

A Message from the Chair

Welcome to the new semester! We are fortunate to begin with good news that arrived too late to be included in this issue in detail. One of our students in the Spanish Minor, Danny Torres, was selected as one of the inaugural recipients of the Paula Howell Anderson Scholars of the Pre-Law Institute. The award is designed to support students in the junior and senior years as they prepare for application to law school. A complete article on Mr. Torres and his achievement will appear in the next issue.

And speaking of law, Prof. Aída Martínez-Gómez has organized a seminar on “What Does a Court Interpreter Do? How Do I Become One?” with interpreters from the New York State Unified court system for Wednesday, February 25, during community hour (1.40-2.50 pm)—room TBD. The seminar will focus on the position descriptions for interpreters in the state court system, what they do on a day-to-day basis, and how best to prepare for a career in the field. Any students interested in using their language skills to begin a rewarding career are urged to attend. Keep on the lookout for further announcements that will be circulated with the room number and additional information.

Finally, but certainly not least, our proposal for a Spanish major was unanimously approved by the College Council on Friday, December 12, 2014. The next steps are to submit the proposal and supporting documents to CUNY Central and, once that OK is obtained, to the New York State Department of Education for final approval.

Best wishes to everyone for a very successful semester!

Silvia Dapía

Students Experience Japanese Culture

Students in Prof. Hiroko Miyashita’s Japanese 102 class visited the Gallery Event “Get Wrapped Up: Poetry and Art of the Kimono” held in the Arts of Japan Gallery at the Metropolitan Museum. Students viewed the demonstration on how to wear kimonos, the elegant traditional Japanese full-length robe garment. They learned the history of the kimono, listened to koto music, read haiku (Japanese poetry), and explored examples of gorgeous kimono textiles of the Edo Period (1615-1868). The koto is a traditional Japanese harp instrument, while haiku is a stylized poetry form consisting of seventeen phonetic sounds arranged in phrases of 5, 7, and 5 in that order.



Students participating in the event were, from the left, Mauricio Tendilla, Feng Guang Lin, Kemar Stephenson, Eloy Moran, Evgeni Ivanovski, Victoria Mei, Michael Murillo, Rehan Khan.

News

Students Attend Kakehashi Event



Prof. Keiko Miyajima arranged for John Jay College to host an event in the Kakehashi, or “Bridge for Tomorrow” Youth Exchange Program, sponsored by the Japanese government. “Many students came to see the presentations, and the room was full of laughter and applause,” reported Prof. Miyajima. “Our students also had fun chatting with Japanese students after the event.”

Students Celebrate “El día de los Muertos”



On October 18, students gathered with family and friends to celebrate the Mexican tradition known as “El día de los Muertos” (The Day of the Dead) a custom in which people honor and remember their loved ones who have passed away. This event began with a musical procession called “calaveras callejeras” at 110th Street Central Park before moving to “El Museo del Barrio.” The students enjoyed the pre-Hispanic dancers and band music. They were able to participate in various activities; creating their own “papel picado” to dedicate to someone special and have their faces painted as skulls.

Department Sponsors “Fellini Night”



The sounds of music echoed from the Moot Court room at John Jay College on the evening of October 24. Sponsored by the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures through the efforts of Prof. Raúl Romero, “Fellini Night,” a live production of the Borona Arts Entertainment LLC drew a large crowd of aficionados who delighted to entertainment that included pianist Misa Ogasawara, singer Mario Gullo, Brazilian jazz performer Chieko Honda, Lebanese-French singer Raya Awad, singer Mario Gullo, pop-jazz singer Emily Claman, Japanese folk artist Lulla, singer Madeline Woods, Bettina Sheppard, Gerry Visco, and performances by Penny Arcade, the Bridges Vocal Ensemble, the cast of “Nine. The Musical,” and the show “Get Happy.”



Faculty Attend Trustees Dinner

On September 23 several department faculty attended a dinner, at the invitation of President Jeremy Travis, with distinguished John Jay College trustees Luis Miranda and Rossana Rosado. Held at Barracas in Greenwich Village, the groups feasted on delicious paella, sangria, and other delights. The faculty would like to thank President Travis, Mayra Nieves (special advisor to the president), and the trustees this exceptionally convivial evening.



From the left are Trustee Luis Miranda and Professors Liliana Soto-Fernández, Raúl Romero, and Silvia Dapía. Below is a paella, one of the sumptuous delights served at the dinner.



Samba Day Celebration

“Día Nacional do Samba” — National Samba Day — is celebrated in Brazil each year as part of a plan supported by artists, musicians, intellectuals and cultural promoters to celebrate and encourage the nation’s unique musical genre and dance style which has been credited with originating the world-famous Brazilian tradition of Carnival.

