

# MODERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES NEWSLETTER

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## Department News

### Department Meeting

There will be a department meeting Tuesday December 10 at 11 in the Language Resource Center. All department personnel are encouraged to attend. There will be three items to discuss: an amendment to the bylaws, potential curriculum changes, and merit guidelines/apportionment. The lecturer representative will have a vote on curriculum changes; tenured, tenure track, and professor of practice faculty will vote on all others.

### GTA Assessment

The Dean's Office recently requested a needs assessment of graduate teaching assistantships to assist with future decisions concerning GTA fund allocation and identifying new sources of funding.

The graduate committee working with the sections and Chair have submitted the needs assessment for the department, if you would like to take a look at the assessment you can find it attached to this newsletter and also on the department Blackboard group.

### Important Dates

#### NOVEMBER

27<sup>th</sup>- Student Holiday

28<sup>th</sup>-1<sup>st</sup>- Thanksgiving Break, Student  
& Staff Holiday

#### DECEMBER

9<sup>th</sup>- Faculty Development Leave  
Requests Due

10<sup>th</sup>- Department Meeting

12<sup>th</sup>- SMAC Meeting

Please send your  
announcements, Bravos  
and events for the  
weekly newsletter  
to Casandra  
(csiefkes2@unl.edu)  
by 5 pm on Thursdays.

## Calls for Papers

See Bulletin Board in 1107 for more information

- 2014 James A Rawley Conference in the Humanities; UNL; DUE: 1 December
- Diálogos 11; University of Michigan; DUE: 1 December
- Society for the Interdisciplinary Study of Social Imagery; Colorado Springs, CO; DUE 9 December
- Department of Spanish & Portuguese; Ohio State University; DUE: 12 December
- Southwest Council of Latin American Studies; San Diego, CA; DUE: 20 December

## Language Clubs

### French Table

Fridays  
4pm-6pm  
Yia Yia's  
#UNLTableau

### Spanish Table

Thursdays  
6pm  
Yia Yia's  
#UNLMesa

### Japanese Table

Lvl 1: Mon // 4-5  
Lvl 2: Thur // 4-5  
Lvl 3: Wed // 3:30-4:30  
Kawasaki Reading Room

### Komensky Club

4 Sept  
6:30 Union  
#UNLKomensky

### Stammtisch

Tuesdays  
5:30pm-7pm  
Panera Bread  
#UNLStammtisch

### Russian Table

Tuesdays  
2-3:30pm  
1107 OLDH  
#UNLRussClub

### Portuguese Table

20 Sept // 5:00 pm  
Yia Yia's  
#UNLBatePapo

### Russian Club

#UNLRussClub

### Arabic Table

Wednesdays  
3:30pm-5:30pm  
1126 OLDH  
#UNLArabicNadfi

## Bravo!

to

## Kelly Kingsbury Brunetto

who has signed a publishing agreement with Deep University Press for a forthcoming book on language learning through theatre, tentatively titled *Deep College Language Learning through Drama: Narratives of Experience*.

## Kawasaki Reading Room

Shirley Muramoto Wong, whose mother and grandmother were held in a WWII internment camp for Japanese-Americans, will give a presentation on December 6th at the Kauffman Great Hall. The presentation entitled, "Hidden Legacy" will explore the Japanese-American struggle to maintain their traditional performing arts within the confines of prison camps.

## Cultural Ambassadors

Tuesday, December 3rd

2:30 – 4 pm

Language Resource Center  
(1126 OLDH)

Please let your students know and encourage them to stop by for more information, refreshments will be provided.

See Flyer for more details.

