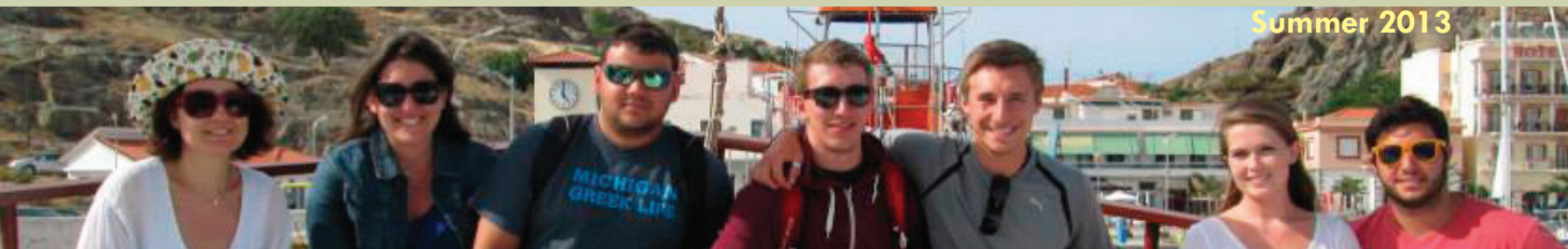


Summer 2013



## LEARNING MODERN GREEK THROUGH ETHNOGRAPHIC EXPLORATION AND OTHER STUDENT ADVENTURES IN GREECE

by Dr. Despina Margomenou

From Thessaloniki to the island of Lemnos to Chalkidiki to the deep forested north of Greece and the lake of Kastoria: for twenty three days in the spring semester, students of the Modern Greek Program explored Greek heritage, tourism, sustainable development, and new activist movements responding to the current crisis in an immersion course combining ethnography with language. Their study abroad program was connected to the ongoing ethnographic research project on alternative economies and activist movements in Thessaloniki and Lemnos that I am directing alongside my colleague, Dr. Faidra Papavasiliou from Georgia State University. For this study abroad experience, UM students engaged their language skills while training in ethnographic methods to create their own research projects, conduct their own ethnographies, and present the outcomes of their research. They regularly posted their observations, field notes, and original creative work inspired by the trip on the blog website for this study abroad program. The UM student team included six undergraduate minors and concentrators in Modern Greek with advanced level proficiency.

Our first, short stop was the city of Thessaloniki. The two days we spent there permitted us to get acclimated but also gave us an opportunity to start unraveling the complex history of this city, from prehistoric times to antiquity to the Byzantine and Ottoman periods to its more contemporary history. Thessaloniki has always been a cosmopolitan urban center, where a number of different ethnic, linguistic, and religious communities coexisted. Walking the streets of the city, we were able to get a feel of its university student vibe, shopping culture, and relaxed way of life. At Ladadika, the City Port, Athonos Square, Bit Bazaar, and Valaoritou Street, the complex, multicultural history of the city translated into a fusion of fragrances, flavors, and tastes, particular to the Greek north. These were combined with the sounds of different musical traditions: from authentic rebetiko at “Pringipessa” to Pontic dances at the annual expo promoting city tourism to Sephardic songs to tango and jazz. At Modiano and the other covered markets we discovered the city’s unique soundscapes. We attended the International Book Fair and visited a number of museums, the White Tower, medieval acropolis, Roman palace and forum, and the city’s most significant Byzantine monuments. In Thessaloniki we were joined by Dr. Faidra Papavasiliou and a group of seven graduate and senior undergraduate anthropology students from Georgia State University (GSU). The two groups then boarded the ferry for an eight hour long boat ride to Lemnos in the north Aegean.

