

# SCHOOL OF LITERATURES CULTURES AND LINGUISTICS

A NEWSLETTER COVERING THE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE CLASSICS  
PROGRAM IN COMPARATIVE AND WORLD LITERATURE  
DEPARTMENT OF EAST ASIAN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES  
DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH AND ITALIAN  
DEPARTMENT OF GERMANIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES  
DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS  
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION  
DEPARTMENT OF SLAVIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES  
DEPARTMENT OF SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE  
AND CENTER FOR TRANSLATION STUDIES

SUMMER 2016

## SLCL GRADUATES SHOW VALUE OF A HUMANITIES DEGREE

By Rick Partin, Editor

When **Brad Hartmann** graduated from the U of I in 2000 he began working with a national homebuilder and immediately learned the value of his Spanish degree.

"With the large and growing Hispanic workforce, I was often called upon to assist when language barriers arose with contractors and customers," he said. "The language and cultural skills learned on campus and in Guadalajara, México, during my study abroad were instantly utilized."

As a Project Manager he began developing his own language training program for his team. The goal was to improve safety and productivity while spending only a few minutes every day learning what he calls "Construction Spanish." The content had to be relevant, entertaining and brief."



**Brad Hartmann**  
BA Spanish, 2000

With that content in mind, he created the product that launched his company, Red Angle, Inc. (redanglespanish.com).

"Today, the skills I learned at the U of I help the construction industry improve

communication—English to Spanish and vice versa—and our Safety Spanish program is now in the curriculums of several universities."

Brad adds that Red Angle also helps leaders at all levels understand the relationship between effective leadership and cultural values.

"Without the strong foundation built at the University of Illinois, I would not be where I am today."

Brad is one of many SLCL graduates who have shared their success stories. Another graduate, **Anna Patterson** (BA, Germanic Languages and Literatures and International Studies, 2010) describes herself as an "enthusiastic marketer" of international postgraduate programs. "I was able to bring a good skill set to apply for jobs and graduate school in Europe," she said. "I'm very happy for that because I always wanted to work abroad. Growing up, I wanted to be a pilot or a diplomat."

These initial goals changed at college after she realized that she liked working on communication topics in business environments, especially ones that are creative and active. "Through my majors, German and International Studies, I learned to speak German professionally and I gained an understanding of the world around me." She adds that the focus on social rights issues at her residence hall also changed her perspective.

Anna says that these factors together made a good base for her first full-time job,



**Anna Patterson**  
BA, Germanic  
Languages and  
Literatures,  
International  
Studies, 2010

managing a student exchange program. Later, her master's degree in marketing added a skill: "I had fun researching my thesis topic, and a solid marketing background helps when applying for jobs in this competitive field."

When asked what she would recommend to students presently in school, Anna replied, "If I were to give any advice to students in college it would be to study something that you love and utilize the resources around you to really excel in it. Take extra classes for a certificate program, a study abroad trip or something where you really get specialized knowledge (and a heck of an experience). The career comes later, but it helps to be good at what you're enthusiastic about." ✂

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

### Give to the School

Please consider investing in the future of the School through a gift designated for either: 1) **the SLCL Annual Fund**, which helps to promote overall excellence in the school; 2) **the Douglas A. Kibbee Prize**, awarded annually to the most outstanding dissertation proposal; or 3) **SLCL departments or programs**. Your gift is most appreciated! Visit our website, [slcl.illinois.edu](http://slcl.illinois.edu) and click "Give to SLCL" in the upper right-hand corner.

### Attention, Alumni/ae: We Want to Hear Your Stories

We want to hear from you: what do you do (job title, duties), where do you work, and how has your U of I education prepared you for your success? Please send us your story, 200 words maximum, subject heading "My Alumni/ae story" to: Rick Partin, [partin@illinois.edu](mailto:partin@illinois.edu). You may include a photo of yourself in electronic format (.jpg or .png preferred). We'll publish select ones on our School website: [slcl.illinois.edu](http://slcl.illinois.edu).

