



UC DAVIS

# Comparative Literature

## DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

### Notes from the Director!

**T**he major news for Comparative Literature at UC Davis is that after a two-year process, we are finally a department. Since 1971, when the major was approved at UC Davis, we have been a program. This transition seems an appropriate recognition because next year we will celebrate our fortieth anniversary.

This Fall has also been a sad time for all of us, as we experienced the death of our colleague and friend, Professor Marc Blanchard, who died in November. He came to UC Davis in 1971, so he was a major presence in our program for all these years. He will be sadly missed. His memorial service will take place on January 7, 2010, 4pm-6pm in the Ballroom A of the Activity Recreation Center (ARC).

In his honor, we have renamed *The Comparative Literature Undergraduate Travel*

*Award*, which began with start-up funds from a teaching award I won in 2008, to *The Marc Blanchard Comparative Literature Undergraduate Travel Award*. It offers limited funds to support Comparative Literature students to study abroad. (If you would like to make a donation to this Travel Award, more information is on Page 5.)



Prof. Brenda Deen Schildgen  
Program Director

### Graduate Student Elena Shapiro sells her first novel

Elena Shapiro's first novel, *13 rue Thérèse*, will be published by Reagan Arthur imprint of Little, Brown in March 2011.

(More on Page 6)

### Undergraduate Student Kris Ide wins the 2009 Osher Re-Entry Student Scholarship

Senior Student Kris Ide is the recipient of this year's Osher Re-Entry Student Scholarship.

(More on Page 6)

### In Memoriam: Marc Blanchard (1942-2009)

Marc Blanchard, Distinguished Professor of Comparative Literature and French, passed away on November 8, 2009 after a long battle against cancer.

(More on Page 5)

### Conference on Religion, Literature, and the Arts

A one-day conference on *Religion, Literature, and the Arts* will take place on Friday, March 5, 2010 from 9am-5pm in Voorhies Hall. Broadly conceived and focusing on multiple art forms, the conference will feature Giuseppe Mazzotta, Professor of Italian Studies and Comparative Literature at Yale University as the keynote speaker.

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FALL 2009 ISSUE  
Volume 3, No. 2



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## JANUARY

7

Prof. Marc Blanchard Memorial Service  
4:00pm - 6:00pm at ARC Ballroom A

20

EAP Info Session:  
*Renaissance Florence and the Birth of Modern Europe*  
4:00pm - 5:00pm at the Education Abroad Center



## FEBRUARY

9

Brown-Bag Topic:  
*CompLit Student Study Abroad Experience*  
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm (Location: TBA)

11

EAP Info Session:  
*Palaces of the Gods: Texts, Temples, and Tombs in India*  
4:00pm - 5:00pm at the Education Abroad Center

23

Lecture by Harriet Murav of University of Illinois  
4:00pm at Voorhies Hall, Room 126



Voorhies Hall

## MARCH

5

Conference: *Religion, Literature, and the Arts*  
9:00am - 5:00pm at Voorhies Hall, Room 126

## APRIL

-

Lecture by Indira Viswanathan of Mt. Holyoke College  
(Location & Time: TBA)

27

Round-Table Topic:  
*CompLit Graduate Student Perspective*  
2:00pm - 3:00pm (Location: TBA)

## IMPORTANT DEADLINES:

- **Submission for the journal, *Brújula***  
Deadline: January 8, 2010  
(More on Page 13)
- **The Amy Lee Memorial Essay Prize**  
Deadline: May 7, 2010  
(More on Page 10)
- **UC Davis Undergraduate Prized Writing**  
Deadline: Spring 2010  
Website: <http://prizedwriting.ucdavis.edu>

## SAVE THE DATE!

December 2010

## Pondicherry Conference:

### South India as Cultural Crossroad

For more information, contact Prof. Archana Venkatesan  
at [avenkatesan@ucdavis.edu](mailto:avenkatesan@ucdavis.edu)

## Faculty Lead Summer 2010 Abroad Program

Enrollment begins on January 4 and closes on April 2, 2010. For more information, visit the <http://summer-abroad.ucdavis.edu>.



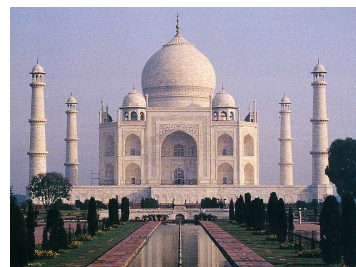
### Renaissance Florence & the Birth of Modern Europe

Florence, Italy

June 25 - July 27, 2010  
Instructor: Brenda Deen Schildgen

#### Program Highlights:

You live in apartments at the historic center of Florence, walk the streets, see the lights, and hear the hubbub experienced by Dante, Michaelangelo, Leonardo, Galileo. Renaissance monuments side by side with modern city.



