



SCHOOL OF LITERATURES CULTURES AND LINGUISTICS

A NEWSLETTER COVERING THE
UNIT FOR CINEMA STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF THE CLASSICS
PROGRAM IN COMPARATIVE AND WORLD LITERATURE
DEPARTMENT OF EAST ASIAN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES
DIVISION OF ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE
DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH
DEPARTMENT OF GERMANIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES
DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION
DEPARTMENT OF SLAVIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES
AND DEPARTMENT OF SPANISH, ITALIAN, AND PORTUGUESE

WINTER 2008

‘Translating the Middle Ages Conference’ Features Appearances by Poets W.S. Merwin and Robert Pinsky

Pulitzer Prize-winning poet W.S. Merwin and three-term U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky were the featured guests visiting the University of Illinois campus on October 28 in conjunction with the conference “Translating the Middle Ages.”

The conference took place October 28-29, 2008. Sponsored by the Program in Medieval Studies and the Center for Translation Studies, the conference featured medievalists from throughout North America and Europe.

“This event is distinctive in that it invites medievalists and modernists, scholars and artists to engage in creative dialogue that will draw the interest of both the campus and the broader community,” said organizer Karen Fresco, the director of the Program in Medieval Studies at U of I. “It showcases the new Center for Translation Studies and the interdisciplinary work that is the hallmark of medieval studies.”

Also distinctive was a pre-conference “Dante Marathon” held on October 23. The event featured a collective public reading of *Inferno*, the first canticle of Dante Alighieri’s *Divine Comedy*.

Event organizer Eleonora Stoppino, a U of I professor of Italian who teaches a course on the *Divine Comedy*, said that students, faculty members, and community members took turns reading—in several different languages—the 34 cantos that make up *Inferno*.

Participants in the “Translating the Middle Ages” conference included medievalists who work in various disciplines—from literature and language to history and art history—and in national traditions from Scandinavia to Greece, focusing on the movement among vernacular languages Arab and Latin.

Twenty-two distinguished scholars read original papers during the conference. According to Fresco, several of the participants have “helped shape the field of medieval translation studies, are



Pulitzer Prize-winning poet W.S. Merwin (left) speaks with an audience member following Merwin’s remarks at a special event in the Rare Book Room of the Main Library on October 28.

making transformative interventions in the field, and are conducting innovative research.”

Among the scholars that presented at the conference, four have translated or are preparing translations of medieval texts and two are contributors to the Worldwide Universities Network collaborative project “Multilingual-

ism in the Middle Ages.” This project’s aim is to further research into the cultural consequences and manifestations of multilingualism in the medieval west.

Merwin and Pinsky read from and discussed their translations of *Divine Comedy* during a CultureTalk event held at the Colwell Playhouse in the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts on October 28. The conversation was moderated by author Richard Powers, the Swanlund Chair in English at Illinois who won a National Book Award in 2006 and received a Pulitzer Prize nomination in 2007 for his book *The Echo Maker*.

An exhibit of Merwin’s papers, titled “Multiple Merwins: Poet, Translator and Environmental Activist,” was placed on view in the Rare Book & Manuscript Library. The poet made informal remarks at a reception in the Rare Book & Manuscript Library on October 28.

Merwin has published more than a dozen books of poetry, including *The Carrier of Ladders* and *The River Sound*, which have evolved from a medieval formality—echoed in his translation of Dante’s *Purgatorio*—into a more distinctly American voice.

Pinsky founded the Favorite Poem Project, an online video database of ordinary people reading their most-cherished poems, and created the anthology *Americans’ Favorite Poems*, now in its 18th printing. He also earned the Los Angeles Times Book Prize in poetry and the Howard Morton Landon Translation Award for *The Inferno of Dante*.



U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

In a recent count we determined that more than 30 languages are offered by the University of Illinois, all from our School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics. The fastest growing part of our School is the development of new language programs, many oriented towards heritage language speakers within our communities.

Heritage language learners are those who have grown up in a bilingual environment, but often have not had formal instruction in their parents' language. According to the Illinois Coalition of Immigrant and Refugee Rights, immigrants and their children constitute a quarter of the population of the state of Illinois. Immigrants are learning English rapidly, but we also want to benefit from the cultures they bring to our shores.

