Killam

I began teaching Spanish in 1996. Thirty years later, I finally have the opportunity to write about my first sabbatical. It did not go according to plan. Rather, in many ways it went better than I could have imagined. The focus of my study is a phenomenon called Differential Object Marking (DOM), and the details regarding the study will be presented in the early fall. Suffice to say that after months of research and testing, I received permission in October from our IRB committee to proceed with gathering data overseas.

Ultimately, I had three goals as I visited universities abroad: (1) Establish contacts for collecting research data, (2) learn about their methods for teaching language classes, and (3) learn more about their study abroad programs as they relate to our Office of Global Programs.

On November 10, I left for Spain and made my way to the University of Alcalá de Henares. There, I met with several faculty members, María Ángeles and Sonia, to learn about their language program called Alcalingua. After two days of meetings, touring the university, seeing where the “Premio Cervantes” is awarded and visiting the childhood home of

Cervantes, I left for the University of Salamanca.

I met administrators and faculty members including José Miguel, Vega, and Vicente. They helped tremendously with contacting others for my research project. Also, I should mention pastor Eliezer of Iglesia Calle Volta, and his wife, Hortencia. I was able to attend Bible studies and several Sunday services. They invited me to eat at their home several times. Being received into someone’s home through their Christian hospitality is life-giving. I pray that we can all do the same with the sojourners in our midst.

I arrived home on November 25, and departed four days later, this time with my wife, Caroline, for Buenos Aires. Having Caroline join me for a week was also life-giving. Rather than visiting the University of Buenos Aires alone, Caroline joined me while meeting with the International Relations director, Miguel and with the director of their language programs, Alejandra. We were able to take part in the very social experience of drinking yerba mate from the same straw with our hosts.

I spent time with a leading DOM researcher in Argentina, Pablo Zdrojewski, and a colleague of Miguel’s, Alejo, to discuss his ESL business. Finally, I was received graciously at Iglesia Mensaje en Acción by their pastor, Cristián. He was so kind to take me to the airport, and he continues to reach out to me via WhatsApp, blessing me with his encouragement.

I arrived home on December 16 and began making plans to visit my old stomping grounds in McAllen, TX, where I served as a missionary for about two-and-a-half years. I was able to meet with the “kids” I used to work with and spend time with my former mission organization leader, Dale.

Since returning, I have been analyzing data from Spain and Argentina and am getting ready to analyzing data from students at GCC. I look forward to completing statistical analyses this summer and submitting abstracts for presentations and journal articles. Thanks to everyone at GCC for making this sabbatical happen!

What Is Differential Object Marking?

Certain language structures may have prescriptive rules, but native speakers of any language tend to vary in terms of when they deem a structure to be more acceptable or not. Many times they cannot explain what it is exactly that causes them to accept one version over another version, or sometimes both versions. In Linguistics, we seek to analyze the underlying factors that influence use in each dialectal region. In the case of Differential Object Marking (DOM), the focus is on how particles (i.e. markers) are used variably (i.e. differentially) before direct objects ostensibly to denote that the noun is a direct object. In Spanish, this is known as the “personal ‘a’” in language learning textbooks. That said, there are multiple language families from around the world that use some form of DOM, and there is a push to understand the factors that drive its use from typological, pragmatic, sociolinguistic, and acquisition perspectives.

Bearing Witness

Translating Protestant Resistance and Studying
20th Century Narratives of Remembrance

Dr. Kelsey Madsen



Dr. Madsen at the
Bibliothèque nationale
de France

This spring and summer, I have been working on two projects as part of my sabbatical. The first is the translation of a French historian's anthology of sermons or speeches by Protestant pastors involved in forms of resistance during World War II. While I am using a computer-assisted

translation tool (the software OmegaT, for anyone interested), this is distinct from machine or AI translation. OmegaT lets me build a glossary as I come across key terms in the text, and it then prompts me to consider using the same English translation when I come across those terms again. It also will flag strings of words that I have previously translated elsewhere in the text—in this way, it assists with consistency over a long document. It has been important to read other historical texts about the time period in both French and English to ascertain that I am rendering the words accurately in my translation.

The second project is to update my doctoral dissertation to prepare it for publication, either as a book or a series of articles. The goal for this semester has been on updating and expanding the foundations of my work, and I will then use this material as the basis for publications over the next few years. The topic is literature by contemporary French authors that recounts historical events experienced by their parents (Lydie Salvayre retells her

parents' story as refugees from Franco's Spain, Patrick Modiano retells his father's experience as a Jew during the Occupation, and Zahia Rahmani retells her father's experience during and after the Algerian Civil War), and I look at these books as literary memorials, drawing comparisons with certain physical monuments in France today. In May, I traveled to France where I consulted libraries and archives, and I also photographed several memorial sites in Paris, near Perpignan (Rivesaltes and Argèles-sur-Mer), and in Biron. For example, in Paris, there is a tree-lined walkway dedicated to Dora Bruder, the subject of Modiano's book that bears her name as a title. Argèles-sur-Mer was the site of a refugee camp for Spanish Republicans; Salvayre's parents were among those interned there. Today, there is a memorial for those interned in the camp on the beach and a museum in town. In the tiny village of Biron, I also conducted oral history interviews with locals about their memories and impressions associated with their village's war memorial. These interviews will be used in my research, and copies were also deposited with the local Dordogne archives so that they are available to future researchers. I also had the opportunity to visit Amiens, the city connected to the World War II translation project students have been involved with in past years and that I hope to continue this coming year.



