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After graduating from Calvin with a double major in Spanish and English, I continued on the academic path. My experience studying abroad in Denia in 2004 had inspired a love for Spain and its culture, and an interest in Spanish literature that I wanted to explore further. I did so during my MA at the University of Georgia, Athens, and then went on to a PhD at Boston University. In 2011 I received the incredible blessing of being awarded a Fulbright Grant to Spain, which allowed me to live in Madrid for a year, researching my dissertation and whenever possible trying to "aprovechar": take advantage of the firsthand experience of Spain I had enjoyed so much as an undergrad. Now back from Spain, in the fall of 2012 I am starting in a faculty position in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Yale University, where I look forward to furthering my research and sharing my love of Spanish culture with the students in my classes.

JULIE HERRMANN

When I started at Calvin I knew two things: I had no idea what I wanted to do as a career, but I wanted to study Spanish. I ended up double majoring in Speech Pathology and Spanish. In order to do both, I spent a semester abroad in Spain. It was a turning point in how I viewed the world that left me with a hunger for traveling the world. Of course as any responsible Speech Pathologist, once I graduated Calvin I went straight to grad school to finish my master’s in Speech Pathology and then jumped right into the workforce at a hospital. Few and far between were my interactions with Spanish speaking patients, but each time I would hear the language it would stir something in me and remind me of my passion for the language that I discovered at Calvin. Every six months my church, Vineyard North in Grand Rapids, sends short term missions teams to Costa Rica to partner with another Vineyard church located in a very poor neighborhood outside of the capital city. In June of 2010 I decided to go on one of the teams. To make a long story short, I came home from the trip, applied to work as an intern in the community, quit my stable job at the hospital, and moved to Costa Rica that September. What was supposed to be a one year internship working for the church has turned into a two year life-changing adventure. During my time at Calvin I had no idea what God held for me in the future. I only knew the passions He had placed in me. If you still have no idea what you want to do as a career, that’s okay. Keep following the passions God has already placed in your heart. You never know how He will choose to use them in the future. Please feel free to follow my adventures in Costa Rica through my blog: mylifeintupperware.blogspot.com.

LESLE HARKEMA

After graduating from Calvin with a double major in Spanish and English, I continued on the academic path. My experience studying abroad in Denia in 2004 had inspired a love for Spain and its culture, and an interest in Spanish literature that I wanted to explore further. I did so during my MA at the University of Georgia, Athens, and then went on to a PhD at Boston University. In 2011 I received the incredible blessing of being awarded a Fulbright Grant to Spain, which allowed me to live in Madrid for a year, researching my dissertation and whenever possible trying to "aprovechar": take advantage of the firsthand experience of Spain I had enjoyed so much as an undergrad. Now back from Spain, in the fall of 2012 I am starting in a faculty position in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Yale University, where I look forward to furthering my research and sharing my love of Spanish culture with the students in my classes.
Hi there Spanish Department!

Elise and Julia here ('10), reporting from Central America! Both of us have great memories of Calvin and the Spanish Department, as we took almost all our Spanish classes together and bonded over many things from studying for grammar quizzes in 301 and Grammar Interim, to deciding what to write for our Capstone projects. Both of us studied abroad in Honduras at different times but we connected over our love for Central America and our crazy adventures there.

The two of us returned to Central America after graduation and are currently serving here in different capacities.

Elise has been working for the past two years in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, sponsored by the Mennonite Central Committee to work at the Association for a More Just Society (http://ajs-us.org/). She works mostly in communications, sharing Honduran justice workers' stories with supporters, and planning and hosting exchange events, like learning trips, academic seminars, and conferences. She especially enjoys how she can connect people all over the world with the exciting work being done in Honduras because of her Spanish and English language abilities.

Julia has been serving with the Peace Corps in Costa Rica as a TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) volunteer for the past two years and is planning on extending a third year. She works with local English teachers at the elementary school as well as providing youth and adult English classes to community members no longer in school. She also enjoys working on secondary projects with local counterparts. She most recently organized the very first 5k race in her community! She lives in the urban-rural community of Upala near the Nicaraguan border. Spanish obviously came in handy for integration into the community, the school, and with local counterparts, though all the Honduran slang learned in Tegus had to be switched to local Tico vocabulary. :)

We've managed one visit so far, as Elise happened to have a conference in Costa Rica! Still working on the reverse visit.

