

West European Studies

Newsletter

September 2003

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WEST received Title VI grant due to its strengths

The center gave five FLAS awards to students to study Dutch, French, Italian, and Modern Greek, says its assistant director

WEST: West European Studies at Indiana University has been recently awarded a Title VI grant by the Department of Education. Could you explain briefly what the Title VI grant is about?

KB: The Title VI National Resource Center program provides grants to institutions of higher education to establish, strengthen, and operate language and area/international studies centers. These centers serve as national resources for the teaching of modern foreign languages, instruction and research in area studies, language aspects of professional and other fields of study, and instruction and research on issues in world affairs. The program was initiated under the Title VI section of the Higher Education Act of 1965.



WEST: What does this award mean for WEST faculty and students?

KB: The award provides resources for activities and research focusing on West European countries and the European Union. This means that faculty, students, and the community alike will benefit from programs such as conferences, lecture series, new courses, and other activities intended to educate about Europe. The award also allows the center to provide grants for travel, foreign language training, research, and curriculum development to graduate students, faculty, librarians, and K-12 teachers.

WEST: The center has been receiving the Title VI grant since 1972. It lost it just once in 2000. What is the key to the success this time?

KB: Indiana University has many strengths in the area of Western Europe that have been built over the years by dedicated and talented faculty and staff. This year, the evaluators clearly saw the strengths at Indiana University and selected WEST as a center of excellence.

WEST: The center has also been awarded FLAS fellowships. How will our students benefit from this award and what will be the advantages for our center?

KB: In addition to the National Resource Center award, WEST received funds to administer Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships for nine modern languages taught at IU: Dutch, French, German, Italian, Modern Greek, Portuguese, Spanish, and Yiddish. FLAS fellowships are given to graduate students of high academic standing who pursue foreign language training and area studies as part of their course of study. This year 5 academic year awards were given to students who study Dutch, French, Italian, and Modern Greek.

The EU as a counterweight to US global aspirations?

WEST professors comment on the processes in Europe after the war in Iraq

The Iraqi crisis alienated the US and Europe as never before but also brought new axes and divisions to the old continent. For the first time Germans were on the side of the French and against the US. For the first time Europe was divided into “old” and “new” and the world heard French president Chirac suggesting that the new EU members should “shut up”.

Who are the winners and losers in Europe in the aftermath of the war in Iraq? Has the pre-war diplomacy affected the processes of European integration and expansion? Is the division of “new Europe” and “old Europe” going to create new geopolitical realities?

WEST asked its faculty members for a commentary on these questions. Prof. Allen Douglas and Prof. Eleanor L. Turk discuss below the processes in Europe after the war in Iraq.

Allen Douglas

Professor of History and West European Studies

The distinction between new and old Europe is real (though it was often misunderstood by the French who took it to mean that they were old-fashioned). The newly democratic countries of Eastern Europe have a different history, different concerns (like a revived Russian threat as a potential future problem) and different needs (they are poorer both economically and diplomatically). In the case of Poland, for example, it seems that the Polish government got some favors on some controversial matters in return for its support of the US. How long this distinction will last is another question, of course.

To suggest that France and Germany were on the same side for the first time could be misleading. True, Germany was pro-US in most of the NATO disputes, but in European Union politics, Germany and France have tended to work together quite closely. One could even consider the Franco-German rapprochement to be the core of the Union.

Two further points directed at US-French relations. The break over Iraq reflected very different perceived economic and geo-political interests as these have become constructed through different theories of international behavior. For many French decision-makers, I suspect our Iraq venture looked like a cynical attempt to muscle in on their area of influence. I doubt they ever saw it as a security issue at all. Second point: France and the US have a long history of ideological rivalry. France

and the US are like what cinema critics call the American Couple -- fascinated with each other yet loving to quarrel. After all we and the French have much in common. We both solely invented democracy (or think we did) and we both think that we have a unique universal mission to the world.

By its population and economy, Europe is a potential counterweight to the U.S. But to effectively function as a counterweight, Europe has to be able to offer an alternative. Europe cannot do so until it develops a truly united political voice on foreign affairs and until it invests more of its resources in the defense area. What we have at present is really more of a nuisance value based on the ability of some European states to veto resolutions in the U.N. Security Council.

Eleanor L. Turk

Professor of History emerita, Indiana University East

Although the military campaign was in Iraq, the diplomatic front was clearly in Europe. When nine members of the European Union and of NATO? refused to endorse the US attack on Iraq, the Bush government's assertion of world leadership received a stunning shock. While Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, author of the campaign against Iraq, scathingly denounced "old Europe," Secretary of State Colin Powell was forced, nonetheless, to put together the "coalition of the willing" from nations which could be persuaded to endorse the war. This partnership, initially of 37 states, includes 18 European states together with such strange bedfellows as the Solomon Islands, Tonga and Costa Rica. Some have speculated that this has caused a split within Europe, as well as between Europe and the United States.

