

Western Worldwide

Your Gateway to Global Engagement

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NEWSLETTER OF THE GLOBAL AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES PROGRAM WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY - SPRING/SUMMER 2018

Research Briefs in Global Studies



From L-R: Dr. Gregory Veeck, Dr. Susan Pozo, Dr. Alisa Perkins, Dr. Chien-Juh Gu, Dr. James Palmitessa, Dr. Ann Miles

The hallmark of a good research institution lies in its ability to facilitate the flow of ideas amongst its faculty members and students. In keeping with this tradition, the Global and International Studies (GIST) program hosted its first faculty research discussion symposium, *Research Briefs in Global Studies*. Researchers (and members of the GIST allied faculty) from different disciplines paired up to briefly describe and compare their individual research projects. One objective was to draw out the distinct ways different disciplines explore similar problems. The presenters of this semester's *Research Briefs*, featured in the photo above, presented three different topics:

Diversity in Cities: Past and Present featured James Palmitessa (History) as he discussed his research on 16th and 17th century Prague, while Alisa Perkins (Comparative Religion) discussed Muslim American civic engagement in Hamtrack, Michigan today.

Telling Migration Stories featured anthropologist Ann Miles (Sociology) and Susan Pozo (Economics) as they recounted their distinct disciplinary methodologies for studying migrants.

Interviews in Fieldwork featured Gregory Veeck's (Geography) interviews with herders in Mongolia and Chien-Juh Gu's (Sociology) interviews with Taiwanese immigrants in Chicago.

As an interdisciplinary and globally focused program, GIST, will be continuing with a new set of *Research Briefs* in the fall along with a companion symposium titled *Sabbaticals Abroad*. Faculty members returning from abroad will provide insights on how these opportunities have enriched their teaching and research. For more information regarding participation, feel free to contact us.

From the Director

My first year as the director of the global and international studies program has almost ended and it has been a true honor to get to work with all of you. Thank you for your support and encouragement in honoring our students, getting Special Topics in Global Studies (GIST 1100) on the books, initiating Research Briefs in Global Studies, expanding study abroad offerings, and inducting new students into the International Studies Honor Society, Sigma Iota Rho.

I hope that each and every one of you will experience a productive, enriching and restful summer. I look forward to the new academic year and hearing about your ideas for moving the GIST program forward! Please keep in touch.

Best wishes,

Susan Pozo, Ph.D.

Global & International Studies
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5492
Phone (269) 387-5652

Instructor research: Seth Allard

Global and International Studies professor Seth Allard will be featured on WMUK's "Between the Lines" with Zinta Aistars. The focus of the interview is Seth's first book *Guided by the Spirits: The Meanings of Life, Death and Youth Suicide*. Allard's book combines classic ethnographic research and creative writing to portray the complex social, historical and cultural realities of youth suicide in Native American communities, which is often described as "one of the longest lasting public health issues in the United States and Canada." You can catch Allard's interview on "Between the Lines" at wmuk.org or WMUK 102.1 this June.

A global citizen in our backyard

Chikezie Okoli, the GIST graduate assistant, has been an integral part of the team and will be wrapping up his degree later this year. Our director had the opportunity to talk with him about his background and future plans.

POZO: Where are you from?

OKOLI: I was born in the city of Warri which is in Delta State, a region in the southern part of Nigeria. I lived there for about 10 years before emigrating to Winnipeg, Manitoba.

POZO: What brought you to Western?

OKOLI: After I had finished my masters I started looking for PhD programs in applied economics. During my search, I came across the applied economics PhD program at Western and was intrigued by what the program had to offer, so I applied and was accepted.

POZO: What is your specialization and what attracted you to that major?

OKOLI: My area of specialty is in international economics, more specifically I look at the foreign direct investment (FDI) aspect of international economics. Growing up in two different economic systems I have always been interested in how countries interact with one another, and how this interaction affects economic growth in these countries.

POZO: You mentioned that you are a PhD student. So what is your research about?

OKOLI: My research topic examines policy uncertainty in the United States and how it affects the investment decision of foreign companies. When I talk about policy uncertainty I am referring to situations where investors or the public are uncertain of a government's stance on a particular issue. This might be due to a regime change or a change in political parties. This is prevalent in the world of international economics, especially when it comes to things like trade policy, tax policy, and other action plans of a government.

