

Inside this Issue

A message from the Chair
Armenian Section
Italian Section
Spanish Section
Spanish Graduate Program
About the MCLL Department

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Dear colleagues and friends,

Thank you all for the good work you have done during the spring 2024 semester. It is my pleasure to invite the CSUN community to read about it in this Newsletter and to join me with a big round of virtual applause to the MCLL Dept. faculty members that contribute every semester to make our department better. This excellence is not only the result of the faculty members' work, but also a reflection of the professionalism of our staff members, Lisa and Leslie, the student assistants, and the students in general. All what we do is for them, and we will keep working in the

future to give students the best education we can.

Thank you again and congratulations for your excellent work.

I wish you a good and restful summer,

Adrián Pérez Boluda
MCLL Department Chair

ARMENIAN SECTION

On February 9, 2024, Armenian Studies Program (ASP) director Dr. Vahram Shemmassian and Armenian Lecturer Dr. Hasmig Baran participated in a daylong workshop organized by the Board of Regents of Prelacy Armenian Schools. Dr. Shemmassian's talk dealt with "The Simultaneous Teaching of Religion and Culture," while Dr. Baran's presentation focused on "Differentiated Teaching of Armenian." More than 100 teachers of Armenian subjects attended the Armenian Youth Center in Glendale, CA.

During the week of April 22nd, the CSUN Armenian Student Association (ASA), Armenian Fraternity Alpha Epsilon Omega (AEO), Armenian Sorority Alpha Gamma Alpha (AGA), and the CSUN Hidden Road Initiative (HRI) held their annual Armenian Heritage Week. This initiative aims to honor the lives lost in the Armenian Genocide and the Mountainous Karabagh/Artsakh War of 2020 while raising awareness about Armenian history and culture. The events included a silent protest, various cultural activities, and a candlelight vigil.



Dr. Shemmassian, Prof. Hasmig Baran, Dean Jeffrey Reeder and his wife, Ruth Reeder.

The CSUN Armenian Alumni Network held its 2nd annual gala on Thursday, May 2 at the Aurora Banquet Hall in Tujunga, CA. The event featured Armenian food, music, and dances, as well as a silent auction. Importantly, two students, Lily Chakrian and Varant Chalikian, who graduated in spring 2024 with a Minor in Armenian, received Certificates of Appreciation for their achievement. Similarly, student Zaruhi Chalikyan was the first recipient of the Dr. Vahram Shemmassian Endowed Scholarship, established during last year's banquet.



Dr. Shemmassian with Lily Chakrian and Varant Chalikian



Dr. Shemmassian and Zaruhi Chalikyan

On May 5, 2024 a book launch took place at the Ararat-Eskijian Museum and Research Center in North Hills, CA. Titled *The Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem Archives on the Armenian Question and the Armenian Genocide: An Annotated Detailed Summary of Documents, Vol. 1*, the 1,040-page tome was endorsed for publication by the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Yerevan State University, and the CSUN Armenian Studies Program. Dr. Shemmassian, who was a leading member of the book's editorial team, MC'd the program and made the concluding remarks. Author Dr. Lusine Sahakyan of Yerevan State University presented the odyssey of the book from its inception in 2017 to culmination in 2024. Co-authors Dr. Ani Voskanyan and Ani Sargsyan sent their brief messages via recordings from Armenia and Germany, respectively, while editor, journalist, and author Vatche Proudian

analyzed the importance of the book from a political perspective.

Dr. Shemmassian has published a new article, titled “The Armenian Apostolic Church in Musa Dagh, 1919-1939,” in the *Haigazian Armenological Review*, vol. 43/2 (2023), pp. 277-320. It deals with the Church’s administrative affiliation, individual parishes, and sociological canvas (marriage, baptism, death). Based exclusively on primary sources including archives, private papers, correspondence, interviews, and the contemporary press, the 43-page article sheds light for the first time on some aspect of Armenian Christianity in the Middle East between the two World Wars.

