

Letter from the Acting Director

I wish a hearty welcome to all MALS students, colleagues and friends. It has been a pleasure serving as acting director while Linda Benson is on sabbatical. I know we all look forward to Linda's return and hope her sabbatical has been both productive and refreshing. Let's also congratulate Linda on being selected as a featured author for her recent publication *Across China's Gobi: The Lives of Evangeline French, Mildred Cable, and Francesca French of China Inland* at the 2010 Authors at Oakland: Celebration of the Book event at Kresge library!

In preparation for my role as acting director I attended the annual meeting of the Association for Graduate Liberal Studies last fall in Florida to learn more about Graduate Liberal Studies programs. The conference provided a great opportunity to exchange ideas with other faculty from around the country about courses, thesis projects and to attend talks where students and faculty shared their research. It was especially enlightening to see the paper of one of our MALS students, Erin Johnson, featured at the conference in the national journal for interdisciplinary studies, *Confluences*. I felt very proud to be a future member of the OU MALS program at that moment.

While on the topic of research, I do encourage MALS students to attend the upcoming Graduate Liberal Studies Conference at the University of Michigan-Dearborn on May 8. This conference provides a wonderful opportunity for those of you who are writing research papers, final projects or

Continued on page 2



May our paths be always lined with flowers

Inside this Issue

- Page 2 Spring Celebration announcement
- Page 3 Grad assistantship, MALS Conference
- Page 4 Trip to Spain
- Page 5 Introducing Professor Rojo
- Page 6 Introducing Professor Brieger
- Page 7 & 8 Fall MALS courses
- Page 9 MALS Winter Core Seminar
- Page 10-11 Fall and winter courses

Letter from the Acting Director, continued from page 1

who are contemplating final projects to exchange ideas and be inspired by the research completed by others.

Two individuals featured in our newsletter are Professor Alberto Rojo who has recently joined the executive committee and Professor emeritus Gottfried Brieger who will teach a MALS science course. You may read their stories on pages 5 and 6. We are also featuring two core courses for next year. In the fall 2010 Linda Benson will be teaching LBS 500 on the topic of Borderlands which matches the CAS university theme and I look forward to teaching a seminar/course on French Cinema in winter 2011. If all goes well, I am planning a trip to Paris to visit the Cinémathèque (film museum) and various sites featured in French film.

In closing I wish to thank our program secretary Graciela Osterberg, Graduate Assistant Kathy Fabian, Linda Benson and the MALS Executive Committee for their generous assistance, experience and advice in helping me fulfill my duties as acting director. I also encourage those of you in need of financial aid and who wish to gain valuable work experience to apply for the 2010-2011 graduate assistantship advertised in this issue.

I look forward to seeing you at the MALS Spring Celebration on March 29, 2010, details below and to teaching my MALS course on French cinema next Winter.

Stacey Hahn

You are cordially invited to the MALS Spring Celebration

Monday, March 29 5:00 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Dinner and a program honoring our students and professors

OAKLAND ROOM, OAKLAND CENTER



Graduate Assistantship
MALS graduate assistantship

**Applications are invited for the
2010-2011 Graduate Assistantship.**



This award is open to students currently enrolled in the MALS program. Applicants must have maintained a consistently high GPA and also have the necessary writing and academic skills to assist the director and to support the overall goals of the MALS program.

The MALS program graduate assistant receives both a stipend and remission of tuition for eight credits of coursework. In return, he or she works with the director for fifteen to twenty hours per week on assignments that range from editing the newsletter to assisting other students with writing and computer skills. Holders of the assistantship may not hold other employment and are required to take two courses during the semester in which they serve in this capacity.

If you would like more information, please contact the Program Director, Professor Linda Benson, Varner Hall 221, Oakland University via e-mail, at benson@oakland.edu.

Announcement

**Oakland University MALS Students are invited to attend
MALS Student Conference.**



WHEN: May 8, 2010

**WHERE: University of Michigan-
Dearborn**

Current MALS students, or recent MALS graduates
will give 20 minute presentations.

