Letter from the Director

For the Program in Comparative Literature, 2012-2013 fulfilled the promise of the 2012 GRACLS conference theme, “Go-Betweens: Crossing Borders,” which is perhaps the theme for our field itself. Comparative Literature sits between languages, media, fields, and disciplines, but we chose to emphasize not only the interstitiality of our work, its “in-betweeness,” but also the ways in which our students and faculty rhizomatically connect diverse places and inquiries across the campus and the globe. As Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari deliciously suggested, human inquiries, like ginger roots, can be patterned in such a way as to allow for multiplicity and to resist hierarchy. Our field and our program epitomize such “going-betweens,” such structures of connection, in a world which has always been equally characterized by displacement and interdependence. Our work this year has involved exciting investigations into human culture, and the newsletter which follows is a kind of passport whose entries serve as a record of the intellectual and cultural places that our faculty and students have “visited” this year.

With prizes and projects that stretch from Tehran to Paris, from Calcutta to Kinshasa, from Cairo to Berlin, from Buenos Ares to Taipei, from Moscow to Tel Aviv, and beyond, our faculty and students continue to redefine the humanities and to offer compelling evidence that closely examining human expression constitutes a humane intervention in our world. Whether focusing on film, art installations, music, or literary works, the program’s research, which includes more than twenty languages, enhances the international scholarly conversation and informs a dynamic and committed pedagogy here on the 40 Acres. From our newest arrivals in an impressive 2012 MA cohort, to those who have left us for academic positions at major research universities, NGOs, and other internationally engaged organizations, UT’s program continues to make a difference. I hope that you will enjoy the journey mapped out in the next few pages.

Elizabeth Richmond-Garza
**Incoming Graduate Students**

*by Lynn Wilkinson, Graduate Advisor*

Global diversity in national and academic backgrounds and study in three or more national languages are only two of the many distinguishing qualities of the CL 2012-2013 incoming class.

**Kimberly Canuette** obtained her BA in English and History at North Carolina State University, before doing graduate work in Comparative Literature at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. At UT, she hopes to focus on literature in Arabic, French, and Persian. She is especially interested in disability studies.

**Chienyn Chi** double majored in English and Chinese at Rutgers University, where she became especially interested in the work of Gilles Deleuze, postcolonial theory, and translation studies. One of the subjects she hopes to explore at UT is the role of pastiche in postmodern literature in English and Chinese.

**Amanda Moore** began her undergraduate studies at Boston University but obtained her BA from the Sorbonne before going on to pursue an MFA in Creative Writing at San Jose State University. She is especially interested in postcolonial theory and literature and gender studies and plans to focus on postcolonial literature by women in French, English, and Spanish.

**Destini Price** obtained her BA in English and Classics from Hollins College before going on to graduate studies in Classics at Florida State University. At UT, she plans to continue her work on classical literature, but also pursue research interests in the reception of classical literature in the Renaissance and classical allusions in Victorian literature.

**Mark Smith** holds a BA in English and an MA in Russian, both from UT, and has also spent several years touring with a rock band. As a Ph.D. student in Comparative Literature, he plans to explore the intersection of literature and popular culture in Russia, the Czech Republic, and the U.S., particularly the representation of popular music in literary texts from all three areas.

**Katherine Willcox** has a BA in Comparative Literature and Spanish and an MA in Spanish Literature, both from the University of Virginia. She has studied abroad in Valencia and Argentina and worked in Peru and Turkey, where she has also studied Turkish. At UT she plans to continue her study of Spanish and Latin American literature, but to broaden her perspective to include Turkish language and literature and East-West Studies.

**A Note from GRACLS**

*by Katie Logan*

The 2012-2013 school year was yet another success for Graduate Comparative Literature Students (i.e. GRACLS). The breadth of involvement across cohorts has been especially remarkable, and we want to thank old friends and new faces for their invaluable contributions to the organization's projects.

We’ve been particularly invested this year in continuing to build a strong and interdisciplinary scholarly community within the bounds of the program. This community came out in full force at the ninth annual GRACLS conference, “Go-Betweens: Crossing Borders.” GRACLS members at every level of the program staffed the welcome table, presented sophisticated papers, and attended Dr. Jahan Ramazani’s illuminating keynote address. The biggest thank you’s go to Hannah Alpert-Abrams, Irina Simova and our wonderful graduate coordinator Billy Fatzinger for helping Martino Lovato and me throughout the organizational process. We’re all looking forward to the return of the conference next fall, as organizers, Hannah (again) and Cory Hahn have invited Dr. N. Katherine Hayles to campus to headline “What We Read: Materiality, Narrative, Text.”

Our academic conversations have also continued in a forum developed by our illustrious former president, Dusty Hixenbaugh, last spring. Our roundtable series still offers the student body the opportunity to discuss theoretical frameworks as a community, but the installments this year also aimed to highlight the work of students already engaged in dissertation projects. Thank you to Michal Raizen (“Passing: A conversation with/about Derrida”), Dusty and Frank Strong (“Subalterns and Others: What are the limits of postcolonial studies?”) and Marina Flider (“Postcards from the Past: Walter Benjamin in the Digital Age”) for sharing their work with us and leading such dynamic roundtables, and to Dr. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza for her support and her thoughtful contribution to the Derrida and Benjamin roundtables. Roundtables will continue this fall with a focus on preparing for upcoming exams and professional development.

Lest anyone think our year has been one of work alone, we’re immensely grateful to Thammika Songkaeo (our former social chair), Kaitlin Shirley and Nat Zingg (our current chairs) for their joyous, ambitious and creative contributions to the social life of the GRACLS community. They’ve been instrumental in introducing Comp Lit poetry night (where the wine flows freely, the languages are many, and the passion for poetry truly extraordinary to behold) and the Golden GRACLS, what we hope is the first of many more end-of-year awards festivities to come.
Fall 2013 Courses

Undergraduate Courses

CL 305
Vampire in Slavic Cultures
Thomas J. Garza

CL 315
Masterworks of World Literature
Elizabeth Richmond-Garza

CL 323
Cairo Cosmopolitan
Michal Raizen

Decoding Classical Chinese Poetry
Chiu-Mi Lai

Freud, Feminism & Queer Thry
Peter Rehberg

Hans Christian Andersen
Jakob Holm

Holocaust Aftereffects-Honors
Pascale Bos

Iranian Fiction
Michael Hillmann

Major Works of Dostoevsky
Keith Livers

The Arabian Nights
Samer Ali

The Qur’an
Hina Azam

Graduate Courses

CL 180K
Introduction to Comparative Literature: Proseminar in Methods of Study and Research
Hélène Tissières

CL 381
Boom and Post Boom
César Salgado

20th Century Germanophon Thought/Nexes
Katherine Arens

Oscar Wilde and His Circle
Elizabeth Richmond-Garza

CL 382
Writers and Intellectuals: Theories and Practices
Lynn Wilkinson

CL 386
Classical Arabic Akhbar
Samer Ali

CL 390
Literary & Cultural Theory Since 1900
Tarek El-Ariss

Dina Sherzer Endowment Fellowship

Pearl Brilmyer, 2013 Dina Sherzer Endowment Fellowship Recipient

Thanks to the generosity of the Dina Sherzer Endowment, we are able to supplement the studies of Pearl Brilmyer, who will be attending a conference in Linköping, Sweden called Missing Links: The Somatechnics of Decolonization. She will present a paper on South African novelist Olive Schreiner and the feminist and anti-racist critique of colonization she crafts in her posthumously published novel From Man to Man (1926).

Dina Sherzer is a Professor Emerita in the Program in Comparative Literature and the Department of French & Italian. She has served as both the Director of Comparative Literature and as the chair of French and Italian. Her fields of specialty are 20th-century French literature and film and post colonialism. The Dina Sherzer Endowment supports graduate students in Comparative Literature who undertake work abroad, with a particular commitment to the encouragement of students who will be presenting their research at international conferences or whose research require them to consult archives and resources overseas.
Degree Recipients

Master of Arts:

Spring 2013:
Hannah Alpert-Abrams: El Tony Manero Nacional
Thammika Songkaeo: Reverse Japonisme: Transpositions of Zola, Cezanne, and van Gogh in Twentieth-Century Japan

Fall 2012:
Katie Logan: Reading, Writing, Roaming: The Student Abroad in Arab Women’s Literature
Brian Mothersole: Documentaries, Salves, and Slaves: Different Receptions of Physicality in Erich Maria Remarque’s IM Western Nicht and Ernest Hemingway’s A Farewell to Arms
Nat Zingg: Andre Breton in Mexico: Surrealist Visions of an “Independent Revolutionary” Landscape

Doctor of Philosophy:

Fall 2012:
Nandini Dhar: Only My Revolt is Mine: Female Heroism, Counter-Violence and Gendered Resistance in Contemporary Novels of Slavery

Spring 2013:
Heather Latiolais-Eure: Illegible Women: Feminine Fakes, Façades, and Counterfeits in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture
Andrew Bennett: Waiting for Virgilio: Reassessing Cuba’s teatro del absurdo
Somy Kim: On Witnessing: Postwar Cinema in Iran and Lebanon

André Lefevere M.A. Memorial Prize for Literary and Cultural Translation and Exchange

Professor André Lefevere taught in the Department of Germanic Languages and in the Program in Comparative Literature at the University of Texas from 1984 to 1996. A brilliant linguist, critic, and translator, Lefevere brought great distinction to the University, especially through his efforts in translation studies where he was an innovator and inspiration to many around the world. This prize honors his memory.

