

# NEWSLETTER OF THE ILLINOIS GLOBAL INSTITUTE



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# The Global and Its Worlds

## An IGI collaboration with the Humanities Research Institute

*Jerry Dávila, Executive Director, IGI*

This year, the centers and programs within the Illinois Global Institute are collaborating with the Humanities Research Institute (HRI) on programming around the theme of “The Global and its Worlds.” The theme has two aims. First, it considers the variety of ways in which scholars in the humanities approach global and regional questions. Second, it considers different regional vantagepoints within which global experiences are lived and interpreted. How do questions look when they are asked from diverse cultural, global, or regional perspectives? How do those questions gain their meaning from where they are asked? And how do those meanings resonate with questions asked from other points-of-view?

These questions can be applied across many experiences, and among them migration stands out as an example. Migration is both one of the most ancient and most contemporary human experiences. The United Nations estimates 3.5% of the world’s population, 272 million people, are migrants.

Locally, over fifteen percent of Champaign-Urbana residents are immigrants who have come from over 75 countries. Members of our community live and work in a variety of situations including ones that are affected by a national climate that increasingly criminalizes undocumented migration and restricts other forms of migration. This criminalization also permits increasingly inhumane actions such as the separation of families and the detention of undocumented members of our community far from their families, networks and legal representation.

But while the focus in the U.S. is frequently on migration in this country, migration shapes experiences

throughout the world. And as much as it is a global experience, it is one that is shaped by the national and local contexts of migrants, as well as those of their countries of origin, and sometimes by the action of powerful third-party countries like the United States which, in particular, shapes migrant experiences within Latin America.

Groups of faculty as well as outreach coordinators from IGI centers and programs have been working even in the context of the pandemic on projects sponsored by the IGI Migration and Refugees in Global Perspective Initiative. The projects range from comparative legal frameworks and social climates for migration to financial networks among Syrian refugees, as well as projects with local migrant and refugee communities. The Women and

Gender in Global Perspectives Program (WGGP) “Fostering Empathy for Latin American Migrants through Game Design” project detailed in this newsletter reflects these efforts.

This spring, the Global and Its Worlds collaboration with the HRI will feature a screening of the documentary *From Here* along with a conversation with its Director, Christina



Antonakos-Wallace. The film focuses on ways in which four artists and activists from immigrant families in New York and Berlin redefine belonging. The documentary was developed over ten years that accompany both the artists’ experiences and the increasingly nationalist contexts in which they work. The screening will take place on two days – April 12 and April 13 and the Q & A with the director and two of the film’s subjects will be held on April 13. There will also be a workshop with the director on April 14. For more information about attending the screening, Q & A session, or workshop, please visit <https://go.illinois.edu/fromhere>.

# Language Learning in Graduate Training

## Reflections by Global South Language Fellows

*JoAnne Geigner, Communications Coordinator, IGI*

Since 2019, the Illinois Global Institute has offered a Global South Language Fellowship (GSLF) to support study in specialized language training by Illinois graduate students.

Candidates to the fellowship apply through the Center for African Studies (CAS), the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS), and the Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (CSAMES). Though recent, the GSLF has already had a significant impact on the programs of study of students conducting graduate work in thirteen departments across five colleges or schools.

The GSL Fellowship's goal is to provide support for graduate students interested in the study of less commonly taught languages of the Global South, including Arabic, Hindi, Quechua, Persian, Portuguese, Swahili, Wolof, and Zulu. This is support that our students would not be able to find elsewhere. The GSL Fellowship, despite its limited numbers, constitutes a valuable funding source for students and their graduate training. The GSLF is funded by the university, widening eligibility for the award, making the support for language study more accessible relative to some sources of external funding.

While the GSL fellows have the study of language in common, their academic programs are varied and multi-disciplined. Peter Floess, a Master's student in African Studies, received support to study Swahili, which allowed him to research the life of Central African immigrants with disabilities. Floess said he appreciated the choices the fellowship granted him to pursue classes not only in Swahili and African history but also disability history, and human development and gender studies. With a career goal of teaching or working for a non-governmental organization (NGO) focused on disabilities, the fellowship he received in the 2019-20 academic year provided the foundation for reaching those goals. While working to attain her Ph.D. in Urban and Regional Planning, Ouafa Benkraouda received a GSLF fellowship to study Hindi. "It opens doors for research that I would not have been able to do without learning the Hindi language," Benkraouda said. "This includes conducting interviews or reaching out to South Asian communities in the Gulf." This capacity brings her career goals of becoming a scholar in planning



*Ryan Schmitt, Ph.D. student in history and GSFL recipient.*

livable and humane cities that utilize technology for its benefit closer. Learning Hindi opened the door to learning and using ethnographic research and urbanism in the Global South, which has expanded the scope of her research.

To close the gap in language learning between immersion in a country and a culture with language study on campus, intensive language training is offered across these languages, which can include daily coursework, lab activities, and conversation partner sessions. The GSLF provides students with the financial support to dedicate more time to language learning relative to other graduate support such as teaching assistantships.

Student language skill development broadens their capacity in both their disciplinary field of study and their understanding of world areas. Srinanda Ganguly, an Art History Ph.D. student, said the GSLF support allowed her to focus on her academic work without financial worries as well as enhancing her research capacity. "For a student of Mughal architecture like myself," Ganguly continued, "studying Persian is of utmost importance – Persian was the Mughal lingua franca, and the Mughal manuscripts and monument inscriptions are in the language. A robust knowledge of the language allows me to interpret these primary materials in an unmediated manner, which enriches my scholarship."