We are both extremely grateful for all we learned through Calvin’s Spanish Department and all the support we received from professors and department staff (shout out to Nora! hehe).

Saludos y Bendiciones,

Elise Ditta and Julia Riddell
My name is Brittany Roode and I graduated in 2011 with a major in Spanish, minor in Math and a focus on Education. I’m about to begin my second year of teaching high school math at the International School of Tegucigalpa, in the capital city of Honduras. It is a bilingual school, so I do teach in English; however, I am surrounded everyday by Spanish. It is my students’ native languages, and although they are supposed to speak English all the time, they more often than not speak Spanish. I take as many opportunities as I can to speak in Spanish with them and have enjoyed learning the colloquialisms of Honduran Spanish. In order to intentionally use Spanish, I have also attended Spanish-speaking churches and spent time worshiping at the Micah Project, a home for boys off the streets.

Throughout my time in Honduras, I have frequently remembered my time with the Spanish Department at Calvin. While studying, I developed a passion for linguistics, and have found myself recalling what I learned about the different dialects that are present in Central and South America. I also find myself thinking back on being a conversation group leader and the strategies I learned, such as finding simpler words to use or other ways to describe an unfamiliar word. These strategies have been helpful as I teach in my students’ second language.

A few words of advice for current and future students: Get out and explore the world! Don’t be afraid to move to a strange and foreign place. There is so much to discover and always something new to learn.

If you have another major or minor, such as education, see if you can find a job that uses your skills in a Spanish-speaking country. There is so much need and you will be extremely blessed.

Since I graduated, I’ve been working at a web marketing agency in Atlanta as a web developer. I don’t get too many excuses to use my Spanish, but a few of my Spanish-speaking coworkers and I try to talk about web development in Spanish every now and then. We often run into vocabulary roadblocks, though. I met my now-husband, Ryder, in Atlanta and we just celebrated our third anniversary!
Una cosa que he aprendido este semestre fue sobre la gente. Me he dado cuenta que toda la gente es similar, no obstante la barrera de la lengua. Todos nosotros sentimos como todo ser humano, vivimos un día a la vez, y disfrutamos las cosas simples en nuestra vida. No estoy diciendo que no tengamos nuestras diferencias. ¿Tenemos muchas! Pero todas las diferencias son necesarias para que nuestras vidas puedan ser más divertidas, ¿verdad? Creo que aunque tenemos diferentes culturas y orígenes, nos hacemos mejores personas mutuamente. Al igual que se dice en la Biblia, cada uno de nosotros debe complementar y edificar a los demás.

Con estas reflexiones, me he dado cuenta que todo lo que necesito hacer es ser yo misma. Debo ser real porque es lo que nos habla. A través de mis experiencias en la Biblioteca de Cook, donde hice service learning este semestre, he aprendido que las diferencias pueden ser buenas. Aunque a veces nuestras diferencias pueden ser causas de malentendidos, después de entenderlas, creo que pueden ser lo que nos enseña, y lo que nos ayuda a aprender de y entender a las otras personas.

Por todo esto, en el futuro próximo, pienso conocer a y hablar con mucha gente diferente de mí. Por supuesto voy a ser una persona de mente abierta y tratar de ser sensible a las perspectivas de otras personas. Por mis experiencias de este semestre, seguramente voy a recordar que yo también tengo algo que puedo aprender de los demás, y tal vez especialmente la gente de otras culturas. En realidad, yo sé con seguridad todos nosotros tenemos muchas cosas que podemos aprender de los otros. La verdad simplemente es que nunca dejamos de aprender, lo cual es bueno, ¿no?

