Global Journeys

Letter from the Coordinator

This newsletter features articles by a 2007 International Studies graduate, two December graduates, and a 2010 graduate. They tell their stories—the path to graduate school in Europe, an internship at the FBI, and study-abroad adventures in Chile and Russia. These are just a few of the exciting opportunities UW-W International Studies students are pursuing as part of their university coursework and beyond. We will continue to feature these types of student and graduate experiences in future editions of Global Journeys.

There are ten International Studies majors graduating in December 2009! I congratulate them on their accomplishments and wish them all the best in their future endeavors. These students include Jorge Antenaza, Erika Buchholz, Jessica Carroll, Jenna Davenport, Amy Lin, Sean McCrimmon, Richard Morris, Thy Nguyen, Erika Rosales, and Alex Wedderspoon.

The International Studies program is a multidisciplinary program, offering courses from three out of the four colleges of the university. The program is growing—there are now over 70 majors. This growth presents both challenges and opportunities. Fortunately, the program is supported by a strong International Studies Advisory Committee, with membership from the three colleges involved in the program. The current members of the committee are Peter Hoff (Languages and Literature), Margo Kleinfeld (Geography), Seth Meisel (History), Larry Neuman (Sociology/Asian Studies), Linda Reid (Finance and Business Law), Peter Wagner (Political Science), Susan Wildermuth (Communication), and Jim Winship (Social Work/Latin American Studies). I appreciate the interest and willingness of these professors to work to improve the program.

Last but not least, there will be a leadership change in the Center for Global Education next semester. Harlan Smith, the director since 2005, is leaving Whitewater for a new position at the University of Texas Medical Center at San Antonio. Linda Reid, will replace Mr. Smith as interim director and will serve in the position until spring or early summer. All International Studies majors are required to participate in a travel-study course or Study-Abroad experience, the administration of which come under the purview of the Center for Global Education. I look forward to working with Dr. Reid and her successor to enhance the quality and quantity of opportunities available to International Studies students.

With best wishes for a healthy and happy New Year,

Anne Wing Hamilton
Coordinator
International Studies Program
Choosing the Right International Program at UW-Whitewater

There are a variety of majors and minors with an international focus at UW-Whitewater. They are designed to meet different needs and interests. Recent changes in these programs provide students with more choices than ever before.

The International Studies major is a 54-credit multidisciplinary course of study; it does not require a minor. Twenty-one credits in courses from a range of disciplines—anthropology, religious studies, history, geography, economics, sociology, communication, political science—are required courses. In addition, students select a 21-24 credit emphasis and 9-12 credits of electives. The four available emphases are: a) foreign language and area studies; b) business; c) public diplomacy; and d) international economics. In addition to these requirements, students must demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language, through 16 credits of coursework or the equivalent. The major provides broad multidisciplinary knowledge on international issues with an emphasis designed to meet students’ interests and career needs. The wide range of course choice allows students to tailor the major to suit their individual requirements.

The International Studies minor is designed for students who want to combine a general background in international issues with a regional concentration (12 credits) on a region. This minor complements foreign language majors particularly well.

Both the major and minor culminate with a capstone seminar, ideally in the final semester of study. For the complete requirements for the major and minor, see the program website at http://www.uww.edu/cls/departments/international_studies/ or contact the program coordinator at hamiltoa@uww.edu.

Two other minors, the Latin American Studies minor and the Asian Studies minor, offer more focused regional specializations. The Asian Studies minor offers two tracks, the Japan Study track and the General Track.

The requirements for the Latin American Studies minor and the Asian Studies General Track are similar in many ways to the requirements for the foreign language and area studies emphasis in the international studies major. But these are stand-alone minors, which can be paired with a wide variety of majors.

The Latin American Studies minor has been revised during the last year. The new requirements for the minor include a new course, INTRNAR 260, "Introduction to Latin American Studies," and 3 credits of study abroad or related internship experience. Eighteen credits in Latin America-related courses, as well as Spanish language proficiency (through Spanish 252 or the equivalent) complete the minor. Direct any question on the Latin American Studies minor to the program coordinator, Prof. Jim Winship, at winshipj@uww.edu.

