

# From the Chair — Spring Forward: Energy, Ideas, and Academic Momentum

As the days grow longer and the warmth of spring settles in, many of us find a renewed sense of focus and drive. There's a reason this season so often sparks intellectual blossoming. The increase in daylight and sunshine isn't just good for the garden—it lifts our mood, fuels motivation, and invites us to return to our projects with fresh eyes and energy. Here are a few reflections from this spring.

**From Service to Leadership:** It's time we recognize service for what it truly is: leadership. Whether mentoring students and colleagues, shaping curricula, chairing committees, or advancing equity initiatives, service work sustains the academic mission and strengthens our institutions. Far from being peripheral, it is essential, strategic, and transformative. Through service, we build community, drive change, and create opportunities for others. As we reflect on our collective efforts this spring, let's celebrate service not as extra labor, but as the leadership that helps our academic community thrive.

This season, I've had the opportunity to participate in leadership workshops in three key areas: Managing Employee and Team Performance, Leading Better Meetings, and Conflict Management. These sessions completed my participation in the Western Leader Orientation Stream within Western's *Excellence in Leadership* program. I was honoured to be invited to the Leadership Recognition Lunch on June 17 and look forward to pursuing further leadership development opportunities this summer as time allows.

**Conference Season and Future Planning:** Spring is also a season of connection. Conferences across disciplines offer the chance to refine our research, share ideas, and strengthen networks—momentum that often carries into summer. At the same time, many of us are turning our attention to what comes next: USRI Internships, grant proposals, or new course designs. This is the moment when ideas planted earlier in the year begin to take root.

In May, I attended and presented at the annual conference of the Canadian Association of Hispanists, held at the University of Calgary. Founded in 1964, this professional association promotes Hispanic Studies in Canada and supports the work of scholars across the country.

My paper, “Censorship, Celebration, and Cultural Resistance: The Enduring Legacy of *Bless Me, Ultima*,” was presented as part of the panel *Prohibidos, temidos, incómodos y escondidos: Censura en las artes hispánicas, antes y ahora* (Forbidden, Feared, Uncomfortable, and Hidden: Censorship in Hispanic Arts, Then and Now). It was a pleasure to see Professor Emerita Marjorie Ratcliffe in attendance and to witness the excellent contributions of our graduate students, José Javier Ponce de León Eyl and Celia Carrasco Gil.

Celia was awarded the *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos* prize for best graduate student essay for her paper, “‘Ekué Dios’ o la influencia de un bembé en *Guanabacoa* (1967) en la poesía de José Ángel Valente.” I understand she will also be stepping into the role of graduate student representative to the association, taking over from Javier.

