

# University of California, Santa Barbara

## Comparative

FALL 2011

## Literature

### Message from Susan Derwin, Chair

#### Greetings to all:

The Comparative Literature Program's undergraduate majors and Ph.D. students are feeling the effects of the considerable reduction in state funding for the University of California. Some Comparative Literature courses have been cancelled, others are over-enrolled, yet the number of teaching assistantships has not been increased to accommodate our impacted classes. Our undergraduate majors are struggling to pay the spiking cost of tuition, and with limited course offerings, graduation requirements have become harder to fulfill in four years. Last year, for the first time in many years, we saw a reduction in the number of applicants to our Ph.D. program. This marked a significant shift; historically, in a weakened economy, the graduate applicant pool has grown. The number of our undergraduate majors is also declining.



These changes have occurred in spite of the fact that, more than ever, we are urgently in need of the means to understand cultures other than our own and to embrace the diverse traditions and communities that comprise our own society. How is this done if not through the study of languages, history, and cultural traditions, and by honing the tools of critical thinking? Cultivating this knowledge and sharpening these tools is what the study of literature, and of humanities more broadly, achieves. Without such a humanistic education, how are we to expect our students' generation to assume responsibility for their future?

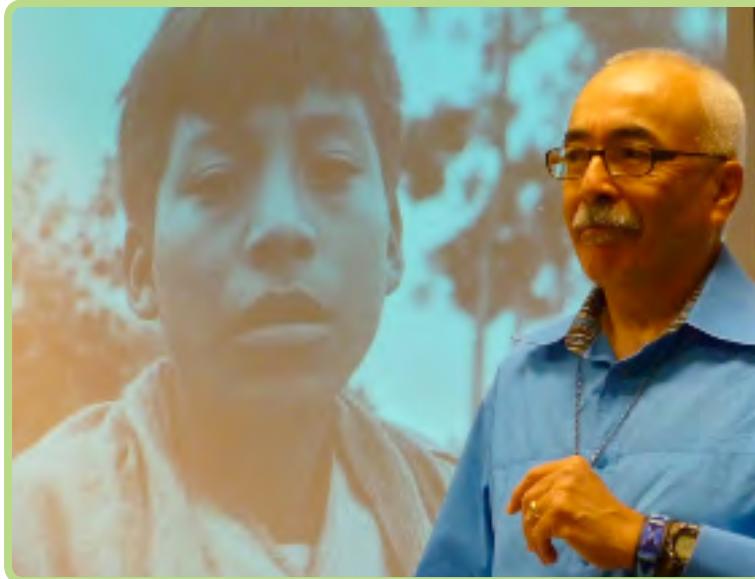
Currently twenty-seven students are pursuing a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature, in fields ranging from Persian feminist literature and performance cultures of the Americas, to genocide studies and biotechnical ecologies. Varied as their interests are, these students uniformly possess an intellectual energy, creativity and sense of commitment that heartens me even in face of our struggles for funding and institutional support. In a workshop I am teaching, a student veteran of the Iraq war told me that what got him through his tour of duty was Ernest Hemingway's novel, *The Old Man and The Sea*. He said it was the strength of the old man's commitment that gave him, the young soldier, the courage not to give up when he wanted to. He read that book over and over again.

That the humanities must battle to preserve its rightful place in American education can be a source of deep discouragement. But when I think about the students in our program, I cannot help but feel in my bones the essential nature of our endeavor.

With best wishes,  
Susan Derwin

## Events Sponsored By The Comparative Literature Program in 2011

### 'The Other Show': The Experimental Vaudeville of Others and Non-Others



Juan Felipe Herrera

In this inaugural event for the Comparative Literature Lecture Series Herrera combined photographs, music, and storytelling to approach questions of the role of the intellectual in relation to her/his object of study, the ethics of the representation of the Other, and the concrete applicability of academic knowledge. Over the course of an hour Herrera used his humorous and poetic style to entertain and enlighten an audience made up of undergraduates, graduates, and professors from Comparative Literature, Black Studies, Spanish, and Chicano Studies among other disciplines.

—Kristie Soares

In April 2011 the Comparative Literature Program hosted acclaimed writer and scholar Juan Felipe Herrera for a talk entitled "'The Other Show': The Experimental Vaudeville of Others and Non-Others." Herrera, who is the son of farm workers, poets and storytellers, is an anthropoeta, teatrista, National Book Critics Circle Award winner, Guggenheim Fellow, and new member of the Academy of American Poets' Board of Chancellors.



