



CONCORDIA

Discovering ourselves + others through the exploration of languages, literatures, and cultures

Q&A with Dr. Roberto Campo



In January, Professor of French Roberto Campo was named head of the Dept. of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures. The *Concordia* team caught up with Dr. Campo to learn more about his new role as department head, his research, and the importance of learning languages.

What drew you initially to study French?

My interest in studying the French language and the literature and culture of the francophone world had multiple points of origin. First, while reading *War and Peace* for pleasure when I was a student in high school, I was inspired by the numerous examples of French in the novel. Another incentive was the fact that my father learned French while living in Belgium as a boy. My great-aunt had been a high school French teacher; so again, I felt an affinity through family. Finally, during my second year in college at UC Irvine, I began to study the language formally. As a student, I had the opportunity to visit Paris after winning a French

speech contest – that transformative experience abroad was pivotal in my decision to make studying French and the francophone world a lifelong commitment.

Tell me more about your research interests.

My research focuses on the literature of sixteenth-century (Renaissance) France. The primary author I study is Pierre de Ronsard (1524-1585), leader of the Pléiade school of mid-century poets and the so-called "poète des princes, prince des poètes" (poet of princes, prince of poets). I have also written and presented on other Pléiade poets, as well as on such contemporary literary superstars as Rabelais, Marguerite de Navarre, and Montaigne. I am amazed by how much these voices of centuries past can teach us about ourselves and provide useful perspectives on the preoccupations of our own times.

Why is it so important for students today to study other languages and cultures?

The world is as humanly diverse as it is physically vast, and the need remains for people to communicate across differences. But as we all know from experience, such bridges among peoples offer so much more to enrich our lives. And then there is the simple fact that learning other languages is a valuable exercise for the brain, enhancing our abilities to think better and more creatively.



Student profile: Kaelyn Smith (Arabic)



Kaelyn Smith is a junior majoring in anthropology.

What made you want to study Arabic?

Arabic is a beautiful language that is spoken in a lot of countries. Arabic is less commonly studied in the United States than Spanish or French, which makes Arabic even more interesting and unique.

Would you say Arabic is challenging?

I would say compared to other languages in the Indo-European language family, it is more challenging for English speakers, but it's such a rewarding language to learn.

Would you recommend learning Arabic to your peers?

Absolutely! Arabic is a beautiful language, we have a wonderful staff, and, as I mentioned, it's a very rewarding language to learn.

How would describe the classroom atmosphere?

In class, we hold many open discussions, and we do activities where we all work and collaborate together in order to obtain the maximum level of proficiency.

Arabic 102

By Noah Gordon

In the Arabic program, Professor Malika Akarramou teaches us more than just the Arabic language – she truly has her students experience the Arab culture. The Arabic class is full of open discussions and really allows for students to grow together. We have fun cultural activities where you further your knowledge and experience beautiful media from the Arab world. Though the language seems intimidating, our great professor makes the language much easier to learn, and you will pick up on patterns in the language to make things even easier.



Student profile: Jaylen Harrison (ASL)



Jaylen Harrison is a senior majoring in parks and recreating and minoring in ASL. In the future, he wants to be a camp director.

Why did you choose ASL as your language of study?

I had a friend in high school who was Deaf, and I learned some ASL that was offered after school to communicate with them. I started taking ASL at community college, and

when I came here, I decided to make it my minor.

What's been the biggest challenge regarding ASL?

Getting over the feeling that I needed to sign everything perfectly. The people who are Deaf or in higher ASL courses will help you and let you know that it's okay to mess up. They're really patient, so that helps.

How do you want to use ASL in the future?

If a Deaf person wants to go to camp, they shouldn't be turned away because of communication issues. It's important to include everyone, so I'll use ASL to help do that.

It's a Different, Different World

By Ramy Sugg

This semester, ASL students were offered the unique opportunity to experience life as a Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, or Deaf-Blind person through "It's a Different, Different World," which was hosted on campus by the Greensboro Regional Center of NC's Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Division Services. When students entered the EUC's Kirkland Room, they were given ear plugs and then moved throughout various stations where the main forms of communication were ASL and body language, not hearing and speaking. This experience had a profound effect on students, who felt firsthand the problems that are often experienced in the Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and Deaf-Blind communities. You can find more information about upcoming ASL events through the Deaf-Hearing College Connection's Facebook page or – better yet – by signing up for ASL 101.



Student profile: Kaz Moore (Chinese)



Kaz Moore is a senior at UNCG majoring in anthropology and double minoring in Chinese and biology. Kaz plans on doing her post baccalaureate pre-medical program at the University of Delaware and intends to go to medical school afterward at UNC Chapel Hill or Duke University.

What sparked your interest in Chinese?

Being adopted from China and not having any idea of Chinese culture or language, I wanted to learn Chinese to try to connect to a culture that I don't know.

How do you plan to use your Chinese after you graduate?

After graduation, I plan on using my Chinese minor in graduate school to try to bridge the gap between health care providers and those who don't know medical terminology in English. I also plan to work with Doctors Without Borders in orphanages in China.

