



the Collage

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Dr. Nancy Zimmerman | Spanish Faculty Highlight

For Dr. Nancy Zimmerman, professor of Spanish at Kutztown University, being able to be creative and design interesting lessons for her students has been the most fulfilling aspect of her teaching career. “The fact is that the creativity of teaching really has always appealed to me,” she says. “[My students] do things that just knock my socks off. They’re so creative.”

Dr. Zimmerman incorporates art, music, and films into her classes to encourage students to look at the Spanish language and culture from different angles. She is currently teaching an advanced syntax class, which is now looking at art. Her students are comparing Diego Velazquez’s piece “Las Meninas” and Pablo Picasso’s rendition of Velazquez’s work, looking at real descriptions and articles concerning art to aid them. Dr. Zimmerman hopes to build students’ vocabulary and familiarize



“Las Meninas (Velazques)” by Pablo Picasso, 1957, part of a series of 58 paintings

them with aspects of the language and culture they may not already know. “I call this class my ‘Greatest Hits,’” jokes Dr. Zimmerman. “I wanted to do things that I love [and] this is one of them.”

Keeping her classes contextualized is important to Dr. Zimmerman. She pulls authentic texts for her students to work with, which she describes as texts written for Spanish-speaking people, not developed for teachers. After her dissertation research showed how university faculty teach heritage speakers, Dr. Zimmerman created the class “Written and Oral Communication for Spanish Speaking Heritage Learners.” The class looks at different types of Latin music, and films like *The Sea Within*. It also focuses on the different students’ cultures, as they talk about traditions from their own heritage and ask each other questions. “We were working on two main things [in that class],” Dr. Zimmerman notes. “Communication and culture.”

Dr. Zimmerman also works closely with student teachers, teaching a class for secondary education Spanish students and staying active in the Pennsylvania State Modern Language Association (PSMLA). She has worked every year to secure funds for her student teachers to be able to attend the PSMLA fall conference, gathering grants from places like the KU foundation and KU’s College of Education. Because of her love for teaching and her work with student teachers, Dr. Zimmerman was awarded the PSMLA Frank Mulhern

Leadership Award in the fall of last year.

She was also awarded the Mead Fellowship from the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages for a children’s book she wrote. The book was based on a poem Dr. Zimmerman wrote in English when she was seven years old and that was translated to Spanish by one of her heritage students. She wanted to incorporate her heritage students into her scholarship, using what they have learned to create a bilingual book that can help younger people learn Spanish.

Dr. Zimmerman is retiring soon. This is her last semester teaching, and next semester she will solely be working with student teachers. She explains that it will be hard for her to leave teaching and KU, but she hopes to spend more time with her children and grandchildren, all of whom live far away. She is also planning a trip to Portugal, which was postponed by COVID, but she hopes to go next May. “I love my students, and they’re just amazing... I’m really going to miss them,” says Dr. Zimmerman. “It’s going to be hard for me not [to] think about how I’m going to teach.”

DEAN’S CORNER DR. DAVID BEOUGHER

In 2015, I wrote my first Dean’s Corner note highlighting the accomplishments of our students, the opportunities provided by Kutztown, and the great work of our faculty and staff. Over the years, we have continued that tradition, proudly recounting the academic and personal journeys of our KU family. Our LAS community remains vibrant and committed to discovering and developing our talents, challenging each of us to be a little bit better today than we were yesterday.

Kindness is a gift that we should each express every day. In a world that often isn’t, remember to take a moment to be kind. A simple smile or hello can change the trajectory of someone’s day, maybe even your own. Try to make a difference and encourage others to do so as well. Seven years ago, I was inspired and humbled by our community’s ability to engage with difficult questions and circumstances, and I remain so today. My sincere thanks to the faculty, staff, students, and alumni that make Kutztown the special place that it is. I hope that you find inspiration in the stories in this issue of *The Collage*.





Michael Alberto | Political Science Student Highlight

Kutztown University junior Michael Alberto's passion for politics began in 2016 during the presidential election. Now, Michael is a part of the Honors program at KU, with a double major in Political Science and Philosophy and a minor in Spanish. "I really found my niche in international relations and political theory," they say.

Michael felt the research for the senior capstone project within Honors Program would provide them with a solid piece of work to show when applying to graduate programs and make them a great candidate. They started their project sophomore year, working with KU Political Science professor Dr. Robert Portada, and they are continuing the research for their capstone project.

The working title of the project is "The Non-Aligned Movement and Its Implications for

the Global South," focusing on the Non-Aligned Movement that started during the Cold War. The global south consists of regions such as Asia and Latin America, and many of the countries within these regions had their own views, not wanting to align with major political views surrounding the Cold War. Michael explains that the movement formed as a third option away from western or eastern opinions and the power struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union at the time. "It's one of the biggest organizations in the world and it can potentially have a lot of power. I think the dynamics are really interesting," Michael comments. They note that this dynamic is especially interesting in comparison to other political organizations, whose ideologies and members' views are usually more cohesive.

Earlier this year, Michael attended the 83rd annual Pennsylvania Political Science Association conference, hosted by the Department of Philosophy and Government at KU. They presented the preliminary

[to show] my research... and make a really strong, cohesive research project—that's something I'm super excited for."

Michael also has a minor in Spanish, saying that it was a way to reconnect with their familial roots, as they have family in Guatemala and Mexico. They feel learning more about the language and culture can help them do so in a way they haven't before. "I've never been able to go there... to meet anyone or know anyone there—I can connect myself just a little bit more to that family there." They plan on using these Spanish skills in their Political Science research as well, wanting to look at Latin America as a region within their studies. "If I ever wanted to take a semester to study there, if I had the opportunity, I would be able to do that more comfortably than if I didn't keep learning Spanish," they explain.

Along with a double major and a minor, Michael spends their time as vice president of the Model UN, editor in chief of *The Keystone* student newspaper, and working as a Community Assistant for one of the residences on campus. As for their future

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research they had completed during their sophomore year, focusing mostly on historical analysis. "It's definitely something that I'm going to continue doing. I'll reapply this year with updated research and new findings," they say. "To be able to have three consecutive years potentially at the same conference,

plans, "I really want to be a professor," says Michael. "An international relations, political theory professor...I think it's really rewarding to be able to work on research that is interesting to me. It's a lot of effort to put in... but it's exciting to take that journey."

Bonus Content



Michael explains their research on "The Non-Aligned Movement and Its Implications for the Global South"

To watch, click on the video!

Or go to our YouTube channel:
<https://youtu.be/3g6ebWvmYHs>