

# Program in Comparative Literatures and Cultures

The University of Texas at Austin



## Director's Note

Writing about human rights and war, Susan Sontag suggested in her long 2004 essay, "Regarding the Pain of Others," that "Compassion is an unstable emotion. It needs to be translated into action, or it withers." The last year has been one of bearing witness to much suffering, one during which getting through each day might have been considered more than enough of a challenge for each of us, one where being at a distance from our former selves informed much of who we felt we were in the present. Sontag, like Ibram X. Kendi, insists, however, that in the midst of pain and injustice both detached sympathy and false neutrality fall short of the activity demanded to transform our current world. This isolated, virtual, and strangely fixed last year offers eloquent testimony that, even in the midst of such uncertainties, careful thought and reflection on diverse human expressive culture can sustain a community and form the basis for interventions and actions both now and in the future. I am denied the pleasure of sharing memories of a 2020-21 GRACLS conference that could not happen. The pictures we include this year continue to look very different, with their Zoom chessboard designs, from the collegially globe-trotting images we hope will soon return. The very absence of these photographs, and the moments that they would have captured, is haunting but also inspiring. Humanists are reflective by nature and by profession, and we have been forced to take a dramatic pause in the lives we were living and to reflect on those we might live. Those reflections appear here, not only as sentiments and thoughts, but as actions in the form of extraordinary accomplishments and contributions by the members of our community. The very nature of our field is agile, working across and along borders of all sorts, in ways that our fall 2021 GRACLS Conference will explore with its theme of "L I M I N A L I T I E S: transitions, borders, in-betweens." 2021 marks two decades during which I have been honored to serve in the role of program director. My tenure as director began exactly as the events of 9/11 made so clear that, as Senator Fulbright affirmed in 1986 at the height of the Cold War, "In the long course of history, having people who understand your thought is much greater security than another submarine." Advanced linguistic and cultural competency, which recognizes that networks of human interaction are intersectional, multinodal and fluid, accomplishes far more than hard power ever could. As I embark on my last year as director, it is with unhesitating joy that I share here the extraordinary labor of our colleagues as recognized researchers, lauded teachers, and invaluable contributors to learning communities here at UT and elsewhere despite the challenges of the last eighteen months. I hope, that as you scroll through these virtual pages, you will experience, even at a distance, something of this remarkable and resilient community kept apart for now but hopefully soon in person.



Dr. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza

## Comparative Literature Newsletter

Summer 2021

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**Fall 2021**

Undergraduate Courses

- CL 305**  
Vampire in Slavic Cultures  
Thomas J. Garza
- CL 305D**  
Afro-Brazilian Diaspora  
Omoniyi Afolabi
- CL 315**  
Materworks of World Literature  
David Kornhaber
- CL 323**  
Decoding Classical Chinese Poetry  
Chiu-Mi Lai
- CL 323**  
Films of Ingmar Bergman  
Lynn Wilkinson
- CL 323**  
Holocaust Aftereffects  
Pascale Bos
- CL 323**  
Viking Languages: Runes/Sagas  
Sandra Straubhaar
- CL 323**  
Youth/Violence Middle Eastern/Europe  
Jeannette Okur

Graduate Courses

- CL 180K**  
Intro to Comparative Literature  
Lynn Wilkinson
- CL 3802**  
Dante's Afterlives  
Guy Raffa
- CL 382**  
Humboldt Sciences of Colonialism  
Katie Arens
- CL 382**  
Premodern Race  
Geraldine Heng
- CL 386**  
Caribbean Networks at Origenes  
Cesar Salgado
- CL 386**  
Modern Arabic Poetry  
Thomas Thompson
- CL 386**  
Reading Arabic Literature  
Avigail Noy
- CL 386**  
Thresholds of Identity  
Alexandra Wettlaufer
- CL 390**  
Contemporary Literary Theory  
Lynn Wilkinson

[Fall 2021 Courses and Course Descriptions](#)

**Degree Recipients**

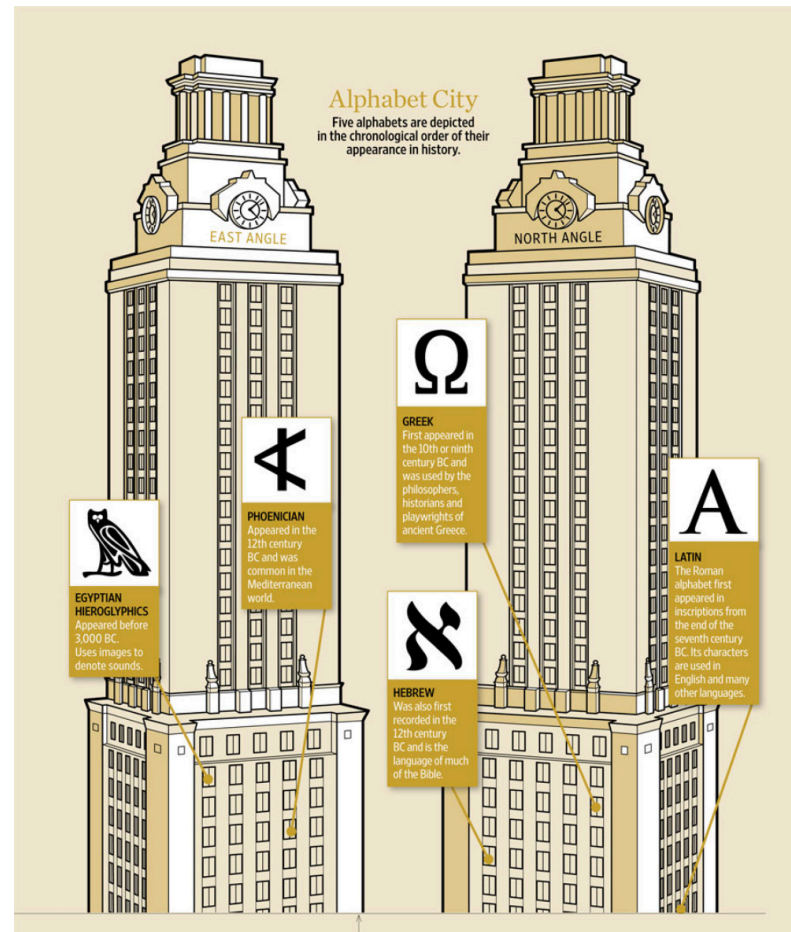
**Master of Arts**

**Spring 2021**

- Silvana Scott, *Rainbow Sponsored Excess and Inconsummerable Melancholia in Vida*
- Nanjun Zhou, *Re-Imagining the Boxer Rebellion*

**Summer 2021**

- Oscar Chaidez, *Profitable Religion: Capitalism and Sexual Politics in Jayro Bustamante's Temblores*
- Amber Taylor, *Tracing Rustbelt Mythologies*



**CL 180K: Proseminar in Comparative Literature**

The Proseminar in Comparative Literature, required for all incoming doctoral students in the program, is the first in a series of three courses designed to introduce new student-teacher-scholars to the field of Comparative Literature and to our program and resources at UT. Over the course of the semester, students will meet CL faculty and become acquainted with their research and teaching. The proseminar also addresses broader questions about the field, about professionalization as a CL scholar and teacher, and about the CL community at UT.

As a dynamic and diverse field, Comparative Literature is at the center of important conversations in and about the humanities in the 21st century, some of which we will begin to engage in the course. With 34 languages taught at UT, and almost 50 faculty who work regularly with our students, our newly arrived colleagues encounter a broad array of options regarding their academic trajectory; one goal of the proseminar is to help students navigate the possibilities offered at UT.

Schedule of Meetings and Presenters

28 August	Dr. Karen Grumberg	Introductions/Juxtapositional Comparison
4 September	Dr. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza	Comparative Communities: UT/ACLA
11 September	Dr. Thomas J. Garza	TAs in Language and Culture Program
18 September	Boya Lin, Andra Bailard, & Monica Mohseni	GRACLS and the UT Comp Lit Community
25 September	Dr. Gabriela Polit	Journalism in Contemporary Latin America
2 October	Dr. Marjorie Woods	Teaching & Learning through Comparative Composition Research
9 October	Dr. Alexandra Wettlaufer	The Anxieties of Comparison
16 October	Dr. Jennifer Wilks	Models of Comparison
23 October	Dr. Katie Arens	Structuring Research in CL
30 October	Dr. Martha Ann Selby	Translation & Situatedness in Contemporary Indian Fiction
6 November	Dr. Lynn Wilkinson	Comparative Bricolage
13 November	Dr. César Salgado	Researching & Teaching Crisis in Puerto Rican Studies
20 November	Dr. Daniela Bini	Teaching an Interdisciplinary Course

By *Boya Lin*



While 2020, under the reign of covid-19, posed unprecedented challenges on a global scale, we complitters managed to power through with determination and strengthened ties. With learning and working moving online, GRACLS kept up its support for the program mainly via Zoom. In Fall 2020 we were delighted to make the orientation happen despite the time differences of those stranded at home (pictured below). Our excellent new cohort received warm welcome from Dr. Richmond-Garza, Dr. Wettlaufer, Dr. Salgado, as well as GRACLS officers and senior students as mentors. Monthly meetings were devoted to newly raised students' concerns and most urgently, to wrestling with the psychological impacts of physical isolation and stagnant social life. Thus, GRACLS held virtual happy hours regularly to offer a place for community bonding and mutual help.

