A WORD FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

SLF is a friendly, vibrant, and hugely diverse School. We teach and research on subjects from practical film making to post-modern literature, from experimental neurolinguistics to Brazilian Portuguese language. This last year, our Russian and French students have directed and acted in plays in their language. Our Linguistics Students have presented their dissertation research at conferences. Spanish and German poets and novelists have come to visit us and our Film students have directed, shot and edited many short films (check out the vimeo page at https://vimeo.com/filmqmul). Our work engages with our local community through workshops, research projects, and public events. It also connects with the wider world, through our research, through our many international students and visitors, and through the Year Abroad, which is now available as part of all of our courses.

David Adger

NEWS ABOUT THE YEAR ABROAD

Teach in Argentina?
Study at the prestigious Sorbonne in Paris?
Work as an editorial intern for a leading sports magazine in Munich?

The Year Abroad will remain a compulsory part of all Modern Languages courses we offer. It is one of the most rewarding aspects of a language degree but deciding what to do and where to go involves quite a bit of decision-making. Here at QMUL we do our best to help students make the planning process that little bit easier. As soon as you start here, you will be invited to join a series of year abroad-related events from general information sessions; to job-hunting workshops; employer presentations; language alumni panels as well as short talks by final year students who have recently returned from the year abroad. You’ll also receive enhanced support in the form of one-to-one appointments from members of staff; and have access to our online year abroad community where you can post any questions you may have in the forums; read up on country-specific practical tips and use the interactive maps to see where students have been.

Students on all other courses now have the chance to build a year abroad into their degree with the help of QMUL’s Global Opportunities Scheme. With our long experience in sending and helping students abroad - see above - we will be able to help you make this a success.

So, the big question is what do you see yourself doing and where do you see yourself going for your year abroad? Whatever you decide, we’ll be with you every step of the way.
CELEBRATING SUCCESS

In the September 2017 National Student Survey, French at Queen Mary performed very strongly, receiving an overall satisfaction rate of 100%. Seeking excellence in teaching and student learning lies at the heart of what we do in Modern Languages and Cultures. Two of the teachers in the French subject area, Dr Elsa Petit and Dr Laetitia Calabrese, were recently nominated for Teaching Awards and were invited to Queen Mary's Education Awards event which took place at the Drapers' Hall in London on Monday, 26th March 2018. Teaching Awards are conferred on teaching and support staff who have made an outstanding contribution to student learning. At the same ceremony, Dr Coppe van Urk from our Department of Linguistics was presented with the ‘Assessment and Feedback Champion’ award and was also nominated for the ‘Innovative Teaching Award’.

QMUL's Education Awards also include the Course Rep Awards, which are made to student course representatives who have played influential roles in their departments. Trisha Mason, final-year course rep for French, won a Contribution Gold Award and was also nominated for the Engagement Award. Trisha has been so effective in her role, helping to ensure partnership between the students and teachers of the department.

2017 was an exciting year in the Linguistics Department, too. Once again, several of our undergraduate students were accepted to present their work at the UK’s national undergraduate Linguistics conference – we are very proud of their achievement! The Department is top-ranked in the UK for research and achieved an overall satisfaction rating of 92% in the National Student Survey in September 2017. At our end-of-term party, single-honours finalists presented posters of their dissertation projects, which covered topics as diverse as orthography and reading speeds in dyslexics, use of American pronunciation by British singers, prejudice against vernacular dialects in the courtroom, and the syntax of Finnish.

TAking THE STAGE BY STORM

Students of Russian worked hard on the department's annual stage production. This year we put on a play by Evgeny Shvarts called An Ordinary Miracle. This is an inverted fairy tale in which a bear (Sam McGill) has been transformed into a dashing young man, but with the proviso that he will relapse into his bearish identity if a princess kisses him. As you would expect, he falls in love with a young woman who is revealed to be a princess, which forces him to run away in fear. The princess, who is likewise taken by the young man, is stunned by his behaviour and turns into an embittered, aggressive, and despotic young lady. In the end, after some convoluted twists and turns, the bear-man musters the courage of his feelings and kisses the princess, while she shows willingness to face the consequences. To everybody's surprise, including a jaded hunter, who was lying in ambush ready to shoot the bear, the expected relapse fails to take place and the lovers are dutifully united as husband and wife. Written in the post-stalinist period, the play suggests faith in the power of hope and love to overcome obstacles, a somewhat unusual stance in the context of Twentieth Century Soviet history.

Directed by Chrisanthi Symeonidou and performed in the original, the play involved an impressive cast of more than 10 students, several of whom had only started to learn Russian in late September. We performed on two successive nights at a resounding success in front of a full house of family, friends, former students, and colleagues.

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Our Work in the Wider Community

Gender diversity is the major focus of the project Gender and Education in Brazil’s Rural Areas, convened by Professor Else R. P. Vieira. In response to Brazil’s legalization of same-sex relationships in 2013, it was co-produced with adolescent students in the settlements of Agrarian Reform educational resources for inclusion in the syllabi of their schools (http://landless-voices2.org/imagens/diversidade-de-genero-imagens/). Students have also composed poems and lyrics (http://landless-voices2.org/vozes/diversidade-de-genero-musicas-e-poemas) seeking to promote gender welfare in the more conservative rural communities.

