



LTC Connection

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Uma Saini

Welcome back to the spring semester of 2009! I hope you had a wonderful holiday with your loved ones and are ready to return to school.

On July the first, it will be ten years since I was hired to begin the Hindi

Program at JHU and eight years since I was appointed as the Director of LTC. It has been my deepest honor to have been entrusted to lead this center.

A new chapter of change, challenge, and opportunity is about to begin at LTC. As Dean David had informed you in March, I will be returning to teaching, writing and directing the LTC's ESL, Hindi and Sanskrit Programs as of July 1st, 2009.

It feels good to report that all the long term and short term goals set in my 2004 Self Study have been achieved and numerous strides have been made. Over the last seven years, new programs have been added, staff has tripled, enrollment has gradually increased, additional office space has been created, faculty with passion for teaching and love of learning have been hired, outreach

programs such as the yearly lunch with advisors and LTC Open House have been successful, the Summer Intensive ESL Program has generated extra revenue for the Dean's Office, and last but not least, we have an atmosphere in LTC that is peaceful and conducive to teaching and learning with a sense of LTC community.

All this was possible due to the wonderful colleagues, staff, and faculty I have had the privilege of working with. When birds flock together, one leads the others in flight, but he can not fly alone. I am so pleased and humbled by what everyone has contributed to make LTC what it is today. Working with you all with diverse backgrounds has surely enriched my life emotionally and spiritually and I thank you.

In July, the baton will be passed to the next Director at such a juncture when LTC is fully equipped to take the next step in improving the quality of its teaching and curriculum. I look forward to working with our new leadership and wish you all the very best in your personal and professional endeavors.

Once again, with my deepest appreciation, thanks, and much love,

Uma

LTC CELEBRATES ANOTHER GREAT YEAR

The LTC welcomes its seventeenth year here at Johns Hopkins University this spring.

Rounding out the 2008 year, the LTC hosted its annual Holiday Party with faculty, staff, and friends from various university departments in attendance.

Guests sampled items from a delicious lunch and dessert spread, enjoyed live music from our very own Chinese

professor Hongen Yao on violin, talked amongst friends and colleagues, exchanged Secret Santa gifts, and a lucky few even took home special door prizes!

LTC and Language Lab student workers were also in on the holiday fun at their own party a few days later.

From everyone in LTC, cheers to a new year and best of luck in 2009!



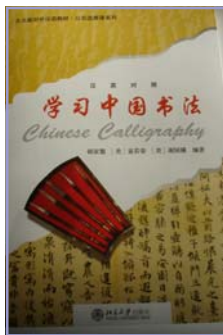
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NEW WORKS IN CHINESE CALLIGRAPHY

At this year's ACTFL Conference in Orlando, Florida, the second book on Chinese calligraphy, co-authored by Becky Hsieh was displayed at the booth of the Peking University Press.

The book was rushed into print by the Peking University Press for this Conference. This is a bi-lingual (Chinese and English) book emphasizing the techniques of Standard Script which is the basic calligraphy script taught to beginners.



Front cover of new calligraphy textbook by Becky Hsieh

At Hopkins, students who take the Chinese Calligraphy course learn and practice this script and have to hand in five pages of practice sheets every week.

At this Conference, Becky also served on a panel discussing the problems of teaching Chinese calligraphy in the United States—such as the lack of a suitable textbook—and exploring the solutions to these problems.

“Language is the road map of culture. It tells you where its people come from and where they are going.” - Rita Mae Brown, American playwright

EXPANSIONS AT LTC

The LTC will be undergoing some expansions beginning this Spring semester.

The Center has recently acquired two new offices in Krieger Hall—Krieger 18 and Krieger 21. The Russian program will be moving its offices to Room 21 while the Arabic program occupies the other new room. Krieger 160E will remain home to part time faculty in the Persian, Hindi, and Kiswahili programs.

For the moment, Krieger 172—the former Arabic office—will remain vacant. Hopes are, if the budget allows, to turn it into a copy room that will be convenient and accessible for LTC faculty on the first floor and ground levels of the building, but no decisions have yet been made.