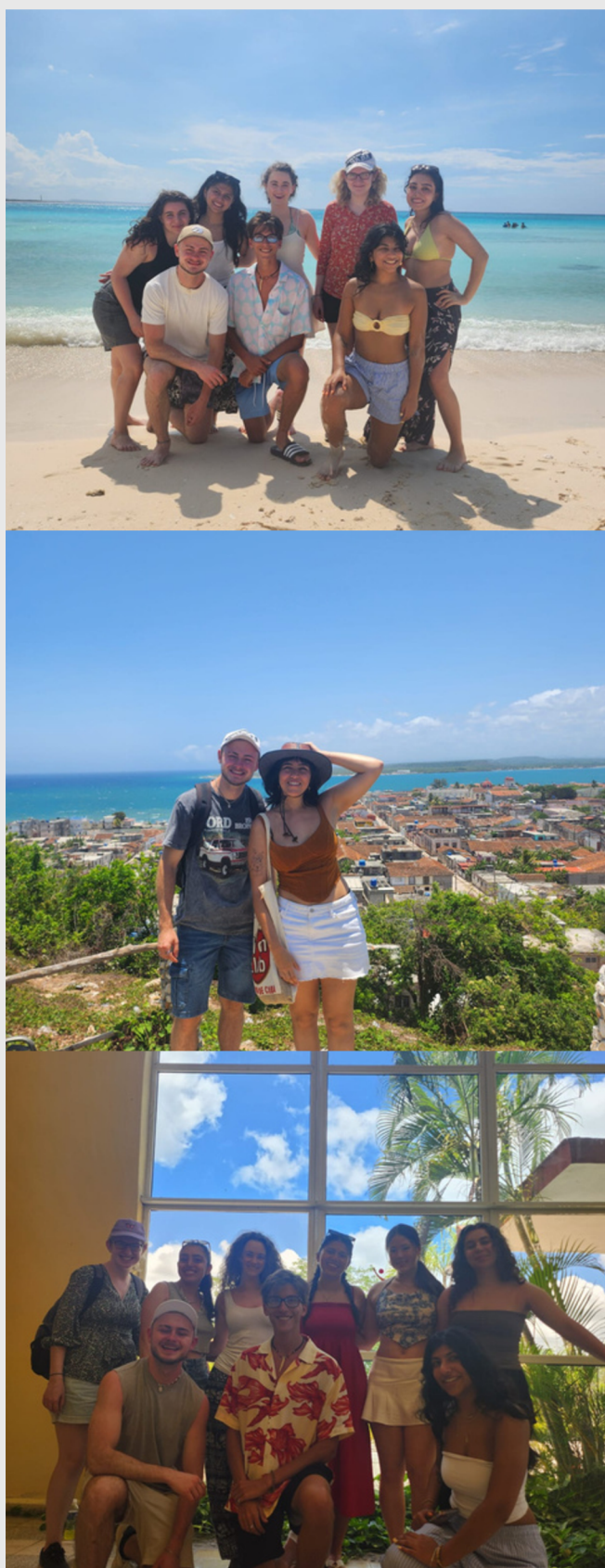
I hope this season brings you clarity, collaboration, and the creative boost you need—whether you're revising a manuscript, presenting your work, or mapping out the next chapter in your teaching.

Here's a look at what else has been happening across the department this spring.

*Victoria Wolff*



# News letter



## Study Abroad in May

Earn Western credits through experiential learning

### Holguín, Cuba

Students immersed themselves in Spanish language and Cuban culture at the University of Holguín, strengthening their intercultural skills and building meaningful relationships through daily life experiences. This unforgettable journey was made possible thanks to the leadership of Professor Ana Garcia-Allen and Paulina Mayor.

### Rondine, Italy

85 students traveled to Rondine Cittadella della Pace, where they deepened their understanding of Italian language and culture through the Rondine Method—learning to listen with empathy, engage in dialogue, and build respectful relationships. Heartfelt thanks to Professors Pirani, Caracchini, Larkin, and Miss Anne for their guidance. In June, Dr. Caracchini, Dr. Pirani, and Allyson Larkin were honoured with a return invitation for a momentous occasion: the official visit of the President of the Italian Republic.



## 1 Recent Publications and Presentations

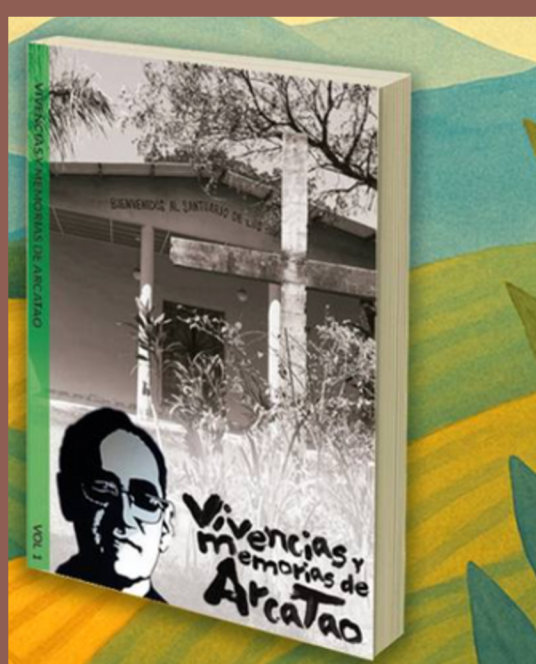
### • Book Publication

*Indigenous Waterviews: An Anthology of Story, Song and Protocol for Water Ethics.* Edited by Juan G. Sánchez Martínez, Sophie M. Lavoie, and Felipe Q. Quintanilla, Siwar Mayu, A River of Hummingbirds, June 2025. In print and ebook. Supported by the Indigenous Environmental Network-IEN, and a grant from the Ontario Arts Council-Northern Arts Projects Grant, and the Government of Ontario. This collection brings together the work of around forty Indigenous writers, artists, and Elders, highlighting a rich diversity of contemporary experiences and celebrating the connections between lands, waters, languages, and cultures.