### Check out Our Website

Look on our School webpage, which includes a Calendar of Events, Announcements, a Feature News section, and our own Facebook page.

The SLCL Brochure, offers a snapshot of what SLCL is all about. Click on "News and Events" on the main page. Even our graduates may be surprised to see the sheer scope of our School and why we called ourselves the "Gateway to a Global Learning Experience." Please visit us online at [slcl.illinois.edu](http://slcl.illinois.edu) to find out what's happening in SLCL.

### SUMMER 2016

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

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Director: Jean-Philippe Mathy  
Editor: Rick Partin



Last year, our Dean and Chancellor, Barbara Wilson, asked the School of Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics to assist departments with student recruitment, career development, and international engagement. This past fall, the School hired Jen Bliss, who holds a doctorate from our Program in Comparative and World Literature, to support units in these areas, in connection with the offices of Development and alumni relations, Recruitment and Admissions, and International Education in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

As a result of this collaboration, Jen and I have had the opportunity to take part in a year-long initiative designed to support student interest in the humanities across our campus. Last April, career counselors from high schools and community colleges in central Illinois and in Chicago met with department heads, faculty and advisors to showcase the humanities at Illinois and explore ways of making the liberal arts disciplines, including those represented in our School, more visible and more accessible to students from all fields of study.

Recent publications have shown the benefits derived from language and culture courses for the career development of our students. A 2015 survey conducted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities has shown that the knowledge of international cultures is among the highest priorities shared by employers: 78% of the respondents stressed the value of intercultural competence and the understanding of societies outside of the United States as a requirement for a successful career. Many of the intellectual and practical skills valued by employers, including oral communication (85% of favorable opinion), teamwork and group learning (83%), written communication (82%) and critical and analytical thinking (81%), are taught in SLCL courses.

Three years ago, Jim Leach, a former representative from Iowa and at the time Chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities, came to the University of Illinois and gave an impassioned speech in praise of the liberal arts, stressing the importance of making the humanities accessible to students across the entire campus.

"The principal rationale for humanities studies," Leach said, "is that they enhance the meaning of life and embellish what it means to be human. This rationale is so powerful that it too easily obscures the utilitarian case which is also compelling. How can we compete in our own markets if we don't understand our own culture and its enormous variety of subcultures, or abroad if we don't understand foreign languages, histories and traditions? How can we stimulate long-term economic growth if we don't cultivate a broadly educated workforce able to navigate a knowledge-based, global economy? How can we contain prejudice and counter forces of hatred if we don't come to know more about each other?"

This is precisely the contribution to higher education our School is designed to promote, and our goal remains to provide as many students as possible with the proper tools to answer Leach's increasingly pressing moral and political questions, meet the expectations of their future employers, and enrich their personal lives. *JP*

Jean-Philippe Mathy

# A WOW MOMENT: LINGUISTICS PROFESSOR IS ON A QUEST FOR A TRANSLATION MACHINE By Doug Peterson

Microsoft employees were setting up a demonstration of their new Skype Translator system at a conference in Vancouver at the same time that some Spanish-speaking hotel employees were in the room putting up tables. Suddenly, the Spanish workers looked up in surprise. The computer system began audibly translating from English to Spanish and back again, allowing two people on Skype to communicate across the language barrier.



Linguistics professor Lane Schwartz is a leader in machine translation.

"It was a 'wow' moment for them," said Lane Schwartz, assistant professor of linguistics and translation studies. Schwartz attended that Vancouver conference of the American Machine Translation

Association in late 2014. Schwartz is a leader in machine translation, which seeks ways to use machines to automatically translate languages.

"I think people are going to look at this new technology and think this is 'Star Trek' come to life," Schwartz added, referring to the "Star Trek" staple, the "universal translator," a science fiction device that automatically translated alien languages.

Machine translation systems have more than a five-year mission before they reach the Trekkies' dream, but Skype Translator, which is now being tested with thousands of users, does a good job translating for simple communication purposes, said Schwartz.

