

APUNTES

DEPARTMENT OF SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE

LUCRECIA ZAPPI VISITS UWM

By César Ferreira

Brazilian author Lucrecia Zappi visited the Department of Spanish and Portuguese on April 1st, 2019. Zappi is the author of two novels, *Onça Preta* (2013) and *Acre* (2017), both published in Spanish by La Huerta Grande in Madrid. Her novels explore mythical worlds with vast geographies and primitive landscapes in the tradition of Latin American authors such as Joao Guimarães Rosa, and Graciliano Ramos.

Zappi held a reading and conversation about her novels at the Golda Meir Library as part of the LACUSL Speaker Series. She also visited Dr. Susana Antunes's class on "Discovering Lusophone Culture Through Food" (Portuguese 360), where she discussed her book *Mil-folhas* (2010), an essay on the history of pastries through the production of sugar cane in the New World.



Lucrecia Zappi (right) reads from one of her books alongside UWM's Susana Antunes.

UWM SPANISH STUDENTS ABROAD

By Allison Libbey

This spring, thirteen UWM students are studying abroad in Spanish-speaking countries, including in Spain, Mexico, Argentina, and Ecuador. They're taking classes in international business, pre-law, Spanish literature, and (of course) language classes, just to name a few. Study abroad has given them all a chance to immerse themselves in the language and culture of their host countries, and they have had wonderful opportunities to travel, try new foods, and meet new people.

Here's what a few of our students have to say about their experiences abroad:



"I've been studying in Querétaro, Mexico at Tecnológico de Monterrey, and my experience has been so much more than I could have imagined. I've learned about the culture; I've traveled throughout a beautiful country that is full of history. And, possibly the most important thing for me, my abilities with the language have improved all around. I only needed to study here for one semester, but I loved it so much that I decided to stay for the spring semester too!"

-Cassidy Kortendick

"I am currently studying abroad for the 2018-19 academic year in the University of Alcalá de Henares in Spain. I have grown so much as a person and the knowledge gained is immeasurable. The biggest benefactors of this change are all the people I've met - mi madre española (my host mom), the professors at UAH, and all the international students from the United States, Germany, France, Italy, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and of course the Spaniards."

- Zoe Skroch



INTERMEDIATE-LEVEL SPANISH STUDENTS HELP THE GREATER MILWAUKEE COMMUNITY

By Allison Libbey

Hope House is a community center and emergency homeless shelter located in Walker's Point that, for the past thirty years, has been helping area residents in need. In its basement there is a food pantry that is set up like a small grocery store, where those eligible to receive assistance are able to choose which products to take home with them, allowing them to better serve their families' needs. Given the location of Hope House on the south side of Milwaukee, a significant percentage of those who come to the food pantry speak Spanish as their first language. This is where our students come in.

This semester, student volunteers from SPA 203 and SPA 204 logged a total of 36 service hours volunteering at the food pantry over the course of multiple visits spaced out over the semester. They helped clients by providing information and answering questions in Spanish, and at the same time had the opportunity to learn a lot of new vocabulary. Students who took part in this experiences would often use the time in the shuttle on the way back to campus to discuss new words they had learned (such as "peaches" or "pig's ear") and also how the experience made them feel more connected to the language and their community.

For more information about Hope House, visit their website: <http://www.hopehousemke.org>



NEW SIGMA DELTA PI MEMBERS

By Allison Libbey

Nine new members were inducted into Sigma Delta Pi (the National Collegiate Hispanic Honor Society) this semester: Abbey Flunker, Dana Gavin, Kira Pless, Viridiana Rocha, Eva Rodríguez, Ema Santos Quiroz, Sana Shakir, Marina Slawinski, Leire Martín Pérez, and Manuel Zelada. Here they are pictured with the 2018-2019 Sigma Delti Pi officers and Professor César Ferreira (faculty advisor).



¡CANTEMOS!

By Kathleen Wheatley

This year we held a weekly gathering for students to listen to music in Spanish, discuss the meaning and cultural significance of different songs, and sing together. Organized by Professor Wheatley, the songs represented different rhythms and genres, such as *flamenco* from Spain, *corridos* and *huapango* from México, *zamba* and *tango* from Argentina, *huayno* from the Andes, *salsa* from Cuba, *reggaetón* from Puerto Rico, and *vallenato* and *cumbia* from Colombia. Songs ranged from traditional music to the *Nueva canción* of the 70s, to current popular music, and each week the songs were based on a theme.