# November

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat	Sun
				01	02	03
04	05	06 Global Cafe 10:30 // 316 Seaton Research Fair	07 Research Fair Oscar Clemente Movie 3:30 // Love Library	08 Oscar Clemente Video & Presentation 10:30 // 102 Hamilton Hall	09	10
11 International Education Week	12 International Education Week	13 International Education Week	14 International Education Week	15 International Education Week	16	17
18 NUFlex Benefits Enrollment Begins	19	20 Vladimir Vertlib Presentation 6:30 // Great Plains	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 STUDENT HOLIDAY	28 STUDENT AND STAFF HOLIDAY	29 STUDENT AND STAFF HOLIDAY	30	

# December

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat	Sun
02	03 Cultural Ambassadors 1126 OLDH // 2:30	04 Global Cafe 10:30 // 316 Seaton	05	06 Shirley Kazuyo Muramoto Lecture	07	08
09 Faculty Development Leaves Due DEAD WEEK	10 Department Meeting 11:00 // 1126 OLDH DEAD WEEK	11 DEAD WEEK	12 SMAC Meeting 11:00 // 1111 OLDH DEAD WEEK	13 DEAD WEEK	14	15
16 FINALS WEEK	17 FINALS WEEK	18 FINALS WEEK	19 FINALS WEEK	20 Graduate Commencement FINALS WEEK	21 Under- Grad Comcmt	22
23 HOLIDAY SHUTDOWN	24 HOLIDAY SHUTDOWN	25 HOLIDAY SHUTDOWN	26 HOLIDAY SHUTDOWN	27 HOLIDAY SHUTDOWN	28	29
30	31					

We welcome the College's review of GTA funding. We hope that it will lead to reducing apparent disparities between departments within the College and the gap between our department and other departments in Big Ten universities. Changes in enrollment patterns have not decreased DMLL's need for graduate teaching assistants. In fact, DMLL's reliance on GTAs has increased because of the drop in tenure-line faculty in Spanish and French since the last review in 2009. We have no assistants whose chief duty is grading, no research assistantships, no "reading assistantships." Our assistants are the front-line instructors of record for the classes to which they are assigned. Just as when the last such assessment was done by the College in 2009, our stipends are near the bottom of our peer group. However, we have plans to shift our internal fellowships to offer enhanced packages to entering students, and this, coupled with support from the College for higher stipends, could make us more competitive.

## I. Current use of GTA allocation

**Number of Graduate students supported:** In 2012-2013 we budgeted for 27 GTAs, all funded with state permanent allocations for assistantships (see attached list). There were 6 in French, 4 in German, and 17 in Spanish. 14 were PhD candidates (13 in Spanish; 1 in French) and 11 MA students.

Since the last assessment by the College in 2009, we have lost two assistants to budget cuts, even though the instructional needs have not changed substantially.

GTAs provide almost all the instruction in the 100-level courses in French and German. Their instructional role has become even more important in Spanish and French during the period since 2009, which has seen a net reduction of two faculty lines in French and three in Spanish. In Spanish, GTAs are now teaching advanced 200-level classes, and ABDs are assigned to 300-level sections once staffed by tenure-line faculty.

**Stipend level:** We maintain a \$500 differential between MA and PhD candidates. In 2013-14, stipends are \$ 12,214 and \$12,731.

**Types of assignments:** We have no research assistants; no assistants assigned to secretarial duties, as some interdisciplinary programs in the College have. All assistants are directly involved with instruction. Teaching assistants work closely under the supervision of a faculty coordinator, but are the instructors of record for the class they teach. They provide all the classroom instruction, grade all the homework and examinations, and meet with students during office hours. In Spring, 2013 each of our GTA produced an average of 121.58 credit hours.

Our assistants are appointed at .375 FTE. Each semester the GTAs teach either a 5 credit 100-level class + one hour in the language laboratory, or two sections of a three-credit course at either the 200 or 300 level.

In 2012-2013, about twelve were teaching two three-credit courses and 15 were teaching a five-credit course and working in the language laboratory each semester. In 2012-2013, the only exception was one assistant assigned to set up the Spanish Resource Center and tutor there.

