

Romance and Germanic Philology Faculty

Not only does Ararat dominate this small country by its magnificent view, but, with its biblical associations, it also compels Armenians to go deeper and deeper into the secrets of human existence, to put forward questions and seek for answers in wisdom, books, knowledge by attaching a great importance to the study of languages. Throughout the history Armenians have been impelled by the desire to explore different languages. This is based on the belief that it is the best way to the new reality, new perception of life, a new civilization and a new culture. And it is not surprising that after the Foundation of Yerevan State University in spite of many economic and historic difficulties the new process of teaching and studying languages was phased in at the University.

In 1935 within the Faculty of Philology a chair of Foreign Languages was set up which in its turn in 1957 was divided into two chairs – the chair of Romance and Germanic Philology and the chair of Foreign Languages. It was the chair of Romance and Germanic Philology which took the initiative in preparing foreign language specialists.

By the end of the 80s the Chair expressed the initiative and its willingness to operate independently from the Faculty of Armenian Philology. This was fully welcomed and supported by the YSU authorities of the time headed by YSU Rector, Academician Sergey Hambartsumyan. In 1991 the Faculty of Romance and Germanic Philology was established on the basis of the department of Romance and Germanic languages and headed by its first Dean Mr. Karo Karapetyan, PH. D, Associate Professor. Currently it is one of the largest educational and scientific units of the University.

Since 1991 the Faculty has succeeded in gaining fame and respect not only in Armenia but also beyond its borders. The vigour of the Faculty may be judged by its commitment to research. This often takes the form of partnership with international companies or inter-institutional co-operation within the framework of programmes of the European community. The Library is the heart of research activity, and here YSU is fortunate. With access to the stocks with several thousand volumes it is one of the largest in the country. The Faculty presently headed by Samvel Abrahamyan, Dean, PH. D, Associate Professor, prides itself also on its tradition of personal contact between staff and students. Its academic staff and students form a compact academic community. The Faculty provides a complete day-time environment, with a large variety of facilities and a varied social life sustained by student societies and sport clubs.

At the Faculty of Romance and Germanic Philology hundreds of educators have gained the skills and knowledge, passion and perspectives to meet the challenges of educating our young people in the 21st century. At the Faculty you will meet many educators who share ideas about teaching and learning, leading classrooms, using effective theories and strategies. The students have a wonderful chance to study with a diversity of professors who are some of the most highly qualified scholar-practitioners in their fields. They also explore real questions in the light of the latest research and best practices. All the educators care passionately about the qualities that make up good teaching and have a professional awareness of what constitutes effective teaching practice. At present, along with its traditional departments of English, German and French those of Spanish, Italian, Translation Studies and Intercultural Communication have taken their stable place and role at the Faculty. Apart from languages, the

Faculty provides the students with the opportunity to gain sufficient knowledge in foreign literature, FL teaching methodology, introduction to Germanic/Romance Philology, theoretical grammar, theoretical phonetics, fundamentals of linguistics, FL history, lexicology, functional stylistics, theory of translation, theory of intercultural communication, discourse analysis, pragmalinguistics and many more. It also offers learning by correspondence. The basic scientific trends the Faculty specializes in are semantics, text linguistics, text interpretation, discourse analysis, pragmatics, language and culture, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, contemporary methods of FL teaching, the study of contemporary problems of foreign literature, etc.

The Faculty of Romance and Germanic Philology successfully cooperates with a number of celebrated universities in the world, namely with those in the USA, Great Britain, France, Germany and Russian Federation as well as with AUA (American University of Armenia), Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University and State Linguistic University after V.Brusov in Yerevan.

The lecturers of the Faculty are given a chance to take part in regular training courses in France, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Germany, Austria, the USA and the UK. In addition, the Faculty cooperates with many foreign embassies to Armenia and international organizations. Among them AASE (Armenian Association for the Study of English) which has become the national representative of ESSE (European Society for the Study of English) since September 2003 is worth mentioning. Together with the Association the Faculty periodically organizes conferences, seminars related to the English language, literature and culture, thus promoting prospective exchange of information and experience between domestic and foreign scholars, strengthening the bounds with foreign higher educational and scientific organizations.