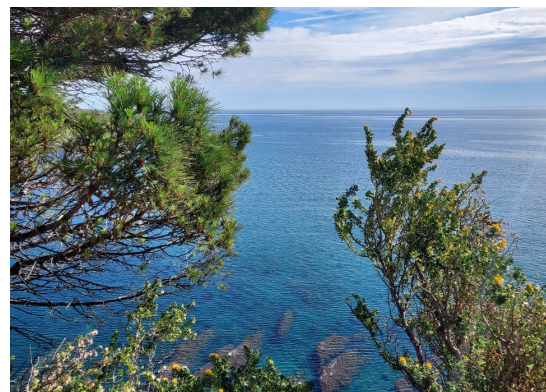
Mémorial du camp d'Argelès-sur-Mer



The Amiens Cathedral



Perpignan in Southern France



Views of the Mediterranean sea

Cover Story

Early Years

Greek and Latin were the earliest languages taught at GCC, under James McClelland, later Vice President of the College.

1880s

French and German were added to the curriculum.

1920s

Greek, Latin, French, and German were taught by only two professors. They referred to them as the "Romance Languages."

1925

French Club founded.

1927

Spanish Club founded.

Late 1920s

Spanish was added to the curriculum.



J. Harvey Cole, Instructor in German in 1965



Members of the Spanish Club in 1927, one of the department's earliest student-led language communities

Once Upon a



The French-Spanish Club in 1958



The Inter-American Spanish Society in 1980

Late 1950s & Early 1960s

Dr. J. Stanley Harker created departments and named department chairs. The department was then called the Foreign Languages Department. French and Spanish Clubs merged.

1961

The department became the Modern Languages Department, with French, Spanish, and German. A new language lab and majors club were also established.

1962

Dr. Jonathan Ladd was named chair of the department.

1968

There were 11 language faculty members.

1975

18 Modern Language seniors.

1980

The Inter-American Spanish Society was founded.

1996

John Moore helped grow international education and was very early on closely linked to the Modern Languages Department.

A Note from Dr. Cathy Trammell, Retired Professor of French

My husband and I are still living on our farm near Slippery Rock (enemy territory) and neither of us is involved with the fields we taught. We are continuing to try to reach out and help people in our lives, as we tried to do with our students.

The Modern Language Faculty (1975-2011, my years) worked and socialized together while forming personal ties with many of our delightful students. Our main goal was to teach students how to communicate and interact with those whose speech, behavior, and appearance are different from ours, both around the world and in the U.S.





Professors Robert H. Sisley and Harry B. Wells in 1961



FUN FACTS

- 'Señorita' Cynthia Forrester, who joined the College in 1967, set up and championed study abroad opportunities for students.
- Although German and Chinese are no longer part of the curriculum, both languages are still offered alongside French and Spanish for language tables
- Majors and minors in French and Spanish, as well as the French K-12 Education and Spanish K-12 Education majors, remain active.
- The images on these two pages were sourced from *The Ouija* (1912–1982) and *The Bridge* (1983–2010), the first and second series of yearbooks from Grove City College.

LANGUAGE

In honor of Grove City College's 150th anniversary, archivist Hilary Walczak and Dr. Kelsey Madsen helped us explore the rich history of the Modern Languages Department



Dr. Jonathan B. Ladd in 1962. Dr. Ladd served as professor of French and chairman of the Department of Modern Languages for 30 years

1990s-2000s

The Keystone Curriculum expanded language study requirements to at least two semesters.

Around 2007

Chinese was added to the curriculum

2011-2012

The department briefly offered Japanese in the early 2000s. The first Japanese minors graduated: one in 2011 and two in 2012.

2024

Introduction of the language proficiency certification program in French and Spanish, requiring at least six credits of 300-level language coursework.

2020

Language tables transitioned from dinner gatherings to lunch meetings. Chinese was discontinued after Dr. Shuhui Su's retirement.

2015

German was phased out after Dr. J. Harvey Cole's retirement.



Modern Languages faculty in 1958: Dr. Charles Newcomer, Dr. Harry Wells, Dr. Jonathan Ladd, Mr. Robert Sisler, Mr. Elmer Weitz



Dr. Anita L. Martin, Professor of Spanish in 1965

Haven't Seen Your Professor Mentioned Here?

Because of space limitations in both the timeline and this newsletter, we have not been able to recognize every faculty member who has shaped the experiences of Modern Languages alumni over the years.