En este año escolar, yo escribí dos trabajos de investigaciones del honor. El primer proyecto del honor fue la comparación entre las obras de Bartolomé de Las Casas, quien escribió varias obras históricas durante los siglos quince y dieciséis sobre las expediciones de los españoles al “Nuevo Mundo” en las Américas, y del “Inca” Garcilaso de la Vega, quien era el mestizo de mitad español y mitad inca y escribió los comentarios sobre la historia y la vida de los incas del Perú. Para la comparación, usé *Apologetica historia sumaria de las gentes destas Indias* de Las Casas y los *Comentarios reales de los Incas* del “Inca” Garcilaso. Ambos escribieron sobre los incas de Perú, pero los dos diferenciaron porque en el caso de Las Casas, no tenía ninguna experiencia personal aunque tenía interés a los indígenas. Puesto que no pude lograr de llegar a Perú, Las Casas escribió sobre los incas basada en otros documentos, mientras la obra del “Inca” Garcilaso es de sus experiencias durante su vida en Perú y se incluye más explicaciones diversas sobre la vida de los Incas.

A través de este proceso de la investigación, pude obtener muchos conocimientos desde la historia peruana hasta la vida de los incas en diferente áreas, así como la medicina y la música de esta época. Además de escribir este trabajo extensivo, tuve la oportunidad de dar una presentación en “Grand Rapids Honors Conference” basada en este trabajo. Este tiempo me faciné porque no solamente compartí esta interesante comparación con los estudiantes, profesores y otros escolares presentes, sino también pude interrelacionar con ellos durante el tiempo de las preguntas.

En el caso del semestre pasado, escribi otro extensivo proyecto del honor con el enfoque en la Revolución Mexicana reflejada en la novela *Los de abajo* de Mariano Azuela en otros cuentos revolucionarios. Entre varios autores mexicanos quienes escribieron sobre esta revolución tan histórica, Azuela es notado por reflejar las realidades menos conocidas de esta época caótica, como la confusión social y político del país, usando los diálogos oídos en los caminos en este tiempo. Azuela usa el protagonista Demetrio de esta novela para representar la realidad pesimista de la sociedad, donde no existe ningún solución a las minorías en contra de los federalistas. Además de esta novela, usé tres cuentos revolucionarios: “Cuatro soldados sin 30-30” por Nellie Campobello, “Uno a media calle” por Gregorio López y Fuentez y “Dios en la tierra” de José Revueltas. Estas novelas también se tratan de los problemas sociales durante la revolución, así como el hambre, la indiferencia, la brutalidad, el sufrimiento de los soldados, la opresión a los indios, y las tensiones que existían entre el pueblo y el gobierno. Por la razón de que estas novelas complementaron unos a otros y juntos formaron una ilustración más concreta sobre la Revolución mexicana, este proceso del estudio me ofreció mejor entendimientos sobre esta primera revolución histórica de Latinoamérica en diferentes perspectivas. Trabajar el proyecto del honor fue un desafío a lograr la excelencia académica, pero con los profesores del departamento de Español, divertí a estudiar en un nivel más profundo, y ahora, estoy muy emocionada de continuar a investigar en otros temas que otros no han estudiado.
Vicente Izquierdo, a pastor of the Christian Reformed Church in Cuba, used his station wagon as an ambulance during the Battle of Girón. He rushed back and forth from the beach, picking up wounded Cuban soldiers and bringing them to a place where they could receive medical help. He aided the Cuban defenders against the U.S.-supported invaders. This story, told by Ester Ordóñez, depicts a different perspective of the battle also known as the Bay of Pigs Invasion.

This is one of the real-life stories that Cubans in Cuba and the U.S. have told Marilyn Bierling as she interviewed them for her Cuban Oral History Project. In 2011, Bierling had interviewed 38 Cuban refugees or people with strong ties to Cuban refugees from Grand Rapids, Miami, and Jagüey Grande, Cuba. She worked in hopes of finding out why the CRC specifically attracted Cuban refugees and how these new members have changed the CRC. She wanted to record these memories before they became too elderly and the memories were lost forever. This past summer I worked with Professor Bierling as a part of the McGregor Fellowship program to translate and transcribe these interviews.

