Dear GIST friend,

Check the newspaper headlines, a web news service, or a radio news program and odds are that one or two GIST focus areas will be featured. I tested this by skimming the front page of the New York Times for the four Mondays in November 2018 and easily identified all six GIST focus areas with headlines about the Central American migrant caravan, the continuation of ethnic nationalism in Bosnia, the world reaction to the gene edited twin babies by a Chinese scientist, and the disappearance of Jamel Khashoggi, a Saudi-born journalist with the Washington Post.

The features in this issue of Western Worldwide summarize many of the events that the GIST program sponsored this past semester. We enjoyed lively discussions, making new friends and absorbing timely information concerning the complex problems in the world today.

Wishing you all a very happy holiday.

Yours truly,
Susan Pozo

FROM THE DIRECTOR:

Dear GIST friend,

Check the newspaper headlines, a web news service, or a radio news program and odds are that one or two GIST focus areas will be featured. I tested this by skimming the front page of the New York Times for the four Mondays in November 2018 and easily identified all six GIST focus areas with headlines about the Central American migrant caravan, the continuation of ethnic nationalism in Bosnia, the world reaction to the gene edited twin babies by a Chinese scientist, and the disappearance of Jamel Khashoggi, a Saudi-born journalist with the Washington Post.

The lecture was followed by a reception hosted by WMU Signature. The reception provided Kyrgyz-style refreshments and a space for those who attended the lecture to continue the conversation. We thank the WMU Visiting Scholars and Artists Program as well as our co-sponsors, the Department of Economics and the Department of World Languages and Literatures, for helping fund this opportunity.

Bride Kidnapping in Central Asia

Did you know that in Kyrgyzstan a bride is kidnapped every 40 minutes? This November, Dr. Charles Becker (Economics, Slavic and Eurasian Studies) from Duke University shared his research on bride kidnapping in Kyrgyzstan, a small country in Central Asia. Dr. Becker discussed the short- and long-term implications of forced marriages, specifically on the birthweight of infants produced in these unions and the psychological health of the woman in the marriage.

He found that children born into nonconsensual marriages in Kyrgyzstan have considerably lower birth weights than children born into consensual marriages. It was also shown that the kidnapped wives have higher stress levels than women in consensual marriages. In addition, Becker noted that the view of kidnapping as a ritual into elopement is not always the case, and therefore kidnapping is often nonconsensual and has serious repercussions. While these findings may not be surprising, providing clear evidence of the costs of forced marriages is important for policy moving forward.

The lecture was followed by a reception hosted by WMU Signature. The reception provided Kyrgyz-style refreshments and a space for those who attended the lecture to continue the conversation. We thank the WMU Visiting Scholars and Artists Program as well as our co-sponsors, the Department of Economics and the Department of World Languages and Literatures, for helping fund this opportunity.

The features in this issue of Western Worldwide summarize many of the events that the GIST program sponsored this past semester. We enjoyed lively discussions, making new friends and absorbing timely information concerning the complex problems in the world today.

Wishing you all a very happy holiday.

Yours truly,
Susan Pozo
GIST Instructor Spotlight: Matthew Nielsen

Professor Matthew Nielsen is the newest instructor in the GIST program. Our staff writer, Jesse Nelson, spoke with him about his research, life before and experience since joining WMU. The interview has been edited for length and clarity.

JESSE: As a new instructor in the GIST program, what is something that you are excited about doing with your new position?

MATT: Drawing up the syllabus was really fun. I got to read broadly across all sorts of disciplines, geographies, and time periods, which is something I enjoy. It’s nice, after focusing on my dissertation for six years, to step back and look at the big picture again. Academics all over campus are coming together to do research at different junctures of this thing called globalization. I’m excited to explore their various contributions with students.

J: What does your academic research focus on?

M: My dissertation looks at the lower portion of the Orinoco River Basin, in what is today Southeastern Venezuela, and it focuses on that area in the 1600s-1700s—the mid to late colonial period. This region was important to the Spanish Empire and served as a boundary region between the Spanish and Dutch colonies that were taking shape in the Guianas. I’m presenting the opportunities and obstacles that the geography provided to both imperial and indigenous ventures. It’s a story about Spanish and Dutch empires trying to exploit the region while runaway slaves, indigenous communities, and contrabandists are also making use of it in their own way.