The GSLF provides support for research and scholarship that, in some cases, is the only support for this type of

*Continued on page 15*

# Supporting Students, Faculty, & Community

## CAS connections provide range of programs

### CAS Staff

The Center for African Studies' (CAS) educational mission is especially vital in today's emerging global age, a time that promises greater international cooperation and interdependence. The center has been an important focal point on campus and in the wider community since the African studies program was formally established in 1970, later becoming an area studies center in 1986. CAS brings together a group of people from across campus and beyond this university who have a common interest in African Studies. With this shared commitment, as well as diverse training and research interests, the center provides a rich and vibrant environment for research, training, and educational programs.

One of the ways the center contributes to the support of our undergraduate students is through scholarships. In fall of 2020, a gift by the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Niger, University of Illinois graduate Eric P. Whitaker, established a new scholarship in CAS.

The scholarship will support undergraduate students pursuing African Studies at Illinois. Ambassador Whitaker holds an M.S. in Biology and an M.S. in community health education from UIUC.

This is the first gift dedicated to undergraduate African Studies scholarships and coincides with the 50th anniversary of the Center for African Studies. CAS Director Teresa Barnes said, "This represents a very welcome gift for us. We're really thrilled and so pleased. This will strengthen our support for students to learn about the African continent." She also said that the flexibility built into the gift will make it possible to support a range of student awards.

Barnes acknowledges Ambassador Whitaker's history of engagement with CAS and with Illinois. His last visit came in October of 2019, when he gave a Brown Bag talk at CAS. He also spoke with groups of students from CAS, Global Studies, Political Science, and ACDIS about his perspectives on public service and career opportunities at the Department of State, where he has a nearly 30-year career in the Foreign Service.

Teaching is another important aspect of the center. In February, Teresa Barnes (CAS, Department of History and GWS), was honored by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences with the 2021 LAS Dean's Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching.

The Department of History's awards committee

described Barnes and her teaching in their letter of nomination.

"Dr. Barnes is an incredible instructor, who has left an indelible imprint on her students. At Illinois, she has developed innovative pedagogy and new courses, reaching undergraduates with many different backgrounds, interests, and educational and career goals. Drawing on her path-breaking scholarship on race

and gender while also ranging far beyond it,

Barnes delivers historical context and insight to help students make sense of their world. Her work in the classroom, like her scholarship, is vital and urgent in an age shaped by the #MeToo and Black Lives Matter movements. Terri is committed to opening new spaces for those who have been excluded or marginalized. As a professor dedicated to teaching students new ways of thinking while helping them challenge themselves and achieve their very best, Barnes has turned her classrooms into spectacular spaces, where history happens in watershed geo-political moments and also everyday experiences."



*Ambassador Eric P. Whitaker with students after a Brown Bag talk in October,*

# The Visiting Asian Scholars Program

## CEAPS long-running program welcomes scholars to campus

CEAPS Staff

The Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies' (CEAPS) visiting scholars program has a long history, with its origin traced back to the former Freeman Fellows Program, funded by the Freeman Foundation. The Freeman Fellows Program began in 1996 and supported 8 to 15 visiting academics from mainland Chinese research universities each year, until its final cohort of scholars in the 2012–2013 academic year. During its 16 years, nearly 200 Chinese scholars from 12 partner institutions have been able to come to the University of Illinois campus.



VASP Scholar Shanshan Wei co-presents a talk on “The Colorful Zhuang Culture: Using Songs as Speech” with Prof. Chilin Shih (EALC) at Asian American Cultural Center’s Food for Thought event. (March 26, 2019)

To continue the legacy of this exchange, CEAPS started a new program, termed “Visiting Asian Scholars Program” (VASP), and expanded its mission to scholars from academic institutions in East Asia, Southeast Asia, and Central Asia in the 2013–2014 academic year. The program continues to this day and over 60 scholars have visited campus since the program launch. The VASP scholars all have an Illinois faculty mentor, and are provided with office space, library and internet access, as well as administrative and research support from CEAPS. Faculty mentors in recent years have included Zong-qi Cai (EALC), Jeff Martin (Anthropology), Tim Liao (Sociology),



The VASP program welcomes 14 distinguished scholars from China, Japan, and South Korea in 2018. (September 24, 2018)

Anne Burkus-Chasson (Art History), Jessica Li (Education Policy, Organization and Leadership), Dana Robinson (Music), Randall L Sadler (Linguistics/ESL), Roderick Wilson (History), Robert Tierney (EALC), Mary Arends-Kuenning (Agriculture and Consumer Economics), and Eric T. Freyfogle (Law).

The visiting scholars participate in all CEAPS events and present their research in the VASP brown bag series. CEAPS staff also curates a special VASP Experience Illinois series to introduce visiting scholars to American history and culture in Illinois. Past events have included a scholar forum and reception hosted by University of Illinois President Timothy L. Killeen at the President’s House, day trips to Springfield and Arthur Amish community, as well as social events and holiday celebrations throughout the year.

The current VASP cohort is much smaller than usual due to the ongoing pandemic. After a long delay, our first 2020-21 visiting scholar Jin Seog Kim, a public official from South Korea’s Ministry of Defense, arrived on campus this Spring. We hope to welcome more scholars when it is safe to return to campus for everyone. We anticipate this will happen in Fall 2021 and are currently accepting applications for visits that commence after August 1, 2021. To learn more about the VASP program, visit the VASP tab at [ceaps.illinois.edu](https://ceaps.illinois.edu).