Before working on this project and learning more about the CRC in Cuba and Cuban history in general, I had never thought about the presence of the CRC in Cuba. However, when Professor Bierling showed me a video of a CRC service in Cuba that was packed with believers praising God with their voices, I realized that I was mistaken in thinking of the CRC as only present in the U.S. and Canada. This project has opened my eyes to work that God is doing in Cuba and the presence he has there.

By listening to these interviews and reading other articles and books about the CRC in Cuba and Cuban refugees here in the U.S., I have learned so much. These people have so many stories to tell. Elsa Cortina tells of the beginnings of the Spanish Department at Calvin. Sara Lima talks about her husband, Erelio Martínez, and his life as a CRC pastor and administrator in Cuba. Carol Boersma describes the work of the Good Samaritan Center in Miami, Florida. Carlos Tápanes shares his experiences about his journey from Cuba and how he had to rely on the Lord during difficult times. Each interview provides one person’s story, but individually and together, they create a personal and descriptive history of the CRC in relation to Cuba.

The exciting thing is that these interviews will be available in Heritage Hall so that the memories and perspectives of those people will be preserved for a long time, and so that important parts of the history of the CRC will be documented. But more importantly, these testimonies will be saved for future Christians as examples of God’s faithfulness to his people.
You may have heard that Calvin has a new fall semester program in Arequipa, Peru. In August 2011, 18 excited and nervous students flew down to Lima and then on to Arequipa to meet their host families and enjoy the big birthday bash that the city of Arequipa throws every August 15. On the 16th, bright and early, the Universidad Católica San Pablo welcomed us to their campus and the semester was launched.

All of the students lived with Peruvian families and treasured the opportunity to see Arequipan society from the inside out. They learned a great deal about the way the Catholic community lives out its faith and about how love and kindness are shown within Arequipan families. They experienced the Peruvian university classroom by enrolling in regular San Pablo classes with Peruvian students, in addition to Calvin classes taught by the director and by Peruvian professors. A big plus at San Pablo was the chance to participate in extracurricular activities like folk dancing, judo, volleyball, guitar lessons, basketball, and choir. We also organized conversation exchanges with San Pablo students, half an hour in Spanish and half an hour in English. Some students were able to observe medical and psychological practices at a local clinic or to volunteer at a school or at a home for girls.

Peru is a very diverse country with a rich historical and cultural heritage, and our excursions really helped us see that. We held Sunday worship on the rim of the Colca Canyon, deeper than the Grand Canyon, with huge condors wheeling and floating on air currents below us. We navigated Lake Titicaca, visiting the Uros on their floating islands made of reeds. We hiked around the always magnificent Machu Picchu, set among lushly green and dizzyingly steep mountains. We toured the enormous city of Lima with its wonderful museums and took motorboats out from Paracas to get a closer look at sea lions, penguins, and pelicans.

If you ask several Peru 2011 students about their semester, you will get a variety of responses. Some of them gained a tremendous appreciation for their Peruvian family, which shaped their dreams for their own future family in unexpected ways. Some of them became keenly conscious of how a traditional yet modern society can create difficult situations and choices for women or for the poor. Some, like the student who assisted the university’s choir director, discovered gifts and talents they had not fully realized up till then. And all of them became much more interculturally competent and more fluent in Spanish. We are all glad we had the opportunity to spend four months in Arequipa, and the Spanish Department is very excited about this new and promising program.
Es la primera vez que la Universidad de Calvin College de Estados Unidos desarrolla una pasantía en Perú. Luego de un proceso de evaluación de casi 3 años a universidades en 4 países de Sudamérica: Argentina, Chile, Ecuador y Perú, seleccionaron a la Universidad Católica San Pablo como el centro donde sus alumnos se formarán durante un semestre académico. 18 estudiantes estadounidenses llegaron para iniciar su pasantía este martes.

“Quiero aprender más español, hacer amigos, aprender la cultura. Siempre quise visitar Sudamérica. Voy a llevar clases de español, arte y cultura”, indicó Bethany Schuitema, alumna de la carrera de Educación de Calvin College.