GRACLS continued to support program meetings and organize professional development events. In November, the first in the professionalization series—the Abstract Workshop, developed by Alex Thomas and Marlena Cravens, invited Dr. Hannah Wojciehowski's to talk on abstracts and conference papers. GRACLS representatives also attended Com Lit core faculty meetings and contributed to key issues like the betterment of proseminar.

GRACLS would like to give sincere thanks to the program's faculty, staff, and fellow graduate students, whose unfaltering trust and cooperation it could not afford to do without. Special thanks go to our program director and graduate advisor, Dr. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza, and graduate program coordinator, Elizabeth Davis. We are also indebted to our committee members: Andra Bailard (Secretary), Alex Thomas and Marlena Cravens (Curriculum Committee Representatives), Monica Mohseni and Claudio de Oliveira (Faculty Representatives), Oscar Chaidez and Nanjun Zhou (Conference Organizers), and Claudio de Oliveira (Digital Officer).



From left to right & top to bottom: Dr. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza (Program Director and Assistant Graduate Adviser), Elizabeth Davis (Graduate Coordinator), Dr. César Salgado (Graduate Adviser), Qianqian Li, Katie Field, Andra Bailard, Ipek Sahinler, Boya Lin, Ana Duclaud, Nanjun Zhou, Mustafa Ayçiçeği, Anna Vilner

By *Caroline Kraft*

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

While the past semester presented many challenges and difficulties on global and local levels, it also provided an opportunity for Comparative Literature to come together as a community and provide support for each other through Zoom GRACLS meetings, presentations at the annual American Comparative Literature Association, a professionalization series, and the occasional Zoom happy hour. GRACLS is dedicated to supporting UT's Comparative Literature community and graduate students by providing a platform for discussion, concerns, and ideas. We continued our set of faculty-led workshops this semester thanks to the initiatives of GRACLS representatives Andra Bailard, Marlena Cravens, and Alex Thomas and our distinguished faculty. Dr. Hannah Wojciehowski began the series last fall with her workshop on submitting abstracts and writing conference papers. This spring, Dr. Jorie Woods spoke about tips for writing fellowship and grant applications, Dr. Katie Arens illuminated the art of the academic CV, and finally, Dr. César Salgado brought in our very own CL alum, Dr. Roanne Cantor, for a dialogue on the peer review process and journal submissions. GRACLS wants to reiterate our gratitude to our faculty for these workshops which were very well attended and a big success. GRACLS also hosted an info session for the students who will be taking their Qualifying Exams next year. Looking ahead to the fall, we are thrilled to welcome in our newest CL graduate students: Asadullah Alvi, Ting-fu Chen, Oleksiy Ostaltsev, Poorna Swami, and Keith Wagner. This fall we will also be hosting our 17th GRACLS conference, "Liminalities: Transitions, Borders, and In-Between." Ana Duclaud, Oscar Chaidez, and Nanjun Zhou are leading what will be a truly fabulous event! Finally, GRACLS wants to recognize the extraordinary leadership of our director and graduate advisor, Dr. Richmond-Garza, and the tireless efforts and always welcome optimism of our program coordinator, Elizabeth Davis. They ensure the success of our program and we thank them profoundly. With hopes everyone had a restorative summer and best wishes for an exciting and rewarding fall semester.

## 2021 GRACLS Officers

President Caroline Kraft

Secretary Bianca Quintanilla

Conference Organizers Oscar Chaidez, Ana Duclaud, and Nanjun Zhou

Curriculum Representatives Marlena Cravens and Alex Thomas

Faculty Representative Monica Mohseni Sisiruca and Claudio de Oliveira

By Dr. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza



From left to right: Qianqian Li, Ana Duclaud, Mustafa Ayçiçeği, Anna Vilner

**Mustafa Ayçiçeği** received his BA in English from Bogaziçi University in Istanbul, writing a thesis about psychic interconnectedness in William Wordsworth and Virginia Woolf. In August 2020 he completes his MA degree in English at NYU with the support of a Fulbright fellowship. Having clarified his theoretical framework based on affect theory while studying at the University of Warwick and writing his MA thesis in New York, his current research interests connect British and Turkish Literature through the reception and translation of British Romanticism and Modernism by figures such as Tomris Uyar, Woolf's translator into Turkish. He has ongoing interests in psychoanalysis, gender studies and aesthetic theory. He works in Turkish, English, French, and Italian.

**Ana Duclaud** completed a BA in Comparative Literature at Queen Mary University in London before undertaking an MPhil degree in European and Comparative Literatures and Cultures at Cambridge University. Drawn to the 1968 Poststructuralist moment and its aftermaths, she completed a thesis on metafiction in Jorge Luis Borges and Italo Calvino. While at Cambridge, she continued to seek connections between French theoretical and philosophical ideas and Latin American literature and culture. She focuses on globalization and deconstruction in her research and is currently exploring the question of meaning as proliferative in Latin American literature. She works in Spanish, English, French, and Brazilian Portuguese.

## First Year Student Profiles 20-21 Continued

**Qianqian Li** comes to the program with a BA in English Language and Literature and an MA in Comparative and World Literature from Peking University in Beijing. Her research is focused on the changing view and role of the body in a post-human context. Drawing on Agamben, she is interested not only in how the body is becoming alienated and redefined in new ways as a result of its interaction with technology but also in how the digital informs our experience and knowledge of the world as a whole. Having written about ambivalence regarding embodiment in Christina Rossetti for her undergraduate thesis, and with a current project on Margaret Atwood, her research involves digital and visual, as well as literary, culture. She works in Chinese, English and German.

**Ana Stanislavovna Vilner** completed both a BA in English and BS in Psychology at the University of Toronto, before receiving an MFA in literary translation from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. An accomplished and award-winning translator, she is particularly interested in the genre of the crónica/crônica, including authors like Hebe Uhart and Pedro Lemebel, and the challenges of movement across languages especially when there is a persistent situatedness of the work in relation to the author's specific experience. She plans to explore the tension between foreignization and rootedness in the theory and practice of translation more generally and in this personal, observational genre especially. She works in English, Russian, Spanish and Portuguese.

## Incoming Student Profiles 21-22

By Dr. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza

**Asadullah Alvi** completed a bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts at the Institute of Business Administration in Karachi. Asad has published in a wide range of intellectual contexts, including *Dawn*, *Words Without Borders*, and *Columbia: A Journal of Literature and Art*. He was also Visiting Faculty in the Liberal Arts Program at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi, during Spring 2021. A prize-winning poet, student, translator, writer and activist, Asad's inquiry regarding Sufi-feminist poetics combines gender studies with an attention to South Asian history and religions with a regional focus. Working in Sindhi, Urdu, English and French, his inquiry explores a non-Judeo-Christian ground for secular engagement by decolonizing and complicating a monolithic view of Islam through materialist and historical critique.

## Incoming Student Profiles 21-22 Continued

**Ting-fu Chen** is primarily concerned with possible connections between the European Gothic and *zhiguai* and with the transnational history of ideas especially in relation to literary theory. Having completed a BA in English and Chinese Literature with a minor in Philosophy at National Chengchi University and an MA in Foreign Languages and Literatures at the National Taiwan University, Ting-fu plans to continue his work on gothic genre fiction, including the non-Anglophone *roman noir*. Drawing on English, French, and German, he seeks to open an uncanny space where the East-Asian fantastic joins a world literary conversation that should trace its origins back to both English Romanticism and Classical Chinese.

**Oleksiy Ostaltsev** has a combined interest in philosophy and literature. Alex earned a bachelor's degree in Russian Language and Literature from Kiev Pedagogical University and master's degree from Florida Atlantic University in British Literature with a thesis focused on J.R.R. Tolkien. He currently serves with the Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts and Utopian Studies magazines as an author and reviewer. Working widely across European literature, he is particularly interested in the fantastic and in the ways in which selfhood is invented and developed in both literary and theoretical contexts. With expertise in Russian, English, Ukrainian, and French, he is an experienced college writing teacher and is concerned through both his teaching and his research not to elide the particular or the local.

**Poorna Swami** is both an artist and a cultural studies scholar whose work interrogates the ways in which expressive culture, whether literary or choreographic, is connected with human rights. Having graduated with a bachelor's degree in English and Dance-Theatre from Mount Holyoke College and also studied at SOAS, Poorna's current inquiry focuses on two generations of post-partition writers whose literary conceptions of womanhood and women's rights moved from anti-colonial nation-making to intra-national concerns about regional identity, labor, sexual rights, and law. Working in Hindi, Urdu and English and with a particular interest in gender and the relationship between lived experience and fiction, she is committed to thinking across borders, both linguistic and ideological, through the lens of feminist theory.