J: What did you do before you came to the WMU GIST program?

M: Before this I was at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, working on my dissertation and instructing courses on global history. Before that, I taught Spanish at community colleges and prisons in North Carolina and at the University of Wyoming.

J: Although this is your first semester here, how do you think WMU, either inside or outside the classroom, has altered your perspective on globalization?

M: In some ways it’s confirmed just how important it is to be aware of globalization and just how connected so many places are already. Kalamazoo and Western Michigan are already very global in many ways, and it’s exciting to see the energy that’s already on campus and in town: organizations, events, etc. For example, while I’m at WMU discussing global and international studies with students, my oldest son is at a bilingual school downtown making friends with and learning alongside a worldly and diverse group of fellow kindergarteners.

J: Is there something about you, i.e. a fun fact, that most students and others in the program do not know about you?

M: I’m an avid skier. I skied in the Junior Olympics (ski racing) and I’ve done some back country skiing in Patagonia. I’m looking forward to taking my three kids on the slopes once the snow falls.

Allied Faculty Spotlight: Gregory Veeck

Professor Gregory Veeck of the Department of Geography is a longtime supporter of the GIST program and member of the GIST Faculty Advisory Committee. Veeck’s (Ph.D, University of Georgia) research interests include agriculture, rural economic development, environmental issues, and small-scale farmers in East Asia and the United States. He has authored many papers including “China’s food security: past successes and future challenges” and “China’s Exports and Imports of Agricultural Products under the WTO.” He has been awarded multiple fellowships and grants from Fulbright, Fulbright-Hays, Committee of Scholarly Communication with China (CSCPRC), the American Philosophical Society, NSF, USDA, the Ford Foundation, the National Geographic Society, and the Sasakawa Foundation and others. He was awarded the 2018 WMU College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Achievement Award in Research and Creative Activity. He has enjoyed visiting East Asia almost annually since 1985, living in China for almost 8 years total, often with his children, Sarah and Robin, and his wife, Ann Veeck, Professor of Marketing. Since arriving at WMU in fall 1999, he has served on sixty-seven MA/MS thesis committees, directing twenty-one of these theses.
As the GIST program continues to strive for more global engagement among its students and faculty, the “Faculty Abroad” series was piloted this semester as a way for faculty members to share their international experiences with the broader WMU community. There were two events speakers this semester:

“The Future of Arctic Security: Reflections from Iceland and Alaska”: Professor Fritz Allhoff (Philosophy; right, above) discussed Iceland and Alaska in regards to how the relatively recent phenomenon of sea ice melting has affected arctic security.

“A Fulbright Experience in Vietnam”: Professor Jim Butterfield (Political Science; right, below) detailed his experiences teaching and living in Vietnam. He also discussed the Fulbright process for faculty members who may wish to apply to the Fulbright program. Look for a new “Faculty Abroad” line-up in the spring.

In its second semester, “Research Briefs in Global Studies” is a way for the university community to share their research. Each “Brief” features two individuals from different disciplines who provide us with a taste of their research, leaving time for questions and discussion. This semester there were two Research Briefs:

“Propaganda and the State”: Professor Tom Kostrzewa (GIST; top, right) discussed security campaigns in China, while Professor Anna Popkova (Communication; top, left) discussed “alt-agents” and their challenge to provide non-state narratives of Russia.

“Globalisms and South Asian Literature”: Professor Todd Kuchta (English; bottom, right) shared his research on fiction about South Asia and how it relates to economic and environmental concerns, and Professor Nathan Tabor (History; bottom, left) shared his research on understanding the expanse of the Persian cultural sphere as evidenced by literary figures.
NELSON: Why did you major in GIST while attending WMU?
BERGWIN: It was the range of classes that appealed to me. I didn’t know what I wanted to do, whether it was language, anthropology, or politics, etc.

N: How do you think majoring in GIST has benefitted you since graduating?
B: Because of the range of classes I could take, it allowed me to see different perspectives that you may not see in the same type of class over and over again. In my line of work, you have to consider other possibilities for sure.