There, on the wind-beaten (“ανεμώεσσα”) island where the mythical Hephaistos forged sacred weapons and Philoktetes was stranded, where Amazons ruled until the arrival of the Argonauts and the Kaveirian fire gods were worshipped by ancient mystics, we settled for most of our program’s duration. Bringing together UM Greek speaking students and GSU anthropology students in small groups, the first student project focused on mapping parts of the city of Myrina and on identifying topics of interest for individual research projects as well as locations for ethnographic observation and interviews. This initial map would become increasingly more elaborate as students, in their groups, and for their individual projects, added new layers of information. In ethnography, language learning is a methodological device. The process of learning the language in the field affords cultural immersion and intercultural understanding. Our program used this device: peer teaching was an inherent component both of student daily fieldwork and of daily Greek classes. UM students acted as culture specialists, they translated, and taught beginner level Modern Greek to GSU students who, in turn, helped them with all the new anthropological material and ethnographic methods.

All students attended lectures Dr. Papavasiliou and I offered on Greek heritage and tourism, globalization, the Greek crisis, and alternative economies. Prof. Giorgos Vassios (University of the Aegean) lectured on the food industry at local and global scales, and offered a hands-on class on Natura designated areas, their mapping, preservation, and protection. Alongside students from the University of the Aegean, we visited a family industry exporting local products. Additionally, we visited a number of family farms practicing traditional and organic production, the workshop of a local potter and artist, and a spa at a historically preserved ottoman bath that uses natural thermal springs and the local clay, “Lemnian earth,” for medical treatments. Students closely worked with our research collaborators on the island—members of local activist groups that practice sustainable farming and engage in seed exchange and other forms of alternative economy, and groups that focus on heritage and environmental preservation and protection. By the end of the field season individual student projects covered a wide range of topics: from uses of alternative medicine and traditional treatments, to community NGOs for youth sports, to island ecology and sustainable development, to the impact of the crisis on the island’s tourist industry.

Article continued on page 2...

# NOTES ON THE MODERN GREEK PROGRAM

## OUR GRADUATE STUDENTS IN COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

by Artemis Leontis, Associate Professor and Coordinator of Modern Greek

Four students are currently pursuing Ph.D.s in Comparative Literature at UM with a strong Modern Greek component. They are active in the conference circuit, giving papers and winning awards for their work. I am pleased to present them:

Ali Bolcakan arrived in Fall 2012 from Istanbul (B.A. Cultural Studies, Sabanci University; M.A. Comparative Languages & Literatures, Bilgi University). His interests are Ottoman and Armenian Studies, Turkish-German minority literatures, literary theory, and continental philosophy, and he is currently studying Modern Greek.

Etienne Charrière is from Geneva (M.A. Modern Greek and French, University of Geneva). His dissertation, entitled "'We Must Ourselves Write About Ourselves': The Transcultural Emergence of the Novel in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1840-1890," studies writers such as Stephanos Xenos, Christophoros Samartzides, Armenak Haykuni, and Tzerents, tracing through their work the emergence of novel-writing and novel culture at large in the three main literatures of the late Ottoman Empire: Greek, Armenian, and Ottoman-Turkish. His project pays special attention to the innovative ways with which authors of the three groups established a dialogue with texts emanating from the West. Last year, Etienne

presented several aspects of his ongoing research at professional conferences in the fields of translation studies, Modern Greek, and French studies in Oxford, Exeter, and Paris. He is the recipient of a Manoogian Simone Fellowship in Armenian, and is fluent in French, English, Modern Greek, Turkish, and Armenian.

María Hadjipolycarpou is from Nicosia (B.A. Modern Greek and Byzantine Studies, University of Cyprus, M.A. Comparative Literature, M.A. Higher Education Administration, Purdue University). Her dissertation, "Inter-subjective Histories in the Mediterranean: History and the Poetics of Self in Postcolonial Life-Writing," studies historical consciousness in postcolonial life-writing through select examples from the Mediterranean. Her work treats postcolonial life-writing as a genre with its own poetics and focuses on one defining feature: the inclusion of history in personal narratives and the importance this inclusion has for the representation of the self. The project makes life-writing examples from Cyprus its point of reference and compares them with life-writing in Palestine and Algeria. It also extends the comparison to what Derek Walcott called the "New World Mediterranean," the Caribbean. Maria has received the prestigious 2013-14 Institute for the Humanities Fellowship and

Summer 2013 Jean Monnet Fellowship to complete this work.

