

TEACHING HUNGARY AND HUNGARIAN AT BELOIT COLLEGE

Founded in 1846, Beloit College is a private liberal arts college on the Wisconsin-Illinois border. The enrollment is around 1,100, and its campus is located in the middle of Beloit, an industrial community of some 40,000 people. The endowment stands around \$40 million, and the physical plant is above average. The campus has a state-of-the-art \$3.5-million library, a \$5-million sports center, and the latest equipment for the natural sciences.

The college's World Affairs Center (WAC) stresses exchange programs as well as recruitment from abroad. Each year about 100 of our students are from outside the United States.

Since András Boros-Kazai's arrival in 1989, courses on Central Europe, the Balkans and Central Asia have become more or less regular components of the curriculum at Beloit. An Indiana University-trained historian, András Boros-Kazai is a Senior Fellow of the World Affairs Center. At Beloit he teaches courses with such titles as *Central Europe, The Balkans, Central Inner Asia, Ethnicity and the EurAsian Nation-State*, as well as seminars on how to approach diverse cultures and epochs through the medium of film. There is sufficient student interest in these topics, as indicated by an average enrollment around twelve. Average class-size at Beloit College is ten.

Since Boros-Kazai also teaches *Introductory Hungarian*, he is additionally listed as an Adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of Modern Languages and Literature. This eight-week course has been offered during each fall semester since 1990. The course was originally designed to be taken by students preparing to go on the Hungary Exchange during the following spring. However, since Beloit College has been sending only three or four students to Budapest, while enrollment in the Hungarian class has been between six and twelve (except for one year when it was scheduled for eight o'clock in the morning), we can note that there is healthy interest in the language in its own right.

The Hungarian Exchange program was initiated in the 1980s by Michael Simon of Beloit's Art Department. Mr. Simon, a photography teacher, established an exchange program with the Eötvös Collegium of the Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem (ELTE). Within the terms of this undertaking, Beloit sends up to five students to Budapest, where they take courses (in English) for credit. While Eötvös Collegium sends up to five students to Beloit, where they attend courses of

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their choice but earn no Hungarian credits. At the same time they are able to improve their English language skills, and visit America.

The Center for Language Studies (operating within the WAC) for the past 20 years or so offered intensive summer sessions. Originally concentrating on so-called "critical" or less commonly taught (LCT) languages, these sessions covered, at one time or another, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Spanish and ESL. Hungarian has been offered since 1990. Czech, Turkish, Portuguese and Indonesian have also been added since. Enrollment averages around eight to ten students, who come from diverse backgrounds and range from high-school to retirement age.

Introductory Hungarian is taught by a trained language teacher from Hungary, thus assuring that the instructor's language is up-to-date. Intermediate conversation courses and those that survey the social, cultural and political development of the region (i.e. Poland, the Czech and Slovak lands, as well as historic Hungary) have been taught by András Boros-Kazai.

This may change in the near future because Beloit College has recently acquired two tenure-track experts on Central Europe. One has specialty in German history, while the second one is an economist who spent a year in Cracow.

In recent years Central Europe has been placed on the academic map at Beloit College. Several students opted for, or at least considered, a self-designed minor in Central European Studies; a few went on to study the region at the graduate level (two of them at Indiana University), a number of alumni spent time in Hungary or in the region (teaching, working for international organizations or business firms, or as tourists), and the library's relevant holdings have greatly improved in recent years.

Alas, the outlook for the future is at best uncertain. As of April 1996 no full-time (or even semi-permanent) faculty member specializes in the region. It is, after all, a component of Europe, which is not currently academically fashionable in the United States. As a result, Beloit college has no Europeanist in its celebrated department of Anthropology, the European Studies concentration appears to be moribund, and proposals to expand (however minimally) teaching on the region have met with no response.

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