N: Students sometimes struggle with marketing their study abroad opportunity as a valuable experience. How do you think your study abroad experience in Spain has assisted you on your career trajectory?
B: Because I studied in Spain, it allowed me to have a second major since I had so many credits [towards Spanish]. The experience was good for my development and made me go out of my comfort zone. Navigating that allowed me to navigate future situations and broaden my horizons. It’s also a great conversation starter to use to your advantage.

N: What has been your favorite part about working on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.?
B: Definitely my colleagues because they’re very down to earth, and a job depends on the people you work with. As for living in DC, I love going to the museums, running, and paddle boating by the Jefferson Memorial. There are also functions at the Congressional Cemetery by our house, including outdoor movies and concerts. There’s always something going on.

Tango class offered in Summer I for GIST credit

Argentine Tango (DANC 1250) was a one-credit class offered this past Summer I 2018 in the Dance department. GIST students were invited to take this class toward their GIST major or minor. One GIST student, Carina Lawrence (pictured left), shared that the focus of the course was more on technique and the Argentinian culture associated with the dance. The layout was a combination of lecture and hands-on learning that began with background information about the history, origins, and culture of the tango, and then followed with practicing the dance. Lawrence stated that the instructors, Doruk and Erin Golcu, were great teachers that made the class accessible to non-dance students. It is anticipated that the class will be offered again this Summer I 2019, and GIST encourages students to expand their horizons by taking it. Maybe you’ll see Director Susan Pozo (pictured right) participating again, as she did in Summer I 2017 and 2018, in this culturally enriching opportunity!
Don’t forget to check out the separate “GIST for Fun” page of the newsletter, that includes a GIST-themed crossword puzzle and a section of fun facts obtained from a survey taken by GIST 2000 students!

Many GIST majors complete a minor. Here are the five most common ones:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>SPANISH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (TIE)</td>
<td>CHINESE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (TIE)</td>
<td>FRENCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>JAPANESE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>HISTORY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Catalog year” refers to the academic year the student began their studies at WMU. The number in each bar represents the number of students in that focus field in the catalog year. Note: students with catalog years prior to 2016-2017 are not represented in this chart, due to program restructuring beginning that catalog year.
The GIST program welcomes back Yadira Rodriguez, an undergraduate working for a third year with the GIST program. Rodriguez, an Interdisciplinary Health Services major with a minor in Psychology, is the third and last sister in her family to attend WMU. She is a Michigan native from South Haven, and is also part of the TRIO program on campus, designed to assist first generation college students throughout their time at WMU.

The GIST program would like to welcome Jesse Nelson, our new graduate research assistant for the 2018-2019 academic year. Nelson completed her undergraduate degree at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, NY, though she originates from Rochester Hills, MI. Here at WMU, she is a Master of Arts student in the Department of Economics, and is helping us with our various programs throughout the year. In her spare time, she likes to do puzzles and solve Rubik’s cubes. She served as editor for this newsletter.

GIST is excited to announce that, coming soon, the GIST program will be managing an online Global Data Center. The Data Center will be available on the Global and International Studies page, and provide links to various data sources. It will serve as a resource for students when they are searching for data on different internationally-focused topics, from immigration, education, and living standards to health, finance, international census data, and more. GIST hopes the Global Data Center will become a landmark starting point for individuals attempting to locate data on their specific topics, both inside and outside the WMU community.

Congratulations to our Fall 2018 graduates!

Majors
- Amyre Dennis
  Language: Chinese
- Emily Sabourin
  Language: Spanish
- Jiaqi Yao
  Language: English
- Samantha Brown
  Language: Japanese
- Erena White
  Language: French
- Irene Kivinen
  Language: Spanish
- Sarah TenBrink
  Language: Russian
- Jordyn Gardner
  Language: Spanish
- Austin Duryea
  Language: Chinese

Minors
- Austin Lee
- Leakiath Cunningham
- Connor Tovey
- Jacob Williams
- Carolyn LaForet
- Teagan Young
- Sydney Kester
- Ahoud Al Muqarshi
- Jacob Kriger

Edited by: Jessalyn Nelson
Earlier issues of the Western Worldwide Newsletter are available on our website at wmich.edu/globalstudies/about/newsletter.