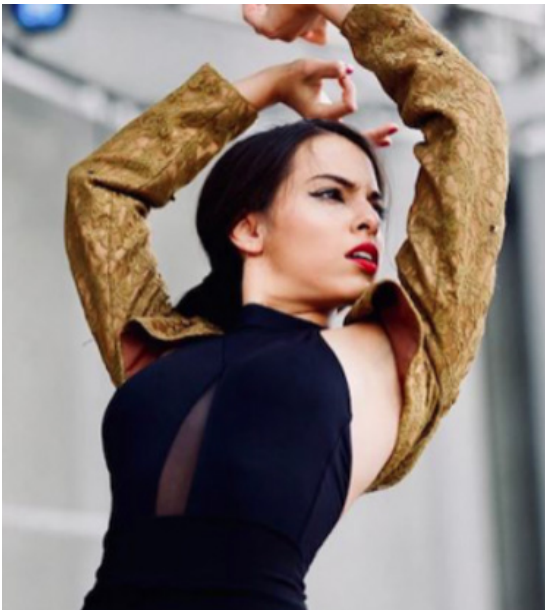
# Global Intersections Across Disciplines

## CGS fosters new collaborations

*Maria Dorofeeva, Ph.D., EH Program Coordinator, CGS*

Global Intersections is a Center for Global Studies (CGS) initiative designed to encourage multicultural, international, transnational, and global perspectives in student research. This initiative invites collaborative proposals from faculty and students across multiple disciplines that promote understanding and aid in solving global problems. These projects provide opportunities for students to engage directly in the process of developing new research directions in areas of global import. Global Intersections projects are multidisciplinary and globally-focused collaborations, spearheaded by students and supported by faculty.

Current Global Intersections projects explore new directions in the arts, sciences, and humanities in richly diverse, cultural contexts. This year's projects include Ph.D. student Brian Stark's and undergraduate dance student Alyssa Teijeiro-Ficht's collaboration on the "Illinois Flamenco-Jazz Collective." The students are working on a new music and dance ensemble dedicated to high-quality Flamenco education and performance in Champaign-Urbana and surrounding areas. "Illinois Flamenco-Jazz Collective" will perform for the public in May 2021.



*The Illinois Flamenco-Jazz Collective. Mia Angela de Lourdes "La Malou"*

In turn, Nicholas Perozzi, an M.S. student in the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, and recent Ph.D. graduate Keilin Jahnke from the same



*"P.A.N. Culture and Heritage Experience"*

program, are directing "Illinois Contextual Engineering Week" (April 20-21). The planned series of events includes a hands-on Zoom workshop on April 21 that would introduce the attendees to the benefits of a contextual approach in engineering design.

Global Studies in Education doctoral students Angelique Evans and Angelina Arrington are collaborating on the design for a study abroad course called "P.A.N. African Heritage and Cultural Experience" that focuses on the preparation of students for life abroad and research in Ghana, Africa. As part of their project, on February 25, the students hosted a Zoom conversation titled, "Impact of COVID-19 on Travel and Study Abroad in West Africa," where they were joined by community developer and co-founder of the Semanhyia American School, Patrick Benneh.

One of the current Global Intersections projects, titled "Turning the Discursive Gaze Toward a Digital Center: Negotiations and Global Imaginaries Surrounding Facial Recognition Across Weibo," directed by Media Studies doctoral students Adrian Wong and Yiran Gao, recently held its first event. The project analyzes facial recognition technology and its implementation in China and Eastern Asia against the backdrop of transnational media from the news organizations around the world. On February 9, 2021, the students invited an eminent scholar of Sociology, Professor Saskia Sassen of Columbia University, to give a public Zoom lecture, "When Corona Meets the City." This event offered the University community a unique opportunity to engage with the distinguished scholar's work and pose questions afterwards. The recording of Professor Sassen's talk is currently available on the CGS webpage, along with the recordings of other CGS-sponsored events.

# Innovative Collaborations at CLACS

## Reimagining the Andean Art gallery at Krannert Art Museum

*Gisela Sin, Director and Kasia Szremski, Associate Director, CLACS; Allyson Purpura, Senior Curator & Curator of Global African Art, Krannert Art Museum*

At the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS) we have a credo: interdisciplinary projects that drive innovation in Latin America-focused research, that develop and facilitate cross-campus connections and collaboration, and that translate this expertise through public engagement, are the type of projects where CLACS seeks to be involved.

CLACS's collaboration with the Krannert Art Museum (KAM) in the reinstallation of the Pre-Hispanic Andean Art Gallery boasts these components, building interdisciplinary ties across fields of study and geographies, in this case with scholars, students, and museums from UIUC, UIC, the broader Midwest, and Peru. Spearheaded by CLACS Associate Director,



*CLACS Associate Director, Kasia Szremski experimenting with drone photography at her research site in Peru.*

Kasia Szremski, an archaeologist whose work focuses on the political-economies of the north-central coast of Peru and

KAM Senior Curator and Curator of Global African Art, Allyson Purpura, the project leverages on CLACS' strength in Latin American indigenous studies. As the hub of Latin America-focused scholarship at Illinois—with more than 140 affiliate faculty representing ten colleges—CLACS has maintained a special emphasis on the Andean region since our founding in 1963, anchored in our Quechua program and focused on interdisciplinary groups that bring in new research in Andean archaeology and art history; decolonization and the history of collecting; and student-designed museum evaluation protocol.

KAM's Andean collection consists of over 700 objects, representing approximately 3,000 years of central Andean history. Though is one of the most significant repositories of pre-hispanic Andean art held by a public university in the nation, the current gallery installation dates from 1988, representing an outmoded exhibition style which focuses on artifacts as singular art objects separate from any sense of history, agency, or connectivity across time and space.