POZO: Which event or activity did you like the most while working with the GIST program?

OKOLI: When I first started with the GIST program, I got the opportunity to interview a U.S. diplomat for the newsletter. It was an interesting experience interviewing him, talking with him, and seeing how he became a diplomat. It opened a whole worldview to me as to what is possible with an international studies degree.

POZO: What do you feel are some of the strengths of the GIST program?

OKOLI: What I have come to appreciate during my time here is the emphasis the program places on study abroad and acquiring another language. After talking with students who have done study abroad or studied another language, I have seen that these students become more aware of the world around them and it seems to help them formulate their future plans in a more complete manner than before.

POZO: What do you hope to do when you graduate?

OKOLI: Ideally when I finish I would have a job as an economic advisor for the government, or an economic consultant on international issues. I have always been interested in country relations, so I would very much like to work in this area.

Studying Abroad



A trip to the Dominican Republic

Last August, Susan Pozo led the Global Ambassadors, a group of pre-freshmen, on a study abroad to the Dominican Republic to study socioeconomic realities arising from the D.R.'s proximity and ties to one poor neighbor (Haiti) and one rich neighbor (U.S.). Students were introduced to colonial Santo Domingo, to Dominican art, and learned about Dominican social and economic realities. The group then traveled to the Haitian border region to gain insights into the border economy. Toward the end of their stay, students visited bateys

(Haitian settlement communities) on the eastern side of the country, while also studying and observing both the successes and stresses of the vibrant Dominican tourism industry. Pozo will be leading another group of pre-freshmen to the Dominican Republic this coming August.

Costa Rica: The Great Green Experiment

This past spring break, Dr. Thomas Kostrzewa and Lauren Carney (Program Manager for the Kalamazoo Promise Scholars Program at WMU) took a group of students from WMU, many of whom are Kalamazoo Promise scholars, to Earth University in Costa Rica. Kostrzewa says, to paraphrase: "If you are unfamiliar with Earth University, I highly encourage you to take a look online at this most amazing institution and what it is doing. Our traveling class stayed at Earth University with students from around the world and studied the theory and practice of the "triple bottom line" approach (environmental, cultural, and economic) to rural development. The highlights for



all involved stays with rural farming families in the Limon Province in the community of 'La Argentina'. This community of families hosted and involved our students in the practices of rural sustainability in accordance with this aforementioned "triple bottom line" approach. Of course, our class also had to do the mandatory rafting and ziplining associated with Costa Rica. The accompanying picture shows our class being schooled by one of the many howler monkeys which were part of our rainforest education with brilliant Earth University guide Freddie. We will do this again! ¡Pura Vida!"

Boren and Brazil

The GIST program would like to congratulate Caitlin Wiley on being one of the recipients of the 2018 Boren Scholarship award. The Boren scholarship is a prestigious national award that aims to provide unique funding opportunities for U.S. undergraduate students to study less commonly taught languages in countries considered to be critical to U.S. security interests. These tend to also be regions underrepresented in study abroad programs. Caitlin will be in Florianopolis this fall studying Portuguese.

Student Corner

One small component of the GIST senior capstone class involved submitting a creative piece inspired by the topics covered in class. Below are two pieces of creative work produced by our students.



Assimilation?

By Brendan Sapato

This work features a monochromatic color scheme that represents that the migrant has assimilated to an extent, while the blurred background/other students represent that he is not fully assimilated and is caught between two worlds, and ostracized in this one.

(Media: NuPastels)

Crumbling Peace

by Erena White

Where do I go from here?
 How do I make it without my family?
 What was supposed to be a happy day
 Turned into pain that I wish would fade away
 My hopes my dreams

They all mean nothing to me
 Without my family
 The only hope and dream I have is just to be free
 The land that I once knew is no more
 The troopers they came bursting through our doors

All I remember was I was pushed to the floor
 I've watched my father being taken from me
 I've watched my mother hold out for me
 We were surprised
 We were bamboozled

The home of the brave
 The land of the free
 How could you ever let this happen to me?
 My heart so empty
 My tears keep falling

As we walked through the airport
 We learned we weren't the only ones affected
 All these families
 All being separated
 Could the government not see the monster they
 have created

Presidential scholar spotlight



Morgan McCullough (center)

