

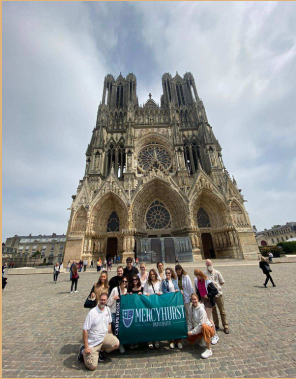
# World Languages and Cultures

## Fall 2023

### Mercyhurst Abroad

Everyone was traveling this summer! Dr. Boudreau and Professor Pete Zohos led a group of 11 students on a food and wine tour of France this May. They travelled from Nice to Paris (see photo below on left). They ate baguettes and cheese, had cooking lessons, toured vineyards, and reveled in the beauty of France (far left, below).

Kaylee Moffitt (Spanish '25, second photo below) ) studied abroad in Alicante, Spain with Spanish Studies Abroad, for the summer. Two students of Chinese, freshman Katie Wigton (third photo below) and Sophia Smietna, traveled to Taiwan this summer. Ryan Lieser (Russian '23) returned from studying abroad for the spring semester in Tblisi, Georgia. Sabrina Pizarrelli (Spanish '23) traveled to Cartagena, Colombia, to meet her birth mother. Sabrina was adopted to the US as an infant and decided to connect to her biological family. She made the trip accompanied by her mother and siblings, and had an emotional reunion (below, right) where she translated between the two families and reestablished an important relationship.



### A new name, same great programs

Over the summer, our department merged with the Department of Anthropology to create the Department of Anthropology and World Languages. This will allow us to "cross pollinate" and leverage all the skills and resources of both sets of faculty, staff, classes, and experiences to support all our students. Dr. Edwards will be the chair, so you can continue to reach out to her with any needs or questions. We encourage our language students to investigate the very cool Anthropology course offerings; Language and Culture or World Geography would be useful and interesting options.

Our first act as a joint department was to co-sponsor, along with the Multicultural Student Services, a drum circle on August 23. Students and staff learned the basics of African drumming from Erie musician Lynn Johnson. Be on the lookout for more events as we plan the academic year!

### Welcome, Fulbrights!



We are joined this year by Fulbrights Sarah Mohamed and Nelia Ermolenko! Sarah (left, in photo) is from Egypt and will be teaching Arabic classes. She introduced herself: " I'm from Alexandria, Egypt. I graduated from the English Department at Alexandria University with a bachelor's degree in English Literature and Language. I'm currently pursuing my MA degree in English Literature. Back home, I am an English teacher for middle-school students. I love teaching, which is why being an FLTA at Mercyhurst has been great for me. When I'm not working, I enjoy listening to music and reading literature, especially poetry. I also love films and filmmaking, which is why my favorite activity is being a part of a writing group back home founded by one of my literature professors where we write and produce independent movies together".

Nelia (on right in photo) will be teaching Russian classes and helping the Russian Club activities. Nelia says " I come from Rostov-on-Don, which is the center of Southern Russia. I got my bachelor's degree in education in 2020 and master's in Linguistics in 2022. I have been working as a teacher for more than 5 years, but I never stop learning how to teach. I'm happy that I do what I love. When I don't work, I spend time with my friends. I like playing board games, doing yoga and roller skating. In winter I do skating and snowboarding. I like learning new things about psychology and psycholinguistic, but my greatest passion is travelling and exploring new areas and cultures".

# Alumni Update: Brooke Lewis (Spanish '13)

Hola! I am a 2013 graduate of the Department of World Languages where I majored in Spanish and minored in Mandarin. Despite my many declarations that I would never be a teacher, I have been teaching Spanish for the last seven years and love it! I began as a substitute teacher after graduating and was quickly hired as a long-term Spanish substitute. From there, I went on to acquire a master's degree in Education and recently received my PA level II teaching certification. I began my teaching career in rural northwestern PA, not far from Mercyhurst, however, several years ago I moved to Philadelphia, PA.

I recently began teaching at Esperanza Academy Charter School. Esperanza began as a charter school in 2000 with only a high school. Today, they have 1,600 students in K-12, a cyber charter school, and Esperanza College. Esperanza's mission statement is "Esperanza Academy Public Charter School is dedicated to providing a quality education that prepares critically thinking, socially capable, spiritually sensitive and culturally aware young adults who can use English, Spanish, and technology as tools for success in the 21st century." (<https://www.esperanzaacademycs.org/>) Esperanza Inc., which founded the school, was created to serve and support Hispanic families in the Philadelphia region, and they are doing just that. The student body is 98.2% Hispanic, according to their website. They offer a wide variety of majors to students, numerous AP and Honors classes, and they have created a school community unlike any I have experienced.



I have previously taught at schools where Spanish was an elective course or only offered for two years because that is what colleges recommend. At Esperanza, however, nearly all the students and families they serve are bilingual or have at least some Spanish experience or exposure. It is a school where they value being bilingual, bicultural, and educated. You walk down the halls and hear a beautifully chaotic, raucous, and joyful mixture of Spanish, English, and Spanglish being spoken by students, faculty, and staff. At Esperanza, I am one of six Spanish teachers in the high school alone. In addition, we have a fully staffed department serving English language learners, who do not speak English as a native language or have not had formal education in English. In the Spanish department, we serve students on two tracks: native speakers and non-native speakers, although even students in the non-native track typically have significant exposure to the language. The school offers several honors and AP courses in Spanish as well.

