Consider for a moment these statistics published by The Washington Post in 2007. In that year—the last time U.S. high school seniors were tested in economics by the National Assessment of Educational Progress—60 percent of students knew that lower tax revenue and higher spending increase a country’s debt. About 50 percent were aware that the cost of imported goods would probably decrease without trade restrictions. Only one in ten students could analyze how a change in the unemployment rate affected income, spending, and production.

Fortunately, a unique new nationwide program is attempting to improve students’ knowledge of economics, and it is starting with even younger students: ninth and tenth graders. For people like me who grew up in a time when economics wasn’t even taught in high schools, the other amazing part of this story is that this program tests student knowledge not about issues here in the U.S. but about European economics.

Euro Challenge, now in its fourth year, is billed as an educational opportunity for high school students to learn about the European Union (EU) and the euro. While EUCE/ESC is sponsoring Euro Challenge for the second time, our part in this year’s program was expanded with the addition of a teacher/student orientation for interested high schools featuring a speaker from the Delegation of the European Commission to the U.S. in Washington, D.C.

After completing orientation and following months of preparation, a team from local North Allegheny Intermediate High School recently won the regional and preliminary rounds of the Euro Challenge 2009 competition and will advance to the semi-final round of the competition to be held at the Federal Reserve Bank in New York City on April 29, 2009. The students on North Allegheny’s winning team are from left to right in the photo above: Tom Helgerman, Lili Peng, Andrea Evankovich, Katie Adams, and Apoorv Dhir. This group will compete against 24 other teams from eight states while they enjoy the travel and educational opportunities afforded by their prize-winning trip to New York.

The preliminary round of the competition took place at the University of Pittsburgh on April 1, 2009. The requirements of the Euro Challenge are for student teams to make presentations answering specific questions about the European economy as a whole and about the single currency, the euro. They are then asked to pick one member country of the euro area, to examine an economic problem at the country level, and to identify policies for responding to that problem.
SUMMER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Friday, May 8, 2009


This one-day conference will bring together linguists, anthropologists, and scholars of literature to look at the patterns of intersection between language, literature, and expressions of identity in the changing and enlarging contexts of the EU. As EU policy has encouraged the redevelopment and legitimization of less-used or minority languages within the framework of a wider sense of European unity, this conference will be concerned with how this aspect of EU policy has been taken up in practice. Since this is a potentially complex topic, the conference will concentrate on parts of Europe where there are identifiable language-related movements, including Scotland and Ireland. Relationships between language, literature, and politics will be one major focus. A second focus will be on problems of standardization in language presentation. A third will be on the scope for creativity and imaginative performances of identity in the broader senses of the term that is opened up through EU policies and the association between EU identity and minority categories of people within the Union. This event is co-sponsored by the European Union Center of Excellence and the European Studies Center, the University of Pittsburgh, and the Center for European Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

For more information, please contact the conference co-chairs: Prof. Andrew J. Strathern, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Anthropology, and Dr. Pamela J. Stewart (Strathern), Senior Research Associate, Department of Anthropology, University of Pittsburgh, 3302 Wesley W. Posvar Hall, Pittsburgh, PA 15260 or by phone at 412-648-7519.

Thursday, May 21, 2009

University-Level Faculty Workshop: “Understanding Islamic Frameworks in a Global Context”

This workshop welcomes interested faculty from the University of Pittsburgh and other universities in western Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia to join in an exploration of contemporary Islam in a global context. Panel discussions will feature the topics of “Society and Politics” in the morning and “Business and Law” in the afternoon. Dr. Muqtedar Khan from the University of Delaware will be the keynote speaker. 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m., 4130 Posvar Hall. Please contact Sandra Hall at ssh13@pitt.edu for more information.

Thursday June 11 - Saturday, June 13, 2009

Policy Conference:

“Accessibility in the Context of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”

The European Union Center of Excellence has invited Dr. Katherine Seelman, Professor of Rehabilitation and Technology in the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, to organize a policy conference for this June to bring together experts on accessibility in the context of disabilities from the U.S. and Europe, with participation by an official of the European Commission. Experts from user organizations and industry have also been invited to participate.

