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Jack Lannamann, Associate Professor of Communication, travels to Italy

Jack Lannamann

University of New Hampshire - Main Campus, john.lannamann@unh.edu

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~ Faculty Travel through CIE

International Perspectives

Center for International Education

JACK LANNAMANN, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF COMMUNICATION

Professor Jack Lannamann traveled to Italy in June 2007 to discuss a collaborative study program with colleagues at the University of Parma.

In this Issue

Featured Stories

Additional Articles

Faculty Travel Reports

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*Professor Lannamann (second from right) with
colleagues in Italy*

*"Oh quanto è corto il dire e come fioco
al mio concetto! e questo, a quel ch'i' vidi,
è tanto, che non basta a dicer 'poco!'"*

*"How incomplete is speech, how weak, when set
against my thought! And this, to what I saw
is such--to call it little is too much."*

*(From Dante, Divine Comedy, Paradiso,
Canto 33. Mandelbaum, Tr.)*

Perhaps only Dante can get away with such a disclaimer, but it is true that a description of Italy in late spring makes me aware of my limits with language. The University of Parma, where I met with my colleagues in the Doctorate of Social Psychology, is located near the center of the beautiful city of Parma. As a center of learning, the university has a rich history. When Dante wrote the words in the *Divine*

Comedy back in the 14th century, the school was already two hundred years older than UNH is now. Over the years, the institution has weathered the changes brought on by popes, dukes and powerful neighbors. In one phase of that history, the buildings where I met with my hosts were used as the stables for Napoleon's horses. This sense of living history surrounds the campus.

As I traversed Via Gramsci and entered the university gates, I was greeted by a brilliant image of the early 20th century Italian political philosopher, Antonio Gramsci, on a poster announcing a conference to celebrate the legacy of his thought. It turned out that a friend was organizing the conference, and I returned to UNH with one of the posters. It now hangs in my office where I can point to it as I try to explain what Gramsci's idea of hegemony has to do with communication.

The purpose of my travel to Italy was simple. I went to meet with colleagues at the University of Parma to continue work on a collaborative study program. The program links the newly developed Doctorate of Social Psychology at Parma with the Department of Communication here at UNH. As a member of the Graduate Faculty at the University of Parma, I advise Ph.D. candidates in the Social Psychology program who have specific interests in communication theory. The UNH-Parma collaboration is still in its early stages of development and it requires the kind of sustained conversation that can only be had in face-to-face working sessions.

I met with the head of the psychology department, Prof. Laura Fruggeri, and with Profs. Nadia Monacelli, Tiziana Mancini, Luisa Molinari, and Sergio Manghi. We discussed the initial success of the program and how the link between UNH and the University of Parma had already resulted in several graduate students traveling to Durham to pursue their research in communication. These early encounters have been rewarding. While at UNH, one of these students sat in on my undergraduate classes and added a valuable international component to my senior seminar "Perspectives on Culture and Communication." She also participated in departmental colloquia and various scholarly reading groups.

One of the themes that we discussed during our meeting had to do with finding a comfortable balance between maintaining the flexibility of our existing collaboration on the one hand, and adding structure to what is, after all, an institutional arrangement. As we discussed this question, it became clear that there are benefits to be gained from a more formal structure. Parma is a highly ranked Ph.D. program in Italy. The high caliber students in that program have much to offer UNH. Formalizing an exchange program would benefit both UNH and Parma. We discussed drafting a formal agreement to institutionalize what has been a fruitful relationship.

During our discussion we also confronted the issue that although the UNH/Parma exchange of faculty has been bi-lateral, the student exchange has been a one-way street. UNH undergraduates typically do not have a sufficient command of the Italian language to allow them to benefit from coursework at the University of Parma. We explored several options to resolve this problem. One of the more intriguing proposals involved using web-based technology to create remotely accessible research colloquia and semi-regular video-conferences allowing students to collaborate on intercultural research projects without the need to relocate. Formalizing the institutional link between the two universities might also allow students to access the diverse library holdings available at each institution.

I am grateful to the Center for International Education for making my trip possible. I am excited about the potential for continued collaboration with my Italian colleagues and students. I expect that this work (along with my new Gramsci poster) will find its way into my undergraduate teaching in several forms, including new case study material, readings, and classroom discussions. Thank you for your support.