

[View this email in your browser](#)



SCII Agenda Newsletter

November 2023 Issue

The mission of the Schoolcraft College International Institute (SCII) is to coordinate cross-cultural learning opportunities for students, faculty, staff, and the community.

A Conversation with Curtis Chin, Author, Filmmaker and Activist

by Ashley Xu



On Friday, November 10th, the Asian Student Association, Student Activities, and the International Institute Focus Series hosted [Curtis Chin](#), filmmaker, author, and activist, who came to discuss his critically acclaimed memoir, [Everything I Learned, I Learned in a Chinese Restaurant](#). Students, faculty, and community had a wonderful opportunity to hear Chin read aloud memorable passages from his book, recounting the relationships between his upbringing as a gay Chinese American and his family-owned business, Chung's Cantonese Cuisine in Detroit's historic Chinatown.

Following his presentation, the audience took part in a moderated discussion with both Professor Helen Ditouras and Schoolcraft student Ashley Xu. Topics covered within the Q&A included Chin's experience as a gay youth within his Chinese immigrant family, and the intersections of race, family, food, and memory. For anyone interested in reading Chin's memoir, it can be checked out at [Schoolcraft College's Bradner Library](#).

[Ashley Xu](#) is President of the [Asian Student Association](#) President and welcomes interested students to join their group and visit [their interest page](#).

Culture and Conversation: Ukrainian and Schoolcraft Students

by Colleen Pilgrim



This fall, my social psychology students participated in a cultural exchange with college students from [Ukraine](#) during their visit to the Detroit area and our Schoolcraft campus. The event was coordinated with Program Consultant Dr. Laura Kline from [Global Ties Detroit](#).

Global Ties Detroit is a nonprofit organization that hosts international exchange programs on behalf of the U.S. Department of State, and other governmental organizations, think tanks, and universities that promote global exchange and citizen diplomacy. They bring delegates from around the world to learn about our life and culture, educate us about theirs, and foster mutual understanding and cross-cultural connections.

The students met in small groups to exchange ideas and have conversations

about the similarities and difference between countries and cultures. Social Psychology (Psych 207) is a Globally Endorsed course and the cultural conversation added to the course focus on individualism and collectivism. Student feedback was positive and this is our second cultural exchange with Global Ties Detroit and Dr. Kline.

The SCII wishes to extend a huge thank you to those who helped with this event; this really was an SC community effort. [Todd Stowell](#) and [Elizabeth Machniak](#) provided pizza and space in Student Activities for our guests to relax and participate in leadership training. [Megan Monthei](#), Social Media Coordinator, and [David Veselenak](#), Marketing and Events Coordinator, provided gift bags with Schoolcraft items for our Ukrainian guests and published a wonderful writeup about the event; please visit the [SC Webpage](#) to read additional details about the cultural exchange and view more pictures.

[Colleen Pilgrim](#) is a Professor of Psychology and the Editor of the SCII Agenda.

Doha Debates:

Exodus - Film Screening and Conversation

by Helen Ditouras



On Thursday, October 26th, the producers of the documentary short, [Exodus](#), joined Schoolcraft College and the University of Michigan Center for Southeast Asian Studies for a screening and moderated Q&A following the film. In collaboration with Fortify Rights, an organization committed to ensuring human rights for all, and three young Rohingya refugee documentarians, Doha Debates supported the creation of a film chronicling the plight of the Rohingya Muslim refugees living in the world's largest refugee camp in Bangladesh. Co-sponsored by Student Activities Office and supported by the Schoolcraft Foundation, students in Professor Helen Ditouras's Intro to Film class had an opportunity to moderate a discussion with the producers of the film that delved into topics such as the ongoing Rohingya refugee crisis, the political climate in Myanmar, as well as the process of filmmaking and the use of social media. For anyone interested in screening the film for free, please follow this link: https://www.fortifyrights.org/our_films/bgd-inv-vdo-2021-08-25/

[Helen Ditouras](#) is a Professor in the English Department and SCII Co-coordinator.

Photography & Promptography

by Anna Maheshwari



GlobalEYEzers cohosted along with Phi Theta Kappa a Zoom presentation by [Boris Eldagsen](#) who is a leader in photography and has worked to change the narrative of art and photography. Students engaged with him on the history of photography as well as his recent activism with AI. Mr. Eldagsen has created momentum to converse about whether the organizations hosting photography awards, judges, curators, and museums are prepared to distinguish between AI-generated (Artificial Intelligence) images or not. Students and other members of the Schoolcraft community discussed with him why there are currently no guidelines for most art shows with regards to AI as well as the future for art and photography with these new technologies.

