

Klaus Engelhardt

Professor of French and German



Forest gave way to farmland as the tour bus headed down the gentle eastern slope of the Carpathian Mountains. On a six-hour ride from Piatra Neamt to Iasi in northeast Romania, Klaus Engelhardt began contemplating his return to Portland—and his approaching retirement.

Clearly, all he had learned about Romania's 2,000-year-old history, architecture, religious art, and hospitable inhabitants was invaluable. It should not lie dormant when the 2001 overseas study program he was leading ended. Instead, this consummate leader of six academic forays into Europe is sharing his expertise with Lewis & Clark alumni in Romania this summer. For one week, his group will journey from the tree-lined streets of the capital city of Bucharest to the elegant eastern seaport of Constanta—the country's second largest city and a staging area for U.S. military troops—and points in between.

“Klaus is a fun collaborator. He has made himself liked and respected by peasants in Romanian villages and by university professors; by the young and old; and by nuns, priests, and artists,” says Ruxy Lazarescu '00, a native Romanian and three-time program assistant.

Originally from Germany, Engelhardt began teaching at Lewis & Clark in 1969 and remained until he retired in December 2002. He took students to France in 1972 and 1978, to Hungary in 1988 and 1992, to Poland (with a side trip to

Romania) in 1997, and to Romania in 2001. His wife, Marie, and their son, Roland, and daughter, Marika '00, often accompanied him.

Romania remains his favorite destination because of its people. Spontaneous and gracious, they welcomed Engelhardt and his charges into their homes. Hotel stays were a rarity.

Based at Bucharest University and Babes-Bolyai University in Transylvania, the undergraduate program included courses in language, art history, contemporary affairs/politics, and general history.

Engelhardt and his students often engaged in the lively political discourse prevalent in the streets and cafés of Bucharest. “I see the renewed political awareness of today’s students as a sign of hope,” he says.

While at Lewis & Clark, Engelhardt chaired the foreign languages and literatures department; launched *Polyglot*, the College’s foreign language literary magazine; and advised the Student Academic Affairs Board (SAAB) from 1992 to 2002.

Retirement, Engelhardt says, presents new opportunities. He plans to broaden his travels, catch up on his reading, and contribute work to an encyclopedia of French literature.

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