Every year international examinations of Spanish are organized at the Faculty based on which the students are awarded internationally acclaimed diplomas after Servantes. Among the great achievements of the Faculty is the publication of a number of scientific journals: "Astghik"- a translator's journal, "Foreign Languages in High School", "Language and Literature in the Contemporary Paradigm of Scientific Knowledge", "FLSP" (Foreign Language for Specific Purposes), "Context" and "Journal of Romance Philology". In the field of English the Faculty most efficiently has created strong ties with "Armenian Folia Anglistika"- a reviewed international journal concerned with English-related research. Being sent to more than 50 countries of the world, it sheds light on the achievements of Armenian scholars.

The activities of the Faculty are shared by its 8 chairs (the Chairs of English Philology, German Philology, Romance Philology, French Philology, Translation Theory and Practice, Foreign Literature, English Chairs No 1 and No 2. The staff of the Faculty totals to over 200 lecturers with 9 doctors and professors, and over 40 PhDs. Guest lecturers from the USA, Great Britain, Italy, Spain, Germany, Poland, Brazil, etc. are regularly invited to deliver lectures at the Faculty.

The highlight in the history of the Romance and Germanic Philology Faculty was the foundation of **the Chair of English Philology** in 1991. Inheriting the great scientific and pedagogical experience of her predecessors Gevorg Jahukyan, Doctor of Philological Sciences, Professor, Academician of the Armenian National Academy of Sciences; E. Atayan, Doctor of Philosophical Sciences, Professor, Academician of the Armenian National Academy of Sciences; Professor H.Tokmajyan; L.Aloyan, PH. D.; professor Ye.Mkhitaryan, Seda Gasparyan, Doctor of Philological Sciences, Professor has been the head of the Chair since 1993. Due to the enthusiasm and energy, devoted love for English Studies and academic persistence of the present head

of English Philology Chair, Professor Seda Gasparyan, the Chair has become an outstanding centre of English Language Teaching and English Studies, recognized all over Armenia.

Currently with lecturers totaling to 70 (24 PhDs and 3 Full Professors) the chair performs varied teaching and methodological activities, provides the teaching of practical English as the first and second foreign languages, as well as allows the students to obtain knowledge in different philological disciplines. With the advent of the three-level educational system the Chair skillfully and successfully overcomes the challenges it meets on its way, reforming educational syllabuses, introducing new and more efficient methods of teaching to meet the modern requirements of science, economy and culture and provision of good professional knowledge both in Bachelor and Master degrees. The work of the Chair embraces systematic exploration of the life and realities of English speaking countries, involving both classrooms and on-site investigation. The teaching process comprises the refinement of all four language skills (reading, speaking, listening, writing) and the classes are accompanied by oral presentation on different issues, viewing and discussion of films, vocabulary development, homereading and so on). Its aim is to bring together the theoretical and practical approaches to the teaching of foreign languages at this level of study.

Its graduates not only perform successfully in their classrooms, but achieve the extraordinary in their careers. The alumni of the Chair of English Philology are successfully involved in the highest spheres of state and governmental structures, many different institutions and companies, as well as in the embassies of foreign countries and international organizations functioning in RA.

The interests of the scholars of the chair lie in the fields of phonetics, lexicology and lexicography, morphology and syntax, stylistics and linguopoetics, discourse analysis and pragmalinguistics, psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics, cognitive and functional linguistics, cross-cultural communication and others.

The Chair has always been involved in compiling dictionaries, books, textbooks, manuals, practitioner guides.

English Chair No 1 was established as a separate Chair in 1991 and M. Apresyan, PH. D, Associate Professor has been the head of the Chair since 2001.

The Chair with the staff of approximately 40 lecturers elaborates large-scale educational activities at different YSU faculties (Informatics and Applied Mathematics, Chemistry, Biology, Philosophy and Psychology, Law, History, Sociology, Geography, Geology and Theology) aimed at teaching English for Special Purposes. To meet modern requirements the Chair has set a goal to incessantly update and develop the methods of teaching languages and expand knowledge in Applied Linguistics. The notable achievement of the Chair is the launch and publication of the international scientific journal "FLSP" (Foreign Language for Specific Purposes) which illuminates the international achievements and experience of language teaching according to learners' constantly changing demands, needs and interests. The Chair is oriented on equipping people having different specializations with sufficient knowledge and skills in English which will help them introduce Armenian scientific potential on international arenas.