### Palaces of the Gods: Texts, Temples, & Tombs in India

Pondicherry, India

August 8 - September 6, 2010  
Instructor: Archana Venkatesan

#### Program Highlights:

Visit some of the world's greatest monument, including the Taj Mahal, and learn about love, poetry, sculpture, and bronze casting in India. Enjoy the fabulous fusion French-Indian cuisine of Pondicherry.

## 2009 Asia Pacific Film Festival

The 2009 Asia Pacific Film Festival and an accompanying symposium on the "Spaces of Asian Cinema" were held at the University of California, Davis on November 4 - 6. The festival featured film screenings, keynote speeches, and panel discussions. Professor Sheldon Lu and PhD students, Chris Tong and David Dayton, participated in the organization of the events. *UC Davis Dateline*, *The California Aggie* and Davis Media Access, the local public TV station, covered the festival. Five Asian films (*One Shining Day* and *3-Iron* from South Korea, *Pulse* and *Departures* from Japan, and *If You are the One* from China) were screened over three days. The two-day symposium welcomed 16 speakers and presenters from California, the US, and as far as Asia and Europe. Prof. Yingjin Zhang (UC San Diego), Prof. Akira Mizuta Lippit (Univ. of Southern California), and Prof. Kyu-

## Spaces of Asian Cinema

### 2009 Asia Pacific Film Festival

November 4-6 at the University of California, Davis



**PUBLIC SYMPOSIUM**

Andrews Conference Room (2203) on the 2nd Floor  
Social Sciences & Humanities Building (entrance near 3rd & A St.)  
Thursday 11/5 . 9am-6pm ... Friday 11/6 . 10am-1pm

Hyun Kim (UC Davis) gave keynote speeches, while the other presenters formed four panels on "Spaces of Spectrality and Memory," "Transcultural and Transnational Spaces," "Real and Imaginary Spaces," and "Postcolonial and Gendered Spaces," respectively. Special thanks to Prof. Michelle Yeh and Prof. Chia-ning Chang who served as panel chairs.

# RELIGION, LITERATURE, AND THE ARTS

**FRIDAY, MARCH 5, 2010**

**9:00am - 5:00pm**

**Voorhies Hall, Room 126**

A one-day conference on **Religion, Literature, and the Arts** will take place on Friday, March 5, from 9am-5pm in Voorhies Hall, Room 126. Broadly conceived and focusing on multiple art forms, the conference will feature Professor Giuseppe Mazzotta, Italian Studies and Comparative Literature, Yale University, as the keynote speaker. His talk is titled "Literature and Religion: a Medieval and a Baroque poet: Dante and Tasso."

HArCS\* faculty and graduate students will also speak on various aspects of the intersection of religion and the arts. UC Davis faculty include Professors Catherine Chin of Religious Studies on early Christianity and literature; Alan Williamson of English on American poetry and Buddhism; Moulie Vidas of Religious Studies, on Judaism and literature; Olga Stuchebrukhov of Russian on

Dostoevsky and Russian Orthodoxy; Henry Stiller of Music on "Ritual residues in modern dances of West Java, Indonesia"; Heghnar Watenpaugh of Art History on "Islam-as-religion and Islam-as-culture"; and Archana Venkatesan of Comparative Literature and Religious Studies will speak on the Hindu religion in medieval art, ritual, and poetry.

Graduate students addressing various issues of the intersection of religion and the arts come from French, Comparative Literature, English, and Performance Studies. The event is co-sponsored by the Comparative Literature Program, the Davis Humanities Institute, Prof. Alison Coudert as Castelfranco Chair of Christian Studies, English, Religious Studies, Jewish Studies, and the Early Modern Cluster.

## PROGRAM

### 9:15

Opening: Dean Jessie Ann Owens, HArCS, Letters & Science  
Introduction: Prof. Brenda Deen Schildgen, Comparative Literature

### 9:30-10:30

Panel discussion with UCD faculty addressing religion and literature/arts and various religious practices:

Prof. Catherine Chin, Religious Studies: "Living Words: The Incarnation as Model in Early Christian Literary Theory."  
Prof. Alan Williamson, English: "Buddhism and American Poetry"  
Prof. Moulie Vidas, Religious Studies: "Early Judaism and Literature"

### 10:30-10:45 Break

### 10:45-12:30

Heather Jennings, PhD candidate, English: "Reading, Conscience, and Memory in Augustine and Chrétien"  
Brody Smith, PhD candidate, French: "This is not my Body: Understanding Transcendent Desire in Rutebeuf's *La vie de sainte Marie l'Egyptienne*"  
Emelie Coleman, PhD candidate, Comparative Literature: "Prophetic Authority and the Rhetoric of Fanaticism: William Blake and John of Patmos"  
Gabriel Hourcade, PhD candidate, French: "Christian heaven and Chinese sky in Claudel and Segalen"  
Amy Champ, PhD candidate, Performance Studies: "Non-Dualism Embodied: Yoga and American Women"