Herrera with Comparative Literature Graduate Students: (from left to right) Anne Marcoline, Kristie Soares, Marzia Malazzo, and Mary Garcia.

## Bodies in Space: A Guerrilla-Style Graduate Conference

In May 2011 the Comparative Literature Program and the Hemispheric South/s Research Initiative co-sponsored “Bodies in Space: A Guerrilla-Style Graduate Conference.” The event was co-created by Kristie Soares from Comparative Literature and Shannon Brennan from the English Department. This

12-hour performance marathon brought together graduate scholars from the departments of Comparative Literature, English, Feminist Studies, Film, and Theatre and Dance to rhyme, screen, perform, and inhabit their engagements with critical questions surrounding the racialization and spatialization of bodies—particularly in relation to issues of justice, sustainability and environment.



Modeled after the Black Performance Theory conference, and loosely based on the 24-hour play bake-off (wherein short plays are written, rehearsed, and staged over the course of 24 hours), “Bodies in Space” asked participants to debate, articulate, and (finally) stage a critical/creative issue, question, or argument related to the conference theme over the course of 12 hours. Using embodiment as both a way of knowing and as a way of showing, participants worked in small groups to devise a creative way of presenting their conclusions. The result was a spectacular showcase of modern dance, aikido, and salsa, combined with poetic readings of Frantz Fanon and Jean Luc Nancy, and set against the backdrop of popular films such as *Ghost*.

— Kristie Soares



## 2011 Faculty Publications and Completed Projects

**Silvia Bermúdez**, Professor of Spanish and Portuguese: Guest editor of “Constitutional Spain: Democracy and Culture, 1978-2008,” in a special issue of the *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* 44; “La apuesta pop de Alaska: la estética warholiana en los proyectos musicales con los Pegamoides,” in *Ventanas sobre el Atlántico* (University of Valencia); “Poetry and Performance: The Renewal of the Public Sphere in Present-Day Galicia,” in *Galician Studies* (Modern Language Association of America)

**Susan Derwin**, Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and German: *Rage is the Subtext: Readings in Holocaust Literature* (Ohio State University Press); “What Nazi Crimes Against Humanity Can Tell us about Torture Today,” in *Speaking About Torture*, Elisabeth Weber and Julie Carlson, co-eds. (Fordham University Press, forthcoming)

**Francis Dunn**, Professor of Classics: “Sophocles’ Electra,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Sophocles*, Kirk Ormand, ed. (forthcoming); “Dynamic Allusion in Sophocles,” in *The Brill Companion to Sophocles*, Andreas Markantonatos, ed. (forthcoming); “Ethical Attachments and the End of Sophocles’ Oedipus the King,” in *The Door Ajar: False Closure in Greek and Roman Literature and Art*, Farouk Grewing and Benjamin Acosta-Hughes, eds. (forthcoming); “Metatheatre and Metaphysics in two late Greek Tragedies,” in *Text and Presentation*, Kiki Gounaridou, ed. (forthcoming)



**Bishnupriya Ghosh**, Professor of English: *Global Icons: Apertures to the Popular* (Duke University Press)

**Giles Gunn**, Professor of English, Professor, and Chair of Global & International Studies: “Global Literature” and “Global Ethics” in *Encyclopedia of Global Studies* (Sage Publications, forthcoming); *America and the Misshaping of a New World Order*, Carl Gutierrez-Jones, co-ed. (University of California Press)



**Elizabeth Heckendorn Cook**, Professor of English: “Re-mediating Interpretation: Sophie Calle Rewrites Epistolary,” a festschrift honoring the 18th-c.scholar Betty Rizzo; “The Vocal Stump: The Politics of Tree-Felling in Swift’s ‘On Cutting Down the Old Thorn at Market Hill,’” in *Arboreal Values: Trees, Forests, and Wood in Europe and North America 1660-1830* (forthcoming)



**Dominique Jullien**, Professor of French: “Figures du juif dans les *Mille et une nuits*,” in *Histoire des relations entre juifs et musulmans du Coran à nos jours*, Benjamin Stora and Abdelwahab Meddeb, eds. (Albin Michel, forthcoming); “Entre psychiatrie et philosophie: la folie dans ‘Adieu’ de Balzac,” *Littérature* (forthcoming)