This March, two of our GIST students, Morgan McCullough and Irene Kivinen, were among WMU's seniors recognized during the 38th annual Presidential Scholar's convocation. During her time at Western, McCullough, a double major in GIST and Spanish, pursued her interests in Arabic, gender and women studies, and the Middle East-North Africa region. She complemented this with study abroad trips to Spain, Peru and Morocco. She is one of the founding members of the Model United Nations Club at WMU and will be graduating this spring. Kivinen is also a double major in GIST and Spanish. While at WMU, she undertook study abroads in Santander and Burgos, Spain that provided her with an internship opportunity at a local bilingual elementary school. This sparked an interest in obtaining certification for teaching English abroad to further help others with language skills. She will be graduating in the fall of 2018.



Irene Kivinen (center)

Student perspectives: A global internship

by Liliana Flores

I have had many great experiences at Western, but none quite like my internship experience. I recently interned with the Office of Migrant Affairs at the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The Office of Migrant Affairs aids in the delivery of DHHS services to farmworkers and their families and while there I



focused on collecting data on migrant populations in Michigan. I also helped with evaluating the housing conditions of migrant and seasonal families while making sure that the families were aware of the benefits they are eligible for. Working with this diverse population showed me how these migrant and seasonal farmworkers, who contribute to Michigan's economy, are marginalized because of their poorer English language skills and their foreign-born status. I saw how job accessibility and uncertainty surrounding their status further contributed to their marginalization. This experience bolstered my understanding of the plight of migrants in Michigan, and I would recommend this internship opportunity to others.



Alexis Lenderman (Far Right)

GIST trailblazer

The GIST program is proud to recognize one of its own, Alexis Lenderman, as one of the recipients of the 2017-2018 Trailblazer award. The Trailblazer program celebrates exceptional WMU students for their achievements in academics, personal and professional development, leadership and community or campus involvement. Alexis, a double major in Entrepreneurship and Global and International Studies, is an active member on campus, a Newman Civic fellow, and the owner of The Scholarship Expert LLC, a company that assists students in finding scholarships and grants.

Sigma Iota Rho: A semester in review



The Western Michigan University Zeta Phi Chapter of the Sigma Iota Rho Honor Society for International Studies held its third annual induction ceremony on April 20th. Faculty advisor Seth Allard opened the ceremony with Ann Miles, Professor of Sociology, who provided the keynote address. This year's inductees include Adam Murrie, Caitlin Wiley, Nathanael Bills, Joshua White, Anna Kietzerow, Chris Coppock, Amanda Van Baren, Marisa Weller, and Lauren Lalonde. With an

aggressive agenda and the induction of highly talented students and honorary faculty members, this relatively new student organization promises to become a key presence at WMU, providing students with opportunities for scholarship and promoting the study of international affairs. For more information about Sigma Iota Rho membership or activities, contact the GIST office.

Congratulations to our recent graduates!

Spring 2018 graduates

Kya Cain Language: Spanish	Citlali Alcaraz Language: Spanish
Caroline Swiercz Language: Spanish	Anna Kietzerow Language: German
Juan Garcia Flores Language: French	Mary Schuck Language: Russian
Luke Freeman Language: Spanish	Brendan Sapato Language: Spanish
Ahmina Graves Language: Japanese	Elizabeth Kell Language: Korean
Brenda Martinez Language: Spanish	Morgan McCullough Language: Spanish
John Bryer Language: Russian	

Summer 2018 graduates

Trisha Domeier Language: Spanish	Anna Tarasyeva Language: Arabic
Carina Lawrence Language: Spanish	Jim Schooley Language: Arabic
Liliana Flores Language: Spanish	

Minors: Erin Hard, Jessica Petersen, Rebecca Davis, Alison Bommarito, Brittany Little, Austin Lee, Mitchell Noss, Olivia Oerther, Kori Leighton, Joshua White, Lisah Crall, Annelise Wilp, Sydney Queen, Jacob Vasquez, Sarah Ransone, Krystl Sladovnik, Keagan Gay, Alexander Bunner, Janiea Erquhart, Ali Orlandi, Ahry'Ana Puterbaugh

Alumni needed: We are looking for Global and International Studies alumni to speak to current students about how to transition from student to professional. If you are interested in sharing your journey, please contact us at coas-global-intl-info@wmich.edu

Edited by Chikezie Okoli

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



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