En el caso de la alumna de la carrera de Enfermería, Hilary Banning, esta pasantía le será muy útil para aprender mejor el español y así mejorar la comunicación con los pacientes hispanos a los que atiende. Del mismo modo el alumno, Martín Ávila, tomó la pasantía porque considera que es una buena opción para reforzar su español y conocer más de la cultura de Perú. Él estudia Educación en Calvin College.

Dianne Marie Zandstra, directora del Programa de Calvin College en la UCSP, indicó que se eligió a la Universidad Católica San Pablo, por su variado programa académico, su modo de enseñanza que prioriza la calidad a la cantidad, y una coincidencia entre ambas universidades que es muy importante es que tienen como base en su labor, la visión cristiana.

Los alumnos son de diversas carreras y años. Entre las carreras de la que provienen están: Educación, Negocios, Asistencia Social, Enfermería, Medicina. Ellos tendrán cursos exclusivos pero también llevarán materias afines con los alumnos de la UCSP, además de cursos de lingüística, historia y cultura peruana.

Esta mañana se realizó la ceremonia de recepción a los alumnos de Calvin College, quienes fueron recibidos por el director de Relaciones Internacionales de la UCSP, Bradley Silva, el pro rector, Alonso Quintanilla Pérez – Wich y el vicerrector de la UCSP, José Corrales-Nieves.

Cabe mencionar que como parte del programa no sólo se ha elaborado una currícula especial para los pasantes, sino también, la UCSP se ha encargado de conseguirles un hogar donde vivirán estos seis meses.
Since it was Calvin’s first year studying abroad in Oviedo, Spain, no one quite knew what to expect for the first semesters there. We greatly enjoyed the city and its charm, and we hope that future Calvin groups studying there will also develop a fondness for Oviedo just like we did. Nearly everything about the new location was marvelous, but the frequent rain there was something we probably could have been able to live without!

Thankfully, the bad weather did not keep us from having a phenomenal stay in Oviedo. Just like previous semester abroad programs in Dénia, our groups connected with gracious host families and we were warmly welcomed into a Christian church in the city, la Iglesia Evangélica. We were able to make connections in those places that we hope to maintain for years to come.

We found that classes at the university were actually easier than classes in the United States—even with the language barrier!—and were overjoyed that the homework load was also lower there. There may have been struggles with communication at first (or throughout most of the semester for some of us), but we soon learned that trying different types of Asturian cheeses or going out dancing or simply chatting with a friend over café con leche were things we could all easily do and enjoy. Yes, there were still some challenges, like our Calvin classes (in which we were subjected to much higher expectations than our other classes!) or deciding where to travel during the weekend or determining how much money was wise to spend on souvenirs. But these challenges were met and overcome during our time in Oviedo.

The new location in Oviedo offers some opportunities that simply weren’t available at the old location in Dénia. The most significant difference is in curriculum. This year, in addition to our Calvin classes, we were privileged to study with many other international students at la Casa de las Lenguas, a language school that is part of the university. Both semesters’ students were also able to enroll directly in classes at the University of Oviedo and attend classes with Spanish students.

The University offers a limited number of classes in English which were ideal for students on the Core Language program, and Advanced students could challenge themselves in an authentic university class taught by and for Spaniards. These classes were fantastic opportunities to get to know new people and we were able to develop meaningful relationships there as well.

We also had many new places to explore since we were in a completely different autonomous community of Spain—Asturias! We visited the town of Ribadesella, where the Core students were able to kayak the Rio Sella and both groups visited the Tito Bustillo caves to view cave art that is 30,000 years old! We loved visiting Oviedo’s neighboring city Gijón to go the beach or to go surfing. We also found that simply taking the bus through Asturias was always a delight because the mountainous countryside is simply breathtaking. Even in our home base, Oviedo, we found that there is so much history to be discovered. For example, on the way up Mount Naranco to see the statue of El Cristo, there are two Pre-Romanesque churches, Santa María del Naranco and San Miguel de Lillo, that are hundreds of years old. As a striking contrast, there is a modern work in the city that was designed and built by the well-known architect Santiago Calatrava that opened about a year ago, with a shopping mall, government offices, and a hotel. It’s such a huge contrast, but that made it all the more fascinating for us to learn about!