If a professor made a lasting difference during your time at GCC, we would love to hear your story. Please email your memories, reflections, or favorite moments to Dr. Kelsey Madsen at madsenkb@gcc.edu with the subject line: **My GCC Faculty Story**.

Selected alumni stories may be featured in a future issue as we continue celebrating the department's history and legacy.

Spanish Education

Olivia Grimes

How do you seek to incorporate your study abroad experience into your teaching?

I seek to incorporate the cultural aspects that I learned about in Seville! I love telling students everything I learned about while studying abroad, showing them photos and taking virtual tours of the beautiful city, and sharing its history. Also, while studying abroad, I learned to be able to make mistakes and to keep moving on. This is essential to learning, and I seek to incorporate this in everything I teach.

Lastly, I seek to incorporate the love of learning as well as encourage my students to openly learn about different perspectives and cultures, just as I did through studying abroad. Just because something is different, that does not mean it is "weird!"

What is your most entertaining or interesting experience in teaching so far?

Being able to watch my students communicate with each other in Spanish without being afraid of making mistakes was an incredible experience. There were also several times where my students were mimicking my hand motions/mannerisms/initiations while speaking Spanish, which I found absolutely hilarious.

Lastly, on my last day of student teaching, my cooperating teacher set up a party day for me and my students, and she also had helped each class period to write a recommendation letter for me to use in future interviews. It was so incredibly sweet!

What did you expect versus what have you experienced as a student of Spanish and now as a student-teacher of Spanish?

Coming into college, I did not really know what to expect; overall, I generally expected to learn Spanish grammar more in-depth, but I experienced SO much more than this! Through being a student of Spanish, I have gotten to read and analyze so much fascinating and rich literature, debate and discuss countless topics, write essays on complex topics that I never would've imagined being able to write in my second language, and be able to connect with so many other students.

Furthermore, I received the opportunity to study abroad in Seville, Spain, which changed my life in innumerable ways. Lastly, as a student teacher, I have been able to utilize all of the Spanish skills I have learned through my time at GCC and be able to teach students about the beauty of language learning, which is an extremely rewarding experience.



Olivia Grimes

As a Spanish Education major who is passionate about language and culture, Olivia will be teaching Spanish at an elementary school in Austin, Texas.

Leah Morgan

When I came to Grove City College as a freshman, my family and I had just returned from several years living in Argentina. We had made lifelong friendships, begun learning a foreign language, and experienced a completely different cultural experience than what we had grown up with in the U.S. When I came to college after my time in South America, I knew that I didn't want to stop learning about the language and culture that had been shaping me for the last few years.

I added Spanish as a major my freshman year, and it has been one of the best decisions I could have made. My goal in taking this major was to improve my Spanish skills and keep the Spanish culture close to me. Both goals have been achieved over my four years in the program. My Spanish has improved greatly, and I've even had the opportunity to travel to Bolivia for a summer course.

The Modern Languages department has truly embodied one of the best cultural elements that I learned from Argentina: the power of family. Each professor has taken time to have personal and academic conversations with me, encouraged me in my extracurricular endeavors, and relentlessly aided me in practicing the Spanish language. The Spanish major has been an incredible blessing to me, and I highly encourage any students interested in learning another language to look into this incredible department!



Marcus Henry

My decision to start studying French came very naturally: in middle school, every student was required to choose between one of three languages. My choice was for the one that I was most likely to visit in years to come, but I never really expected to make much of it. Gradually, however, I was hooked.

My studies continued and I explored more and more of not only the intricacies of language but rather the French and Francophone culture itself, and how that was related to language. Captivated, I progressed through high school and quickly decided not only to add a French major but also that, just like my middle school dream, I would one day live in France.

The Modern Languages Department has been instrumental in allowing me to attain these goals. Not only has my mastery of the French language grown exponentially, but my knowledge of Francophone culture has soared. Through French courses, I've been able to study cinema, theatre, literature, composition, and more. These bases of knowledge serve me elsewhere as well, allowing me to produce art and exercise my creativity in countless ways outside of school. Thanks to French, a major I never intended to pursue, my life and my vision of the world have been fundamentally changed.



Kelsey Patton

Modern Languages Alumni,
Class of 2017



Kelsey Patton joins colleagues at an international admissions college fair in Costa Rica in 2025



Patton stands with her team at the Leadership Center, where she served in 2024



Patton and her host family in Aix-en-Provence, France, in 2015

What sort of work have you done since graduating? How have you used your language skills?

I graduated from Grove City College in 2017 with a B.A. in Communication Studies and a minor in French. Since graduating, I've used my language skills in all kinds of areas including customer relationship management, international education, refugee services and digital marketing. I currently work at Purdue University as Assistant Director of Admissions using my French.

What was your favorite course at Grove City College?

One of my favorite courses I took at Grove City College was Cultural Anthropology with Dr. Ayers. It was an engaging and memorable class that shifted my perspective on people and cultures and set the stage for my language studies. As I went abroad, reflecting back on his class helped me fully appreciate the history and way of life of the people around me.