## 2011 Faculty Publications and Completed Projects

**Benjamin Stora and Abdelwahab Meddeb**, eds. (Albin Michel, forthcoming); “Entre psychiatrie et philosophie: la folie dans ‘Adieu’ de Balzac,” *Littérature* (forthcoming)



**Suzanne Jill Levine**, Professor of Spanish: Translation of Jose Donoso's *The Lizard's Tale* (Northwestern University Press, forthcoming)

**Catherine Nesci**, Professor of French: “Une « polémique vraiment fraternelle » ? Communication et espace public chez George Sand,” in *George Sand journaliste*, Marie-Eve Thérenty, ed. (PU St-Étienne); the proceedings of the 18th International George Sand Conference, *Writing, Performance and Theatricality in George Sand's Works* (forthcoming), a collaborative project with Anne Marcoline (Comparative Literature Doctoral Candidate, UCSB)



**Elizabeth Weber**, Professor of German: *Speaking About Torture*, Julie Carlson, co-ed. (Fordham University Press, forthcoming)

**Kay Young**, Professor of English: “The Aesthetics of Elegance and Extravagance in Science and Art,” in *Narrative* 19.2



### Faculty Lectures and Presentations

**Catherine Nesci**, Professor of French: “L'image détournée: le recyclage d'*Un Autre Monde* de Grandville dans l'édition de 1868 du *Diable à Paris*,” colloquium: “L'image répétée,” University of Victoria; “Le prisme des songes, des hallucinations: l'imaginaire fantastique de J. J. Grandville (1803-1847),” plenary address, the annual colloquium of the Korean Organization of French Studies, L'Université féminine Ewha, Seoul



**Harvey Sharrer**, Professor of Spanish and Portuguese: “El proyecto BITAGAP desde 1988: la expansión del cuerpo de textos y los hallazgos más significativos,” plenary paper, Primer Simposi Internacional: “Humanitats a la Xarxa: Món Medieval,” Universitat de Barcelona; “Apresentação da nova BITAGAP: funcionalidades e conteúdos,” plenary paper, Corpus Medieval em Português: “Novos testemunhos de BITAGAP,” Universidade de Lisboa

**Jon Snyder**, Professor of Italian Studies and Comparative Literature: “*I quaderni azzurri*: the Italian architect Aldo Rossi's architectural notebooks today,” Italian Cultural Institute of New York



**Kay Young**, Professor of English: “Wounded by Mystery: Dickens and the Shadow of the Object,” Dickens and Psychoanalysis Panel, Modern Language Association, Los Angeles; “On Neuoraesthesia,” Contemporary Narrative Theory, International Narrative Conference, Washington University, St. Louis; “Sex-Text-Cortex,” Queer and Feminist Narrative Theory Conference, Project Narrative, Ohio State University, Columbus; “On Joyce's Mind: the neuroaesthetics of 'yes,'" keynote address, Cognitive Joyce Conference, The Sorbonne University, Paris

## Faculty Awards

**Bishnupriya Ghosh**, Professor of English, was awarded the programming funds to convene the “Critical Issues in America” program for UCSB in 2011-12. The program will host a series of events related to risk, uncertainty, and security as urgent concerns for the United States at present.

**Giles Gunn**, Professor of English, was a fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation for one month at its study center in Bellagio, Italy. The purpose of this residential fellowship was to finish a new book on cosmopolitanism in an era of global absolutisms, tentatively entitled *Ideas to Die For*.

**Catherine Nesci**, Professor of French, was elected President of the George Sand Association, a literary society founded in 1976 at Hofstra University which aims to encourage and foster research and scholarship on George Sand ([www.hofstra.edu/georgesand](http://www.hofstra.edu/georgesand)).

## Visiting Faculty News

The Department of Germanic, Slavic and Semitic Studies is proud to host visiting Kade Professor, Helmut Schneider, of Bonn University in the winter quarter 2011. Prof. Schneider, an internationally acclaimed authority on German literature of the 18th and early 19th century (Lessing, Kleist, Goethe) and on the figuration of the body in the 18th century, is the fifth visiting Kade Professor in the department. During his stay at UCSB Prof. Schneider will offer one undergraduate course and a graduate seminar in Comparative Literature on German drama. The Max Kade Foundation, which actively supports graduate study in German literature in the UCSB German Department, has promoted contact and exchange between the U.S. and German-speaking universities since 1944.