Katie Logan received the 2013 André Lefevere M.A. Prize for Literary and Cultural Translation and Exchange for her 2012 Master’s Report: “Reading, Writing, Roaming: Arab Women’s Lives and Studies Abroad in Fadia Faqir’s My Name is Salma and Somaya Ramadan’s Leaves of Narcissus.” The project focused on contemporary female travel narratives and was particularly interested in the ways texts and characters from the Arab world engage with British literary canons. Logan wrote the report under the supervision of Dr. Tarek El-Ariss and Dr. Elizabeth Cullingford.
Elizabeth Warnock Fernea Memorial Endowment Fellowship

Elizabeth Warnock Fernea has devoted her life to greater understanding between the Middle East and the West. Herself an intrepid traveler, scholar filmmaker, and ambassador for intercultural exchange, Dr. Fernea was honored by friends, colleagues, and admirers upon her retirement by the creation of an endowment. It supports graduate research in Comparative Literature which focuses on the Middle East with a special emphasis on gender issues.

For five years now this endowment has funded advanced research students in our program, allowing them to undertake original archival research and to write up their research. For the sixth year of the award, the program has decided to use the available funds to supplement the studies of current students doing important work in Middle Eastern studies.

Thanks to the generosity of the Fernea Endowment and the College of Liberal Arts, we are able to supplement the studies of Ms. Maryam Shariati, attending the third annual meeting of the Institute of World Literature at Harvard University.

“I am extremely grateful and honored to be a 2013 recipient of the Elizabeth Fernea Excellence Award. This award allows me to participate in the Institute for World Literature program which will be held at Harvard University in summer 2013. As a dedicated comparitist, I am interested in exploring and studying the connections of literature with history, philosophy, politics, and literary theory, the transnational history of literary and cultural forms, and the historical relations between East and West. The multidisciplinary nature of the IWL training, therefore, aligns perfectly with my research as it further equips me with the essential tools and skills to develop my dissertation project while enabling me to reach across linguistic, cultural, historical, and disciplinary boundaries. The Fernea Award provides me with the unique opportunity to meet distinguished faculties and scholars and to discuss and exchange ideas for current projects. It is also a great source of support for conceptualizing and fulfilling ambitious future research.” - Maryam Shariati

Prizes and Fellowships

Comparative Literature Graduate Excellence Fellowships
Cynthia Francica (2013-2014)
Martino Lovato (2013-2014)

Graduate School Summer Fellowships
Amanda Moore (Summer 2014)
Kimberly Canuette (Summer 2014)
Mark Smith (Summer 2014)
Destini Price (Summer 2014)

Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowships (FLAS)
Katie Logan, Middle Eastern Studies, Arabic (2013-2014)

Billy Bob Draeger Graduate Research Fellowship in the Humanities
Roanne Kantor (Summer 2013)
Jennie Wojtusik (Summer 2013)

Other Fellowships and Awards
Fulbright Scholarship for Middle East and North Africa
Zainab Cheema (2013-2014)

U. S. Department of State Critical Language Scholarship
Jamila Davey (Summer 2013)

Taraknath Das Foundation Grant
Jayita Sinha (Summer 2013)

Schusterman Award
Michal Raizen (2013-2014)

2013 - 2014 Fulbright Competition

The 2013-2014 Fulbright U.S. Student competition opened May 1, 2013 and is open to graduate students, undergraduates who will have completed their degree by the beginning of the grant period (Sept. 1, 2013). The competition will close at 5:00 p.m., Eastern Time on October 15, 2013. The program is restricted to U.S. citizens. The grants are for study and research abroad, and are available for most countries. A number of countries also offer grants for those who wish to serve as English teaching assistants.

For more information visit http://us.fulbrightonline.org/home.html
First Year Student Profiles (2011-12)

**Jamila Davey** holds a BA in Philosophy from Northwestern University and earned a MA in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Texas in 2012. Jamila works in Arabic and French and also has training in Spanish. Her research investigates the relationship of Islamic literary forms and the Islamic narrative to the broader category of Arabic literature and engages Islamic and Sufi lenses that open up multivocal and multivalent interpretations of texts. Jamila's work also examines modern Arabic and Francophone literature in light of their Islamic contexts with a focus on women writers and the construction of gender identity.

**Yucong Hao** received her BA from Tsinghua University, Beijing in 2012. At UT, her current project focuses on the adaptation, translation, interaction, and dissemination of Western literature in East Asia from late nineteenth century to early twentieth century. She is particularly interested in the comparative studies between Chinese and Japanese literature and the possibility of East Asian theory.

**Nika Setek** graduated from Saint Louis University with a BA in Communications and Spanish in 2007, spending two years of her undergraduate studies in Madrid, Spain. In 2011 she earned her MA in Spanish Language and Literature, also from Saint Louis University. She has taught Spanish both at the university and high school level in St. Louis before starting at UT. A native of Croatia and coming from a diverse language background, she works mostly in Spanish and English literatures. Her main research interests are comparative medieval studies and contemporary dystopian literature.

**Kaitlin Shirley** received her BA from Sarah Lawrence College in 2008. She attended Wellesley college from 2010 to 2011 for post-baccalaureate studies where she focused on Russian language and literature. At UT, she is working on Russian and French 18th and 19th century literature, focusing specifically on Dostoevsky, Rousseau, and confession. She is looking forward to spending her third summer at Middlebury College's Summer Russian language program before returning to UT to continue her research into issues of transgression, confession, and translation.

**Jennie Wojtusik** graduated from University of Washington in 2011 with a BA in Russian Language and Literature and a BA in Comparative Literature. She focuses on the long nineteenth century with a particular interest in the unique assimilation and dissent of Russian writers to the concerns of continental philosophy. She works in the comparative history of ideas, tracing the expression of epistemological and ontological concerns through Russian, German and English Romanticism to Modernism.

**Raelene Wyse** holds a BA in English from Seattle University and an MA in Latin American and Caribbean Studies from New York University. During her undergraduate work, she began a comparative project focusing on Chicana author Helena María Viramontes and Chilean author Susana Sánchez Bravo, which inspired her transition to CL. At UT, she is researching representations of gender and Jewish identity in literature by Latin American Jewish writers.
2012 GRACLS Conference Reflections
by Martino Lovato and Katie Logan

When we began discussing 2012’s Ninth Annual Graduate Comparative Literature Conference, we were looking for a new start. GRACLS’ successful 2011 Conference focused on post 9/11 trauma and constituted a moment of reflection, while the Arab Spring and the ongoing financial crisis urged us to consider the new sites of struggle taking shape before us. The need to reshape the theoretical assumptions through which we read the interconnection between diverse literary landscapes was pressing, and we decided to start from a classic site of comparison: uncomfortable in-betweenness. Methods of study like cosmopolitanism, transnationalism and planetarity have consistently highlighted this state of being, and we wanted to re-think these formulations.

We asked panelists to focus on the individuals, groups, texts and practices that translate or mediate between different places or identities so as to reassess the state of our discipline in these fast-changing times. We entitled the conference “Go-Betweens: Crossing Borders,” and invited our colleagues to address literary and cultural figures that shatter categories and definitions of boundaries.

Our thinking on these topics was influenced by Jahan Ramazani, Edgar F. Shannon Professor of English at the University of Virginia. His most recent book, A Transnational Poetics (2009), argues that poetry, frequently considered the most localized of genres, is always the product of global interactions and movements, a position that encouraged us to think about entities like genres and disciplines as other sites of in-betweenness. We were thrilled, then, when he accepted our invitation to deliver the conference’s keynote address. Dr. Ramazani generously attended a graduate panel in conversation with his work; in this lead-up to the keynote, graduate students discussed poetic traditions from locales as varied as the Scottish coastline, Ecuador and India. Dr. Ramazani’s keynote, “Poetry and Its Others,” emerged from his current work on poetry’s potential for heteroglossia and generated an engaged discussion among conference participants.

Graduate student presenters crossed the borders of departments on UT’s campus and travelled from academic institutions across the country and overseas, making the conference multidisciplinary, vibrant with original notions of diversity, conceptualizations of borders, and of crossing itself. Their interpretations of the conference topic led to a record number of presentations and located “go-betweens” in a diverse assortment of media, time periods, text and disciplines. Panel topics included archiving, martyrdom and religious identity, translation studies, heteroglossia, gender, and the incorporation of cultural materials into language classrooms. Dr. Richmond-Garza also led a round-table discussion on the interaction between scholarship and pedagogy within academia.

