



# CONCORDIA



DISCOVERING OURSELVES + OTHERS THROUGH THE EXPLORATION OF LANGUAGES, LITERATURES AND CULTURES

## The LLC welcomes Arabic

In the fall, the Dept. of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures introduced its newest language program: Arabic.



In its inaugural year, approximately 60 students passed through the program, which offers Arabic 101, 102, 203 and 204.

The program is led by UNCG alumna and current University of Oxford PhD candidate Suja R. Sawafta. For Sawafta – who teaches all four language courses in addition to an Arabic literature course for honors students – the first year has been an incredible success.

### Why do you think there's been a growing interest in Arabic?

I think the growing interest in Arabic is due to a couple of factors. First, the Middle East is among the hot topics occupying the American mind. Second, I think our students simply want more exposure and opportunities to learn non-Latin or Germanic

languages. The world is bigger than any one region, and our interests as intellectual beings are a reflection of that reality.

### For language learners, what's the most challenging part of learning Arabic?

The most challenging part of Arabic is learning a new alphabet and grammatical system. In terms of speaking, students have to learn the Modern Standard Arabic variation (formal) and the dialect, which is spoken in any country of their interest or choice. It's like learning two languages in one.

### What are your students surprised to learn about the language and the culture?

They are surprised to learn how the expressions themselves are centered around a culture of generosity and giving. I think the second most surprising thing to them is how diverse the different Arabic speaking countries are from one another.



## Student Profile: Mariam Ramadan (Arabic)



**Mariam Ramadan** is a sophomore communication studies major from Cary, North Carolina.

**What sparked your interest in Arabic?**

I'm originally Egyptian, so I'd rather take a language I'm familiar with than start from scratch. I

like Arabic because it's nice to be able to communicate with my family when I go to visit them in Egypt.

**What's your favorite Arab food?**

I don't even know where to start – my absolute favorite Arab food is shawarma. Jack's Corner (next to campus) has really good authentic Arab food, and their shawarma is really good.

**What's your advice for future students?**

Students should take advantage of the opportunity to study Arabic. So many jobs need you to speak another language, and Arabic can increase your chances of getting those jobs. It's a really cool opportunity that a lot of colleges don't offer.

## Middle East Music Ensemble

By Emma Levrio

The Middle East Music Ensemble began rehearsing January of this year and already exudes a complex and professional sound due to the proficient leadership of Professor Philip Murphy. Accepting students at any musical proficiency, the ensemble features selections from Egypt, Morocco, Palestine, Turkey and other Middle Eastern nations. Joining this group exposes students to instruments that they would not have access to otherwise, such as the oud, a string instrument with origins throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Besides the traditional oud, the ensemble incorporates vocals as well as other string, wind and percussive instruments into their pieces, so there is a place for any and all motivated musicians.



## Student Profile: Emily Thouin (ASL)



**Emily Thouin** is a senior at UNCG majoring in sociology. She has been taking ASL to fulfill her language requirements and is currently in ASL 204. After graduation, she wants to work for a nonprofit.

### Why did you decide to study ASL?

I just love the endless possibilities of the language and the beauty of ASL. I want to learn more about what it means to sign and what that means to other people.

### What is your favorite ASL event?

I always enjoy ASL Coffee Night at Tate Street Coffee!

### What are some challenges you've faced in learning ASL?

I struggle and still struggle with not mouthing while I am signing. You are supposed to use your mouth with some words, but it can be really difficult to not mouth each word in the whole sentence. It is something I am still getting used to.

### Do you have a favorite ASL poem or story?

I love the poem *Dandelions!* It's one of my absolute favorites, I just think it's so beautiful. You can find it on YouTube.

### What's your favorite part about ASL/Deaf culture?

I love how tight-knit the community is. Everyone knows everyone when it comes to the Greensboro ASL/Deaf community, so you always know someone when you go to events.