With the financial backing of the German Academic Exchange Service, the German Department was host to best-selling author Katherina Hacker. Katherina read extracts from the novel she is currently writing, which were translated into English by our final year students specially for this event and read by Dr Robert Gillett. She also took part in a Routes into Languages event, organized jointly by Queen Mary, the Greater London German Network, UCL and SOAS to coincide with the London premiere of the film based on her novel Die Habenichtse, The Have-Nots. Some twenty A-Level students took part in three workshops: one devoted to language, and the other two to the novel and the film respectively. At the premiere itself, which took place on the 13th February in the Regent Street cinema, Katherina answered questions alongside the film’s director, Florian Hoffmeister, and the scriptwriter Mona Kino. The answers informed the academic treatment of the adaptation in a course on German Narrative Fiction, run by Dr Astrid Köhler.

This year’s George Steiner Lecture in Comparative Literature was given by Professor Wiebke Denecke (Boston University), and entitled: “World Literature, Premodern Comparisons and Global Cultural Memory in Action”. Professor Deborah Cameron from the University of Oxford gave an annual lecture on ‘Language and the Problem of Women’s Authority’, looking at the language used by male and female politicians in broadcast debates. Staff also continued to engage with the media, for example in the Financial Times and Sky News. (Professor David Adger’s comparison of Yoda’s language to Hawaiian was covered widely, from The Sun to NME!)

We also ran several events for secondary school pupils and teachers. Professor Adger and Dr. Coppe van Urk taught a Year 10 summer school on Creating Languages (with a visit from the creator of Parseltongue, from the Harry Potter films!). Our PhD students Shivonne Gates and Christian Ilbury organised a workshop for school teachers on dialect differences among students within the classroom. And Professors Jenny Cheshire and Devyani Sharma ran workshops for teachers at the British Library, providing them with new English Language A-level teaching materials based on our department’s research.

The department of Linguistics had an active schedule of events for students, scholars, and the wider public this year. Our special workshops explored gender, identity, prosody, semantics, and dialect variation. Professor Deborah Cameron from the University of Oxford gave an annual lecture on ‘Language and the Problem of Women’s Authority’, looking at the language used by male and female politicians in broadcast debates. Staff also continued to engage with the media, for example in the Financial Times and Sky News. (Professor David Adger’s comparison of Yoda’s language to Hawaiian was covered widely, from The Sun to NME!)

Spanish Lecturer Dr Elina Vilar took her second-year students out to interview native speakers of Spanish living in London. This was an innovative, fun and very effective way of engaging with Spanish language and culture. One of her students wrote:

“I loved discovering everything new through the interviews of (Spanish) people in London and the variety of people in our city.”

Malachi Zeke Randell
INTRODUCING…
Prof. Rüdiger Görner

Rüdiger Görner is the Director of our Centre for Anglo-German Cultural Relations, a high-profile researcher and a prize-winning poet, novelist and essayist. In June 2017, he received the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany (Bundesverdienstkreuz) in recognition of his achievements in developing Anglo-German Relations. He delivered the opening keynote lecture on Brexism or: How to Emerge from Political Psychosis at the Colloquium of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in Oxford on 15th March 2018.

Among his latest academic publications are:


In the field of prose fiction, he recently published:


UPCOMING EVENTS

Second German Film Day at Queen Mary University of London.
We offer an interactive film studies afternoon focusing on TSCHICK (2016), a film by German director Fatih Akin (Head On, Soul Kitchen), based on Wolfgang Herrndorf's eponymous novel (2010).
Despite having very different social backgrounds, fourteen year old boys Andrej "Tschick" Tschichatschow and Maik Klingenberg come together through their common role as outsiders and the painful feeling of boredom. With a rickety stolen car, the two youths embark on a journey that is likely to change their lives. (Rotten Tomatoes)
The event takes place on Wednesday 25 April at Queen Mary University of London, Mile End Campus, in the Foyer of Arts One, 12noon - 5pm (Sandwiches and drinks provided).
If you wish to attend, you can book your free ticket on https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/second-german-film-day-at-queen-mary-university-of-london-tickets-44348717207

If you don't live too far away, come to Queen Mary's

We will be offering Language Snacks on the day!

Magic, Theatre and Striptease
On 23-24 May Queen Mary will be hosting two days of talks, readings and performances to celebrate the theatre of the Catalan artist and poet Joan Brossa. Brossa was a close friend of Joan Miró and also worked with famous musicians and film makers of the 1960s. Prepare to be astounded as performers from Spain, the USA and the UK bring magic and strangeness to Mile End. This is the first time Brossa's theatre is to be performed in this country.
The events are free, but booking is essential: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/theatrical-poetry-actions-dance-and-striptease-two-days-celebrating-the-work-of-joan-brossa-tickets-43693590706

And in case you haven’t managed to come along to one of our offer holder days, you can meet your future teachers and peers on one of QMUL's Summer Open Days, taking place on Friday 22nd and Saturday 23rd June 2018. Our open days should help you to find out what life at Queen Mary is really like and where our degrees can take you in the future.