What made you choose to study French?

Languages help us connect and empathize with others. I saw language learning as a tool that could help me reach out and love my neighbor. Through my experiences abroad, I've learned to listen well and seek to understand the people I interact with by staying humble and curious. Language learning has led me to meet the most interesting people and given me the ability to hear their stories.

Is there any advice you would give current or future language students?

From my time as a student, I would say to take advantage of informational interviews to learn more about possible career paths and the many ways language can be used in your future. I would also recommend reaching out to Career Services to obtain guidance on ways you can continue to explore your passions. Finally, in terms of language learning, take advantage of resources such as language coaches on websites like LinguaMeeting to immerse yourself in the language.



Following her research in Madrid, Roper extended her time abroad to work as an au pair in Paris, pictured here with Gabriel during a summer of continued French immersion in 2019



Roper on campus with her twin sister (center) and classmate Alivia Cook (now Barnard) during their undergraduate studies



Roper celebrates her delayed 2021 graduation alongside Dr. Madsen, whose mentorship in French studies shaped her academic journey



During the summer of 2019, Roper conducts grant-funded archival research on Spain's Golden Age at the Royal Palace of Madrid while assisting former Spanish professor Dr. Forteza

Julia Roper

Modern Languages Alumni,
Class of 2020

What sort of work have you done since graduating? How have you used your language skills?

Since graduating in 2020, I've done a mix of interpreting, teaching, and music-related work. I've been an au pair in Luxembourg with a French family, a language assistant in Spain, and I've done Spanish interpreting for schools, medical encounters, and even some Border Patrol interviews. Now I'm a full-time private piano teacher with about 40–45 students, and I still use Spanish through interpreting, tutoring, and as I work toward medical interpreting certification.

What was your favorite course at Grove City College?

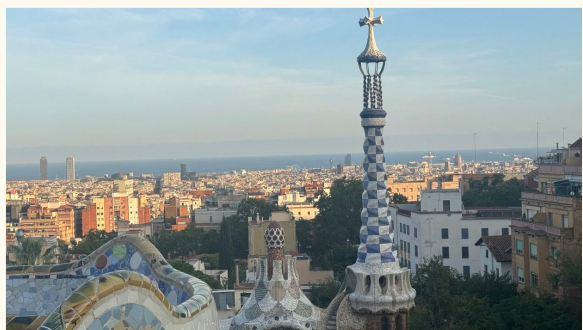
French Phonetics with Dr. Harmon was one of my favorite courses because it was the first time I felt I could really speak and understand French well. It was challenging but incredibly practical, and the effort I put in translated directly into real-world fluency. Spanish Phonetics with Dr. Forteza was also a highlight, especially since I was already very comfortable in Spanish by then.

What made you choose to study Spanish?

I chose to study languages, including Spanish, because they were the subjects where I truly excelled, compared to feeling more average in other areas. At first, it was about the challenge and satisfaction of being good at something difficult, but living abroad turned it into a real passion for the people and cultures behind the language and the connections it allows.

Is there any advice you would give current or future language students?

Focus on truly learning your language instead of letting tools do all the work for you, because college is the best time to push for real fluency. If you're serious, go abroad or find immersive experiences, even if it means giving up a semester or summer, because apps and videos can't replace living in the language. And don't worry if your path doesn't look perfectly linear; there are many meaningful ways to use your language skills beyond the "classic" careers.



Natalie Gilkinson

Class of 2027, Entrepreneurship Major



I spent last semester in Barcelona, Spain, where I took business and Spanish classes. I chose Spain specifically for the opportunity of Spanish language and culture immersion. I had taken Spanish in high school and college, both of which were essential in preparing me for using it in Barcelona.

Obviously, I had a lot of local lingo and slang to learn, but I know that my time in Spanish class learning the basics of the language were important. I got a lot of great feedback about my pronunciation from Spanish people, which was thanks to the phonetics class I took with Dr. Killam at Grove City. Additionally, the conversational practice that we consistently got in my Spanish classes helped me approach real-world Spanish with confidence. I came back from Spain understanding a lot more about the language, but most importantly, with the confidence and desire to continue practicing, even knowing I might mess up.

One of my favorite parts about living in Barcelona was getting to learn about and

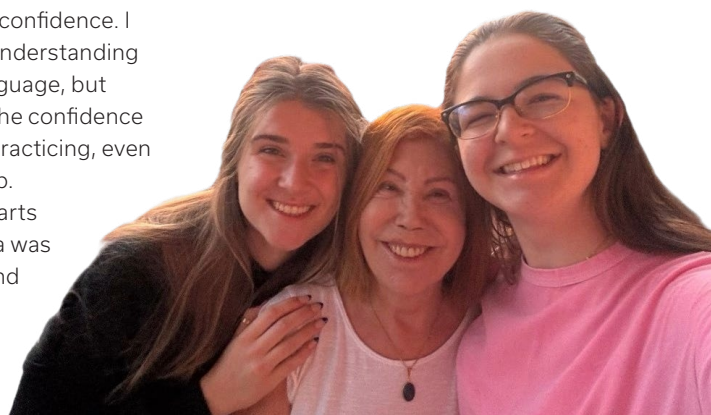
experience the Catalan culture, which is very distinct from the rest of the country. I really enjoyed the region's food. I took a cooking class where I learned that a Catalan meal consists of food from the *mar i muntanya*, which is Catalan for "sea and mountain." The Catalan region is on the east coast of Spain, but also sits

in the Pyrenees mountain ranges, which played a significant role in the culinary culture of the region.

