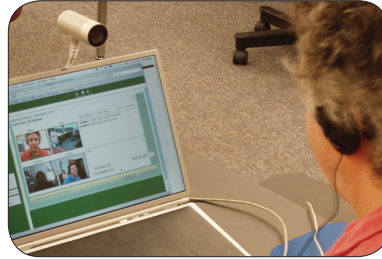




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## Spanish Literature Reenacted by UO Spanish Students

Ammina Kothari, Newsletter Editor

"The Spanish theatre class I took helped me overcome my fear of speaking and performing in public," said Laura Church, a former student in SPN 331, Introduction to Spanish Theater.

Anyone not familiar with this unique course introduced by Juan Eppe, Professor of Spanish in the Department of Romance Languages over 10 years ago, might require a little bit more clarification.

Eppe, a native of Chile and theater aficionado, was happy to elaborate about this juxtaposition of Spanish literature with theater production. The class was started with the aim of introducing Spanish language students to nuances in Spanish literature by showing them differences between reading and discussing a play and doing a live performance. "The idea is that [students] have an experience about how the plays, the literary texts can become actual plays," he said.

While many students come to know about this course through word-of-mouth, there are also some who sign-up not knowing that it is performance-based. The former come in knowing what to expect—intensive language practice, voice training, and, ultimately, performing for a live audience. The latter group tend to get cold-feet in the beginning, but Eppe points out to them that "we are all acting in our social world; we don't realize that we are also capable of acting in a public setting in a fictitious situation. Right now I am acting as a teacher, the way I talk, walk, is very different from what I do when I am at home or playing in the park."

Eppe continues this reassuring dialogue with his students throughout the term. He gives them an overview of Latin American Theater first, and then helps them select short plays for further literary

analysis and performance. The number of plays depend on the ratio of male to female students. Usually more female students take this class, according to Eppe, and sometimes they have to impersonate male characters.

Once students have been introduced to the premise of the class, the count down begins for the final live performance. Students are not only required to memorize their script, learn to control their voices and acting, but in some instances, they have to practice accents from Chile, Argentina, Mexico and Cuba, as the plays can be from different countries. Eppe also asks native speakers from Latin America on campus to assist his students with the reading of the scripts so that they can imitate the accent accurately.



Spanish Professor Juan Eppe

# Spanish Literature Reenacted (continued from page 1)

Ammina Kothari, Newsletter Editor

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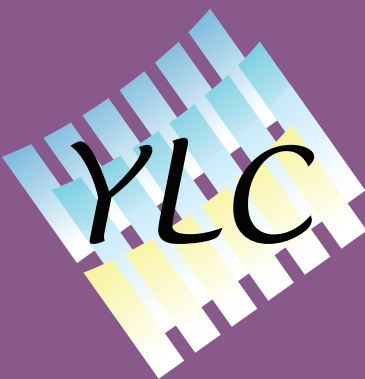
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Like actors in training, Epple requires them to complete a series of exercises in front of a live audience. "We practice with songs and we perform the songs outside in front of the EMU or the Department of Romance Languages, at midday when there are a lot of students coming and going through," he explained.

A ten-week term can be a daunting timeline in which to produce and act in a play. Yet, Epple's students deliver a successful performance each year. "They do a lot of work, in the beginning they feel overwhelmed, some of them think they will not be able to perform, but then with help of group work, because this is essentially team work, they begin to have more confidence in themselves," Epple elaborated.

The plays are usually performed in the Ben Linder room in the EMU during finals week and they attract in a good audience. Students help to advertise the performance, because they know that the success of the play is gauged primarily by the size and response of the audience. "The most important thing for them is to be seen by their friends, relatives and parents," stated Epple.

Rebecca Wilson, an undergraduate majoring in Spanish said she liked this class because it combined two things that she really enjoys: acting and speaking Spanish. "I did a lot of theater when I was in junior high and high school, so it was great to be involved in a production again." While she enthusiastically recommends this class and called it fun, Wilson also had a disclaimer. "For students that don't like to speak in front of others or get nervous speaking Spanish, the class may be more difficult, but all together it is a great opportunity to build confidence in one's Spanish speaking abilities".



Spanish (331) Students Performing in Ben Linder Room

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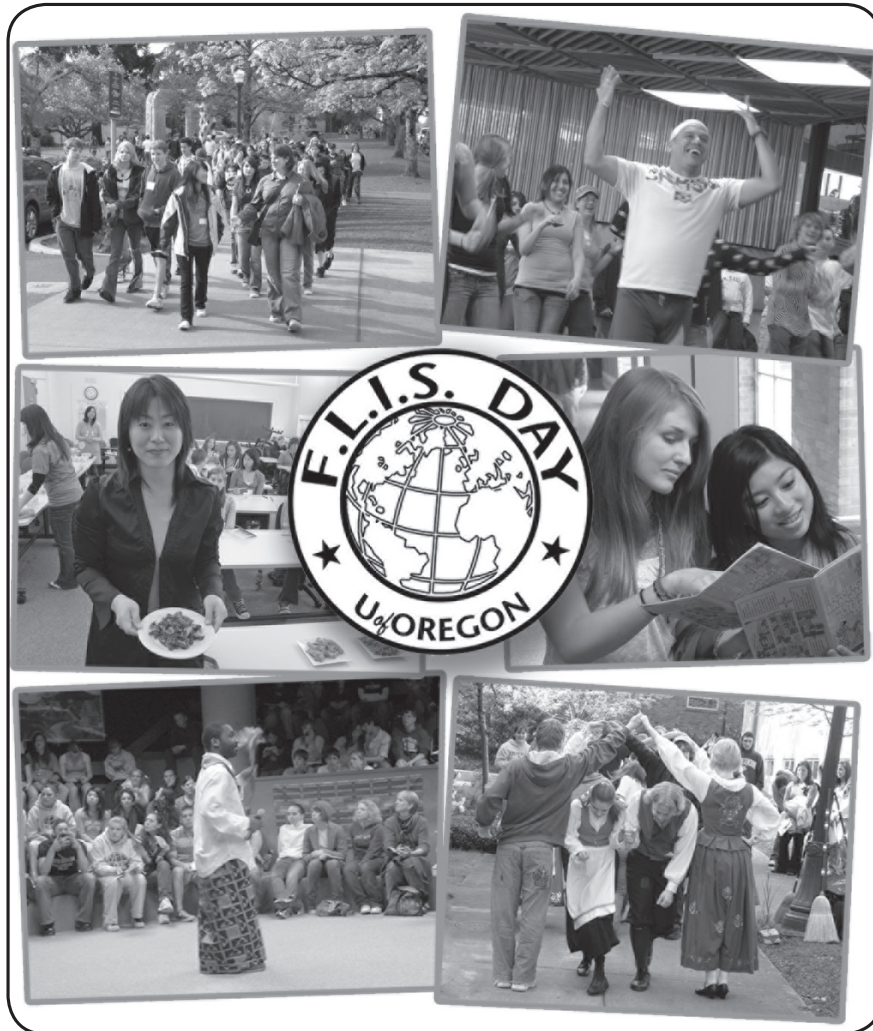
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# Thank You, Presenters!