Some weeks the songs were related to a significant historical event. On Sept. 19, the one-year anniversary of the destruction caused by Hurricane María on the Island of Puerto Rico, we listened to “*It’s almost like praying*”, written by Lin Manuel Miranda and performed by over twenty Hispanic artists throughout the world. The song begins with a segment of the song “*María*” from the play *West Side Story* and the lyrics include all of the 78 municipalities of the island. For Oct. 12, we discussed how *el Día de la Hispanidad* is celebrated in different countries and listened to “*Canción con todos*,” written by the Argentinian poet Armando Tejada Gómez and considered by many to be the national hymn of Latin America. To commemorate International Women’s Day on March 8, we listened to “*Dignificada*” by Lila Downs, a song dedicated to Digna Ochoa y Plácido, a Mexican human rights lawyer, who was assassinated in 2001.

Other weeks we learned songs related to different holidays. For *Día de los muertos* on Nov. 1 and 2, we sang traditional songs such as “*La llorona*” and “*Cucurrucú Paloma*.” In December, we sang a traditional ladino Chanukah song “*Ocho kandelikas*,” talked about the nine nights of *posadas navideñas* leading up to *la Nochebuena*, and listened to “*la Rama*,” which describes this celebration in Vera Cruz, México. We also sang other popular *villancicos* such as “*Los peces en el río*.” For *Martes de Carnaval* we sang and danced to Celia Cruz’s “*La vida es un carnaval*” and compared it to Maluma’s version of “*Carnaval*.”

We also listened to songs based on different poems. We sang the popular 60s song “*Guantanamera*,” with verses from the Cuban poet José Martí’s *Versos sencillos*. We read “*Voy a dormir*,” Alfonsina Storni’s final poem before committing suicide, and compared the imagery in this poem to the verses of “*Alfonsina y el mar*.” We listened to and discussed Paco Ibañez’s hauntingly beautiful version of Gustavo Adolfo Becquer’s Rima LIII (“*Volverán las oscuras golondrinas*”). We listened to Juan Manuel Serrat’s song “*Cantares*,” in which he combined several verses from Antonio Machado’s *Proverbio y cantares de “Campos de Castilla”* and added his own verses about the life of this poet.

Besides the simple pleasure of listening to and singing music, these gatherings gave students the opportunity to discuss different aspects of Hispanic culture and to connect history and culture with music.



Kathleen Wheatley with Maren Hawkins and Susie Horning, cantando en español.

FROM ORGANIC FOOD TO GMO

By Julian Alexander Phifer, PORT 360 student

Portuguese 360, “Discovering the Lusophone Culture Through Food” taught by Professor Susana Antunes is a class that everyone should take. Not just to taste the delicious food (orange cake and brigadeiro), but to witness how Professor Antunes brings together community and enlightens and motivates her students through an exploration of the Lusophone world by showing how food connects us all. At the beginning of the semester Professor Antunes asks her class a simple question, “Are GMOs good or bad?” In this day and age, you cannot talk or think about food without bringing up this question, and Susana helps her students get a better understanding of GMOs by bringing in two guest speakers with opposing views on this touchy but must be talked about subject.



Susana’s first guest speaker, who came to class on March 11th, was local organic farmer David Kozlowski, from Pinehold Gardens (<http://www.pineholdgardens.com/>) in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. Kozlowski educated the class about natural farming and presented about “Bringing Food Home.” One of the great takeaways from Kozlowski’s presentation was the unselfish reason he is against GMOs. If you didn’t know, since the production of GMOs, big farm corporations have made it harder for farmers like Pinehold Gardens to compete in a market and give their community naturally grown foods. Kozlowski says GMOs takes away the true freshness of the product by making it unnaturally durable, bigger and by giving it a longer shelf life, as well as damaging the land it is harvested on by killing the different organisms that help with the natural growth of the product as well as the soil.

On April 22nd Dr. Wujie Zhang, a bioengineer at MSOE who is in favor of GMOs, visited Susana’s class as part of a joint appearance with the Japanese food class. Dr. Zhang presented “Genetically Modified Food” and educated the two classes on how GMOs are very safe, as genetic engineering provides the power to remove, block and change genes to make food free from things that can harm humans. Dr. Zhang also talked about how GMOs help with vaccinations. The greatest takeaway from his presentation was his explanation on how, since there are still millions of people around the world with no food who are going to bed hungry, GMOs have the power to feed starving countries around the world.