Most recently, for instance, we have initiated the process of creating a program in Modern Greek Studies. Professor Angeliki Tzanetou of the Department of the Classics and Marina Terkourafi of the Department of Linguistics are spearheading this effort. By the fall of 2009, the first courses will be offered, with the enthusiastic support of the Greek community throughout the state.

In May, the Dalkey Archive Press, an important component of our Center for Translation Studies, brought a Greek author to Chicago for a reading from her stories, along with the translations. The event was held at the Hellenic Museum in Greektown. In September, filmmaker Maria Iliou and historian Alexander Kitroeff came to present their movie, *The Journey*, about Greek immigration to the United States. Within the next few years, we will offer several years of language instruction and develop a variety of courses on literature, history, and culture of modern Greece.

This is a model we are developing with the many other cultural communities that enrich our society. Spanish, Hindi, Arabic, Italian, Swedish, Chinese ... the list goes on and on. The opportunity to build bridges between these communities, our students, and the University in general, is being pursued through courses and research programs on these cultures and their languages.

Next summer the School will host the Heritage Languages Institute, a forum where researchers from all over the country meet to discuss both pedagogical and theoretical issues raised by language instruction to students who have grown up in a bilingual context. Professors Silvina Montrul (Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese), Elabbas Benmamoun (Linguistics), and Tania Ionin (Linguistics) are leading this initiative.

We cherish all cultures and their languages and are committed to supporting our immigrant communities. We look forward to working with you in recognizing and cherishing the full diversity of our cultural mosaic.

Best wishes,



Doug Kibbee

Winter 2008

School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

This newsletter is published biannually by the School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and is produced by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences' Office of Communications and Marketing (09.032). Suggestions and correspondence may be sent to the School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics:

4072 Foreign Languages Building
707 South Mathews Avenue
Urbana, IL 61801
(217) 244-3252
Fax: (217) 244-8430
<http://services.lang.uiuc.edu>

Director: Douglas A. Kibbee
Editor: Rick Partin



College of
Liberal Arts & Sciences
AT ILLINOIS

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM STUDENTS SEE ISLAM IN A LIGHT ONLY EGYPT CAN PROVIDE

By Dave Evenson, from LAS News Online, July 2008

Conveying what it's really like to attend a traditional Sufi dhikr, an Islamic ceremony to bring one closer to God, is too much to ask of a classroom environment, no matter how brilliant the professor. One class in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences had a method that worked, however—they went to Egypt.

Eleven students in the study abroad course "Islam in Egypt" traveled in May with associate professor of religious studies Valerie Hoffman to the immense city of Cairo, described as the cultural capital of the Arab world. There they spent almost a month studying the diversity and intricacies of Islamic life, from the issuing of fatwas—scholarly interpretations of Islamic law—to the debate over traditional methods of teaching the Koran.

Living out of a hotel near the heart of the ancient city, and striving to maintain a low profile, the class also learned a thing or two about daily life, including, for the women, how it feels to wear a headscarf in the desert heat. They also learned how to negotiate a traffic pattern one student described simply as "frantic."

Pollution and insects led to a few minor illnesses, but nothing that required professional medical care, and nothing that stopped what turned out to be an inside view of Islam that many foreigners or non-Muslims would never have the chance to see. Hoffman had previously spent years in Egypt studying Islam, and, while serving as translator and organizer, she utilized contacts and knowledge of the territory to admit her students to rare places.

For example, Al-Azhar University is typically off-limits to non-Muslims, but Hoffman knew Ahmad al-Tayyib, the current president, and the

class was able to meet with him and pose questions about Egyptian reform and the educational system.

Along with trips to monuments, they also spoke with an imam (mosque priest), journalists, non-governmental organizations, students, and a Sufi shaykh, or master in one of the Islamic sects. Jeff Peyton, a graduating senior in religious studies, was surprised by what he learned in a meeting with an advisor to the Grand Mufti, the highest Egyptian authority on Islamic law.