### • Book Presentation in San Salvador (May, 14, 2025)

*Experiencias y memorias de Arcatao:* Vol. 1. Edited by Adriana Alas López, Marisol Zarceño, Felipe Quintanilla, and Comité de Memoria Histórica Sobreviviente de Arcatao, MUPI, 2024.

This community book presents 204 stories of individuals who were killed or died as a result of the armed conflict in El Salvador (1970–1992), specifically in the Arcatao district of Chalatenango. It seeks to honor the victims of Arcatao, deepen our understanding of the region’s history, and stand as a call to prevent the repetition of political violence.



## 2 Videographic Essay Workshop with Catherine Grant



From Professor Constanza Burucua: The week of May 12 to 16, we had the pleasure of welcoming Catherine Grant—a leading voice in videographic criticism ([catherinegrant.org](https://catherinegrant.org))—to Western for an intensive workshop on videographic essays.

The workshop brought together graduate students from various programs, including several from Hispanic Studies, Visual Arts, and the Theory Centre. Their creative, thoughtful, and eloquent engagement with this emerging scholarly form was truly inspiring. It was a humbling experience to work alongside them and to witness firsthand the intellectual depth and visual sophistication of their work.

Co-organized by the Faculty of A&H and FIMS and sponsored by Western Research, FIMS and the Departments of Languages and Cultures, Visual Arts, EWS and the Theory Centre.

## 3 Western Student Wins Misfeldt Prize at the CSSG 2025

**Yuan Fiona Gao**, a student from Faculty of Arts & Humanities, was the much deserving shared recipient of the Kim Misfeldt Prize at the Canadian Summer School in German (CSSG) 2025. Fiona shares the Misfeldt Prize with Nicole Fitzgerald of the McGill U.

**The Kim Misfeldt Prize** recognizes undergraduate achievements and celebrates building transcultural bridges through intellectual engagement and participation in the international community. In particular, the Prize rewards the outstanding performance of an undergraduate student participant of the CSSG for superior achievement in developing intercultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence through graded coursework, active engagement in the cultural program, and interpersonal interaction in German with CSSG peers, instructors, and host family members during the sojourn abroad. The Prize also honours and celebrates the outstanding contributions made by Dr. Kim Misfeldt as Director of the CSSG for 14 years and instructor there for 15 years.

Yuan Fiona Gao’s accomplishments are especially significant given the very high quality of the nine nominated candidates for this year’s award and that the selection of the winners was made by a committee of all CSSG 2025 instructors.



## Recent Research

Dr. Angela Borchert is exploring the fascinating world of Weimar’s leading thinkers—Goethe, Schiller, Herder, and Bertuch—by examining their influential art, philosophy, and fashion journals from around 1800. Her upcoming overview will appear in a handbook on *Der Deutsche Merkur*, the Enlightenment’s most enduring journal. She’s also delving into Germany’s first fashion history, published in 1830 by Caroline de la Motte Fouqué for the renowned *Morgenblatt für Gebildete Stände*, a journal that helped cement Goethe and Schiller’s legacies. Dr. Borchert’s research uncovers the surprising connections between fashion trends and the making of literary legends.



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# New German Modules and New ICC Courses

- **New German Studies Certificate and Minor**

Take a moment and go to [https://www.uwo.ca/languages/undergraduate/programs\\_degrees/german\\_studies.html](https://www.uwo.ca/languages/undergraduate/programs_degrees/german_studies.html). Discover our brand-new Certificate and Minor in German Studies—a dynamic 3.0 or 4.0 credit program designed to blend advanced language proficiency with rich cultural insight. Begin your journey with German 2200, where you’ll sharpen your speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. Dive deeper with courses in intercultural communication, gaining the tools to connect and collaborate across cultures—an invaluable asset in today’s global workplace. The program’s flexible, interdisciplinary structure lets you explore German-speaking cultures through film, history, music, philosophy, and the arts. Build practical skills, broaden your perspective, and set yourself apart in the job market with German Studies.