### 12:30-1:30

Lunch for Participants

### 1:30-2:45

Introduction: Prof. Brenda Deen Schildgen  
Keynote speaker: Giuseppe Mazzotta, Sterling Professor of Humanities for Italian Language and Literature and Comparative Literature, Director of Graduate Studies in Italian, Yale University

"Literature and Religion: a Medieval and a Baroque poet: Dante and Tasso"

(Break: 15 minutes)

### 3:00-4:30

Prof. Olga Stuchebrukhov, Russian: "Iconic Vision in Russian Literary Tradition: The Curious Case of Dostoevsky's *The Meek One*"  
Prof. Henry Stiller, Music: "Ritual residues in modern dances of West Java, Indonesia"  
Prof. Heghnar Watenpaugh, Art History: "Islam-as-religion and Islam-as-culture"  
Prof. Archana Venkatesan, Comparative Literature and Religious Studies: "Dance and Religion"

### 4:30

Closing Remarks

**For further information, contact Prof. Brenda Deen Schildgen ([bdschildgen@ucdavis.edu](mailto:bdschildgen@ucdavis.edu))**

\*HArCS = Humanities, Arts, and Cultural Studies, a division of the College of Letters and Science



PROFESSOR BRENDA SCHILDGEN ON FELLOW COMPARATIST

## Professor Marc Blanchard (1942-2009)

A professor at UC Davis for 39 years, Marc Blanchard was a brilliant scholar and innovative teacher. He possessed an insatiable imagination and intellectual breadth that drove him to expand his own research interests while vigorously challenging established pedagogical and curricular traditions.

Born on October 12, 1942 in Portugal as his French father and French Jewish mother were fleeing the Nazi threat during World War II, Blanchard's first home was in Argentina. From there, the family moved to Egypt. After the war, they returned to Paris where in 1965 he completed his education by earning the highest degree at the Sorbonne in Romance Languages, Comparative Literature, and Classics. He immigrated to the US to take a position as assistant professor of Romance Philology and director, La Maison Française at Columbia. He came to UC Davis in 1971 as professor of French, and later joined the Comparative Literature Program.

Fluent in French, English, Spanish, and German, he published numerous books, among which are *Trois Portraits de Montaigne* (1990) and *In Search of the City* (1985), as well as almost a hundred scholarly articles. He gave public lectures and speaking tours in Europe and in the U.S, and more recently in Cuba, Mexico, and Venezuela. Blanchard became a renowned scholar in critical theory in the 1970s and 1980s and, later, a specialist in Latin American literature and culture, and Caribbean Studies.

He founded the Critical Theory program, helped to build the Comparative Literature Program, and also taught French, Spanish, Cultural Studies, and Community Development.

Marc Blanchard was a bold and dedicated teacher, who encouraged students to challenge boundaries, master new subjects, and think unconventionally. Among his many achievements, he was proudest of helping advance underrepresented students to completion of undergraduate, professional, and doctoral degrees that placed them in successful careers in the U.S. and Europe.

One of his most important accomplishments was breaking new ground in cultural relations with Cuba. While that country was off-limits for academic exchanges, Blanchard forged a relationship with the Cuban government and the world-renowned Casa de las Americas in Havana. He then steered a complicated course through the U.S. State Department to establish a short-term program abroad in Cuba in 2001, one of only six such programs offered by U.S. institutions.

Awarded the distinguished professor title in 2006, he won the Distinguished Teaching Award for Graduate and

Professional Teaching in 2009. He is survived by his wife, Raquel Salgado Scherr and his daughter, Lauren Blanchard.

**A public memorial service will take place on January 7, 2010 from 4pm-6pm at the Ballroom A of the Activity Recreation Center (ARC) on the UC Davis campus.**

**For directions or information: contact the Main Office at (530) 752-1219 or visit the program website at <http://complit.ucdavis.edu>.**



**If you would like to make a monetary donation to The Marc Blanchard Comparative Literature Undergraduate Travel Award, please make your check payable to UC Davis Foundation, write Marc Blanchard Fund on the memo line, and mail it to: Comparative Literature Program, 522 Sproul Hall, One Shields Avenue, Davis, CA 95616.**

## Elena Shapiro sells her first novel, *13 rue Thérèse*

Elena Shapiro will publish her first novel entitled, *13 rue Thérèse*, which will be released by Reagan Arthur imprint of Little, Brown in March 2011. The central story concerns a fictionalized Louise Brunet, who is a married-but-childless piano teacher with a propensity for giving false confessions to priests and other small acts of mischief. She lost her lover during WWI, and in an attempt to revive the excitement of that relationship, she is quite tempted to have an affair with a new man who moves into her building, named Xavier Langlais. The narrative frame for the story is named Trevor Stratton, a contemporary American academic working in Paris who comes across Louise's box of mementos. Studying the objects has a strange effect on him, and in a fever he channels what may or may not be the life of Louise Brunet over a two-week time period in November of 1928.

