12-8-2015

Writing & Linguistics News

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Dr. Lisa Costello pilots digital resource for United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

December 8, 2015

Department of Writing and Linguistics associate professor Dr. Lisa Costello spent fall 2015 piloting a new course that incorporated a digital resource to be used at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

In an original Writing and Linguistics Special Topics course called “Writing Autobiography Post-Holocaust: Gender, Memory, and History” (WRIT3030 A, offered fall 2015), Costello helped to pilot a new digital resource housed at the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM). Costello’s course, and by extension Georgia Southern University, was one of approximately 20 universities participating in the pilot project nation-wide.

Costello was chosen from a competitive pool of applicants to be among the initial trial group of six teaching faculty. The web resource is a digital extension and reconception of the Jewish Responses to Persecution project. The groundbreaking series, produced by the Mandel Center, “embeds translated, annotated, and contextualized contemporary Jewish sources into a general historical narrative of the Holocaust. The aim of the series is to rectify the imbalance between use of perpetrator and victim sources in scholarship on the Holocaust, and point to the amazing range of Jewish documents that have traditionally been neglected and marginalized in the study of the Holocaust.”

In her course, Costello used the resource to teach students about Holocaust history from new perspectives. In addition to using the resource for various writing projects, students also used the site to learn how to work with archival material and conduct research. One research assignment about layered narratives asked students to think about how stories and histories become more complex and layered with the addition of new research. The second research assignment asked students to use the database to make visual research maps and explore how history and memory connect narratives of the Holocaust.

The Department of Writing and Linguistics is housed in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. The College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences is the largest of the eight colleges that make up Georgia Southern University, and it plays a central role in every student’s core of knowledge. CLASS, also described as the University’s College of the Creative Mind, prepares students to achieve academic excellence, develop their analytical skills, enhance their creativity, and embrace their responsibilities as citizens of their communities, their nations, and the world.

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