

**The Kansas State University Department of Modern Languages is one hundred years old this year.** In the academic year of 1916-1917 the Modern Languages Department was formed from the pre-existing Department of German, adding classes in French to the curriculum. The following year French, German, and Spanish were offered. Over the last century this list has been expanded; in this centennial year, students have their choice of ten different languages.

The Department of German was formed twelve years previously in the fall of 1904. German had been reintroduced in the mid 1890's, after almost two decades of no language instruction offered at the college, and quickly became a required part of the curriculum of virtually all courses of study at the time. The demand for German instruction was fueled by the fact that universities in Germany had become the world standard for instruction and research. In the catalogue of that year the description of the newly formed German Department begins thus:

In whatever line the modern student turns his energies a practical knowledge of German is very useful, often indispensable. In literature, the arts, and the sciences, much of the newest and best work appears in German, so that he who would keep abreast of the times is forced to acquire at least the rudiments of that language.

In 1916, when the Modern Languages department was formed, the instruction in languages still served in large part as a component of other courses of study, however the appreciation of the languages themselves, and of modern foreign literature had emerged as important goals of the department. Semi-monthly meetings of the Deutscher Verein, gave "ample opportunity for developing the student's ability to speak the [German] language and to understand it when he hears it" (1916-1917 catalogue).

The faculty of the Modern Languages department in that inaugural year consisted of Dr. John Van Zandt Cortelyou as head, Louis H. Limper (at that time Instructor), a second instructor – not named in the catalogue, and graduate assistant, Mrs. Park. Twelve courses in German and four in French were offered.

Louis H. Limper came to Kansas State in 1914, joining the faculty of the German department, having just completed a Master's degree at the University of Wisconsin. In the second year of the Modern Languages department (1917-1918) he shared the teaching of German with Professor Cortelyou, and the teaching of French with Grace Roberta Hesse who taught French and Spanish. Hesse continued at Kansas State through the 1925-1926 academic year, by then an Assistant Professor. She taught both French and Spanish until the fall of 1922, when her teaching was focused exclusively on Spanish. Limper's prior teaching experience included the teaching of English at Robert College (American high school) in Constantinople. He received his PhD in 1931 from the University of Iowa and after 30 years at KSC he retired in 1944 as professor. Throughout his career at Kansas State, he continued to split his teaching between German and French, and he and his wife remained in Manhattan until his death in 1975.

The founder of the Department of Modern Languages, Professor Cortelyou, had been head of the German Department from its inception and remained head of Modern Languages until his retirement from teaching and from the College in 1934 after 30 years at Kansas State. He had arrived at KSAC in 1904, shortly after having completed his doctoral degree in the Germanisch-Romanisch Seminar at the University of Heidelberg. There, as a student of the celebrated Medievalist and English Philologist Johannes Hoops, Cortelyou wrote a dissertation (published in Heidelberg as a monograph in 1906)—*Die altenglischen Namen der Insekten, Spinnen- und Krustentiere*. By the time he retired, he had served the College in many capacities

besides his teaching, including standing committees such as admissions, catalogue, graduate study, and the faculty loan fund. Early in his career here, he served two years as manager of athletics, and was secretary of the Memorial Stadium corporation since its formation. At the time of his retirement, he was a director of the local Chamber of Commerce. A list of the boards of directors he served on during his thirty years in Manhattan would still, however, not reveal as much about the personality of the professor who was so admired and loved by his students as this small article that appeared in the *Industrialist* (college newspaper) on May 2, 1934:

M.J. Caldwell, graduate student, was greeted by Dr. J. V. Cortelyou, his German professor, in verse the other morning when he entered the class-room, the provocation being that young Caldwell, was the father of new born twins. The verse:

Huzzah! Hurrah!  
Hier kommt der Papa!  
Er hat zwei Töchterlein  
Das ist sehr fein!  
Viel' Glückwünsche, Papa!  
Hurrah! Huzzah!

We are very pleased to mark this centenary of the Department of Modern Languages! We look forward to seeing it continue to thrive in the coming years as it enthusiastically offers a community of students from around the world the opportunity not only to develop linguistic, literary, and cultural competencies but also to grow in numerous ways from indispensable experiences at the core of the humanities mission.

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