**Keith Wagner** is interested in cultural and linguistic hybridity especially when transnational diversity is focused in a single space that imagines itself as a "Paris of the East." Having completed a BA in Modern Languages at Metropolitan State University of Denver, Keith is transferring to our program from the PhD Program in the Department of French and Italian at UT Austin. Working primarily in French, Italian, and Romanian, his research focuses on translation and multilingualism. Concentrating on the social, literary, artistic and architectural self-expression of the city of Bucharest, he is interested in the ways in which the Parisian imaginary is adopted and deployed so as to resist Orientalist identification with the Ottoman imperial past while accruing Western cultural capital.

**Aycan Akçamete** presented her work at the annual *ACLA* (American Comparative Literature Association) and *ATHE* conferences (the Association for Theater in Higher Education). She taught a five-week online seminar at Moda Sahnesi (Istanbul) that focused on Hans-Thies Lehmann's renowned work *Postdramatic Theater*. Having translated this seminal book into Turkish, she aimed to contextualize postdramatic theater within the broader theater history and discuss its implications for the theatrical landscape in Turkey. Her chapter proposal on the stage adaptation of *#WeAreArrested* by Can Dündar has been accepted for publication in an edited collection entitled *Theatres of Resilience: Navigating Censorship, Gender, Intersectionality in Turkey* (2023). Based on a previous conference paper, her work on the reception of Zinnie Harris' *How to Hold Your Breath in Istanbul and London* was accepted to be published in *Environments and Ecologies: The Plays of Zinnie Harris* (Manchester UP, 2023). She is the recipient of the Graduate School Continuing Fellowship for Fall 2021, Graduate School Dissertation Writing Fellowship for Summer 2021, and the 2021 Maxine Hairston Prize for Excellence in Teaching.

**Andra Bailard** participated in the 2021 Institute for World Literature, at which she presented a paper titled "Writer, Painter, Translator: Intersemiotic Translation in Eugène Fromentin's Literary Travelogues". She received a Professional Development Award from the Graduate School to support her attendance in this month-long program. Andra has also spent the past two years serving as managing editor for *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, an interdisciplinary journal published by Routledge and edited by our own Dr. Alexandra Wettlaufer.

**Oscar Chaidez's** review of *Border Cinema: Reimagining Identity Through Aesthetics* was published in the 21st edition of the *E3W Review of Books*. He also presented his master's report, "Profitable Religion: Capitalism and Sexual

Politics in Jayro Bustamante's *Temblores*," at the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) conference, held virtually in May of this year.

In addition to researching and writing under a 2020-2021 University Graduate Continuing Fellowship, **Marlena Cravens** presented her research at MLA, ACLA, RSA, the [Library of Congress](#), and Princeton's Global Publishing and the Making of Literary Worlds Conference. She also wrote and published with *Torrid Literature Journal*, *Pterodáctilo*, and *La corónica Commons* on the themes of [medieval Iberian cooking](#), the [premodern history of linguistics through Isidore of Seville](#), and the [application of scientific techniques in archives](#). She has a book chapter, "The Liminal Arte: Missionizing, Language Pedagogy, and Grammar in Alonso de Molina's Tenochtitlan (1571)" slated to come out in *American Contact: Intercultural Encounter and the History of the Book* (Penn Press 2022). This summer, she has thoroughly enjoyed discussing EFL language pedagogy and course design with Russian faculty through the Texas Language Center's Summer Institute for Overseas Teachers of English.

**Hamza Iqbal** spent the Spring and Summer of 2021 at the University of Heidelberg in Germany as a visiting scholar as he worked on his dissertation. Since the university was physically closed due to COVID-19, Hamza based himself in Berlin but virtually presented preliminary part of his dissertation at Heidelberg's South Asia Institute's symposium. He also partook in their fortnightly reading groups on South Asian literature. While in Berlin, he worked out of Humboldt University's library and the American Memorial Library. While in Europe, Hamza was also able to present a research paper from dissertation at the 26th European Conference on South Asian Studies (ECSAS 2021) in Vienna, Austria. The conference which had been originally scheduled for 2020 but postponed due to COVID-19 was hosted by the University of Vienna.

**Caroline Straty Kraft** is a recipient of the 2021-2022 Harry Ransom Center Fellowship for her work on Sanora Babb. Her project is entitled “The Cry of the Southern Plains: Sanora Babb, the Dust Bowl, and Ecological Catastrophe.” She also presented at the American Comparative Literature Association conference for her work on women writers of the Mexican Revolution.

**Bianca Quintanilla** received a summer 2021 FLAS, with the support of her recommenders Profs. Richmond-Garza and Salgado, to study Nahuatl in an intensive course jointly organized by the University of Utah and University of Zacatecas. She was also awarded a Thematic Fellowship for the 2021-2022 school year to support her studies of Chicana feminism, indigeneity, and decolonial theories of the Americas.

**Thais Rutledge** presented “From Country to City: Identity and Displacement in Marilene Felinto’s *Mulheres de Tijuapapo*” in a seminar on “Geography, Affect, and Diaspora” at the 2021 Annual Meeting of the American Comparative Literature Association, virtual conference. She was awarded the UT Graduate School Summer 2021 Fellowship. She has been appointed by the MLA to the Committee on the Status of Graduate Students in the Humanities. She was invited to participate in the 2021 ACLS *Intentional Foundry*, focused on innovative practices of equity, inclusion, and structural change in the academy.

In her second year at UT, **Ipek Sahinler** launched a new reading group called the Turkish Literature in Translation Reading Group. Sponsored by the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, the group’s aim is to gather those who are interested in Turkish literature at UT together. It meets every month throughout the semester, is open to the entire UT community and the discussions are held in English. Due to COVID-19 circumstances, all of the discussions are held through Zoom, which turned out to be a more

gratifying experience with scholars, students, writers and translators joining the group from the Middle East, Europe, Canada and the US. In the virtual meetings that Ipek moderates, they have so far looked at Turkish novels with their English translator, like Orhan Pamuk’s *Snow* with Maureen Freely (on Sep 24, 2020), Sevgi Soysal’s *Noontime in Yenisehir* with Amy Marie Spangler (on Oct 22, 2020), Kemal Varol’s *Wûf* with Dayla Rogers (Nov 19, 2020), Bilge Karasu’s *A Long Day’s Evening* with Dr. Aron Aji (Feb 16, 2021), Aslı Erdogan’s *Stone Building and Other Places* with Dr. Sevinc Turkkan (March 23, 2021) and Sema Kaygusuz’s *Every Fire You Tend* with Nicholas Glastonbury (April 22, 2021). The group will continue to meet virtually in Fall 2021. Besides, Ipek held a full-time summer position as a Turkish teacher at the University of Wisconsin Madison’s TURFLI program, where she also acted as the head of the weekly language tables. From June to July 2020, she delivered a four-week-long seminar called “Queer Turkish Literature” (Queer Türkçe Edebiyat) at a cultural venue in Istanbul called Moda Sahnesi. In September 2020, she was accepted to The Institute for Queer Theory Berlin as a research fellow. With six other academics from around the world, she is now part of a colloquium called “Queer Arts and Theories” where they work on ways to develop nouvelle queer theories. In October 2020, she presented a paper called “How Is Queer Understood in Turkey?” at the annual Middle Eastern Studies Association (MESA) conference, and gave a talk titled “Pandemi ve Queer Ufuklar” (The Pandemic and Queer Horizons) at the Istanbul-based LGBT+ NGO called Boysan’ın Evi. Finally, she translated Audre Lorde’s “Uses of the Erotic: Erotic As Power” into Turkish for the first time for a new exhibition held at the SALT Galata Museum, Istanbul.

During her second year at UT Austin, **Silvana Scott** (she/her) earned a Master’s degree in Comparative Literature by completing a master’s report titled “Rainbow Sponsored Excess and Inconsummerable Melancholia in *Vida*”. The report demonstrates how Starz’s 2018-2020 series, *Vida*, weaponizes its “queer brown narrative” tagline to accommodate a palatable and reductive packaging of onscreen and offscreen social differences such as race, gender, and sexuality. Silvana posits that *Vida* relies on liberal capitalist notions of intersectionality and progress that mark certain characters as more valuable than others in order to appease the demands of capital. Through a lens of a queer of color critique Silvana exposes the ways in which queer consumerable excess in *Vida* ultimately fails to be transgressive. By contrast, a queering temporalities framework enables an unveiling where melancholic excess in sidelined characters displays its incompatibility not only with conventional heteronormativity but even with a homonormativity that never escapes the privileging of “whiteness” preferring thereby to preserve the digestible liberal capitalism of the series. In addition to completing her master’s report, Silvana also worked for the Gender and Sexuality Center (GSC) during the 2020-2021 academic year. At the GSC, Silvana worked on various tasks surrounding the creation of intersectional material, such as writing reviews on popular LGBTQIA+ film and media for the GSC Instagram and Facebook, compiling biographical information for key LGBTQIA+ Latinx Figures for Hispanic Heritage Month, and writing Disability Awareness and Inclusion, Sexual Assault and Prevention Awareness, and Asian American Pacific Islander Month content for the GSC Social Media. Through the GSC Silvana also served as a peer mentor in the GSC GEMS Peer Mentorship Pilot Program for two undergraduate students. This included providing peer support through individual zoom meetings

that created a safe environment for an open discussion to be had on school, professional and/or personal matters. Silvana will be returning to work at the GSC for the 2021-2022 academic year where she will help in the creation of the GSC’s Latinx Queer Collective.