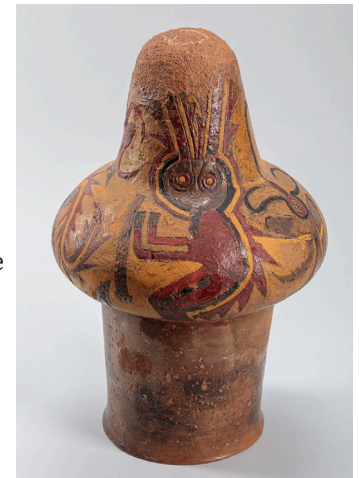
With financial support from the Presidential Initiative to Celebrate the Arts and Humanities and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, our goal is to reframe narratives around past Andean social and artistic complexities by creating an updated, socially engaged pre-hispanic Andean art exhibition which leverages the cultural richness of KAM's collection to explore how pre-hispanic Andean artists actively engaged and experimented with visual motifs, ideas, and practices across time and space. This approach places the emphasis on how past Andean societies were active agents in the creation of their own (art) histories. We are also explicitly engaging with the histories of looting that brought these objects to KAM through tracing object biographies from their creation and original use, to their illicit and violent removal from archaeological sites and journey to the museum.

Our project seeks to be reparative by actively engaging with our Peruvian colleagues and descendant communities through the creation of an adaptive digital platform that will allow students, scholars, and communities in Peru to have remote access to the exhibition as well as involvement in the research and interpretation of their cultural patrimony. All information and in-gallery labels will be available in Quechua, Spanish, and English.

Ultimately, the new installation will function as an innovative teaching and research tool to better serve the needs of students, faculty, K-12 educators, and the growing central Illinois Latinx population. It is slated to open in February of 2023.



*Allyson Purpura, Senior Curator and Curator of Global African Art at KAM.*



*Currently off view, this Paracas drum featuring the Occulate Being is one of the pieces that will be highlighted in the new installation.*

# Student Programs in Middle Eastern Studies

## CSAMES' Department of Education grant supports instruction

Angela Williams, Associate Director, CSAMES

While the past year brought unexpected challenges and hardship, the Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (CSAMES) was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Education Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Languages (UISFL) for the 2020-2022 academic years.

The primary aim of the grant is to increase opportunities for undergraduate students from across the disciplines to learn about the Middle East by supporting a variety of outreach activities in area and language studies, including a conference on military interventions in the Middle East, a documentary film series on daily life in the region, events on Turkish culture, and a workshop on careers in Middle East studies. The grant also supports a permanent Director of Persian, and assistantships for Arabic and Turkish

language programs. Furthermore, the grant will fund a new online course called "Introduction to Middle East Studies," a Persian Gulf Studies course, and a Digital Humanities course.

We are excited to begin several of those initiatives this semester. First, the grant is funding NaTakallam online tutorials with native speakers for students of Arabic and Persian, as well

as a new course on Arabic Debate taught by Eman Saadah, LCTL Director, Arabic Director and Lecturer. Inspired by QatarDebate's first U.S. Arabic debate competition held at Harvard in 2019 in which Saadah and students participated, this course is meant to hone students' speaking and critical thinking skills. Malaak Saadah, a junior in Materials Science and Engineering, says, "To anyone considering taking this course in the future, I would say that it may seem intimidating to face an opponent in a completely different language, but the skills



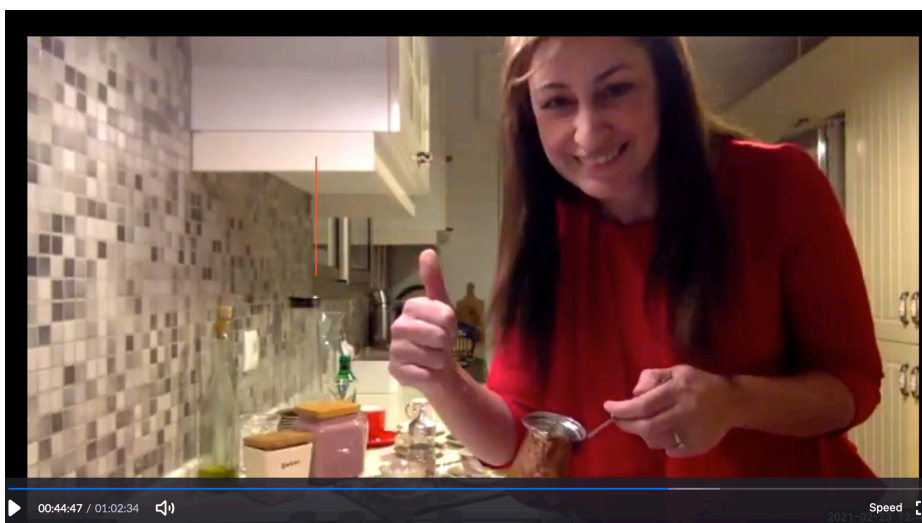
you gain by learning how to confidently present your ideas and arguments is worth it!"

This semester also marks the beginning of a series of events on Turkish culture, organized by Ayse Ozcan, Director and Lecturer of Turkish, and in collaboration with the Yunus Emre Institute. The series began on

February 23 with "The Story of Turkish Coffee," an informational talk followed by a demonstration of how to prepare Turkish coffee.

Last but not least, we are collaborating with faculty in the campus ROTC program. A recent survey conducted in collaboration with members of the Military Education Council indicated that

half of ROTC students who participated in the survey are interested in taking courses on the Middle East, while 75% are interested in attending events related to the region. In response, we are planning events, the first of which is a March 25 online lecture by Joshua Landis, Director of the Center for Middle East Studies at University of Oklahoma, titled "Sectarianism and Ethnicity in the Arab Revolts: Who Should Rule?" This event will be from 7:00-8:30 PM and registration is open [here](#) or through the [CSAMES website](#).