Will Stroebe, from Minnesota (B.A. English and Classical Studies, Grinnell College; M.A. Comparative Literature, Aristotle University, Thessaloniki), came to know Greece as a Grinnell Corps fellow (2004-2005). Now a Ph.D. candidate, he is beginning dissertation research on the history of the book in Greece and Turkey. His project emphasizes the book as a physical object, as a form of material mediation, as an archive, as a circulating commodity, and its place within the emerging national print networks of Greece and Turkey and the state apparatus that surrounds them. Greek works of particular importance for his research are the poetic productions of Constantine Cavafy, manuscript collections of Yannis Vlachoyannis, fiction of the Population Exchange (such as Elias Venezis's *Το νόυμερο 31328*), Melpo Axioti's *Το σπίτι μου*, and Aris Alexandrou's *Το κιβώτιο*. Over the next year, he will be conducting archival research in Athens, Istanbul, and Thessaloniki, focusing on newsprint, periodicals, multiple book editions, personal archives, and publishing records. To carry out this work, he has secured the International Dissertation Research Fellowship (IDRF), with financial support from the Mellon Foundation.

### Continued from Page 1...

### Learning Modern Greek Through Ethnographic Exploration

Still what stayed with us was the warm acceptance we received at every turn: from the mayor of Myrina, to our friend Giorgos who prepared home cooked meals with fresh vegetables every day at "Platanos." UM students were invited to give an interview in Greek for the local radio station "M.E.A.Σ. Lemnos" and were treated to an evening "class" of Lemnian folk dancing at Hagios Yannis. It was not all work of course: we visited museums, travelled to the island's major archaeological sites, climbed the path to the imposing medieval fort of Myrina, sailed around the island with a small sailing yacht, and took myriads of photographs of the spectacular sunset behind Mount Athos across the sea. One such spectacular evening, perched at the foot of the old fort, we all performed the play *Philoctetes* by Sophocles. After all this, it was not easy to leave Lemnos behind...

Back in Thessaloniki and after the GSU team departed, we discussed activism and its impact on a large, urban center with the head of two activist groups: "Parallaxi" and "Thessaloniki in a Different Way" (Θεσσαλονίκη Αλλιώς). This time our explorations of northern Greece took us further: we traveled to Vergina to visit the tomb of Phillip II, and from there all the way to Kastoria, at the northern tip of Greece. We then headed southeast to Chalkidiki and reached the very edge of the Cassandra Peninsula, where, high on a rocky promontory at sunset, we fondly remembered the island of Lemnos and the new friends we were leaving behind, there, somewhere across the Aegean.

The study abroad program was funded by a grant from the International Institute Experiential Learning Fund (IIE ELF) and from the Constantine A. Tsangadas Trust.





## THE MODERN GREEK KEY: REFLECTIONS FROM A GRADUATE

by Peter Hasiakos, UM Class of 2007 (BS), 2008 (MA)

On Thursday nights during my senior year of high school, I made the fifty-minute commute to a Chicago-area community college to take a course in Modern Greek. The course was hardly rigorous, but it helped kindle a small flame of interest that I had to learn the language.

Only after deciding to attend the University of Michigan did I learn that it was one of the handful of universities in the country that offered a program in Modern Greek studies. During my freshman year, fellow students encouraged me to enroll for a one hour per week conversation class during the winter term. After that course, I was hooked; I proceeded to take more courses, eventually earning a minor in Modern Greek studies.