Powell did gain "old European" support from Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain, but all the other European partners in "Operation Iraqi Freedom" are Eastern European states with hopes for financial aid from the United States. Indeed, Reuters reported budget allocations of \$15 million each for the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. The declaration of support came at relatively little cost: Albania has allocated 70 men, Bulgaria 150, the Czechs a team of nuclear/biological/chemical warfare decontamination experts, Denmark 2 ships, the Netherlands 360 men, Poland and Rumania each around 200 non-combat troops, and Spain a medical ship. Estonia, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Portugal and Slovakia have offered lip service, but no material participation in the war. Significantly, the 9 Eastern European "willing" are all candidates for NATO membership, and all but Albania candidates for the European Union as well.

Meanwhile, the European Union has shown no evidence of wilting under the US glare. The Euro has been implemented in its continental states, and discussions have produced significant reforms in agricultural policy. With the economic issues well in hand, the EU has plans for substantial political reforms in a constitution which will replace the current six-month rotating presidency with a single president elected for a fixed term, a revised Council with legislative capabilities, and an elective parliament based on the principle of majority vote rather than consensus, and a 100,000-member rapid deployment military force. These auger even greater cohesion and strength for a European voice in world affairs.

On June 25, 2003, the summit meeting between US President George Bush and the then EU President, Prime Minister Costas Simitis of Greece, reflected the EU's confidence. The US demands support for the war on terrorism and the "road map" for peace between Israel and the Palestinians. The EU agrees in principle, but proposes that the UN be the means, not US unilateralism. And significant areas of disagreement remain: the US rejects the European-sponsored International Criminal Court; the EU refuses to accept US exports of genetically modified foods; the US wishes to impose its definitions of terrorist groups, while Europe wants to distinguish between clearly terrorist groups and valid political organizations with similar goals but clearly peaceful activities.

While the EU promises that its reforms will not duplicate NATO, they clearly will create a rival, strictly European alternative. Thus the addition of the East European candidates to each organization will be noteworthy. The Eastern European candidates are clearly trying to gain the advantages of the EU as well as of NATO, in which the US plays a commanding role. The barometer of the relative strengths of each side may be reflected by the decisions of Turkey. Despite being denied candidacy status for the EU, the newly-elected Turkish government nevertheless rejected the demands of its NATO partner, the United States, to base troops there for an attack on Iraq. This suggests that in Turkey, at least, the assertive unilateralism of the US is a less certain support for the future than a clearly defined and open partnership with Europe.

Thus, it appears to me that the European Union is in a strong, although not commanding position for the years ahead. It is defining a new form of federalism which will, when enacted, give it a single negotiator on the world scene while preserving the identity and voices of the EU member states. It may constitute a friendly counterweight to US global aspirations. As such it is an excellent school in democracy for its prospective new members and for other regional coalitions. Even the fact that its next president, Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi is, allegedly, one of the most corrupt men in Europe should not disturb the steady pace of its development.

Youth culture class bloomed in WEST

Germanic Studies grad students bring popular culture to the classroom

A new WEST class taught by two graduate students became very popular last summer. The instructors Corinna Kahnke and Faye Stewart are currently working towards their doctoral degrees in Modern German Culture in the Department of Germanic Studies at IU. During the school year, they teach German language courses and defend the validity of researching popular cultures.



The doctoral students Corinna Kahnke and Faye Stewart in front of their class.

WEST: What is the unique proposition of "How Global is Youth Culture?"

CK and FS: This course is unique not only because of the topic, but also because of the pedagogical approach: two grad students team-teaching cross-cultural material, drawing on their own experiences, research, and of course, their German and American identities. As graduate students, this was a rare opportunity to design a course according to our research interests. In addition, the course is unique in the use of a wide variety of media, ranging from graffiti to the internet, and from television commercials to popular films. The students also feel that they can make original contributions to the class based on their own knowledge and life experiences.

WEST: What is the purpose of this class?

CK and FS: First and foremost, we seek to highlight the importance of researching popular cultures, and specifically youth cultures. Students learn about contemporary youth identities and practices in Germany and Europe. Another important aspect of the course is the exploration of processes of globalization within youth cultures. And last, but not least, we want to demonstrate that fun and academics can go hand in hand.

WEST: The class has attracted a substantial amount of students. What is so appealing in that class? What do the students expect from such a class?

CK and FS: Naturally, the students expect to have fun while learning about a topic that is closely tied to their own lives. We also believe that the cross-cultural aspect of the course, both in terms of our identities and teamwork as instructors, and in terms of the material we examine, has attracted a number of students.

