

READ REVIEW

FALL SEMESTER 2021



RETURNING TO IN-PERSON

We at CIIE know that our community is hungry to meet our scholars, learn about the work we do, engage in our events and see students go abroad again. The center welcomed 21 scholars from 11 countries for the fall 2021 cohort of the Fulbright Teaching Excellence and Achievement in Media Literacy program, hosting them in White Hall on the Kent campus. Likewise, we are starting to see an increase again in our EHHS international scholars, the Aggarwal-Blackburn Visiting Scholars.

EHHS faculty are gearing up for a return to study abroad activities. Dr. Maureen Blankemeyer looks to journey with students to Ireland and Dr. Mark Kretoivics will engage with students designing study abroad programming while studying abroad at our Florence campus in Italy. Faculty are also planning to take students to Brazil, Mexico, and Las Vegas.

During International Education Week, Daniel Diaz Nilsson, director of the Office for Diversity Outreach and Development in the college, and I presented the "Breaking Barriers and Crossing Borders," an education abroad session focused on helping students overcome common hurdles to studying abroad.

Finally, in my commitment to lowering the center's carbon footprint, we started a committee with other international educators on campus to investigate ways to fight climate change in our international initiatives at Kent State. It is our hope to eventually suggest ways and incentivize faculty, staff, students and visiting scholars to lead in climate action.

THREE ROMANIAN EDUCATOR PERSPECTIVES:

THE IMPACT OF THE KSU FULBRIGHT TEACHING EXCELLENCE AND ACHIEVEMENT IN MEDIA LITERACY PROGRAM

Corina Mitrulescu


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In May 2021, I completed a comprehensive program on media literacy hosted by Kent State University, through the Fulbright TEA program. This experience represented an amazing asset for my career as a teacher and the only question I had in mind after returning home was, "what can I do next? How can I help both my students and my fellow teachers?"

While still focused on helping my students develop their critical thinking skills, I also realized that teachers also need training in this area. The engagement of authorities and educational institutions in Romania in promoting media literacy is insufficient, if not nonexistent. It is my belief that most of the teachers in our country could be considered illiterate when it comes to media literacy; there are no courses offered or research conducted in this area. There is no systematic program of teaching media literacy. Therefore, I have started creating a course for teachers that would bring media literacy to their attention. This course will provide teachers of English as a foreign language with the necessary skills to make adequate judgments in response to information conveyed through mass communication. Consequently, teachers will be able to encourage their students to think critically, interpret, evaluate and develop an informed understanding of the complex media content today.

I was also given the opportunity to share my experience during a workshop titled "Teaching Excellence: Promoting Media Literacy and Critical Thinking in the English Class." This two-day training event was organized by the Romanian-U.S. Fulbright Commission in Bucharest on September 2nd and 3rd, 2021. I acted as a teacher trainer for some of the workshops, which were meant to provide a number of 43 middle and high school teachers from around the country with a set of activities and tools that could be used in their classrooms in order to promote critical thinking.

The experience at Kent State University became a defining moment of my career that will stay with me for life. I am determined to continually share this experience, not only for the benefit of my students, but of the whole community I come from.



Elvira Kiss

I have always dreamt of becoming a teacher, an English teacher to be more precise. And I did! I have studied, I had exams, I had courses and tests, and I worked and worked, and taught and taught until I realized I needed something else; something new in my daily routine. Something that would engage and make my classes outstanding; something that any student would do just to be in my class. This is the point where the Fulbright TEA Media Literacy program came in at the right time and it changed me completely.

My objective for participating in the Fulbright TEA program was to explore new methods of effectively teaching English as a foreign language, motivating students, learning more about all spheres of life in the USA and improving language skills. But throughout the program, I learned so much more. After the quarantine week, which actually helped us all connect easier and faster than we expected, I had the chance to meet my friendship family, my professors and all the other people involved in the program that made us feel so welcome and shared from their vast experience. The courses, the field experience, the group work with my fellow colleagues taught me so many things about teaching, interacting and the importance of introducing media literacy in our classes.



Returning from the US, I felt more alive and involved in my teaching and eager to teach my students and my fellow colleagues about everything I learnt during my six-week stay in the US. Therefore, I brought articles in the class, I used different apps and platforms in the classroom and I saw how students gradually cultivate their skills like creativity, collaboration and communication, as well as their digital literacy skills through interacting with media, information and technology. I continued to research, read and gather more and more information on media literacy as it is an objective from now on in my daily teaching experience.

My Fulbright experience continued in September 2021 as I was invited by the Romanian-U.S. Fulbright Commission together with my colleagues, Corina Mitrulescu and Corina Moise-Poenaru, to share our experience in the U.S. and to participate as teacher-trainers in the two-day training workshop entitled “Teaching Excellence: Promoting Media Literacy and Critical Thinking in the English Class.” The event took place at the National Library of Romania and brought together 43 middle and high school teachers from around the country. Corina Moise-Poenaru and I presented the workshop “Ten Creative Ways to Integrate Media Literacy in the EFL Classroom” with different interactive methods that teachers could use in their classrooms. I had another workshop, which developed the theme of advertisements in teaching media literacy in the classroom titled, “What’s For Sale? The Role of Advertisements in EFL Teaching.” At the end of October, I was invited to present my Fulbright experience to my fellow teachers in my hometown and I plan to share this experience and to have a workshop on media literacy on this very occasion.

Corina Moise-Poenaru

My experience as a Fulbright Teaching Excellence and Achievement grantee at Kent State University was the pinnacle of my English teaching career. The time spent in the USA in an American scholar environment has offered me the most beautiful, insightful, interesting academic and cultural experience. The impact of the program was so meaningful and deep that it will probably take years before I can fully grasp the layers of change it brought to my life. The staff at Kent State University was amazing and this whole experience has helped me reach my full potential, improved my self-esteem and made me realize my true worth as a teacher.