The Grand Mufti has a hotline to provide non-binding interpretations of Islamic law to inquiring Muslims (the office receives up to 1,800 calls a day). Egypt is entirely Sunni, so

Peyton expected the interpretations to be based on four Sunni schools of law, but it turns out that the Grand Mufti's legal scholars will consider every Islamic interpretation when preparing the fatwas, including Shi'a interpretations.

"They use a lot more different sources and schools of law than the orthodox ones," Peyton says. "So you get wider interpretations than expected."

A theme repeated among some of the upper-level students was that while they already had learned much about Egypt during their time on the University of Illinois campus, the knowledge they'd accumulated seemed more real after the visit.

"It was the most amazing thing that ever happened to me," said Millie Wright, a senior in religious studies. "It just contextualized all my education."

While the course was only as long as the trip, it meant that classroom demands were only magnified. The students had five required books and

they wrote 10 papers, eight summaries, and five sets of interview questions (they met often to study in the nearby American Research Center in Egypt and they took their final exam in a Coptic Christian center in the desert between Cairo and Alexandria).

The coursework was accompanied by a packed daily schedule of moving in and around the city for meetings and observations. During that time they received informal lessons in colloquial Arabic and introductions to Egyptians who were friendly to the Americans (Peyton says he felt safer in Cairo than he would in Chicago).

Egyptians even encouraged the women to remove their headscarves if they desired, Wright said, though most Egyptian women wore them.

"Actually a lot of Egyptians were saying, 'Why are you wearing that? You're Americans. You don't have to, you know,'" Wright recalls.

She and Peyton have agreed to write about the experience for the Department of Religion website, though they both acknowledge some of the most moving moments are beyond words. For Wright, one of them came after they had grown accustomed to having a minaret issuing five calls to prayer per day (starting at 4:30 a.m.) right outside their hotel. By the end of the visit, however, she even grew to like it.

"It was amazing standing out on the balcony at dusk and hearing it," Wright says.

And then there was the dhikr, which Hoffman reports made a particularly deep impression on most the students. The dhikr is a Sufi tradition to chant the various names of God while moving the body vigorously side to side, and front to back. One day the class witnessed one in a packed alley outside the shrine of 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin, where the students watched the swaying, entranced participants, accompanied by music.

"There's this electric feeling in the air," Peyton says, in trying to describe it. "I can't think of anything that compares."

LAS students, accompanied by religious studies professor Valerie Hoffman, were immersed in Egyptian culture in May.



Students who participated in the study abroad course 'Islam in Egypt' were able to witness a traditional Sufi dhikr.

TEACHING AND LEARNING ABOUT ISLAM By Rick Partin



Professor Mohammad Khalil

For Summer 2008, Mohammad Khalil had to somehow reduce a 15-week “Intro to Islam” course into four weeks.

Khalil, assistant professor of religious studies, had previously

taught the full 15-week version of the course to 80 students at U of I. His summer class was composed of students of widely varying ages and backgrounds—including three ROTC students who planned to serve in Iraq.

The class, mostly lecture, started with the life of Islam’s founder, Muhammad (570-632 AD).

He held one class session on the Qur’an, the holy text of Islam, and had the class read several passages. Khalil emphasized that the Qur’an is not supposed to be read as a book, as “it’s meant to be an oral text.”

Next he included a session on Islamic history, including the Crusades, the Mongol invasions, the Ottoman Empire, and Islamic law, philosophy, and mysticism. He also reviewed Islamic art, architecture, and music. Students were expected to visit a local mosque as part of their coursework.

In the last part of the class he covered Muslim Americans, including Malcolm X, and tensions within the American Muslim community.

“One thing I really tried to hit home is that Muslims are not a monolith,” he said. To give the students an idea of diversity among Muslims, in his lecture on art, architecture, and music, Khalil showed the class devotional music videos from around the world. This included one in which an Egyptian American from Oklahoma performed country music. And in his lecture on Islam in America, he showed a

clip from a documentary on indigenous Texan Muslims.

Khalil also points out that, for example, Arabs comprise only 13-20 percent of the estimated 1.3 billion Muslims worldwide.

GROWING UP MUSLIM

A second-generation American, Khalil was born in Lansing, Mich. His parents came from Egypt as students to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1975. His father is currently a professor of electrical engineering at Michigan State University.