The ASP gifted seven boxes of the *Hairenik Amsakir* (Fatherland Monthly) from the 1920s-1940s to the CSUN Library. This journal, published in Boston, Massachusetts, was one of the most important periodicals of the Armenian American community, indeed the entire Armenian diaspora, dealing with historical, literary, and cultural issues. The collection was originally donated to the ASP by Arthur Hampar of Visalia, California.

ITALIAN SECTION

The Italian Studies Program successfully concluded the spring semester with an increase in students enrolled in Italian Studies courses. In fact, enrollment in our lower division offerings increased sufficiently to have one additional elementary Italian course added to the schedule. Students’ interest in taking Italian also holds the promise of new minors and

language and culture majors to our program.

On Sunday, May 19, 2024, the Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures Department hosted a reception honoring MCLL graduates and scholarship recipients. Six meritorious students in the Italian Studies Program received awards from the Barbera Endowment and the Fellowship in Italian Studies. We are extremely proud of our students for their fervent commitment to their studies and we congratulate them for their accomplishments.



Professors Miller & Weisberg, and Ms. Angela Di Mascio with (from left to right) Quaddriyah Wilson, Anna Fitzgerald, Edwin Shelby, and Catherine Phan

The Barbera Endowment was created by Mr. & Mrs. Robert Barbera, longtime supporters of Italian language and culture studies. Their philanthropy and commitment to CSUN and to the Italian Program has been unwavering for over 30 years. The Robert Barbera Endowment is offered yearly to full time CSUN undergraduate students with a declared Italian Minor or a Major in Languages and

Cultures with an option in Italian. Students who apply for the fellowship must be enrolled in Italian section offerings at time of application. Funds awarded support: Standard Fellowship for tuition, books, etc., Internship with Italian Firms and/or Institutions, and the CSUN Italy study abroad program.

Two meritorious students were chosen to receive \$ 2,000.00 each from the Barbera Endowment, Anna Fitzgerald, and Rosalinda Son-Alvarado. Both students will be continuing with Italian language acquisition and will be enrolling in intermediate courses in fall 2024 semester.

In the 1990s, *the Fellowship in Italian Studies* was the brainchild of the Italian community at large and supported by the philanthropic efforts of Robert Barbera and the Giovanni Roberto Family. For decades, the Barberas and the Robertos have been generous donors, passionately committed to education, and relentlessly supportive of Italian language and culture in the Los Angeles region. CSUN's Italian Studies Program is indebted to these visionaries and, indeed, our students are the beneficiary of their passion for all things Italian.

In May 2024, the MCLL Scholarship Committee reviewed applications for the Fellowship and was able to choose four meritorious recipients. Leonardo Calanchini, Lara De Fazio, Edwin Shelby, and Quaddriyah Wilson were each awarded a \$ 2,000.00 scholarship. These students are working towards the Major in Language and Culture with Italian option and/or the Minor in Italian. As required by the parameters of the Fellowship in Italian Studies, the

students will be enrolling in intermediate to advanced Italian courses as well as Foreign Literature in Translation (FLIT) courses in fulfillment of their obligations.

We also want to acknowledge the *Di Mascio Family Scholarship* for study abroad. Ms. Angela Di Mascio, CSUN Alumna and a graduate of the MCLL Spanish program, created the scholarship in memory of her parents. Ms. Di Mascio spent her junior year on the CSU Spain Study Abroad. The experience was transformative, and it propelled her to establish this generous scholarship. This year Catherine Phan was the awardee. Catherine is minoring in Japanese and will be studying in Japan during the 2024-2025 academic year.

The Italian Studies Program has several projects in the works for the fall 2024 semester. We will be sharing upcoming events with MCLL colleagues, the College of Humanities, and the CSUN Community at large, so please stay tuned.

SPANISH SECTION

The Spanish Section has had a memorable and productive Spring 2024 semester. We are particularly proud of our graduating seniors, who on May 17th successfully presented their Capstones! After months of hard work and long hours, our Spanish majors presented their Capstone Professionalization Portfolios or Research Projects in front of a live and virtual audience composed of friends, family members, students and professors. We are proud of all their accomplishments over

these past years at CSUN, and we wish them the best in their future endeavors!