## 2011 Graduate Student Advancements: Degrees



Rosie Karr, Ph.D.



Marzia Millazo, ABD



Katie Kelp-Stebbins, ABD



Eli Evans, ABD



Claudia Yaghoobi, ABD

## Graduate Student Advancements: Field Exams



**Kuan-yen Liu:** "Culture, Literature and Intellectual Thought in Late-Qing China"



**Kristie Soares:** "Rethinking Coalition in a State of Dissensus: The Role of Conflict in Comparative Literature and World Politics"



**Devin Fromm:** "Mysterious Origins: Popular Fiction and the History of Modernism"

## 2011 Graduate Student Publications



**Anne Marcoline:** "'Une trace de moi': Narrative Succession in *Consuelo* and *La Comtesse de Rudolstadt*," in *George Sand: Intertextualité et Polyphonie II: Voix, Image, Texte*, Nigel Harkness and Jacinta Wright, eds. (Peter Lang)

**Kristie Soares:** "Who Do I Have to Forgive to Move On From This Place: Meditations from a Third World Feminist Lesbian," in *The Anthology of Queer Girls in the Classroom: Lesbian Teachers and Students Tell Their Classroom Stories* (Peter Lang)



**Lily Wong:** Review of Paola Zamperini's *Lost Bodies: Prostitution and Masculinity in Chinese Fiction* in *China Review International*; "Projecting a More Habitable Globe: Hollywood's Yellow Peril and its Refraction onto 1930s Chinese National Cinema," in *Contemporary Cinema and the Visual Arts*, David Gallagher, ed. (Anthem Press, forthcoming); "Sinophone Erotohistories: The Shaw Brothers' Queering of a Transforming 'Chinese Dream' in *Ainu Fantasies*," in *Queer Sinophone Cultures*, Larissa Heinrich and Howard Chiang, eds. (Routledge, forthcoming); "Oscillating Histories: Representations of Comfort Women From *Bamboo House Of Dolls* to *Imperial Comfort Women*," in *Divided Lenses: War and Film Memory in Asia*, Michael Berry and Chiho Sawada, eds. (Columbia University Press, forthcoming)

**Claudia Yaghoobi:** "Iranian Women and Shifting Sexual Ideologies: 1850-2010," in *Policing Sexuality and Women's Resistance in Muslim Asia and the Middle East*, Homa Hoodfar and Anissa Lucas-Helie, eds. (Zed Books forthcoming); review of Margot Badran's *Feminism in Islam: Secular and Religious Convergences* in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (forthcoming); review of Arzoo Osanloo's *The Politics of Women's Rights in Iran*, in *The Journal of Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* (forthcoming)

## Graduate Student Conference Presentations

**Devin Fromm:** "The Renewal of Mankind: Benjamin, Modernist Subjectivity, and the Techno-Human beyond Itself," ACLA Conference, Vancouver, Canada

**Anne Marcoline:** "Résonances d'Écho: Le dédoublement acoustique dans l'*Histoire du rêveur* de George Sand à travers la fiction musicale d'E.T.A. Hoffmann," the *Séminaire du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, L'Université Paris-Sorbonne

**Claudia Yaghoobi:** "Sacred versus Profane: Transgressive Homo-erotic Love in Sufi Poetry," ACLA Conference, Vancouver, Canada—nominated for The Horst Frenz Prize.

## Graduate Student Awards

**Lily Wong** received the *UCSB Graduate Division Dissertation Completion Fellowship* and the *Interdisciplinary Humanities Center Pre-Doctoral Fellowship* for 2011-12.

**Claudia Yaghoobi** received the *UCSB Graduate Opportunity Fellowship* for 2011-12 and UCSB Religious Studies Department Mellichamp Research Fellowship in spring 2011.

## Teaching for Comparative Literature Program



I taught Comparative Literature 32: Middle Eastern Literatures during the summer of 2011 as a teaching associate. We examined a collection of Middle Eastern women's speeches, short stories, personal memoirs and novels spanning over a century beginning in the 1860's to the present. We discussed the conception of Middle Eastern and Islamic feminism, and the problematics of examining and studying Middle Eastern women within Western academic discourse.

Comparative Literature provided me with a great opportunity to sharpen my teaching skills and delve more deeply into one of my research areas. This was a very rewarding experience!

