

CONNECTIONS 2023

A Publication of the Department of World Languages at the University of Northwestern - St. Paul

OUR GRADUATES IN GEORGIA

Jacob and Tehya Bierle (pictured below and right) both graduated in Spring 2022 with degrees in English as a Second Language Education. Jacob completed a second major in Elementary Education as well. Since graduating, the Bierles have made the most of their studies through varied opportunities. Jacob received the Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Award; this prestigious award places participants in schools overseas to assist in language instruction and provide a native-speaker presence in classrooms. Tehya is pursuing a graduate degree in the field of linguistics and teaching English lessons to people in the community where they live.



Jacob is working at Akaki Tsereteli State University in Kutaisi, Georgia. Weekly, Jacob teaches around 160 first- and third-year college students, focusing on pronunciation and speaking fluency. In addition to his teaching, Jacob assists other faculty with lesson ideas,

planning, and curriculum design. Jacob also started a conversation club at the American Corner, an organization sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Georgia. Many of his students are working to further their English proficiency and are interested in studying or working in the United States.



Tehya is pursuing an online Master's degree in Applied Linguistics at Mary Immaculate College in Limerick, Ireland. Her experiences in Georgia have enhanced her learning, and she has enjoyed the uniqueness of this culture and language. She plans to use her local observations to write her thesis. She is "particularly curious about how English has affected the Georgian school system and the roles of native English speakers compared to local teachers, so the research area for [her] thesis will stem from these interests." Tehya is also finding ways to use her ESL training from Northwestern in the community of Kutaisi. She has taught individual and group English lessons at the local American learning center and started a book club at the American Corner.

Their education at Northwestern allowed Tehya and Jacob to gain skills they use daily in Georgia. Jacob



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gained confidence and developed well-rounded and dynamic teaching. He states, “Even though this is my first time doing real teaching outside of my UNW placements, I was certain enough in my own abilities to lead my own classes and design relevant, authentic language lessons that build up my students personally, professionally, and academically.” Tehya learned how to keep students engaged and became comfortable managing classrooms. She states, “I believe my UNW placements strengthened my love for other cultures and equipped me to meet the learning needs of people who are different than me. Also, Northwestern helped teach me how to hold fast to my own values while accepting beliefs and lifestyles outside of my own.”

Jacob and Tehya spend their spare time exploring Georgia and its beautiful landscapes. They “feel right at home” and enjoy the “cozy, family-oriented atmosphere.” They attend Georgian language classes and enjoy putting their skills into practice when in town or at the marketplace.

LEARNING SPANISH WHILE STUDYING ABROAD

The UNW Spanish program offers the opportunity to study abroad. Students sharpen their language skills and use Spanish in professional, spiritual, and personal contexts. This is what students have to say about their semester abroad:

Andrew Barnett explained, “Learning Spanish at Northwestern was an incredible opportunity for me that led to my many stories here in Spain. Most im-

portantly for me was the religious vocabulary as that allowed me to get involved in a local church right away and have meaningful conversations with locals about our shared faith. I would recommend to anyone learning a language to really take time and learn the culture of the language you are learning. It is one thing to learn language alone, and it is another to learn a language within its culture.”

Libby Valine shared, “What I brought back from Spain was not only an improved vocabulary, but also an increased appreciation for culture and importance of community.”

Emily Kruger reflected, “My experience in Spain offered me many benefits beyond my growth in the Spanish language... I feel so much more confident as I walk through life, and I have clarity in what I want my life to look like... I feel much more like a true member of the global community... I think that any study abroad experience would make any person better for any job.”

Abby Athman clarifies that “not only did I find my strengths of working with people, but I also gained experience in truly understanding and listening to people’s stories and situations of a different culture, and in the Spanish language... a great preparation for my career I could not have achieved by solely finishing my studies on campus.”

The department thanks teaching assistants Diana Boyce and Carrena Falls for their assistance in creating this newsletter.



**UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHWESTERN**
ST. PAUL

DEPARTMENT OF
WORLD LANGUAGES

CONNECTIONS

is a publication of the
Department of World
Languages at the University of
Northwestern – St. Paul for the
following:

MAJORS

ESL Education
Spanish Education
Spanish

DUAL LICENSURE MAJORS

ESL/Elementary
ESL/Spanish
Elementary/Spanish
ESL/Communication Arts &
Literature Education (CALE)

MINORS

Spanish
Teaching English to Speakers of
Other Languages (TESOL)
Modern Languages
Chinese Studies
International Studies

and all
language students.

3003 Snelling Ave. N.
St. Paul, MN 55113

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE CLUB ADVISORS

Language classes and clubs at Northwestern host events and provide opportunities for cultural experiences. Anyone can join a club! If you would like to join a club or receive information about classes or events, please contact one of the advisors listed below:

CHINESE

Dr. Tongyan Pan: tpan@unwsp.edu



RUSSIAN

Dr. Matthew Miller: mlmiller@unwsp.edu
Department Chair



SPANISH

Prof. Kimberly Cronen:
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ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Prof. Jonell Pacyga: jlpaceyga@unwsp.edu
Program Coordinator of ESL Education
and Spanish Education



AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE

Melissa Clutter
mrelutter@unwsp.edu



UPCOMING EVENTS

- Spanish Praise Chapels
- Spanish Senior Capstone Presentations
- World Language Day: Chinese
- World Language Day: Russian
- World Language Day: American Sign Language (ASL)
- World Language Day: Spanish

UPCOMING CLASSES (FALL 2023 & SPRING 2024)

- CHN 2101 & CHN 2102 Intermediate Chinese
- SPA 1001 & SPA 1002 Beginning Spanish
- SPA 2101 & SPA 2102 Intermediate Spanish