*Elena was born in Paris, moved to the US at the age of 13, earned a BA in English from Stanford University, MFA in Creative Writing from Mills College, and is currently studying English & French Romanticism for her PhD. 13 rue Thérèse was a finalist for the 2009 Bakeless Literary Prize.*

### Shapiro on her novel:

When I was a little girl growing up in Paris in the early eighties, an old woman who lived a few floors up from my apartment died alone. Her name was Louise Brunet. None of her remaining relatives cared enough about her to come fetch her belongings, so the landlord had to clear them all out.



He let the other tenants in the building scavenge through her stuff and take home silverware, jewelry, whatever they wanted. My mother salvaged a small box filled with mementos: old love letters from WWI, mesh church gloves, dried flowers, a rosary - all objects of little monetary value, but tremendously evocative. This box is the sepulcher of Louise Brunet's heart.

As I have carried it through life and across the world, I have always intended to write a book out of it.

## Noteworthy Achievements

**Giovanna Montenegro** presented a paper titled "Retratando al nuevo mundo: Inveniones del otro" at the 5th Annual Colloquium on Latin American and Iberian Languages, Literatures, and Cultures in the University of California, Davis on November 7, 2009.

**Sayyeda Zehra Razvi** was awarded the prestigious President's Predoctoral Fellowship in the Humanities in recognition of academic achievement and promise of future scholarship. As part of the fellowship, Razvi will be affiliated with the Davis Humanities Institute during the 2009-2010 academic year.

**Chris Tong** presented a paper titled "The Drift between Cognition and Emotion: Mapping the City in Contemporary Urban Films" at the Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association (PAMLA) in San Francisco State University on November 6-7, 2009.

**Chris Tong** presented a paper titled "Journey through 'Asia': Locations of the Monkey King in Asian Cinema and Media" at the New England Association for Asian Studies (NEAAS) at Brown University on October 3, 2009.

## Nicholas Sanchez as a Fulbright Student in Argentina

Nicholas Sanchez received a Fulbright Grant to spend the year 2010 as a guest scholar at the Universidad de Chile en Santiago doing research for his dissertation. His project focuses on the mobilization of science within leftist political movements for liberation during Chile's "utopian years" - the years that preceded the overthrow of Socialist President Salvador Allende on September 11, 1973 in a military coup led by General Augusto Pinochet.

His grant was awarded so that he could pursue archival work at the National Library in Santiago as well as at various archives housed at the Universidad de Chile. His research will historicize a few key scientific developments, particularly new uses of cybernetics in state planning within the ideologically charged Chilean experience of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

*Nicholas Sanchez earned his BA degree in Literature at Claremont McKenna College. His research interests are in the Literature of the Southern Cone and Intellectual Traditions in the Americas.*

## Meet this year's new Graduate Students!

**Sayyeda Zehra Razvi** grew up in Pakistan and moved to California to pursue her undergraduate education at UC Davis where she majored in Economics and Comparative Literature. Her research interests include twentieth century Urdu and Arabic literature as well as Postcolonial literature.

**Erin Michael Grimm** graduated summa cum laude from UC Berkeley with a BA in Slavic Languages and Literatures. She wrote her honors thesis on the function of scandal in the works of Dostoevsky, for which she received the departmental citation for excellence in undergraduate research. Her research interests include 19th century Russian and French literature and German Romanticism. Erin grew up in Sacramento and is thrilled to be close to home. She has a passion for family, friends, teaching her wonderful students, and piano.

**Anna Björk Einarsdóttir** graduated from the University of Iceland with a BA degree in Comparative Literature. Her research interests include radical political movements and Marxist literature and cinema.

**Emelie Karen Coleman** began her undergraduate career at New England Conservatory of Music and received a double BA with honors in Philosophy and Music Theory and History from Mills College in Oakland, CA. She has a postgraduate diploma in filmmaking from London Film School and spent four years working in film and television. Her graduate study began at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA where she studied Art and Religion with a focus on Islam. She is interested in translation studies of Persian poetry into English, as well as performance studies and critical theory. She is a semi-professional dancer and performs regularly with Ballet Afsaneh in the Bay Area.

## From Romance to Reality: Greetings from Paris, France

By Elisabeth Lore, 4th-Year Graduate Student

From the moment a student begins to take French language classes, he or she begins to form a very romantic image of the beautiful country of France. Great monuments like La Tour Eiffel, le Louvre, la Cathédrale de Notre Dame, and le Château de Versailles are quickly added to our list of "must sees." We dream of romantic walks along the Seine, small country villages with cobblestone streets, and fields of lavender perfuming the air, all the while attempting to squirrel away money in order to take that marvelous trip. When we finally manage to buy that airline ticket, pack our bags and head on over to our dream vacation spot, we see all these wonderful things on our list, checking them off one by one.



