

# Connections

▶	DEPT. EVENTS .....	2
▶	ESL .....	3
▶	SPANISH .....	4
▶	DEPT. NEWS .....	5-6

A Publication of the World Languages Department at UNW, 2015-2016

## Fulbright in Bulgaria

*Emily Herlinger (ICS/ESL '15) and Katie Lee (TESOL/ICS '14), are teaching in Bulgaria through the Fulbright program. Here's what they had to say about their experiences so far.*

“Hello from Bulgaria! I am living in a small city called Silistra on the border with Romania. I love Silistra for it has a small-town feel even though it is a city. It covers only a small area of land along the Danube River, so everything I need to go to is only a 10-15 minute walk from my apartment. Because many people live in block apartment buildings, the city is filled with people, yet I always seem to run into someone I know when I am out and about.

I am teaching in an Economics School, which means that many of my students want to go into fields that have to do with economics, tourism or administration. I am the first American and Fulbright ETA (English Teaching Assistant) to teach at this school so it has been a really neat experience to be the first American my students have met. I am co-teaching in all my classes with Bulgarian teachers in grades 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>. Schools in Bulgaria are very different from schools in the United States and are very traditional.

Each day I am learning more about how to teach in this setting and while some days are more difficult than others, I am really enjoying getting to know my students and being able to teach them.

I am in charge of the Bulgarian English Speech and Debate Club at my school. This is the first year that they will have a team lead by an ETA so I feel very honored to be able to develop the club more. We will be traveling to tournaments together soon, so I am looking forward to getting to know my students better through this. I am also a part of a local church here, which has been a huge blessing. They have welcomed me in like a family member and I have been involved with their youth group and other events in the church.” -Emily Herlinger

“Living in Ruse has been a big adjustment for me. It's my first time living on my own, and I can't communicate with very many people because I don't speak Bulgarian. This is also my first year teaching, and the Bulgarian school system couldn't be more different from the American system. Bulgarian classes are very traditional: the teacher is central, students work on textbook exercises and drills, even grades are recorded by hand in official “registers.” No one expects me to do things exactly the Bulgarian way here, which gives me a lot of freedom, but also requires me to figure out pretty much everything on my own. After three weeks of classes, I'm starting to get to know my students and what works and doesn't work in this context. Teaching and living in Bulgaria requires a lot of patience and flexibility. Sometimes it's really challenging and downright frustrating, but already I've experienced rewarding growth and I'm truly looking forward to what the next nine months will bring!” -Katie Lee



*Katie Lee (left) and Emily Herlinger (right) are both participating in the Fulbright program in Bulgaria this year. For more information about their experiences, visit Emily's blog at [www.storiesfromsilistra.blogspot.com](http://www.storiesfromsilistra.blogspot.com)*

## Department Events

### SPANISH PRAISE AND WORSHIP CHAPELS

Monthly Spanish praise and worship alternative chapels have been held on campus with great success. Join us for more Spanish praise and worship chapels during the spring semester!



### SPANISH LANGUAGE DAY

On November 17, Spanish-loving students and faculty took a day to celebrate language and culture. Activities of the day included an alternative worship chapel, Spanish-only tables set aside at lunch in the Billy Graham Commons, and piñata party/movie night in Robertson Student Center in the evening.

### MINNETESOL CONFERENCE

ESL Education Seniors attended the MinneTESOL conference on November 6. According to students: “The MinneTESOL conference was a great, new way for me to experience all of the networking possibilities there are in the Twin Cities and to learn from a variety of experienced teachers and professionals in the ESL field” (Elise Gangestad). “I was very impressed by the number of topics that were available and by the quality of things being presented” (Maria Olson).



## Upcoming World Languages Events

**SPANISH PRAISE AND WORSHIP CHAPELS: JAN 26, FEB 23, MARCH 22, APRIL 19**

**CHINESE LANGUAGE DAY: TUES, FEB 9**

**RUSSIAN LANGUAGE DAY: TUES, APRIL 26**

**SPRING SENIOR CAPSTONE PRESENTATIONS: TBD**

# Student Bio: Maria Olson



*Maria Olson (center) is a senior ESL education major. She is involved with on- and off-campus ministries, as well as other leadership roles with residence life, etc.*

I look forward to following the Lord’s call to serve Him long-term in East Asia soon, using my degree in ESL Education with a Chinese minor. I see how He has led me to where I am today, as I am continually “in process” as a student here at UNW.

Since starting college, I have been richly blessed with opportunities. I spent a summer doing medical work in Ethiopia. My job through CAPSS allows me to work with international students who are making a significant culture and language transition. I co-lead a campus outreach, Way in the Wilderness, where I coordinate and recruit Northwestern students for various ministry opportunities, including community events and tutoring for Somali refugees in Roseville. I lead bi-weekly events for Chinese students from the

University of Minnesota and weekly groups for St. Thomas’s English Club, which is mostly comprised of Saudi Arabians. I lead and participate in a prayer group that intercedes for each of these outreach ministries. For all of these things, my joy feels so complete.