Nearly a decade later, there are not many cobwebs forming on the foundation that I received through studies. Every day, some knowledge or skill is reactivated or built upon. The frequency of our class sessions provided many hours of personal interaction with our instructor, whose voice often still comes to my mind when, in conversation or reading, I encounter a grammatical phenomenon that we learned in class.

An education in Modern Greek is a key. But it might be one that opens doors that a person has not yet encountered. When I began my studies, I was a physics major considering a career in medicine or education. Thus a pragmatist might have deemed Greek an illogical choice for a minor. For many students, though, an undergraduate education is not just a pre-mapped trajectory that satisfies "requirements"; it is a journey that requires a kind of balance between steady focus and spontaneity. This experience is probably best summarized by a proverb in Old French that my organic chemistry professor had (and still has) in the signature of his emails. It reads: *Vaille Que Vaille Lors se Verra* ("One goes as one goes, then one shall see").

There is one particularly rewarding aspect of my studies that I have noticed. Comprehending Greek has allowed me to appreciate the personalities and ideas of Greek people in a more intimate way than before. If reading a work of literature in translation is subject to

imperfections, how much more is this true with people! Even more splendid than reading a Greek poem in the original is the experience of sitting and having a lengthy conversation with my grandmother, relative, or friend, in Greek.

At the same time, I must emphasize the tremendous benefit I have received from being able to read Greek texts. While working as a high school physics teacher for several years after graduating, I frequently read Greek Orthodox theological books, as well as the New Testament itself, which I was able to learn to read with the help of some tutoring. Furthermore, in serving as a chanter for my home parish, my familiarity with the ancient heritage of the language increased through reading the hymnological texts. Last year, I enrolled at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, where I began my Master of Divinity. It is here on campus that my former studies have proved invaluable. My knowledge not only afforded me exemptions from certain introductory courses, but more importantly, it allowed me to delve deeply into original texts of the Scriptures, Patristic texts—many of which are available in "bilingual" editions with the original text and modern Greek translation side-by-side—and a wealth of modern theological writings that have remained largely untranslated. This last category includes, for example, the erudite works of Saint Nektarios of Aegina, a twentieth century bishop, who, despite his poverty and being persecuted, managed to write extensively on a variety of topics, drawing on an impressive collection of sources.

Each student will have a different story. Some students may take a couple of classes in Modern Greek studies; others will go on to obtain a minor or major. I hope, though, that prospective and current students at U of M will realize the "key" that is available to them, because for me it opened countless doors.

I wish to thank those who taught and mentored me during my time at the university: Dr. Vassilis Lambropoulos, Dr. Artemis Leontis, Dr. Despina Margomenou (my primary instructor, from whose teaching I benefited greatly), and the late Traianos Gagos. I must also thank the local parish of St. Nicholas, where I was given encouragement and the opportunity to put my developing skills into practice. May your dedication and work continue to bear fruit for others as it did for me.

Κ Π ΚΑΡΑΦΗ  
PROFESSORSHIP IN MODERN GREEK  
ENDORSED BY THE FOUNDATION FOR MODERN GREEK STUDIES



C. P. Cavafy

**Vassilis Lambropoulos**  
C.P. Cavafy Professor,

Professor of Classical Studies &  
Comparative Literature

**Artemis Leontis**

Associate Professor of  
Modern Greek &  
Coordinator of Modern Greek Program,  
Newsletter Editor

**Despina Margomenou**

Lecturer III in Modern Greek /  
Research Associate, Kelsey Museum of Archaeology

**Sandra Andrade Chumney**

Dept. Assistant/Events Coordinator &  
Newsletter Designer

**Janet Crayne**

Head Librarian,  
Slavic & East European Division  
Hatcher Graduate Library

World Wide Web Address

<http://www.lsa.umich.edu/modgreek>

Regents of the University

Julia Donovan Darlow, Ann Arbor  
Laurence B. Deitch, Bingham Farms  
Denise Ilitch, Bloomfield Hills  
Olivia P. Maynard, Goodrich  
Andrea Fischer Newman, Ann Arbor  
Andrew C. Richner, Grosse Pointe Park  
S. Martin Taylor, Grosse Pointe Farms  
Katherine E. White, Ann Arbor  
Mary Sue Coleman (ex officio)