Students in the Spanish section who presented their capstones in spring 2024.

Congratulations to all of you: Daniel Rosa Alves da Silva, Yessica Bocanegra, Ismeray Cervantes, Fernanda Colunga, Viridiana Dávila, Kelvin López, Sarah López, Simón López, Evelyn Lucha, Cecilia Ordóñez, José Reyes, Ariadna Sánchez, Aracely Serrano Ramos, and Lizbeth Zavaleta.

Dr. Axel Montepeque, Head of the Spanish Section, participated in the presentation of the book titled, *(De)construyendo latinidades y movidas de descolonización*, at the prestigious Casa de las Américas, in La Habana, Cuba on April 18th, 2024. Specifically, he discussed his chapter in said book titled, "Tiempos de furia: colonialidad, totalidad, y naufragio en la cuentística de Ana Lydia Vega," in which he analyzes the work of the famed Puerto Rican author, Ana Lydia Vega.

On June 12th, Dr. Montepeque served as a discussant on a panel titled, "Narconarrativas', pasados y presentes: reflexiones sobre el sujeto, el espacio y la nación," at the Latin American Studies Association taking place in Bogotá, Colombia, from June 12th to the 15th.

Dr. Montepeque is proud to share that María Elizabeth Massena, our former undergraduate and graduate student, will present her paper titled, "Radiografía de una jefa narco en *Si me querés, quereme transa, Cristián Alarcón,*" on this same panel.

In Spring 2024, Dr. Montepeque was interviewed along with Dr. Linda Alvarez (Political Science, CSUN) by Javier Rojas regarding immigration policy as a wedge issue in the 2024' Presidential Election. The media release was published in the CSUN Newsroom on Tuesday, June 4th.

Dr. Montepeque also had the honor of serving as a faculty judge in the 2024 CSUNposium. Specifically, he judged the 10-Minute Oral Presentations delivered by undergraduate students in the Colleges of Arts, Media, and Communication, Health and Human Development, Humanities, and Social and Behavioral Sciences. It was a wonderful experience as the undergraduate students delivered amazing oral presentations.

Dr. Montepeque also had the pleasure of serving in Spring 2024 on the College of Humanities Research Fellowship Program Committee.

Besides the foregoing, Dr. Montepeque also had the pleasure of collaborating with the Center for the Study of the Peoples of the Américas (CESPA) in Spring 2024. With the generous support of the College of Humanities' Academic Programming Fund, Dr. Montepeque hosted a webinar by the distinguished scholar Dr. Paul M. Worley titled, "From Story to Tsikbal: The Words and Worlds of Contemporary Maya Ts'íib

(Writing?) in Yucatán.” As a settler scholar, Dr. Worley in his talk explored, “the relations that Maya writers in Yucatán create between their texts and their communities, their texts and readers, each other, and scholarship produced about their communities.” The seminar was well-attended by students and faculty from CSUN and other universities.

Dr. Montepeque also had the pleasure of organizing two other CESPAs webinars. In the first of these, Dr. Karina Alma from UCLA delivered a talk on her forthcoming book titled, *Central American Counterpoetics*, in which she explored responses to political repression by U.S. Central Americans. Arturo Albizures, a founding member of the Human Rights organization, *Asociación para la Comunicación, el Arte y la Cultura* (COMUNICARTE), delivered the second webinar in which he discussed his work documenting the (re)construction of historical memory in Guatemala. Both of these events were well-attended and produced a robust discussion.

Dr. Daniela Salcedo attended the *11th Symposium on Spanish as Heritage Language*, “Cultura y corazón: Local Knowledge and Community Engagement”, in San Antonio, Texas. Connecting the symposium's keynotes, conference presentations, academic panels, and workshops, there was a critical reflection about how our work in Spanish as Heritage Language can incorporate community engaged practices that model our commitment to our students, their communities and the communities our universities serve.