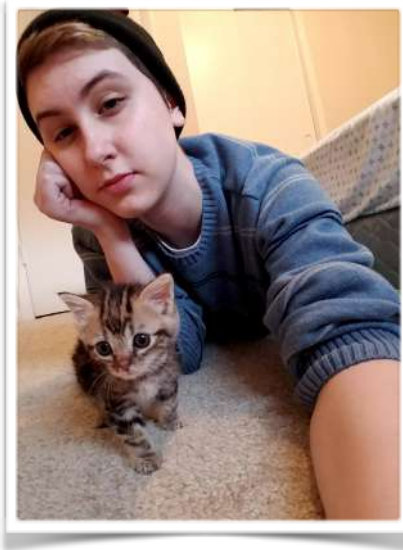
## ASL Silent Dinner

By Ramy Sugg

There was an energetic buzz in the air at the **ASL Silent Dinner** at The Den in Spartan Village. The event, held April 11, was organized by ASL Lecturer Detoine Williams, and there was, as always, a variety of students, professors and members of the Greensboro Deaf community who came out to mingle. Conversations in ASL were taking place across most of the restaurant, with people rotating from one table to the next. Students may have walked in nervous, but they walked out with a full stomach, a head full of new names and signs, and the memory of an evening full of big smiles. You can find information on upcoming ASL Chats, Movie and Coffee Nights through LLC's ASL/Deaf Studies Program, and ASL Night Outs through the Deaf-Hearing College Connection's Facebook page.



# Student Profile: Paige Overby (Chinese)



**Paige Overby** is a sophomore pursuing a major in biology along with chemistry and Chinese minors.

**What sparked your interest in Chinese?**  
Honestly, I read a lot of incredibly kind reviews of my current Chinese professor online. I decided to give it a try, and after one class I was hooked. You have to have a

good teacher to learn a new language, and UNCG has some of the best.

**What's your advice to future Chinese learners?**  
Make sure you either take it with a friend or make friends quickly in the classroom. Any language is easier to learn if you have someone to practice it with. Download a Chinese keyboard on your phone and try to text each other in Chinese. It gets a lot easier with practice.

**What are some of the struggles you have faced with learning Chinese?**

The hardest part of Chinese is definitely remembering all the characters and pronunciations. Using those characters as much as possible in text conversations with my friends, and also practicing writing them in my Chinese notebook, helped make it a lot easier.

**What are your favorite aspects of Chinese culture?**

I really enjoy how much emphasis is put on the arts. It is rich in art, music, writers, philosophers and even martial arts! I think Chinese calligraphy is absolutely beautiful, and I would love to be able to write it one day.

**How do you practice Chinese outside of the classroom?**

My roommate is actually taking Chinese with me. We bought a large dry erase board to practice characters, and we also text in Chinese.

## Chinese Film Festival

By Fiona Grant



This year, the Chinese Program sponsored a **Chinese film festival** that consisted of six movies over the course of the Fall 2017 semester and the Spring 2018 semester. The series featured films that focused on Chinese culture, including *Eat Drink Man Woman* (饮食男女), *Mountains May Depart* (山河故人) and *Hero* (英雄), among other movies. The spring semester films were concluded with two guest speeches. The first lecture was by Professor Li-ling Hsiao, associate chair and director of undergraduate studies in the Department of Asian Studies at UNC Chapel Hill. The second guest lecture was a demonstration by Master Wu, Wen-Ching about the martial arts application of Tai Chi and a discussion of the health benefits of Qi Gong.

## Student Profile: Jawon Gathers (French)



**Jawon Gathers** is a senior double majoring in French and international business.

### What sparked your interest in French?

I grew up hearing different languages. I already knew Spanish, so that made learning French easier. I've always been interested in speaking languages, and I thought it would be cool to be trilingual.

### Tell me more about your time abroad in Rennes.

The coolest part of being abroad was being immersed in something completely new. Being in an unknown place is so cool because eventually you pick up on the new mannerisms, culture and slang. There are so many different people to meet, and it's cool to experience the openness of French society.