For example, a traditional meal might pair shrimp (from the sea - *mar*) with a meat like pork (from the

mountain - *montanya*). I thought this was really interesting - and it was only one of many interesting and unique things about the Catalan culture!

"I came back from Spain understanding a lot more about the language, but most importantly, with the confidence and desire to continue practicing, even knowing I might mess up."





Sonya Campbell

Class of 2026, Social Work Major

"With my background in French, I was able to use it to communicate with clients and co-workers from the DRC, Burundi, and Rwanda!"

Hi, my name is Sonya Campbell. I'm a senior Social Work major and French minor, and I studied abroad last semester in Uganda! I was completing my 400-hour social work field placement at an agency called Refugee Law Project in the capital city of Kampala.

I learned a lot about so many different cultures and I had co-workers and clients from all over Africa! Uganda itself is home to over 50 indigenous languages, not to mention the languages spoken by their respective refugees and immigrants, so needless to say on any given day I heard several different languages being spoken!

With my background in French, I was able to use it to communicate with

clients and co-workers from the DRC, Burundi, and Rwanda! They were always very surprised to hear an American speak French. It was interesting to learn about how the French they speak is influenced by Swahili, Kirundi, Kinyarwanda, etc. I also devoted time to learning Arabic when I was there due to the majority of clients being from Sudan.

Working with such diverse populations taught me the importance of language-learning in being pivotal to forming relationships and gaining rapport. Even a small amount of any language goes a long way, and in my case was met with exponentially more friendship and community!

La biblioteca

Mariah Katzin

This section features original student writing from both Spanish and French courses. The Spanish short stories were composed for Dr. April Studeny's SPAN 306 Composition and Grammar course in fall 2025, while the French essays were written for Dr. Aileen Ruane's FREN 307 Composition and Style course in spring 2026.

Se encuentra en el centro de la ciudad, rodeada del tráfico y de la gente que pasa a toda prisa por las calles estrechas. Alrededor de las paredes del edificio, el aire vibra con el rugido ensordecedor de los motores, pero en cuanto se entra, el ruido se desvanece y el silencio desciende. Es la madrugada, y la biblioteca está casi vacía.

En la parte delantera del edificio, detrás de la recepción, hay una bibliotecaria baja y chiquitita cuyo cuerpo regordete está envuelto en una manta de cuadros. Está leyendo, y sus anteojos captan las rayas del sol que brillan por las ventanas y fluyen hacia el suelo como una cascada de colores deslumbrantes. La luz se extiende a través del edificio, disipando las sombras e iluminando todo, hasta las telarañas delicadas que se aferran a los rincones de las estanterías y las huellas dactilares en los lomos y las portadas de cada libro. Lo único que permanece oscuro es la sala de ordenadores—las computadoras están apagadas, y sus pantallas negras se miran fijamente como caras vacías, desprovistas de cualquier signo de vida.

Al fondo del edificio hay un reloj alto e imponente cuyo péndulo se mueve rítmicamente. Sus manecillas indican que ya son las once y la gente empieza a llegar. Una multitud de niños se junta alrededor de la recepción, pidiéndole ayuda a la bibliotecaria que suspira profundamente y pone a un lado su libro para ayudarles. A la derecha de la recepción hay una puerta de madera detrás de la cual se escucha el murmullo suave de conversación y las risillas reprimidas de los niños. Ocultado en un rincón aislado, un hombre viejo está dormido

en un sillón de cuero. Su boca está abierta, y de vez en cuando, se le sale un ronquido áspero. Los que pasan por el sillón ojeando las estanterías ni siquiera se fijan en él, porque viene aquí cada día para leer una revista y echarse una siesta. Tal vez no tenga casa, o tal vez simplemente quiera escaparse de la algarabía de la ciudad y disfrutar del ambiente apacible.

Las horas pasan velozmente y cuando el reloj da las cinco, la biblioteca se vuelve a calmar. Las sombras van extendiéndose a través del suelo como dedos largos y negros mientras el olor somnoliento del atardecer va a la deriva por las ventanas abiertas. Los niños se van por la puerta principal con libros metidos bajo los brazos. Sus padres los siguen, ansiosos por volver a casa. Y detrás de la recepción, la bibliotecaria recoge su libro y vuelve a leerlo, su cara suavizada por una sonrisa enorme.