Sponsored by the College of Humanities Academic Programming Fund, Dr. Daniela Salcedo organized the visit of guest speaker Dr. Raquel Mattson-Prieto, currently a Spanish Lecturer in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Princeton University to our SPAN 400 class to present “No me considero bilingüe todavía”: Grammatical Features of Spanish as a Heritage Language”.

During spring 2024, Dr. Svetlana Tyutina Served as a member of the Leadership Team for the Middle Leadership Academy, where she participated in developing curriculum and year-long programming for leaders of the CSU campuses focused on projects promoting equity and diversity.

Dr. Tyutina also Served on the Student Success Network Advisory board, an umbrella organization for CSU initiatives related to promoting student wellbeing and success. She also served on the Land Acknowledgement subcommittee.

Dr. Tyutina Presented her research and chaired a panel "Teaching beyond University" at the annual MLA convention in Philadelphia in January 2024.

Dr. Adrian Perez Boluda presented the paper “El español en las universidades del Sur de California. Presente y futuro”, at the 41 AESLA CONFERENCE, held from 4/17/24 to 4/19/24 in Valencia, Spain.

On March 14, a group of students from Anacapa Middle School led by their teacher, Paola Rodriguez, visited our department to get information on the Spanish program, and the importance of knowing Spanish for their professional

goals. Also, on April 23, a group of AP Spanish students from Ventura High School visited our department to get information on our Spanish programs. Their instructor, Salvador Villalobos Mendez, graduated with a B.A. in Spanish from our department, and now is working as Spanish Teacher in Ventura High School.



Dr. Perez Boluda, Prof. Villalobos, and his students from Ventura High School.

SPANISH GRADUATE PROGRAM

Graduate students in the Spanish program, under the advisement of Dr. Svetlana Tyutina, completed over 300 hours of volunteer work for the [CSUN VITA clinic](#), the Volunteer income tax assistance clinic helping low-income families in the San Fernando Valley and beyond. Students served as Spanish/English interpreters at VITA sites and its hub at CSUN.

Silvia Gonzalez and Stepanie Torres, together with their professor Dr. Svetlana Tyutina, translated the [Toxic Tour](#) website and videos for the CSUN HERE Center. As the website mentions, "The SFV Toxic Tour takes students on a virtual "toxic tour" of

the San Fernando Valley through a GIS Story Map platform. The tour is led by faculty experts revealing sites of environmental injustice but also locations of re-imagination and hope." This project was developed by CSUN professors in collaboration with the community.

ABOUT THE MODERN AND CLASSICAL LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES DEPARTMENT

The mission of the department is to offer curricula, services and research leading to proficiency in language, literature, and culture that will enable individuals to function effectively in the international communities in our geographical area and throughout the world. The Department's programs serve and promote all academic divisions of the University in providing our students the language and cultural training necessary to support their international and intercultural endeavors.

The Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures offers a wide variety of courses and programs in the fields of foreign languages, literatures and cultures. They are designed for those students who intend to major or minor in languages other than English, for students who seek a broad liberal arts education in preparation for a variety of professions, and for students whose careers will be furthered by the knowledge of another language and culture. In addition to the majors and graduate degrees, the department offers minors in Armenian,

Classics, French, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish, and a number of courses in Arab, Chinese, Farsi, Hebrew, and Korean.



Traditional Kasbah in Marocco

Sections Heads

- V. Shemmassian..... Armenian
- T. Watson.....Classics
- J. Huang.....Chinese
- A. Perez Boluda.....French
- A. Perez Boluda.....Italian
- D. Langford.....Japanese
- D. Langford.....Languages & Cultures
- A. Perez Boluda..... Russian
- A. Montepeque.....Spanish
- S. Tyutina.... Master in Spanish Coord.

Departmental Office

Dr. Adrian Perez Boluda, Chair
 Support Coordinator (ASC II)
 Lisa Kim
 Support Assistant II
 Leslie Cervantes
 MCLL Office Sierra Tower 405
 Phone: 818-677-3467
 Fax: 818-677-5797
 Website: www.csun.edu/MCLL



Traditional Norwegian clothing