The requirements for the 21-credit Asian Studies minor, General Track, include two humanities courses, two social science courses, a capstone seminar, and two electives. The Japan Studies track requires 14 credits of Japanese language coursework beyond the first year (101 and 102), and two courses from a list of courses offered at UWW on Japan. An exciting new opportunity, which should be available for UW-Whitewater students in spring 2012, is a Japan Studies major, developed in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh.

For complete information on the Asian Studies minors, contact the program coordinator Prof. Larry Neuman, at neumanl@uww.edu. See also the web site for the program at http://www.uww.edu/academics/majors/factsheets/asianstudiesminor.php.

Finally, the Business School offers an undergraduate general business, international emphasis major. Nearly all of the courses in the major are business or economics courses with international content. The major requires a study-abroad experience and International Relations (Polisci 351). International Business majors are also required to take 16 credits (two years) of foreign language coursework, Speech 424 (Cross-Cultural Communication), and a Religious Studies course (135 or 211 or 212 or 303) but these credits are not counted in the 24 credits of the major.

This program has some of the same requirements as the International Studies majors with a Business minor emphasis. Both have 16 credits of foreign language as a unique requirement. Both require Cross-Cultural Communication (Speech 424), International Relations (Polisci 351), a travel-study or study-abroad experience, and a religious studies course—although in the IS major there is a choice between a religious studies course and Cultural Anthropology (Anthro 218). But, International Studies majors with a business emphasis generally take 33 credits of non-business-
Outside My Comfort Zone
By Allysha Adkins

In summer 2008 I went to Russia with a team of seven other students. We were part of an English summer school program, run through Novosibirsk State University. We attended English lectures with Russian university students and led a seminar with a smaller group of Russian students and faculty. The program was supposed to help the Russian students with their English while dismantling stereotypes and prejudices that both the American and Russian students had about each other. However, before we arrived at Novosibirsk, we spent one day in Moscow.

In Moscow, I learned a very important lesson that I will always remember. The day we were in Moscow was the day that Germany attacked the USSR in 1941. As a result, the Kremlin and everything around it was closed to the public. Meanwhile, it was raining cats and dogs, we were jetlagged and hungry, and many of the restaurants were closed. So we walked and finally found a McDonald’s, which was packed. Consequently, there were no tables available for us to sit at and eat our food.

Before traveling to Russia, we had been told not to sit on the ground, that Russians view the ground as dirty and will never sit on it. They will squat or stand instead. We were also told that they have an old superstition that if you sit on cement you will become sterile and not be able to have children. Whether this superstition still exists is beside the point, because we were so exhausted and hungry that we decided to ignore this warning and sit on the ground.

When we were sitting on the ground eating, people kept looking, pointing, and making weird faces at us. At that point we were so exhausted that we did not care. Our excuse was that we were Americans and McDonald’s was an American restaurant so we could sit on the ground if we wanted to. We even found it amusing when people started taking pictures of us on their cell phones. Why was this such a big deal? However, our tour guide told us that it was indeed huge, that it was taboo to sit on the ground because you would get dirty. It was during this time, when people were taking pictures, that some of my team members decided to squat while eating. I, however, remained seated on the ground.

After getting to Novosibirsk and building friendships with Russian students, I finally understood that I had acted like an arrogant, foolish American. I had not cared if I went against the cultural norms, as long as I was comfortable. I realized that my actions reinforced the stereotypes people have of Americans: considering ourselves better than others and able to do whatever we like, two stereotypes that I have previously despised. I realized how disrespectful I had been, not only to the tour guide and the Russian people, but also to my country. My team and I were representing the United States and ourselves; therefore, we should have shown more respect for the Russian culture and people.

My other important learning experiences in Russia were not as embarrassing, although one was painful! One of the first things I learned about Russians was that their sense of time was different than ours. The first day we were in Akademgorodok (in Novosibirsk), our hosts invited us on a “short” walk. I was thinking five—maybe ten—minutes. Well, two hours and two blisters later we were still walking. On other occasions we set times for activities at the university and our Russian hosts told us to make sure to wait at least 15 minutes beyond the arrival time. They did not consider this late; it was normal practice.

I also learned how much Russians value friendship. I often saw Russians stopping to spend time speaking to acquaintances on the street. It fascinated me how much emphasis they put on relationships and how much they valued friends over work and other commitments. When not at work or class, they were always hanging out with friends or family. We became their friends and they became ours very easily because they put so much emphasis on relationships.