This last year, God put Central America on my heart. In March of 2015, I co-led a team of nine students from Northwestern to Casa Hogar-Benito Juarez A.C. in Oaxaca, Mexico. This is home to 90 children, many of whom are from unreached people groups. Our team’s goal was to establish a sponsorship program. We took photos and put together biographies for the children at Casa Hogar’s two homes. Upon our return, we made sponsorship packets, spoke at churches, wrote personal notes to all past sponsors, and did a prayer pal initiative where we had all 90 children adopted by Northwestern students. Each Northwestern student wrote a letter and gave us a photo of themselves. These notes were translated, and hand-delivered to each child. By God’s grace, we now have 25 consistent sponsors. However, there is still great need to have sponsorship for the other 60+ children. To get involved, contact me at: [mariakaylynn@gmail.com](mailto:mariakaylynn@gmail.com)

## UNW Culture Clubs

*Northwestern has a variety of student-led culture clubs. Check out what some of them are doing this year.*

### RUSSIAN

The Russian Culture Club is hosting two movie nights, dining at a local Slavic restaurant, and attending a Russian-language worship service. Look for more information coming soon, or contact Jake or Tessa to get involved. ([jrnuckolls@students.unwsp.edu](mailto:jrnuckolls@students.unwsp.edu); [tkjohnson@students.unwsp.edu](mailto:tkjohnson@students.unwsp.edu))

### CHINESE

In 2015-16, the Chinese Culture Club has had a movie and discussion night and a Chinese hotpot party, and they plan to celebrate Chinese New Year and prepare a performance for the Multicultural Festival in the upcoming semester. Contact Dandan for more information. ([dzhu@students.unwsp.edu](mailto:dzhu@students.unwsp.edu))

### SPANISH

The Spanish Culture Club is hosting meetings (Mondays at 7pm) with Spanish food, music, and conversation, and planning to visit a Spanish church service, restaurant, and more! For more information, contact Cindy or Emily. ([ccastruitaontiveros@students.unwsp.edu](mailto:ccastruitaontiveros@students.unwsp.edu); [eroquist@students.unwsp.edu](mailto:eroquist@students.unwsp.edu))

# Pacto de Victoria Tutoring Program

Karli Olson—International Business and Spanish Major

Pacto de Victoria (Victory Covenant) is a church located in St Paul. Most every Tuesday, students meet around 6:30pm and travel to this church as tutors. These volunteers get to help out kids ranging from middle school to high school. The kids are AWESOME. I drove the transport van last year and had the opportunity to go every week tutoring was available. You forget what it's like being a middle-schooler, now being in college. You don't need to know Spanish to help at Pacto, most of the kids speak English fluently and most of their homework is in Spanish. However, all of these kids are of Latino descent, and are at different levels with their English/Spanish. My major is International Business

(and Spanish), so I'm not exactly aiming to be a teacher by any means, but being able to help these kids understand their homework and making it fun for them to learn (and lets be honest, with all the ways math changes, I was teaching myself just as much as I was teaching them) is SO rewarding. These kids are hilarious and if you let them, they're quick to love and mess around with you. Every tutor I brought with me to Pacto loved their experience and many of them wished they could have attended more nights. I bonded with one girl in particular (Jhenny) who constantly made fun of me for loving Pokemon back in the day. I knew she liked me so I didn't take any of the sassy remarks to heart. And then, on the last day of tutoring, she brought me present consisting of gum, a note, and Pokemon cards! I'm still in touch with quite a few of the girls I particularly worked with (via Snapchat and Instagram, most of the kids are too young for Facebook), and they are hysterical. All this to say, if you have the time, I highly recommend coming one night or two, and by all means, bring a friend! You'll leave knowing you had an evening well spent.



*Pictured are volunteers for the Pacto de Victoria Tutoring Program. Center back is Pastor Julio Yañez, the pastor of Pacto de Victoria church.*

## Anxiety and the Language Learner:

A Bilingual Case Study with Feline and Human Subjects

Alex Boutelle — Spanish Education and Elementary Education Major, ESL emphasis

Researchers in the linguistics and world languages fields have known for years about the power of the "affective filter," a psychological barrier to language learning which is raised due to performance anxiety and other factors. As someone who struggles with anxiety on a daily basis, I have noticed how much more fluently I speak Spanish when I am relaxed. In order to cope, I adopted a cat this summer. I wanted to keep up my Spanish fluency and practice strategies for teaching children to be bilingual, so I speak to Sevilla (the cat) in as much Spanish as possible throughout the day. She knows many commands and nouns

such as baja (down), monte (climb), and comida (food). Not only has this helped my Spanish fluency tremendously, but it has also reduced tensions for both of us because I focus on moderating and softening my tone when talking to her in Spanish, lowering both of our performance anxiety and affective filters.