Khalil’s path to U of I was circuitous. He was in dental school in the fall of 2001. “When 9/11 happened I couldn’t study. So much was going on in the world.”

Disillusioned with dentistry, he finally dropped out in the spring of 2003 and decided to go into Islamic studies. “I liked the humanities,” he says. “I just wanted to get into the field.”

He earned his MA and PhD degrees in Islamic studies from the University of Michigan. He taught at Albion College in the fall of 2005 and at Michigan State University in 2006-2007.

Khalil’s wife, Suzanne, is a pharmacist at Carle Foundation Hospital in Urbana. They were born at the same hospital in Lansing. He has a photo



Mohammad Khalil (center) during his pilgrimage to Mecca in January 2008.

of them together when he was five years old. They began getting to know each other in high school and were engaged during their undergraduate studies at the University of Michigan.

Suzanne graduated from Michigan with a major in biopsychology. They were

married after he graduated from college at age 22, having earned an AB in Arabic and Islamic studies.

Fast forward to 2008, a monumental year for the couple, as on January 1, Khalil returned from his pilgrimage to Mecca—accompanied by his brother-in-law, Sherief, a 34-year-old police

officer in East Lansing—and on January 31, their daughter, Maryam, was born.

For Muslims, embarking on a pilgrimage is one of the five “pillars of Islam”—Muslims who are physically able and can afford to do so are expected to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lifetime.

Going on the pilgrimage was “the hardest thing I’ve ever had to do,” Khalil said, noting that while there, one’s total focus is on the pilgrimage. He and his brother-in-law went for 19 days, including two days in Medina. “It was an eye-opening experience,” he said. “You’re dealing with two to three million people.” He described the pilgrimage as a “free-for-all” in which men and women, Shi’ites and Sunnis, all intermixed peacefully. “In general, everyone’s there to pray, and the rituals evoke a sense of universality.

“Everyone comes back really sick. I had to wear a mask when I got back, on January 1st.”

Thirty days later he had recovered and his daughter Maryam (Arabic for “Mary”) was born.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

In teaching about violence and Islam, Khalil said he focused on two themes: justifications for violence and the rules of warfare. While Khalil teaches the historical range of interpretations within Islam, his own opinion is that terrorism is unjustified and that “the only type of war worth fighting is resisting oppressive forces—Hitler’s Nazis being an example—when they cannot be contained any other way.”

When asked how teaching Islam has affected how he views himself as a Muslim, he responded, “I don’t see the world in as narrow a way as I used to.” He said he started asking himself, “Why do I believe this? Why do I believe that?”

As part of this process, he said, he first became less faithful, but over time, as he developed new answers, more faithful.

Above all, Khalil said, the main lesson he learned in responding to his students’ many questions is that “how you word an answer is very important. Many a misconception is simply the result of wording.”

PROFESSOR KINGSLEY BOLTON OF UNIVERSITY OF STOCKHOLM DELIVERS INAUGURAL BRAJ AND YAMUNA KACHRU DISTINGUISHED LECTURE By Andrea Lynn



Professor Kingsley Bolton

Kingsley R. Bolton, professor of English linguistics at Stockholm University, delivered the inaugural Braj and Yamuna Kachru Distinguished Lecture in the Linguistics Sciences at the University of Illinois on October 9.

The lecture, entitled "World Englishes in the Global Context," is named for Yamuna Kachru, professor emerita of linguistics at U of I, and Braj B. Kachru, professor emeritus of linguistics at U of I's Center for Advanced Study.

In his lecture, Bolton discussed the development of world Englishes as a branch of linguistics over the past three decades, acknowledging the crucial contributions of Yamuna and Braj Kachru to the study of English worldwide. In addition, the presentation also considered current arguments concerning globalization and the role of English in this context.

The speaker also reported on his recent research on call centers and Business Process Outsourcing in the Asian region, notably India and the Philippines.

Bolton referred to globalization as a "contested area," with positive and negative aspects in the process. The challenge, he said, is to make globalization work in the poorer countries. The question he raised is whether English is driving globalization or detracting from it.

His work on Asian Englishes centers on the issue of colonization, to which he refers as an "area of immense linguistic diversity," with an estimated 30 million English speakers in India and 330 million speakers and learners in mainland China.

