Microlending Project Connects UWM Students to Latin America

For the past three semesters, students in Julie Kline’s class, Introduction to Latin America (Latin American and Caribbean Studies 101 – LACS 101), have had the opportunity to help entrepreneurs in a variety of Latin American countries, while learning more about these countries and their people – their lives, hopes, struggles and dreams. The interdisciplinary, online course explores aspects of Latin American geography, history, economics, environment, society, politics and culture.

As a central organizing core, the class participates in an online collaborative project involving Kiva.org, a microfinance facilitator, which aims to alleviate poverty by connecting lenders directly with small-scale entrepreneurs. Ms. Kline had heard about micro-lending from K-12 teachers and thought the idea also would work in her course. While doing research about micro-lending, she learned about Kiva and chose it as the classes’ lending tool.

She also uses it as a way to help build and maintain the online class community, she said. “Unlike a traditional classroom setting, in this class students don’t see each other. I want to encourage the idea that we’re a learning community, gaining from each other’s background, knowledge and perspective. I’m not the only teacher in the class.”

Kiva (Swahili for “unity”) is a non-profit organization that uses the Internet and a worldwide network of microfinance institutions, to help individuals lend as little as $25. It provides safe, affordable loans to people without access to traditional banking systems, assisting them to create better lives for themselves and their families.

In her class, Ms. Kline uses micro-lending as a way to help link students with people in the Americas because it’s a way to connect academic content and exploration of themes – gender, ethnicity, history, economics, politics – with real people’s daily lives and communities. She wants students to recognize that being poor in Latin America does not mean being passive. Kiva highlights individuals who take initiative to improve their lives.

Each Latin American entrepreneur posts their photo, business information and loan amount request. Students do preliminary research and choose a country they want to study and research the borrower they want to assist. This micro-lending project allows students to actually see the faces of the borrowers they are supporting and better understand that Latin America is a complex, multi-faceted region characterized by an existing informal economy. Students see that individuals find ways to support themselves and their families through businesses such as selling groceries from space attached to the home, running an individual taxi service, and producing and selling traditional arts like weaving.

The micro-lending experience also teaches students to focus on a set goal while building on each other’s knowledge of a specific Latin American region. The students:

• Work as a group to discuss who to lend to and why.
• Choose a borrower and write a 2-3 page essay discussing the context of the loan and the informal economy in which it operates. This teaches the students how to focus, share resources and brainstorm.
• Create an E-portfolio, which synthesizes the course content for a Web-based presentation.

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This December the UW-Milwaukee Manfred Olson Planetarium collaborated with UWM’s English Department during a special AstroBreak entitled “Space Poetry”. Twenty-five undergraduate students from Brenda Cardenas’ creative writing course were invited to a private show earlier in the semester to gather inspiration for their written work. Fifteen of the students volunteered to perform their own astronomical themed poems during “Space Poetry” on Wednesday, December 14. Classmates and members of the public were impressed by the students’ innovation and imagination.

**The Sky is a Mirror**
by Andrew Stoiber

Once we were stars.
Billions of years before
we built the pyramids,
colonized the New World
or landed on the moon,
we were stars.

Look up at the sky and see
countless faces that could be
the next you or me.

Fusion births new elements.
The brilliant spheroid explosions
were once our womb.
Hydrogen converts to helium
Then the helium capture
produces a chemical rapture,
that creates more of the universe
than any god could dream.

Look up at the sky and see
the new life that will be
wondering about you or me.

We will be stars.
Billions of years after
we disappear,
leave this world,
and are swallowed by the sun,
we will be stars.
New Guidebook Available

Associate Professor of History and Director of the Urban Studies Programs Amanda Seligman has written *Is Graduate School for You? The Whos, Whats, Hows and Whys of Pursuing a Master’s or Ph.D.*

Designed as a practical guide for anyone considering graduate school as a path to an academic or research career, this book provides candid information about the application process, financial aid, expectations and culture of graduate schools, and the employment prospects in the academic job market. Portions of the book also speak to the friends and family who will provide moral and sometimes financial support to the graduate degree seeker.