*Turkish Coffee Lady Gizem Salcigil White prepares coffee in her kitchen in Izmir, Turkey. From Zoom event, "The Story of Turkish Coffee," (February 23, 2021).*



# European Union Center's Virtual Exchange

## Lessons on global collaborations in the time of pandemic

Jonathan Larson, Associate Director, EUC

An EU Center event in early March 2020 marked the start of a journey the implications of which were unknown to us at the time. The EUC had decided to promote virtual exchanges as a way to reduce the carbon footprint of academic travels and increase options for intercultural experiences for those with limited mobility or low confidence that international travel was something for them. The center and its MA program had recently completed a multi-year project, Conversation on Transatlanticism and Europe, with a peer MA program at KU Leuven involving a shared online class. Such projects seemed of rapidly emerging interest among European university partners and some US institutions. The EUC scheduled a campus workshop on virtual exchange with



*A map of the locations of the 2021 Transatlantic Educators Dialogues program participants.*

one of the universities leading the field, DePaul University (a subsequent interview with one of the facilitators can be found [here](#)).

As it turned out, many of the parties who we hoped could attend were unable: they were frantically managing the safe return of students from programs of traditional education abroad. What a difference a year has made. The EU Center is now lending support to the offices of international programs in different UIUC colleges as they forge ahead with integrating virtual offerings into their portfolios. The EUC was a catalyst for a new course, EURO 199: Smart Cities, designed to introduce students from fields less present in education abroad offerings on our campus (such as engineering) to an interdisciplinary topic as taught in situ online by center directors from Vienna, Paris, Rome, and Granada. This project had the further benefit of helping to maintain the university's education abroad infrastructure in Europe, the current destination for the vast majority of students. We are working with the same set of

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European Union Center

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AND CURRICULUM  
DEVELOPMENT**

✓ accessible to diverse student populations    ✓ carbon-neutral    ✓ implementable in times of instability

**For faculty and student leaders**  
Tuesday, March 10  
9-10:30 A.M.  
Lucy Ellis Lounge,  
Foreign Languages Building

**For administrators**  
Tuesday, March 10  
11 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.  
Lucy Ellis Lounge,  
Foreign Languages Building

Presented by  
GianMario Besana,  
Associate Provost for  
Global Engagement  
and Online Learning at  
DePaul University

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international program offices on a first round of projects of “global classrooms,” including training for faculty in best practices with virtual exchange. The EU Center is also piloting its own similar course involving guest appearances with a public component by five Former Members of the European Parliament and a trial collaboration with students from the University of Vienna. The EUC has in essence been deeply engaged in one of the pillars of the U of I’s current strategic plan, “transformative learning experiences.”

Our attempts to utilize the potentialities of a virtual environment have not ended there. The EUC offered campus a continuing source of collective inquiry in April 2020 as an early adopter of virtual talks, particularly a trilogy on the Black Death in Europe and a talk on plague and Napoleonic propaganda, drawing on the strengths of the U of I’s scholars of European history. As part of annual EU Day events at the end of February and beginning of March the center is also experimenting with an online performative reading and public discussion of Aeschylus’s *The Suppliants*, a Greek tragedy speaking to questions of migration and refugees. Continuing a tradition of cross-cultural dialogue and educational outreach, we are proud to offer the eleventh year of our online Transatlantic Educators Dialogues.

As we look forward to an eventual return to the physical space of our center and the possibilities that return will offer, we are aware that something that has been part of our identity as a center—a disposition to continuously experiment, collaborate, and innovate—has only been enhanced.

# Empower Brazil Scholarship Program

## A grant from the Lemann Foundation focuses on historically underrepresented groups

John Tofik Karam, Director, Lemann Center

In 2020, the Lemann Center for Brazilian Studies, through a half-million dollar grant from the Lemann Foundation, established the Empower Brazil Program with the aim to recruit, enroll, and train students from historically underrepresented groups, specifically Afro-Brazilians, Indigenous Brazilians, and Brazilians with disabilities. Over a ten-year period, this opportunity will support numerous Masters students in programs located in the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS) in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, College of Law, Accountancy and Finance Departments in the Gies College of Business, College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences, Department of Education Policy, Organization and Leadership in the College of Education, and the Department of Kinesiology and Community Health in the College of Applied Health Sciences.

Denis Mizne, CEO of the Lemann Foundation, stated that “so many young, talented Brazilians who come from underprivileged communities can’t even imagine being able to study abroad.” The new funding agreement will thus help “internationalize the educational experience of students who are underrepresented in Brazilian higher education.” Under the new diversity scholarship, students must first be independently accepted by Illinois before applying for the support. Students can pursue coursework in any of the aforementioned programs at Illinois but are expected to return to create positive social change in Brazil.

Empower Brazil builds on the past Abdias do Nascimento Fellowship Program, established in partnership with the Catholic University of Rio (PUC-Rio) and the Brazilian government’s CAPES and Ministry of Education. Since 2017, the program supported nearly a dozen Brazilian students from historically underrepresented groups to spend one semester at Illinois. The program is named after Afro-Brazilian leader, activist, and writer, Abdias do Nascimento (1914-2011). As the last semester of this program, in Fall 2019, Dandara Malvino, Ezequias Jagge, Leonardo Ventura studied and lived on campus. They enrolled in courses in African American Studies, Dance, as well as Urban and Regional

Planning. These students emphasized how their study abroad at Illinois “changed” and “transformed” their understandings of Brazil, the U.S., and the world. In October 2019, their mentor and professor from PUC-Rio, Thula de Oliveira Pires, came for a talk. Professor Oliveira Pires later told the Lemann Center that a new world opened up for these students from a marginalized region in the State of Rio de Janeiro, Baixada Fluminense, who never would have dreamt of a study abroad experience.

