

# Department of World Languages and Cultures

## Spring 2023

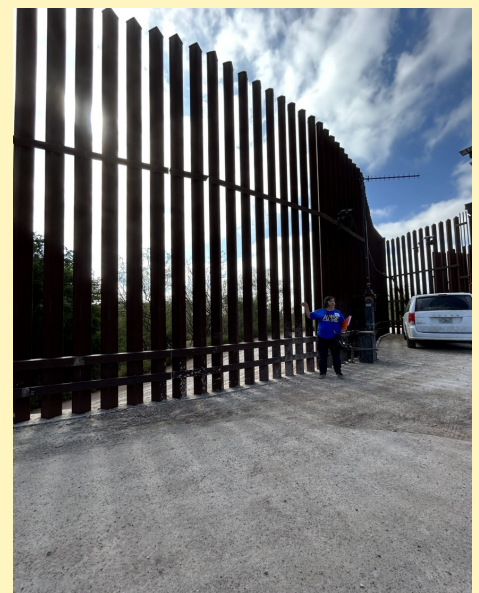
### ON THE MOVE

#### MERCYHURST STUDIES THE BORDER

This January, a group of Mercyhurst students - including three Spanish students and one Russian student - took a winter break trip to the US-Mexico border to study conditions there. Led by Dr. Greg Baker, Vice President for Mission, and Sr. Michelle Schroek, they spoke with residents, immigrants, and aid workers who serve the new arrivals. Sabrina Pizzarelli (Spanish, Sociology '24), Allison Siegmann (Spanish, Intel '23), Kaylee Moffit (Spanish, Intel '24) and Josh Drabik (Russian and Intel '23) were among the group.

Allison Siegmann gave us this reflection:

"My trip to the US-Mexico border was sincerely life-changing. It was a very important experience to have in order to better understand the ongoing situation at the border and the difficulties that migrants face when coming to the United States across the US-Mexico border. The people we talked to throughout our week in McAllen, Texas, were very experienced and have dedicated their entire careers to helping migrants and their families build better lives in the United States. This trip was a great opportunity to expand my knowledge, practice speaking Spanish, and meet new people - both my peers on the trip and people in Texas. It was an honor to meet some of the community members who have traveled the long and difficult journey across the border and to experience their generosity and kindness despite having very little. It was also extremely impactful and powerful to see the migrants' continuous faith despite their extreme poverty and hardships. There are many resources in Texas meant to help migrants, but I learned that the main issue is that the US government is not welcoming. There are few resources that the government offers to help migrants find security after getting to the United States, if they even make it that far. I learned about the extreme difficulties to make the journey across the border, and I hope that US citizens can do their own research to understand these difficulties as well. If there is one thing I would like to share with others about my experience, it would be that migrants do not receive handouts from the government. They face extreme challenges to find and maintain stability in their new lives in the United States, and it is important that they be given more assistance so that they can live and thrive here in the United States, after facing whatever hardship they may have escaped from their home country. I look forward to sharing my experience and continuing to learn about the situation, and I am so happy the Border Trip will become an annual trip for Mercyhurst University students."



*CONCERN FOR IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IS ONE OF THE CRITICAL CONCERNS OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY*

## Kelly Huff '22: Intel and Language Career Spotlight

Alum Kelly Huff writes: "I graduated from Mercyhurst University in 2022, majoring in Intelligence Studies and minoring in Spanish and Psychology of Crime and Justice. Since graduation, I have been working at JPMorgan Chase (JPMC) as a Global Intelligence Analyst. In my role, I cover two portfolios: Executive Protection (EP) and Latin America (LATAM). EP consists of monitoring social media and other open sources for any threats to the firm's Chairman or other high-level executives. The LATAM portfolio is larger in scope from conducting broad geopolitical assessments on countries where JPMC has a physical presence to tracking daily protest activity, JPMC-related or not, that could disrupt our employees from getting to the office.

"I use my Spanish language capabilities and cultural knowledge across different taskings. Besides translating news articles and other text (yes, we do have a translation tool for that), having the language skills allows me to translate and analyze posters and images shared online that announce protest information, in addition to quickly reading through the news and social media sources we check daily for any events that could impact our operations. I regularly work with colleagues in Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Mexico, and I have learned a lot from them about their cultures and regional issues. These include China's fast-growing influence in the region, the impact the Russia-Ukraine war has had on inflation in South America, especially Argentina, and the political swing from right-leaning, conservative governments to leftist, liberal leaders in the past four years.

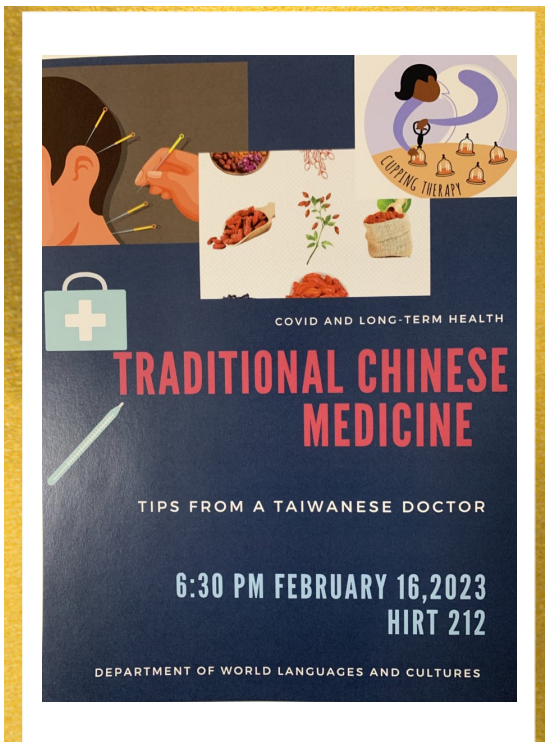
"As these issues in LATAM continue to become more of a problem for U.S. interests, more analysts with Spanish-language capabilities will be needed, whether that is in the public sector or in private sector Global Security organizations at international companies. Private sector data collecting firms are also competing to offer the best and most extensive foreign language open-source collection capabilities for companies who need this global coverage of world events. I truly enjoy working in my role and learning about LATAM as much as I am helping my colleagues protect JPMC's interests, and I believe there will be more opportunities like this for analysts with Spanish-speaking skills."