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We look forward to  
another very  
successful FLIS on  
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### Crossing Communication Boundaries (continued from page 4)

According to their instructor, Claudia Ventura, the exchange has allowed her students to both explore topics of interest with their counterparts in Italy, and take risks with the language that they might not otherwise do in class. Ventura's students work from a semi-structured script as they explore issues of identity and contemporary life.

All students post their messages in both the target language and their native one. This reduces some of the stress involved and it allows students to speak at length about the topic of that week—which in turn provides an excellent opportunity for listening comprehension.

Both Williams and Ventura acknowledge that managing an exchange like this is not trivial. Besides finding collaborating teachers in France and Italy and sorting out the technical details, there are the age old problems of keeping the communication regular, civil, and vital. Still, both are convinced of the effectiveness of the exchange and plan to continue doing them.

Their students seem to think so, too. In Williams' French class, 21 out of 25 opted to take part in an exchange this term. Shelli Sherman, one of Williams' second year students put it this way: "I think that all of the language courses should make this option available if possible."

# Crossing Communication Boundaries

Jeff Magoto, YLC Director

Language teaching and “social networking” go way back. First there was penpals. Then keypals. And, now in this multimedia age, we have voicepals, or videopals, or as many term it, “v-pals”.

Whatever you call it, the purpose for doing exchanges between language students in one country and those in another really hasn’t changed that much over the years: to establish relationships between students in disparate places, create opportunities for cross cultural understanding, and, of course, provide a “real” audience for foreign language practice.

What has changed of course is the ease with which exchanges can occur using web-based and voice-based tools like YLC’s Message Board and Amiga LiveChat.

Senior Instructor in French, Melanie Williams, whose students have worked with university counterparts in Lyon, France this entire year, explains her interest in exchanges like this:

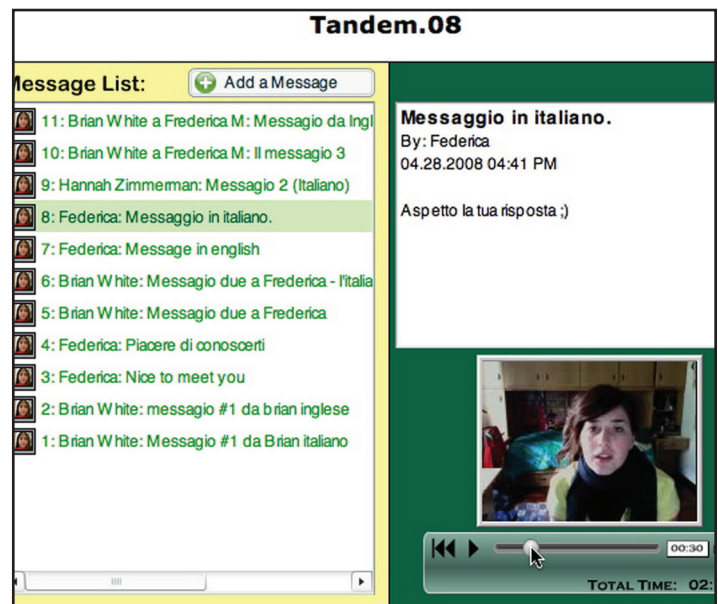
“French language students in Eugene often have no social contact with native French speakers and this first chance to communicate with a French peer motivated them to work on oral production”.

Lyon II is one of the Oregon University System’s oldest study abroad exchange partners and several of Williams’ students plan to study there in the future.

Williams also explained that “this connection encourages students to be more curious of another culture and to realize that learning French has true communicative purpose, even if they cannot travel to study in Lyon. The program also gives students direct access to current happenings in France that we can use as points of discussion in the classroom”.

Two of Williams’ FRN 203 students wrote to say they appreciated the way the exchange deepened

their understanding of French and France. Nichole Scholes commented, “I have a new way of looking at things, and also saying things.” Shelli Sherman pointed out, “I made use of the exchanges to ask questions about France, just interesting things I was curious about, like asking about rumors I had heard or about how much caffeine they liked to drink.”



Using the YLC Messageboard Italian student Federica corresponds with her counterpart, ITN 105 student Bryan White.

UO Italian students have been using Message Board and wikis to communicate with peers in Italy for a couple of years now, but this is the first time that beginning language students (ITN 105) have participated as well.

Continued on page 3

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