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Focus: Foreign Languages and Business: Spanish

Spanish majors have the opportunity to experience a whole new world of Spanish in Dr. Isabel Alvarez's Spanish 308 Business Spanish course. Alvarez says, "There are three main course goals. They include acquiring general knowledge and specific vocabulary about the business world, improving the four skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) so that students can effectively communicate in any context and, encouraging critical thinking, appreciate and understand the role of culture when doing business." Alvarez names six main content areas: banking, business types (corporations, joint partnerships, etc.), the stock market, importing and exporting, marketing and advertising and human resources.

The class worked on vocabulary and discussed two readings: one on commercial/business concerns and the other on cultural features. Students worked on writing and translating commercial documents. The Spanish language used in business documents is very different from the language used in daily life. Alvarez believes that it is important for students to become familiar with this type of formal language so that they can use it effectively. She also places great emphasis on culture, although it is sometimes challenging to cover cultural aspects when dealing with over twenty countries.

Business Spanish proves students "an opportunity to learn from one another."

Students completed two presentations: in one, they examined one Spanish-speaking country from a business/economic point of view; in the second, they discussed a business topic. Topics ranged from Mexican beer and Colombian coffee in the U.S. to marketing techniques in Latin America or the Hispanic market in the U.S. Business Spanish classes can be diverse: some students are Spanish majors or minors, but may not know much about the business world, while others are Business majors or minors who are much more knowledgeable in that area. Although it can be challenging at times, Alvarez welcomes this diversity since it gives all students an opportunity to learn from one other.

Focus: Foreign Languages and Business: German

For students who plan to work for a German business--either in Germany or in the U.S., German 313 Business German is a crucial course. Dr. Monika Hohbein-Deegen describes the main objectives and themes of the class. "Students cover general information about Germany's federal states and their major branches of industry and business, the European Union including its history and current member states, studying and working in the EU and the Euro, transportation systems, business correspondence, job application etiquette, tourism, consumerism, social systems, Germany's industry, and its role in the global marketplace, finances and environmental issues, and innovations/renewable energies."

Hohbein-Deegen also mentions that the students discuss Germany's place in the global economy. She says "Students are working toward communicative competency in a variety of business situations. They develop business language skills and also gain useful business and cultural knowledge."
Of course, grammar review and expansion as well as increased vocabulary are a major part of this course. Students also learn how to present on certain business topics along with other forms of communication. Courses such as German 313 remain invaluable to students in business because they gain useful knowledge and skills which have and will continue to qualify them as potential employees in businesses within the German business world or work force, or international businesses located anywhere throughout the world, including the U.S. The course is also helpful to German majors and minors outside of the business field, helping them to gain important language and knowledge that assist them in applying for internship positions abroad and generally making them more informed about global and business issues.

Alumni Focus: Megan Baker

"I majored in German with minors in English Linguistics and International Studies with a European Studies emphasis."

Megan Baker, a May 2010 graduate of UW-Oshkosh, describes searching for a job for which foreign language skills are an advantage. At UW-Oshkosh, Megan found direction from the German Program and shares her experience and some words of encouragement with current students.

What was your major at UWO? I majored in German with minors in English Linguistics and International Studies with a European Studies emphasis. Had I stayed one more semester, I would have had a triple-major.

What was your favorite foreign language class? I thoroughly enjoyed German Phonetics (German 314). I love linguistics as a science and am very interested in the ways a language is put together and how it develops. With our world ever-developing and being connected via technology, medicine, and word-borrowing, I'm interested in the social, anthropological, philosophical, and pragmatic contributions to languages.

What was your most valuable class as an undergraduate? Of course, any of the conversational courses were very handy, but I also must include any of the European history courses, whether in German or in English. It helps to know how the countries and their cultures have developed throughout the years. Those courses always made me want to travel and see everything I had to read and write about! I love learning about people and from where they came/how they got here!

What was the best advice you got about graduating/getting your first job? Never give up! You may not have your "dream job" right out of college, and that's ok! It took me two years to find my place, but a few bumps in the road actually made the journey that much sweeter. The majority of my friends had a transitional job (or two or three) as well. I have now found something that makes me very happy to get up in the morning and go to work, which is half the battle. My dad's words echo in my head, "Find the job that you cannot wait to go to".