Kelly Huff living her best life in Texas.

## PARTNERSHIP WITH KEYSTONE HEALTH

Spanish students are using their skills to serve as interpreters for migrant health clinics in the county, a partnership that began this fall with Keystone Health. Drs. Edwards and Mohamed, along with Sabrina Pizarelli, Allison Siegmann, and Ivelisse Arce helped at two vaccination clinics this fall and will start again as soon as weather allows farm work to begin. Interested students should contact Dr. Edwards.



## Important Dates

February 3, 9-2:00: Day in World Languages with high school students

February 10, 7:30: MIAC: Ballet Hispánico at the MIAC, free for students

February 16, 6:30 in Hirt 212: Discussion of Chinese traditional medicine with a Taiwanese doctor.

February 23, 3:00: Language in Motion visits Joanna Connell school with Carpe Diem Academy - all languages welcome! See Dr. Edwards.

March 29, 3:30: Sophomore and Senior review - Majors should check your email for directions!

April 13, 7:30: Angelique Kidjo at the MIAC, free for students

April: Oral Proficiency Exams (OPI) for senior majors! Register with Dr. Edwards

April 27, 5:30: Phi Sigma Iota honors society induction (look for email invitation!)

May: Dr. Boudreau's FSAT group leaves for France! See article on next page. Bon voyage!

## Our Achievements

Ryan Leiser, (Russian, Intel '23) is studying abroad in Tbilisi, Georgia (see photo).

Nate Kwiatkoski (Russian, Intel) is studying in Latvia this semester.

Fatmira Gobeljic (Russian Studies, Chinese '23) Our trusted work study for the department was accepted in to a post-graduate program for speech pathology at Salus University. Congratulations!

Libby Koyn (Spanish, Intel '23) returned from study abroad in Barcelona, Spain, and has been hired by Deloitte upon graduation.

Allison Siegmann (Spanish, Intel '23) is a semi-finalist for the Fulbright English Teaching Assistant program in Mexico. ¡Buena suerte!

Hanna Good (Spanish Education '23) is doing her student teaching at Cathedral Preparatory School in Erie this spring.

Alum Ian Michalski, Ph.D. (Spanish, Poli Sci '10) accepted an assistant professor of Spanish position at Roanoke College in Virginia this fall.

Alum Alaina Ryzewski (Spanish '12) has visited her 50th country with a recent trip to the Antarctic!

## Next stop: France!

Food, wine, France! Ten students will accompany Dr. Boudreau and Pete Zohos, assistant professor of Hospitality, this May as they travel to France to study French food and culture. The group will land in Nice, on the Riviera, and then travel to Aix-en-Provence, Lyon, Reims, and Paris.

What will they eat? Dr. Boudreau hopes his students will try at least one thing they've never had before. What does he think is the best thing eat in France? He had a hard time picking one thing but noted that traditional French techniques - like using fresh dough, no additives - make baguettes, crepes, and croissants very special. Dr. Boudreau said that not all French food is as "fancy" as we imagine; there is plenty of delicious home cooking, some of which developed into iconic French recipes, like boeuf bourguignon or ratatouille (he also wants to assure readers that "rats do a lot less of the cooking than the movies would lead you to believe"). There is also a lot of international cuisine and the abundant North African presence in France has made foods like couscous feel like native French dishes.

Are Parisians really snooty? No, Dr. Boudreau said. "Paris is a giant city. And like all people in giant cities, they don't have time for you. They're not snooty; they're just in a hurry." We hope all the travelers on this trip get plenty of time to slow down at a nice cafe and enjoy all the things France has to offer.

## Many Thanks

Thank you to everyone who helped us with the Day in World Languages on February 3. This event gave area high school students (and a student from as far away as Michigan) the opportunity to see Mercyhurst, tour the campus, experience the languages we offer, and interact with our students. Five schools and 32 students were with us and we couldn't have welcomed them without all of you helping!



Fulbrights Sharon Nien (Taiwan), Kristina Smagina (Russia) and Samira Bahadi (Morocco) shared their cultures.



Kaylee Moffit and Sabrina Pizzarelli (left) help Fairview High School students with Mexican amateur painting.



Samira Bahadi leads guest students in learning a little Arabic.



Libby Koyn (Spanish, Intel '23) studying abroad in Barcelona, fall '22



Ryan Lieser (Intel, Russian '23) studying abroad this spring in Tbilisi, Georgia.



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**DEPARTMENT OF WORLD LANGUAGES AND CULTURES**



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