Planning a conference is an immensely rewarding academic exercise; at the same time, it offers logistical challenges that encourage presenters to think about the administrative complexities they might face in future roles. In thanks for their intellectual, financial and moral support, we would especially like to recognize the following people: Dean Randy Diehl; Senior Associate Dean Richard Flores; Associate Dean Jamie Southerland; Associate Dean Esther Raizen; Dr. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza, Director of the Program in Comparative Literature; Dr. César A. Salgado, Graduate Advisor in the Program in Comparative Literature; Dr. Kamran Aghaie and the Center for Middle Eastern Studies; Dr. Douglas Biow and the Center for European Studies; Dr. David Birdsong and the Department of French and Italian; Dr. Kristen Brustad and the Department of Middle Eastern Studies; Dr. Elizabeth Cullingford and the Department of English; Dr. Thomas J. Garza and the Texas Language Center; Dr. Charles R. Hale and the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies; Dr. Susan Sage Heinzelman and the Center for Women’s and Gender Studies; Dr. Mary Neuburger and the Department of Slavic and Eurasian Studies and CREEES; Dr. Mary Neuberger and the Department of Slavic and Eurasian Studies and CREEES; Dr. Jill Robbins and the Department of Spanish and Portuguese; Dr. Martha Ann Selby and the Department of Asian Studies; Dr. Alan Tully and the Department of History; The Graduate Student Assembly; The Louann and Larry Temple Endowment; and William Fatzinger, Graduate Coordinator for the Program in Comparative Literature.
Institute for World Literature in Istanbul
by Fatma Tarlaci & Katie Logan

Last summer, we traveled to Istanbul, Turkey for the 2nd annual session of the Institute for World Literature. Developed and chaired by Professor David Damrosch, Chair of the Comparative Literature Department at Harvard University, and a number of his most prominent colleagues, the Institute recognizes the need for new and responsible practices in world literature. During the month-long program, we approached the topic through bi-weekly seminars and workshops interested in both scholarship and pedagogy. We discussed the status of world literature at universities as varied as Harvard, Bilgi University (our host for the summer), the University of São Paulo, and the American University of Beirut. We heard stimulating lectures from Bruce Robbins, Djelal Kadir, Kader Konuk, and Orhan Pamuk.

Spending the summer in a classroom with David Damrosch, the department chair of Comparative Literature at Harvard and author of books like and What is World Literature? (2003) and Teaching World Literature (2009), and with Bruce Robbins, professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia and author of books like Feeling Global: Internationalism in Distress (1999) and Perpetual War: Cosmopolitanism from the Viewpoint of Violence (2012) makes for a pretty engaging summer. Spending the summer in that classroom while in Istanbul and with 100 other participants from an assortment of countries, disciplines, and stages in their academic careers becomes simply transformative. Seminars that we participated questioned the study of world literature in intellectually challenging ways where scholars from around the world shared their unique perspectives shaped by their specific backgrounds. Sharing what we have discussed in the different seminars that we joined was totally enriching. The Institute brought people from around the world together to study world literature in Istanbul, a city where the culture and history of thousands of years still live.

What made the program even more enriching was the “affinity groups” where people chose their groups according to its theme, shared their projects, had the chance to receive feedback from their individual groups, and came up with a presentation for all of the participants at the end of the program.

Pamuk’s presence at the Institute highlighted the importance of the summer’s host city. Far from the book-less locale once described by Auerbach (the topic of Kader Konuk’s plenary lecture on her book East-West Mimesis: Auerbach in Turkey (2010)), Istanbul offered us its storied history and its interaction with former empires and international communities as ways of thinking about the circulation of literature. We toured Pamuk’s newly opened Museum of Innocence, which serves both as a physical representation of his most recent book and a museum of Istanbul life in the 1970’s. For Fatma, Istanbul is home. For Katie, the experience of a new place, culture and language enriched the Institute’s curriculum.

Our program, Comparative Literature at UT Austin, supported both of us with Elizabeth Fernea Fellowship to help us with our travel expenses and allowed us to develop our research and scholarship with the unique experience at Institute for World Literature.
If the crisis of the humanities is long-standing in the U.S., it has become particularly acute in the past few years as widespread budget cuts in education have led to programs closing and funding plummeting nation-wide. The fact that cuts have often impacted the humanities more deeply than scientific disciplines was the recent topic of several lengthy and heated discussions with UT fellow graduate students. Even today, the scary question Tad Friend asked in *The New Yorker* when writing on the 2009 California education budget cuts still haunts us: “who will bankroll poetry?”

One early morning last October, while I was browsing through the thesis work my students had turned in that week, a knock on the door of my office startled me out of my reading. In came a student, with a draft of her creative project in hand and several questions in mind. After our discussion, she left me with a copy of her work. To my delight, I found myself unable to put it down. Outside, heavy steps hurried from one classroom to the next as the tower clock embraced, unforgiving, the UT campus, but I was engulfed by her words. If somebody had told me a few months before that my teaching assistantship for the Plan II Honors Senior Thesis course would involve becoming entranced by students' poetry, I probably would not have believed them. But, then again, that was one of several surprises undergraduate thesis mentoring at Plan II had in stock for me. In the midst of the current questioning of the place of the humanities in higher education, the thesis course offers a space where undergraduate students of disciplines as varied as biology, business, sociology, history, linguistics, literature, creative writing and arts, among others, can engage in productive conversations on their projects and, in the process, build an interdisciplinary intellectual community. As I mentored students working on such disparate and fascinating projects as the potential impact of science fiction literature on urban planning, the aesthetic experience through the eyes of neuroscience, the impact of UT undergraduate student housing on academic performance, or the effects of friendship on physical health, I was struck by the productivity of their conversations across disciplines. To this day, I keep thinking of how my students' work might help us re-assess the entangled relations between the humanities and sciences from the privileged vantage point of their undergraduate research.

Teaching this course has been illuminating for me both at the professional and personal level. When I first learned about my teaching appointment, I did not quite know what to expect: I had always been passionate about teaching, but I had not mentored a thesis class before. As a graduate student right in the midst of writing my own doctoral dissertation, I feel grateful for having had the chance to learn from my students’ process. This experience reminded me of the importance of focusing precisely on that key word, process, so that an idea, no matter how preliminary, might grow into an outstanding thesis project. Teaching this course has cemented my belief that, rather than focusing exclusively on the final outcome, addressing apparently simple but actually quite challenging issues such as finding a sound research question or writing a good introduction is fundamental to learning. Students themselves, in fact, often expressed that their favorite class activities were those in which they had the chance to share their research and workshop each other's work, which brings me to the second lesson I took away from this experience: the importance of community to thesis writing. An intellectual community to share and disseminate our research, to give meaning to what we do beyond our study cubicle, and also to keep us afloat through the obstacles, dry patches, and sheer frustration. Last but not least, I was reminded of the importance of falling and staying in love with our thesis topic and, more broadly, with our work. And if thesis writing might at times disturbingly feel like a tortuous romantic entanglement, this past year my students have taught me that it is through staying close to work that ignites our passion, be it science or poetry or, perhaps, both, that writing results in profound academic and personal growth.
“quem quiser aprender é favor prestar atenção”
[“if you want to learn, you just gotta pay attention!”]

In his song “O Baião,” Luiz Gonzaga describes what it takes to learn the baião, a Brazilian song and dance form popularized in the 1940s. However, Luiz might as well have been referring to my wonderful experience studying Brazilian language and culture in 2012-2013. I haven’t (yet) learned to dance the baião; nonetheless, the Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowship awarded by the Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies has helped me take great strides in the Program in Comparative Literature, and to evolve as a scholar of Brazil. In the past academic year, my confidence has grown as I transition from coursework to professional inquiry. If asked a year ago, I would have said that I was not ready to undertake long-term original research, without the guidance of coursework. Now, on the other hand, I cannot wait to advance and to get my ideas “out there” to a wider critical readership.

And with the help of the FLAS fellowship, I haven’t had to wait. In the fall and spring, I was able to devote significant time and energy to professional writing activities centered on Brazilian literature. The invaluable support of my professors and of my community of peers encouraged me to transform my sprawling (to put it nicely!) Master’s Report into focused manuscript, which I have submitted to an academic journal. My brainchild is eager to be let loose in the world, and I am on course to add my voice to contemporary inquiry and debate.

In addition to helping me adapt and submit the manuscript, the 2012-2013 fellowship accelerated my progress towards a doctoral degree. With sure-footed academic Portuguese, I look forward to conducting field research in Brazil this summer and beyond. Moreover, my area of expertise has expanded to include linguistic and historical perspectives in my study of Latin American literature. Most importantly, new joy and new energy have come to me as I prepare for my upcoming projects and milestones.

The past academic year has been the most rewarding and productive of my college or graduate career. As Luiz Gonzaga would sum it up, “o baião tem um quê / que as outras dancas não têm [the baião has a special something / that the other dances don’t have”]. And, for me, 2012-2013 has had that “special something” as well.
Experiences in Cuba
by Frank Strong

At a conference last spring, a senior scholar pulled me aside and said, Frank, if you’re going to write about Alejo Carpentier, you’ve got to go to Cuba. It was something I had heard from friends and professors, including my dissertation adviser, but not something I thought would be possible while still a graduate student. Cuba just seemed too mystifying, too complicated, too difficult for someone still learning the ropes of archival work.