Do you have some advice for future Chinese learners?

I would definitely advise them to learn root characters before anything else, watch Chinese movies and TV shows, and try to read Chinese articles, books, or magazines whenever possible. Studying abroad also really helps, though I didn't study abroad.

Chinese New Year

By Fiona Grant



This semester, UNCG hosted an event for the Chinese New Year on February 6. To celebrate the Year of the Pig, students and faculty contributed in numerous ways for the occasion. The Chinese Culture and Language Association performed a ribbon dance, and other students gave cultural presentations, singing performances, a Chinese yo-yo demonstration, and a cross-talk presentation. The highlight of the show was an amazing performance given by Chinese exchange student Ying Lam Eva Chu and Chinese Professor Sue Chen. The two hosted a beautiful workshop introducing and demonstrating Chinese classical instruments and music styles.

Student Profile: Alex Romero (French)



Alex Romero is a senior who spent her spring 2018 semester studying abroad at the Université de Rennes 2 in Rennes, France. She is a double major in art history and French with a minor in classical civilizations.

Why did you choose to study abroad in Rennes?

The French program at Rennes 2 allows international students to study only French for

an entire semester in the traditional French style of education. For me, I wanted to work on my language skills and learn how to write essays and formal papers in the French style. I also learned that we would get a language level certification from the program that is internationally recognized.

What was the most impactful lesson you learned while studying abroad?

I definitely learned to be humble during my international experience. I make excellent grades at UNCG and just assumed that it would be that way in France, but the university expectations were so different. I had to learn quickly that I have to be humble about what I know and acknowledge what I don't know.

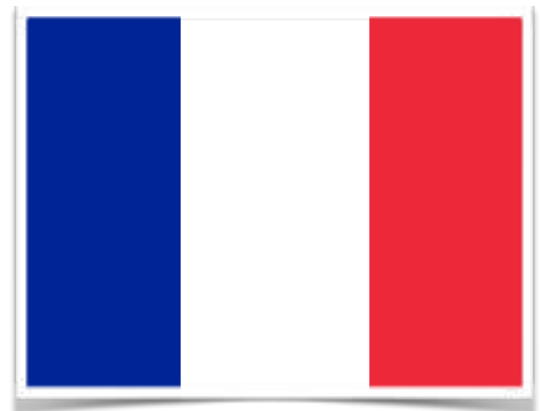
What is your favorite memory from studying abroad?

In Rennes I had a true "aha!" moment with language. I had this point in time where my understanding and comprehension of the language just clicked essentially. From that moment on, my listening skills were so much better, and that prompted me to be a more engaged student and to meet new people.

Couscous Night

By Tara Redpath

For the last event of the semester, the French Club held a Couscous Night, with homemade couscous by Professor Malika Akarramou. Using her traditional family recipe from Morocco, students were able to enjoy the made-from-scratch meal and discuss French and Moroccan culture.



Student Profile: Sarah Kassem (German)



Sarah Kassem is a senior double majoring in political science and German.

When and why did you start learning German?

I started learning German in 2009 when my family and I lived in Egypt. I went to an international school where we were required to speak three languages, so I picked German as my third language, and when we traveled to Hungary I continued to speak it, all the way until we came back to the U.S. for my high school years. I ended up loving the language

and when I got to college it began as a minor, but soon morphed into a major!

What is your favorite accomplishment you have had with learning German?

I would say writing my entire thesis! Not to mention in German and all in one semester.

What is your favorite thing about the culture or language?

German movies are my favorite part of the culture, especially *Goodbye, Lenin*, which I think is a wonderful depiction of the struggle of the Cold War on individuals and between family members.

German Honors Society Induction

By Tennah Murphy

This year I had the pleasure of being initiated into the German Honors Society, but the most wonderful thing was seeing all the other students who stood beside me who had various and different accomplishments within the department. There was a game of jeopardy played, as well as snacks and food to keep the mood comfortable and welcoming. Parents and students alike were welcome to join, and the professors were there to show their support for their students. I highly recommend going to events like this, even if you are not being inducted, because they can inspire you and help you network with people in the field.



Student Profile: Daniel Willis (Japanese)



Daniel Willis is a senior from Randleman, North Carolina, majoring in languages, literatures, and cultures with a concentration in global languages and communities. He has been taking Japanese for five semesters at UNCG and is also studying Russian.

What is your method for studying Japanese?

I like to use a combination of various SRS (Spaced Repetition System) programs to help with memorization, such as WaniKani for Kanji, Bunpro for grammar, and Memrise for vocabulary words. I'm surprised how many of my classmates have never heard of any of these, and I recommend people look into them at least.

How do you plan to use Japanese in the future?

I'd like to either teach English in Japan, or do some sort of translation/interpretation work. I already have a degree in business, so there are also opportunities in the international business sector that could be interesting.

What advice would you give to someone wanting to study Japanese (or any language)?

Regardless of what language you are going to study, believe me, you will feel like an idiot sometimes. The important thing is to not give up and realize that you are slowly improving, even if it doesn't feel like it at times. If it's something you really want to learn, then stick with it, even through the frustrating times.