Upon returning home, we realize that one, two or three weeks of vacation is just not enough time to quench the thirst we have of spending time in the France we have come to know and love through our short visits and our regular French language and culture classes. We continue to romanticize our image of France to the point where we may even romanticize the French Revolution of 1789, bloody and violent as it was, and the glorious adventures of Napoleon Bonaparte, despite the destruction he caused in his wake.

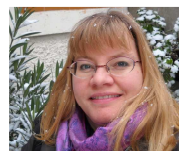
We soon begin to fantasize about spending an entire year studying abroad so that we can fully bask in the glory of this marvelous country. So we fill out applications, we pray really hard that we are accepted into the program that will make all our dreams come true. When we finally get the news that we are really going to France for a year, we dance with excitement and start making preparations. A few months later, we disembark from our plane with an acceptance letter to a local French school and the name and phone number of our new neighbors scrawled in a little notebook that we will, from this point on, never let go of. A few months later, we disembark from our

plane with an acceptance letter to the École Normale Supérieure and the phone number of our new neighbors. We pick up our luggage and our bunny rabbit and head off to our new adventures.

Okay, okay, not everyone picks up a bunny rabbit at the airport when they arrive in France, but I just happened to bring mine along with me for the ride....couldn't bear to be away from him for an entire year. So, what I just described is the romantic journey that got me here to France. However, reality has a funny way of dulling some of the romantic image with which many of us arrive in France. France is not just warm, fresh baguettes, colorful, tasty pastries, and well-dressed men and women drinking coffee at local cafés. When you are no longer a tourist, you have to face the frustrations of antiquated systems and cultural differences...but when you come to a country that holds a very romantic place in people's hearts, you get the feeling that you should not complain when things are not quite what you expected. Nevertheless, I decided from day one that I would share the reality of my adventures with my friends - the good, the bad and the ugly.



**If you want to know more about her trip, feel free to e-mail Elisabeth at [emlore@ucdavis.edu](mailto:emlore@ucdavis.edu).**



*Elisabeth Lore is currently spending her year in Paris, France. She holds a BA in Liberal Studies and an MA in Comparative Literature from San Francisco State University. She is currently working on a double PhD in Comparative Literature and French, specializing in French, Caribbean and Multilingual Literatures.*



## Kris Ide as the Recipient of 2009 Osher Re-entry Scholarship Program

Kris Ide is in his final year at UC Davis and is finishing up his requirements for a bachelor's degree in Comparative Literature. As an older, re-entry student, he has learned to take advantage of every opportunity available to him in a university environment. In the summer of 2008, Kris traveled to Florence, Italy to study Renaissance art and literature with Prof. Brenda Deen Schildgen. Over the last year, he has acted in three Shakespearean productions on campus as Antigonus in *The Winter's Tale*, Egeus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and as Banquo in *Macbeth*. A one-act stage play Kris wrote called *Fools Afloat* will be performed as a part of the Theatre and Dance Department's *ThirdEye Theatre Festival* in January 2010, and he has signed on to be the Assistant Director for a production of the musical, *Hair*, to be performed in the Spring 2010.

Under the direction of Prof. Schildgen, Kris is also currently hard at work on an honor's thesis project focusing on the myth of Daedalus and the labyrinth which will include an extensive research paper on Ancient Greek sources and his own version of the myth in the form of a feature-length screenplay. He hopes to enter this screenplay in the Goldwyn Foundation's screenwriting competition sponsored by UCLA every year.



Because he has been able to maintain a 3.97 GPA, Kris has been a three-time recipient of the Osher Re-entry Scholarship and was recently awarded a substantial Board of Regents Scholarship for his senior year. After graduating from UC Davis this Spring, he intends to continue his education in a graduate level program for dramatic writing, and may yet decide to pursue a PhD in Comparative Literature, Performance Studies, or Theatre.

## SPOTLIGHT: Undergraduate Upper-Division Courses

### Winter 2010

135: Women Writers (Anna Kuhn)  
146: Myth in Literature (Scott McLean)  
153: The Forms of Asian Literature (Sheldon Lu)  
166A: Epic (Seth Schein)  
167: Comparative Study of Major Authors - *Dante* (Brenda Deen Schildgen)

### Spring 2010 (Tentative)

139: Shakespeare and the Classical World (Seth Schein)  
156: Topic: The Ramayana (Archana Venkatesan)  
158: The Detective Story as Literature (JoAnn Cannon)  
168A: European Romanticism (Scott McLean)

*Names in the parenthesis indicate the instructor of the course. To view the expanded course description of these courses, visit the program website at <http://complit.ucdavis.edu>.*

## Sherry Hsieh is the recipient of UC Regents Fellowship

Sherry Hsieh was awarded the Regent's Scholarship upon entering UC Davis as a freshman and maintained it for four years. Hsieh was part of the Integrated Studies Honors Program. Hsieh appreciated the exceptional experience of living and learning with a group of equally excellent students; furthermore, the program enabled her to take courses from a breadth of disciplines. She is currently studying abroad in Beijing, China.