I was able to take back home to my classes new methods and strategies, to tackle new topics such as media literacy and to approach in an innovative way English language teaching. I realize it may seem an exaggeration, but facing the American academic culture and the American school system has been eye-opening and granted me the confidence that I needed to become my best version.

After my return I did not focus only on my students, but my colleagues as well and I wanted to share my newly acquired knowledge and competencies, and with the support of the Romanian Fulbright Commission I was selected to be a speaker at the "Teaching Excellence:

Promoting Media Literacy and Critical Thinking in the English Class" conference where I conducted a workshop entitled "Fake News, Propaganda and Disinformation: How to Teach Your Students to Think Critically and Evaluate Media." With my fellow grantee Elvira Kiss, we delivered a workshop titled "10 Creative Ways to Integrate Media Literacy in the EFL Classroom." The feedback was overwhelming, I felt so incredibly happy that I could share all the great things that I have learned with the right people.



AGGARWAL-BLACKBURN VISITING SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT: AI MATSUNAGA



Ai Matsunaga was born and raised in Japan. In college, a study abroad program to Singapore aroused her passions for intercultural experiences, so she moved to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia to her further studies. She graduated from the University of Malaya, Malaysia in 2010 with an International Master's in ASEAN Studies. Upon graduating, she moved to Singapore and joined the Embassy of Japan to work for cultural affairs and Japanese language education. After two years of rich diplomatic working experiences, she joined Yamaguchi University in Japan and started her career as an administrator in 2013.

During the six years in her home institute, she worked for international affairs for four years and strategic planning and evaluation for two years. Then, she was determined to be transferred to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in Japan for her further advancement in 2019. She has been working for the Ministry for two years as a trainee in the Office of the Director-General for International Affairs (Japanese National Commission for UNESCO) and was in charge of UNESCO's educational and scientific programs.

Currently, Ai stays at Kent State University as a LEAP (The Long-term Education Administrators' Program) Scholar funded by the Japanese government to research higher education in the U.S. from various perspectives such as policies, institutional systems, strategies and future prospects of the U.S. higher education institutes to obtain ideas that can be applied in universities in Japan at the end of her stay. Specifically, she has interests in Institutional research, university evaluation and quality assurance, and systems and data in higher education administration.



FALL CIIE EVENTS



Also in celebration of International Day of Peace, the center hosted its annual soccer tournament at the fields on Loop Road. Over 40 students and staff from Kent State joined us at a truly international game of fútbol.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

This fall we continued our collaboration with the School of Peace and Conflict Studies by hosting a conference on Peace Education. Scholars and peace educators Dr. Barbara Wien from American University and Dr. Sylvestre Nzahabwanayo from the University of Rwanda described strategies for conflict and post-conflict education for peace.



RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

The center continues to highlight the research and cultures of our Aggarwal-Blackburn Visiting Scholars. This semester, Janara Baitugolova, a Fulbright scholar from Kyrgyzstan, presented her research on higher education assessment in the Kyrgyz Republic. Dr. Caroline Obiagali, a Fulbright scholar from Nigeria Defence Academy, presented an integrated critical thinking program for her university. We look forward to our scholars Ai Matsunaga, a scholar from Yamaguchi University, and Min Ho Kim, professor at Jeju National University in South Korea, to present on their research in the spring.

DURING INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK THIS YEAR...

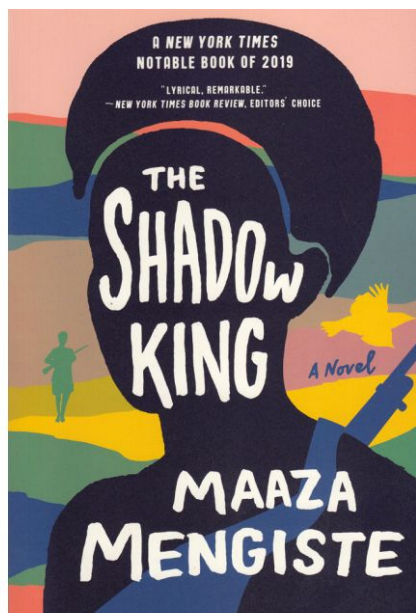
- CIIE collaborated with the Office of Diversity Outreach and Development to discuss the challenges of studying abroad
- Provided a pancake breakfast with the Office of Global Education for the campus' visiting scholars
- Aggarwal-Blackburn Visiting Scholar, Ai Matsunaga, presented a Cultural Dialog on Japan

UPCOMING EVENTS

FIFTH FULBRIGHT COHORT

JANUARY 2022

After winning the Fulbright TEA in Media Literacy grant, the center will be implementing the fifth cohort beginning January 2022. Scholars will take advantage of academic seminars, a teaching field experience in our local schools, meet with local friendship families and participate in civic and cultural events.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CONFERENCE

MARCH 8, 2022

On Tuesday, March 8, 2022, the center, in partnership with the School of Peace and Conflict Studies, will honor International Women's Day by hosting a conference on "Women and War." We have confirmed a talk by New York Times Notable Book of 2019 author Maaza Mengiste. Maaza will discuss her book, "The Shadow King," set in Mussolini's 1935 invasion of Ethiopia, which focuses on the women soldiers often left out of historical accounts of World War II.

We also look forward to previewing Dr. Molly Merryman's documentary "Coming Home: Fight for a Legacy." Dr. Merryman, along with Oscar-nominated film director Matia Karrel, will talk about how they are using the film to encourage peacetime roles that women and under-represented populations can play in civilian air careers.

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