Bolton's research on call centers has been done mainly in Manila, which he refers to as "a poor ex-colony of the United States of America." He conducted a pilot study in 2006-2007 of call center workers with "native-like English who work at night to accommodate customers some 12 hours away on the other side of the globe." The typical worker, he found, is female, 26 years

of age, learned English from an early age (five to seven years old), and earns about \$200 (U.S.) a month.

The speaker used multimedia clips to illustrate, sometimes amusingly, how call center workers are trained to speak American-style English, and how they carry out over-the-phone business deals with customers. In one such clip, a call center representative in Manila told a potential customer that she was "down here in Detroit" as they spoke. However, he also noted, call center workers, if asked where they are calling from, are typically trained to state the truth.

In discussing his call center research, Bolton raised the possibility that we are dealing with a "Spiky World"—that is, rather than a world brought closer due to positive aspects of globalization, we have evidence of concentrated power and wealth in a handful of western urban areas, such as Chicago and New York. Bolton based this assertion on such factors as knowledge (research), light emissions, patents, and scientific citations. Bolton pointed out that conversely, inequality is increasing in parts of the world, such as parts of China and India.

Bolton lectures at Stockholm University on language and society and world Englishes. He has published books and articles on sociolinguistics, Asian Englishes, Hong Kong English, Chinese pidgin English, and Chinese secret societies.

He is the founding editor of the Hong Kong University Press book series *Asian Englishes Today* and coeditor of the Routledge book series *The History and Development of World Englishes*.

Bolton's recent publications include *Chinese Englishes: A Sociolinguistic History* (CUP, 2003), *World Englishes: Critical Concepts in Linguistics* (coedited with Braj B. Kachru, Routledge, 2006), and *Asian Englishes* (coedited with Braj B. Kachru, Routledge, 2006).

Yamuna Kachru's areas of research are Hindi and South Asian linguistics and world Englishes in communication across cultures. She has published extensively in her areas of research

and was honored by the president of India for her contributions to Hindi linguistics in 2006.

Her recent publications include *Hindi* (John Benjamins, 2006), *World Englishes in Asian Contexts* (coauthored, Hong Kong University Press, 2006), *Contexts, Cultures, and World Englishes* (coauthored, Routledge, 2008), *The Handbook of World Englishes* (coedited with B. Kachru and C. L. Nelson, Blackwell, 2006), and *Language in South Asia* (coedited with B. Kachru and S. N. Sridhar,

Cambridge, 2008).

Braj B. Kachru has pioneered, shaped, and defined the scholarly field of world Englishes and was honored with the Duke of Edinburgh Joint First Prize for his book *The Alchemy of English* (Pergamon, 1986). He is the founder and coeditor of *World Englishes*, associate editor of *The Oxford Companion to the English Language*, and contributor to the *Cambridge History of the English Language*.

His research on world Englishes, the Kashmiri language and literature, and theoretical and applied studies on language and society has resulted in more than 25 authored and edited volumes and more than 100 research papers, review articles, and reviews.



Professors Braj and Yamuna Kachru talk with linguistics professor Wayne Dickerson at a reception following the Kachru Distinguished Lecture.

TURNING TO FAITH

By Dave Evenson, from LAS News Online, September 2008



Members of the University of Illinois faculty addressing the threat of climate change and shrinking ecosystems believe they've found a potentially powerful new ally in local churches.

The first fruits of this unusual alliance came in June, during a STEWARDship (Sustaining The Earth With Allied Religious Denominations) workshop on the U of I campus, where presentations were accompanied by scientific analysis of climate change.

Achieving a greater mutual understanding was the aim. Presenters—from the U of I, environmental groups, and religious organizations both within and outside the University—also spoke of ecosystems, biodiversity, health, the “commodification” of nature and nonhumans, belief in God and dealing with global environmental problems, restoring the human-nature connection, and implementing lessons from the workshop into churches.

The effort was built upon a growing realization within religious communities that caring for the environment is part of following God's word. The trend—taking shape in actions such as the placement of solar panels on churches—has been widely reported in the media nationwide, and an attitude shift is confirmed by members of Urbana Theological Seminary who attended the workshop and maintain connections with many churches in and around Champaign-Urbana, as well as outside the area.