## Education Abroad Program Participants

The following students are Comparative Literature majors who have studied abroad in various cities during various quarters. Each student shares his and her unique experience.

"During Spring Quarter 2008, I studied abroad in Mendoza, Argentina, located near the border with Chile in the eastern foothills of the Andes. My ten-week program consisted entirely of Spanish language and culture classes and included frequent excursions such as wine tasting, hiking, and an extended trip to the Patagonia region. This experience provided an excellent opportunity for me to acquire another language, as I found myself immersed at the host university, in my home stay with an Argentine family, and everywhere in between. I also was able to complete one year of Spanish language courses in just one quarter. In addition, I learned to appreciate the much slower and relaxed Argentina lifestyle, especially the daily siesta period, and came out with many new friends and once-in-a-lifetime experiences. Studying abroad was certainly among the best experiences of my undergraduate career, and I would recommend it, and this program in particular, to anyone interested in languages, cultures, and of course, literature. Following my stay in Mendoza, I graduated in June 2008 and am now working full-time for the University in the Department of Academic Preparation Programs."



**Megan Macklin**

"When I arrived in Santiago, Chile in late January 2009 I was immediately overwhelmed by the burning summer heat and the Chilean Spanish dialect that includes many slang words known as "modismos." Other elements of



"culture shock" for me included the numerous stray dogs everywhere in the city and the excessive amount of mayonnaise used on sandwiches. Santiago is a very big city but it has an excellent public transportation system and weather that is quite similar to Sacramento and Davis: very warm summers and very cold winter nights. As I write this, I am in the last few weeks of the first semester of 2009 at the Universidad de Chile in the Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades Departamento de Literatura. The classes have been very interesting and include entirely Latin American authors, many of which are Chilean including Manuel Rojas, José Donoso, Vicente Huidobro, Oliverio Girondo, Horacio Quiroga and Antonio Skármeta. However, the university classes are generally not as well organized as UC classes: all of my course texts have had to be purchased at a campus photocopy shop or found online and classes can be cancelled without prior notice because sometimes a professor fails to show up or the students can vote to go on strike for up to several days at a time. I also got tear-gassed on one occasion

because of an almost violent student demonstration taking place outside of my classroom building as I was leaving. Most of the Chilean students I have met are very friendly and spend lots of time studying as they normally take 5 or 6 courses a semester and many still live at home with their families in Santiago. The university sometimes feels as if it is organized as a continuation of high school for this reason and also that there is a designated lunch hour each day between classes. Overall I have greatly enjoyed my experience studying and living in Santiago as I have immensely improved my Spanish speaking and comprehension skills, and have even had some time to travel in Argentina and Uruguay and plan to visit more places in the north of Chile when the semester ends."

**Daniel Harkin**



The Amy Lee Memorial Essay Prize was initiated after Amy Lee, a graduate student in Comparative Literature Program from 2005-2007, passed away in September 2007. Those lucky enough to have shared Amy's company knew of her dedication to teaching. This essay prize in her name was created as a tribute to her commitment.

It is the wish of her friends and family that Amy's passion for the written word will in some way live on through this memorial.

### The Amy Lee Memorial Essay Prize

This award is meant to reward well-written and well-argued student essays and is limited to essays submitted in the COM 1 through 4 series. Instructors may enter papers from any quarter of the academic year, until the deadline in the Spring Quarter. In addition to being recognized as an excellent writer, the author of the winning essay is awarded a cash prize.

#### 2008-2009

Winning Essay: "Propaganda and Expansionism in *The Song of Roland*," written by Evan Loker.

Honorable Mention: "Irrationality and Horror in *Faust*," written by Charles Ellis.

#### 2007-2008

Winning Essay: "Picking the Flower of France: Natural Imagery and Divine Providence in *The Song of Roland*," written by Kevin Peterson.

Honorable Mention: "An Inner Strength: Female Embodiment of Rationality and Truth in *Death and the King's Horseman* and *Sitt Marie Rose*," written by Christine Kobayashi.

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Papers may be submitted for consideration digitally by the instructor of the course throughout the year to Falcia Savala, Graduate Program Assistant, at [fsavala@ucdavis.edu](mailto:fsavala@ucdavis.edu).