In the end, it was a tremendous joy to experience so many new things in Spain yet still be able to praise the same God we worship in the United States and at Calvin College. We were able to see more of His glorious creation and meet His children in Spain and all over Europe. Although we may seem different to each other, we were all created by the same Father. To be able to realize something like that while in a different country and while surrounded by such amazing creation was an enormous blessing to us all.
Yesterday, I went to mass at a Catholic church instead of the Protestant church I normally attend. Spain is built on Catholicism, so I figured it’d be good to experience a mass. I’m glad I went, but it was very hard to understand because the high ceilings create a huge echo and I’m unfamiliar with the Catholic tradition. My mind began to wander and I wished the priest was Pastor Mary and the huge cathedral the cozy Calvin chapel instead. For some reason, one of the first chapel/LOFT services I went to my freshman year came to mind. I don’t remember the exact context of the sermon, but I clearly recall Pastor Mary saying “Yes! And…” Yes, I will participate in this club and I will join your Bible study, or something along those lines. All that matters is that her voice and that phrase have not left my mind.

I’ve been in Oviedo more than a month already. Though I still have months left, I already feel like time is slipping away. Before I know it, I’ll be back home wishing I could relive this experience. So, I decided to make “Yes! And…” my new philosophy for the rest of the semester.

My goal in this is to take advantage of every opportunity offered to me here and make the most out of every day. There are (too many) days when I want nothing more than to stay in my warm bed and hang around the house with Bobi, my mamá’s adorable dog. It’s pretty awful walking around the city in the cold, especially when it’s rainy. Nothing about this climate encourages an active lifestyle. Add to the lousy weather plenty of homework to keep me occupied and the Internet with endless distractions and I instantly have one delightfully lazy Saturday.

But that’s not why I’m here. I’m here to explore and find adventure. I’m here to make this the experience of a lifetime. So as long as I’m healthy, I’m going for it! Sure, I know that I can’t be on the move all the time. But “yes” to new opportunities is my new favorite word. (Of course, this doesn’t involve me saying yes to everything - I’m being adventurous, not careless.)

So far, yes has led me to some cool places! I started taking French lessons from a woman I met at an English-Spanish exchange. I’ve always wanted to learn the language and Alicia, who is a French teacher, offered to give me lessons if I helped her with her English. It’s not easy but I’m excited to hopefully learn the basics!

I said yes a hike to Pico Llosoriu in the neighboring town of Mieres on Saturday with three other students and Professor Slagter. It was the first sunny day all week and the walk was just gorgeous. Just challenging enough and very manageable. When we got to the top, we could see a 360° view of the larger snow-covered mountains, los Picos de Europa. There were horses and donkeys grazing on the side of the mountain where we stopped to eat lunch. It was absolutely perfect. In that moment, I was just overcome with happiness. There is something so exhilarating about hiking. It’s the perfect high. The views brought me right back to Colorado and reminded me of how much I miss it.

Other highlights from the week include my first trip to the market, meeting my mama’s grandson, starting Bible study and watching the Calvin-Hope basketball game. We watched it on a projector in the church and had a blast, although it would’ve been great to see a win!

This week will be busy with our first paper and second exam. But I don’t want to let homework take over my life anymore. I think I’m finally starting to learn that happiness comes from time spent doing the things you love with the ones you love and praising the God who IS love. A solid GPA can never give me that same satisfaction. I love learning and I’m by no means disregarding my studies, but I want to start to gain the knowledge that doesn’t come from a textbook and can’t be graded. The kind of knowledge that comes from experiences!
The first day we drove into Santa Lucía, a small municipality on the top of one of the many mountains surrounding Tegucigalpa, Honduras, I was elated to be seeing new people, smelling new smells, and hearing new sounds. The park in the middle of the town was large and clean with an Aztec-ian feel to the steps leading up to the giant cross overlooking the country’s capital down in the valley below us. The roads were a conglomeration of stones which made for a bouncy ride, the buildings rose and fell to different heights as they were built wherever they could have been built on the mountain top, and the stray, skeleton dogs chased our packed busito (van) as we bumped and banged our way to Señora Alba Luz’s house where we ate our first Honduran meal. Living in Santa Lucía was an adventure. We discovered the twists and turns of the stony roads, learned to wake up to roosters and donkeys outside of our doors, and navigated the streams of Honduran culture with new friends, new foods, and a new lifestyle.