The University of Michigan, as an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding non-discrimination and affirmative action, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The University of Michigan is committed to a policy of non-discrimination and equal opportunity for all persons regardless of race, sex, color, religion, creed, national origin or ancestry, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, or Vietnam era veteran status in employment, educational programs and activities, and admissions. Inquiries or complaints may be addressed to the University's Director of Affirmative Action and Title IX/Section 504 Coordinator, 4005 Wolverine Tower, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1281, (734) 763-0235; TTY (734) 647-1388. For other University of Michigan information call (734)764-1817.

# STUDENT AWARDS, DEGREES, AND GRANTS



## Samantha Reardon, Recipient of the Calliope Papala Politou Modern Greek Senior Prize

Samantha Reardon received the Modern Greek Senior Prize, awarded in memory of Calliope Papala Politou, recognizing the most outstanding undergraduate senior who excels in the study of Modern Greek.

Samantha took Greek to fulfill her foreign language requirement and was surprised to find a niche, within the at first overwhelmingly large population of both students and staff at UM, where she felt like she fit. "Conquering the Greek language is a difficult task, but I always felt like I was able to go to my professors for help."

Samantha's courses in Greek Studies and International Studies helped her draw connections between cultures. She explains, "my International Studies degree focuses on Comparative Culture and Identity, and it was amazing to see how often the two would overlap. Of course, through diaspora, Greek culture has spread throughout the world but, more than that, I saw connections between Greek identity and other identities. It really made me think about and appreciate the diversity in the world in a way that I never had before."

### AWARDS

**Samantha Reardon**, Calliope Papala Politou Senior Prize

**Joseph Jozlin**, Modern Greek I Translation Award

**Maria Pliakas**, Modern Greek II Translation Award

**Colton Babladelis** (Minor in Modern Greek), Arthur and Mary Platsis Student Prize for Work in the Greek Legacy: for his collection of poems, *Written in Marble*

### 2013 GRADUATING CONCENTRATORS AND MINORS

**Takis Bletsis**, B.S., Neuroscience; Minor, Modern Greek. "I'll be attending Indiana University School of Medicine in the fall."

**Jaimee Kerhoulas** B.A., Modern Greek; International Studies. "After graduating in December I went to Orlando, Florida for a guest service operations internship with Walt Disney Company. Upon the conclusion of that internship in May I began working as a market research intern at Dwyer Instruments in Michigan City, IN and am currently interviewing for full-time jobs in the Chicago area."

**Alexander Melidis**, B.S.E., Industrial and Operational Engineering; Minor, Modern Greek. "In the fall I hope to move to New York City to pursue a career as a professional musician under the pseudonym Zander Michigan. I have just released a 14-song LP and am working on networking with people in the music industry. If you're interested in listening to my music, you can find it here: [www.soundcloud.com/zander-michigan](http://www.soundcloud.com/zander-michigan)."

**Samantha Reardon**, B.A., Modern Greek; International Studies. "My next steps after graduation are to try to gain real world experience that will hopefully translate on my resume into a career. Right now, I'm looking into joining the Peace Corps because I'd love to gain the kind of experience they would

be able to offer me. My career goals would include something like working with refugees."

**Andrew Simon** B.B.A., Business Administration; Minor, Modern Greek. "I will be doing management consulting with IBM in Chicago starting this September."

**Alexandros Syropoulos**, B.F.A., Jazz Studies; Secondary Teaching Certificate; Minor, Modern Greek. "I am currently performing and teaching music in Ann Arbor and Detroit. I plan to move to Los Angeles in the fall to pursue a career as a musician and composer. I was recently selected as a 2013 National Yamaha Young Artist winner."