But this scholar, a professor at another university, was insistent, and so was my adviser, Professor César Salgado. When I got emails from both spurring me forward, I applied for and received a Travel Grant from the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. So I found myself, last April, with money and impetus—getting to Cuba was now possible, but I was still mystified about what to do, who to talk to, and what to look for in order to make the most of my time on the island. Fortunately, UT has developed a sort of pipeline for students traveling to Havana: several students from Comp Lit and Spanish and Portuguese have traveled there in the past few years for research and conferences, and I was able to draw on their experiences, their advice, and their contact lists as I prepared for my own trip. And two colleagues, one from Spanish and Portuguese and one from Comp Lit, were planning trips that roughly coincided with mine. We shared questions as we were getting ready to leave, and we traded notes once we got there. Their help, and (of course) Professor Salgado’s, proved invaluable.

I went to Havana at the end of June and stayed there through mid-July, spending most of my days at the Fundación Alejo Carpentier, which now houses the writer’s archives at his former residence in the city’s El Vedado neighborhood. It was strange going through Carpentier’s notes and drafts in what had once been his dining room. Most of all, it highlighted a hidden meaning in that senior scholar’s insistence: If you’re going to write about Carpentier, you’ve got to go to Cuba.

Because when she said it, I knew that there were things in Havana—papers, notes in the margins of the author’s books—that I could never find online or in a journal at the Benson. And I knew that in Havana there were people who had dedicated their lives to studying Carpentier, who maybe even knew Carpentier when he was alive, and I knew that, because of the politics of US/Cuba relations, the only way to talk to those people was to get a license, get on a plane, and fly to their city. In those ways, traveling to Cuba was exactly as helpful to my research as I had hoped, and much more helpful than I had expected.

But I couldn’t have expected that visiting Havana would help my writing in another, less tangible way. Without visiting Havana, for example, I couldn’t have known exactly what Carpentier meant when he wrote that “the sun is, in our latitudes, a sumptuous presence, often bothersome and tyrannical, but one that must be tolerated on a level of mutual understanding.” Or when he wrote about Cuban houses as “invitations” to breezes. I don’t mean that I somehow became more of an expert on Carpentier’s books just from writing in the rooms from which he wrote, or from walking the streets he describes in El acoso or El siglo de las luces. But my visit did give me a new starting point for reading those books, another level of connection. Which, in the end, is what I really think that senior scholar was getting at when she told me I had to go.
Publishing Outside of Academia
by Hannah Alpert-Abrams

I was asked to share five hundred words about writing beyond the academy. Before attending UT, I worked collaboratively on non-fiction book projects; as a student, I work with several literary magazines. I offer three thoughts on bridging the scholarly/literary divide:

1. The death of the author: We all know that in 1967 Roland Barthes proclaimed the death of the author, and that in 1969, Michel Foucault proposed the author function in its stead. But what does the death of the author mean to a ghostwriter? Sometimes, collaborative writing meant working with sincere and talented writers who sought an editorial gaze. On other occasions, it meant being paid to produce content in the voice of someone else. Ghostwriting explodes the metaphor of the death of the author and brings it into the realm of the uncanny. Whose voice is speaking in a ghostwritten text?

2. The fate of the book: When I worked as a collaborative writer, I participated in a side project helping to develop an app for long-form essays. My experience at the margins of the publishing world showed me that while scholars may be mourning the death of the book, innovative publishers are breaking into new forms. Sometimes these forms are beautiful: (semi)digital works by Amaranth Borsuk or Marc Saporta come to mind. Other times, they suggest new possibilities for the communication of information and the production of meaning. We can think about what those possibilities mean for the study of literature. We can also think about the doors they open for us as communicators of information and producers of meaning. As scholars we are, after all, writers too.

3. Mapping: At ACLA this year, I met a scholar who uses computers to map social networks between literary figures in 19th century France. I see my involvement with literary magazines today as a way to become a (very) small participant in contemporary literary networks. I currently work with Full Stop, an online literary journal, The Bat City Review, the Michener Center’s print journal, and Covered with Fur, produced by the new Austin publishing house A Strange Object. Through these projects, I collaborate with writers in Comparative Literature, in the English Department, at the Michener Center, in the wider Austin community, and across the digital landscape. I wonder how these networks will be mapped.

East Asian Culture: A Case Study of Taiwanese Cinema Since 2008
by Flora Chuang

Ang Lee’s best director acceptance speech in 2013 brought Taiwan into the spotlight of the Academy and its global audience again, this time for The Life of Pi (2012). Pi was shot in Taiwan and drew the world’s attention to its fledgling film industry, one that has been revived by the recent boom in Taiwanese narrative film productions. The reception of these Taiwanese films has been favorable not only within Taiwan, but also in other Chinese-speaking cities throughout East Asia. Although Taiwan represents a small market, and the Taiwanese cinema industry is equally small in the context of world cinema as a whole, my focus on recent Taiwanese cinema will demonstrate that Taiwan’s current position has made it a cultural producer with marked visibility in East Asian Cinema and beyond. My research project focuses on narrative films produced since 2008. I argue that the current establishment of Taiwanese cinema as a national cinema can be read as both a resistance to, as well as a contestation of, globalization. I suggest that this new establishment challenges our understanding of Chinese cinema as always defined by Mainland China and offers expanded reception of these works for English-language audiences. Taiwanese cinema is an example of trans-Chinese-language cinema, and it allows for a cinema that is defined by a single shared culture spreading beyond borders. It also allows us to understand how imperial cultural products, like those of the Chinese and Japanese cinema industries and the American Hollywood studios, for example, are localized in Taiwanese cinema. Consequently, I claim that Taiwanese cinema should be understood globally as well as in the context of its regional political history, where the residuals of Cold War politics and the emergent redefinition of the image of East Asian image continue to reinforce Taiwan as an indispensable nodal point. This is a comparative project, and at its core it is possesses a multidisciplinary essence. UT is an excellent place for me to do this work, because I can create a dissertation committee consisting of members from Comparative Literature, English, and Radio, Film and Television. These faculty members not only recognize the originality of this project, but also support my specific undertaking of it. It really is a great honor to become part of this intellectual community.
I presented my first paper, “The Death of Theory and the Birth of a New Comparative Literature,” at the MLA this year in Boston. My panel was “Theory: A 20th-Century Genre.” The panel was organized by Thomas Beebee and Marshall Brown. My fellow panelists were Hillis Miller and Nicholas Birns. Jeffery Williams was our respondent. Unlike the ACLA which I am more used to, the MLA follows the usual conference format where the entire panel gets over in an hour and half. Time to bond as scholars, and discuss our work is short. But it was amazing that our discussion on literary theory started way before the panel officially materialized on January 3rd 2013, and the conversation still continues. Beebee and Brown had insisted right in the beginning of 2012 that we exchange our conference papers before the presentations in 2013. As promised, we shared our papers with each other and the moderators months before the MLA conference. This gave us the opportunity to understand the seminar topic as a whole, and connect with the issues at a very organic and individual level. Plus, we were in touch with each other over emails even before the presentation. It didn’t seem that we didn’t know each other.

On the presentation day I met my fellow panelists. It was such an honor to share the stage with Hillis Miller, and other distinguished guests. We must have had more than 200 people in the auditorium. We read our papers at our assigned times. Nick went first, I followed him, and Miller gave the last word on literary theory. The seminar ended with J. Williams’ response to all the papers in the seminar. Once the seminar was over, we all went together to get dinner, and over fine food and wine discussed our works, travels, interests, and projects. It was most interesting to hear from Hillis Miller the stories of Derrida. Ah! Memories. I wouldn’t change anything from that day.

For me the seminar had a special significance. First, it was a panel that attracted a wide audience. I had never spoken to more than 50 people in a panel before. So, it was rewarding to learn to handle a bigger audience. Second, the seminar gave me the opportunity to think, talk, feel, sense, see, hear, and experience comparative literature at the MLA. Nothing is greater than having the company of fine comparatists at a non-ACLA location. Third, my MLA paper has given me ideas to think about the prospect of literary theory and translation in the globalized world. This could be my post-dissertation project. Fourth, Thomas Beebee and Hillis Miller have commented on my MLA talk in order to develop it into a fuller essay. MLQ is considering it for publication. Further, Miller and I are in constant touch through emails, and he has read two out of my three chapters from my dissertation. Fifth, Thomas B and I will be co-organizing a sequel of our theory panel in 2014 at the ACLA. There is a chance that CLS would take out a special issue to consider papers presented in that seminar. So consider sending your abstract once we have the cfp out in September. But above all, the seminar gave me an opportunity to grow as a scholar, and form friendships that mean more to me than anything in this world. Long live comparative literature!
Why a Military Officer Would Pursue a PhD in Comparative Literature

by Mike Flynn

As a naval officer to be assigned to the United States Naval Academy (USNA) English faculty upon completing the PhD, I wanted to pursue a degree in Comparative Literature because of the flexibility it offered me in conducting a research project that both incorporated all the language proficiencies I had acquired throughout my career and would be relevant to the US military and its future leaders.