Las Grandes Dunas de Arena

Asher Alley

Era el verano de 2025 y yo trabajaba en un centro de convenciones en la región central de Colorado. Mientras mi día libre final se acercaba, pensé en qué podría hacer con este tiempo valioso. Así era la situación cuando nos juntamos mis amigos y yo para discutir la posibilidad de ir a acampar al parque nacional y reserva Grandes Dunas de Arena, dos horas y media hacia el sur del lugar donde trabajábamos.

Creo que ahora sería un buen momento para introducir los personajes de este cuento. Mi compañero de cuarto, Jaxon, era nuestro conductor. Pedro y Davi eran de São Paulo, Brasil, y nunca habían acampado antes. Finalmente, Gavin era el último miembro de nuestro grupo cómico.

Después de mucho tiempo estresante de recoger equipo, como tiendas de campaña y sacos de dormir, la noche de acción llegó. A las ocho de la tarde, después de terminar nuestro trabajo, cenar y prepararnos, nos apiñamos en el sedán de un amigo y salimos hacia las dunas. Nos acercamos a nuestra destino mientras el sol se ponía al oeste. Al llegar a las Grandes Dunas, todo ya estaba oculto, pero la aventura solo había empezado.

Durante las siguientes dos horas, marchamos hacia arriba por los interminables médanos sin ninguna luz salvo nuestras linternas de cabeza, enterrados hasta los tobillos en arena. Entretanto, el viento y la arena nunca paraban de golpearnos agresivamente y llenar nuestros bocas, ojos y narices. Todo fue bien hasta que Gavin y yo decidimos girar a la izquierda para subir la cresta de los médanos más aprisa. Repentinamente, nos encontramos en medio de una faz escarpada de un médano grandísimo. Pero después de una lucha prolongada para escalar el médano, llegamos a nuestro destino. Sacamos las tiendas de campaña para montar el campamento y descubrimos que una de las carpas se había roto, la cual tuvimos que fijar apresuradamente. Entonces, después de todo, caímos al suelo, agotados, para ver las estrellas esparcidas por el cielo claro.

Esa noche, yo dormí terriblemente antes de despertarme muy temprano, a las seis y media, para mirar el amanecer con mis amigos. Escalamos el médano que sobrepasaba nuestro campamento, el cual era el segundo más alto de Norteamérica. Hacía mucho frío esa mañana y casi me dormí otra vez en la cima

del médano donde esperábamos el sol. Pero cuando el sol llegó, fue más bello que todo. El amanecer teñió todo el mundo de tonos brillantes de naranja, reflejándose en la arena difundida en el aire. Entonces, aunque estábamos muy cansados, recogimos todas nuestras cosas y nos aventuramos más lejos por los médanos, donde disfrutamos durante las siguientes horas. Pero, eventualmente, tuvimos que salir de las dunas y empezamos a marchar de vuelta a nuestro carro.

Mientras regresábamos, lento pero seguro, el sol calentaba el mundo a nuestro alrededor. Al llegar a la cresta que había ocultado la entrada de las dunas, vimos a muchas personas que hacían surf en los médanos que habían estado vacíos la noche anterior. Pero lo que era más importante, pudimos ver a lo lejos nuestra salida a la que caminaríamos, cansados y aliviados



Le massacre de Strasbourg

Une conséquence de la peur

Kendra Schoeppner

Tout le monde connaît l'histoire de la peste noire, généralement parce que la plupart des enfants l'apprennent à l'école. Cependant, un événement que beaucoup de gens ne connaissent pas s'est passé pendant la peste noire : le massacre des Juifs à Strasbourg. La peste noire est venue de l'Europe en 1347 et a continué jusqu'à 1351. Cette grande maladie a tué beaucoup de gens, environ cinquante pour cent de la population de l'Europe. Pendant le Moyen Âge, les gens avaient tellement peur parce qu'ils ne savaient pas s'ils vivront ou mourront. La peur pouvait mener aux événements horribles, ce qui a été le cas pour le Strasbourg.

Comme le reste d'Europe, la peste noire a ravagé les citoyens de Strasbourg. Les gens ont remarqué que la peste n'a pas touché les Juifs de la même manière qu'elle a touché le reste de la ville. Diane Zahler remarque dans *The Black Death* que les Juives étaient plus en sécurité que le reste de la ville à cause d'utilisation moins les puits dans la ville. Une autre raison pour leur manque de maladie, selon Berel Wein Astor dans « *The Black Death* », est que les Juives tenaient aussi la coutume de se laver les mains avant de manger ou se laver pour le sabbat.