Registration deadline: April 15, 2010
Malsconference@umd.umich.edu

Spain During Mid Winter Break

Kathy Fabian

Our tour of beautiful Spain began in Madrid. From here we went to Toledo then Segovia, Burgos, Bilbao, Guernica, Pamplona, Montserrat and Barcelona. We toured four museums in Madrid and three in Barcelona, churches and historical buildings everywhere and were drenched in local color, history and rain. Our Basque guide treated us to a delightful evening in an authentic cider house near Bilbao.

The evening began with a bus ride to a house located in the Basque countryside. Entering a huge dining area of plank tables and benches with decorations of Basque flags, old farming tools, and pictures of workers in the fields, we beheld huge barrels of cider against a wall near the kitchen. When the cider call is issued, everyone rushes to the barrel and forms a line. The host opens the vat and the cider begins to run. The first person in line catches two fingers of cider in his glass and motions to the person behind to put their glass into the outpouring stream and so on down the line. The meal was served family style beginning with omelets followed by several ample courses, topped off with a dessert of walnuts and cheese.

The Guggenheim Museum was our only stop in Bilbao, but one of the highlights of our trip. What a great experience to see the photographs from my Modern Art text books come to life before my eyes. We all had varied experiences walking through Richard Serra's installation art. As we walked through the spaces he created with slabs of weathered steel, we listened to his voice explain the concepts behind his work. This part of the museum was built specifically to hold this exhibition.

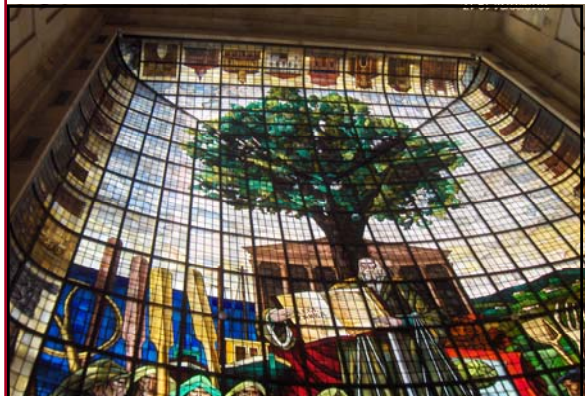
A stop at Guernica had not been part of our scheduled tour, but our guide made special arrangements for us to visit on our way to Pamplona. Guernica is a Basque city bombed by Germany and Italy with the permission of the Spanish government in 1937. Their objective was to eliminate the seat of rebellion, obliterate their parliament building and kill the "sacred tree," a symbol of their



Inside the Cider Mill



Parliament of Guernika in the Basque Country.

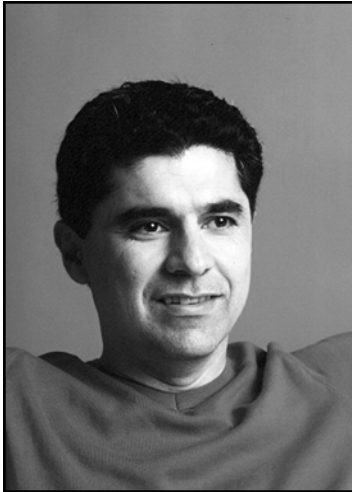


The stained glass ceiling in the parliament building depicting citizens defending the "sacred tree."



The Guggenheim, every viewing angle is different.