The book is available in hardcover, paperback and digital formats. Advance orders are currently being taken at [Amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), Johns Hopkins University Press, and other retailers, with a release date of February 9th.

**UWM students, alumni and friends receive a 25% discount when ordering directly from the publisher:**


*Use discount code NAF at checkout.*

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**Videos**

Check out our latest YouTube video which features four of our best and brightest L&S students: [http://youtu.be/YgUJPQqg2nQ](http://youtu.be/YgUJPQqg2nQ)

Assistant Professor (Japanese) Jason Jones was featured as an “I Am UWM” story. [http://youtu.be/ft3fTPXuQIE](http://youtu.be/ft3fTPXuQIE)
CRAIG SANDGREN, Associate Professor of Biological Sciences, died Dec. 24, 2011, in Shorewood, Wis. A native of Minneapolis, Craig held BS and MS degrees from the University of Minnesota. His love of nature and particularly all things aquatic led him to the University of Washington’s Friday Harbor Laboratories, where he earned a PhD.

A UWM faculty member for 25 years, he served three years as Department chair. Craig was a phycologist (specialist in algae) and aquatic ecologist with broad interests in the ecology, taxonomy and physiology of algae; and aquatic community ecology, including food webs in lakes and streams, ecology of invasive and nuisance species and habitat restoration.

He inspired students and introduced them to the rarefied world of algae, aquatic ecology, plankton, seaweeds, intertidal life, lake studies and more. His research included fieldwork on Lake Michigan, Midwestern northern lakes and the Pacific Northwest. Craig also taught seaweeds and marine phytoplankton classes at the Friday Harbor Laboratories.

Craig had a love of music as well as nature and the outdoors; he enjoyed fishing, hunting and rambles through the woods. A celebration of his life was held January 2 in Shorewood.

If desired, memorials may be made to: University of Washington Friday Harbor Laboratories Marine Life Endowment Fund, 620 University Road, Friday Harbor, Wash. 98250.

JAMES SAPPENFIELD, Professor Emeritus of English, died Dec. 31, 2011, in Shorewood, Wis. A faculty member and administrator at the University for more than 39 years, he retired in 2005. Jim was a teacher of Early American Literature, chaired the Department of English three times, was a Graduate School administrator and served as Interim Dean of the School of Fine Arts.

Much of his scholarship was dedicated to James Fenimore Cooper, Herman Melville and Nathaniel Hawthorne. He edited a three-volume edition of Washington Irving’s Life of George Washington and several Cooper novels – most recently, The Bravo.

Jim loved travel, food and art, and had the good fortune to teach students in Germany, Egypt, Poland and England. He and his wife, Eve, were able to indulge their love of travel and cities with many years of a house-swapping arrangement with a Parisian family.

A funeral service was held in Shorewood January 5.

A fellowship for Creative Writing graduate students has been established in Prof. Sappenfield’s name. If desired, memorials may be made to: UWM Foundation, The Sappenfield Fund, UWM Development, Attn. Christina Makal, UWM, PO Box 413, Milwaukee, Wis. 53201, or online at: www4.uwm.edu/give_to_uwm/makegift/online_giving.cfm.

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**Save the Date**

Chancellor Lovell will host a brown bag lunch forum for all L&S faculty and staff on March 2nd from noon to 1 in Curtin 175. The Chancellor will provide campus updates and answer your questions. Please join us.
Kiva Microlending continued from page 1

Ms. Kline stresses that there is a definite service learning component to the course, even though it is accomplished online. And, unlike a traditional classroom course, this one actually gives her more detail about what a student is doing. She can explain the requirements of participation and track each student’s participation.

The class is registered as the UWM Latin American & Caribbean Studies Kiva Lending Team (http://bit.ly/z8koth). With $200 seed money from Julie, the team has made 21 loans totaling $525 to borrowers in countries such as Honduras and Nicaragua.