My experiences in Russia taught me most about myself and how I want to live my life. It taught me to be stronger, more culturally aware, less materialistic, and willing to take the time to build deep, meaningful relationships. In sum, it made me deeply passionate for the world.
L&S Contemporary Lecture Series: International Issues
By Robin McGuire

“How to be Mexican”
On Monday, October 12, 2009, Alma Guillermoprieto visited our campus to give a lecture entitled, “How to be Mexican.” She was born in Mexico in 1949 and has spent many years writing about Latin American issues. Guillermoprieto began the lecture with background about the tumultuous past and long history of conquest experienced by Mexicans. Mexico was invaded three times after Columbus discovered the North American continent: first by the Spanish, then by the United States, and finally by France. When all disputes had ended and Mexico was once again in control of its destiny, the leaders truly felt Mexican; they were developing a strong national identity. Guillermoprieto noted that “wars forge national unity.” The Mexican Revolution was a defining moment in the 20th century. A new political party evolved to implement the ideas of the revolution; it remained in power for 70 years. The people of Mexico felt that under this new party a real nation had been created.

When Mexico signed the North American Free Trade Agreement with the United States and Canada, Guillermoprieto said that the people of Mexico were worried that their country would become more like the U.S.—that people would stop “being Mexican.” Could Mexico be prosperous and its people still be Mexican? How could Mexico be modern? Guillermoprieto asked the rhetorical questions, “What’s so great about having a strong sense of national identity? What need does patriotism satisfy?” For Mexicans, Guillermoprieto said, national identity has always been an important part of life. Mexican art, especially, forged a sense of “Mexicanness.” The Mexican movie industry created the Mariachi band, which was featured in many film productions. This new type of art and entertainment was a way for Mexicans to reinvent themselves and their traditions. The music in these movies was a way of speaking to the Mexican people about how a true Mexican would behave. Guillermoprieto shared clips from some of these movies. The “true” Mexicans in these movies were rural people. Women were especially aggressive and possessed a “macho attitude,” as Guillermoprieto said. A popular Mariachi song from the time says, “My beautiful, beloved Mexico, if I should die far from you, let them bring me back home.” This song, about a man working in the U.S. to make money for his family at home, conveys the concern the Mexican people had with the U.S. presence in their lives.

In the 1960’s, people started migrating from the countryside to the cities in large numbers. Life in the city, according to Guillermoprieto, made people more self-confident and accepting of immigrants and different cultures. Rock-and-roll also emerged at this time and destroyed the popularity of traditional Mexican music. With these new elements emerging, the Mexican people were facing a major identity crisis. The population was skyrocketing while the economy was experiencing no growth at all. Mexico began feeling inferior, especially when hoards of people had to move to the U.S. to have any chance at a better life. For Mexican-Americans, acceptance was, and still is, hard to come by, Guillermoprieto said. These people are scorned in Mexico for leaving and scorned in the United States for coming; not really feeling that they belong anywhere.

Mexican pride and tradition has carried over through the years and is still important to the Mexican people today. Guillermoprieto ended her lecture with a music video she found on YouTube by a modern Mexican music group that combined hip hop and Mariachi. The lyrics convey how hard it is to live without your past, and though the group is from the United States, they were singing proudly about their homeland.

“Song for Night”
Chris Abani, a Nigerian writer and poet, came to our campus on November 30, 2009 to give a lecture about the inspirations behind his book Song for Night. Abani was born in Nigeria to an Igbo father and English mother during a vicious civil war in 1966. He was imprisoned three different times as a young man for his writings and protests and was on death row until he was freed in 1991. When released, he lived in England and then moved to the United States. He is currently a professor at the University of California- Riverside.

Chris Abani is a man with a very good sense of humor. It may come as somewhat of a shock that a man who has been through so much can still laugh and have a light heart. In the essay that he recited to his audience, Abani speaks a lot about pain, but also happy endings. He began his essay with a joke about 12 Nigerians, noting, “It is good to laugh at ourselves.” Abani then tells the story of how, as a child, it was his duty to kill a goat for his family’s food. He explained that this was a very hard thing for him to do and bothered him greatly. A friend, who was a child soldier, helped Abani get through killing the goat. This friend, who had killed people and seen many horrible things, surprised Abani with his compassion for Abani’s unwillingness to kill.