**Jeffrey Vandervennet**, B.A., International Studies; Minor, Modern Greek. "I've been interning in Montana for the summer for a political research nonprofit. At the end of August, I'll be heading to China for a year to work for an NGO, teaching English, and participating in other community activities."

### STUDENT GRANTS FOR SUMMER STUDY, RESEARCH, AND INTERNSHIPS

**Colton Babladelis**, undergraduate pursuing B.S. in Anthropology and Program in the Environment with Minors in Modern Greek and Spanish, received a Constantine A. Tsangadas Trust grant to study anthropology-ethnography in the Field School directed by Dr. Despina Margomenou Thessaloniki/Limnos and ecology and lizards as biocontrol agents in a project led by Professor Johannes Foufopoulos (U-M School of Natural Resources) on Naxos.

**Joseph Jozlin**, undergraduate pursuing a B.S. in Modern Greek and Program in the Environment, received a Foundation for Modern Greek Studies (FMGS) grant to study the relationships between humans and the natural environment in the Aegean, specifically overgrazing by sheep and goats leading to loss of biodiversity and depletion of the services that nature delivers to humans. The project on Naxos was led by Professor Foufopoulos, with an international team of U.S., Greek (Dr.

Panayiotis Pafilis, U-Athens), and Israeli (Dr. Shai Meiri, Tel Aviv University) scientists.

**Alex Kiefer**, a graduate student pursuing a M.A. in the School of Public Health, received a grant from the Kalliopi Dontou Filis and Kenneth P. Mathews Fund and the Tsangadas Trust to support a summer internship in Athens in the University Research Institute of Psychological Health collaborative project assessing the mental health of Greek adolescents and university students during the current economic crisis.

**LJ Pavletic**, undergraduate pursuing a B.A. in Modern Greek and Political Science, received a FMGS grant for summer study in the Institute for Balkan Studies (IMXA) International Summer School of Greek Language, History and Culture.

**Maria Chrisa Pliakas**, undergraduate pursuing a B.S. in Anthropology and Evolutionary Biology and a Minor in Modern Greek, and **Holly Taylor**, undergraduate studying English and Modern Greek, both received Tsangadas Trust grants to study anthropology/ethnography in the Field School in Thessaloniki and Limnos directed by Dr. Margomenou.

### GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

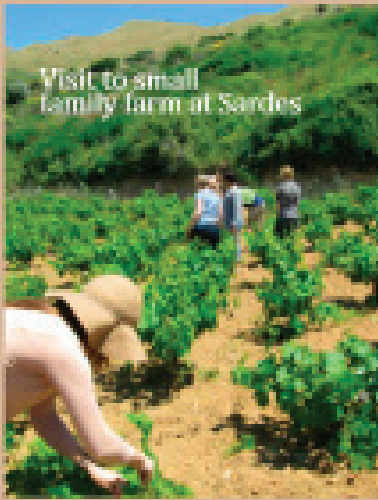
**Maria Hadjipolykarou** (Ph.D. Candidate in Comparative Literature) was awarded a UM Institute for the Humanities fellowship and Jean Monnet Summer Fellowship for research on her dissertation, "Inter-subjective Histories in the Mediterranean: History and the Poetics of Self in Postcolonial Life-Writing."

**William Stroebel**, (Ph.D. candidate, Comparative Literature) received the Mellon International Dissertation Research Fellowship (IDRF) for archival research in Thessaloniki, Athens, and Istanbul to prepare for writing his dissertation on the book within the emerging national print networks of Greece and Turkey and the state apparatus that surrounds them.