Malheureusement, les autres citoyens de Strasbourg pensaient que les Juifs ont conçu la peste en empoisonnant les puits, les ruisseaux, et la nourriture. Selon Samuel Kline Cohn dans « *The Black Death and the Burning of the Jews* », la noblesse a réagi à propager des rumeurs que les Juifs avaient conspiré contre les citoyens en inventant la peste. Le gouvernement composé des guildes n'a pas cru les rumeurs mais un autre groupe qui a inclus l'évêque de Strasbourg, Berthold II von Bucheck, tous les seigneurs féodaux d'Alsace, et les représentants aristocratiques de trois villes impériales a voulu juger les Juives et les a brûlés au bûcher pour arrêter la peste. La première partie du gouvernement n'a jamais interrogé les Juifs. Puisque la noblesse propageait des rumeurs, la situation s'est intensifiée, et le groupe de Berthold II von Bucheck a pris d'action. Le 14 février 1349, avec l'aide de la militaire de la noblesse alsacienne, le groupe, mené par Berthold II von Bucheck, a rassemblé tous les Juifs, ils les ont massacrés.

Avant de découvrir cet événement, j'étais étonnée que ce dernier n'était pas plus notoire. Néanmoins, quand j'ai lu des informations sur cet événement pour la première fois, je n'étais pas étonné qu'il se passe. Les événements peu connus et plus isolés sont communs pendant les époques du stress et de la peur. C'est facile pour les gens de garder leur réputation quand la vie est normale et quand ils sont en sécurité parce qu'on peut être intentionnel en ce qui concerne des mots et des actions.

Cependant, s'il y a des événements extrêmes, comme une peste, on voit ce que les gens pensent vraiment. Particulièrement, les préjugés que tiennent les gens ainsi que leurs instincts. Ils ne se concernent plus à préserver ni la dignité ni la réputation—ils se sont occupés de la survie. Les citoyens avaient peur à cause de la peste parce qu'ils ne comprenaient pas pourquoi cette catastrophe s'est passée. Ils ont réagi comme ceci, particulièrement parce qu'ils ne gardent pas le contrôle véritable de la situation. Dans ces situations, quand on a peur et on n'a pas de contrôle de la situation, on imagine qu'il est nécessaire de faire de quelque chose ou quelqu'un le bouc émissaire. Quand on se sent incapable de rectifier une difficulté, on réagit imprudemment pour maintenir ou reprendre un sentiment du contrôle.

Je ne formule pas de ceci pour trouver des excuses, mais plutôt pour donner un exemple des actions que les gens sont capables de faire quand ils craignent l'Autre et la mort. C'est facile de voir rétrospectivement et voir les erreurs que les gens ont fait. La microbiologie se saisit de nos jours et donc la mort de millions de gens s'explique, mais pour les gens au cours du XIVe siècle, cet événement semblait incompréhensible. Ils ne connaissaient pas la science derrière la peste que nous connaissons de nos jours. Comme un scientifique qui connaît bien les raisons derrière cette peste, je sais qu'une peste n'est pas une punition religieuse ou l'empoisonnement des puits, et ce fait-là soulage le cœur. On peut approcher ces types d'événements avec la logique et ne renonce pas les instincts émotionnels. La peur sera toujours un aspect de la vie, mais en comprenant pourquoi ces événements se passent, on peut les approcher avec une meilleure perspicacité de la situation. Cependant, même si on rassemble plus de connaissance que les gens au Moyen Âge, il y aura toujours les événements et les saisons de la vie qu'on ne perçoit pas. Malgré ceci, on ne doit pas toujours réagir pour reprendre le contrôle, mais on se reconforte que le Dieu maintienne le contrôle. On ne possède pas la charge d'essayer de comprendre tout, mais on se rassure que le Dieu perçoit pourquoi ces événements se passent.



La Bastille, un symbole du basculement

Adam Budzik

L'histoire du monde se remplissait de beaucoup de révolutions, dont certaines étaient tranquilles et dont certaines violentes. La Révolution française, par exemple, a eu plus d'actions violentes. La vie en France avant la Prise de la Bastille s'était marquée avec des épreuves qui étaient courantes pendant ce temps : la famine, la pauvreté, et plus. Pendant toute la Révolution, les gens du Tiers État ont voulu plus de droits et plus d'égalité avec la noblesse et le clergé. Le quatorze juillet 1789, tous les sentiments se sont unis par La Prise de la Bastille. La Bastille était une prison connue à Paris. Elle fonctionnait comme une forteresse, prison, arsenal, et plus pour le gouvernement des peuples. Les émeutes se sont répandues comme une traînée de poudre. En conséquence, les émeutiers ont vu la Bastille comme un symbole de l'ennemi. Donc, ils ont pris une décision ; ils avaient besoin d'occuper cette forteresse royale.

Le matin du quatorze juillet 1789, les émeutiers ont exécuté leur plan. Pendant que le gouverneur et les gardes occupaient la Bastille, le peuple a encerclé le bâtiment. Le plan des émeutiers a commencé avec l'attaque sur les portes de la Bastille. À l'extérieur, le bruit des coups de feu a transpercé la foule. À l'intérieur, il y avait un gouverneur qui s'appelait Bernard-René de Launay. Il a essayé de garder la paix entre les deux groupes, mais la réponse des émeutiers n'était pas agréable. Par conséquent, ils l'ont tué. De plus, ils ont traîné son corps à travers les rues de la ville. Après que les émeutiers ont pris la Bastille, ils ont libéré tous les prisonniers dans la forteresse, et ils se sont munis des armes de la Bastille. À la fin, ils ont gagné une grande victoire pour le peuple contre le clergé et la noblesse.

