Dr. Shereen Elgamal is excited for and proud of the transformation that Elon’s Arabic program has witnessed over the past 12 years. In 2007, when Dr. Elgamal joined the program, the number of students taking Arabic averaged 10-15/semester. Since then, this number has more than tripled, now averaging 35-50 students/semester.

Furthermore, since 2014, Elon Arabic students have been competing for the critical language scholarship (CLS), a summer intense language study program sponsored by the State Department. Six students have won the scholarship so far, spending their summers in Morocco, Jordan, and Oman. The Arabic program aims to build a community of learners inside and outside the classroom and Elon’s Arabic Language Organization (ALO) has assumed this role since 2009, bringing together students who are interested in the language and culture of the Middle East. Group activities allow students to share resources, discuss current events, cook Middle Eastern food, practice speaking the language, and discuss cultural practices. The organization is also keen to regularly present the Middle East to the campus community through panel discussions, guest speakers, and movie screenings.

Sharing the spotlight today is Nicole Plante, currently enrolled in a language tutorial at the 400 level with a focus on the Levantine dialect. Through the Lumen Prize and the Elon College Fellows program, Nicole is conducting undergraduate research with Dr. Sandy Marshall in the Geography Department on how refugees create belonging in the United States.

For data collection, Nicole has been working closely with Syrian refugees through the Center for New North Carolinians where her Arabic language skills prove effective in conducting interviews and moderating focus groups.

Last summer, Nicole taught English as a second language to refugee children in Lebanon, and she is planning to return this summer to enhance her language skills and gain more familiarity with the culture. Dr. Elgamal identifies student advising and mentoring as the highlight of her work at Elon.

She enjoys assisting students to align their academic pursuits, extracurricular and language study plans along with their summer and career goals. She feels honored to have received the Ward Family Mentoring Award last spring. Elon’s Arabic program aims at continued expansion that is marked by campus involvement and student achievement.
Shalom, friends! My name is Isabelle Rogers and I want to let you all know about a special new course being offered here at Elon: Falafel Nation! I am a rising senior and a Creative Writing major, but I also enjoy studying world cultures and language. When I found out about Falafel Nation, I knew that it would be the perfect opportunity to learn more about Middle Eastern and Israeli culture, and the coolest part is that the course is centered around food!

I've always loved Middle Eastern food, but this course has opened my eyes to so many things I didn't know about it; from the history and meaning behind the Kosher lifestyle, to the territorial controversies behind hummus, agricultural labor in Israel and so much more. On top of it all, we've had the pleasure of actually getting to prepare and cook various middle eastern meals, like bourekas, moroccan salads, and of course - hummus. Between the engaging classroom activities, cooking lessons and class tastings, HEB370 is by far the most delicious and educational classes I've ever taken.

This course has been an incredible way for me to connect to my Jewish roots, but regardless of your cultural background you're sure to have a positive and fun experience!
Twenty students will be inducted into Pi Delta Phi, the National French Honor Society, on May 6th, 2019. Inductees were selected for their high marks in French courses and their strong overall GPA. Guest speaker, Alice Perseval ’19, a dual degree student from Reims, France, will share her undergraduate research in French on the incorporation of the French language in American marketing.

31 students will be inducted into the Spanish Honor Society, Sigma Delta Pi, on May 1st, 2019. At the ceremony, Professor April Post will be the guest speaker and the department will be honoring Dr. Donna Van Bodegraven for her time at Elon.

On May 10th, 2019 the second group of students will be inducted into the German Honor Society, Delta Phi Alpha. The Elon chapter of Delta Phi Alpha was established in 2018. The ceremony will also be a time to say goodbye to graduating students and those that are studying abroad.
Senior student staff-members Isabel Treanor and Jay Schulte are leaving the team after four years. For nearly half a decade, faculty have worked alongside Isabel and Jay on projects ranging anywhere from building renovations to newsletter publications. Most importantly, they have been helping the student body of years past along the collegiate journey, as their four-year journey comes to an end.

Divya Dewan, the Director of Marketing Operations for next year’s staff, writes “I have had the immense pleasure of working with both Jay and Isabel over the past year. I look forward to following in their footsteps as I continue in my position.”

Jay and Isabel have been a pleasure to work under. It is evident in everything they do that they care deeply about the entire World Languages department.

—LILLY ROTHSCHILD

"Isabel and Jay were so dedicated to the department. They have always been willing to help out and offer advice. Both will be so missed next year!"

—WHITNEY MILLER

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LEARNING ABOUT IDOLATRY THROUGH PRINT AND PEDAGOGY

Dr. Mina García

Dr. García is always excited to share her expertise with her students, but one of her courses this semester, the Spanish Capstone Seminar, is the realization of a long-time passion project of hers. The syllabus for the class focuses on the transmission and manipulation of religion and idolatry from Spain to the New World. The class draws inspiration from the course’s required reading Idolatry and the Construction of the Spanish Empire penned by Dr. García, and includes secondary reading material selected from sources she read while completing her book.