In addition, faculty may have noticed a renovation on the bulletin boards outside the Krieger offices. Each program now has their own section of the bulletin board where faculty may post class pictures, flyers, student work, brochures, or anything else pertaining to their program. Postings not made by LTC may be taken down by faculty if they are not relevant to a language program.

We hope everyone will be comfortable in their new surroundings!

ESL NEWS AND HIGHLIGHTS

This year, ESL will offer a new course—Building Fluency Through Film—and the summer will see a redesigned American Culture course that includes elements from the spring film class.

Specialized placement testing and improved testing methods are also being looked into.

For more information on ESL programs, visit www.ltc.jhu.edu/esl.



NOT ONLY THE LANGUAGE, BUT ALSO THE CULTURE!

Chuan AiXinJueLuo At 1:45 after a 45-minute class on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, we students in Oral Skills for International TAs joined together in the LTC lounge, but not actually to continue our regular class. Instead, Ms. Shiffman offered us even more—pumpkin pie, a kind of traditional American dessert for Thanksgiving, and also pecan pie! As we enjoyed sharing the pies, Ms. Shiffman talked to us about this special day, such as the way Americans celebrate, how to cook a turkey and so on.

This is the first Thanksgiving we had in the

US. Thanks to Ms. Shiffman, we can improve our oral skills and have this kind of leisure time during stressful study!



Int'l TAs pose with Doris Shiffman and special Thanksgiving treats

CHINESE IN ACTION

Learning new languages can be a great way to reach out and help others. Ryan Lee, a student in Aiguo Chen's Intermediate Chinese class, learned this while travelling over the holidays.

While at the airport, Ryan encountered a Chinese couple who spoke no English and were having trouble communicating with the service

attendants who spoke no Chinese. He volunteered to translate for them and both parties were so satisfied, the airline gave him a \$50 travel voucher.

Thank you for your good deed, Ryan, and for being an example of the importance of language learning.

KISWAHILI STUDENTS REFLECT ON ELECTION

Uchaguzi Mkuu wa Marekani

Tarehe nne mwezi wa kumi na moja mwaka wa elfu mbili na nane, saa tano usiku, Barack Obama akawa rais mteule. Barack Obama atakuwa rais wa arobaini na nne wa Marekani. Katika uchaguzi mkuu, watu mia moja thelathini na tatu milioni wa Marekani walipiga kura.

Kuona jamaa wafro-amerika wakijitayarisha kukaa White House ni kitu kizuri. Hiki ni kipindi cha kihistoria. Marekani ilikuwa na utumwa; ubaguzi ulikuwa sheria.

Obama ni bwana mzuri sana. Miaka minne iliopita alihotubia Wamarekani akiwa Boston. Niliamini Obama. Obama ni tumaini. Ataongea na nchi za kigeni, kama Venezuela, Syria, Cuba kule kunahitaji huduma kadhaa. Nchi nyingi zimefurahi kama Ufaransa. Huko Kogelo, kijiji cha babake Obama, watu wanaita Obama "mwana wetu". Obama ni bayana tayari na yeye anapendwa duniani.

Obama ni kijana na vijana marekani wanapenda yeye. Miguu ilioma baada ya kusimama kwa milolongo mirefu kupiga kura lakini ninafurahi sana. Lakini, nina hangaika juu ya sera ya afya marekani, madaktari pia wanahangaika. Ninangoja kuona vile Obama atafanya kazi. Dunia inangoja uhusiano na Marekani.

Tarehe nne, mwezi wa kumi na moja tulipiga kura na Obama alishinda. Watu wengine wanafuraha sana na wengine hawafurahi. Kwa sababu Obama alishinda, tunajua watu wa Marekani wanaweza kusahau rangi ya ngozi ya mtu wanapopigia kura. Lakini, tunatumai watu wa Marekani wanaweza kukumbuka Obama ni mwanaume tu, na atakuwa na kazi kubwa. Anahitaji kurekebisha uhusiano na nchi nyigi za kigeni na uchumi wa nchi yetu.