Katelyn Lucas, a senior in International Studies, was a member of the group helping entrepreneur Dionisio, a taxi driver in Managua, Nicaragua. You can see her e-portfolio at tinyurl.com/6rcr1kr. She explained her experience:

I’m glad we were able to incorporate a Kiva loan experience into our course work. It was not only beneficial as a learning experience, but it directly helped someone in need. Such a small amount of money can make a large impact in the lives of others. Instead of simply donating to a more traditional type of charity, Kiva funds small business endeavors of people who have ideas, motivation, and the willingness to work to better their lives.

As we chose our country of interest and recipient, we learned a lot about the region and the various social and economic issues facing the country, as well as how the people find ways to make a living and build better lives, despite these issues. It’s different to just read about poverty and struggle in textbooks, but this experience allowed us to actually see the person we helped and read about their background and experiences, making the issue more real.

LACS 101 is a required course for the BA in Latin American, Caribbean, and U.S. Latino Studies. It also can be counted toward the GER Humanities and the L&S International requirements, the Cultures and Communities Certificate Program, and the Latin American & Caribbean Studies Certificate Program, thereby attracting students from a variety of backgrounds. Ms. Kline believes this is a good thing because a class with students from Finance, Global Studies, Criminal Justice, Psychology, Marketing, Dance, Biological Sciences, Health Sciences, Art History and Spanish is one filled with different perspectives, a range of ideas and lively discussion.

Social Media Snippets

If you aren’t one of our Facebook fans or following us on Twitter, here are a few highlights from our social media posts over the past month:

• The Department of English is offering a Veterans Re-Entry Writing Workshop this Spring. uwmenglish.tumblr.com

• L&S Alum Brian O hAirt and his band Bua in concert at the Irish Cultural Heritage Center on Friday, February 4th @ 7:30 p.m. (doors at 7 p.m.). $12 https://www.facebook.com/events/172499269520811/

• Interesting article on the relevancy of a college education even in an era of free information on the internet. http://ow.ly/8mYht

• Remember when the Google Trike was filming on campus last summer? The data is now online. Use Google Maps to look up the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, drag the yellow person from the left corner onto the map, and you will be able to explore the campus through video. http://ow.ly/8q4uj
In the Media and Around the Community

Three undergraduate students, Jared Catenacci, Anne Bruckner and Morgan Schroeder, attended the 2012 Joint Meetings of the mathematical societies of America (MAA, AMS) in Boston from January 4th to the 7th. The students presented two posters on their undergraduate research. Jared had a poster on his REU (Research Experience for Undergraduates) project, The Spatial Spread of Wolbachia-Infected Mosquitoes: A Strategy to Control Dengue Fever, while Morgan and Anne presented on Modeling the Dynamics of Bacterial Contamination at an Urban Beach on Lake Michigan, their UBM (Undergraduate Math and Biology Research) project. While in Boston, the students were interviewed by the MAA tv station: http://bit.ly/yRkRXD. Scroll to the video entitled Graduate Fair at JMM 2012: Where to Next?

Bob Schwartz (Philosophy) will deliver the keynote address, “Philosophies and Philosophy,” at the opening of the new William James Center at the University of Potsdam, Germany on February 2nd. On February 3rd, the Center will hold a workshop on his book, Rethinking Pragmatism (Wiley-Blackwell).


Devin Mueller (Psychology) presented “Noradrenergic mechanisms of cocaine-associated memory retrieval” at the Winter Conference on Brain Research, Snowbird, UT.

Susan McRoy (Engineering), Vishnuvardhan Vaidhyanathan (Engineering), Amy May (Communication), and Hayeon Song (Communication) presented “An open architecture for messaging-based consumer-health question-answering,” to the 2nd ACM SIGHIT International Health Informatics (IHI) Symposium in January.

Jeffrey Sommers (Africology) appeared on the international show Crosstalk twice recently. On December 30th, he was a part of their panel for a year-end review entitled, “Farewell 2011!” where part of the discussion about revolution circled back to the Wisconsin protests. Just after the first of the year, Professor Sommers was a panelist for Crosstalk’s episode, “Greetings 2012,” discussion revolt, revolution, the economy and the American presidential campaign. http://bit.ly/zSjuaO and http://bit.ly/ywWfF6.