# Meet the New Department Chair

*In fall 2015 Dr. Matt Miller began serving as the chair of the Department of World Languages. He helps to coordinate programs and support students and faculty.*

## **What classes do you teach at Northwestern?**

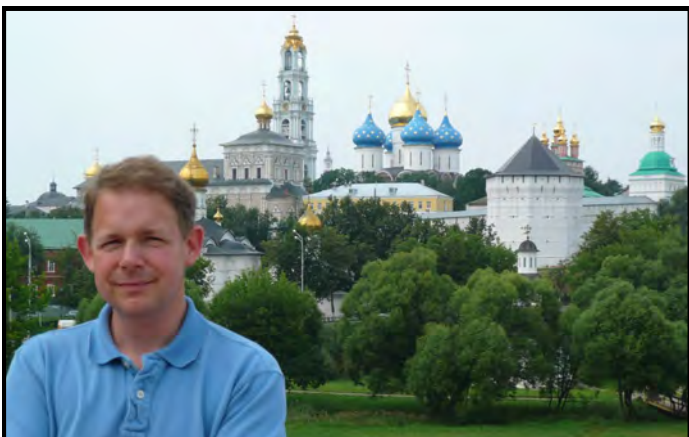
I enjoy teaching Russian language classes and a variety of courses on modern European and Russian history.

## **Where have you studied to prepare for your work?**

After a great experience in a Christian high school I enrolled at Miami University, where I studied German for two years. Later I completed graduate school programs at Wheaton College and the University of Minnesota, where I took two years of classes on the modern Greek language. I also studied Russian full time for two years at Moscow State University.

## **Where did you work before you came to Northwestern?**

In 1990 and 1991 I worked in Leningrad for ten months and experienced the last days of the Soviet Union. From 1997 to 2008 I lived with my family in Moscow, where we served with the Russian-American Christian University and the Evangelical Free Church.



## **Do you have any special research projects?**

Currently I am working on a research project which analyzes recent changes in the Eastern Orthodox and Catholic churches of the Twin Cities. I have also written a book which was published in 2013, *The American YMCA and Russian Culture: The Preservation and Expansion of Orthodox Christianity, 1900-1940*. This is a case study of how a group of American believers encountered a rich culture, developed relationships of respect, and supported several creative and effective ministry projects.

## **What advice do you have for students?**

Learn a new language, of course! Read widely. Travel off the beaten path. Develop friendships with people whose opinions and backgrounds stretch you.

## **What do you do in your spare time?**

My wife and I have 14-year-old twin daughters. We love to watch them play in their high school marching band and hear what they are learning in their Spanish and French classes.

## **Do you ever lead study abroad trips?**

Absolutely—I have led three trips for students to Moscow and plan to take a group in summer 2017. Let me know if you are interested!

# Connections

is a publication of the Dept. of World Languages at University of Northwestern—St. Paul for the following

**Majors:**

- ESL Education*
- Spanish Education*
- Spanish*
- ICS/English Teaching*
- ICS/Spanish*

**Dual Licensure Majors:**

- ESL/Elementary*
- ESL/Spanish*
- Elementary/Spanish*
- ESL/CALE*

**Minors:**

- Spanish; TESOL;*
  - Modern Languages;*
  - Chinese Studies;*
  - International Studies*
- and language students.

**Submissions of the following are welcomed:**

- reflections on cross-cultural experiences or English teaching in various contexts
- news items related to language teaching and learning
- humorous language-related anecdotes
- job/ministry/volunteer opportunities

**E-mail submissions to**  
Dr. Matthew Miller  
mlmiller@unwsp.edu



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## Language and Culture Club Advisors

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



**Chinese**

**Prof. Hongna Bystrom:** hrbystrom@unwsp.edu

**Russian**

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



**Spanish**

**Prof. Kimberly Cronen:** kmcronen@unwsp.edu

**Prof. Kimberly Aaron:** kaaaron@unwsp.edu



**ESL**

**Dr. Feng-Ling Margaret Johnson:**  
fmjohnson@unwsp.edu

**Prof. Jonell Pacyga:** jlpacyga@unwsp.edu  
Program Coordinator of ESL Education



**WE'RE ON**



**Search for**

**“UNW Department of World Languages”**

**to join our group!**

**“Own only what you can carry with you; know language, know countries, know people. Let your memory be your travel bag.”**

**-Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn,  
The Gulag Archipelago**