As a young man, Abani organized several protests against the corrupt Nigerian government. During these protests, Abani was putting himself and his
International Internship

During the fall 2006 semester I made a decision that ultimately would change the rest of my life. I chose to switch my major from International Business to a degree in International Area Studies with an emphasis in Public Diplomacy. Changing majors helped me accomplish two major goals. First, it encouraged me to spend a semester studying abroad in Spain. And second, it helped me begin a career with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, a goal I had wanted to pursue since I was a child.

After returning from Spain, I realized that the real world was fast approaching, and I began researching several different internship opportunities that led me to the FBI's Volunteer Internship Program. I applied to be an intern at the FBI Academy with the International Training & Assistance Unit, or ITAU. It wasn't long before I was selected, thoroughly investigated, and moving across the country to Washington, D.C.

In general, ITAU's mission is to develop effective law enforcement training programs for police officers in the international arena. These programs equip officers to combat and prevent terrorist acts against citizens and institutions of the United States both abroad and at home. ITAU's programs are designed to strengthen and enhance international police liaisons and cooperation through hands-on initiatives.

As an intern I was afforded many once-in-a-lifetime opportunities. For instance, I helped coordinate one of this year's Central American Law Enforcement Exchange programs, at which a group of police officers from Central America came to the FBI Academy for training as part of a new international anti-gang initiative. It was a great opportunity to see how law enforcement officers fight crime on an international scale. Besides participating in certain training programs, I also had the chance to meet several foreign dignitaries who visited the FBI Academy for an official tour of the facilities. I helped Supervisory Special Agents give tours to foreign dignitaries from Canada, Chile, El Salvador, Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia and several other countries. Overall, the internship was not only a great way to build my professional network, it also allowed me to experience first-hand one way in which the U.S. government implements its foreign policies.

Some of my favorite experiences at the FBI Academy were those of Enrichment Night. Every so often the FBI invites a prominent guest speaker to address an auditorium full of prospective new Special Agents and other law enforcement officers as a way to enrich their training experience. I was able to attend lectures by the former director of the CIA, George Tenet, as well as the FBI's very own Assistant Special Agent in Charge, George Piro, the man who was tasked with interviewing Saddam Hussein after his capture in 2003. Both guest speakers were extremely insightful and very interesting.

I believe that earning a degree in International Area Studies and pursuing an internship with the FBI will prove to be the key to my future success in the International Relations field.

~John Doe
From Whitewater to Germany: A Student’s Journey

By Thomas Parker

When I was very young, two experiences shaped the way I look at the world today. I remember opening up an encyclopedia, the cover of which had a simple abstract depiction of a man in the desert, and turning to a page about Morocco. The idea of exploring that world, and for the first time thinking about how big it is out there, was quite fascinating to me. I also remember studying a poster we had hanging in the basement, taken from up on top a large hill in Heidelberg - the “Philosopher's Way,” overlooking the entire city, river and castle. In the bottom right hand corner, it said “Heidelberg. Man muss es erleben. Vous devez l'éprouver.” With these small examples in mind, fast forward to college. After deciding on UW-Whitewater, International Studies was a pretty easy choice for me. I had a feeling at the time that I would become more and more happy with that decision, and I have. Here are some reflections on my studies.

In my first semester as an International Studies major (2004), I took a class on Africa. Our professor told us on the first day that he gives out few A’s, and that even getting a B would be difficult. Can’t say we weren’t warned. I worked hard in that class and I enjoyed it - there were a few of those late nights studying during the semester, but the result was work that I was proud of. It was the best work I had done in my student career until that point. In such a difficult course, I succeeded, and after achieving that, I felt as though I was ready for anything to be thrown at me, except, of course, shoes. Our Professor said to us on the last day of class in May, “knowledge is like a river; it is ever flowing.” I’ll never forget those words.

During spring semester of 2005, I noticed a small sheet on a corner bulletin board by a soda machine advertising an opportunity to teach English in China for a month during the summer. I just wrote down the phone number, called, and three months later I was teaching English to a class in Changsha, China, having quite the time. I mean, this was the city where Mao was born! We spent two weeks in Changsha and two weeks in Beijing (quite the train ride from one city to the other). The experience was great, and deep in Asia, you come to see how different the world is, but also how very similar everybody is to one another.