The purpose of the conference is to explore transatlantic perspectives on accessibility in the context of the practical implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The seminar will explore the Convention’s emphasis on accessibility from a human rights perspective. The issue of accessibility will be given prominence in this transatlantic dialogue, viewed by many as crucial for the implementation of the Convention’s human rights dimension. The link between human rights and accessibility will provide the background for the discussion. The built environment, transport, and Information & Communication, including Information and Communication Technology (ICT), are vital for such implementation, and provide a focal point for the discussion on accessibility. The promotion of global standards and possible U.S.-EU cooperation in this area will be discussed. It is the goal of the seminar to be a platform for discussion that will cover topics related to the work of the on-going EU-U.S. Dialogue on Accessibility as well as the more political dimensions of the Convention in relation to accessibility and the ratification process. The Convention has been signed by the Member States of the European Union, but not ratified in most European Union Member States. The conference will take place over one and a half days with proceedings to be written and coordinated by Professor Seelman.

For more information, please contact the conference chair: Katherine D. Seelman, PhD, Professor of Rehabilitation Science and Technology, Associate Dean Disability Programs, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Pittsburgh, 5036 Forbes Tower, Pittsburgh, PA 15260, by phone at 412-383-6727, or by e-mail at kds31@pitt.edu.
Since the beginning of this academic year, my coursework in the Slovak language has been graciously funded by the European Union Center of Excellence & European Studies Center (EUCE/ESC). A mere five years ago, such Slovak studies would have most likely been funded by the Center for Russian and Eastern European Studies. However, as many Slovaks will surely tell you, they are neither Russian nor Eastern European. They are Central European. Writer Milan Kundera expanded on this feeling of identity when he wrote *The Tragedy of Central Europe*. In it, he states that Central Europe was essentially stolen away from Europe in 1945 by the Soviet Union: “It is not merely a political catastrophe: it is also an attack on their civilization. The deep meaning of their resistance is the struggle to preserve their identity—or, to put it another way, to preserve their Westernness.”

Of course, communism was defeated and the Iron Curtain fell in 1989. Almost immediately, the newly freed Central European states looked westward, seeking membership in the EU. Institutionally, each state attempted to fulfill the requirements of the acquis communautaire: political institutions were made more democratic, trade was opened, and businesses encouraged to compete. On a cultural level, after 45 years of repression, Central Europeans could finally express themselves through unrestricted speech, theater, and music. Finally, on May 1, 2004, Slovakia became one of the eight post-communist countries to join the EU. But did this enlargement finally reunite a stolen Slovakia to the West?

This question is not easily answered. On an institutional level, Slovakia is faring rather well. After a rough political period under the autocratic Prime Minister Vladimír Mečiar, the government is stable, more democratic, and enjoys membership in NATO and the Eurozone. Yet an issue that has arisen is that some people are worried that their country’s “return to the West” and membership in the EU has cost them part of their Slovak identity. However, the majority of Slovaks are positive about membership in the EU and dismiss euroskeptics as nationalists.

My previous studies of the Czech language at Palacký University taught me about the importance that language plays in politics. Interestingly, the secondary languages tell the tales of Slovakia’s place in terms of national identity. Slovakia has always struggled to find its identity under larger political entities, and the second languages reflect these dominant influences. When Slovakia was part of the Austria-Hungarian empire (and later when it allied itself with Nazi Germany’s coalition), many people learned German as a second language. Then, when the Iron Curtain fell over Central Europe, Russian became the most common second language taught in schools. Today, students have their choice of English, German, or French, the three main languages of the EU. Thus, there are three generations in Slovakia with their own unique linguistic characteristics. Even though the adherence to the EU is elective, critics of the EU claim there is a democratic deficit in such a large bureaucratic organization. When so few people speak Slovak (5 million people out of 500 million in the EU), it is easy to struggle to find one’s identity in such a large organization.

