

Italian lovers leave to learn

University offers only four semesters of the Italian language

Michelle Fortner
for the Index

When she started at Truman, senior Mary Kretsinger decided to try something new.

Instead of continuing her education in Spanish, Kretsinger began learning Italian.

"I wanted something different, something unique," Kretsinger said.

Kretsinger studied Italian for four semesters, and said she would have continued, but Truman offers only four semesters. Kretsinger, like other Italian language students, had to find other ways to continue her education in Italian.

Kretsinger said she considered going to graduate school to receive her master's in Italian, but the proficiency she gained at Truman was not enough.

After talking to some graduate schools, Kretsinger said she found that she would need to study more in Italy to be at the level needed to start in a master's program.

Kretsinger said she would like to see an Italian major offered at Truman but knows that might not be possible. She also said not many Italian programs

are available in the Midwest.

"If a major would have been offered here, I would have done it," Kretsinger said. "The fact that we don't have a major here makes it more difficult for anyone to pursue Italian at the graduate level."

Even though she could not continue Italian in graduate school, Kretsinger wanted to expand her Italian education.

Options do exist for learning Italian at Truman outside of the classroom.

Last summer, Kretsinger traveled to Florence to study at Lorenzo de'Medici, taking 12 credits. Besides Florence, Truman students can study at universities in Venice and Rome. Among the three schools, 22 Truman students studied in Italy in 2005 and 29 in 2004.

Kretsinger said she decided on Florence for many reasons.

"I thought in addition to learning the language, I'd be able to see all the great art things there," Kretsinger said.

She said she also recommends it for any Italian student.

"If you're interested in a language, the only way you can really learn it is to go there," Kretsinger said. "You get the sound and the immersion. Here you can only get a taste of it. It's a completely different world."

Marie Orton, associate professor of Italian, also said study abroad is essential to learning Italian.



Chris Waller/Index

Cole Woodcox, professor of English, prepares to teach an Italian class in McClain Hall on Monday afternoon. The University only offers four semesters of Italian language classes, however, it offers an Italian studies minor. The Club for Italian Appreciation and Outreach, studying abroad in Italy and conversation group Tavola are some ways to experience the Italian language and culture.

"If you're interested in a language, the only way to learn it is to go [abroad]."

Mary Kretsinger
Senior

"I think you can't study a language outside of the context," Orton said. "It is impossible to study without studying the culture."

Study abroad is only one way to continue study in Italian. Kretsinger meets once a week with a group of students to talk in Italian. The group conversation helps Kretsinger stay sharp with her vocabulary and pronunciation.

Another conversation group, Tavola, meets Wednesday and Thursday nights. Tavola is for current and former Italian language students who want to

work on their conversation skills. Students can use their experience at Tavola to write a weekly journal activity for class. Kretsinger leads the group Wednesdays.

Italian studies at Truman expand beyond just learning the language.

Kretsinger is an Italian studies minor, one of the interdisciplinary minors at Truman. The minor requires a student to complete the second intermediate Italian class, six credits in Italian culture and six credits in supporting disciplines.

The Italian culture section

includes classes in Italian civilization and film. The supporting discipline classes include a variety of art classes such as Renaissance art, classical civilization, Roman history and Roman literature.

Kretsinger said she likes the idea of the Italian studies minor because it is interdisciplinary.

The Club for Italian Appreciation and Outreach provides an opportunity to learn about many aspects of Italian culture, including food and customs.

The club plans nights to show Italian films for further exposure to the culture and language.

Sophomore Eric Schneider, CIAO president, said he thinks the Italian club is important for the University.

"I'm part Italian, and I find it important to spread the culture," Schneider said. "Other cultural groups have groups on campus, and we needed to represent Italian culture also."

Schneider said the club also wants to promote Italian culture with a bocce ball tournament and possibly a few dinners.

He also said the Italian professors will give guest lectures about different aspects of the culture.

Resident paddles table tennis to city

United States Table Tennis competitor forms club in Kirksville

John Scognamiglio
Staff Reporter

Kirksville might be the next Missouri city to turn a basement activity into a sanctioned sport.

In the past few weeks, Kirksville resident Eddie Hodges has been meeting regularly at the Kirksville Christian High School with a few other residents to play the game of basement heroes and legends, the sport of table tennis.

Hodges said he has been a competitive player since 1996.

"Hopefully we can get enough people attending on a regular basis to become a USTT-affiliated club," he said.

Hodges started playing table tennis for the Columbia team and played in several major tournaments in Missouri.

He has played in the Show-Me State Games and in the Gateway Open in St. Louis.

After moving to Kirksville

and finding there was hardly anyone with whom to play, Hodges earned his coaching credentials and started building a club.

Kirksville resident Mel Bissey said he was just another basement warrior when Hodges contacted him.

"I went down and played in the senior games, and Mr. Hodges was down there at the time," he said. "We became aware of an effort to get something organized here in Kirksville."

John Sparks was another table tennis player Hodges contacted.

Sparks said he is probably a beginner compared to Hodges and Bissey.

"[Hodges] told me he was starting a club and asked if I would be interested," he said. "I haven't done very much. In fact, it's only my second time out here."

Hodges said there are advantages to being the only USTT club north of Columbia.

"We get some insurance liability and coverage," he said. "Also, we'd be able to hold USTT tournaments."

If the club is formed, Hodges said there would be opportunities for singles players and doubles teams.

"I like to play doubles," he said. "Some players prefer singles, some prefer doubles. I think doubles is a lot of fun. On the other hand, if I want to improve my rating as a player, doubles doesn't contribute to that."

Bissey said there is a difference between playing at home and then playing in the club.

"Here, I'm trying to learn," he said. "At home, I'm playing for recreation. Here, you are the student as opposed to a participant."

As a new club trying to gain its footing in Kirksville, there are a set of fees for those who wish to play.

Right now, there is a fee of

\$2 for those interested in playing casually. The bylaws outline the pay structure for different types of members.

Groups have special discounted fee structures. Kirksville youths and students can get a membership of a discounted rate as little as 40 percent of the adult membership fees.

One of the many questions Kirksville residents might ask themselves is if they are good enough.

"I would say a good basement player and someone who can beat all of their friends without any formal coaching would be at the level of about 1,000," Hodges said.

Hodges added that junior Daniel Tucker is probably the highest-rated player in Kirksville with about a 1,700 rating.

Bissey said education is his main goal as he furthers himself with his table tennis.

"Hopefully, we can get enough people attending on a regular basis to become a USTT-affiliated club."

Eddie Hodges
USTT Competitor



Chris Waller/Index

Kirksville resident and U.S. Table Tennis competitor Eddie Hodges practices table tennis in the old Kirksville Christian High School on Saturday afternoon.

"There's a whole lot you can learn that you don't think about," he said. "I've noticed today that I have to concentrate more to fix the bad things in my game."

Sparks said his goal is to get in shape and exercise regularly.

"I just want to have more enjoyment than anything else and

maybe exercise," he said. "I don't want to play in any competition or anything like that until I get a lot better than I am now."

The Kirksville Table Tennis Club meets Saturdays from 2 to 6 p.m. at the Kirksville Christian High School located at 1702 N. Elson St.

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