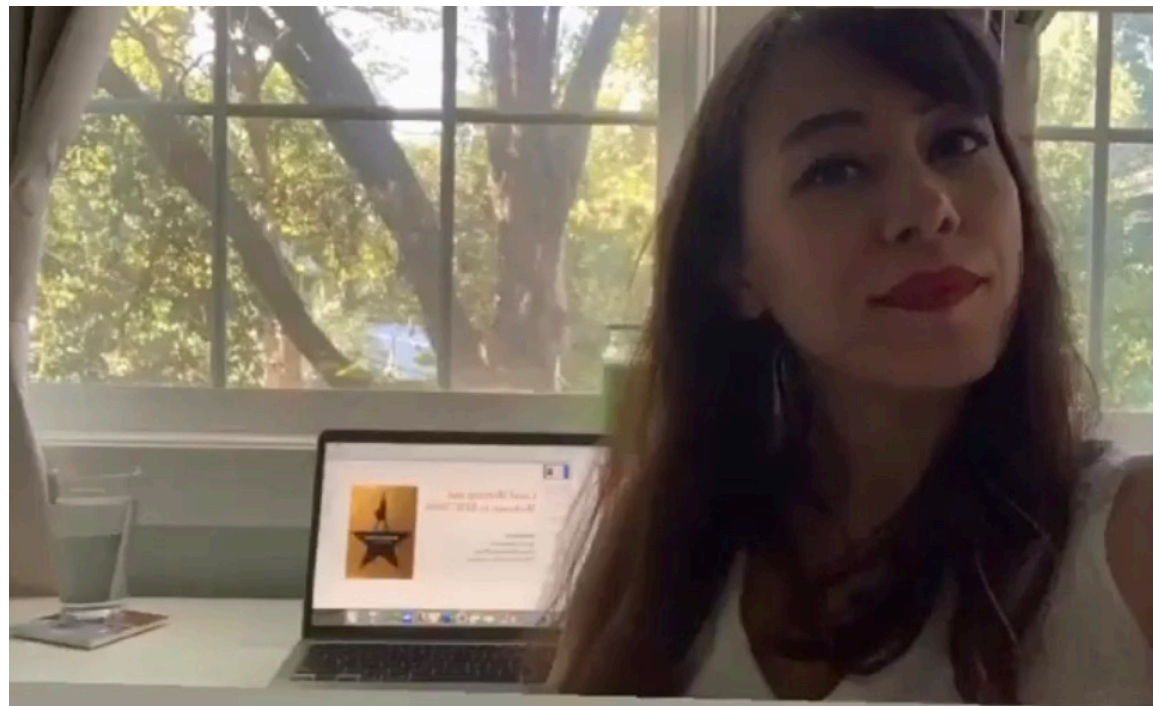
The Harry Ransom Center’s committee for D.A.R.E./Diversity Awards for Research Engagement selected **Diana Silveira Leite**’s article “Curating Fugitive Findings and the Right to Research Slowly” for a Graduate Student Award, shared with co-author Gaila Sims (doctoral candidate in American Studies). The piece was published as a part of the Ransom Center’s series on *What is Research?* and proposes strategies for the curation of literary works that showcase creators of color. She also published “The Challenges of Exhibiting Gabriel García Márquez’s Literary Intimacy” with *Pterodactilo*.

This summer, **Amber Taylor** completed her Master’s Report, “Tracing Rustbelt Mythologies,” which examines the legacy of racial segregation and labor struggle in Detroit through Diego Rivera’s Detroit Industry Murals. She is a recipient of the Foreign Languages and Area Studies fellowship in Russian for 21-22, which will allow her to deepen her interest in workers’ struggles through an examination of socialist movements in Europe and the Americas and their legacies today.

**Alex Thomas** delivered the paper “*The Deceived: Improvisation on the Sixteenth-Century Spanish Stage*” at the ACLA conference, and his article “The English *Quixote*: Cervantes and the *Knight of the Burning Pestle*” appeared in the Fall 2020 edition of *Studies in Philology*. He was awarded the Texas Language Center’s 2020-21 Foreign Language Teaching Excellence award.

## On Winning the 2021 Maxine Hairston Prize for Excellence in Teaching

By Aycan Akçamete



Aycan Akçamete

For the last two years, I have had the chance to work for the Department of Rhetoric and Writing (DRW), teaching RHE 306 and RHE 309K: Rhetoric of Hamilton. Despite the challenges the pandemic imposed, I felt lucky that I was given the chance to design my own course and teach it for two semesters. It was a great privilege to virtually meet with my students every week to analyze this ground-breaking musical, explore issues pertaining to American society, and discuss various strategies for writing and building arguments (while at the same time venting about how challenging and different life was during the pandemic).

As a part of the DRW team, I was awarded the 2021 Maxine Hairston Prize for Excellence in Teaching. Every year, the students and the faculty at the department nominate an Assistant Instructor for this prize. The finalists are evaluated based on their Teaching Portfolio, consisting of a teaching statement, student evaluations for the Rhetoric courses they taught, a reflection on these student evaluations, and sample teaching documents such as PowerPoint presentations, lesson plans, syllabi, and so on.

When I received the exciting and unexpected news about my nomination, I had a very hectic two weeks to gather the materials and prepare my Portfolio. Since this Portfolio is usually required for the job market, I was not quite sure about how to write my teaching statement or which documents to include. However, after a very helpful visit to the UT Career and Engagement Center, I submitted my application and was granted the Maxine Hairston Prize.

Overall, I feel honored to be recognized for my efforts with my courses and my students, especially considering how challenging it can be for all of us to juggle research with teaching responsibilities (and other career-related or personal tasks). I would like to thank the Department of Rhetoric and Writing for allowing me to reflect on my teaching philosophy and pedagogy and the selection committee for granting me this selective award.

Here is the statement released by DRW, summarizing the highlights in my Portfolio:

*Aycan Akçamete's reflective and caring pedagogical work is abundantly clear in the content and design of her courses as well as in her attention to the accessibility of instructional materials. Her course design consistently manifests tenets of culturally responsive pedagogy. Her teaching portfolio demonstrates reflective and thoughtful scaffolding of course materials and active learning. Additionally, her attention to students' needs and concerns are conspicuous. Her caring and mindful response to students' feedback reflects open engagement with their experiences, and her syllabus has many different opportunities for students to express their concerns and (re)negotiate the terms for their learning. For her insightful and care-full work as an educator, she is the 2021 Awardee of the Maxine Hairston Prize for Excellence in Teaching.*