Professor Oliveira Pires was an important partner in publicizing this inaugural year of the Empower Brazil program. Out of the sixty candidates who expressed interest, a select number are currently applying to several of the participating programs at Illinois.



Lemann Leadership Fellows, Abdias do Nascimento Fellows, Lemann Foundation Representative, and Lemann Center staff. Back (from left to right): Denis Tavares Simões, Clóvis Monteiro Ferreira Silva Neto, Leopoldo Faiad da Cunha, Dandara Malvino, Leonardo Roque Lucciola Gonçalves Correia, Leonardo Ventura, Elis Artz, John Tofik Karam, Fernando Dambros Lucchesi. Front (from left to right): Ezequias Jagge Teixeira and Felipe Marinho da Rocha.

# Supporting Scholars Globally

## REEEC and the Virtual Open Research Laboratory

*REEEC Staff*

For nearly fifty years, the Summer Research Laboratory on Russia, Eastern Europe, and Eurasia (SRL) has brought scholars to Urbana-Champaign to work in our Library's amazing collections. Covid-19 canceled most travel plans, but not scholars' desire to continue their work and develop new lines of inquiry. "We knew the need for a research community was, if anything, growing this year," says John Randolph, Associate Professor of History and Director of the Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center (REEEC). "And thanks to Illinois' long-standing outreach programs and continued financial support from the US Department of State, we were in an excellent position to provide it."

Working together with its co-investigators at the Library's Slavic Reference Service, REEEC was able to retool the SRL into a virtual format. Already answering thousands of remote inquiries a year, the SRS was able to expand its capacity to work with scholars virtually. We added scanning services from the University's closed stacks and worked with online repositories such as Hathi Trust to expand access. When we opened an application portal for the Spring 2021 Open Research Laboratory (ORL), we were surprised by the number of applications for remote research support that they received. "The Spring ORL program was designed for 6 in-person visiting scholars," Randolph adds. "We received over 110 applications."

These applications came from all over the world, and from scholars at many stages of their projects and professional careers. Fortunately, SRS was able to expand its services to assist all these researchers. REEEC, meanwhile, has worked to create virtual brown-bag talks, lightning sessions, and other networking opportunities that are allowing this international group of scholars to

share their ideas and insights with colleagues, in a way that breaks through Covid-era isolation. These talks also bring a diversity of knowledge and perspectives to our local community, students, and faculty. We will hear from a historian of Polish architecture after World War II; a scholar who studies citizen oversight of policing in Russia today; a student of the Russian Revolution who analyzes tableaux vivants from the period to think about its cultural history; and a political ecologist thinking about the slow death of the Aral Sea. "We weren't sure how much scholarly programming people would want, but these events have turned out to be extremely popular," Randolph notes.

"ORL associates have even attended our local community outreach programming, including a recent family friendly, virtual event celebrating International Women's Day co-organized by Stephanie Porter, REEEC Outreach and Programming Coordinator, and Kim Sheahan, Assistant Director of Education at the Spurlock Museum," said Maureen Marshall, REEEC Associate Director. Over 100 scholars turned out for the semester's keynote event, a lecture on the rise of authoritarianism within the European Union, by the noted legal scholar Professor Kim Lane Scheppele. (This event is part of REEEC's working group on Critical Legal Studies,

led by our colleague Jessica Greenberg [Anthropology].) With a mix of local and remote scholars, the brown bag talks have drawn 20-30 participants a session. The conversations have a decidedly transnational quality, with Illinois students and scholars hearing from and helping to facilitate conversations between researchers in Russia, Belarus, Cyprus, Korea, the UK, the USA, and elsewhere. It's been a reaffirmation of our public university's mission in a difficult time, Marshall concludes: "It is really wonderful to see how Illinois is supporting the REEES scholarly community internationally!"



# Fostering Empathy Through Game Design

## WGGP initiative on Latin American migration

Anita Kaiser, Assistant Director, WGGP

Women and Gender in Global Perspectives (WGGP) is in its second year of the initiative on “Fostering Empathy for Latin American Migrants through Game Design.” This two-year project is a collaboration between WGGP, the Siebel Center for Design (SCD), and Playful by Design (PbD), the campus-wide interdisciplinary games studies initiative with funding provided by the Illinois Global Institute. Colleen Murphy, WGGP director, and Judith Pinter, a WGGP Faculty Affiliate, led the project. Pinter is also the acting BS/IS program director at the iSchool and director of Games @ Illinois: Playful Design for Transformative Education.

During fall 2019, the working group noon talks brought together campus and community representatives to look at the expertise regarding the migrant experience. The project examines the social and political contexts from which migrants and refugees come;

the psychological impacts of violent conflict, disaster, and repression; the requirements of international law concerning refugees, and the specifics of each of these dimensions in Latin American countries.

The fall working group also contributed relevant content for the syllabus of IS 490: Playful Design Methods taught by Judith Pinter, which was offered in the Spring Semester 2020

to graduate students and advanced undergraduates. Informed by the readings, presentations, and ideas of the team, these students were introduced to a wide range of game design methods, at the same time that they were reading about the migrant experience. Guest speakers from the faculty group visited the class as well: Danielle Hernandez from the Siebel Center for Design, Lauren Aronson from the College of Law, Duncan Baird,

from the Fablab, and Christopher Ball from the Department of Journalism. Other guests included Kaity Bequette of the Champaign-Urbana Design Organization’s sister boardgame design organization CUDO Plays and Jim Wentworth, the Armory VR Lab director. Jim hosted the class in a VR session in the Innovation Classroom. Finally, nationally-recognized game designer Lorri Hopping visited at the end of the semester to give student feedback.



