Dear FIG student,

Welcome to the University of Oregon! I am very excited to get to know all of you in the upcoming months, as you start your first term in college. My name is Vanessa Coaloa, and I am your FIG leader for “Papas o Patatas.” I am a junior majoring in Romance Languages and Comparative Literature with also a minor focus in International Business. The influence of my father, who was born and raised in Argentina, and my passion for travelling and reading, have led me to choose these majors and to becoming an Assistant for this FIG. A little bit about my interests: I love to travel and experience all kinds of new and wonderful things. I am also an active member of the International Students Association, so you will often find me in the Mills International Center in the Student Union. I’m excited to get to know more about all of you and your interests.

Dr. Robert Davis is the professor who will be co-teaching the FIG. He is deeply passionate and knowledgeable about Iberian Peninsular Linguistics, his subject area. He is recognized on campus as a charismatic and approachable teacher. His work focuses on Spanish linguistics, since he has done most of his research in the Iberian Peninsula. In SPAN 150, one of the FIG classes, you will notice how the Spanish language has evolved throughout the historical timeline of the Spanish speaking world. It will be a great connection to the other FIG course, LING 201 with Professor Spike Gildea, where we will focus more on language as a means of social power. Professor Gildea is known for his energetic teaching style and interactive discussions with students. His interest in linguistics comes from his research in the Amazon where he has spent many years researching native languages in the area. His class is provocative and will leave you contemplating the way we use everyday language.

The College Connections class will be the merging point between the two classes. We will look at helpful resources on campus, discuss topics from your courses, and talk over the best ways to approach them. Since this class is mainly for your benefit as a freshman, we want you to feel comfortable sharing your thoughts and want to help you in any way possible. For the summer, you will need to read the novel Across a Hundred Mountains by Reyna Grande. It is a fun read, easy to take on during a relaxing summer day. Be sure to have it finished by the time we meet.

Aside from the academic tasks we will be doing in class, we will have other activities outside the classroom that will help us get to know each other, such as possible field trips related to class subjects or weekend gatherings! Please be checking Facebook soon, since I will be creating a group “Papas or Patatas 2011”, so we can keep each other updated about activities.

Important dates to mark in your calendar! We will meet on Friday, September 21, 2012 at 11 a.m. at Columbia 150. In addition, we will go as a group to Student Convocation on Sunday September 23, 2012 in the afternoon. Make sure to mark those dates. Please don’t forget to bring your Student Handbook! We will be using it a lot this term. In addition, if you could please send your e-mail address to Vanessa with a small single paragraph bio about yourself prior to our first meeting, it will help us get to know you better. Enjoy the summer reading. We look forward to meeting you!

Sincerely,

Vanessa Coaloa                      Robert Davis
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