Tell us about your job now. I work in downtown Milwaukee in administration as an Administrative Coordinator for a non-profit international society for medical professionals. We all know about organizations such as the American Heart Association and the American Cancer Society, as they do a lot with patient advocacy and support. My organization is a bit like that minus the patient

advocacy. It's called the Movement Disorder Society and it is tailored in connecting neurologists worldwide specializing in movement disorders. My coworkers and I provide administrative assistance to programs and resources for 4,000+ clinicians, physical therapists, medical students, researchers, and other health professionals from around the world. We are accredited so our members are able to earn Continuing Medical Education credits towards their practice. The majority of our time is spent organizing programs and conducting workshops and conferences worldwide so that all of our members, no matter their location in the world, have a chance to attend and receive their credits as well as develop more in their practice and research through our programs. Along with the logistics of meeting and program planning and conducting, the Society also distributes a monthly medical journal to include the latest breakthroughs. Societies like these are extremely beneficial to medical professionals in developing countries so that they have access to Westernized practices.

To what extent do you use German in your work? Could you do your job just as well without knowledge of a foreign language?

Unfortunately, I do not use German as much as I wish. The official language of my organization is English, so everyone corresponds in English. However, it has been very helpful to have a background in a foreign language. Having a background in a foreign language, a strong command of the English language/linguistics helps me communicate well on both a professional level and to empathize with non-native English speakers. With some correspondents, I have to write in simple English terms if they have only very basic English skills. In other instances, I respond to German-speaking members in German, they seem to enjoy it!

"My co-workers and I provide administrative assistance to programs and resources for 4,000+ clinicians, physical therapists, medical students, researchers, and other health professionals from around the world. "

UW Oshkosh Students Visit Japan

From May 14 to 24, 2013, the Japanese Program took 23 UW Oshkosh students to Japan to participate in the KAKEHASHI Project (The Bridge for Tomorrow) study tour. Sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and facilitated by the Japan Foundation, the project funded nearly the entire 10-day trip. Accompanied by Dr. Yoshiro Hanai and Ms. Shoko Emori, students visited many important places and participated in a variety of cultural enrichment activities in the capital of Tokyo and Wisconsin's sister state, Chiba Prefecture. Tour highlights included assisting Japanese students with a charity flea market at Kanda University of International Studies, experiencing a full-day of Japanese campus life with students at Chiba University, and paying a courtesy call to and giving a speech in Japanese in front of Chiba Governor Kensaku Morita.

During the 10-day study tour, UW Oshkosh students gained a better understanding of Japan. Through interaction with many Japanese students and locals, they built strong friendships with people in Japan.

For more information about the tour, please visit the UW Oshkosh Japanese Program's homepage at http://www.uwosh.edu/foreignlanguage/japanese/recent-news/kakehashi-project.

A group picture at Mitsubishi Corporation in Tokyo. Photo: Y. Hanai.

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Recognizing Student Excellence in Foreign Language Study at UW Oshkosh

The Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures' Student Award Celebration gives faculty and staff a opprtunity to acknowledge the achievements of their students. This year the event took place on April 18 and featured student performances on traditional Japanese drums, poetry from French students, and music from Spanish students. Under the direction of Dr. Yoshiro Hanai and Ms. Shoko Emori, Erikah Lange, Joseph Peralta, Justin Rick and Laura Weaver performed two pieces on traditional Japanese drums called *taiko*.

French students, Anna Lukyanova and Laith Msaibeeh, read two poems each, first in the original French and then translated into English. Spanish student musicians Garrett Sewell, Sarah Speigle, and Libbie Gerondale performed selections of vocal and guitar music.

After the student performances, faculty of each language program briefly described the accomplishments of each student receiving an award. The French Program presented book awards to Kristin Heckel, Adrianne Benson, and Susan Fochs. The German Program presented Goethe Institut Awards to Jennifer Butler, Hannah Popp, Garrett Wright, Amy O'Connor, Sarah Mueller, and Jacob Schaubs. The recipient of the William and Clifford Sanders Memorial Award this year is German student Beth Molnar. The Japanese Program presented a book award to Catherine Wrucke. The Spanish Program presented a book award to Kelsey Sweeny, Krystyna Biel, Taylor Weeden, Nazak Sankari, Hannah Briones, and Madeline Meis and study-abroad awards to Whitney Dewald and Ashley O'Brien.

As no party is complete without food, the faculty and staff present also each prepared a dish associated with their language or culture. The academic year and the Award Ceremony ended with students, faculty, staff and guests enjoying a variety of the best ethnic cuisine on campus!

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