Continued on page 10



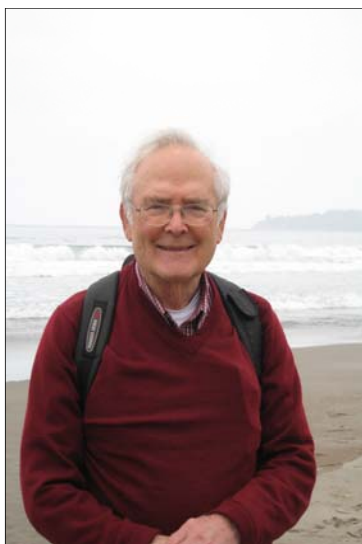
Meet Our New Executive Committee Member

Professor Alberto Gustavo Rojo is an Associate Professor of Physics at Oakland University and a recent addition to our MALS executive committee. He is charming, gracious and easy to talk with. I recently met with him so that I could introduce him to our MALS students. Professor Rojo obtained all of his degrees at a school in the middle of the mountains of southern Argentina. Professor Rojo was one of only 12-13 students accepted to the physics program through a national contest. Rojo says, "In this school everything is paid for, room, board and books, everything. It was a very nice experience. I received my undergrad degree, masters and PhD there before going on to Oakridge National Lab and then to the University of Chicago as a post doctorate. I was an assistant professor at the University of Michigan before coming to Oakland University."

Rojo laughingly says that he came to Oakland University because he could get tenure here, but then goes on to say he really likes it because it is a smaller school. The physics department is excellent and personal relations very harmonious. There are not the political tensions that he felt at other institutes of higher learning. He goes on to say, "We are all active in research and even though we work in different fields there is a common thread in intellectual values."

Professor Rojo is a theoretical physicist, but he does research on aspects of quantum mechanics. Though his PhD is in super connectivity, his research has led him to dabble in the fields of condensed matter and the properties of solids. He has published and researched topics with many people and still collaborates with some mathematicians, "Because I like the mathematical aspects of physics, I don't do experiments but I like to keep in touch with those who do. They do the more rigorous part." He also stays in touch with some of his former colleagues from the University of Michigan. He says, "I like to work with people who are intellectually broad and I am interested in integrating their work with mine."

Outside of physics one of Rojo's main interests is literature. Rojo has written about the intersection between arts and the sciences. He goes on, "That is why I am interested in the Master of Liberal Studies program. I am always exploring those intersections, not only in literature but in painting and music. I like the MALS program. I like its purpose and goals." When asked the usual question that we all hear, "what can you do with a MALS degree?," he reflected a moment and said, "I'm not sure as far as the job market is concerned, but I think it definitely improves the mind and that is a fundamental step in whatever you do in your future life. Having a broader perspective and the fact that knowledge has to be interdisciplinary are things that are often times forgotten, and makes you lose perspective, not only intellectually but ethically as well. If you specialize in one subject, sure you get ahead in that, but you may miss the broader view of things. The MALS program opens one's mind to see connections that are not always obvious and that are probably disregarded because of mainly administrative reasons, rather than profound fundamental reasons. This is the answer I would give and the reason I would take on this kind of intellectual endeavor."



Dr. Gottfried Brieger, Professor Emeritus, to teach MALS Interdisciplinary Science Course

Dr. Brieger received his undergraduate training in Chemistry at Harvard College. While at Harvard he also pursued his interest in archeology. This was followed by graduate studies at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where he received his Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry. He taught at the University of California, Berkeley for two years. He then chose Oakland University in 1963 because he felt that he would prefer a smaller university. Oakland also offered the exciting opportunity to start a new university and to participate fully in this development. He served on numerous committees and was elected by his colleagues to just about every office he chose. He enjoyed it

thoroughly.

His areas of professional interest varied, but for many years, his research was principally in the area of synthesis of organic compounds, particularly compounds occurring in nature. He also engaged in the synthesis of compounds that could be used as innovative insecticides. For this purpose he raised a variety of interesting insects in the laboratory. Further on, he engaged in research related to the environment, including studies on the chemistry and utilization of coal fly ash, and the fate of pesticides in the Great Lakes, which are absorbed by Zebra mussels.

He offered courses in a variety of subjects, including organic chemistry, general chemistry and environmental chemistry. He also offered courses in the Honors College such as team-taught courses on the Millennium (Science in the year 1, 1000, 2000), notable Detroiters (Coleman Young, Henry Ford), as well as courses on Metals and Man, and Survival in the City.

In addition to chemistry, Dr. Brieger is very interested in local history, particularly the history of Pontiac, and has published a book on Pontiac Postcards. He was a member of the Michigan Studies Concentration. He is also very interested in alternative energy studies, and with interdisciplinary colleagues, founded the Energy Studies Concentration.