Samba Day originated with Nilcemar Nogueira, the granddaughter of Cartola (Angenor de Oliveira), a legendary singer, composer, and poet credited with a major influence in the development of samba. It is celebrated throughout the country with various samba and carnival events. In 1937 the Brazilian government declared the samba to be a part of the national cultural patrimony to be preserved for future generations. UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, awarded it the Heritage of Humanity designation in 2005 as a significant world cultural element. In 2007, Brazil recognized three legitimate forms of samba, the “partido alto,” “samba de terreiro,” and “samba-enredo,” the later of which is traditionally played during the Rio de Janeiro Carnival.



Prof. Raúl Romero (on table with scarf) celebrated Samba Day with students in his Portuguese class with music and a cake decorated with the Brazilian flag. From the left, Gabrielle Maraj, Luis Brito, Jazmin Mesa, Elbia Ramirez Stephanie Blanco, Sergio Martins, Avenir Sina, Yerlin Moya, Alejandra Flores, Rene Barrett and Mario Lituma.

Maria Yrene Santos Visit



Prof. Irma Romero arranged a visit by the noted Dominican writer Maria Yrene Santos on December 4. Those in attendance enjoyed her work, which included poems, narratives, and literary essays. The visit and face-to-face discussion encouraged students to appreciate and embrace the wonderful world of literature.

“Tea Time in Japanese”



In October Prof. Mieko Nakamura Sperbeck began a Japanese Conversation Club called “Tea Time in Japanese” to provide an informal meeting where students can practice Japanese in a fun and open environment while they indulge in Japanese snacks and sweets. Students in her classes and those in Prof. Hiroko Miyashita’s classes both attended. The above picture includes, from the left, Victoria Mei, Prof. Miyashita, Arielle Campbell, Sophia Rodriguez, Linda Wu, Rui Lin Tan, Nini Ho, Irene Poster, and Eloy Moran.

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Student Spotlight

Gloraluis De Jesus



My name is Gloraluis De Jesus and I was born in the Dominican Republic. I came to the United States when I was just 12 years old and since then I have been living in Brooklyn with my parents, my brother and my grandmother. I thank God for John Jay College of Criminal Justice every day. There I have been able to grow as a professional individual. One of the things I love the most is the Legal Spanish Translation and Interpretation classes. When I first heard of them I said yes without a doubt in my mind. I felt peace in my heart knowing that I would have a future as a court interpreter and many opportunities to understand court procedures.

My professors Aída Martínez-Gómez and Sandra Bryan have taught me how to become a better interpreter and translator. With this program I had the chance to go to Family Court, the New York Supreme Court and many others. In the fall of 2014 I will be graduating from John Jay with a Bachelors degree in Political Science and a Certificate in Legal Spanish Translation and Interpretation. In January 2015 I will be taking the New Jersey Court Interpreter Exam.

Faculty Spotlight

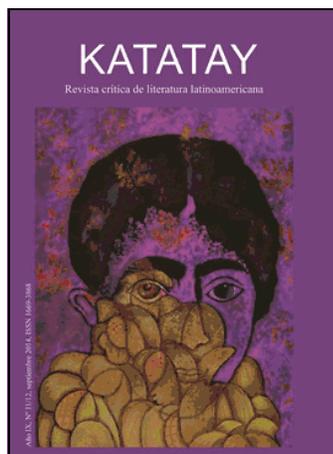
Liliana Soto-Fernández



Prof. Soto-Fernández is a nationally-recognized leader in the field of Spanish language acquisition who has held various offices in the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP) including serving as its national president and a member of its Executive Council. Her services were recognized with the Theodore Huebener Service Award from AATSP, induction as a honorary member of the Phi Eta Sigma national honor society, and inclusion in five different editions of *Who's Who*. She is a member of Sigma Delta Mu (Spanish Honor Society).

After receiving her B.A. degree *magna cum laude* at Brooklyn College she earned a Masters degree and a Ph.D. from the CUNY Graduate Center. She joined John Jay College in 2003. The author of numerous articles on literature, gender, and the pedagogy of language instruction, she is the author of *Language Through Structure: A Practical Approach to Learning Spanish* (Wiley, 2009) and *Grammar Made Easy* (Houghton Mifflin, 2007). A frequent presenter at professional conferences, she has given workshops on the teaching of languages, the use of technology in the language classroom, and various topics in literature.

News



Symposium Papers Published

In 2011 the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures hosted a very successful symposium, “Empowering the Tribe,” featuring prominent speakers on LGBTI topics. Accepted papers from that symposium were published in Vol. IX, No. 11-12 (September 2014) of the academic journal *Katatay: Revista crítica de literatura latinoamericana*. They appeared in a special section edited by Prof. Silvia Dapía.

TEA TIME IN JAPANESE

日本語でティータイム
にほんご



Let's get together and practice Japanese language with your friends!