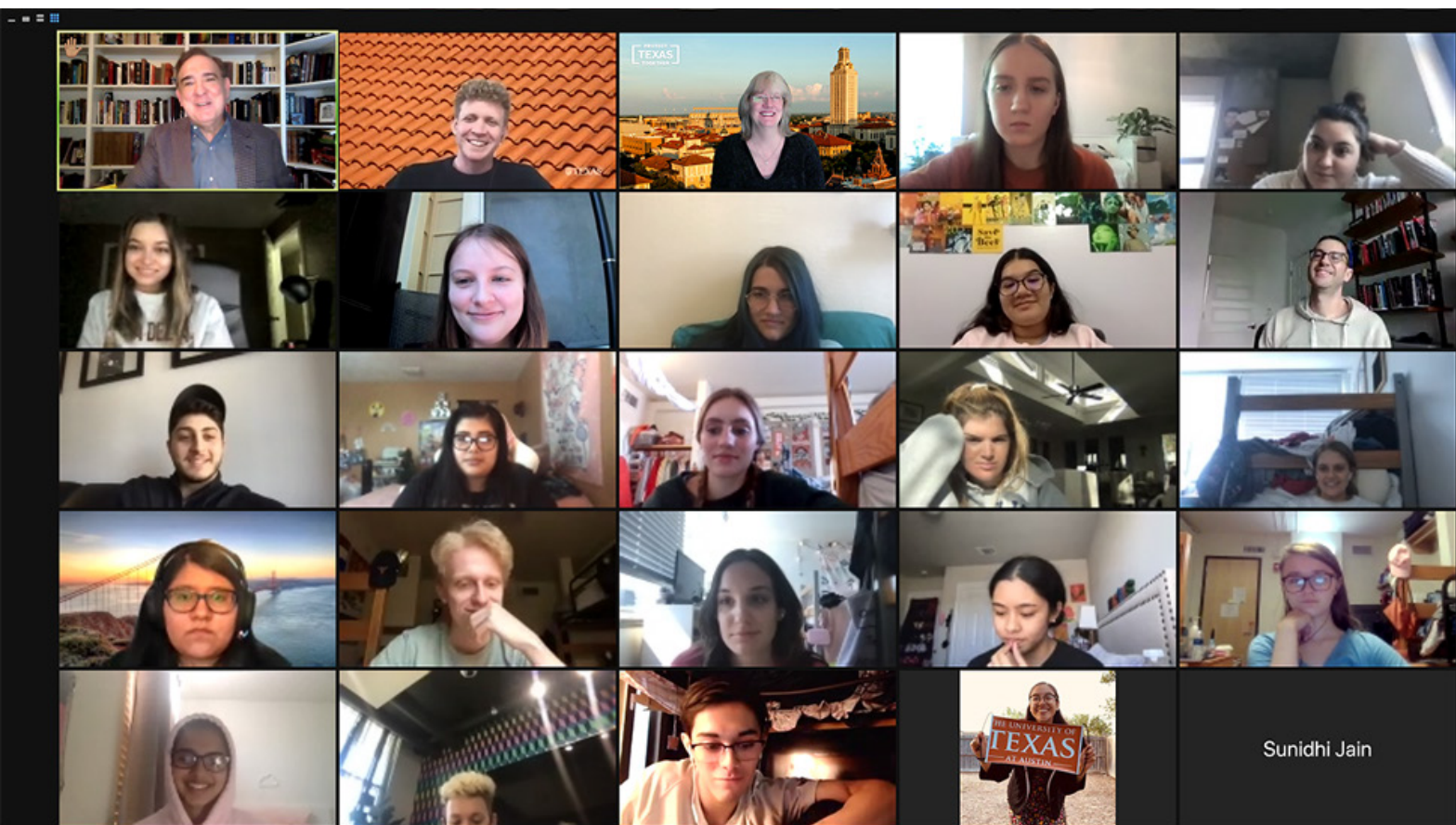
Aycan and students

**2021 Texas Foreign Language Teaching Excellence Award from UT Austin's Texas Language Center Recipient Alex Thomas**

Alex Thomas was awarded the 2021 Texas Foreign Language Teaching Excellence Award from UT Austin's Texas Language Center, for his work with the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. Each year, two foreign language educators — one UT faculty member and one graduate student Assistant Instructor — are presented with a plaque and monetary prize, recognizing them for their superior knowledge of and enthusiasm for teaching language and culture.

The process of selecting a winner begins with student nominations of their instructors, which are then reviewed by members of the TLC Advisory Committee. This year saw 195 nominations across 17 different languages. In their nominations, Alex's students cited his passion for teaching, engaging and innovative teaching methods, the creation of a comfortable learning environment, and his dedication to helping all students who were struggling.

Alex Thomas (pictured in the top row, second tile from the left)



**Attending the Institute for World Literature (2021)**  
*By Andra Bailard*



Andra Bailard (pictured in the second row, furthest right tile)

This summer, I had the opportunity to attend the 2021 Institute for World Literature. The annual program, which is hosted by Harvard and changes location each year, completed its second fully virtual session. This online format gave me the opportunity to meet and learn from scholars around the world, all while sitting in the living room of my apartment in Austin. (At the start of each day's meeting, we would all say good morning/afternoon/evening, depending on which time zone everyone was currently situated in.) Most excitingly, I participated in a two-week seminar led by Dr. Lawrence Venuti, whose theories on translation have significantly shaped my research and academic interests. The conversations from our seminar have led me in some incredible new directions that I plan to pursue in my dissertation, and I am exceedingly grateful to all the IWL participants who made the session so energizing, as well as to the Comparative Literature program and the Graduate School for helping make my attendance possible.

Liminality is an anthropological concept that denotes borders, thresholds and transitions. Previously used to describe the middle stage of rites of passage marked by transformation and the uncertainty of an outcome, the term would later expand to include spaces and times of change. More recently, the concept has been co-opted by various academic disciplines as a way of approaching emerging and historical cultural phenomena.

Moments of crisis—the Covid pandemic, for example—may be described as liminal. At the same time, liminality applies to notions of subjectivity. Outside traditional constituents of belonging such as culture and place, the identity of those caught between spaces becomes liminal, as does that of those between or outside normative categories of sexuality, gender, ability, or otherwise. Indeed, liminality is so thoroughly encompassing that it begs the questions: is it a limiting category, or are we all, in one way or another, liminal? Is liminality temporary or are we always living in the in-between? In a sense, the legacy of post-structuralism, with its disavowal of binaries and essentialisms, pronounces the transitive, queer nature of all things and beings.

As we continue to transition out of a global pandemic, we propose a conversation on spatial, temporal and political borders and change, seeking to discuss liminality's numerous manifestations and explore its potential to shed light on contemporary issues. We therefore invite proposals that directly or indirectly deal with change, borders, globality, and movement, as well as precarity, ambivalence, identity and queerness. Topics may include, but need not be limited to the following areas of scholarship:

**Borders and boundaries**  
**Moments/periods of transition**  
**Space/place/temporality**  
**Globalization**  
**Biopolitics/necropolitics/precarity**  
**Migration/displacement/diaspora**  
**Nationalism/transnationalism**

**Citizenship/exclusion/othering**  
**Violence/conflict/trauma**  
**North-South discourse**  
**Center-Periphery discourse**  
**Postcolonial/decolonial discourse**  
**Human rights**  
**Bioethics/post-humanism**

**Queer and Trans Studies**  
**Feminism(s)**  
**Disability Studies**  
**Intersectionality**  
**Hybridity**  
**Identity and belonging**

Please submit your abstract/panel proposal to the following Google Form: [docs.google.com](https://docs.google.com)

Deadline: September 15

Direct any questions to [gracslconference2021@gmail.com](mailto:gracslconference2021@gmail.com)

## LIMINALITIES

transitions, borders, in-betweens

17th Graduate Conference  
 in Comparative Literature  
 The University of Texas at Austin

Keynote Speaker  
 Adriana Corral

CFP

October 29-30, 2021

<https://gracslconference20.wixsite.com/liminalities2021>

Please use the following link to submit a paper to the 2021 GRACLS Conference. Deadline to submit: **September 15, 2021**

<https://tinyurl.com/u98hmeju>

For the most up-to-date information about the conference, schedule changes, etc., check the GRACLS Conference website linked below

<https://gracslconference20.wixsite.com/liminalities2021>

## 2021 Annual Meeting for the American Comparative Literature Association

### Friday, April 9

**Aycan Akçamete**, "Theater Criticism and Meaning-Making: Leyla Nazli's *Silver Birch House* At Arcola Theater"

**Chienyn Chi**, "Madness in Translation: Reading Against the Empire of Psychiatry"

**Thomas Jesús Garza**, "Vodka and Tears: Russia's "Little Water" and Memory -- or The Lack of It"

**Liza Goodstein**, "'Il m'a dévoré des yeux": Mahi Binebine's *Cannibales* and the Neocolonial Cannibal Encounter"

**Elizabeth Richmond-Garza**, "Without Much Charity: Legal Discourse and Queer Empathy in the Trials of Oscar Wilde"

**Alex Thomas**, "*The Deceived*: Improvisation on the Sixteenth-Century Spanish Stage"

### Saturday, April 10

**Marlena Cravens**, "Translating the Galveston Coast: Cabeza de Vaca's "Relación" (1542) and the Rhetorics of a Liminal Interpreter"

**Katie Field**, "Abject Intimacies in Marie Vieux-Chauvet's "Love"'"

### Sunday, April 11

**Minou Arjomand**, "Performances without Actors"

**Caroline Straty Kraft**, "Words as Weaponry: Gender, Autobiography, and the Mexican Revolution"

**Lynn Wilkinson**, "The Right to an Inheritance: Inge Jonsson on Swedish Literary Societies"



## New Director of the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies - Comp Lit Alumna Dr. Adela Pineda Franco

By Dr. Naomi Lindstrom



Dr. Adela Pineda Franco (left) and Dr. Naomi Lindstrom (right) in Boston

In some excellent news, Professor Adela Pineda Franco, who in 1997 completed her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature at UT, will be back in the fall as Director of the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies and the Benson Collection, as well as a Professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese.

Before beginning the doctoral program in Comparative Literature, Professor Pineda completed a master's degree (1991) in Latin American Studies at UT. Her first job was on the faculty of the Universidad de las Américas in her hometown of Puebla. She currently serves as Director of the Center of Latin American Studies at the Frederick S. Pardee School of Global Studies at Boston University.

Professor Pineda has been active in various administrative roles while remaining a highly productive scholar. Most recently, she has authored two books, *Steinbeck y México: Una mirada cinematográfica en la era de la hegemonía estadounidense* (2018) and *The Mexican Revolution on the World Stage: Intellectuals and Film in the Twentieth Century* (2019).