He said machine translation works well for "assimilation," in which you need only a rough idea of what is being said. Google Translator, which automatically translates text online, is a good example of this. But "dissemination" calls for precise translation, he said, and for this task human translators remain critical. Examples of dissemination are translating European Union Parliament proceedings into many languages,

or translating product manuals.

In these cases, he said, "You really want your translation quality to be top notch because your reputation is on the line."

Schwartz came to the U of I from the Air Force Research Lab in Dayton, Ohio, where he worked on machine translation systems that focused heavily on the English/Arabic language pair. "I'm very interested in the partnership between humans and machines," he said.

Schwartz also organized the United States' first machine translation marathon, held in May 2015 at Illinois. In this marathon session, researchers from around the world formed groups to devise problems for open-source machine translation tools—tools that are openly available to the public.

Machine translation marathons have rotated annually among European cities since 2007, but the Illinois translation marathon was the first of a series that will rotate in the Americas. It included some of the biggest names in machine translation, including Philipp Koehn, the author of the definitive textbook on the subject, according to Schwartz.

Schwartz's fascination with language goes back to his childhood growing up in Alaska. When he was 4, his parents moved from Iowa to St. Lawrence Island, which is about 36 miles from the Alaskan mainland, not far from Russia. When Schwartz arrived at kindergarten, many of his classmates were more fluent in Yupik, their native language, than they were in English.

"As I got older and looked back, I think that's really where the seeds were sown for my interest in languages," he said.

According to Schwartz, "machine translation is arguably the oldest discipline within computer science, with intellectual roots extending back to the 17th century." In the 1600s, he said, philosophers hoped to recreate the universal language that they believed existed before the Tower of Babel, where, according to the Old Testament, God confused

the languages of the people.

During the 20th century, prior to computers, inventors tried to create mechanical translation systems, such as the "mechanical brain," patented in 1933 in France. But the quest for machine translation advanced markedly during the Cold War. American mathematician Warren Weaver speculated that researchers might be able to adapt cryptography techniques, used to break Nazi ciphers, to translate languages.

"They wondered, could we view Russian as a ciphered form of English?" Schwartz said. Weaver's notes became the driving force behind the first wave of research in machine translation.

"In the early 1950s, you had a lot of enthusiasm in machine translation, and people thought the solution was just around the corner," Schwartz added. One reason for the optimism was that people assumed if humans could do a certain task easily, then it would be even easier for computers. As researchers discovered, however, the opposite is often the case: difficult tasks for humans are simple for computers, and simple tasks for humans can stymie a computer.

"A computer can calculate the product of two 18-digit numbers in milliseconds,"

Schwartz said. "But at the same time, a 4-year-old can do language tasks that are extremely difficult for a computer."

As reality set in, machine translation research aimed for baby steps, and during the 1980s and '90s, systems became more data-driven. Side-by-side texts in different languages were input into computer programs, becoming the data that improved the translation systems. This ultimately paved the way for systems like Google Translator and the new Skype Translator, the latter of which one reviewer called "the most futuristic thing I have ever used."

Despite the 'wow' moments that these new systems bring, Schwartz states, "I don't think machines will eliminate the need for human translators any time soon." ☞

# SWEDISH FILM INSTITUTE CEO ACHIEVES GENDER EQUITY IN FILM PRODUCTION



**Anna Serner**  
CEO, Swedish Film Institute



**Theo Malekin**  
Visiting lecturer of Germanic  
Languages and Literatures

## HOW DID ANNA SERNER ACCOMPLISH GENDER EQUITY IN FILM FUNDING, AND ARE THERE THINGS ABOUT SWEDEN OR THE SWEDISH FILM INDUSTRY THAT MADE IT EASIER TO DO THERE THAN IN THE U.S.?

This was done primarily through a quota system. In 2012, under Serner's leadership, the Swedish Film Institute announced a set of funding priorities, with gender equality top of the list. By 2014, funds were being distributed fifty-fifty between men and women. There have been other initiatives as well to try and bring in a greater diversity of voices and of life experience across lines of gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

Sweden is fertile ground for this kind of undertaking. Women make up close to 50 percent of the Swedish parliament, Foreign Minister Margot Wallström is pursuing a feminist foreign policy (and has been very outspoken about gender inequality in, for example, Saudi Arabia), and gender has been very prominent in discussions of society and culture for some years.