Beginning Kiswahili students pose for a picture on the last day of classes



BONUS FOR READERS

As a special treat for readers of the *LTC Connection*, Jane Kamau's Beginning and Intermediate Kiswahili classes have provided their articles in both Kiswahili and English. Translations are provided at the right.

We hope you will enjoy reading from this new perspective.

The 2008 General Election

On November 4th, 2008, at 11pm EST. Barack Obama became President Elect. He will be the 44th president of the USA. 133 million Americans went to the polls.

There was a time when segregation was law in America. To see an African-American family preparing to move into the White House marks a historic period in American history.

Many have hope in Obama. They first "met" him when he spoke in Boston in 2004. Obama will dialogue with countries around the world, many of which were very pleased with his election. In Kogelo, Kenya, his father's home village, villagers refer to him as 'our child'.

Barack Obama is young and the youth love him. Our feet ached after standing in long lines to vote but we are happy. However, we worry about the state of health care in our country, as do our doctors. We wait to see how Barack Obama will work. The world waits to see how the USA will work with other countries.

On November 4th, 2008 we voted and Obama won. Many people were very happy and many were very unhappy. Because Obama won, we know that the people of America can forget skin color when they vote. But we hope that the people of America can remember that Obama is just a man and he has a big task. He needs to fix our relations with other countries and our economy.



Intermediate Kiswahili class gets together for a special end of the year lunch



To explore this and other LTC language programs, check out:
www.ltc.jhu.edu/langprograms.htm

Faculty in Focus

OLYA SAMILENKO TEACHES MORE THAN JUST A LANGUAGE

Valeria Costadoni

“Teaching is a way of finding a reason to be on this Earth.”

From her comfortable Krieger office, decorated with posters celebrating Russian art and literature, Professor Olya Samilenko talks to the *LTC Connection* about her life through teaching.

For over 20 years, Prof. Samilenko has brought the richness of Russian language and culture to LTC students. In her time here, she has introduced

Russian at numerous places including George Washington University, the Smithsonian Institute, and Dickinson College. After her marriage to an exiled Russian poet, she moved to Washington and began a new career doing research and translation work for a Congressional committee investigating survivors of the 1932 Ukrainian famine. While the work and travel were exciting, Prof. Samilenko could not ignore her desire to return to teaching. Following her divorce, she began teaching at Goucher College, eventually heading the



Professor Samilenko in her Krieger office

doing what they love.

Prof. Samilenko’s interest in Russian language and literature stems from her diverse cultural background. Straddling two cultures—Russian and American—and equally belonging in the two, she stresses how each culture informs the other. It is her belief that preserving diversity allows people to become more “global persons” – what she describes as “the epitome of what the world should

“No matter how crowded a room is, nobody is short-changed. Everyone benefits and grows as a result.”

new language and culture courses, overseen a cooperative Russian program with Goucher College, founded study abroad and personnel enrichment programs with universities in Odessa, Moscow, and the National Security Agency, and invited many big names – Nobel laureates, famous writers, and educators, for example – to speak to students. But all these seem to be very recent accomplishments in Prof. Samilenko’s extensive career.

Over the years, Prof. Samilenko has worn many hats. After receiving her BA in English and Russian from Bryn Mawr, she continued her studies at the University of Michigan, eventually earning a PhD in Slavic Languages and Literatures. She went on to teach

cooperative program with Johns Hopkins University.

Her vast and varied background is exemplary of Prof. Samilenko’s endless ambitions and aspirations over the years. As a child, however, her goals were very different.

“My role models have always been teachers,” Prof. Samilenko recalls. Having attended a parochial grade school, she once aspired to be a nun. Later, her interests turned to creative writing and her love for literature continues today.

“I believe the world can be saved through Russian literature,” she says, with all the passion and honesty of someone who has devoted their life to

become ... Preserving the humanistic by saving literature.”