A series of extremely fortunate long-term postings in Spain, China and Italy, many short-term deployments to Greece, Turkey, Iraq, Qatar and Japan, combined with an insatiable interest in foreign cultures and languages led to competencies in Spanish, Italian, Mandarin Chinese and French. Selfishly, I wanted to take advantage of the vast resources at UT to get a chance to read the great literary works in the languages I had worked so hard to learn, and maintain my proficiencies in the process. That worked out marvelously. To mention one class, I took an entire seminar on Boccaccio's Decameron, which was pure pleasure. The auspices of the Comparative Literature program provided me with the time and space to engage one of the great works of Western literature in its original language. Were it not for the program, I may very well have gone to the grave with a still-untouched Decameron staring me down from the bookshelf in quiet rebuke and indignation. Now I only have to worry about that happening with my Spanish copy of Don Quixote.

Less selfishly, I wanted to build a research project around literary representations of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as diagnoses among returning US military members have spiked considerably in the past decade. As a course offering at the USNA, this may serve to enlighten the students on the certain elements of violent conflict that lead to more traumatic effects than others. While there will never be violence without trauma, perhaps there are certain things that wartime leaders can do to mitigate PTSD symptoms, or prevent the disorder altogether.

Critics have argued that instances of PTSD are spread throughout World literature, from the Greek epics and tragedies to the trauma of witnessing the Black Death victims that inspired Boccaccio, to the contemporary Latin American narco-literature representing the personal and cultural trauma of the citizens who lived and still live under a continual threat of random violence. I hope to write a dissertation that will be a comparative study different cultural and literary representations in the aftermath of violent trauma that will be both socially relevant and academically innovative. Comparative Literature was the only program I found that offered both the flexibility and the resources to support my particular interlinguistic, transnational, interdisciplinary project.
When I found out I was moving to Columbus, OH during my year at the Center for Arabic Study Abroad in Cairo, I contacted my professors at UT to see if they had any recommendations for finding teaching opportunities in the area. As I discovered, the best way to find lectureships is by using your contact networks. In my case, Dr. Samer Ali put me in contact with a colleague in the department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at The Ohio State University, who, knowing of an opening in Comparative Studies at one of OSU’s regional campuses put me in contact with the dean of OSU Newark. I began teaching a few weeks later.

The Department of Comparative Studies at OSU houses comparatists from all walks of the humanities, including religious studies, literature, philosophy, folklore, and science and technology studies. Its courses, which are typically part of the university’s General Education Curriculum, encourage students to think across disciplinary, national, and linguistic boundaries. The department’s goal of encouraging students to think as global citizens “guided by an ethos of mutual respect and persistent questioning, and recognition of the value and pleasures of critical intellectual work” certainly resonates with my experiences in Comp Lit at UT.

At OSU Newark, I have been teaching “Introduction to the Humanities: Cross-Cultural Perspectives” and “Literature and Society.” Although these courses have many different sections across the OSU campuses, each instructor brings a different perspective and emphasis. In my case, I draw on my background in Middle Eastern Studies, Arabic literature, and Comparative Literature when developing the comparative framework of my courses. In the introductory humanities course we explore primary sources in the visual arts, literature, sciences, and politics in order to discuss different ideological and regional perspectives on historical events or intellectual currents. My literature course focuses specifically on Middle Eastern literatures. However, it also includes readings that help students think more broadly about different ways to conceptualize the relationship between literature and society.

One important benefit of teaching at OSU (other than funding all those days, months, and years of dissertation writing) is the way it has allowed me to diversify my teaching portfolio. In addition to the language courses I taught at UT, teaching at OSU has given me the opportunity to create and teach content courses that both overlap with and go beyond my previous experience. While teaching “away from home” as a non-affiliated graduate student certainly brings the unsavory realities of contingent academic labor into focus, it can provide useful opportunities for teaching in different kinds of academic settings and in different subject areas.

I will bring these teaching experiences with me as I begin my new position as Middle Eastern and Islamic studies librarian at OSU. In addition to delving head first into the field of librarianship and learning Turkish, I will also continue to teach, this time in the department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures.
I’m writing this note in mid-April, when in Texas the bluebonnets are blooming and the sun starts to become violently hot. Alas, it is not the same in Michigan. No, here we are entering our final two weeks of the appropriately called Winter Semester. It has been, indeed, a long, grey, and cold winter, with so much snow as I don’t remember ever seeing, and these two weeks will mark the end of my first academic year working for the Sweetland Center for Writing, the University of Michigan.

I started talking about the Michigan winter because a line out of Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses* has lingered in the back of my mind in the past month or so: “The trouble with the English was their… in a word… their weather.” I could say the same thing about Michigan. The trouble with Michigan is the weather.

The thing is, that while outside the cold destroys my skin and the snow discolors my life, inside Sweetland I have found an ambience affiliation that is as warm as Austin, and I can describe my academic appointment as a magical rainbow—it’s colors leading to a pot of gold (this is figuratively; I am a non-tenure track lecturer whose stipend does not lead to riches—at least not material ones).

But that is not exactly true. I am a Lecturer III with a union contract, and if in three years I pass my major review and get promoted to Lecturer IV I will have automatic renewal of my contract, which is a sort of tenure if you think about it. All faculty at Sweetland are lecturers, and the difference between I to IV is that III and IV have their appointments only at Sweetland, rather than a split contract between Sweetland and another department. So, we III and IV are by contract required to do service for the Center, leading committees, attending faculty meetings, and developing curricula. We all teach two classes each semester and have 10 hours a week of writing workshop—one on one appointments in which we talk to writers about their writing.

I find my experience here intense, but extremely rewarding, and it is exactly what I like to do with my academic life. So here is what I do at Sweetland: I’m required to teach an intro to writing course every Fall Semester, but then I’m free to decide what other courses to teach. I’m interested in contemporary rhetoric and writing center pedagogy, so I teach classes in methodologies of peer tutoring and in new media culture. This year I taught a course on the rhetoric of blogging, and next year I will teach courses on social media and internet memes. I will also have the chance to teach a graduate seminar on dissertation and academic article writing—I’m very excited about that.

I miss Comp Lit and UT, of course. I believe that choosing to get my PhD in Austin was the best choice of my life, because it prepared me for what I love to do, which is working at Sweetland. I really cannot see myself anywhere else, for now—even though the trouble with Michigan is the weather, and my vitamin D is close to zero, and these cold, grey days find me whispering, more often than I thought I would, “Oh, Austin.”
“As a curious person, you will appreciate the intellectual stimulation that Cornell has to offer.” This statement ran like a leitmotiv in the last conversations with my remarkable intellectual mentors at UT Austin. After two semesters at Cornell, I have to admit that the statement sounds like an understatement. Regarding intellectual stimulation, Cornell is simply grand. There is no shortage of compelling lectures to attend. From Beverly Guy-Sheftall on Michelle Obama in Black Studies and Feminism to Toni Morrison on Writing and Reading; from Achille Mbembe on Fanon and the Subject of Emancipation to Michael Warner on Risk, Normativity, and Valuation; from Danny Glover on Race, Activism and Art to Afrika Bambaataa on the roots of Hip Hop. Amongst the gorgeous waterfalls, gorges, and trails of Ithaca and the grandness of Cornell, my knowledge of the world is ever expanding.

The thought-provoking weekly seminar with Cornell faculty from various departments, including Political Science, Anthropology, History, English, and Linguistics has been formative on several levels. I have had access to a diverse array of readings and what I call “Gorilla courses” which have exceeded my expectations. Reading and discussion of texts on diverse regions—South-East Asia, South America, Europe, the Middle East, and America—has been rewarding for me as a Comparatist. Thanks to its structure and composition, the seminar has offered me a higher awareness of disciplinary differences, resulting in a deeper understanding of the kinds of questions that are important to audiences outside of Comparative Literature and African Studies. Consequently, my current book project on women’s deployment of “indigenous” forms of contestation as a theoretical model for the nexus between tradition, politics, and agency is more than ever mindful of its target audience. Despite the disciplinary differences, I have tremendously benefitted from discussions with Cornell faculty seminar members, Gerard Aching, Magnus Fiskesjo, Richard Miller, Leslie Adelson, Eric Cheyfitz, Judith Byfield, and Sarah Murray, who are invested in the intersection of related issues in their work. In fact, I cannot say enough about my fellow seminar participants and especially senior faculty who have been more than generous as mentors. Special thanks go to Professors Aching (Seminar Director), Adelson, Byfield, and Cheyfitz.

Significantly, this semester in my graduate/undergraduate course, “Body Politics in African Literature and Cinema,” I came to better understand how teaching expands and informs one’s research. The ongoing conversation with students is an unparalleled opportunity to push one’s own theoretical boundaries. Hence, next year, I will teach “Poetics and Aesthetics of Nakedness” which is even more closely related to my current book project.