Early the next year I went to Germany for a week to visit a friend, and after a year of German courses, my confidence was up. I made certain that Heidelberg, from the poster on the basement wall, was included in our Euro trip schedule. About half way through the week in Germany, we walked down a pedestrian zone, crossed a bridge, and hoofed it up this narrow hill path, and at the top of it: the payoff – the “Philosophen Weg”, i.e. the “Philosopher’s Way.” Quite the view from up there too! This moment melded with a thousand others; my interest in learning about and traveling the world was becoming more clearly defined and more realistic.

When I returned for the spring semester, I started researching UW-Whitewater’s study abroad programs. Natural course of action, I’d say, as by that time I had pretty easily convinced myself that I hadn’t been in Europe long enough. I was in my third semester of studying German for my language requirement, and I was looking at the summer programs in the state of Hessen. I chose Fulda, a city close to Frankfurt and Main with over 1,000 years of history, and the best biergarden in the world. The program was great. Every morning, day and evening was a new and exciting experience, and my fellow students from all over the world, made it even better. Afterward, I ended up living in Munich for a semester at the 'Studentenstadt' where thousands of students live in tall apartments right next to the Englischer Garten. I returned to Whitewater for my final semester in early 2007. After graduating that August, I moved to Madison, found a job and played some music. But, I had the travel bug and wanted to return to Europe. I applied to and was accepted for a European Studies graduate program at the International Institute for Management, University of Flensburg, in northern Germany. At the time of this writing, in November, I have started classes and just attended a conference in Sønderborg, Denmark on border relations. From my perspective, the future is bright.

My story isn't anything out of the ordinary. I just made choices. I think the worst thing is to take the middle ground of indecision — the maybes. To cop Woody Allen, if you want to see the world, 80% of it is just saying “yes.” The other 20%? Euros - and, having a book of Bukowski poetry somewhere in your bag. I also write in the hope that you can find some inspiration one day from an article written by a Masters student embarking on a new course of study. With that said, I just want to say good luck to all UWW students and everyone out there thinking about the International Studies program. I wish ya'll the best.
IS Students Conduct Research in Argentina and Peru

By Robin McGuire

Over the summer three of UW-Whitewater’s International Studies students traveled to South America to conduct undergraduate research. Dessa Unrath went to Córdoba, Argentina, with two other students and history professor Seth Meisel. Dessa’s group spent much of their time in the Córdoba Archive reading petitions written to the Argentine government between the 1820s and 1860s. These petitions from the Independence Era in Argentina were written by wives and widows asking that the government not recruit their sons. Soldiers also sent petitions to the government asking for unpaid wages. These petitions were a way for the common people of Argentina to communicate with their government. These documents are important to Professor Meisel’s overall project, which is about the social history of Córdoba during this time period, in that they give a clear record of what was happening at the time from the common person’s point of view. Dessa and the other students photographed the petitions and collected them into a database. Now they are writing papers on their findings. In April, the students will be presenting their papers at a conference in Montana.

Mónica Los, Ian Vaver and IS coordinator and professor Anne Hamilton went to Lima, Peru, this summer. In Peru, Monica and Ian were studying the role of ideology in the formulation of South American foreign policy in collaboration with Peruvian students at a university in Lima. Each student had a specific country to study and an advisor to guide them. Mónica chose to study Colombia and Ian chose Bolivia. The group of seven students and advisors developed the research question and hypotheses together. The end result will be a comparative study of the role of ideology in the foreign policies of South American states. At the university, Mónica and Ian presented their preliminary findings in the beginning of the semester. They will present their final results in the spring, Mónica at the state Undergraduate Research Conference in La Crosse, and Ian at the national Undergraduate Research Conference in Montana.

All agree that undergraduate research is a great experience, but it is not without its challenges. The hardest part for Dessa was the language. All of the petitions she had to read were in 19th century Spanish, with verbs meaning somewhat different things than they do today. For Ian, also, language posed difficulties. Speaking Spanish was a challenge, as well as reading the Bolivian newspapers and government websites each day for continued research. For Mónica language was not an issue as she is from Peru. Instead, her biggest challenge was working with Peruvian students in a setting that required her to blend her Peruvian background with her US experience. Despite these difficulties, all agree it was a great experience. Since they were writing about the region, it made it easier to learn about the region from people who actually live there and gave them greater insight into the culture. Working with Peruvians also gave them greater access to information and resources that might otherwise not have been available.