This fervor carries over easily into teaching. In her years at Hopkins, Prof. Samilenko has served students with unwavering dedication and support.

“My students’ growth and health comes first,” she explains. Prof. Samilenko has never taken a sabbatical and there are no TAs for Russian. The close relationship between professors and students gives the program a “personal touch” that she finds essential to its growth and success.

But nothing is earned without hard work. Describing what keeps her at LTC, Prof. Samilenko explains, “You share so much of the difficulty of teaching with the faculty.” But this difficulty is not



without its rewards. "It is truly rewarding to see the light in a student's eyes when they use a new language for the first time."

Her teaching philosophy is a simple one. Reciting an old Russian adage, Prof. Samilenko quotes, "Repetition is the mother of learning." She likes to tell this to students to encourage them to practice their Russian as much as possible. "Learning in this way, there is a point where [studying] becomes a joy, not drudgery."

While encouraging growth in her students, Prof. Samilenko is always looking ahead. In the future, she'd like to see

the Russian program expand to include research opportunities, regular programs abroad, more courses, additional faculty, and to pull stronger enrollment numbers to involve students in leaving "a national imprint" through Russian. Of course, she would also enjoy having more time to write.

While the breadth of Russian language and literature offers and endless supply of quotes to live by, Prof. Samilenko has a particular one that is special to her. Speaking first in Russian, she then translates, "No matter how crowded a room is, nobody is short-changed. Working

together, everyone benefits and grows as a result." This kind of teamwork is what she feels is strongest about the LTC dynamic, as well, particularly under the leadership of Uma Saini, who stresses similar attitudes.

This spring, Prof. Samilenko looks forward to leading a seminar course in Russian Nobel laureates and some of her favorite works by Tolstoy and Chekhov. We're sure her students are excited about the opportunity to learn with such a caring and dedicated educator, as we at the LTC look forward to another year of her company and contribution.

NEW FACES AT LTC

LTC and the Language Lab welcomed two new additions to our staff this fall.

After almost a year of searching, the Language Lab has finally found its new IT Technician - and he was worth the wait! **James Fitts** joins us from PNC Bank where he worked as a Network Support Specialist. Everyone who has met and worked with James already knows how friendly and helpful he is and how valuable his vast knowledge of IT is to the Language Lab and LTC faculty and staff.

With our senior student worker, Valeria Costadoni, leaving Hopkins in the spring, the LTC is thrilled to have a new student employee on board. Freshman **Emily Cheung**—a California native— works under Carol Young to assist LTC and its programs. Though her academic interests are in Political Science, Emily is skilled in a variety of tasks including newsletter publication, presentations, and basically anything else assigned to her!

We hope you will join us in welcoming our newest members and look forward to working with them in the upcoming year.



Student Spotlight

Emily Cheung

For many years, the LTC has been running smoothly and efficiently due to its wonderful employees. Much of the behind-the-scenes work has been done by student assistant, **Valeria Costadoni**. Carol Young, Valeria's supervisor, describes her as "an exceptional student assistant." Valeria came into the LTC with a background in database management, web publishing, desktop publishing, and MS Office experience, which is "a very unique set of skills for someone right out of high school." We sat down with Valeria to ask her about her experience working at the LTC, her experience at Hopkins, and her plans for the future.

How did you get to work/learn about the LTC? I heard about the position through the Student Employment website my freshman year. My mom had suggested I find a job and Carol had been looking for another student to help Jaelyn out as her schedule got busier – it worked out for everyone!

What is your favorite part of working at the LTC? Getting to create something everyday. I like to make things beautiful and well done, and there's always an LTC project that gives me the opportunity to do this. I also really love all the people I get to work with. I don't get to go back home as often as I'd like, but I feel like I have a real family here at the center.

What is the most useful thing you learned? I learned a lot about working with others in a professional environment; the kinds of people you meet, the different challenges, and the ways to get people to work together toward a common goal. I've also learned a lot about the different cultures represented here at the LTC. There's so much great literature to explore in all the different languages.