Dr. Brieger was a very active participant in political activity in Pontiac, particularly in the 1960's. He is also dedicated to world peace, and is an active member of several peace and social justice organizations. He has a long-standing interest in the Detroit and Pontiac public school systems, and has taught on a volunteer basis in both systems.

Dr. Brieger also worked as a consultant, which gave him an opportunity to see chemistry in action. This included three years as consultant and ultimately chemistry department head of a large clinical laboratory, a semester spent working for a large pharmaceutical firm in Ann Arbor, and as an inspector for quality control of the 10 largest drug-testing laboratories in the country.

Professor Brieger retired in 2003, having taught at Oakland University for 40 years. He continues to teach one course per year for fun, generally outside of chemistry. He is a volunteer with the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society, in charge of accessions. This has led to an exciting archeological search for the homestead of the first settler in Waterford, Oliver Williams. He has also just completed nine years as the chair of the Board of Trustees of Friends School in Detroit. Beyond that he busies himself with family history and genealogy, his two grandsons, and travel.



Fall Semester 2010

LBS 514

Relationship of Man to Metals
Monday, 6:30—9:50 PM
Gottfried Brieger Ph.D
Professor Emeritus of Chemistry



From Stone to Copper

Bronze gives way to iron

The Rise of Bronze

The Revolution of Necessity

Swords and plowshares

Steam and Steel launch the Revolution

Shining Conquest

Into the Machine Age

A world- wide contagion

From Alchemy to the Atom

The Age of Metals – Can it Last?

This course presents a comprehensive overview of the introduction of metals into human cultures, starting with man the toolmaker (paleontology), early mining and smelting of ores (metallurgy); early uses of metals (archeology); and the eventual consequences of large-scale metal use (industrial revolution), ending up with space age metals (chemistry), if time permits. Material is presented in a historical sequence. There will be an extensive use of visuals. Some material will be drawn from a PBS series entitled "Out of the Fiery Furnace." One of the readings we will use is entitled "Uncle Tungsten" by Oliver Sacks.

LBS 500: Borderlands

Fall 2010

Wednesdays 6:30 – 9:50 pm.

Instructor: Professor Linda Benson, Director, MALS, and Professor of History

Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies.



This course theme takes the often knotty problems presented by borderlands, borders, and frontiers, real and metaphoric. Our discussion will begin with the classic “frontier thesis” posited in 1893 by Frederick Jackson Turner who asserted that the vast western frontier defined what it meant to be American. His notion that the frontier shaped the American psyche has been supported and challenged ever since. Globally, we will consider how borders drawn by the world’s great powers created contemporary states in Africa, the Middle East, in Asia, and how war and conquest formed the boundaries of modern China and Korea. A topic of contemporary relevance is present-day American concerns over our porous border further to the south—a sharp contrast to our northern border which holds little threat for most Americans.

Borders can also be metaphoric. We will consider some classic political and historical issues involving borders and borderlands, and look at concepts and theories derived from a consideration of phenomena existing “on the edges,” where lines are difficult to draw with any certainty. For example, we may consider the sociological concept of marginality, the psychological phenomenon of a “borderline” personality, and the clear but invisible borders that separate peoples by race and ethnicity.

Especially relevant are the traditional divisions or borders within academe. Some fields of study are enclosed within boundaries that seem as carefully delineated as any international border today. Course materials will illustrate ways in which we can metaphorically cross borders to combine ideas and theories from diverse disciplines in a truly interdisciplinary endeavor. The readings, discussion, and short lectures will also provide a template for embarking on your final interdisciplinary project (LBS 600) when you are ready to complete your MALS degree.