The open borders policy of the EU has also brought Slovakia closer to Western Europe—perhaps a little too close. These fleeing workers are the youngest adult generation to see their country free of communism, yet waves of university graduates leave the nation for richer Western nations, leaving Slovakia “brain drained.” Slovakia has opened its labor market, but there is still stiff competition for jobs and higher wages against places like Ireland and the United Kingdom. So, although the general economic situation in the country is improving, many of the youth who could carry on the cultures and traditions of Slovakia are leaving. This has been met with differing opinions among those living in the country. Many progressives believe change is good, but there are those skeptics who have the ghost of Soviet control still looming in their minds: they do not want Slovak sovereignty and identity to be lost in a supranational Europe.

Thanks to the EUCE/ESC, I have progressed in my Slovak language skills. I can hold basic conversations with Slovak people, which will come in handy when I return to Central Europe to conduct comparative behavioral research. Most importantly, I hope my newly acquired language skills will help me answer the question that has plagued many minds: now that Slovakia has been returned from Moscow, is it slowly having its identity stolen away by Brussels?
Ms. Anne-Laure Beaussier, PhD candidate and research fellow at the Universite de Montpellier I in France.

Prof. Hartmut Behr, Professor of International Politics at Newcastle University in the UK.

Mr. William Burros, Senior Advisor in the Political and Development Section of the Delegation of the European Commission to the U.S. in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Cesare Cuttica, PhD in Intellectual History at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy.

Ms. Susan Dudley, former Co-Chair of the EU-U.S. High-Level Regulatory Cooperation Forum.

Ms. Patricia Otero Felipe, PhD Candidate from the University of Salamanca, Spain.

Ms. Pinar Gözen, PhD candidate from the School of International Studies at the University of Trento, Italy.

Dr. Nicola Harrington, Deputy Director of Policy and Communications, United Nations.

Dr. Andreas Hoff, James Martin Senior Research Fellow at the Oxford Institute of Ageing in the UK.

Prof. Martin Holland, Director, National Centre for Research on Europe, Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence and EU Centres Network, University of Canterbury, New Zealand.

Prof. Liesbet Hooghe, Zachary Taylor Smith Professor of Political Science at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill and Chair in Multi-level Governance at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

Prof. Dimitris Keridis, Associate Professor of International Relations at the University of Macedonia in Greece.

Prof. Stefania Licini, Visiting Fulbright Professor of Economic History from the University of Bergamo in Italy.

Dr. Stefan Lorenzmeier, Visiting Professor of Law from the University of Ledien in the Netherlands.

Dr. Denis MacShane, Minster for Europe in the UK 2002-2005 and serves on the Council of Europe and NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

Dr. Achilleas Mitsos, Visiting Distinguished Professor from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Prof. Eric Remacle, Visiting Distinguished Professor of Political Science from the Universite libre de Bruxelles.

Mr. Angeloantonio Rosato, Italian journalist and Fulbright scholar.

Ambassador Vasil Sikharulidze, Georgian Ambassador to the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

Prof. Hilary Silver, Associate Professor of Sociology at Brown University.

Dr. Ivana Simikova, Junior Lecturer at the Technical University of Liberec in the Czech Republic.

Prof. Marc Smyrl, Associate Professor at the Universite de Montpellier I in France and at the University of Denver Department of Political Science.

Mr. Michito Tsuruoka, Resident Fellow on a German Marshall Fund-Tokyo Foundation fellowship.

Dr. Marc Vanheukelen, Head of Unit for Relations with the U.S. and Canada in the Directorate General for External Relations of the European Commission.

Ambassador Pierre Vimont, French Ambassador to the U.S.