During her years in the Program in Comparative Literature, Professor Pineda was mentored by several UT faculty members, including Enrique Fierro, Fred P. Ellison, and Comp Lit legends Christopher Middleton and Louis Mackey. Naomi Lindstrom supervised her master's thesis and doctoral dissertation. Reflecting on her upcoming directorship and her past in Comp Lit, Professor Pineda points out the ways in which her training at UT as a comparatist and an interdisciplinary scholar gave her a strong background for leading Latin American Studies: "My understanding of Latin American Studies as a field that integrates multiple disciplines and intellectual traditions informs my vision as a leader, researcher, educator. I owe this to my background as a comparatist. My scholarly work situates the study of specific literary and cinematic phenomena within transnational contexts and comparative, interdisciplinary frameworks, addressing the relationships between culture, politics, intellectual thought.

As a comparatist and cultural critic, it is my conviction that we should strive for a vision of higher education that places greater importance on the humanities and the arts to imagine alternative futures, build bridges between past and present realities, and connect regional concerns with global aspirations."

The news of Professor Pineda's appointment and return to UT has met with a jubilant response among those who know her scholarly work, her interdisciplinary outlook, her administrative abilities, and her gift of being a true people person.

**Dr. Omoniyi Afolabi** published *Identities in Flux: Race, Migration, and Citizenship* with SUNY Press (2021). The brief description follows: Drawing on historical and cultural approaches to race relations, *Identities in Flux* examines iconic Afro-Brazilian figures and theorizes how they have been appropriated to either support or contest a utopian vision of multiculturalism.

In June 2021, **Dr. Katie Arens** gave an invited lecture (virtually) at the Paris Lodron University in Salzburg, Austria, for a special conference on the author H. C. Artmann; her topic was “Übersetzung als hybrides Denken: Artmanns Gruselgeschichten (*Dracula, Frankenstein*)” (Translation as Hybrid Thinking: Artmann’s Horror Stories). She also participated in an international conference (virtually), presenting on “Nationalisms of the Mind: The Case of *Geistige Strömungen in Österreich* (1949)” for the annual conference of the Austrian Studies Association, sponsored by the Adam Mickiewicz University in Pozna, Poland (July 2021, rescheduled from 2020). She had a peer reviewed contribution to a collection appear: “Mauthner as Epistemologist: The Critique of Language as Existential Science” in *Fritz Mauthner (1849-1923): Zwischen Sprachphilosophie und Literatur.*, ed. Veronika Jicínská (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2021, 43-56). Coming out soon are two peer-reviewed essays in journals: “Pedagogy as Epistemology: Building the Subject of Knowledge.” Special issue of *Meinong-Studien/Studies* on Herbart and Herbartianism, ed. by Carole Maigné. (2021), and “Building the Habsburg Subject: Scholarly Historical Fictions.” Special Issue of *Journal of Austrian Studies: Festschrift for David Luft*, ed. by Donald Wallace. (2021). And a long piece (80 ms pp.), entitled “Salzburg’s Age of Aquarius: *Der Wassermann* and the Case for Austrian Expressionism,” is scheduled to appear in an edited volume on *Interwar Salzburg*, ed. Robert von Dassanowsky and Michael Burri (2021) She had a College Research Fellowship in Spring, 2021, during which she completed most of the work on a monograph on Kant’s Materialist

Legacies (written with Carlos Amador) — it will go out to a publisher by the end of August.

**Dr. Daniela Bini** published her book *Portrait of the Artist and His Mother in Twentieth Century Italian Culture* with Fairleigh Dickinson University Press in January 2021, and has four essays forthcoming in 2022. In the frustrating year of Zoom teaching, Daniela was nonetheless able to use Zoom in a productive way and give four lectures: “The Missing Episode in *Tu ridi* and *Six Characters in Search of an Author*” at the Italian Cultural Institute, London; “Pirandello’s Real and Fictional Women,” for the Pirandello Society of America in New York; “*Il libro dei sogni*; Federico Fellini’s Dreams” at the XV Conference of the Italian Researcher in the World, organized by the Texas Scientific Italian Community and Rice University; and “Federico Fellini and the Feminine” at the University of Basilicata (Potenza, Italy). She is looking forward to getting back to class.

In 2020-21, **Dr. Thomas Jesús Garza** (Slavic and Eurasian Studies and Texas Language Center) published two book chapters, “Cultural transformation: Virtual communities, autonomous contact, and intercultural competence” in *Transformative Teaching and Learning in Foreign Language Education: Theory, Praxis, and Programs*, and “Making the Standards the standard: World-readiness Standards and the teaching and learning of Russian in the U.S.” in *The Art of Teaching Russian*. During the pandemic, he published four journal articles: “Here, there, and elsewhere: Reimagining Russian language and culture courses for social justice,” “Raise your hand: Online language and culture instruction, inclusivity, and critical pedagogy” and “Digital humanities, access, and the teaching of Russian language and culture,” all in *Russian Language Journal*, and “Changing course(s): On race, intersectionality, and the syllabus,” in *Slavic and East European Journal*. He also edited *RL@DH: Digital Humanities and the Teaching of Russian Language and Culture, and Practices That Work: Bringing Learners to Professional Proficiency*

*in World Languages*. He delivered two virtual keynote addresses via Zoom for the Language Education and Resource Network (LEARN) Virtual Conference: “Where’s the beef? Gen Z and Language teaching in the 2020s” on February 23, 2021, and “Meetings of minds: Advanced Russian through global debate” on November 9, 2020. In addition, he presented via Zoom five invited lectures: “Singing the body eclectic: Boy bands and marginal masculinities in New Russia,” at U Chicago, “Going (South) West! Russia, empire, and Chechnya” at the U California—Davis, “Breaking bad: Russia and the ‘Putin doctrine in global policy” at Angelo State University, “See it my way: Global debate, intercultural competence, and Advanced language skills” at the National Security Agency, and “From Vlad the Impaler to Stoker’s *Dracula*: How the literary vampire got his fangs,” at Adolphus Gustavus University. He presented two papers at scholarly conferences: “Vodka and tears: Russia’s ‘little water’ and memory – or the lack of it” at the ACLA Annual Convention and “Russian for everybody: Inclusivity and language and culture instruction” at the ASEES Convention, and two roundtable presentations: “Changing course(s): On race, intersectionality, and the syllabus” at the AATSEEL Convention, and “Preparing undergraduates for study abroad: Lessons learned” at the ASEES Annual Convention. He did two online presentations for CoLA: “On Walls, Fences, and a Bridge: How Regimes Establish Boundaries” and “First Encounters with Russia(n).” Finally, he conducted six virtual professional development workshops: “The World Readiness Standards and the Teaching of World Languages in the Age COVID and Social Justice,” STARTALK Institute at UT-Arlington, “Say Their Names: Inclusivity, Critical Pedagogy, and the Teaching of World Languages” at Indiana University, “The Myth of ‘*The Wide Circle*’: Addressing Diversity and Intersectionality in the Teaching of Russian” at the AATSEEL Conference, “See It My Way: Global Debate, Intercultural Competence, and Advanced language Skills” at the National Security Agency, and “Educating

Gen Z: Teaching Languages in the 2020s” and “Zooming for Proficiency: Online Instruction in the Age of COVID-19” at the Region 15 Education Service Center in San Angelo.

During 2020-2021, two critical anthologies that **Dr. John Morán González** co-edited were published: 1) *Communication of Migration in Arts and Media* (Transnational Press London, 2020) co-edited with Vildan Mahmutoglu and 2) *Reverberations of Racial Violence: Critical Reflections on the History of the Border* (UT Press, 2021), co-edited with Sonia Hernández. As a member of the public history project Refusing to Forget, he was given the Friend of History Award from the Organization of American Historians, which recognized “an institution or organization, or an individual working primarily outside college or university settings, for outstanding support for historical research, the public presentation of American history, or the work of the OAH.” Finally, he was awarded a Humanities Institute Faculty Fellowship for 2020-2022.