I have enjoyed networking opportunities such as dinners, lunches, and seminars with speakers and invitations to present my work in various settings (Comparative Literature, Women of Color Conference, Africana Studies and Research Center, etc.). As already alluded to previously, the weekly seminar has helped me maximize the benefits of these opportunities by allowing me to reflect on the ways in which I interact in different communities—intellectual and social. Other opportunities have also enhanced my experience here at Cornell. For example, last week I received a certificate in Leadership after attending a ten-week seminar on Leadership organized by the office of Postdoctoral Studies. Furthermore, I look forward to the stimulating intellectual environment of the world-renowned Cornell School of Criticism and Theory that I will attend this summer.

If you are considering applying for the Cornell University Doctoral/Postdoctoral Diversity Fellowships, consult the website http://as.cornell.edu/academics/opportunities/diversity-fellowships/index.cfm. Postdoctoral fellows teach one course per year, above the entry level, in fields related to their research. All fellows also attend a weekly research seminar, in which they will be joined by post-docs continuing from the previous year and an annually changing group of Cornell faculty who have similar scholarly interests. Fellows receive full benefits and research money.
On the Publishing of *Depression: A Public Feeling*
by Dr. Ann Cvetkovich

Depression: A Public Feeling grew out of my decade-long collaborative work with Public Feelings groups in Austin, Chicago, and New York that used the category of “political depression” to describe the conditions of hopelessness and despair with which many of us, including scholars and activists, respond to the current state of the world. It is also a very personal book that includes a memoir of my own experiences finishing my dissertation and first book. The personal narrative is combined with a critical essay that ranges across an eclectic archive that links early Christian accounts of monks battling the urge to give up their faith, postcolonial feminist academics confronting the absent archive of slavery and writer’s block, and contemporary queer artists taking up crafting and other domestic practices. Challenging medical models that turn doctors into the experts on depression, the book seeks to make space for feeling as thinking and for creative forms of scholarship. For further information, including reviews, see: www.anncvetkovich.com

Representing the Humanities to Our UT Chancellor’s Council
by Dr. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza

As a result of being chosen to deliver one of the “Game Changers” lectures, “Do We Lead Double Lives? #JekyllHyde,” which was broadcast on the Longhorn Network last fall, I was invited to represent the humanities at the UT system-wide Winter Chancellor’s Council Executive Committee meeting, which was held at on campus on January 24th and 25th. With so many remarkable projects among which to choose picking two presenters was not easy, but Michaela Telfer and Michal Raizen represented the field of Comparative Literature at the undergraduate and graduate level respectively at UT superbly. Michaela Telfer, an English/Plan I Honours and Russian Language and Culture major, presented a portion of her honors thesis about the ways in which nineteenth-century fictional writers intervened in the conversation about the place of women’s rights in the emergent discourse of human rights. Her talk, entitled “Women in Hugo and Dostoevsky or How to Start a Revolution,” suggested how these two authors, both of whom she explored in the original language, offered three-dimensional, vivid portraits of female identity whose capacity to capture the imagination ensured them a crucial role in their historical moment. Michal Raizen, a Ph.D. candidate in Comparative Literature, presented a portion of her dissertation project under the title, “Writing Across the Divide: Contemporary Authors of Hebrew and Arabic Literatures Reflect on the All-Stars of Arabic Music.” Her boldly interdisciplinary presentation combined her expertise in music, Hebrew, and Arabic in order to invite the audience to consider how crucial musical performance, whether live or on radio broadcasts, can be in bringing riven communities into dialog in ways that go beyond official diplomatic channels.

From left to right: Michal Raizen and Michaela Telfer.
Tarek in Berlin
by Dr. Tarek El-Ariss

I spent the academic year 2012-13 as a EUME (Europe in the Middle East) postdoc-toral fellow at Forum Transregional Studien of the Wissenschaftkolleg zu Berlin. As EUME fellow working in literature, I had an office and a visiting-scholar affiliation at the Schlegel Graduate School for Literary Studies at the Free University in Berlin. My postdoc project, *Making a Scene: Literature, Social Media, and the Arab Spring*, is the subject of my second book which I expect to complete in Fall 2014. The book explores the way modes of confrontation, circulation, and exhibitionism shape writing practices and critiques of power in the Arab world. Engaging notions of scandal, hacking, and scene, the book draws on contemporary theories of affect and performativity, and on the literary genres and cultural history of Arab social and political subversion from the classical tradition onward. This project arises from my ongoing investigation of the relation between aesthetics and politics in modern Arab literature explored in my first book, *Trials of Arab Modernity: Literary Affects and the New Political* (2013), and from the political transformations that have swept the Arab world since Fall 2010.

My research greatly benefited from EUME’s stimulating intellectual environment to which various institutes, centers, and departments in Berlin contribute. I gave two lectures at the Forum: While the first talk, “Fiction of Scandal,” emerges from my new research project and has since appeared as an article in JAL (Journal of Arabic Literature), the second talk, *Trials of Arab Modernity*, coincided with the publication of my first book. As an affiliate at the Free University, I also attended dissertation defenses and gave talks on new Arabic writing, and on comparative approaches to literary theory in Area studies. Moreover, German colleagues invited me to submit an essay about Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq, a dissident intellectual and literary innovator from the 19th century, for an anthology on the author’s oeuvre. Writing this piece allowed me to explore a genealogy of dissent and affective criticism in the Arabic tradition extending from Ghazali to Edward Said, and to engage with Sufi notions of unveiling as a mode of knowing arising from the collapse between subject and object, author and text, key themes for my new research.

The Center for Mediterranean Studies at the University of Bochum (Germany) invited me to participate in a conference on Mediterranean heritage held in Tangier, Morocco, in February. My paper, which has been turned into an article for a center-sponsored publication, took up Turkish TV series dubbed in Arabic. “Ottomania: Boy Love, Incest, and the Arab Spring,” explored the unsettling fascination of Arabs by the Ottoman heritage and all things Turkish. Expressed through compulsive viewing practices, models of desire, and consumerism, the reception of Turkish series following the Arab Spring reveals a crucial link between this Ottomanic nostalgia and a sense of collapse of the project of Arab modernity and of colonial-era borders of Arab nation states. This essay allowed me to further investigate compulsive viewing practices bound to redefine forms of subjectivity in the Arab world beyond nationalism and the public sphere arguments. It also allowed me to recognize structures of desire and eroticism that are integral to the political transformations the Arab world is currently undergoing. This exploration of sex and desire reveals how social and political models emerge at the level fantasy and the unconscious, performance and collapse. The special issue of *IJMES* (International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies) on “Queer Affects” which I recently co-edited and came out in May takes up some of these questions as well.

Beyond Berlin, I took part in a workshop on teaching Arabic language co-organized by the Arabic Flagship Program at UT at the American University in Cairo in January, and attended both MESA (Middle East Studies Association) in Denver and ACLA (American Comparative Literature Association) in Toronto. The ACLA panel on the Arab Spring examined from the perspective of the Arab Renaissance (19th to mid-20th century), which included colleagues from the Schlegel School in Berlin, provided a forum for scholars of Middle Eastern studies and comparative literature to engage across disciplines and learning traditions. I was also invited twice to the University of Oslo, taking part in a dissertation defense on Arabic literature online, and to give a talk on research ethics in the humanities from a comparative perspective.

All in all, it’s been a great year, full of new opportunities and discoveries. I’m eager to return to Austin in the fall and teach my graduate seminars in Middle Eastern Studies and Comparative Literature. I’m also looking forward to Hoda Barakat’s residency at UT in the fall; her course and the activities scheduled around her visit give much to look forward to!
This year the annual ACLA Conference was held in Toronto, Canada from April 4 - 7, 2013. A number of Comparative Literature faculty and graduate students participated in the conference as presenters and panel organizers.


Tarek El-Ariss, “The Arab Renaissance: A Note on Translation” in the seminar, “Translation Renaissance: from the Nahda to the Arab Spring.”

Michael Flynn, “Postmemory and PTSD in Juan Gabriel Vásquez’ El ruido de las cosas al caer” in the seminar, “The Global Contemporary.”

Thomas Garza, “It’s Hard to Be Macho: Redrawing the Lines of Russian Masculinity in Contemporary Popular Culture” in the seminar, “Recalculating Route...Please Wait: Eastern European and Eurasian Transitions and Global (Re)Positioning in PostSocialism.”

Katie Logan, “‘For We Know Not Quite What’: Leila Ahmed and Nostalgia’s Missing Object” in the seminar, “Space and the Education of Desire: Postcolonialism and Diaspora.”


Irina Simova, “Berlin, Alexanderplatz: Mapping the Urban and Deterritorializing the Subject” in the seminar, “Translating the City II.”

Fatma Tarlaci, “Readers of Other Worlds: Reading Pamuk’s Ottoman Theme in World Literature” in the seminar, “Positioning the Subject of World Literature.”