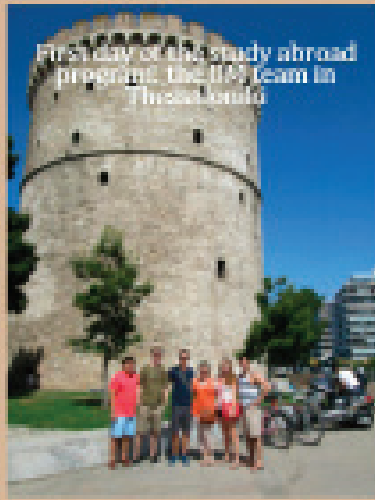
# MODERN GREEK'S 2013 STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM



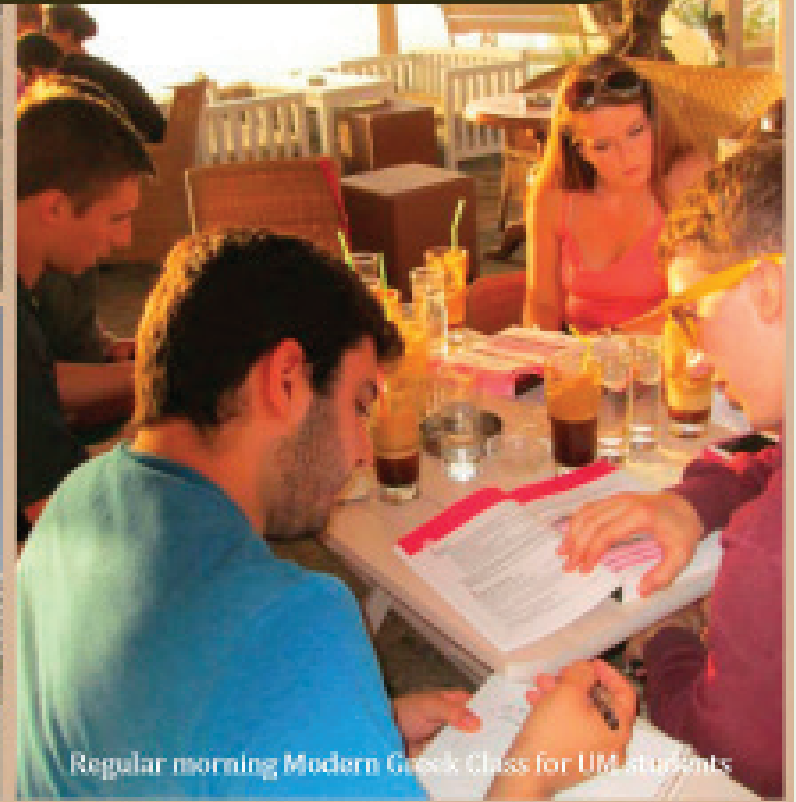
Visit to local potter, Kostasina Despoteri's studio "Lemnian Earth"



Visit to small family farm at Sardes



First day of the study abroad program, the UM team in Thessaloniki



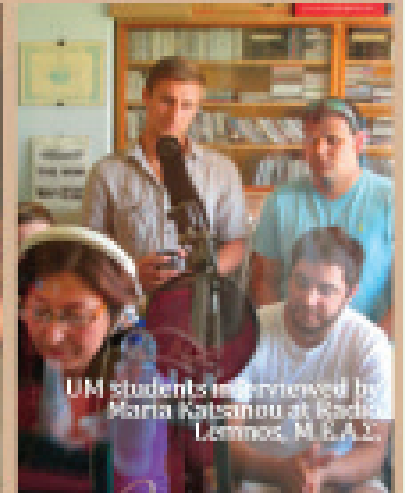
Regular morning Modern Greek Class for UM students