Dr. Ernst von Weizsäcker, Dean of the Donald Bren School of Environmental Science and Management at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

A wide range of scholars, professors, and practitioners visited EUCE/ESC during the 2008-2009 academic year, including:

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SRS GRADUATE STUDENT ESSAY PRIZE

The Society for Romanian Studies announces the Graduate Student Essay Prize competition for an outstanding unpublished essay or thesis chapter written in English by a graduate student in any social science or humanities discipline on a Romanian subject. The competition is open to current M.A. and doctoral students or to those who defended dissertations in 2008-2009. Essays/chapters should be between 25 and 50 pages double spaced, including reference material. Submissions should be sent in duplicate by July 1, 2009 to Paul E. Michelson, Society for Romanian Studies, Huntington University, Huntington IN 46750 or in electronic format (.doc or pdf) to pmichelson@huntington.edu. For more information, please visit www.huntington.edu/srs/srs_announcements.htm.
Expanding My Horizons for a Global Economy: A Third Language

by Esther D. Mosimann

JD Candidate, School of Law

Esther D. Mosimann was a recipient of a Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowship for the 2008-2009 academic year.

I have always had a strong interest in international affairs, specifically in the area of Europe. This interest grew out of my Swiss roots. As a native of Switzerland who moved to the U.S. at a young age, I grew up speaking both German and English at home. Furthermore, I spent many of my summers in Switzerland with family and friends.

During my undergraduate career, my interest in all things European grew. In order to nurture my interest, I lived in the University of Pittsburgh’s International Community, which is geared toward students with a passion for cross-cultural issues and who wish to expand their global vision. In addition, I took advanced German classes and used my history major as an opportunity to learn more about modern Europe and the emergence of the EU. I also spent a wonderful and exciting semester in Belgium interning for the EU Parliament and taking classes at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

Naturally, when I began my studies as a law student at the University of Pittsburgh, I wanted to continue to explore my interest in Europe with the ultimate aim of securing a legal job in the international arena. In furtherance of this goal, I applied for the Foreign Language Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship, which provides its recipients with a living stipend and the opportunity to study a foreign language in addition to their regular course of study. I was fortunate to receive the FLAS Fellowship, which enabled me to study Italian in addition to my legal studies.

Out of all the languages that FLAS Fellows have the option to study, I wanted to study Italian because it is one of the four national languages of Switzerland. In light of that fact, I was sure that I would be able to use Italian in the future. Second, although the rise of English as the international lingua franca has made it easier for native English speakers to get by in other countries without knowing a second language, I believe that putting in the time and effort to learn languages other than English makes a person more marketable in today’s globalized economy.

I began the 2008-2009 academic year studying Italian as a true beginner. I must admit learning a language “from scratch” was more difficult than I had anticipated. Although I thought that my extensive background in German would be useful and help me learn Italian more quickly, it did not take long for me to discover that the sounds and structure of Italian are very different from the Germanic languages that I was accustomed to using.

Nevertheless, the struggle of learning a Romantic language without a crutch of any kind turned out to be a very rewarding experience for me. Indeed, attending my Italian class every day quickly became one of the highlights of my week. This was primarily because each semester my instructor thought of many creative ways to foster language learning. For example, in class I participated in many group exercises and group presentations, including a very entertaining fashion show. In addition, the daily homework exercises helped me learn Italian through repetition and reinforcement.

Despite the initial challenges that all beginners face when learning a language, over the past two semesters my ability to speak and understand Italian has improved immensely. I am now able to form complete sentences in Italian, and I am also able to carry on an Italian conversation, albeit a limited one.

In addition to learning Italian, the FLAS Fellowship also encouraged me to take law classes that I would not have initially considered. For example, last semester I took an interesting class entitled “Civil Law Tradition.” This class focused primarily on the difference between the U.S.’s legal system versus the systems that exist in Europe. In addition, I took a European Sales Law class, which was taught by Professor Beate Gsell, a visiting German professor from the University of Augsburg. This class addressed the differences between U.S. and European commercial law.