ACLA 2014 Conference at NYU:
The 2014 ACLA meeting in New York City offers a singular opportunity to address the city’s tenuous reputation as a global capital—and, more broadly, the notion that governance, finance, or culture can (still) be located in capital, in a capital, or in capitals. In what sense do we speak of capitals (and capital) at all? The difficulty of these questions is rooted in the semantic density of the term ‘capital’ itself.

Seminar Proposal Deadline: October 1, 2013
Deadline for Paper Proposals: November 1, 2013
For more information, contact info@acla.org
Samer Ali serves on some of the governing committees of the Modern Language Association, including the Delegates Assembly, the Organizing Committee of the Delegates Assembly and the Executive Council. He has published encyclopedia articles in major reference works: The entry “Boon Companion” in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 3d Edition; and the entries “Medieval Court Poetry” and “Literary Salons” in the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam and Women*. Currently, he is working on a book project titled, *Traditions of People in the Islamic Middle Ages*, which examines how people used the humanities in 10th century Arabo-Islamic culture to participate in a sphere of political concerns.


Marc Bizer After publishing his third book *Homer and the Politics of Authority in Renaissance France* with Oxford University Press in August 2011, he has begun a new research project seeking to redefine the meaning of the tragic and tragedy in Europe in the medieval and early modern period. This has received support in the form of a Faculty Research Assignment for the Spring of 2014 and a Humanities Research Award for 2013-5.

Pearl Brilmyer spent 2012-2013 on a William S. Livingston Continuing Fellowship in New York City where she was invited to participate as a visiting scholar in the Department of Comparative Literature at New York University (Fall 2012) and the Department of Philosophy at The New School for Social Research (Spring 2013). Her article, “The Natural History of My Inward Self: Sensing Character in George Elliot's *Impressions of Theophrastus Such*,” is forthcoming in *PMLA*. Pearl was awarded the Dina Sherzer Excellence Award, made possible by her attendance of a conference in Linköping, Sweden called Missing Links: The Somatechnics of Decolonization. She will present a paper on South African novelist Olive Schreiner and the feminist and anti-racist critique of colonization she crafts in her posthumously published novel *From Man to Man* (1926).

Zainab Cheema has won a Fulbright Scholarship for Middle East and North Africa. Zainab will be spending the 2013-2014 academic year abroad doing language training and research in Morocco.


Jamila Davey presented a paper entitled “Unruly Voices: Reimagining Ideal Muslim Women in Assia Djebar’s *Far from Madina*” at the annual meeting of the Middle Eastern Studies Association in Denver, Colorado in November, 2012. She received a Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) awarded by the U.S. Department of State to study Arabic in Rabat, Morocco this summer.

Jonathan Fleck was awarded a FLAS grant from LLILAS to continue his study of Brazilian language and culture. In addition, he presented at conferences at UCSB and UT-Austin, including the LAJSA conference at UT. Finally, Jonathan published a review in the 2013 *E3W Review of Books*.

Francisca Folch-Couyoumdjian is now working as Adjunct Assistant Professor in the English Department at Pontifica Universidad Católica de Chile. She was recently invited to participate in the forum “Approaches to Shakespeare” at cultural center Gabriela Mistral.

Thomas J. Garza (Slavic and TLC) was on academic leave in the fall of 2012, working on a book manuscript entitled Bandits No More: Marginal Masculinities in Contemporary Mexican and Russian Popular Cultures, a critical response to the filmic, musical, and televised portraits of Russian and Latino men in the 1990s and

Dr. M. R. Ghanoonparvar co-edited and wrote an introduction to Iranian Languages and Culture: Essays in Honor of Gernot Ludwig Windfuhr. He translated The Trial by Ghazaleh Alizadeh and also translated and wrote the introduction to Red Olive: The Memoirs of Nahid Yusefian. He published several articles, including “Through Tinted Lenses: Western and Iranian Perceptions and Reconstructions of the Other, “Azra-ye Khalvatneshin, Taqi Modarresi's Last Novel,” “Iranian Films as Cultural Texts for Persian Language Instruction,” “Collective Identity and Despotism: Lessons in Two Plays by Bahram Beyzaie,” “War Veterans Turned Writers of War Narratives,” and “Sharing Poetic Sensitivity and Misery: Encounters of Iranians with the Irish in Travel Writings and Fiction.” Ghanoonparvar will retire at the end of this academic year, but he will continue to serve his PhD students and The University as Professor Emeritus.

Dr. John Morán González delivered presentations at the 2012 American Studies Conference, the Haciendo Caminos US Latina/o Literatures Conference, the Mexican American Archival Enterprise at the Benson Latin American Collection Symposium, and the Censorship and Exile Conference at the University of Augsburg.

Dr. Sabine Hake published two books in 2012, Screen Nazis: Cinema, History, and Democracy (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press) and Turkish German Cinema in the New Millennium: Sites, Sounds, and Screens (Berghahn Books) coedited with Barbara Mennel. As the editor of German Studies Review, she also received the award for best journal design from the Council of Editors of Learned Journals (CEJL) at the 2013 MLA.


Dr. David Kornhaber published an article in Theatre Journal (March 2012) entitled “The Philosopher, the Playwright, and the Actor: Friedrich Nietzsche and the Modern Drama’s Concept of Performance” and an article in Philosophy and Literature (April 2012) entitled “Nietzsche, Shaw, Stoppard: Theatre and Philosophy in the British Tradition.” He was invited to serve on the faculty of the Mellon School for Theatre and Performance Research at Harvard University for their Summer 2012 session on “Theatre, Theory, Philosophy.” He delivered a paper on George Bernard Shaw and Tony Kushner at the annual conferences of the Modern Language Association and on the concept of the ‘postdramatic theatre’ as it relates to textual studies at the annual conference of the Society for Textual Scholarship. In fall 2012, he was elected to the Society for Teaching Excellence at UT.

Julianna Leachman presented the paper, “The Last Peregrination of Dostoevsky’s Cosmopolitan: Pushkin and Peasants in Demons” at the GRACLS conference last semester. She also received the Signature Course Lead Teaching Assistant Fellowship last semester.


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Click here to join the UT Comparative Literature organizational Facebook page. You’ll be able to see updates, receive information about upcoming events, and follow and share important happenings across the field of Comparative Literature.

Katie Logan presented at the 2013 ACLA conference in Toronto. She has also received a Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowship for summer 2013 and the 2013-2014 school year through the Center for Middle Eastern Studies.

Dr. Carol Hanbery MacKay published “Colossal Forces: Vanity Fair Meets Jane Eyre” in Critical Analysis of Vanity Fair, ed. Sheldon Goldfarb, and presented “Landmarks or Way Stations? Elizabeth Robins Tracks the Progress of Women’s Rights” for the British Women Writers Conference at the University of Colorado, as well as “Beyond The Cornhill Magazine: The Life and Afterlife of Anne Thackeray Ritchie’s Miss Angel” for the Research Society of Victorian Periodicals Conference held here at UT.

Dr. Lisa Moore won the Liberal Arts Council Faculty Endowment Teaching Women’s and Gender Studies. She also became Interim Director of the Center for Women’s and Gender Studies.

Dr. Fehintola Mosadomi gave a talk for Language Matters in April, 2013 on “Open Access Publishing: Tongue Twisters: An Effective Pedagogical Tool in a Yoruba Language Classroom.” She presented a paper titled, “Tongue Twisters: An Effective Strategy for Teaching Yoruba Language” at the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages and African Language Teachers Association (NCOLTCL / ALTA) annual conference in Chicago, April 2013. She has been elected President of the American Association of Yoruba Teachers (AATY) and received a fellowship from the Media Watch International for gender research in Israel this Summer (2013).

Dr. Guy Raffa won an NEH fellowship for 2012 to work on his current research-project, “Dante’s Bones.” His article, “A Beautiful Friendship: Dante and Vergil in the Commedia,” appeared in MLN.

Dr. Wayne Rebhorn has a new translation of Boccaccio’s Decameron that will appear in September. It will be published by Norton and is the first American translation of this great classic of Italian literature in over thirty years. Those interested can purchase the book at a steep discount at places such as Amazon and Banes & Noble if they purchase pre-publication copies.


Dr. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza presented papers at the 2013 ACLA meeting in Toronto, “Do We Lead Double Lives? #BenjaminArcades,” and at the 2013 MLA conference held in Boston, “Translation Is Blind: Wilde’s The Disciple, Rilke’s Narcissus, and the Possibility of a Queer Echo.” She was selected by the Longhorn Network as one of a dozen “Game Changers” whose lectures were televised in Fall 2012. In September 2012, she once again participated in a statewide workshop for high-school English teachers for Humanities Texas. She is a founding member of a new UT Liberal Arts master’s program, “The Human Dimension of Organizations,” which will admit its first class in Fall 2013.