What are your plans after graduation? Hopefully getting into graduate school! I'd like to go to the University of Miami for a MA degree in Liberal Studies - a program where I can combine what I enjoyed most in Poetry and Latin American Studies here at Hopkins. Mostly, I'd like to get back home to Florida and see the sunshine.

What is the most surprising/unexpected/embarrassing thing that has happened since you've been working for the LTC? Embarrassing moments? Too many to mention! I did a lot of growing up between my freshman and sophomore years, so there haven't been too



Valeria at the 2007 LTC Business meeting

many surprises since then.

Tell us something funny about yourself. I'm a big eater – James can tell you all about that! There's nothing I won't try, but some of my favorite foods are the Indian treats Uma shares with me.

Tell us about the most interesting project you have done. There's been a lot of papers I've written for classes at Hopkins that I've really enjoyed, but I think the project I'm most proud of in my time here was the t-shirts I helped designed for LTC and ESL last summer. Carol and I made custom graphics for both shirts and it was really cool getting to see people wear something we designed.

Although, Valeria will be sorely missed, the staff of the LTC wish her nothing but the best. It is clear that she has a very bright future ahead of her!

Language Teaching Center

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Happy Birthday from LTC! Upcoming Birthdays:

January

3rd, Liman Lievens
4th, Cindy Simpson
22nd, Annalisa Czeuczulin
23rd, Wesley Sudduth
26th, Juliya Kravets

February

4th, Satoko Katagiri
6th, David McNeal
9th, Jane Kamau
10th, Peng Wu
21st, Becky Hsieh
23rd, Nancy Gooding
27th, Yuqi Li

March

3rd, Elya Papoyan
12th, Jean Boisvert
18th, Jillian Macnaughton
30th, Cristina Cajigas

April

12th, Olya Samilenko
13th, Chris Mihalsky
Olga Guvosky
19th, Sam Alexander
20th, Emily Cheung
23rd, Choonwon Kang
24th, Fadel Abdallah
25th, Christine Waddail
Vivienne Machi

May

19th, Julia Yarmolinskaya
20th, Aiguo Chen
21st, Manreet Jassar
24th, Hongen Yao
29th, Rongrong Xia

June

6th, Zach Yerushalmi
20th, Mehreen Merchant
22nd, Neeti Ahluwalia
28th, Kazue Zon
Wenning Xu

July

17th, Doris Yaffe Shiffman
24th, Uma Saini



CLASS OF 2009 COMMENCEMENT

The Class of 2009 Commencement will see the University's 133rd year of graduates take the stage to receive honors.

The ceremony will take place Thursday, May 21st, at Homewood Field. Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral degrees and certificates will be awarded to students from all nine Hopkins schools. Special ceremonies will take place on the 20th and 22nd to recognize individual achievements and confer special certificates.

Commencement will be broadcast via a live webcast and following the ceremony,

pictures, videos, and speech transcripts will be made available on the Commencement website.

The official list of speakers, honorees, and pertinent visitor information is forthcoming.

Be sure to check the Commencement website—<http://www.jhu.edu/commencement>—for the latest updates.



UPCOMING DATES & EVENTS

January 5th—Intersession

January 19th—Observance of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, No Intersession classes

January 26th—First day of classes, Continental Breakfast in LTC Lounge

March 16th to March 22nd—Spring vacation

April 6th to April 12th—Student Appreciation Week

April 13th to May 3rd—Undergraduate registration for fall term

TBA Week of April 27th—Senior Farewell Reception

May 1st—Last day of classes

May 4th to May 6th—Reading period

May 7th to May 14th—Final examination period

May 21st—University Commencement



HELPFUL LINKS

Many helpful links can be found at the LTC website under *Faculty Resources*, such as:

- Academic Calendar
- Course Rosters (JHED login required)
- Final Exam Schedule
- Classroom Equipment List
- Proficiency Exam Form
- Academic Advising
 - Registrar
 - Admissions
- and much more ...



Visit <http://www.ltc.jhu.edu/resources.htm>