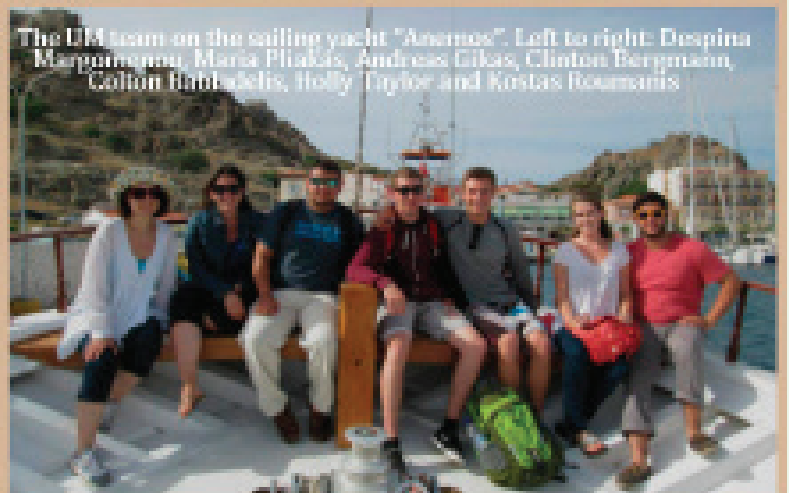
Discovering Byzantine art at Kastoria (Mavriotissa Monastery)



Learning the local Lemnian dance Pfitma at Hagios Yannis



UM Students interviewed by Maria Katsinou at Radio Lemnos, M.E.A.2.



The UM team on the sailing yacht "Anemos". Left to right: Despina Margariannou, Maria Pliakis, Andreas Gikas, Clinton Bergmann, Colton Haddadellis, Holly Taylor and Kostas Roumanis

# UPCOMING EVENTS

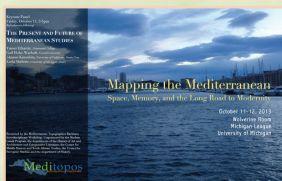


## Reptilian Mysteries in the Mediterranean: The Archaeology of Biodiversity September 20, Time and Place TBD

Despina Margomenou, lecturer III in UM's Modern Greek Program

Johannes Foufopoulos, Associate Professor in UM's School of Natural Resources and Environment

Opening lecture for the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology's exhibit, *Discovery! Excavating the Ancient World*.



## Mapping the Mediterranean: Space, Memory, and the Long Road to Modernity 3-5 PM, October 11-12, Wolverine Room, Michigan League, University of Michigan

This Keynote Panel is presented by the Mediterranean Topographies Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop and is co-sponsored by the Modern Greek Program. Speakers will include: Yasser Elhariry, Dartmouth College; Gail Holst-Warhaft, Cornell University; Sharon Kinoshita, University of California, Santa Cruz; and Karla Mallette, University of Michigan (chair).



## Queering Time and Affect: C.P. Cavafy and E.K. Sedgwick on Ethics

4 PM, October 23, 2175 Angell Hall, University of Michigan

Dimitris Papanikolaou, University Lecturer in Modern Greek and Fellow of St. Cross College, University of Oxford

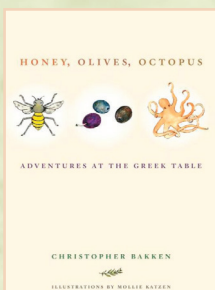


## Dead yet Alive! The Resurrection of Cappadocian (Asia Minor Greek)

7 PM, November 7, 2175 Angell Hall, University of Michigan

Mark Janse, BOFZAP Research Professor in Ancient & Asia Minor Greek at Ghent University and a Fellow of Harvard's Center for Hellenic Studies

In 2005 Hellenist and linguist Mark Janse discovered speakers of the Misiótika dialect of Cappadocian (Asia Minor Greek), a language until then believed to have died out in the 1960s. His work on Cappadocian has earned him a special status in Cappadocian communities, honorary memberships of Cappadocian societies and a documentary entitled Last Words (seriousFilm, 2013).



## A reading by Christopher Bakken of his latest book *Honey, Olives, Octopus: Adventures at the Greek Table*

7 PM, November 18, Literati Bookstore, 124 E. Washington St., Ann Arbor 48104

Christopher Bakken, Associate Professor, Department of English, Allegheny College

For more on these events, visit our website: [www.lsa.umich.edu/modgreek](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/modgreek)