**A**nn Serner, CEO of the Swedish Film Institute, declared in 2011 that she would see equal funding by gender for all film productions. At the time, only 26 percent of film funding in Sweden went to women filmmakers.

By 2014, Serner had achieved equity and then some: of the Swedish films receiving funding, half had women directors, 55 percent had women writers and 65 percent had women producers.

Serner visited the U of I campus in April as a guest of the Scandinavian Program to speak about that accomplishment.

**Theo Malekin**, visiting lecturer of Germanic Languages and Literatures, teaches courses on Scandinavian film and literature. He talked with News Bureau arts and humanities editor Jodi Heckel about Serner's work on gender equity in film.

## WERE THERE PEOPLE WHO OPPOSED SERNER'S GENDER EQUALITY EFFORTS, AND WHY?

Yes, there has been controversy. The two main criticisms are that the Swedish Film Institute is pursuing a political agenda at the cost of quality and that the films produced under this new regime have not had the commercial success to justify this approach. So, the argument runs, good films are not getting made because the director is a white man; poorer films are instead being funded for political reasons; and the films SFI is funding, however worthy, are only reaching a small audience of middle-class intellectuals who are already sympathetic. Nobody openly disagrees with the goal of fifty-fifty funding, but they dispute the methods used to achieve it.

A lot of these criticisms have a familiar ring to them. In essence, they are accusations of political correctness trumping talent, against which Serner has deployed some very cogent and persuasive counterarguments. For example, on the quality question, she has pointed out the number of international awards these films have won. There is really no evidence of declining quality.

## HAS THIS BEEN A CATALYST FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN THE FILM INDUSTRY ELSEWHERE, INCLUDING IN THE U.S.?

I think we have to wait and see. It has served as a consciousness-raising exercise, at the very least. Serner has been covered extensively by IndieWire and has been interviewed by The New York Times, for example, and she has been cultivating links with people in the U.S. film industry, among others the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media.

## HAS THIS TRANSLATED INTO GENDER EQUITY EFFORTS IN OTHER FIELDS – ARTISTIC OR OTHERWISE – IN SWEDEN?

Sweden has already put a lot of thought, effort and resources into gender equality in child care, education, political representation, etcetera. For example, a portion of Sweden's famously generous parental leave has to be taken by the father, with the result that you see many more dads pushing strollers in Sweden than in America. That in turn has challenged perceived notions of masculinity no less than of femininity. In many ways, this initiative from SFI is the result of a larger cultural shift, rather than its cause. Whether it will lead to further gender equity efforts remains to be seen.

**For more about the Swedish Film Institute:** <http://193.10.144.150/en/> 



# FRIENDS, ROMANS, ILLINI...AWARD-WINNING PROFESSOR OF CLASSICS BRINGS ROME TO LIFE

By Doug Peterson

You know it's been a tough decade when a volcano, Mt. Vesuvius, obliterates an entire region; Roman troops sack Jerusalem; fire and plague sweep through the city of Rome; and four emperors in a single year are placed on the throne.

This was just some of what happened during the first 10 years of the Flavian dynasty, which ruled Rome from 69 to 96 A.D. It wasn't an easy time for the Roman Empire, but it was a great time for Latin literature, which is why **Antony Augoustakis** chose this period to study. But in addition to becoming a respected authority on Flavian literature, he has

emerged as one of the most popular—and demanding—professors in the Department of the Classics. In recognition of this, the Society for Classical Studies recently conferred on Augoustakis the Award for Excellence in the Teaching of Classics at the College Level—an honor that goes to only one college teacher nationwide each year.

Rome wasn't built in a day, but the transformation of the Department of the Classics has been quite rapid over the past five years, thanks in part to Augoustakis.

"Antony's tenure at Illinois has been marked by a dramatic increase in new courses, new topics, new programs, and new opportunities for students at every level," said Ariana Traill, head of the Department of the Classics. "His impact on graduate education in classics at Illinois has been transformational."