English Chair No 2 was founded in 1993 and since then has been headed by Professor Ye.Yerznkyan. The Chair has more than 40 lecturers, among them 12 PhDs and 5 Associate Professors, 8 Assistant Professors, translators and many experienced specialists. The Chair aims at teaching English at different YSU faculties (Armenian Philology, Russian Philology, Oriental

Studies, International Relations, Journalism, Economics, as well as the Art Department of the Faculty of History). The Chair goes to extreme lengths to help students have a good command of professional English and proficiency in their speciality. Language as a basic tool in communication is inextricably bound with society and is used in different social as well as cultural situations. That is why the models of verbal communication used in classrooms should be based on real-life situational contexts inducing and prompting students to speak. Therefore within the framework of the Chair the aim of practical English is to provide good communicative bases, i.e. to be able to share knowledge and ideas in English and develop the ability to express themselves in sustained oral and written forms, to master adequate speaking skills to be lively conversationalists on any topic, to understand and interpret texts in English related to their fields of study. The whole process embraces all the key elements of language teaching - reading, listening, speaking and writing. The adopted highly individual approach in the teaching process allows the instructors to find out the needs of the students and to help them overcome difficulties and get involved in the learning process to the best. This is enhanced by the *Edusoft - English Discoveries* computer-based course and by the steps taken towards the development of theoretical bases for English teaching through a computer-based programme. The course consists of 12 levels from *basic* to *executive* including Business English.

The notable achievement of the Chair is the publication of the yearly journal "Foreign Languages at Higher Educational Institutions". It touches upon different issues in linguistics, literature and methods of teaching. Since 2007 the Chair together with the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Armenia has been publishing the journal "Foreign Languages in Armenia" which is designed for a larger scope of readers and draws the attention on such fields as educational reforms, education and upbringing, teaching methods, philology and so on.

The Chair attaches great importance to the role of the lecturer in forming a student's personality as a citizen and specialist. Due to the endeavors of the lecturers the students take part in different conferences and competitions. The students also have an English Club where they share their problems, make reports, organize discussions.

The Chair of Translation Studies was established in 2009 on the basis of the Section of Translation Studies of English Philology Department and since then has become a self-organized unit within the Faculty of Romance and Germanic Philology. The head of the Chair is K.Karapetyan, PH. D, Associate Professor.

The aim of the Chair of Translation Studies is to prepare qualified specialists both in written and oral translations equipping them with all necessary knowledge and skills to work in all spheres of our society.

The department has about 20 highly qualified specialists in three foreign languages (English, French, German). They successfully put into practice the contemporary approaches to foreign language teaching and preparation of skilled translators. Modern technologies (computers, TV, DVD, audio materials) are actively used in the teaching-learning process.

Future translators study works by world-famous authors in the original and in translations. The problems of adequacy, the translation of stylistic devices, imagery, word play, versification and exactitude are addressed in term papers, final papers and theses and are always in the centre of scientific attention of the staff.

In 2011 the first conference devoted to the problems of translation theory and practice was held and it proved to be a success.

In 1988, the publication of a translator's journal, "Astghik" (named after the pagan goddess of Love and Fertility) was initiated. The focus of the journal is not only on the translations from different languages into Armenian and from Armenian into other languages but also on key issues of the Theory and Art of Translation.

The Chair takes an active part in compiling dictionaries, proverb books, textbooks, manuals on the theory and art of translation, publishing monographs and articles.

The Chair of Germanic Philology was established in 1991 after the foundation of the Faculty of Romance and Germanic Philology and included lecturers teaching German at different faculties at YSU. Since 1999 the Chair has been headed by Professor Yu. Gabrielyan, Doctor of Philological Sciences, Professor. The teaching process is accomplished by putting into practical use all contemporary methods of language teaching. The theoretical subjects are delivered according to the latest achievements in the field of Contemporary Linguistics. Due attention is given to the teaching and mastering of German as a second language.

At the faculties of Humanities and Sciences efficient methods and efforts are invested in the teaching process aimed at providing students with opportunities to read scientific literature and communicate freely in German.