After hearing both sides, I personally would love if we could live in a world where we could produce more natural farming foods, as well as produce GMO foods for developing and impoverished countries. Only time will tell.

FACULTY AND STAFF NEWS

Nancy Bird-Soto published the chapters: “La mujer como tema según Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda y Luisa Capetillo” and “Luisa Capetillo y su filosofía feminista, un siglo después” in *Porto Rico et les Caraïbes. Émergence et existence*, edited by Françoise Léziart (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2019). Her essay, “La sutileza de la subversión en *Roma* de Alfonso Cuarón” was published on March 15, 2019 in Revista Cruce’s special edition on gender. In February, she presented the paper: “Luisa Capetillo and the Coordinates for a Global Feminism” at the Caribbean Meridians Conference at Western Sydney University in Australia.

Dr. **César Ferreira** was invited to participate in a panel entitled “Una conversación con el escritor Jorge Eduardo Benavides” in early April. The event was sponsored by the University of the Incarnate Word and the Casa de España in San Antonio, Texas.

In April, Senior Lecturer **Allison Libbey** presented “*Yo tuve un sueño: perspectivas infantiles sobre la violencia*” at the Kentucky Foreign Language Conference in Lexington, Kentucky.

On January 10, 2019, Senior Lecturer **Ester Suárez-Felipe** presented at the UWM 2019 Teaching and Learning Symposium--Engaging the Whole Student. Her Interactive Presentation was titled “Engaging Students in (Their) Writing” and focused on description and discussion of the pedagogical activities used by Ester in her Spanish advanced writing classes at UWM. She shared with the attendees three successful strategies that she uses in her sections of *Spanish 308: Advanced Reading and Writing*. In collaboration with Lane Sunwall, from the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), Ester participated in CETL’s Active Teaching Lab on April 24. Her presentation was titled “Student Collaboration and Peer Instruction in Canvas: Is it time to re-evaluate your preconceptions of online discussion?” She shared how she uses Canvas discussions to improve course interactions, boost class buy-in, and empower students to mentor each other. The presentations are live streamed and available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ovoPKYmDOWA>.

STUDENT WINS AWARDS AT INTERNATIONAL DESSERT COMPETITION

By *Estér Suárez-Felipe*

UWM student Luz Areizaga-Díaz, currently enrolled in Spanish 319: Advanced Listening and Speaking for Heritage Students, entered the [6th Annual UWM International Dessert Competition](#) on Monday, April 8, 2019. Areizaga-Díaz competed alongside 18 other individual competitors and 10 teams, representing countries across Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas. Her tembleque from Puerto Rico won 4th place in the Individual category and it also won the coveted People’s Choice Award. She is pictured here with her tembleque prior to the start of the judging.



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

As we conclude the 2018-2019 academic year, I reflect on my first year as Chair of the Department, and I continue to be deeply grateful for the commitment and dedication of our teaching and office staff in supporting our students in Spanish and Portuguese. While this has been a rather unusual semester—4 days of cancelled classes due to severe inclement winter weather during the first weeks—it has also been one with several highlights. One of these is the visit of Brazilian writer Lucrecia Zappi as guest for the LACUSL Speaker Series. Another is that, thanks to Allison Libbey’s initiative, the Department again has a presence in volunteering opportunities at the Hope House Food Pantry. Also, congratulations to Molly Hayes, this year’s recipient of a Meta Steinfert Scholarship and to Katelyn Matt, this year’s recipient of the Hilda Becher Modern Languages Scholarship.

To our graduating majors and graduate students, I wish you the best and hope you stay in touch and let us know of your latest ventures. For anyone looking for updates on lectures and other events sponsored by the Department, be sure to join our Facebook Page: <UWM Department of Spanish and Portuguese> and visit our website: <https://uwm.edu/spanish-portuguese/category/news>. I also invite you to consider making a donation to one of the funds listed on our website at: <https://uwm.edu/spanish-portuguese/give/>. Many thanks to the generous individuals who have donated over the years.

Have a wonderful summer, everyone!

Nancy Bird-Soto
Chair