WEST: Why did you choose the German youth culture to discuss the problems of globalization? Is the German youth culture more open than the American one?

CK and FS: The wide variety of German youth cultures since unification is a particularly interesting case study on the relationship between the local, national and global aspects of cultural production and consumption. Our personal experiences and research interests have also provided us with multifarious perspectives on German youth cultures.

WEST: What are your plans in the future in regards to this class?

CK and FS: Teaching this course has been incredibly challenging and rewarding for us, and we are very pleased with how engaged and enthusiastic our students have been thus far. We hope to teach the course again, if possible during a spring or fall semester, as many students have expressed interest and were unable to enroll this summer. In addition, we will then be able to offer a more streamlined version of the course.

WEST alum is the new US Defense Attaché in Slovenia

WEST alumnus Eric Metzger is a lieutenant colonel in the Army serving in Ramstein Air Base, Germany, with Allied Air Forces North, a NATO Air Command. He is an Airspace Staff Officer and spends a good deal of time traveling throughout Western and Central Europe teaching Airspace Management and attending seminars and exercises. "In my current job, I've been as far west as High Wycombe, England, as far east as Wroclaw, Poland, as far north as Trondheim, Norway, and as far south as Naples, Italy", said Metzger. He also plans trips to Latvia, Croatia, Macedonia, and Greece.



After graduating from the WEST program at IU, Eric Metzger served for two years as the U.S. Security Assistance Officer in the Slovak Ministry of Defense in Bratislava, Slovakia. While there, he met his wife, Sylvia.

Metzger has now been selected to represent the United States in the country of Slovenia as the U.S. Defense Attaché beginning in 2005.

"Throughout my travels, my experiences in WEST have come back to help me. While studying at IU, I learned some very useful and practical information on governments and economics in Europe. More importantly, I learned to have a greater appreciation for the languages, cultures, and peoples of Europe", said Metzger.

Faculty Highlights:

Prof. Shetter's new book was born on the web

William Z. Shetter's new book *Language Miniatures* has a unique history. "After I retired in 1994 after 44 years of foreign-language and linguistics teaching, I decided that I wanted to put these many years experience to good use by finding a way to popularize intriguing language and linguistic questions to a wider audience", said Prof. Shetter. In the fall of 1998 he began writing 850-word language columns in the old *Bloomington Voice*. They appeared every two or three weeks, each accompanied by a cartoon by him, and written in an informal chatty style. After the *Voice* became the *Bloomington Independent* the columns moved to the web. So in the fall of 1998, he designed a web site called *Language Miniatures* and started posting them there, 112 of them as of this moment. The site, which can be found at <http://home.bluemarble.net/~langmin/> has had 49,000 visits since January 1, 2000. "Last year I decided to offer readers an inexpensive print version of some of the Miniatures I consider the best, so I selected 59 out of the first 100", said Prof. Shetter. The book also incorporates a few of his cartoons. He laid it all out himself and had it printed as an IU 'Classpak' by Custom Publishing.

The author of *Language Miniatures* believes that English is taking over as the dominant second language not only in Europe but also in the world as a whole. "I think it was a British columnist or politician who said that if Britain would withdraw from the EU - which is obviously not going to happen - there would suddenly be no problem accepting English as the EU language! However, at the moment there seems to be no possibility that the EU will be using only one language at any time soon. This is simply not politically feasible, said Dr. Shetter. According to him, the EU seems to be irrevocably committed to multilingualism, though the form it will take is something nobody can foresee. His feeling is that though the diversity of languages will be permanently guaranteed and much translation will continue to be done (more and more of it by machine), as a practical step the working languages by common agreement will be reduced to three or four.

Prof. Gardner awarded World Bank grant

The World Bank has awarded a 3-year, \$900,000 research grant to the Economics Education and Research Consortium (EERC), Ukrainian National University "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy" which is to be administered by two IU Economists.

Chancellor's Professor of Economics Roy Gardner, who is Academic Director of EERC, co-wrote the World Bank grant and will help administer it. EERC offers the only Western-style MA in Economics in Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, and four of its alumni are pursuing PhD's in Economics at Indiana University.

Prof. Bondanella launched a new classic series

Professor Peter Bondanella from the Department of French and Italian will introduce his new edition of Dante's *Inferno*, one of the first titles in the new Barnes & Noble Classics series, at Bloomington's Barnes & Noble Bookstore on Saturday, 20 September at 2 pm.

This new edition combines Longfellow's classic American translation of the *Inferno* with an introductory essay plus extensive commentary and notes by Bondanella. The public is invited for an informal presentation of the new edition and a discussion of Dante's recent influence on American literature.