Master of Arts in Liberal Studies
Oakland University
Winter 2011
LBS 502
Core Seminar in the Humanities
Monday 6:30-9:50 PM



FRENCH CINEMA: FRENCH CULTURE THROUGH FILM



Cinema has its roots in France dating from 1895 when the Lumière brothers gave the first public screening of a film in Paris. Since then the French have given film the status of le septième art (seventh art), paying serious attention to film's aesthetic, intellectual and commercial dimensions. In this course we will examine French cinema both as an art and a manifestation of French culture. We will begin our investigation of French cinema by observing its history and development beginning with the silent film, then moving on to the classical era, war years, New Wave movement and realist films. We will examine various genres of film as well as important filmmakers who have left an indelible imprint on the history of filmmaking and whose films reflect the historical and political climate of their times.

Stacey Hahn is Associate Professor of French in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures and coordinator of the Oakland University/ University of Orléans exchange program. Her research and publications focus on Medieval French Prose Romance.

Fall Semester 2010 MALS Schedule of Classes

LBS 512 Germany Since 1740

Wednesday 6:30 – 9:50 p.m.

Professor Derek Hastings

This course covers German politics, society, and diplomacy from Frederick the Great to the present.



LBS 512 Piracy in Atlantic World

Wednesday 6:30 – 9:50 p.m.

Professor George Milne

The course surveys social, political, religious, and economic trends as well as the causes and effects of piracy in the Atlantic World from the late Middle Ages to the rise of steam-powered vessels.



Professor Milne attended Stockton State College in New Jersey, attaining a bachelors of arts in Political Science and earned an interdisciplinary masters degree at New York University in Humanities and Social Thought. He finished his PhD at the University of Oklahoma.

Spain: Continued from page 4

longing for independence. The bombing killed a large percentage of the population, but missed the parliament and tree. Picasso's famous painting, *Guernica* documents this event. Outside the parliament we saw the current remains of the old tree and its grandson growing healthy and strong where its grandfather once stood.

In the Pyrenees Mountains sits a beautiful old monastery called Montserrat. Here resides the statue of the Black Virgin. Those of us who went to see the statue were invited to touch the holy orb she holds in her hand. The 16th Century chapel is breathtakingly beautiful and invites the weary traveler to sit and rest a while. The grounds of the monastery are inviting. Though the walk is usually steeply up or down there are plenty of places for one to stop and catch one's breath.

In Barcelona the architecture by Gaudi, the Picasso museum and the Juan Miro museum were but some of the wonders we encountered. There is never enough time to see everything.



A view of a model of The Sagrada Familia in Barcelona. It has been under construction for 128 years—to be finished 2026. Architect Gaudi construction

Winter Semester 2011 MALS Schedule of Classes

LBS 511 Ethical Issues in Media

Monday and Wednesday 10:00 – 11:47 a.m.

Professor Garry Gilbert (visiting instructor)

This course is a study of professional ethics with an emphasis on print journalism, though helpful and applicable to electronic journalism as well. The class is conducted in a discussion format where students analyze a series of factual problems that arise in daily media operations



BS 511 The Rise of Electronic Media

Tuesday and Thursday 1:00 – 2:47 p.m.

Professor Kathleen Battles

This course examines the development of the technologies, institutions, regulations, cultural forms, and audiences of electronic media. The class will consider the ways in which media was both shaped by and was a force in changing cultural and social conditions.



LBS 512 The Philosophy of Gender

Monday and Wednesday 3:30 – 5:17 p.m.

Professor Phyllis Rooney

This course will explore philosophical issues relating to gender. Different approaches toward dealing with sexism will be examined, as part of an ongoing analysis of what constitutes human nature, freedom, equality and the relationship between the individual and the state



Some pictures courtesy of Punchstock.com

academic calendar

March 29	MALS Spring Celebration, 5-7 p.m.
April 27	Winter semester classes end
May 1	Spring Commencement
May 3	Summer semester classes begin
May 31	Memorial Day Holiday
June 1	MALS application deadline for fall 2010
June 25	Deadline for August 2010 graduation application
June 28	Summer II Semester classes begin
July 5	Independence Day recess
July 21	Deadline, final project proposals for fall 2010
August 14	Summer semester classes end
September 2	Fall semester classes begin, 7:30 a.m.
October 1	Deadline, MALS applications for winter 2011