Lual Mayen, founder of Junub Games, will deliver the Keynote Lecture April 8, 2021.



Due to COVID-19, the Keynote Lecture by Lual Mayen, who spent 22 years in a refugee camp in Uganda before founding Junub Games, will now take place in April 2021. The lecture “From Refugee to Game Developer: Peacemaking through the Art of Gaming” will be held on April 8, 2021, at 4:00 pm CST via zoom. We anticipate this to be of interest to both campus and community individuals. This

keynote lecture has received support from 18 co-sponsoring units from across campus. Pre-registration is required for the Lual Mayen talk and available at <https://go.illinois.edu/LualMayenTalk>.

More information about this project is available at <https://wggp.illinois.edu/outreach/research/migration-and-game-design-project>.

# Global STEAM In Context

## A conversation with the UIUC Global STEAM Working Group

IGI established the Global STEAM Working Group in summer 2020 to engage faculty and students in interdisciplinary conversations that examine the relationship between science, the arts, and issues that transcend national boundaries. Currently, the Global STEAM Graduate Seminar will be offered in Fall 2021 under course numbers ACES 499, ENG 598, and LAST 495.

The Global STEAM Steering Committee members include Chemistry Lecturer Jose Andino Martinez, Carle Illinois College of Medicine Teaching Assistant Professor Olivia Campos Coiado, Siebel Chair in History of Science David Sepkoski, Center for Global Studies Outreach Coordinator Timur Pollack-Lagushenko, Student Representative Jessica Mingee, Materials Research Lab Research Program Manager Bhavna Hirani, Women and Gender in Global Perspectives Center Acting Director Flavia Andrade, IGI Executive Director Jerry Dávila, and Applied Research Institute Research Scientist Ann-Perry Witmer.

*Last fall, the group sponsored a three-roundtable forum, “Global STEAM in an Age of Crisis,” and the working group now is focusing on establishing a fall graduate seminar and a student blog to engage the campus more fully.*

*The Global STEAM steering committee recently gathered to talk about their initiative, and we’ll share their thoughts over the next few newsletters, with the next topic - exploring the value of Global STEAM to the University of Illinois Community.*

**Ann:** “What is Global STEAM? What does it mean to you?”

**Tim:** It’s very much a label in search of a definition, and part of the purpose of this group is to try to define it. In a sense, the problem it grapples is omnipresent – its that the univocal ways of talking about science refract incredibly complicated and diverse and problematic ways depending on cultural and social settings. How you understand that refraction, or how you address and engage with it, is an everyday problem for policymakers but it’s a very complicated analytical issue for all of us in the academy. So I’d like to think that we’re constantly going to come back to try to define and refine this concept, even though the framing problem is very obvious, and has become even more obvious during the timeframe of the pandemic.

**David:** Yes! But it’s also a recognition that the sciences and the arts/humanities are intertwined and inseparable, and the way they’re practiced and deployed is context-dependent. That is to say, the particular relationship between all of the component letters of STEAM—as well as the goals and outcomes—will depend on the local circumstances where they’re applied. It also recognizes that we live in a globalized, interconnected world, and that we can’t only focus on one local context or another. We have to imagine outcomes in various contexts, and we have to be aware of inequities and imbalances between various global contexts. That’s part of what makes it so tricky.

**Ann:** We all come from such different scholarly backgrounds, and as the engineer in the group, I tend to focus on the empirical, definitive statement. Just by the fact that Tim says defining Global STEAM is something that’s ongoing, and one of our roles is to think about what it can mean for our campus, I have to reconcile this problem with my training, from which I’d say, “This is what it is, now let’s do something with it.” It contradicts my training to step back first and say, “Whoa, wait. We don’t even have a clear-cut definition yet. That’s what we have to work on first.”

**Tim:** Whereas I’ve been taught that the moment you come to a conclusion, it’s time to freak out because you’re probably wrong. (laughter)

**Jessica:** Throughout my education so far, I’ve been raised to have that engineering mindset that Ann was just talking about. A lot of the reason students choose engineering is because of that clear-cut nature that they think it offers. But as I’ve had more interactions with multi-disciplinary ideas, I’ve learned that one of the biggest things for a good engineer is accepting uncertainty and understanding that it’s never clear how the sciences interact with the social sciences, humanities, and the arts, but it still is worth investigating.

**Ann:** It’s really a new way of thinking from everything you’ve been presented in coursework isn’t it? Jose, you’re in the physical sciences. How do you reconcile this “find the solution” versus “keep asking the questions” component of Global STEAM?

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**Jose:** I have to admit that my view of it is probably not exactly the view of my field. And I like the point that Tim made about it being a term in search of a definition. In the natural sciences, physical sciences, you can't ignore someone else's work, or at least that's what we hope students will learn to do. You cannot just think, okay, you came up with a new idea. But is it? Is it a new idea, and who else has ever proposed anything like that, because you don't want to waste your time and you don't want to seem like you haven't investigated precedents of a certain phenomenon, concept or reaction. But at the same time, I agree with what Jessica said about learning to accept

uncertainty because when we teach students about chemical concepts, we tell them to use approximations to accept that we're going to look at it this way for simplicity. And that simplicity allows them to hopefully recognize that, okay, okay, if I do that, then I more easily can tell where I am, right? But in reality, nature is not like that. Nature is not that clear-cut all the time.

