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MFJMCE FACULTY CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT GRANT

Interview with grantee Dr. Ilaria Serra



Dr. Ilaria Serra

Dr. Ilaria Serra is Professor of Italian and Comparative Studies, Department of Languages, Linguistics and comparative Literature (LLCL) at Florida Atlantic University. She received the Miami-Florida Jean Monnet Center of

Excellence Faculty Curriculum Development grant for her proposal titled: "European Movement Films of Immigration around the Mediterranean (didactic package)."

She was kind enough to answer a few questions about her proposal.

MFJMCE: Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

This year, I am proud to have been promoted to Professor in Italian and Comparative Studies, and to have won the University Scholar of the Year Award at FAU. I am a native of Venice, Italy, where I lead a 6-week study abroad every summer for our students. My research deals with Italian American studies, poetic geography of Italy, digital humanities, and Italian history through songs. (Read article from FAU, [here](#), and bio [here](#)).

MFJMCE: Can you tell us in a few words what the main focus of your research project is?

We are creating a didactic package with five movies that focus on immigration around the Mediterranean Sea, which were produced in the last few years. They all focus on the same theme, but from different vantage points: *Fire at Sea* from Italy, *Return to Hansala* from Spain, *Welcome to the Hartmanns* from Germany, *Capernaum* from Lebanon and *Tazzeka* from France. We will create lesson plans, reading material, pre-viewing activities, a guided viewing of the movie, linguistic considerations and post-viewing discussion questions.

MFJMCE: Your grant proposal says that you would use this research for classroom teaching. What do you hope students will gain by attending the course you are developing?

We will digitize all the material and make it available for wider use, for teachers and students of colleges or high schools. We will also create a film series at FAU, presented by all of us, and we plan on using this material in our own World Literature courses. We hope that movies will widen the students' points of view and intercultural competence.

MFJMCE: Why do you think the focus of your course has specific interest for students in the U.S.?

Not only US students. In today's globalized world it is ever more important to use films as tools of intercultural comprehension. We need to see the world with other people's eyes, and walk on their streets to attempt to understand them. These movies make us walk in streets that are especially thorny and difficult, and give us different outlooks on the current social issue of immigration.

MFJMCE: Where will your research take you in the future? Do you plan to continue developing this project, or do you have others in mind?

This is surely a repeatable project, and we would be happy to invite new colleagues, new movies and new perspectives from world countries.

By Christine I. Cally-Sanchez



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