Robert McKim, professor of religious studies and philosophy, and head of the Department of Religion, says the diversity of people at the workshop, including those with ties to local ministers and church leaders, provides an opportunity to bring together people who, until now, have

largely remained apart.

“The reality is that most people within 100 miles of Champaign-Urbana are more likely to be influenced by what their churches say than by what academics say,” McKim says. “Part of what's involved is getting information about the relevant science into the hands of people at churches.”

The effort formed in fall 2007 when people at the University began talking about what they could do to encourage more eco-friendly lifestyles. The workshop came together in the ensuing months. Members of the group hope to do more events in the future.

The workshop took on a unique flavor after Ken Cuffey, president of Urbana Theological Seminary and a professor there, spotted a letter in Champaign's local newspaper, *The News-Gazette*, by several U of I faculty proclaiming solidarity with evangelical Christians who have worked to reduce impacts of climate change. Cuffey reached out to the letter-writers to join forces.

Members of the seminary played a significant role at the workshop, with Cuffey presenting several Biblical passages that called for care of the environment (there's a powerful theology of the environment in the Bible that people don't see, he says). The seminary is familiar with U of I faculty on an informal basis, Cuffey notes, but this kind of working collaboration between members of the institutions has been “unique,” he says. As a result of the program, he adds, he could connect local church leaders with scientists he met at the workshop, and he could also develop his own teachings.

“This is very grassroots,” Cuffey says, of the workshop, “and it's something both parties were really interested and ready to respond to and open arms to each other.”

McKim says that the group is working on a budget for basic expenses, but “it is quite modest and we do not have a staff.” attests to the grassroots nature of the group.

“We're just a number of individuals that devoted our time and energy to this,” McKim adds. “We can serve as a clearinghouse for ideas and information and relevant knowledge, relevant expertise, relevant theological insights, and we can help disseminate all of that to key relevant constituencies.”

NEWS BRIEFS

SPECIAL EVENT HONORS PROFESSOR WILLIAM M. CALDER III

Professor William M. Calder III, William Abbot Oldfather Professor of the Classics and Comparative Literature at U of I, was recognized for his lifelong contribution to the study of the classics and the history of classical scholarship at a special event held on campus in March.

Professor Mortimer H. Chambers, emeritus professor of ancient history at the University of California at Los Angeles, delivered the keynote address entitled, “William M. Calder III and the History of Classical Scholarship.”

Calder, who received a PhD from the University of Chicago in 1958, joined the U of I in 1988 after teaching at Columbia University and the University of Colorado-Boulder.



His academic fields of interest include Greek tragedy, Greek epigraphy, Greek historiography, Greek oratory, Greek and Roman paganism and the rise of Christianity, Seneca Tragicus, the history of classical scholarship in the 19th and 20th centuries in Germany, England, and the U.S., and the reception of antiquity in Wilhelmine Prussia.

The event was cosponsored by the Humboldt Foundation, the American Friends of the Humboldt Foundation, the U of I Center for Advanced Studies, and the Department of the Classics.

The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation is a nonprofit foundation established by the Federal Republic of Germany for the promotion of international research cooperation. It enables highly qualified scholars not resident in Germany to spend extended periods researching in Germany and promotes the ensuing academic contacts.

Every year, the Humboldt Foundation enables more than 1,800 researchers from all over the world to spend time researching in Germany. The Foundation maintains a network of more than 23,000 Humboldtians from all disciplines in 130 countries worldwide, including 40 Nobel Prize winners.

EVENT ON CAMPUS PAYS TRIBUTE TO AUTHOR EVELYNE ACCAD

A special event honoring the writing of author Evelyne Accad and featuring an appearance by her was held at the Illini Union Bookstore in April.

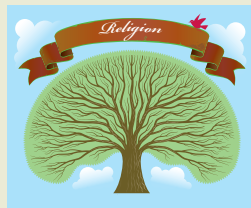


The event was sponsored by the Department of French.