**DEADLINE: May 7, 2010**

## Study Break Events for Undergrads!

During the Fall Quarter, the Comparative Literature Program hosted the Study Break event for students to take a break, enjoy some snacks, and get an opportunity to meet one another. Students shared their interests and asked several questions regarding the major/minor. They even had a chance to learn about the graduate program from a current graduate student, Chris Tong.

If you were unable to attend the Study Break, hopefully you will have a chance to attend or participate in our two upcoming events. During the Winter Quarter, there will be an information session for Comparative Literature students who have studied abroad to share their experiences, and in the Spring, undergraduate students will have the opportunity to hear from current graduate students.

For more information, contact Lilit Minasyan, Undergraduate Peer Adviser, at [lminasyan@ucdavis.edu](mailto:lminasyan@ucdavis.edu).

### SAVE THE DATE!

#### Brown-Bag Topic: *CompLit Student Study Abroad Experiences*

When: February 9, 2010  
Time: 12:00pm - 1:00pm  
Location: TBA

#### Round Table Topic: *CompLit Graduate Student Perspective*

When: April 27, 2010  
Time: 2:00pm - 3:00pm  
Location: TBA

## A busy year for the CompLit Faculty!

The faculty has been active inside and outside the classroom pursuing new opportunities and earning accolades.

### Published Articles

#### By Gail Finney

"Elitism or Eclecticism? Some Thoughts about the Future of Comparative Literature." *Symploke*, 16.1-2 (2009), 215-25.

(With Diana Lysinger) "Theoretical Cross-Pollination in Latin America: Mapping Transnational Exchanges." *Brújula: Revista interdisciplinaria sobre estudios latinoamericanos*, 7 (Spring 2009) 150-4.

#### By Neil Larsen

"The Idiom of Crisis: On the Historical Immanence of Language in Adorno." *Language without Soil: Adorno and Late Philosophical Modernity*, ed. Gerhard Richter (2009) and a German translation on *Krisis*, 33 (Spring 2010).

(Forthcoming) "Literature, Immanent Critique and the Problem of Standpoint." *Meditations*, Issue 24.2.

#### By Seth Schein

"Narrative Technique in the *Parodos* of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*," in *Narratology and Interpretation*, ed. J. Grethlein and A. Rengakos (Walter de Gruyter: Berlin and New York, 2009): 377-98.

"Greek Mythology in the Works of Thomas Bulfinch and Gustav Schwab," in *The Classical Bulletin* 84 (2009): 71-78.

### Invited Talks

**Gail Finney** was the keynote speaker at the Graduate Student Conference at UC Berkeley, "This is Nowhere: Local, Regional, and Provincial Spaces in World Literature," with a presentation entitled "Father Doesn't Always Know Best: Cinematic Depictions of Family Trauma in the Suburbs" on October 24, 2009.

**Sheldon Lu** organized, along with Graduate Student Chris Tong, the 2009 Asian Pacific Film Festival on November 4 - 6, 2009.

**Neil Larsen** will deliver the keynote address at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Cultural Studies Graduate Student Conference and Workshop at the University of New Mexico on April 16 - 17, 2009. The conference is titled "Networks of Power: Re-imagining the Imagined Community in a Globalized World" and focuses on the shifting position of the nation-state in global society.

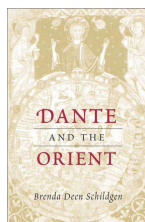
**Neil Larsen** will deliver a paper entitled "In the Shadow of 'Second Nature': Speculations on the Implied presence of a Second Fetish-form in Marx's Mature Critical Theory" at a conference sponsored by the journal *Historical Materialism* at City University of New York, Graduate Center on January 14 - 17, 2009

**Scott McLean** was one of the two poets who participated in the UC Davis Arboretum event titled *Poetry in the Garden: Esteemed California Poets Read Their Work* on September 24, 2009.

**Seth Schein** was invited to give several talks at different institutions:

- "The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite as Religious Poetry?" at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (May 5, 2009)
- "The Prologue of Sophokles' *Philoktetes*: a new commentary" at University of Chicago, Rhetoric and Poetics Workshop (May 7, 2009)
- "Divine and Human in the Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite*" and "The False Merchant Scene in Sophokles' *Philoktetes*: A New Commentary" at the University of California, Los Angeles (October 1, 2009)
- "Divine and Human in the Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite*" at University of Wisconsin, Madison (October 15, 2009) and at University of Oregon (November 11, 2009)

### Books



**Brenda Deen Schildgen's** *Dante and the Orient* (University of Illinois Press, 2002) is forthcoming in Arabic, published by the National Translation Center, Egypt. Her latest book, *Heritage or Heresy: Preservation and Destruction of Religious Art and Architecture in Europe* (Palgrave/Macmillan) appeared in 2008.