### How do you practice the language outside of the classroom?

I like to speak random French with my friends whenever possible, and I always listen to music in Spanish or French. I also watch French videos a lot.

### What's your favorite French food?

In Rennes, my favorite food was the galette. The galettes are a Bretagne specialty – they're like a savory crepe and they're the most amazing thing you've ever tasted. What's cool is that they're so limited to the region, so they're a lot less known than crepes. There was the galette saucisse, which you could always find at the Sunday markets, which was a sausage wrapped in a galette.

### What's your advice to future UNCG language learners?

Don't be timid! Take advantage of study abroad. You won't have many opportunities like this after you graduate.

## Tournées French and Francophone Film Festival

By Tara Redpath



UNCG was lucky enough to be selected to host the **Tournées French and Francophone Film Festival**. Held in Curry Auditorium on campus, this year's festival presented some of France's most celebrated films on topics ranging from cross-cultural identity and human rights to empowerment through education and the post-colonial experience across the Francophone world. There were six different films, all in French but with English subtitles. The film I enjoyed the most was called *La Noire de*, a 1966 film directed by Ousmane Sembène.

## Student Profile: Rose Kuehr-McLaren (German)



Raleigh native **Rose Kuehr-McLaren** is a sophomore majoring in international and global studies with a minor in German.

### When and why did you start learning German?

My great grandfather came to the United States from the Black Forest (in southwest Germany) just before World War II. When I was 13, I found some letters written in Denglish between him and my grandfather. Those letters inspired me to study German in high school.

### What is your favorite thing about the German program?

The professors really want me to succeed, and I feel very supported in the program.

### Do you plan to study abroad?

I plan on going to Baden-Württemberg to study abroad next spring. I went to Heidelberg in 2015 as an exchange student in high school and I fell in love. I can't wait to see the cities again and to visit my exchange partner, Luisa, who attends the University of Mannheim now.

### What's your favorite thing about German culture?

The German sense of humor. My exchange partner's little brother was very funny, although his humor could be a little dry at times. He had only been learning English for as long as I had been learning German – we couldn't communicate very easily, but when we did it was to make each other laugh (mostly at his sister's expense).

## German Campus Weeks

By Tennah Murphy

The theme of this year's **Campus Weeks event** was "Germany Making Changes." The full week of activities, leading up to this year's German election, included guest speakers and different contests – most notably the poetry contest that most classes participated in. Each person who submitted a poem exemplified what they thought change would look like in German society. It was a huge success with many poem entries, showing both the talent of new German students, and those who have been studying the language for a while.



## Student Profile: Heaven Pearce (Japanese)



**Heaven Pearce** is a second-degree seeking student at UNCG majoring in Asian studies. Currently she is enrolled in the highest level of Japanese taught at UNCG. She aspires to become a translator, particularly in the gaming industry.

### How was your experience studying abroad in Japan?

Studying and living in Japan was a pivotal experience in my life. I never thought I would be able to do something so exciting. Japan is a beautiful country full of rich history and a unique culture. Everywhere I went I learned something new, not just about the country, but also about myself. It was extremely rewarding when I discovered that I was able to use the Japanese I had learned in class to speak with locals, or when I realized that the place that was once so foreign to me had become my home.

### What is your favorite thing about UNCG's Japanese program?

My favorite thing about UNCG's Japanese program is Professor Sugawara-Sensei. At first he can be a bit intimidating, but I think that his style of teaching pushes students to be their best. I am so grateful for everything that he has taught me.

### How do you intend to use your language skills after you graduate?

I aspire to work as a Japanese translator. It would be a dream come true if I could work in the game industry localizing Japanese video games, but I will settle for any sort of translating work.