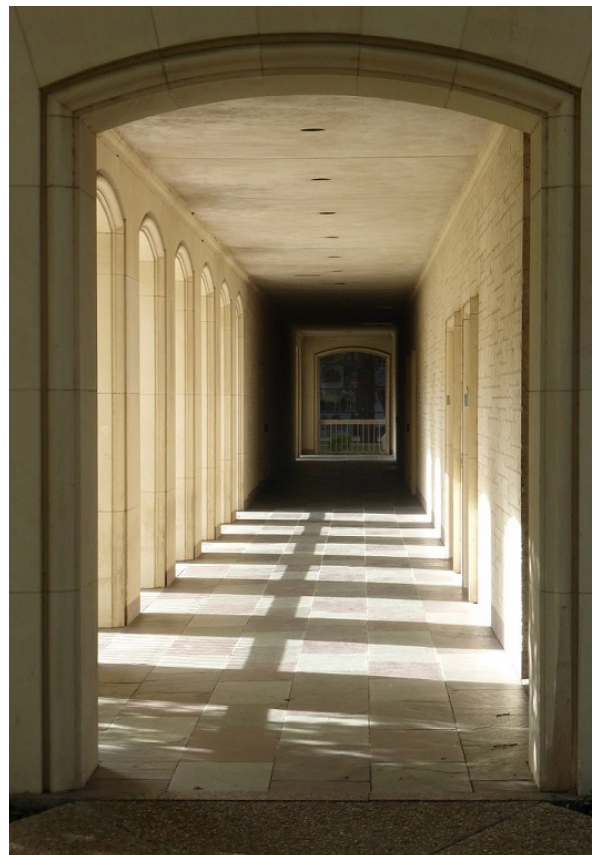
**Dr. Karen Grumberg** edited a special feature in *Poe Studies* on “Poe in the Middle East,” which included her article on Poe in Hebrew culture alongside articles on Poe in Arabic, Iranian, and Turkish contexts. She also published an article on Amos Oz and Sherwood Anderson in a special issue of *Journal of Israeli History* in memory of Amos Oz. She spoke via Zoom at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem about her recent book *Hebrew Gothic*. Together with Maya Barzilai of the University of Michigan, she discussed “The Horrors of Comparison” at a virtual series on Hebrew literature hosted by the National Association of Professors of Hebrew [NAPH]. Currently, she is editing a volume on Middle Eastern Gothics for the University of Wales Press. In March, Dr. Grumberg was notified of her promotion to Full Professor.

**Dr. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza** published “The Mysteries of Moscow: In Which Boris Akunin Impersonates a French Writer and Reveals a Buried Secret.” *The Akunin Project: The Mysteries and Histories of Russia’s Most Popular Author*. Eds. Elena Baraban and Stephen M. Norris. Toronto: Toronto UP, 2021: 270-87. She conducted virtual workshops on “Understanding and Balancing Motivation in a Pandemic” for the leadership teams of the Bullock Texas State History Museum, Removery, and several other groups. She presented a paper at the virtual ACLA annual meeting and also was invited to talk to the [Tower Fellows](#) on “Vampires and Dandies: A Gothic Take on Intersectional Diversity” and for the 2021 EFL Summer Institute on “Big and Bright: Images of Texas on Screen.”

In February 2021 **Dr. César A. Salgado** was invited to give an online public lecture on the Afro-Puerto Rican editor, intellectual, and anticolonial activist Sotero Figueroa at the CISA (Center of Applied Social Research) of the University of Puerto Rico’s Mayagüez campus. An expanded and revised version of the talk was published by the public humanities online journal 80grados in March. That same month Salgado presented about sexual politics in José Rodríguez Feo’s work as translator for Cuban journals in the 1940s at the UConn Storrs symposium *The Translation of Letters and Ideas in Cuba’s Republic*. In Spring 2021 he organized and hosted the online series *Screening Scribes: Four Films on Cuban Writers* under the sponsorship of LLILAS Benson, Spanish and Portuguese, and Comparative Literature. Featuring films by award-winning Latin American documentarians Oneida González, Gustavo Pérez, Ernesto Fundora, Jorge Dalton and Adriana Bosch, the series included in-depth interviews led by Salgado with each of the filmmakers. As an expert in Cuba’s *Orígenes* circle of writers, in 2020 he helped the Benson Latin American Collection acquire the papers of Orígenes poet Eliseo Diego. He is currently collaborating with colleagues from the Colegio de Mexico organizing an international online conference celebrating Diego that will take place in November 2021.

**Dr. Martha Ann Selby**, Asian Studies, published “Is there a Cankam Way of Feeling? Body, Landscape, Voice, and Affect in Old Tamil Poetry,” in *The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Emotions in Classical Indian Philosophy*, Maria Heim, Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad, and Roy Tzohar, editors. London: Bloomsbury Press, 2021. Selby also received a Humanities Research Award from the College of Liberal Arts to support her continuing work on her translation of the Old Tamil anthology *Kuruntokai*.

**Dr. Alexandra Wettlaufer** offered a spring 2021 graduate French course, cross-listed with Comp Lit and WGS, on “Representing Women in French Fiction and Film.” Comp Lit graduate student Caroline S. Kraft worked with her as a TA for the Plan II Thesis Course and will continue in that position in 2021-22. Alex published “Signifying Difference: Reading Balzac and Sand/Writing Balzac and Sand” in the *Romanic Review* 112.2 (September 2021) and presented a virtual talk on “The Politics



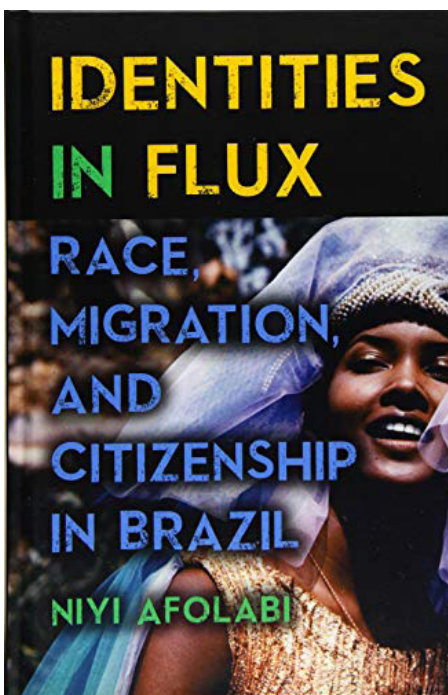
Calhoun Hall

of (Narrative) Aesthetics: Sand, Eliot, and the Reconfiguration of Subjecthood in the European Novel” at the 2021 MLA Convention.

**Dr. Lynn R. Wilkinson** published *Laughter and Civility: The Theater of Emma Gad* (U of Wisconsin Press, 2020) and “Bridging Places, Media, and Traditions: Lasse Hallström’s Chronotopes” (in *Nordic Film Cultures and Cinemas of Elsewhere*, ed. Anna Stenport and Arne Lunde (Edinburgh UP, 2019)), and she presented two conference papers – on Zoom, of course: “The Right to an Inheritance: Inge Jonsson on Swedish Literary Societies” in the seminar, “Marketing World Literature,” chaired by David Damrosch, at the annual meeting of the American Comparative Literature Association; and “Towards an International Literary Field: Georg Brandes and the History of Intellectuals” in the panel “Becoming Modern,” chaired by Julie

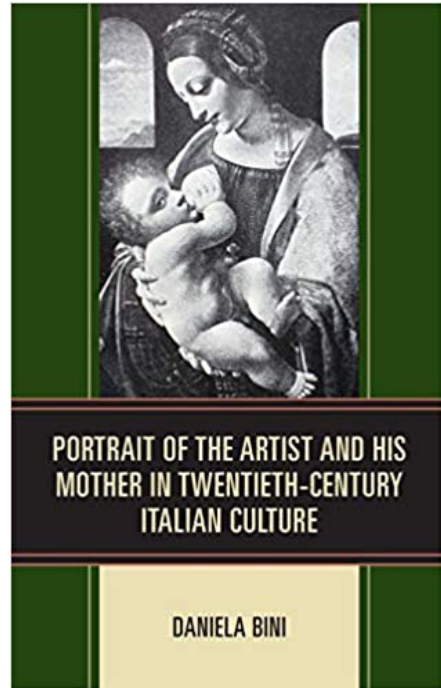
Allen, at the annual meeting of the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study. She is currently working on a study of walking, mobility, and perception in the work of George Sand.

In November, **Dr. Jennifer Wilks** published an [essay](#) about her current book project, a cultural history of the Carmen figure, in the *Ransom Center Magazine* online. In January, she completed her term as chair of the executive committee of the MLA’s Caribbean literature forum. This spring finds Wilks completing her first year as Director of UT’s John L. Warfield Center for African and African American Studies, and she is happy to report that the Warfield Center team was able to provide a robust slate of virtual programming across platforms (Facebook Live, Instagram, Zoom) and throughout the academic year.



**Identities in Flux: Race, Migration, and Citizenship in Brazil** (2021)  
by Ominiya Afolabi

Drawing on historical and cultural approaches to race relations, *Identities in Flux* examines iconic Afro-Brazilian figures and theorizes how they have been appropriated to either support or contest a utopian vision of multiculturalism. Zumbi dos Palmares, the leader of a runaway slave community in the seventeenth century, is shown not as an anti-Brazilian rebel but as a symbol of Black consciousness and anti-colonial resistance. Xica da Silva, an eighteenth-century mixed-race enslaved woman who married her master and has been seen as a licentious mulatta, questions gendered stereotypes of so-called racial democracy. Manuel Querino, whose ethnographic studies have been ignored and virtually unknown for much of the twentieth century, is put on par with more widely known African American trailblazers such as W. E. B. Du Bois. Niyi Afolabi draws out the intermingling influences of Yoruba and Classical Greek mythologies in Brazilian representations of the carnivalesque Black Orpheus, while his analysis of *City of God* focuses on the growing centrality of the ghetto, or favela, as a theme and producer of culture in the early twenty-first-century Brazilian urban scene. Ultimately, Afolabi argues, the identities of these figures are not fixed, but rather inhabit a fluid terrain of ideological and political struggle, challenging the idealistic notion that racial hybridity has eliminated racial discrimination in Brazil.