Three U of I graduates presented and discussed recent works in English on Accad: Dr. Cheryl Toman (Case Western University), who edited a volume on Accad's work entitled *On Evelyne Accad: Essays in Literature, Feminism, and Cultural Studies* (Summa, 2007, Scholar's Choice Award); Dr. Deirdre Bucher-Heistad (University of Northern Iowa), who edited another volume of writing about Accad entitled *Explorations: L'écriture d'Evelyne Accad* (L'Harmattan, 2006); and Dr. Cynthia Hahn (professor of French, Lake Forest College), translator of two of Accad's novels, *Wounding Words: A Woman's Journal in Tunisia* and most recently *Poppy of the Massacre* (*Coquelicot du massacre*, bilingual format, including preface by Hahn, L'Harmattan, 2006).

Also participating was Dr. Zohreh Sullivan of the English department, whose essay is included in Toman's volume. Dr. Accad spoke about her fiction and criticism.

A second session followed on francophone topics by graduate students in French: Arnaud Perret, Nicola Dach, and Dan Maroun.



PROGRAM IN RELIGION BECOMES A DEPARTMENT

In the summer of 2008, after a process taking more than a year to complete, the Program for the Study of Religion officially became the Department of Religion.

The department's faculty members have been the recipients of numerous awards and grants including a Guggenheim Fellowship, Fulbright awards, NEH fellowships, and awards from the American Philosophical Society, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Spencer Foundation, the Templeton Foundation, and numerous other agencies.

The department has in fact been functioning in all respects like a regular department. For example, since its inception, it has had tenure-track and tenured faculty appointments and it has had degree programs at the undergraduate level. The department usually has around 30 majors. About a fifth specialize in Christianity, about a fifth specialize in Islam, and the others are divided among the Asian traditions, Judaism, philosophy of religion, and religion and culture, according to Robert McKim, head of the department. The department teaches a large number of students each year; the total enrollment in 2008-2009 is more than 1,400 students, including many students who are taking General Education courses.

"We believe that the global citizenship for which the University aspires to prepare all of its students requires an ability to understand the deepest and most sensitive aspects of other cultures, including their religions," McKim said.

DIVISION OF ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE MERGES WITH DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS



With the start of the Fall 2008 semester, the Division of English as a Second Language has become part of the Department of Linguistics.

The former division's English as a Second Language (ESL) program and Master's Degree in Teaching English as a Second Language (MATESL) curriculum will continue, as will teaching and academic awards and its library,

an ongoing resource to all ESL/EFL teachers-in-training. Its role in testing and placing incoming international students through the ESL Placement Test will also continue. The Division of English as an International Language faculty moves into linguistics to create one of the largest units in the School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics.

The new merger also will permit the former division to offer, for the first time, a PhD program for those students who wish to continue their studies after completing their MATESL degree. Additionally, another benefit of its merger will be to offer a broader range of electives for students.

The University of Illinois began offering ESL courses in 1947 and established a Division of English as a Second Language in 1952.

“RHETORIC OF THE OTHER V” CONFERENCE HELD ON CAMPUS MARCH 28-29, 2008

A conference sponsored by the Department of French entitled “Rhetoric of the Other V: From Previsibility to Hypervisibility” was held at the Alice Campbell Alumni Center on March 28-29.

The conference focused specifically on LGBTQ-related matters in French and francophone cultures, literatures, and media (film, television, new media, the Internet, etc.) from the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries.

More than 40 presentations were given covering a wide range of topics, including new approaches to queer studies and its interrelations to cultural studies, aesthetics, and specific literary and cinematic practices, changes in conceptions of what queer theory might be, changes in the optics relative to HIV infection, the development of new means of communication and representation, and the developing maturity and decreased marginality of the field.

Elisabeth Ladenson of Columbia University and Anne Garetta of Université de Haute Bretagne delivered plenary talks.

The conference was organized by Lawrence R. Schehr, professor of French.

© Ghada Amer, courtesy Gagosian Gallery, New York



Ghada Amer, 'Les Poufs,' 2002-2004, polyurethane and acrylic.
Dimensions variable, each cube 16 x 16 inches, ed. of 6.

School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
4072 Foreign Languages Building
707 South Mathews Avenue
Urbana, IL 61801

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #75
Champaign, IL