Undergraduate research is a great opportunity. The students agreed that their individual learning experiences were most valuable. Ian learned a lot about the politics of South America, especially in Peru and Bolivia. Travelling in Peru was a highlight, as this was his first time in South America. Monica learned a lot about how political science is taught in Peru and was interested to see the contrast between Peru and the United States. She also learned new things about her own culture. Dessa learned a lot about Argentinean history and gained a new perspective on everything by spending an extended amount of time in a different country. The opportunity to travel around Buenos Aires and Córdoba added to her great experience.

Dessa, Monica and Ian all say that everyone should participate in undergraduate research. It is academically and culturally a very good experience that opens up your world. They also agreed that it was a unique way to personalize your education, and have some say in what you are studying and learning about. For Monica and Ian, developing a framework and methodology of what they were going to do was an enriching way to get involved. They all said that the research becomes part of your life and something that they have each become very excited about. Monica is eager to visit Colombia, Ian can’t wait to see Bolivia, and Dessa is looking forward to another trip to Argentina.
Traveling to Chile... and Finding Myself

By Jessica Carroll

From the moment I stepped off the plane, I realized that Chile would be a land of contrasts. The Santiago airport was modern and sparkling clean, with all the amenities of any comparable U.S. airport. However, the bus ride to the hotel where we would be staying in the city would reveal a much different side of the city. In the outskirts of Santiago, houses were dilapidated, children were playing soccer on concrete fields, and fires were burning in trash barrels. This was the Chile that everyone learns about in school, the developing Chile, the Chile that remains in third world status. Throughout the five weeks I lived in the country I would experience the same dismay over and over again.

These wildly contrasting scenes-- of people who have so much with people who have so little-- made my Chilean experience so moving. I will never forget the day when I saw an unkempt, worn man selling avocados by the road for 500 pesos, or a little less than one dollar, in the midst of the white-washed vacation homes of Zapallar. I realized at that point that I needed to enter a field in which I could help people like this man.

I would have this realization again, when my host parents took me on a driving tour of the real Valparaíso. My host parents, comfortable in their middle-class life, took me through the slums of the city. They drove me through the part of town where the main road became little more than a dirt path. Nearly all of the houses had patched roofs. The children played in the road for little else to do. We passed the public high school, where parents who could not afford private school tuition sent their children. The windows were broken and graffiti covered the school -- not the artistic graffiti that Valparaíso is famous for. I was in shock. This was not the Valparaíso I had known, not even close to it. My Valparaíso was comfortable; though not like home, it had all the amenities of home. There were sidewalks and streets and many, many cars, taxis and buses. There were colleges, parks, children’s daycares. In fact, I was not at all prepared for this Chile.

I had studied Chile in great detail, fascinated by the country that was to become my home and my first, of hopefully many, adventures outside of the United States. Chile had been a stable democracy since the overthrow of Pinochet in the late 1980s. Its economy, at least by Latin American standards, was strong, second only to Brazil in the region. It was an isolated country, with a grand sense of nationalism. Chile had the internet and computers, was fairly modernized by all standards. Chile to me was essentially home, with the Spanish language, of course. Obviously I hadn’t studied the country well enough.

I realized I could study the country from the outside all I wanted. I could use all the facts and figures to make all the suggestions possible for life in this country. None of this would matter, of course, in the grand scheme of things. Development, the field/career I had been aspiring to enter, became real on this excursion. I realized I had actually gotten it all wrong through my four years of studying. Development is more than economic figures and life expectancy numbers; it is human and real. Development is uneven and uncaring, unusually cruel and kind at the same time.

My trip to Chile was a life-changing event for me. It changed the way I think of many of the processes that go into international relations and world politics. It also stirred in me a deeper passion for a chosen field. Previous to this I had interest, but now it is somewhat like a labor of love. When discussing economic and political matters, I always think back to the man selling avocados in Chile. I want to work to change how world politics and economics affect that man.