As the semester continued and we settled into our homes and families in Santa Lucía, we began to make friends with some of the people our age that either also attended one of the two universities in Tegucigalpa or worked. After a long day of classes in the city, we would meet up with them in the café del pueblo, located in the center of Santa Lucía, to socialize and maybe even ask for help with our homework. Their friendship was una gran bendición [a great blessing] because we had friends to root for during one of Santa Lucía’s soccer league competitions ¡Vamos, Reinery! or we had somebody to have a good conversation with about Honduras, Spanish, classes, religion, or life. They gave us a larger perspective of their culture and their culture’s values, and we learned so much more from them than we would have learned on our own as a group of white cultural outsiders.

Living in Honduras had its challenges. Because the majority of us were blonde-haired and blue-eyed, and all of us were white, we stood out like sore gringa thumbs. The media in Honduras was largely influenced by the United States, with TV shows, movies, and music giving many in Honduras the impression that women from the U.S. are sexually loose and love to party. Already in the culture itself, some men shout out at women they find attractive (they are called piropos) and we experienced the cat calls and the stares daily. We were driven to and from Santa Lucía and Tegucigalpa by our dedicated conductor, Señor Rolando. We could walk alone in daylight, depending on where we were going, but we mostly walked in groups for safety reasons, and we especially needed chaperones after dark. Internet was hard to come by and our pre-paid phone minutes ran out quickly. We learned through first-hand experience the value of safety in society and how that affects independence—of which we were learning to live without.

Leaving Santa Lucía, and Honduras, was hard. In our five months there, we had built deep relationships with our families, with our friends, and even with our professors. There was so much we still wanted to experience and learn, and we didn’t know when we would see our dear friends again—they had become a large part of our lives and our identities. Living in Santa Lucía was, in a sense, a beautiful mess. We bumped and banged to the rhythm of a new and unfamiliar territory, but found joy in our communities and in our experiences. We learned how to navigate the winding roads with a little help along the way. Santa Lucía became home and, for many of us, it will be a part of who we are for the rest of our lives.
Prof. Bierling’s areas of research and publication include Phoenician archaeology in Spain, immigration reform, and most recently the history of Cubans in the Christian Reformed Church, an ethnographic project including videotaped interviews collected in SW Michigan, Miami, and Cuba and transcribed and translated with the help of McGregor students Elena Brubaker and Julie Busscher.

In the last two years Prof. Clevenger has presented at three conferences on topics of literature and culture. In November she will present on “Resistance during the Franco years.” She is also preparing a Christian Engagement project, grown out of the Christian Engagement workshop at Calvin, to use in a new cross-cultural engagement course which she will teach when she directs the semester in Spain during the spring of 2013.

Prof. Miller presented a paper in Argentina (summer, 2010) on the literary production (poems, short stories) included in 19th century Afro-Argentine newspapers. He continues to edit a collection of short stories that Argentineña Díaz Lozano published in Guatemalan and Honduran newspapers from 1936 until 1975 (80 plus stories).

Professors Pyper and Slagter worked with McGregor Fellow Katie Van Zanen during the summer of 2012 to investigate students’ language acquisition and spiritual/cultural engagement during Calvin’s Spanish semesters abroad via survey, language testing and follow-up interviews. In 2010 they published a study guide to accompany David Smith’s Learning from the Stranger.

Prof. Rodriguez is working on research with a focus on teachers’ language proficiency and knowledge of language teaching pedagogy in Spanish language immersion school settings. The results of this study will provide insights into teacher preparedness and the impact of such in the classroom.

Prof. Slagter spent last year directing the core and the advanced Semester in Spain programs. She has recently been appointed as editor of The Journal of Christianity and Foreign Languages. [See M. Pyper for a description of several joint projects.]