As the 2008-2009 academic year comes to an end, I look forward to the prospect of graduating and using the skills that I learned while attending the University of Pittsburgh. The FLAS Fellowship has been a challenging and rewarding experience for me. I am sure that the Italian and European courses that I completed while in law school will help me be a better member of the legal community, and I look forward to applying my new language skills when I return to Europe in the near future.
The students from North Allegheny worked in close cooperation to research and prepare a 15-minute presentation answering the questions posed by the Euro Challenge. For the second part of the challenge, which deals with an issue at the country level, the team chose to discuss Portugal’s slow economic growth and to create policies to deal with that issue. Their presentation was followed by a 10-minute question and answer session led by the judging panel to further test the students’ knowledge. In order to advance to New York, North Allegheny defeated another local team as well as teams from the North Carolina region.

The Euro Challenge program has expanded since its inception to include almost 80 teams in 2009. “This year is a very special year for the Euro Challenge,” said Ambassador John Bruton, Head of the Delegation of the European Commission to the U.S. “We have more schools and students competing this year than we have ever had since the Delegation of the European Commission to the U.S. first launched the contest in 2006. And they are competing at a time when daily headlines remind us just how important it is that we all understand the world of economics and finance.”

Most competitors this year admit that the worldwide economic crisis made analyzing economic situations around the globe a bit more challenging. However, overall interest in economics has soared recently due to that very same crisis along with issues that hit closer to home like credit card debt and rising unemployment. For a subject that used to be called “the dismal science,” economics has come a long way.

In addition to the paid trip to New York awarded for winning the preliminary round, students also compete for scholarships and a one-day field trip to Washington, D.C. awarded by the Moody’s Foundation to the top two teams overall. “Moody’s is proud to be supporting the Euro Challenge as the competition grows into a truly national event,” said Fran Laserson, President of the Moody’s Foundation. “Economic and financial literacy is key to the development of tomorrow’s U.S. and global leaders.”

The Euro Challenge is a program created and supported by the Delegation of the European Commission to the United States in Washington, D.C., with the technical support of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. Other partner organizations include The Moody’s Foundation, Credit Suisse, the University of North Carolina, Florida International University, the University of Michigan, the University of Pittsburgh, the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, and the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. For more information on Euro Challenge, please visit www.euro-challenge.org/news/.

The European Union Center of Excellence and the European Studies Center applaud this year’s North Allegheny team and are proud to sponsor a program that enables students to learn first-hand about complex international issues like the ones posed by Euro Challenge.

**UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM RESULTS**

The Undergraduate Research Symposium, co-sponsored by EUCE/ESC and the Center for Russian and Eastern European Studies, took place on March 26-27, 2009. The School of Arts and Sciences and the U.S. Department of Education provided funding that made this event possible.

The event began with a dinner on March 26 for students, organizers, sponsors and guests that was attended by 45 people. The keynote address was given by Dr. Kenneth Thompson, Associate Director for Medical Affairs, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Public Health, University of Pittsburgh.

The symposium featured 24 students from 7 different schools: University of Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh-Greensburg, Bethany College, Washington & Jefferson College, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Dickinson College, and West Virginia Wesleyan College. There were six panel competitions made up of four students and papers each. Here are the panel titles, the winning students, their schools, and the titles of the winning papers.

**LITERATURE AND BIOGRAPHY**

Jeff Reamer, University of Pittsburgh, “The Compromise of Carl Schmitt: German Sovereignty for Nazism”

**EUROPEAN POLITICAL ECONOMY**


**POST-COMMUNIST TRANSITIONS**

Daniel Gore, University of Pittsburgh, “Democracy, Dilemmas, and Dissension: The 2008 Russian Presidential Election and Russia’s Unique Democratic Structure”

**RECONSIDERING HISTORY**

Joe Lodico, University of Pittsburgh, “Bureaucracies and the Patterns of Persecution: The Spanish Inquisition and the Scottish Witch-Hunt”

**CONFLICT, WAR, AND NEGOTIATION**

Weilu Tan, University of Pittsburgh, “The Failure of CFSP: EU’s Human Rights Policy towards China”

**EUROPEAN UNION ENLARGEMENT**

Anna Siegel, University of Pittsburgh--Greensburg, “Bosnia’s Near Democracy: Close Enough for the European Union?”
NOTE TO EUCE/ESC AFFILIATED FACULTY, STUDENTS, & ALUMNI:

Please keep us informed about your professional achievements pertaining to the study of the EU and Europe. Send news of awards offered, grants received, books recently published, job appointments accepted, etc., to the newsletter editor at eucnews@pitt.edu.