- **New Course: ICC 1060G Intercultural Communication for Global Awareness**

Ever wonder why cultural misunderstandings happen? This new course transforms you into a confident global communicator for our interconnected world. Explore cultural artifacts like fashion, film, food, and celebrations while developing problem-solving skills through intercultural partnerships. Discover how power dynamics shape global interactions and navigate diverse workplace environments with fluency. You'll gain cross-cultural collaboration skills, develop cultural sensitivity, and adapt your communication style authentically. By examining your biases, you'll see global events through multiple perspectives—exactly what employers seek. Join this transformative experience where every class brings cultural insights, international connections, and practical skills for life. Ready to become truly global?

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## Undergraduate Honours Thesis in German

**Tiffany Breilkopf** completed her undergraduate honours thesis entirely in German: “Fremdsprachenlernende als ‘ganze Personen’: Wie Identitäten im Fremdsprachenunterricht eingebracht und erweitert werden können” (“Foreign language learners as ‘whole persons’: How identities can be introduced and extended in the foreign language classroom”). Continuing her collaboration with Prof. Angela Borchert during a German internship, Tiffany will be testing some exercises she explored—developing research on teaching—for German 1030, Beginners German.

**ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING AND EAGER TO MAKE A REAL IMPACT?**

We’re excited to invite undergraduate students to help us redesign German 1030 (Beginners German) for our diverse community of learners. As a student partner, you'll help shape a dynamic flipped classroom where online preparation lets us turn class time into lively conversations, creative role-plays, and meaningful cultural exchanges.

This is your chance to take ownership of your learning, boost your motivation, and help others succeed.

**READY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?**

Contact an innovative team—  
contact Angela Borchert at [borchert@uwo.ca](mailto:borchert@uwo.ca)

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## More Publications and Presentations

- Black, M., Rato, A. & Rafat, Y. (2025). The Effect of perceptual training without feedback on bilingual speech perception: Evidence from approximant-stop discrimination in L1 Spanish and L1 English late bilinguals. *Journal of Monolingual and Bilingual Speech*. (From Second Language Acquisition and Multilingualism Lab).
- Joyce Bruhn de Garavito presented the invited plenary for QODAS, titled ‘*SLA and Teaching: a retrospective*’, May 23 2025.
- Joyce Bruhn de Garavito and Riham Hafez Mohamed presented a paper at CLA (McGill) titled “Modals and auxiliaries in L2 Spanish: The view from verbal ellipsis.” May 5 2025.
- Marcela Otálora and Joyce Bruhn de Garavito presented a paper at QODAS titled “What noun ellipsis can tell us about the status of definite determiners in heritage Spanish.” May 23 2025.
- Martinez Loyola G., Colgiu, I., Spinu., & Rafat, Y. (2025). What does your accent say about you? The perception of Cuban and Peninsular Spanish varieties by native and non-native speakers of Spanish. *The International Journal of the Sociology of Language*. (From Second Language Acquisition and Multilingualism Lab).
- Riham Hafez Mohamed presented a paper at QODAS titled “Acquisition of Subject-Verb Inversion in Main-Clause Wh-Questions in Egyptian Arabic-English and Spanish-English Bilinguals,” May 23 2025.
- Tyson de Moura Umberger presented a paper at the Canadian Linguistics Association annual conference (McGill) titled “Direct object pronoun clitic omission in Ecuadorian Spanish,” June 5 2025.
- Tyson de Moura Umberger and Zayra Marcano Chiquín presented a paper at WEFLA (University of Holguín, Cuba) titled “Ojalá nuestros estudiantes aprendan/aprendieran a interpretar ‘Ojalá’.” April 25, 2025.
- Tyson de Moura Umberger and Zayra Marcano Chiquín presented a paper at QODAS (Université de Montréal) titled “Morfología y semántica en lenguas de herencia: interpretación del subjuntivo en cláusulas dependientes de ojalá’,” May 23, 2025.
- Wang, C., Flemming, K., Cortiana, G., Lammert, J., Rafat, Y., Tao, S., & Joannis, M. F. (2025). The effect of different bilingual experiences on attentional control ability. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 13670069251335394. (From Second Language Acquisition and Multilingualism Lab).