### Awards & Honors

**Archana Venkatesan** received a New Initiative Research Grant and a Hellman Fellowship for her research on hereditary communities of performers in south India. She also received a Faculty Research Award from the Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard University to collaborate with Professor Frank Clooney on a translation of the 9th century Tamil mystical poem, *Tiruvaymoli*.



## Comparative Literature Fall 2009 Welcome

October 29, 2009 at 912 Sproul Hall

The Program hosted its Annual Fall Welcome. It was a wonderful occasion for undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, and staff to gather together and to celebrate the new academic year.



From left to right: Monica Powers Keane, Prof. Juliana Schiesari, and Maria Saldaña-Seibert

## UC Davis Preview Day

October 17, 2009 at the ARC Pavillon

About 3000 prospective students, parents, and counselors attended UC Davis Preview Day. Representing the Program were Lilit Minasyan (Undergraduate Peer Advisor), Gabrielle Lampert (Undergraduate student), Prof. Archana Venkatesan (Undergraduate Faculty Advisor), and Maria Saldaña-Seibert (Staff Advisor).



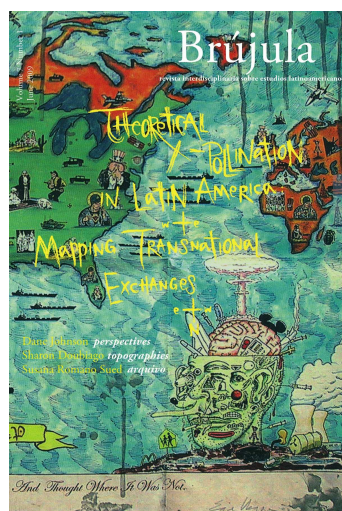
From left to right: Lilit Minasyan and Gabrielle Lampert



Lilit Minasyan discusses the Comparative Literature Major/Minor Program with prospective parents and students.







## Brújula:

*Revista interdisciplinaria sobre estudios latinoamericanos*

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### The Beginnings of Central American Narrative: A Disregarded Tradition

With the notable exceptions of Rubén Darío and Miguel Ángel Asturias, Central American literature has only emerged in academic discourse, particularly within the academy of the United States, in roughly the past decade. In the aftermath of the civil wars of the northern Central American nations, considerable attention has been paid to the works of contemporary writers of narrative fiction and *testimonios*, while writers from the early 20th century and the second half of the 19th century have suffered from a near-absolute occlusion, even despite the presence of some of Latin America's first novelists, such as Guatemalans José Milla and Enrique Gómez Carrillo (writing as early as the 1860s). With the intention of opening a discourse on the birth of narrative fiction in Central America, the 9th volume of *Brújula* will be dedicated to studies concerning the development of novels.

Articles to be submitted for this volume might include, but are not limited to the following:

- Interdisciplinary studies linking narrative production to musical works or the graphic arts
- The outgrowth of narrative fiction from genres such as journalism and essay writing
- Historical studies concerning "lost" works and authors
- European influence on authors and traditions on early Central American writers such as Gómez Carrillo, Milla or Manuel Argüello Mora, among others.
- The development of the traditions of *modernismo* and *vanguardismo* within the isthmus
- Comparatist studies about the beginnings of Central American narrative.
- The emergence of an infrastructure within Central America to support the growth and dispersion of narrative works
- The significance of European and North American economic investment for early writers and the appraisal of such foreign involvement within the works of these same authors
- Central American women's narrative production of this period
- Any other related studies focused on the means by which narrative fiction developed from the 1860s until the 1910s and 20s in Central America

For questions, e-mail [brujula@ucdavis.edu](mailto:brujula@ucdavis.edu) or visit <http://brujula.ucdavis.edu>.

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: January 8, 2010**



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## ATTENTION **ALUMNI**

We would like to hear from you! Please keep in touch with the Comparative Literature Program by sending your news and updates to one of the following:

- E-mail Prof. Archana Venkatesan at [avenkatesan@ucdavis.edu](mailto:avenkatesan@ucdavis.edu)
- Mail to this address: Comparative Literature Program, 522 Sproul Hall, One Shields Avenue, Davis, CA 95616

Items may be edited for clarity and space purposes.

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## SUPPORT THE **PROGRAM**

Your charitable, tax-deductible gift to the Comparative Literature Program is greatly needed and appreciated. Your support will be used for the highest priority projects in the program to support both undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, programs and facilities.

Here is a list of awards that the program currently offers: *The Amy Lee Memorial Essay Prize* and the new *Marc Blanchard Undergraduate Travel Award*.

For more information, contact Prof. Brenda Deen Schildgen at [bdschildgen@ucdavis.edu](mailto:bdschildgen@ucdavis.edu).

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We now have a Facebook group that you can join! It is a great way to meet fellow majors/minors and stay updated on upcoming events!

You can follow the link to join:

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/group.php?gid=141304226988&ref=ts>