Augoustakis arrived at Illinois in 2009, during a tough time for the department, which like the rest of the university, was hit hard by the recession of 2008, and there was a mass exodus as many in the aging department retired. Suddenly, the department went from 12 full-time professors to only 4.5 full-time staff. This was tough to swallow for a department that goes back to 1905 and has had a reputation that is well known across the U.S. and Europe.

At this time, Augoustakis was teaching at Baylor University in Texas. Illinois lured him to Urbana-Champaign, and Augoustakis came on staff with the mission of revitalizing the graduate program. Almost immediately, things began to improve, and, under the Traill's exemplary direction (see "Ariana Traill recognized for excellence in leading Department of the Classics" in News Briefs, p. 6), today the number of full-time staff is back up to 10.

Augoustakis was born in Greece, on the island of Crete. He grew up thinking he might become a doctor, but he also loved the humanities and language (he is fluent in Latin, English, French, German, Italian, Sanskrit and both modern and ancient Greek), so in the 10th grade he decided he would study classical literature. He eventually came to the United States for his



**Antony Augoustakis** has taught many people about the Romans. Here he is lecturing at a necropolis, an ancient cemetery, under the Vatican. (Image courtesy of Antony Augoustakis.)

graduate work, receiving his PhD in classics from Brown University in 2000.

Augoustakis teaches intensive, small seminar classes with graduate students, as well as the mega-popular undergraduate classical civilization classes that draw thousands of students from across the campus. Even during the department's difficult years, the undergraduate classes in mythology and Greek and Roman civilization remained some of the most popular general education courses on campus.

These classes have a long and storied tradition. Many alumni still recall the mythology lectures of the late **Richard T. Scanlan** from 1967 to 1998—lectures that reached a peak of about 1,200 students. Scanlan would dress in a toga as Apollo and predict the outcomes of Illini games, and he would even dress up as Jason of the Golden Fleece, Hercules, or Odysseus.

Augoustakis doesn't dress in a toga, but he does bring in a full set of Roman armor for students to try on. He drives home his points by using numerous clips from contemporary films and television shows, such as the acclaimed "Rome" series and the recent "Spartacus" series from the Starz channel. He also references older TV shows, such as the 1976 BBC mini-series "I, Claudius," and he uses music and architecture around campus to talk about the classical influences.

Meanwhile, on the graduate level, Augoustakis pushes his students to publish and present papers, and he has produced results.



**Richard T. Scanlan**  
(Image courtesy of U of I Archives.)

"In just the last three years alone, our graduate students (about 16 at any given time) have presented 35 conference papers and published nine articles and book chapters," Traill says. "Antony is such an effective mentor that he once encouraged a prospective student to submit a paper during her campus visit."

The student did so, and was awarded a three-year fellowship. Augoustakis' graduate classes are challenging, but the students eat it up. "How Antony can sound so encouraging when he makes criticism is still something of a mystery to me," said Clayton Schroer, a PhD student in classics. "I suspect that it has something to do with the fact that the criticism is made by someone who holds himself, just like his students, to consistently high standards."

"His relaxed, welcoming teaching manner and contagious enthusiasm for classics were instantly noticeable," added Audrey Majors (BA, '15, English and classics), a former student.

The ancient model of learning is to teach by example, and evidently, Augoustakis has tapped into this classical skill. According to Traill, "He makes his students want to outdo themselves, leading by example."

"It's daunting," PhD candidate Stephen Froedge said about the work in Augoustakis' classes, "but not in a way that makes you want to give up." ❧

## NEWS BRIEFS

### PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING AUTHOR DELIVERS ANNUAL THULIN LECTURE



**Garry Wills**, a Pulitzer Prize-winning writer and historian, gave the Marjorie Hall Thulin Lecture in Religion on April 21.

In his lecture, titled "Earth, Our Home: A Theology of Nature," Wills discussed the theological idea—culturally established for much of Western history—that it is appropriate and legitimate for human beings to dominate nature.