This is an informal meeting where you can practice Japanese in a fun and open environment. It's open to anyone so you may spread the words.

We will meet on Wednesdays during the community hours at W103.

Please contact Prof. Sperbeck at msperbeck@jjay.cuny.edu if you have any questions.

すいようびにあいましょう！

Kudos

Silvia G. Dapía gave two workshops on job searches for graduate students in the Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Department at the CUNY Graduate Center. She published “Living in Another Language’: Witold Gombrowicz’s Argentinean Experience” in *Polish American Studies*, Vol. LXXI, no. 2 (Autumn 2014: 79-89).



She edited a symposium of articles that appeared in the journal *Katatay* on “Sexualities and Identities in Latin America: From Colonial Times to the Present,” and had three of her translations into Spanish published: “The Clattering Chains: Social Control and Sexual Transgressions and in Colonial Guatemala,” *Katatay*, Vol. IX, no. 11/12 (2014), 109-116; “*Geografías nefandas* and Homosociality in Colonial Mexico,” *Katatay*, Vol. IX, no. 11/12 (2014), 117-129; and “From ‘Un hombre muerto a puntapiés’ to ‘Matan a una marica’ and Back Again: Representations of Violence and Traditions of LGBT Writing in Latin American Literature,” *Katatay*, Vol. IX, no. 11/12 (2014), 130-137.



Aída Martínez-Gómez published her article “Interpreting in Prison Settings. An international overview” in *Interpreting* (Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 233-59) and “Criminals Interpreting for Criminals: Breaking or Shaping Norms?” in the *Journal of Specialized Translation*, Vol. 22, pp. 174-193. She was awarded a Fellowship in the

Faculty Fellowship Publication Program sponsored by CUNY’s Office of the Dean for Recruitment and Diversity, a CUNY-wide initiative to support research writing projects for untenured faculty to work on a book publication.

Meng Jiang attended the Institute of World Literature at the City University of Hong Kong sponsored by Harvard University’s Department of Comparative Litera-



ture. The Institute is a four-week program held in different institutions around the world. This year the IWL program consisted of two two-week seminars, four panels, eight lectures, and eight affinity group meetings. She was awarded a PSC CUNY Professional Development Grant to assist with her lodging and travel expenses and was also awarded a full tuition scholarship.

Raúl Romero arranged for “Fellini Night,” a live production of Borona Arts Entertainment to be held at John Jay College sponsored by the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures. He also arranged for a student observance of Samba Day, a Brazilian national celebration.



María Julia Rossi had her article “*Los que aman, odian: ¿borrador o reescritura?*” (“*Los que aman, odian: Draft or Rewriting?*”) published in *Revista Iberoamericana* and another article, “Una poética de la incertidumbre: procedimientos erosivos en trea obras de Elena Garro” (“Poetics of Uncertainty: Procedures of Erosion in three Elena Garro Works”) appeared in *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica*. She presented a collaborative project with Dr. Daniel Balderston, “A Puzzle of Literary History: An Edition of José Bianco’s Letters,” and was awarded a Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS) 2014-15 Faculty Research Grant at the University of Pittsburgh to pursue preparation of a collection of Bianco’s letters. Further, a project she is leading to collect, publish, and present plays written and performed in Rosario, Argentina, was recognized by the Ricardo Rojas Cultural Center at the

Kudos

Universidad de Buenos Aires. Three books in this project were published this past August and three more are planned for next year.

John Sorrentino was a speaker at the CUNY-IT Conference at John Jay College on December 4. He participated in the panel on "Parts and Sums: The CUNY Innovation Survey" where he discussed technology-related initiatives and achievements across the university, specifically how the Macaulay Honors College ITF program supports a CUNY culture of innovation. He has accepted a position as Chief of Staff for the dean of the Hunter College School of Education.



Professor's Documentary Film Featured in African Festival



Prof. Aristides Falcón Paridí's documentary titled "Rumba Clave Blen Blen Blen" was presented at the 22nd African Diaspora International Film Festival in Teachers College, CUNY, on December 1. It is described by a reviewer as "a song of praise to the musical genre of rumba in New York City."

Professor Meng Jiang Studies in Hong Kong

Supported by a PSC CUNY Professional Development Grant, Prof. Meng Jiang traveled to Hong Kong to take part in the Institute for World Literature, a four-week program sponsored by Harvard University's Department of Comparative Literature. Held at the City University of Hong Kong the program consisted of two two-week seminars, four panels, eight lectures, and eight affinity group meetings. More information can be found at their website: <http://iwl.fas.harvard.edu/>



Prof. Meng Jiang receiving her certificate for completing the world literature course in Hong Kong from Prof. David Damrosch, director of the Institute of World Literature at Harvard University.