In addition to the academic successes of Esperanza, I have never worked with students who were so kind, considerate, and thoughtful. I never go through a day where a student doesn't ask me how I am doing, how my weekend was, how my family is, or some other thoughtful inquiry. I don't mean that they aren't still teenagers, who are bound to drive you crazy from time to time, but there is something special about them. While, of course, their families deserve most of the credit, the faculty, staff, and administration must also be recognized for their role. Esperanza has created an environment where students can feel proud, supported, and capable in a way that has taught them to be internally motivated to do well academically and behave in a manner they can be proud of. This internal drive is rare to encounter in students and even adults.

I am thoroughly enjoying teaching at Esperanza and I appreciate how it has enhanced my own teaching and understanding of the culture of Hispanic people in the US.

## Language Scholarships Available!

Karen Christensen Williams, Ph.D., was a beloved member of the Department of World Languages and Cultures for 23 years. Dr. Williams passed away in 2019. A scholarship, established by her family in her name, seeks to support students who, like her, have a passion for studying language and culture with a goal of making the world a better place. The \$1,000 scholarship is awarded to a junior Spanish education major, Spanish major, or Spanish minor (preference in that order) who demonstrates academic excellence and commitment to this field. Students may apply for the Karen C. Williams scholarship from now until November 1 by sending a cover letter introducing yourself and explaining your language goals, a resume, and an unofficial transcript to Dr. Alice Edwards at [aedwards@mercyhurst.edu](mailto:aedwards@mercyhurst.edu). The \$1,000 scholarship will be disbursed in to the student in two parts, \$500 disbursed in the fall 2023 semester and \$500 in the spring 2024 semester. For more information, please contact Dr. Edwards.

The Vivetta G. Petronio Scholarship Fund was created at The Pittsburgh Foundation by Gail Gerono in honor of honor of Vivetta G. Petronio, a French professor at Mercyhurst University who had a positive impact on Gail's college experience and her life. In honor of Professor Petronio, this fund will provide scholarships of up to \$4000 for full-time students enrolled at Mercyhurst University who are studying abroad in their sophomore, junior or senior year. Deadline for applications is Feb. 28, 2024. Interested students should contact Dr. Douglas Boudreau for further information.

Wanderlust (n.): a strong desire for or impulse to travel and see the world

## Language in Motion offers paid opportunities for interested students

If you love languages, enjoy talking to children, and need a little extra cash, Language in Motion has a proposal for you! We are looking for students to take language and cultural activities to K-2 grade students at a rural Erie County school, as part of the MELIA program sponsored by our Education department. Language in Motion has been funded by the MELIA grant to pay our students to visit this after-school program once each month, sharing art and games for about an hour and a half. Students will be fully supported by Dr Edwards in the planning and implementation of this fun, interactive program that will show children a little bit of the larger world. If you'd like to participate as student LIM leader, see Dr Edwards in Preston 206 by the end of September. Other students who would like to participate on a "drop in " basis as volunteers are also very welcome!



Language in Motion is a national program that began at Juniata College. Mercyhurst has been a partner for the past five years.

## Important Dates!

Monday September 25, 7 p.m. Mercy Heritage Hall . "Peacemaking on the Borders" an evening with Polish peacemaker, Gaia Magdalena Luczak, who works on the border of Poland and Belarus aiding refugees.

October 3, 7 p.m. Mercy Heritage Hall. "Exploring Latinx Identity: A conversation". In conjunction with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month.

October 5, 4:30 - look out for information about our Fall student gathering!

October 26, 4:00 p.m. "Old Songs, New Opportunities," Ethnomusicologist Kelly Armor will present with several of her collaborators, showcasing her program that leverages traditional songs and games as a tool for refugee women entering the work force. This event is part of our "I Stand with Immigrants" Campus Day of Action and is sponsored by a Diversity Grant from the VP of Mission (see photo, left).



## News...

Dr. Katie Duda, assistant professor of Russian, published a book chapter to a volume edited by Olga M. Cooke and published by Academic Studies Press "A Mind Purified by Suffering": Eugenia Ginzburg's "Whirlwind Memoirs". Congratulations!

Cole Lowe (Spanish Ed '18) graduated with his Masters degree in Spanish from Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT this August.

Look out for a new course on the spring schedule "Spanish for Health and Social Services" will be offered for any interested student who has completed SPAN 203 or equivalent.

We were saddened to see the devastation from the recent earthquakes in Morocco and the floods in Libya. We have been so fortunate to have Fulbrights from these countries come to Mercyhurst and share their beautiful cultures with us. We are thinking of Laila, Hicham, Elhoucine, Hayat, Mohammed, Fatiha, Samira, Youssef and Alya. Anyone wishing to make a donation to the relief efforts can do so through Global Giving at <https://www.globalgiving.org> or through UNICEF at [www.unicefusa.org](http://www.unicefusa.org).



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