Idolatry was published in 2018 and shipped to Elon just in time for Spanish students to dive into the complicated themes and draw inspiration for their own capstone research. According to García, the most meaningful part of the creation of the book and course has been the realization of the academic trifecta: researcher, author, and professor, particularly the ability to bring her printed words to life through the practice of her pedagogy.
The Latin American Studies program is excited to introduce Elon’s first Latin American Documentary Film Series, supported by Belk Library and Turner Theatre! The films addressed several of the most glaring social conflicts affecting the region today and will be followed by time for discussion. Screenings included Paraíso for Sale (Panama, US, 2011) and When the Drum is Beating (Haiti, US, 2011). The big event for the film series was the screening of the 2017 Peruvian documentary Nada queda sino nuestra ternura (Nothing is Left but Our Tenderness) on April 16. Significantly, filmmaker Sébestien Jallade joined the audience via Skype to discuss the film and answer questions.
This past Winter Term, Professor Olivia Choplin engaged students in an exciting three weeks with FRE 349: French Theater in Production. French students undertook critical thinking and discussion of the role of theatre in French society and played an active role in the creation of an original class production either as actors, technical support, or both.

During the writing of their play, students had the unique opportunity to work closely with critically acclaimed Haitian-Québécois author Marie-Célie Agnant. The opportunity to work closely with a living Francophone author allowed students to address challenging themes while taking their French learning to the next level. The class's play, “Où irons-nous? (Where will we go?)” was performed at the end of the three weeks as the culmination of their course experience.

Où irons-nous?
On February 14th, Valentine’s Day was not the only holiday celebrated at Elon University. With the help of Professor Binnan Gao, the Asian-Pacific Student Association, the Latinx-Hispanic Union, the Truitt Center, and the CREDE all joined to celebrate the annual Chinese Lunar New Year festival. 2019 being the year of the pig, students and faculty gathered and engaged in all kinds of activities, including a calligraphy table, chopsticks games, learning how to tie Chinese knots, and a sing-a-long performance from Professor Gao's elementary Chinese class.

All who attended wore red as it is a symbol of good luck, fortune for the coming year, and happiness. Similar to the Lunar New Year in China, all enjoyed eating traditional Chinese dumplings followed by a fan favorite, Boba Tea. An evening filled with celebrations, feasts, songs, and pigs, it was a night that all would remember.
The journey of completing any major is a challenging, technical, and taxing one, but for these 5 Classical studies majors their academic journey has given them a strong sense of community as well. After visiting an advanced classical studies class and interviewing both Professor Meinking along with the 5 CLA majors, Lucy Crenshaw, Kyle Thomas, Monroe Dziersk, Kat Westover, and Emily Ternent, I gained a deeper understanding and appreciation for the dedication to an independent major and for these 5, a true passion. When I asked the students about their most challenging and rewarding takeaways of this program the most popular response was either balancing a double major curriculum with an already intense coursework, or the process of getting the independent CLA major approved through the multiple “institutional hoops”. They have echoed a curriculum that five other alumni have completed but also personalized it. Professor Meinking explained that these students have begun a ‘lineage of passion in the love for classics’. She emphasized that this program has led them to evolve in fantastic ways based on the course work but also each other. Their curiosity and questions changed yet her pride and passion has only grown.
The 2018–2019 German Club officers; Crystal Sharp, Julia Towner, Jackson Spivey, Christopher Pottorff, and McKenna Patterson have worked alongside Dr. Kristin Lange to spark interest in German language and culture through chocolate tastings, karaoke, movie nights, study sessions, and a German cooking night. The largest events were the cooking event, which over 30 students RSVP’d for, and the midterm study session. These events bring students from varying levels of German together to grow their speaking skills while also meeting those with similar interests. For more information on future events follow @elongerman on Instagram or email Germanclub@elon.edu.
Donna Van Bodegraven has been a part of the Department of World Languages and Cultures for 20 years. She joined the Elon faculty in 1999 and has been teaching college Spanish since 1975. From 2000 to 2008 she served as department chair during which the language requirement was established; faculty lines increased from 5 to 19; minors in German, Italian and Classical Studies were established; language class enrollment doubled; and more than half of the current faculty members that are full-time were hired.

During her time working for the department, the name switched from Department of Foreign Languages to Department of World Languages and Cultures, per Van Bodegraven’s recommendation. Van Bodegraven left a lasting impact not only on the department but also on the lives of her students. “It’s exciting to see former students make their marks on the world,” Van Bodegraven said. She emphasized the importance of remembering that as an educator, you are making an impact. “The big takeaway from teaching is that you never know what kind of an impact you are going to make, sometimes it comes back to you 20–30 years later with a thank you,” Van Bodegraven said.

Two students that Van Bodegraven mentioned being especially proud of are current faculty members April Post and Quiqui Hilgartner. Both Post and Hilgartner were students of Van Bodegraven that later returned to Elon University to join the Spanish faculty. Van Bodegraven plans to stay in the Elon area and has already renewed her football season tickets. She is excited for the time to get back in touch with herself and travel to various destinations on her bucket list.
NEW COURSES

CHN 376 — BUSINESS CHINESE

Business Chinese helps prepare students for work and travel in Chinese-speaking communities. Resources include authentic cases of multinational companies that have integrated intercultural knowledge to adapt to the markets abroad. Not only do students develop their critical thinking skills and intercultural competence, but they gain basic knowledge of business terms when analyzing cases.

CLA 370 — RACE AND ETHNICITY IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

The course focuses on how the Greeks and Romans viewed multiculturalism and how their views are relevant to today’s society. The content covers primary sources such as ethnographies and Greek tragedies along with other academia such as more modern research in order to take a more scientific lens.

FRE 352 — PERSPECTIVES ON MODERN FRANCE: “FRENCH SOCIAL CRITICISM THROUGH HUMOR”

Students in French 352 explore identity in modern France as it relates to language, race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, and class. Among their critical sources are editorial cartoons and stand-up comedy clips for intercultural perspectives/voices. Through charged humor, political cartoonists and “stand-uppers” inform and often challenge their audiences in compelling ways.

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