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## Greensboro Japanese Speech Contest

By Madison DelRusso

In April, UNCG hosted the third annual **Greensboro Japanese Speech Contest (GJSC)**. Japanese language students from UNCG, Guilford College, Wake Forest University and High Point Central High School all gathered together and prepared to present speeches written in Japanese that they composed and memorized. Four judges, including Takashi Shinozuka, the Consul General of Japan in Atlanta, were present to evaluate the speeches, and friends and family of the contestants attended as well. Students read speeches about their daily lives, trips to Japan, research on Japanese culture and even creative pieces like poems. The hard work by UNCG faculty and students each year ensures that students of Japanese from multiple schools and proficiencies have the opportunity to come together and develop their understanding of the Japanese language and culture.





## Student Profile: Ashley Hayden (Russian)



**Ashley Hayden** is a senior majoring in anthropology and minoring in Russian. Ashley currently works at UNCG as a Russian tutor. In her spare time, she enjoys hiking, writing, cooking and listening to Russian music.

### What do you enjoy most about learning Russian?

I really enjoy learning about Russian history and culture. Both the history and culture of Russia are incredibly rich, and as a cultural anthropologist and somewhat of a history buff, I have had a lot of fun learning about those things and pairing them with my new language skills.

### What is your favorite Russian word and why?

I like Надежда (hope) and Звезда (star) because they sound so beautiful.

### What aspect of Russian culture do you find the most intriguing?

I think it's interesting how Russian culture is so hardy and tough, but you can still talk to your Russian friends about anything and they will always listen and try to help you.

### If you had to choose to live in Russia, which city would it be and why?

Saint Petersburg! I want to see all the museums, historical monuments and the beautiful architecture.

## LLC Poetry Jam

By Mila Yanez

In April, the students of Russian 306 attended and participated in the **annual LLC Poetry Jam** at UNCG. Every student read a poem in Russian that was written by a famous Russian writer. Not only did the students find it enjoyable, but it gave them the opportunity to practice reading and gain a grasp on Russian poetry. Russian Lecturer Yekaterina Colón helped to prepare the students, and she was very pleased with their abilities to read Russian poems. Everyone was helpful and supportive and amazed when every student went up and read their poem.



## Student Profile: Brenda Ramirez (Spanish)



**Brenda Ramirez** graduated in December 2017 with a double major in Spanish and international and global studies (concentration in global affairs & development). She studied abroad at La Universidad de Salamanca in Salamanca, Spain, and she presented her capstone paper on the recent Catalanian Referendum at the Honors Symposium at UNCG.

### What was your favorite Spanish class?

My favorite class that I've taken in the Spanish program was definitely SPA 534 Spanish American Culture and Civilization: "Beyond the Party: Lights and Shadows of the Latin American Centennials (1910-2010)." The whole class was just so interesting to me, studying the cultural, political and social dimensions of Latin American countries celebrating their independence. Not only did we study historical archives, but we also looked into

essays, journals and literary texts written during those periods. I even kept the readings and on occasions will look back at them.

### What are your future plans?

I'm currently looking into master's programs in international security abroad, whether it be Spain or Italy.

### How was your study abroad experience?

My experience in Salamanca was absolutely amazing – there is nothing I could ever compare it to. During my five months abroad I met people that have become such an important part of my life. It helped me mature and grow as a person, and it definitely made me realize the things that matter the most to me and in what direction I want my life to go.

## Herrison Chicas Visit

By Sebastian Vega



Thanks to the efforts of UNCG's SALSA (Spanish American Latino Student Association), **Herrison Chicas**, an award-winning spoken word poet that has been featured on TEDx and Public Radio International, visited campus in April to share some of his poems with students. His poetry is based on the dichotomy of being El Salvadorian and American. His poems ranged in topics from his mother and her struggles as an immigrant to following one's heart in pursuit of one's dreams. Many of the audience members could relate to his poems in one way or another, judging by the snapping of fingers during the readings and thunderous applause after each poem.



## CONTRIBUTORS



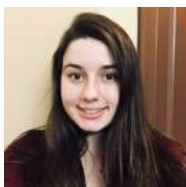
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