On January 24th, the release of the Center for Economic Development’s report on black male employment rates generated front page coverage in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and top news story status on most local TV and radio stations, as well as national media attention. http://bit.ly/wuRHuO

Congratulations Stephanie Obst
Miss Milwaukee 2012

Stephanie is a senior majoring in Journalism, Advertising and Media Studies. The Miss Milwaukee pageant is the first step to Miss Wisconsin and Miss America, the largest provider of scholarships for women. Stephanie will compete for Miss Wisconsin this June.
Development Update

We continue to have fundraising success in the 2011-12 academic year. The first two quarters of our fiscal year have exceeded our expectations! Through the end of December, we have raised more funds for L&S this year in all areas of giving (cash, in-kind, external and planned giving) than we have for the last five years.

Through December 31, we have raised approximately $1,300,000. All of these gifts have been directed by our donors to support specific programs.

We look forward to continued success in the remainder of our fiscal year, especially as we gear up for our appeal for the New Directions Scholarship Program through the UWM Gives to UWM Campaign. Contributions to New Directions are not program specific; students can apply these scholarships to any undergraduate degree program within Letters & Science.

So much of what makes a successful fundraising effort begins with our faculty and staff. We thank you for your time and support in 2011, and we look forward to your continued generosity in 2012.

Awards & Honors

Congratulations to Jeff Tiger (Psychology). He has been selected as the 2012 recipient of the B. F. Skinner Foundation Young Researcher Award in the area of applied research. This award, given by Div. 25 of the American Psychology Association, recognizes his contributions to the field of applied behavior analysis and his potential for making many more. His research in the area of developmental disabilities, particularly his work on interventions for problem behavior and skills deficits, and his research on skills training for those with visual impairment, have made a significant contribution to the field.

Graduate student Andrew Parisi (Geosciences) received a $1,000 Sigma Xi Grants-in-Aid of Research for his project, “Analysis of deformed dikes in the Rainy Lake Region of Ontario, Canada: an application of a new method for understanding the kinematics of deformation.” Congratulations, Andrew!

Chantal Wright (Foreign Languages and Literature) has won the inaugural Cliff Becker Book Prize in Translation. The prize, given for an English translation of a volume of poetry, is awarded by the creative writing program at the University of Missouri, White Pine Press, and the Cliff Becker Endowment for the Literary Arts. Chantal received a publication contract that will result in a bilingual volume of her literary translation. The poet whose work Chantal has translated, Tzveta Sofronieva, will visit UWM on April 27th to conduct a workshop with students in the translation and creative writing programs.

Devin Mueller (Psychology) received a Travel Fellowship for the Winter Conference on Brain Research where he was also named the Ann Kelley Memorial Fellow. This award is for the top new investigator among the Conference’s travel fellows.

Growing up as part of a middle class family in the Midwest, pinch- ing pennies was always kept in mind. However, I never truly felt the value of a dollar until moving out and supporting myself financially through college. This is why I feel so fortunate to receive the New Directions-Next Generation Scholarship once again.

Kristi Schuette
Iowa City, Ia.
Biological Sciences major

Chantal Wright was born in Sofia, Bulgaria in 1963 and has lived in Berlin since 1992. She writes short stories, essays and poetry in both her mother tongue (Bulgarian) and her adopted language (German). In 2010, she was appointed writer-in-residence at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin.

Tzveta Sofronieva was born in Sofia, Bulgaria in 1963 and has lived in Berlin since 1992. She writes short stories, essays and poetry in both her mother tongue (Bulgarian) and her adopted language (German). In 2010, she was appointed writer-in-residence at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin.
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1

Feb.


7:00 PM – CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES LECTURE: A Second Life for the Jews of Europe: Shoah & Virtual Memory. Presented by Rachel Baum. This lecture builds upon recent scholarship of Second Life (a simulated world) by anthropologists, film scholars, and philosophers to argue that SL has radically changed the categories of “home,” “memory,” and even “human” in ways that are of vital significance to the study of the Shoah. At the Kliebhan Conference Ctr. at Cardinal Stritch.

3

Feb.