Wills is a professor emeritus of history at Northwestern University. His many books include studies of George Washington, Richard Nixon, the Kennedy family, Ronald Reagan, and religion in America.

His 1992 book, "Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words That Remade America," won the 1993 Pulitzer Prize for General Nonfiction and the 1992 National Book Critics Circle Award for Criticism.

Marjorie Hall Thulin (1910-2009), for whom the annual lecture is named, was a 1931 Illinois graduate. She enjoyed a successful career in advertising and published poetry and children's literature in addition to editing a book on the history of Glencoe, Ill. ✎

### ARIANA TRAILL RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE IN LEADING DEPARTMENT OF THE CLASSICS



Professor **Ariana Traill**, head of the Department of the Classics, was one of four faculty members honored with the Campus Awards for Excellence in Faculty Leadership at the Celebration of Academic Service and Leadership event held at the Alice Campbell Alumni Center on May 11.

Traill was honored for her outstanding leadership and vision by an executive officer in a campus unit. She has worked tirelessly and energetically toward replenishing her department's diminished resources

at every level: budgetary, faculty recruiting (including increasing its gender and underrepresented ratios), curricular development, undergraduate and graduate education, mentoring, evaluation, outreach and fundraising.

"This is a well-deserved recognition," said Jean-Philippe Mathy, Director of the School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics. "Ariana has been an exemplary department head." ✎

### ANN ABBOTT RECEIVES TWO AWARDS FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



Professor **Ann Abbott**, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, received a Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Public Engagement (CAEPE) in recognition of her work for several community organizations, and the J. Frederick Miller Award from the University YMCA's Board of Governors in recognition of public service involving moral understanding and civic responsibility.

The **Chancellor's Award** honors her work for community organizations such as the East Central

Illinois Refugee Center, La Línea, the SOAR after-school program, and the bilingual education classroom in Champaign-Urbana schools. CAEPE defines 'distinguished public engagement' as sustained (a minimum of two year for students, and three years while at the U of I for all others) and direct extension of an individual's disciplinary or technical expertise to the public and non-profit sector.

The Miller Award is given for distinguished volunteer service by a staff or faculty member of the U of I or a member of the Religious Workers Association of Urbana-Champaign. The award is given to an individual who has made significant contributions as a volunteer during his or her life in the local community. ✎

### ALAIN FRESCO HAD HUGE IMPACT ON UI GRAD, NOW ANCHOR/REPORTER FOR ESPN

In the Sunday, April 10 edition of Champaign's *The News-Gazette* newspaper, a reporter asked 10 U of I grads 'who've gone on to big things: Who's the professor who had the most profound impact on you?'

One of them was **Alain Fresco**, Assistant Professor of French and Director of Undergraduate Studies for the Department of French and Italian.

Michele Steele (BA/economics, 2000), an anchor/reporter for the television sports network ESPN, responded, "As an econ major within the liberal arts school—our unofficial motto: 'we won't take accounting and you can't make us'—I took a bunch of classes to round out some of the business-oriented requirements for my degree. One of those non-stats, non-econ classes was a 300-level French language course on Afro-Caribbean literature, taught by Dr. Alain Fresco."

Steele said the Professor Fresco "encouraged me to apply to a program that sent some U.S. students to France to teach English—he was kind enough to write me a recommendation.

"I did and couldn't be more grateful for the nudge. I spent two phenomenal years in the Loire Valley and in the French West Indies, an island called Martinique, where I worked, traveled and generally laid the foundations for a taste for adventure and an openness to new opportunities." ✎

### MARA R. WADE WINS TEACHING AWARD/ NAMED NEH AND MELLON FOUNDATION FELLOW AT NEWBERRY FOR 2017-18



**Mara R. Wade**, Professor of Germanic Languages and Literatures, was honored with an LAS Dean's Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching. The award program is designed to reward and honor the College's best teachers and is supported by alumni and friends of the College.

Wade also will be the National Endowment for the Humanities and Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellow at the Newberry Library, Chicago, for 2017-2018. She intends to research and write a monograph titled, "Early Modern Intellectual Networks: Emblems as Open Sources."