## II. Department Needs Assessment

**Number of GTAs by assignment.** More of our basic language instruction could be provided by GTAs instead of by lecturers. In fall 2013, for example, in Spanish, twenty-two of the thirty-seven sections that comprise the language-requirement courses (101-202) are being taught by lecturers; we recommend replacing at least two of these lecturers with GTAs. At least one lecturer in French could be replaced by a

GTA. This was strengthen the graduate program by increasing the pool of graduate students enrolled in courses, while providing the GTA with valuable teaching experience.

**Recommended stipend level for GTAs.** In 2013-2014 our MA candidates receive \$12,214 and PhD candidates receive \$12,731. This puts us at the bottom of the Big Ten language departments. According to reports from CIC Romance Language departments for fall 2013, out of eleven departments reporting, only one paid less than our department. Stipends ranged from \$10,617 to \$25,969. Our beginning MA stipend of \$12,214 is 25% less than the average of the eleven departments (\$16,472). We do even worse against the two nearest Big Ten departments, Iowa and Minnesota. Their beginning stipends are \$17,682 and \$15,389, respectively. The problem caused by our low stipend is compounded by the high fees that the University assesses graduate students each semester. The fees that can run to around \$700 easily devour over half of GTAs first check each semester. We thus recommend raising our stipends 20% to put us more in line with other Big Ten departments. This would bring the MA stipend to \$14,760 and the PhD one to \$15,277.

**Departmental pattern and mix of graduate assistantships.**

The distribution of teaching assistantships funded by state funds across sections in 2013-2014 is 17 Spanish, 5 French, and 4 German. In addition, one GTA (a Spanish ABD) is currently director of the language laboratory and paid by lab fees.

The current mix in fall 2013 of MA candidates to PhD candidates in the department is 15 MA and 12 PhD. All French and German GTAs are now preparing an MA, although a doctoral option does exist in French. Our doctoral program is concentrated in Spanish, and our goal is to limit the number of doctoral students being supported as GTAs in it to seven. Since six of our current Spanish doctoral students are in their last year of support, we are actively moving toward this target.

**Years of GTA support for students making adequate progress.**

Our policy is to limit assistantships at the MA level to two years, except in the dual masters program with German and Teachers College, where it is three years. Doctoral candidates are initially awarded three-years of post-MA funding. They may apply for a fourth year.

**Conclusion**

Our GTAs, as the instructors of record of the sections they teach, are highly productive and cost effective. Each full-time GTA produced an average of 121.58 credit hours in Spring 2013. To take advantage of this, we recommend shifting some lecturer funding to GTA positions. If need be, these assistantships could be offered on a year-to-year competitive basis, with no guarantee of renewal.

Our stipend level is very low in comparison with other Big Ten language departments, especially those of our immediate neighbors, Iowa and Minnesota. In order to offer more competitive packages to entering students, we plan to change how we use our departmental Rogers fellowships. In the past, we have rarely offered fellowships to entering MA students; instead, we have reserved a good proportion of our funds to reward our very best doctoral students. We will shift some of this money to entering students. This should allow us to raise our initial offer to our strongest applicants by about \$1,000. Experience teaches us that our best prospective students do compare programs before committing to a graduate program. If the University raised the stipend level by even \$1,000, the combined additional \$2,000 would make us much more attractive regionally.

Kawasaki Reading Room for Japanese Studies presents

# HIDDEN LEGACY

## Japanese Traditional Performing Arts in the WWII Internment Camps

Friday, December 6, 2013

3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

At Great Hall at Kauffman Center, UNL  
630 N. 14th, Lincoln, NE 68508-4812



Photo by Elena Zhukova,  
courtesy UC Berkeley

Lecture and Koto performance/demonstration

Guest Speaker: Shirley Muramoto Wong

Followed by  
a reception with green tea ice cream

Contact Dan Riley, [driley2@unl.edu](mailto:driley2@unl.edu)

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Lincoln

Designed by Anusana Abdel-Monem