Prof. TenHuisen studies the circulation of early modern New World knowledge. His research explores alterity, self representation and religious ideology in Iberian colonial narratives, as well as their translations in northern Europe. His recent publications have been on the English, Dutch & German editions of Mendes Pinto’s Peregrinação and the "Protestant Agenda" of the De Bry series India occidentales.
Prof. Tigchelaar continues to work with sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Hispanic nuns, focusing on their living conditions, social-spiritual milieu and literary output. This work joins that of other scholars who are interested in the lives and work of the most prolific Early Modern Spanish women: those who lived in the convents. Last year, Prof. Tigchelaar published a book review on Bienvenido Morales’ Otra lectura del ‘Quijote’: Don Quijote y el elogio de la castidad. She also wrote an article “Puesto un muro en este prado ameno”: Cecilia del Nacimiento’s Pastoral Drama as Shepherding Space,” scheduled for publication in Crítica hispánica in fall of 2012. She is currently at work editing a volume on the topic “Viajes reales e imaginarios.” This volume will comprise articles related to the topic from several fields, and is scheduled for publication in the fall of 2012. She has also been invited to contribute an article to a volume on emotions in the Medieval period, and will write on the topic of eros and caritas in mystical texts, and will read an early version of this article at a conference this coming fall. Prof. Tigchelaar has also recently submitted an English translation of a poem, “Veles e vents,” by Medieval Valencian troubadour Ausiàs March for publication.

Pablo Villalta

Prof. Villalta is the current director for the Spanish Semester in Honduras program. His current research is entitled "The Use of Error Analysis as a Tool to Identify Problems in the Written Spanish of Garifuna Students in the Centro Básico Rodolfo Rojas". The main objective is to identify possible causes for the poor outcomes students have when writing in Spanish.

Dianne Zandstra

Prof. Zandstra currently directs the Semester in Peru program. She presented a paper at the North American Christian Foreign Language Association Conference (March 2012) on “Alterity and Identity in Deep Rivers and After the Feast Day.”
Prof. Lamanna is a new Assistant Professor in Calvin’s Spanish Department. He completed his BA at Wake Forest University, K-12 Teacher Licensure in Spanish at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and an MA and PhD in Linguistics and Spanish (Hispanic Linguistics) at Indiana University. Professor Lamanna’s academic interests include Spanish in the United States, language and dialect contact, Colombian Spanish, sociolinguistics, dialectology, Spanish syntax, second language acquisition, and foreign language pedagogy. He recently presented papers at the second Spanish Linguistics in North Carolina conference in Wilmington, NC and at the NACFLA (North American Christian Foreign Language Association) 2012 conference in Santa Barbara, CA. He also published a chapter for the book Colombian Varieties of Spanish entitled “Second Person Singular Pronoun Use during Closed Role Plays by Colombians in the North Carolina Piedmont Triad”. Professor Lamanna enjoys singing, dancing, reading, traveling with his wife, and listening to good music (Christian, Latin, 80’s pop, and classical). He studied abroad in Bogotá, Colombia, has visited southern Spain, and will be co-leading Calvin’s Interim in Yucatán, Mexico, in January 2013. His wife is an architect from Bogotá, and they have extensive ties to the Hispanic communities of Winston-Salem, North Carolina and Bloomington, Indiana.

Prof. Shkatulo is another new Assistant Professor in Calvin’s Spanish Department. She received her PhD at Indiana University. Professor Shkatulo’s interests include 19th-20th century Spanish and Latin American Travel Literature, Transatlantic studies, and Gender studies. She is currently exploring identity issues in Spanish and Spanish American travel literature. During 2011-2012 she presented a paper on Clorinda Matto de Turner’s travelogue Viaje de recreo at the 28th Biennial Louisiana Conference on Hispanic Languages and Literatures and published her essay "Spain, 'Others' and European Modernity in Pardo Bazán's Parisian Travel Narratives" in the 2011 issue of Letras Femeninas. Currently, she is working on an article on Matto de Turner's European travels. While not teaching at Calvin, she enjoys playing tennis, dancing, backpacking, photography, and cinema. Professor Shkatulo has visited Spain, Peru, and Mexico.