Wade said that her purpose is to write a social history of the genre Emblem. Emblems are concise yet potent combinations of texts and images that invite and require decoding. Like a digital resource, the emblem resulted from new technologies—in papermaking, in the printing of both words and images, and in marketing strategies. It was the work of an ensemble—of poets, artists, printers, and publishers.

Wade is the Principal Investigator for *Emblematica Online*, a digital resource. For more about *Emblematica Online*: <http://emblematica.grainger.illinois.edu> ✎

## NORA STOPPINO RECEIVES AWARD AND GRANT FOR PUBLICATION PROJECTS



**Nora Stoppino**, Associate Professor of French and Italian, received an Arnold O. Beckman Award from the UIUC Research Board for her publication project, "A Chivalric Literature: A Catalogue of Chivalric Incunabula."

The Research Board selects projects of special distinction for an Arnold O. Beckman Award. In 1980, Dr. and Mrs. Arnold O. Beckman initiated the Beckman Research Endowment with a major gift to

the Campus Research Board and a challenge to the U of I to develop matching private support.

Professor Stoppino also received a research grant from the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation to work in Italy this summer on her project, "Sirens and Dragons in the Venetian Republic: Animal Cycles in the Colleoni Territory".

## L. ELENA DELGADO FINALIST FOR SPAIN'S NATIONAL LITERARY AWARD



**L. Elena Delgado**, Professor of Spanish and Portuguese, was a finalist for Spain's National Literary award, in the category of essay (Premio Nacional de Ensayo) for 2015.

She also was among several international scholars who received substantial grant funding from the French National Research Center (CNRS) for a comparative theoretical and historical project on Literature and Democracy, 19th-21st centuries (in France, Japan, Spain, Taiwan, Tunisia, the U.K. and the

U.S.). Co-sponsoring institutions include Princeton University, the University of Paris (Sorbonne), Oxford University, Kyoto University, and the University of Taipei.

Her book, *La nación singular: Fantasías de la normalidad democrática española (1996-2011)* [*The Singular Nation: Fantasies of Normalcy in Democratic Spain (1996-2011)*], was featured in the Spring 2015 issue of the SLCL Newsletter: [http://go.las.illinois.edu/SLCLnews\\_spring15](http://go.las.illinois.edu/SLCLnews_spring15)

## YVONNE KNIGHT RECEIVES 2016 DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD FOR SLCL STAFF

**Yvonne Knight**, Human Resources Manager for the School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics, is the 2016 recipient of the Marita Romine Distinguished Service Award.

Knight has worked in the human resources office in the Foreign Languages Building since 2004. The office is the first point of contact for all employment matters.

Marita Romine, now retired and for whom the award is named, was selected to the College of Liberal Arts and Science's Distinguished Hall of Fame in 2011.

## NIKELLY SPEAKER DISCUSSES TRANSFORMATION OF THE GREEK EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

**Anastasios (Tasos) Anastasiadis**, Assistant Professor of History and Holder of the Phrixos B. Papachristidis Chair in Modern Greek History and Greek-Canadian Studies at McGill University, Canada, gave the 3rd Dr. Arthur G. Nikelly Annual Lecture on April 19.

Titled "From Missionary Schools to Franchised Universities: Transnational Interactions and the Transformation of the Greek Educational System," his

talk dealt with the mechanics of the transformation of the Greek educational system from the inception of the Greek state to the present.

Anastasiadis also discussed the fundamental role that transnational actors have present in Greece since the 19th century. Their persistence is due to the integration of the Greek system in a global educational system and to specific power equilibria within Greece.

The annual lecture was sponsored by the Modern Greek Studies Program; the School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics; the Department of Sociology; the Russian, East European and Eurasian Center (REEEC); and the European Union Center (EUC).

For more about the Modern Greek Studies Program at Illinois: [www.moderngreek.illinois.edu](http://www.moderngreek.illinois.edu)

## SLCL GRADUATE STUDENTS EXCEL

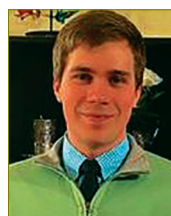
Like our faculty and graduates, several current SLCL graduate students continue to distinguish themselves, as evidenced by various awards they have received during the past academic year.