— Claudia Yaghoobi, Ph.D. Candidate

## Student Testimonials



I chose to take Comparative Literature 32 for a few reasons. I needed a class for both my major and for fulfilling my last GE requirement. However, I picked this one specifically because I knew nothing about the Middle East and wanted to know more. When the class first started I was a little uncomfortable because I felt out of my element, and yet, as the class went on, I began to feel more and more comfortable and really began to like it. I feel like I learned a lot more about a culture that I was completely unfamiliar with, especially because of the readings which were mostly firsthand accounts. Claudia was also a wonderful teacher who showed her passion for the subject, which made learning it all the more enjoyable.

— Caitlin Johnson, History/English

I have never read ALL of the assigned readings for any class except CompLit 32 because it was so engaging and student-oriented.

— Michael Hinrichs Jr., Geography



Although this was the first Comparative Literature class I have taken, I doubt it will be the last. The way we analyzed issues through various authors, perspectives, and activities offered a deeper understanding and revealed unlikely truths. I now understand the women of the Middle East unlike before, thanks to this class and the works we compared.

— Dhalton Grover, Global Studies

## News and Notes from the Outside World

Allison Schifani conducted field work in Buenos Aires, Argentina for her dissertation — *Biotechnical Ecologies: Urban Practice and Play in Buenos Aires and Los Angeles*. She is working with Buenos Aires Libre, an organization in the process of constructing its own autonomous network, apart from the Internet, in the capital city. In addition to ethnographic work with this group, Allison interviewed urban practitioners of new media art and ecological play in the city. Among her subjects are members of Articultores, a group who perform 'guerilla gardening,' planting seeds for edible plants in public spaces around Buenos Aires. She also profiles artist and architect Juan Pintabona whose [www.buenosaires.com.ar](http://www.buenosaires.com.ar) allows users to receive and send messages composed of letters lifted from images of text around the city. She has now returned to Los Angeles where her research will continue with similarly situated organizations there.



Back from Buenos Aires  
Allison Schifani, Graduate Student



### Exploring Spain Marissa Morimoto, Undergraduate Comparative Literature Major

During my first two years of college, the Comparative Literature program encouraged me to examine texts as they relate to society and the world. Now, after studying abroad for the last year in Spain, I have been able to make greater observations about the Spanish culture through knowing its literature, its language and its people. The ability to appreciate Spanish literature in its rich, raw and un-translated form is one of my most treasured gifts that I will bring home this year. All this was made possible through this program, which encourages the study of foreign language and advocates its students to go abroad.

### Courtney Hlebo Speaking about her Experience as a UCSB Comparative Literature Undergraduate

I love Comparative Literature because the professors are really supportive of allowing students to study whatever they want as long as it falls in line with the objectives of the class. For example, in Fall 2010, I took Comparative Literature 30A with Professor Kittler, and for the term paper he allowed me to choose my own topic for the term paper, and I decided to study the role of food in the *Odyssey*. This assignment allowed me to become an antiquarian foodie, and was the most enjoyable paper I have ever written!



## Selected New Graduate Students



**Lauran Elam** completed a B.A. in French with a minor in German at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. After finishing her M.A. in French, she spent three years teaching both French and German at the secondary level in Arkansas. Her undergraduate thesis research focused on Beur literature and film, specifically on narratives concerning the teenage children of North African immigrants to France. Other research interests include French poetry from the Renaissance period, and the works of francophone authors from Morocco and Algeria.



**Alexandra Magearu** has an M.A. in Photographic History from De Montfort University. Her research interests include British, French and German modernist texts, visual and literary autobiographies, poetic fiction, the relationship between text and image, theories of subjectivity, the phenomenological aspects of perception and the connection between memory and creativity.



**Kathrin Spiller** is from Germany. She began her studies in English and French literatures and languages in 2005 at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, Germany. From 2008 to 2009, she worked as a Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant at Dartmouth College in Hanover, NH. At Dartmouth, she also earned her M.A. in Comparative Literature in 2010. Even though she will be in the German Literary Studies specialization at UCSB, she will also be working with English and French literatures during her Ph.D. program. She is very much looking forward to meeting everybody and to getting to know UCSB!



**Xingyue Zhou** has a B.A. in English Literature and has just obtained her M.A. in Comparative Literature, both from Peking University, China. Her research interests include modern American poetry, world poetry since modernism, poetic traditions, psychoanalysis and queer theories.

## Contact the Program

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