3:30 PM – PHILOSOPHY COLLOQUIUM: ON REGRESSION ARGUMENTS FOR HUMAN VALUE. Presented by Nandi Theunissen from Columbia University in Curtin Hall, room 124.

3–12

Feb.

7:00 PM – 15TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF FILMS IN FRENCH. Fourteen free films over 10 days all showing at the UWM Union Theater. See website for show descriptions and times. http://www4.uwm.edu/cie/frenchfilm/

3–March 9

Feb.

7:00 PM – PLANETARIUM SHOW: THE LIVES OF STARS. This program highlights the life cycle of a star. $2 admission. Fridays through March 9th.

3–24

Feb.

8:00 PM – SCIENCE BAG: MATH PUZZLERS AND BRAIN TICKLERS. Bill Mandella will lead an investigation into several interesting and counter intuitive math problems. In Physics Building, room 137. Every Friday in February and Sunday, February 12th.

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Feb.

12:15 PM – PLANETARIUM ASTRO BREAK: EXPLORING ECLIPSES

9–23

Feb.

5:00 PM – ART EXHIBIT: AFRICAN AND OCEANIC ART. Distinctive masks from West and Central Africa and intricately carved sculptures from Papua New Guinea and the Asmat region. Opening reception Feb. 9 from 5 to 7 pm. Regular show hours Monday-Thursday 10 am to 4 pm through Feb. 23. in the Art History Gallery (Mitchell 154)

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Feb.

9:30 AM - L&S APGC MEETING. In Holton 241

2:00 PM – ECONOMICS SEMINAR: CARTEL FORMATION. Presented by Johannes Paha, Johns Hopkins University and the University of Giessen. In Lubar N110.


3:30 PM - REMAKING ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES: EXCAVATING BEDROCK AND CREATING FORMATIONS. Part of the “What is 21st Century Studies?” series, this lecture is presented by Frieda Knobloch, University of Wyoming. In Curtin 118.

13

Feb.

9:00 AM - L&S AP&CC MEETING. In Holton 241

14

Feb.

11:00 AM – NONPROFIT COLLOQUIUM: STRATEGIC RESPONSES TO THIRD-PARTY RATINGS. Presented by Laura Grant, UWM. In Lubar S250. Sponsored by the Helen Bader Institute for Nonprofit Management.

7:00 PM – PLANETARIUM SHOW: CUPID’S CONSTELLATIONS. This show showcases constellations, planets, and galaxies that are mythically tied to love. $2 admission.

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Feb.

12:15 PM – PLANETARIUM SHOW: LOVE IN THE STARS.

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24-25 Feb.  
12:00 PM – MIDWEST INTERDISCIPLINARY GRADUATE CONFERENCE. UWM students have created this 2-day conference as a venue for graduate students from a diverse array of disciplines to share their research in a supportive and critical environment. This year’s theme “What Happens Now? Interdisciplinarity for the Future” seeks to raise new questions, extend disciplinary and multidisciplinary boundaries, and reflect upon the current state of knowledge production in relation to our 21st century future. The seventh annual Midwest Interdisciplinary Graduate Conference (MIGC) is being held in conjunction with UWM’s Center for 21st Century Studies and its 2011-12 research theme “What is 21st Century Studies?” [http://themigc.com/schedule].

27 Feb.  
LAST DATE FOR CHANGES IN PAWS FOR FALL 2012

29 Feb.  
12:15 PM – PLANETARIUM SHOW: UNDERSTANDING LUNAR PHASES.
**Publications**


John David Rhodes and Elena Gorfinke (Art History and Film Studies), eds. *Taking Place: Location and the Moving Image*, University of Minnesota Press, September 2011.  

[http://amzn.to/zNXG83](http://amzn.to/zNXG83)

[http://amzn.to/wy85y1](http://amzn.to/wy85y1)


John Isbell (Geosciences), “Glacial paradoxes during the late Paleozoic ice age: evaluating the equilibrium line altitude as a control on glaciation,” *Gondwana Research*, November 2011.  


[http://amzn.to/wRh9iy](http://amzn.to/wRh9iy)