[Anna Maheshwari](#) is a Professor in the English Department and SCII co-coordinator.

Midwest Institute Conference by SCII Members



**Dr. Theo Sypris, Director of the Midwest
Institute with Chief White Winnebago**

The [Midwest Institute for International/Intercultural Education \(MIIE\)](#) hosted their annual conference on October 13-14 at Illinois Valley Community College. The program included a series of engaging presentations related to global education and the utility of National Resources Centers in supporting faculty development of internationalized curriculum.

In addition, other presentations topics covered included the Psychology of Short-Term Study Abroad, Geopolitics and Eastern Europe/South America, among others, and conference presentations delivered by Professor Anna Maheshwari on *Climate Change, Water Scarcity, and IT Industry in Hyderabad, India – How are they related?* Dr. Maheshwari discussed Hyderabad's water problem due to the rapid rise in commercial and real estate activity in the technology belt and how climate change and population growth poses a serious threat to India's water security. India has only four percent of the world's freshwater resources despite a population of 1.4 billion; there is an urgent need for a solution.

SC Professor Helen Ditouras, Secretary of the Midwest Institute Board, presented an update on co-curricular developments related to Southeast Asia per a grant awarded to Schoolcraft by the Midwest Institute, the University of Washington and Michigan State University.

Other highlights from the event included Professor Rihab's display and presentation of the [Stamps of Hope Exhibit](#) – an art collection featuring original works from Syrian refugees in one of the largest refugee campuses in Jordan, and keynote presentations featuring Dr. Lirim Neziroski and Dr. Jessica Storey-Nagy who discussed the impact of a global education on college students. Per the annual Friday night dinner program, Dr. Theo Sypris, Director of the Midwest Institute, invited Chief White Winnebago to join the conference attendees and deliver a fascinating keynote address on the history of Starved Rock at the Starved Rock Lodge, a beautiful state park marked by indigenous land and a rich indigenous cultural history.

Reflection:

Dear Son, Please Do Not Watch

My Big Fat Greek Wedding 3

by Helen Ditouras



Dear Son,

Please do not watch *My Big Fat Greek Wedding 3*, even if you find yourself bored one night and reminiscent of the wonderful memories you accrued this summer visiting your grandparents' homes for the very first time. You will not find in this film the warmth of your family and the people you befriended in your grandfather's village. Instead, the film will insult your fresh recollections with parodies of people who are abrupt and angry, or clownishly trivial.

Moreover, my son, in a country marked by economic crisis and an influx of refugees from war-torn regions, you will not find a dignified portrayal of people who have persevered despite the economic austerity measures they have faced. Nor will you find honest accounts of inter-ethnic conflict and humanitarian love as highlighted in Christoforos Papakaliatis's remarkable film [Worlds Apart](#). Instead, you will find a silly and simplistic sub-plot involving a clandestine romance between a Syrian refugee and her Greek partner who face the strife of their families for reasons unknown.

However, if you decide one night to ignore my advice and finally stream the film, do not be seduced by the beautiful images of the Mediterranean Sea. While they will remind you of the warm and salty waters that engulfed your body this summer, these images will be countered with empty plotlines and wooden characters content in their ridiculous portrayals. And while the music will remind you of the melodies you have grown to enjoy, those rhythms and

songs will be nothing more than an authentic soundscape trapped in artificiality. The Greece of *My Big Fat Greek Wedding 3* is only as real as its partial location shooting; the rest of the film is a hollow replica which fails to capture the culturally rich history of a nation that continues to attract millions of tourists from all over the world.

While your memories of our summer in Greece too shall pass, please remember to embrace your heritage and our family who will always hold you close to their hearts. And while the language right now is no more than a slight familiarity, perhaps one day you will find the inspiration to learn to speak Greek. You may even recall our conversation about the language barrier between us and the whole other part of my identity you have yet to discover. But should you ever want to learn more about Greece and your ancestors, my dear son, please do not watch *My Big Fat Greek Wedding 3*.

[Helen Ditouras](#) is a Professor in the English Department and SCII Co-coordinator.

Contact: Dr. Colleen Pilgrim, Editor
cpilgrim@schoolcraft.edu
Schoolcraft College International Institute Agenda
18600 Haggerty Road - Livonia, MI 48152 - P: 734-462-4400

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

This email was sent to <<Email Address>>
[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)
International Agenda · 18600 Haggerty Rd · Liberal Arts Building · Livonia, MI 48152-3932 · USA