The best students have a good chance to develop their language skills at well-known universities in Germany and Austria.

Apart from this the staff of the Chair actively carries out research in different fields of philology publishes scientific articles, manuals, dictionaries. Every year qualified specialists from Germany and Austria are invited whose assistance in pedagogical and research work is invaluable. The exchange program with the German Academy has developed into a good tradition for both the staff and the students of the Chair.

The Chair of French Philology was founded in 1991 after the foundation of the Faculty of Romance and Germanic Philology. Presently the chair is headed by Z. Harutyunyan, PH. D., Associate Professor. The Chair initially provided the teaching of three foreign languages – French, Spanish and Italian. After the establishment of the Chair of Romance Philology the French Philology Chair is currently oriented to teach French only. The teaching staff is comprised of both young high-level lecturers and lecturers with great experience in the field of teaching. The Chair is aimed to provide students with good language skills in the language they are majoring in. The entire educational process is carried on taking into consideration all the nuances of up-to-date communicative approaches to language teaching and making good use of the traditional ones. One of the most important scientific efforts of the Chair is translation studies and the theory of translation. The lecturers of the Chair have published a number of educational manuals, textbooks, dictionaries etc.

In 2009 **the Chair of Romance Philology** separated from the French Chair and since then has taken the initiative of teaching only three Romance languages (Spanish, Italian, Portuguese), among which Spanish and Italian are taught both as first and second languages of specialization and students taking Master's degree are given a good chance to study Portuguese too. The Chair is currently headed by Hasmik Baghdasaryan, PH. D, Associate Professor.

In the process of teaching foreign languages contemporary approaches and methods are applied: the communicative method of language teaching is successfully combined with traditional ones.

The Chair periodically invites specialists from abroad who have a great potential, especially in Spanish and Italian. Lecturers from Italy, Spain and Brazil carry on important scientific and pedagogical practice, actively participate in the work of the Chair.

Since 2008 the Chair has had an educator from Brazil in its staff. Last year owing to the good results of fruitful co-operation with the Italian Embassy qualifying exams were held based on which diplomas after Dante were granted. The Chair is actively engaged in elaborating a vast scope of scientific research which deals with different problems of Romance Philology, such as semantics, phraseology, pragmatics, translation studies, etc.

One of the most important scientific efforts of the Chair is translation and the theory of translation.

Since the foundation of the University History of foreign literature has been included in the curricula of the humanities faculties as the study of languages and foreign literature go together and their profound study provides valuable experience and advantage for future career development of our students.

In 1929 in accord with the standards of university education separate chairs of literature as well as **the Chair of Foreign Literature** were set up. At that time the chair was headed by Professor Simon Hakobyan, later by Professor Luisa Samvelyan, Academician Ed. Djrbashyan, Professor H. Edoyan. Now it is headed by A. Araqelyan, PH. D, Associate Professor.

In 2007 the Chair of Foreign Literature was subdivided into two chairs - the Chair of the theory of Literature and the Chair of Foreign Literature. The latter became part of the Faculty in 2007. The Chair offers a wide spectrum of general and specialized courses (lectures and seminars) on the history of European and American literatures of different periods from the early Middle Ages up to the present day. It also presents various courses where traditional and modern literary criticism is considered from an unbiased viewpoint. The objective is to represent literature as a process and an art deeply implanted into historical and cultural contexts. It provides students with the skills necessary for the appreciation and comparative analysis of these works both as literature and as representations of rich and diverse cultural values. The educators are strongly conscious that a good literature course does at least three things: it familiarizes the students with a corpus of authentic material; it reveals fresh points of view; it gives some clues to the methods of investigation by which the field may be explored.

The Chair is also actively engaged in translation doing its best to represent to the Armenian student as well as to the public both the works of great intellectuals and highly valued works of art of European and American Literatures.

Education and wisdom have been essential for all nations. Yet, historically Armenians revered education and wisdom as they were destined to understand the role of spiritual values in the life of the society. They always felt that they might lose everything in a wink of an eye. The only thing they could keep forever was what they had inside: their own wisdom, and consequently they cultivated their inner world.

Thus YSU with all its faculties can be seen as a metaphor which best describes Armenians' striving and aspiration for knowledge and education.