STUDENT NEWS:

Galina Zapryanova, PhD Candidate in the Department of Political Science, received a summer fellowship for the amount of $4,000 from the Council for European Studies (CES) at Columbia University. This is part of the 2009 CES Pre-Dissertation Fellowship Program, and the funds are to be used for field research in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic.

2009 Certificate Students

Congratulations to the following students:

Western European Studies Certificate:

Undergraduate Students
- Lorraine Baer, English Literature
- Louise Bailey, History & Political Science
- Alyssa Bergsten, Economics & Political Science
- Susan Bodack, Communications & Spanish
- Martha Boksenbaum, French & Linguistics
- Bridget Boyle, English Writing
- Patrick Cavanaugh, Anthropology & History
- Alexis Chidi, Economics & Psychology
- Samantha Connell, History
- Caitlin Conner, Italian & Psychology
- John Davis, Spanish
- Katlyn Davis, English Writing & Political Science
- Alisha Ebling, English Writing
- Eric Eissler, German
- Jessica Flamholz, Italian & Spanish
- Kelly George, Anthropology & Italian Studies
- Brett Goode, History & Political Science
- David Goode, History & Political Science
- Jada Greenhowe, Communications
- Cassandra Gundy, Communications
- Janice Hamilton, Political Science
- Caitlin Henry, French & History
- Jacqueline Hill, Business, Italian & Political Science
- Anna-Lena Kempen, Anthropology, German & History of Art & Architecture
- Chloe Kuhns, English Literature
- Alix Levy, Political Science
- Emlyn Mandel, Political Science & Spanish
- Jacqueline McWilliams, History of Art & Architecture

Benjamin Merici, Engineering, Linguistics, & Philosophy
- Natalie Mitchell, Linguistics
- Ishioma Opia, Rehabilitation Science
- Eleanor Ott, Chemistry, French, & History
- Maria Palermo, Political Science
- Sharon Pobodnik, Psychology & Sociology
- Jennifer Pogue-Geile, Political Science
- Margaret Pusateri, Anthropology & Biology
- Amira Rahim, Sociology
- Meghan Reichart, Economics & French
- Yvonne Saadi, German and Philosophy & Psychology
- Anna Talone, Italian & Psychology
- Weilu Tan, Japanese & Political Science
- Kelly Thomas, English Writing
- Bridget Weid, Physics & Political Science
- Benjamin Wischnowski, History & Political Science

Graduate Students (Anticipated)
- Lofton Durham III, Theatre Arts
- Emily Knarr, Masters in Public & International Affairs

EU Certificate Students:

Undergraduate Students
- Alyssa Bergsten, Economics & Political Science
- Janice Hamilton, Political Science
- Alix Levy, Political Science
- Maria Palermo, Political Science
- Kostadin Petrov, Biology & Political Science
- Weilu Tan, Japanese & Political Science
- Benjamin Wischnowski, History & Political Science
TO THE POINT...

If you would like to be added to the EUCE/ESC newsletter’s electronic distribution list, please email the Center at euce@pitt.edu. Include the subject line “Newsletter” and your name, address, and affiliation. You can also call us at 412-648-7405 or send a fax to 412-648-2199. In addition, the latest edition of the newsletter and a complete, updated list of events can always be found at our website: www.ucis.pitt.edu/euce/euce.html.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS
- May 21 - University-Level Faculty Workshop: “Understanding Islamic Frameworks in a Global Context.”

EUCE/ESC Newsletter:
Director: Professor Alberta Sbragia
Associate Director: Timothy Thompson
Editor: Julie Draper

For newsletter announcements, comments, or submissions, e-mail: eucne@pitt.edu

EUCE/ESC would like to thank the U.S. Department of Education and the European Commission for funds for this issue.

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