Par conséquent, les actions à la Bastille ont provoqué un nouveau sentiment de courage dans le peuple de la Révolution. Enfin, ils ont réussi leur plan. Les historiens qui ont étudié cet événement décrivent la Prise de la Bastille comme 'un symbole du basculement' de la Révolution française. C'est vrai pour une raison significative : le peuple français a récupéré

le pouvoir d'autres états, et aussi, a gagné la confiance dans l'avenir. Les actions autour de la Bastille ont aussi représenté les changements pour lesquels ont lutté pendant la Révolution.

Si vous imaginez la vue sur ce symbole, elle serait telle que l'Invasion en Normandie ou d'autres événements similaires qui ont signifié un grand changement dans l'histoire du monde.

L'Invasion en Normandie a inspiré les citoyens, juste comme la Prise de la Bastille pour les émeutiers. La raison derrière ces événements était les Lumières. Celles idées ont inspiré les citoyens de faire une différence au gouvernement.

Aussi, d'autres nations ont pris d'inspiration de la victoire de la Prise de la Bastille. Par exemple, beaucoup de nations en Amérique du Sud ont révolté contre leurs gouvernements après la Révolution française. Précisément, la colonie, qui s'appelle Haïti, a pris l'inspiration et a révolté, en fait, contre le gouvernement français. La Prise de la Bastille n'a pas seulement changé le gouvernement en France, mais elle a aussi influencé d'autres pays autour du monde.

Enfin, je partage l'opinion d'historiens sur ce sujet. J'adore l'histoire française, donc je me suis amusé avec mes études sur la Prise de la Bastille. Cet événement n'avait pas seulement les conséquences importantes pour la France, mais aussi pour d'autres pays.

Le conflit entre les deux groupes—le Tiers État, et la noblesse et le clergé—était un produit de son temps. Les Lumières ont commencé autour du monde pendant les années qui précèdent et suivent cet événement. La philosophie de la nouvelle vie a créé un sentiment de rébellion qu'incarnait le Tiers État, qui l'a déployée contre la tyrannie. Encore une fois, je partage l'opinion des historiens que les Lumières ont jouées un grand rôle dans cette histoire. Elles étaient un catalyseur pour le changement en France. Je comprends le sentiment du Tiers État avant et après la Prise de la Bastille. Avant cette période, les gens étaient remplis de peur, mais après, ils avaient la défiance forte contre l'autocratie. À mon avis, la Prise de la Bastille gagne définitivement le titre de l'acte le plus important dans le déclenchement de la Révolution française.



Alpha Mu Gamma Dessert Festival

Dr. Carruth, Advisor

On December 3, 2025, the world language honor society Alpha Mu Gamma hosted its annual International Dessert Festival from 3-6 pm in the Student Union's "Great Room." Amidst Christmas decorations, student and faculty gathered around tables to converse and enjoy desserts from around the globe—such as, Lebkuchen (German Christmas cookies), Conchas (Mexican sweet bread with sugar topping), Blueberry Cheesecake (a dish from Ancient Greece fed to athletes during the Olympic Games), Belgian cookies, and Tarte au Sucre (Sugar pie from Quebec, Canada; made with maple syrup).

A Note from an Honorary Member of the Department



**Timothy J. Sweet, '85 Chair,
Associate Professor of
Entrepreneurship**

I have been privileged over the last four years to have my office located in the Modern Languages suite at Grove City College. As a professor in the entrepreneurship department, I am a bit of an odd duck among all these great linguists. From the moment I joined them in their suite they welcomed me into their wonderful multilingual community.

Along the way we have built lasting friendships and professional relationships, occasionally connecting around some academic projects. Every day I see how our professors of Spanish and French interact with our students. They are brilliant, dedicated, kind, and enthusiastic, going to great lengths to care for our students both academically and personally. As genuine people of faith, they create a wonderful redemptive environment in which students not only learn about language and culture, but also how to create meaningful relationships and measurable impact in our multilingual world.

Though my office is moving to another floor this summer, this team will always have a special place in my heart. And, of course, I will be back to visit.

Supporting Our Students

Study abroad remains one of the most transformative parts of language learning—and donor support helps make it possible. Thanks to the generosity of our alumni and friends, the department continues to offer small awards that help offset the cost of international study.

This spring, **Sophia Cappawana '26** received support for her 2026 study abroad experience in Seville, Spain.

If you are interested in supporting scholarship and study abroad funds for language students, consider designating the department in a donation to the College at **giving.gcc.edu**.

Please continue to keep our students—both on campus and abroad—in your prayers. If you have any questions, comments, or updates to share, please contact **Dr. Madsen** at **madsenk@gcc.edu**. As we celebrate Grove City College's 150th anniversary, thank you for investing in the next generation of Modern Languages students.



*Sophia at the gardens of the
Real Alcázar in Seville, Spain*