**Ann:** Right.

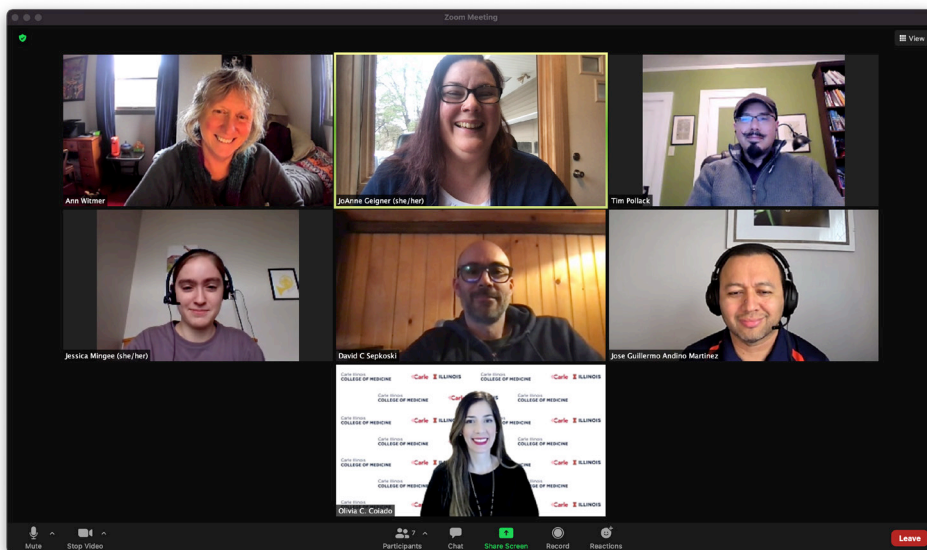
**Jose:** But something that I've learned to understand over years of thinking about this concept, or learning about new reactions, is that they don't always do the same that other reactions did, and so those nuances are needed. When you understand that, you're going to discover something new. But I totally agree with Tim, that we can't say that we have concluded something because we can't ever close the door to new ideas. I do think I like the idea of Global STEAM being a movement, let me put

it that way. That reminds people in different fields and all geographical areas as well that there are different approaches to things. There are different perspectives to how to solve a problem. And ultimately, this will benefit us all by giving us the ability to get to a more, for lack of a better term, global view of how to approach things that will be better for everybody, not just for a certain group of people.

**Ann:** I love the way you just described that. As you were talking about this, you made that happen in me because I had never really thought of uncertainty as, for the physical sciences, being a simplification, where uncertainty for the Humanities and Social Science is a complexity.

**Jose:** We simplify it to get to not worry about it.

**Ann:** And yet that's what we condition our STEM students to do. I can remember taking many physical science classes as an undergrad where the professor would say, "okay, we're just going to neglect all this stuff, because it makes it too difficult." And that's an uncertainty. So we're simplifying. But I've also taken sociology courses, where we can't neglect stuff because that's what plays into the whole dynamic that we need to explore. It's a really good example of how, depending on what discipline you come from, you perceive a concept very, very differently. And it actually ends up microcosmically showing how global STEAM is so important because it allows people to capture each other's disconnects, which is what creates so many of the global issues that we're dealing with.



*Global STEAM Working Group, left to right, upper row: Ann-Perry Witmer, JoAnne Geigner, Tim Pollock-Lagushenko; middle row: Jessica Mingee, David Sepkoski, Jose Andino Martinez; lower row: Olivia C. Coiado.*



*Illinois Global Institute area study centers and thematic program staff photo, Spring 2019.*

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*Reflections by Global Language South Fellows continued from page 3*

study. Fellows receive a \$15,000 stipend and, when applicable, a waiver of tuition and some fees. As cultural and language training go hand-in-hand, fellows are required to take both a language course and a relevant area studies course each semester that they hold the fellowship. Communications Ph.D. student elizaBeth Simpson received the GSLF to study Portuguese. This enabled her to study the Theatre of the Oppressed, which originated in Brazil, to understand how to counteract implicit biases that inhibit participation and collaboration in decision making. Simpson plans to develop research and scholarship that supports grassroots, nonprofit, and governmental efforts to address social problems with equity and inclusion.

Ryan Schmitt, a Ph.D. student in history with a regional focus on East Africa, is training to teach at the university level. Studying the decolonization period in Kenya and Tanzania, he plans to travel to East Africa to conduct oral history interviews with veteran journalists in these areas. His immersion in Swahili and East African cultures will give him a stronger foundation for this research.

Each of these Fellows expressed gratitude and appreciation for the support the Global South Language Fellowship provides. The study of language is an important foundation that cuts across disciplines and is a vital skill that allows our students to engage with the world in a more immediate and meaningful way. When asked how their area study will help them in the future, Benkraouda replied, “It will open for you many doors, networks, events, and most importantly access to a new culture as you unfold its language and traditions.”



## ILLINOIS GLOBAL INSTITUTE

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# Illinois Global Institute

## By the numbers

Established in 2019, Illinois Global Institute is home to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's international area studies centers and thematic programs. These ten centers and programs develop global awareness and cultural competency through a combination of faculty research and professional development, curricular internationalization, student-life activities, international experiences, and outreach and public engagement.

Through the centers and programs in IGI, Illinois students have opportunities to learn languages and to pursue interdisciplinary programs of undergraduate and graduate study engaging with world regions and themes. The Institute and the centers and programs also support faculty research on international themes in global, regional, and national contexts, and encourage research collaboration between scholars at Illinois and their peers and institutions throughout the world.

2019 - Year Illinois Global Institute started

1948 - Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center becomes the first Area and Global Studies Center at Illinois

10 - Number of Area and Global Studies Centers and Thematic Programs

21 - Undergraduate and graduate majors, minors and certificates offered across centers

60 - Countries represented in research

695 - Affiliated faculty across centers

\$2,031,378 - Scholarships and fellowships awarded in the 2019-20 academic year by IGI and its centers/programs