Japanese Speech Contest

By Hailey Gunter

On April 13, UNCG held its 4th annual Japanese Speech Contest in the Curry Auditorium. The competition included competitors from UNCG, Wake Forest University, Guilford College, and High Point Central High School. The speakers read their speeches in Japanese while English translations were displayed by a projector. It was a great event for people wanting to practice their Japanese speaking skills and listening comprehension, as well as a wonderful way to spark interest in learning Japanese for those who aren't studying it. All of the competitors put a lot of effort into their speeches, and it was great to witness their hard work. Many volunteers and guests helped make the event successful – it was really fun.



Student Profile: Ekaterina Khokhrina (Russian)



Ekaterina Khokhrina is a native Russian speaker. She is an international and global studies major with a concentration in Russian studies. Currently, she is serving as a Russian language tutor through the Tutoring and Academic Skills Program (TASP) on campus.

Why do you think people should study Russian?

I think more people should study Russian because Russia has a rich language and culture. There are a lot of people around the world who speak Russian, and learning it will help you to communicate with them. You can also enjoy reading Russian literature in the original!

What do you think is the most interesting thing about Russian language or culture?

I think the most interesting thing about the Russian language is how it uses so many foreign words but still seems to make them sound Russian. It would be especially interesting to experience for students who also study French, because Russian borrowed a lot of French words.

What advice would you give to someone who wants to be fluent in another language?

As somebody who has been learning languages most of my life, I think the best advice I can give is this: Don't be afraid to make mistakes. Making mistakes while learning a new language is inevitable and a great way to learn.

Russian 102

By Veronica Wisnewski

Our class is a family! With only nine of us in class, we have had the opportunity to create close relationships which makes speaking in class so much easier. We learn through guided conversations in Russian, rigorous study of grammatical concepts, and singing together in Russian accompanied by Dr. Sutton on the accordion. We even performed at the Counter Culture Jam! Speaking of culture, learning about the traditions and cultural practices of Russians is an integral part of our class; lessons are far from just memorizing grammar rules and vocabulary. Russian is a hard language, but with the support of Dr. Sutton and the smaller class size, anyone can learn the language and have fun doing it.



Student Profile: Josue Farnes (Spanish)



Josue Farnes is an alumnus of the Spanish program at UNCG and a current graduate student pursuing a Master of Arts in Teaching with a concentration in Spanish Education K-12. His goal is to get a PhD in bilingual education or multicultural education.

Describe your experience as an undergraduate.

It was a rollercoaster of emotions trying to figure out what to do. I started out as an international business major, but I knew deep down that I wanted to be an educator. I pursued business initially because I knew that was the way to make money, but I knew that later in life I'd end up regretting it. I spoke to Dr. Sotomayor about this and she recommended I take the Spanish placement test, which placed me into the Spanish class for heritage speakers.

What impact did the class for heritage speakers have on your undergraduate career?

I fell in love with the language because growing up in the United States, I never had any formal training. I was limited

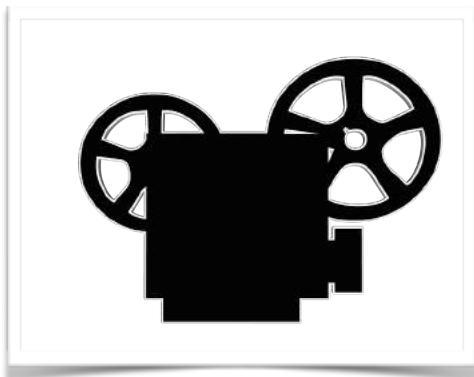
to the Spanish I knew just from speaking at home to family members. It opened up so many doors for me as an aspiring educator by learning about languages and culture as well as research.

How have the classes you took as an undergraduate helped in the master's program?

The undergraduate program taught me the basics of how I needed to write, speak, and argue in a professional environment. I learned about literature from the different Spanish-speaking countries and wrote papers. In the master's program, I am now writing to present my research to others.

Noches de Película

By Sebastian Vega



The idea for "Noches de Película" came from a desire to share the culture of Spanish-speaking countries with LLC students and to help build a bridge between faculty and students. Noches de Película are hosted on Mondays and give students and faculty the opportunity to watch well-known, award-winning films from Spanish-speaking countries. The movies are handpicked by Dr. Lizely López, who researches the movies beforehand to give students some context. While the movies do not shy away from major issues, the environment for discussion is casual and relaxed. The event has had a constant audience and is quickly becoming a tradition in the LLC department here at UNCG.



Contributors



Noah Gordon
Arabic



Tannah Murphy
German



Ramy Sugg
ASL



Hailey Gunter
Japanese



Fiona Grant
Chinese



Veronica Wisnewski
Russian



Tara Redpath
French

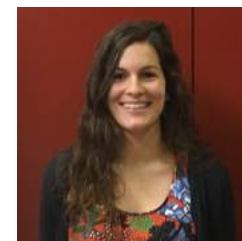


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