**Sarah Johnson**, a master's degree candidate in linguistics, has been selected to receive the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship (GRFP), a highly competitive award that provides three years of funding to graduate students.

The fellowship is designed to help ensure the vitality of the human resource base of science and engineering in the United States and reinforces its diversity. The program recognizes and supports

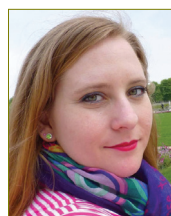
outstanding graduate students in NSF-supported disciplines, specifically those students who are pursuing research-based master's and doctoral degrees at accredited institutions in the US.



**Sean Minion**, a second-year master's degree candidate and teaching assistant in the Department of the Classics, received the LAS Humanities Council Teaching Excellence Award.

Established in 1978, the award program is intended to emphasize the importance of superior teaching by publicly acknowledging outstanding teachers and by enhancing their instructional activities through a modest prize. Each year one faculty member and one

graduate teaching assistant may be selected for the award from nominations submitted by constituent units.



**Jessica Nicholas**, a fourth-year PhD candidate in French linguistics, has been awarded a U of I Graduate College Dissertation Completion Fellowship.

The Graduate College's Dissertation Completion Fellowships help outstanding students complete the doctoral degree by providing a one-year stipend. The intent is to free Fellows from assistantships and other work obligations, allowing them to devote themselves full-time to the completion of the dissertation.

Nicholas' dissertation is titled, "Social and learner-specific factors in the acquisition of local dialectal features by study abroad students in French."



## SLCL CONVOCATION CEREMONY – SPEAKER ABBAS BENMAMOUN: ‘ENJOY THE NEXT JOURNEY’

The School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics held its annual Convocation spring ceremony in Foellinger Auditorium on May 14. SLCL Director and Professor **Jean-Philippe Mathy** served as emcee.

Fifty-four bachelor's degree candidates, 49 master's degree candidates, five doctoral candidates and 34 faculty members took part in the ceremony, which featured an address by **Abbas Benmamoun**, Romano Professorial Scholar in the Department of Linguistics, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Academic Policies at Illinois, and former Director of the School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics.

In his address he told graduates that he grew up in Morocco in a town in a rural area “surrounded by mountains and dotted with olive trees.” Neither of his parents had a formal education, but his father “was determined to get us all educated and was very demanding in that area.”

Professor Benmamoun went on to complete a bachelor's degree and earn a scholarship to go to England to study at the University of London.



Professor **Abbas Benmamoun**, 2016 SLCL Convocation speaker, addresses the Class of 2016 while SLCL Director and Professor **Jean-Philippe Mathy** looks on. (Photo courtesy of GradImages™.)

From there he completed a PhD at the University of Southern California.

He shared several amusing anecdotes about his travels and travails, using his experiences to transmit life lessons to graduates, namely: chart your own path, make the best of the situation you are in and focus on your main goal, and follow your passion “but use your head while doing so.”

He continued by offering graduates seven points of advice, beginning with “On Monday, make sure that you go on your Facebook and social network sites and apply the editing and critical thinking skills you learned at Illinois.” His other recommendations included:

- don't stop learning;
- diversify your ‘skills’ portfolio;
- you'll likely change jobs a number of times so resist the temptation to ‘burn bridges’;
- stay out of office politics;
- get out of your comfort zone: travel and see the world; and
- help others when you are in a position to do so.

Professor Benmamoun's research focuses on comparative syntax and morphology of natural language and on heritage languages (issues of language maintenance and loss within immigrant communities). He is the author of *The Feature Structure of Functional Categories* (Oxford University Press, 2000), co-author of *The Syntax of Arabic* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), and co-editor of the forthcoming *Routledge Handbook of Arabic Linguistics* (Routledge). He is also co-editor of the book series *Studies in Arabic Linguistics* (John Benjamins). 