Dr. César A. Salgado was invited by the University of Connecticut at Storrs Center for Latin American & Caribbean Studies and the Department of Modern and Classical Languages to give the Luis B. Eyzaguirre Annual Lecture, “Restoring (Tapia’s) Campeche: The Role of the Visual Arts in Arturo A. Schomburg’s Afro-Atlantic Archive,” on April 9, 2013. Last October he read the paper “Tutelaje reformista e imaginario transcaribeño: y la corrección de La palma del cacique de Alejandro Tapia y Rivera” at the Puerto Rican Studies Association 20th Anniversary Conference. In April he read “Officiants and Heretics: Positioning Orígenes in the Post-War World Literary System” at the panel “Positioning Orígenes in World Literature System” that he
organized with Juan Pablo Lupi for the 2013 ACLA Annual Meeting. His paper “Notas sobre dos poemas que se dedicaron Virgilio Piñera y José Lezama Lima” was published in the Celebrando a Virgilio Piñera conference proceedings (Miami: Plaza Editorial, 2013).

Dr. Martha Ann Selby, Chair, Department of Asian Studies, has been awarded a Fulbright-Nehru Senior Research Fellowship for the 2013-14 academic year. She will spend nine months in Chennai, Tamilnadu to translate the short fiction of D. Dilip Kumar and to assess the contemporary literary scene in Tamilnadu more generally.

Maryam Shariati read her paper on human rights at the 2012 SCMLA, and presented papers both at the 2012 GRACLS and the 2013 Emerging Scholarship in Women’s and Gender Studies held at UT. Her book review on Shahla Talebi’s Ghosts of Revolution: Rekindled Memories of Imprisonment in Iran (2011) is forthcoming in H-Memory Network. This summer, Maryam will be attending the third annual meeting of the Institute of World Literature at Harvard University.

Jayita Sinha was awarded a grant by the Taraknath Das Foundation to pursue manuscript research in India. She will use the money in the summer to visit archives in Aundh and Dhule, and thus try to trace the manuscript history of the works of two medieval women saints, Muktabai and Janabai.

Franklin Strong received a Graduate Excellence Fellowship for the 2012-13 academic year and, over the summer, traveled to Havana on a Travel Grant from the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. He presented on his research in Cuba at the GRACLS Conference in October, and at the 3rd International Caribbean Conference in Milwaukee in April. He also published a review of Martin Munro and Celia Britton’s American Creoles: The Francophone Caribbean and the American South in the E3W Review of Books.

Thammika Songkao presented her paper, “Acquiring Literary ‘Taste’: The Literary and Gustatory Experiments of the Goncourt Brothers,” at the Nineteenth-Century French Studies Colloquium, with the support of the Professional Development Award. Additionally, after winning the Freer|Sackler Research Grant, she completed research on le japonisme at the Smithsonian, returning to teach a unit.


Dr. Jennifer M. Wilks spent Spring 2013 as visiting faculty at the Université Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3, where her courses included a version of her Black Atlantic Modernisms graduate seminar. In the fall she presented new work on Caribbean literature and comparison in Junot Díaz’s The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao at Brown University and at UT’s Warfield Center for African and African Diaspora Studies.


Attention Alumni:
The Newsletter welcomes contributions from alumni about any aspects of your post-UT Austin lives and careers. The newsletter’s goal is to celebrate the achievements of students and faculty currently in the program and at the same time to share important news about our alumni. It is your successes and undertakings which have secured us a national ranking of 21st in the country according to the National Research Council’s survey, and we would like the opportunity to congratulate you publicly. We encourage you to share your accomplishments with us.

Please send your news for publication in the 2013 newsletter to the Program’s email address:
complit@austin.utexas.edu
CL Proseminar: Professional Strategies for Comparatists in Field Studies

Coordinated and moderated by Prof. César A. Salgado, CL Grad. Adviser

Aug 31 Welcome by Associate Dean for Research Esther Raizen

Introduced by Program Director, Prof. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza

Sept 7 Prof. Alex Wettlaufer (French and Italian, Associate Director Plan II Honors) “Surviving and Thriving in Graduate School”

Sept 14 Prof. Lynn Wilkinson (Germanic Studies) “Intellectuals”

Sept 21 Prof. Naomi Lindstrom (Spanish and Portuguese) “Between Latin American Studies and Jewish Studies”

Sept 28 Prof. Samer Ali (Middle Eastern Studies) “Inside the MLA: The Organization and Your Career”

Oct 5 Prof. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza (English) “Pardon My French: the Queer Case of Translation”

Oct 12 Prof. David Kornhaber (English) “Theatre Studies and Comparative Literature”

Oct 19 Prof. Jennifer Wilks (English) “Points of Comparison: Hemispheric American Studies”

Oct 26 Prof. Karen Pagani (French and Italian) TBD

Nov 2 Profs. Michael Johnson (French and Italian) and Marjorie Woods (English) TBD

Nov 9 Prof. Thomas Garza (Slavic Studies) “Applied Literature: Teaching Language and Culture through Literature”

Nov 16 Prof. Wayne Rebhorn (English) “The New Historicism”

Nov 30 Prof. Hannah Chapelle Wojciehowski (English) “Cognitive Cultural Studies”

Dec 7 Prof. Katie Arens (Germanics) “Situating your work and yourself: The Professional Ropes”

As last year, participants at the Fall 2012 proseminar tailored their presentations to address pragmatic issues of professionalization specific to Comparative Literature. We had two important innovations: 1. We introduced the use of Skype to have Prof. Samer Ali talk about his experience as a member of the MLA Executive Council. 2. For the first time faculty members from different departments (Marjorie Woods from English and Michael Johnson from French and Italian) collaborated to present together multidisciplinary views on one topic (researching pedagogic writing in the European Middle Age). I thank all seminar participants for their work and for helping welcome and orient our new students through one of our program’s key features.

Sincerely,
César A. Salgado
The 10th Annual Graduate Conference in Comparative Literature 
at the University of Texas at Austin

What We Read: 
Materiality, Narrative, Text

Friday, October 11th, and Saturday, October 12th

Keynote Address by Dr. N. Katherine Hayles  
Duke University

We begin with narrative. Reaching backwards, we explore the way that history meets historiography and myth and novel. These stories travel over time and across borders, moving between nations and languages, but also between forms. They become fixed or transfixed as they take shape, embodied in manuscripts and pictorial narratives, photos and films and digital code. This year’s conference is located at the intersection between narrative and material form.

In How We Became Postmodern, N. Katherine Hayles writes of the implications of dematerialization in the digital age. This conference addresses questions of materiality and narrative, the relationship between image and form, between form and content. Starting with the contemporary moment, we invite papers that take these concerns and explore them across literatures and historical contexts, looking at avant gardes past and present, at manuscript and book history, archival studies, non-written textual culture, and contemporary media studies.

Dr. Hayles writes that “now almost every aspect of work in the humanities can be envisioned differently.” In this conference, we encourage participants to embrace the possibilities for formal experimentation in their own work. We also strongly encourage applicants to propose panel topics to accompany their work, or to propose a panel in collaboration with colleagues.

We are particularly, but not exclusively, interested in seeing papers that address the following themes:

The state of the field: implications of the digital age for literary scholarship
Writing without words
Silence and sound
Concrete and visual poetry
Hypertext and the digital humanities
Cartoons, comics, and graphic novels
The theatricality of space
Translation across media
(De)colonial journeys
Archive and memory
Utopia and dystopia
Textual production, textual consumption
Queering form, queering bodies
Zombies, vampires, cyborgs

The deadline for Individual Abstracts is June 1, 2013. All proposals should be submitted via email attachment to graclsconference2013@gmail.com. Panel Proposals may include 3 or 4 speakers and must be submitted by May 15, 2013. The panel leader must email the proposed title, topic, moderator (if available) and presenters for the panel. Each member of the panel must also submit their abstract via email.

For additional information about the conference, please contact conference organizers Cory Hahn and Hannah Alpert-Abrams at graclsconference2013@gmail.com or visit UT’s Program in Comparative Literature website: http://www.utexas.edu/cola/progs/complit/
Job Placement News

**Anthony Arroyo** will be starting a full-time job with a research and development firm in California at the end of this semester. The firm, Applied Minds, develops cutting-edge technology products in a variety of areas including consumer goods, education, military and healthcare.

**Nandini Dhar** accepted a position teaching Contemporary Literature with a Gender, Sexuality, and Cultural Studies focus at the University of Florida at Miami.

**Naminata Diabate** accepted an Assistant Professor position in the Comparative Literature Department at Cornell University.

**Francisca Folch-Couyoumdjian** is working as an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the English Department at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile.

**Somy Kim** accepted a full-time lecturer position at the Writing Program at Boston University.

**Miguel Santos-Neves** accepted a position at the Brazil Foundation in New York.

**Johanna Sellman** was appointed as a lecturer in Comparative Studies at Ohio State University - Newark in Fall 2010.

Attention Alumni:

The Program in Comparative Literature welcomes contributions about any aspects of your post-UT Austin lives and careers. The newsletter’s goal is to celebrate the achievements of students and faculty and share important news about our alumni.

It is your successes and undertakings which have made this such a strong program, and we would like the opportunity to congratulate you publicly.

Please send your news for publication in the 2014 newsletter to:

complit@austin.utexas.edu