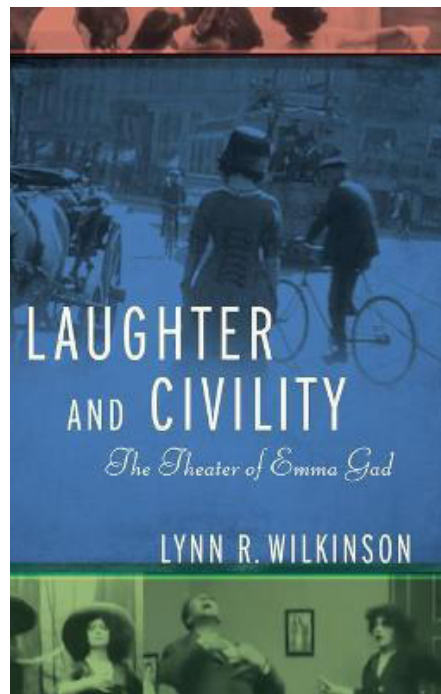
**Portrait of the Artist and His Mother in Twentieth-Century Italian Culture** (2019)  
by Daniela Bini

The power exercised by the mother on the son in Mediterranean cultures has been amply studied. Italy is a special case in the Modern Era and the phenomenon of Mammismo italiano is indeed well known. Scholars have traced this obsession with the mother figure to the Catholic cult of the Virgin Mary, but in fact, it is more ancient. What has not been adequately addressed however, is how Mammismo italiano has been manifested in complex ways in various modern artistic forms. *Portrait of the Artist and His Mother in Twentieth-Century Italian Culture* focuses on case studies of five prominent creative personalities, representing different, sometimes overlapping artistic genres (Luigi Pirandello, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Dino Buzzati, Carlo Levi, Federico Fellini). The author examines how the mother-son relationship not only affected, but actually shaped their work. Although the analysis uses mainly a psychological and psychoanalytical critical approach, the belief of the author, substantiated by historians, anthropologists and sociologists, is that historical and cultural conditions contributed to and reinforced the Italian character.

**Laughter and Civility : The Theater of Emma Gad** (2020)  
by Lynn R. Wilkinson

Emma Gad (1852–1921) was a prolific Danish playwright at the turn of the twentieth century. With sparkling prose and witty dialogue, Gad's ambitious and sophisticated theatrical productions raised important and still pressing questions about sexuality and morality—including the status of women in marriage, divorce, same-sex desire, and marital infidelity. Through her plays she engaged with contemporaries like Henrik Ibsen, Oscar Wilde, and George Bernard Shaw, yet she is primarily remembered for her etiquette book, *Takt og Tone*.

*Laughter and Civility*, the first biographical and scholarly volume to examine and contextualize her dramas, deeply explores how and why influential women are so often excluded from the canon. Lynn R. Wilkinson provides insightful readings into all twenty-five of Gad's plays, and demonstrates how writers and intellectuals of the time, including Georg and Edvard Brandes, took her critically acclaimed work seriously. This volume rightfully reinstates Emma Gad's work into the repertory of European drama and is crucial for scholars interested in turn-of-the-century Scandinavian drama, literature, culture, and politics.



**Changes are Coming! #UTCLC**

By Dr. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza

There are exciting changes ahead for the program this year! If you have read this far you are already seeing our new graphic design. Thanks to our wonderful ad hoc governance committee, comprising Drs. Grumberg, Salgado, Wettlaufer and Wilkinson, we have new by-laws which will enable our program to become more students-centered, agile and inclusive. Along with streamlining and rationalizing many of our administrative processes, we also have a new name:

**COMPARATIVE LITERATURES AND CULTURES**

This change in name allows a more complete reflection of the richness of our work across media and cultures while retaining the attention to the written word which so many of us treasure. Our hope in the next year is to make the program and even more welcoming intellectual space for colleagues working across human expressive culture and in areas, media, languages that are important for our students.

Finally, and very importantly, we are so fortunate to have a new graduate adviser, Dr. César Salgado from the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. His scholarly and pedagogical interventions have been invaluable to the program, whether in relation to colonial and postcolonial New World baroque literatures, the “Orígenes” group and journal in Cuban literary history, James Joyce and Luso-Hispanic modernism, the politics of archival fashioning in Caribbean studies, and contemporary literary theory. He has repeatedly served as our graduate adviser and has accepted the position once again. The willingness of certain faculty members to view their role in graduate education seriously and to devote themselves to their students so fully is essential to the health and excellence of our program. Dr. Salgado shapes and enhances the lives and careers of our students in every way. He has demonstrated an extraordinary breadth and depth or commitment to our program and student in ever regard, and we are so fortunate that he has returned to this critical role.



## Changing Course(s): Teaching for Social Justice

By Dr. Thomas Jesús Garza

The COVID-19 pandemic and consequent shift of university courses to virtual online delivery created a sea change for instructors and learners alike. Moving instruction onto new platforms of technology not by choice, but by necessity, has strained the resilience and energies on both sides of the computer screen. And, in the midst of these significant social and pedagogical changes, we find ourselves at a time of moral and ethical reckoning that poses one of the most basic of questions: Who are we as a nation? As teachers, we are bearing the massive responsibility of stewarding the next generations in their education. And yet we are aware that not everyone is afforded the same opportunities or access to receive that education. So we, as teachers of languages, literatures, and cultures, might ask, “What can I possibly do to have an impact on this grave situation of such massive scale? I’m just one teacher.” In answer to this question, I offer the following two views.

First, movements toward equity and social justice do not necessarily require macro actions. Revolution is not the only way to precipitate change. Sometimes, even small actions, small changes, can have large impacts. Brown (2017), in her work *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*, posits a simple but persuasive argument: Small-scale solutions impact the whole system. Therefore, similar principles can be employed on all scales (33). In other words, making relatively small changes, such as decolonizing a syllabus, selecting diverse texts and materials, and/or providing for the inclusion of all learners in every class, will positively impact the entire course. Any one of these changes can, as time and energy permit, be used as a model for another, perhaps larger, change that will have a proportionally larger impact on the course, and so on. All of us can make a difference in every course we teach. Taken as a whole, these individual local actions will have a significant impact not only on our courses, but also on the larger educational experience.

Second, Freire’s (1998) complex and complicated notion of *Conscientização*, usually translated as “critical consciousness” or “conscientization,” calls for exposing the political and social inequities and contradictions that inhabit one’s worldview, and, perhaps more importantly, for acting against them to attain social justice. This outcome is the ultimate goal of critical pedagogy and our endeavors to achieve diversity, equity, and inclusivity in education. It is the goal that we, as human beings, should all set for ourselves as global citizens. Such an accomplishment in our courses would certainly transform them: from the materials we utilize, to the ways we engage our students in class; from our own interactions with students in and out of class, to the ways and means of assessing their progress.

These are not insubstantial changes; any one of them requires additional time, creativity, and effort. But the end product of such efforts would certainly outweigh this expenditure, because equity and social justice in education and society as a whole should not be negotiable.

Thomas Jesús Garza  
Slavic and Eurasian Studies and  
Texas Language Center



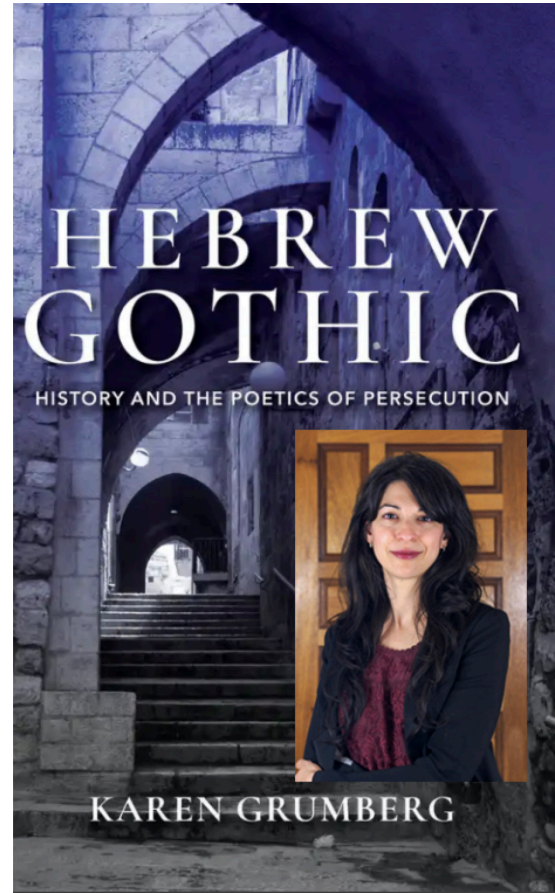
Institute for EFL Specialists from Uzbekistan, UT English Language Center at Texas Global, July 2021

## Congratulations to our Three Newest Full Professors!

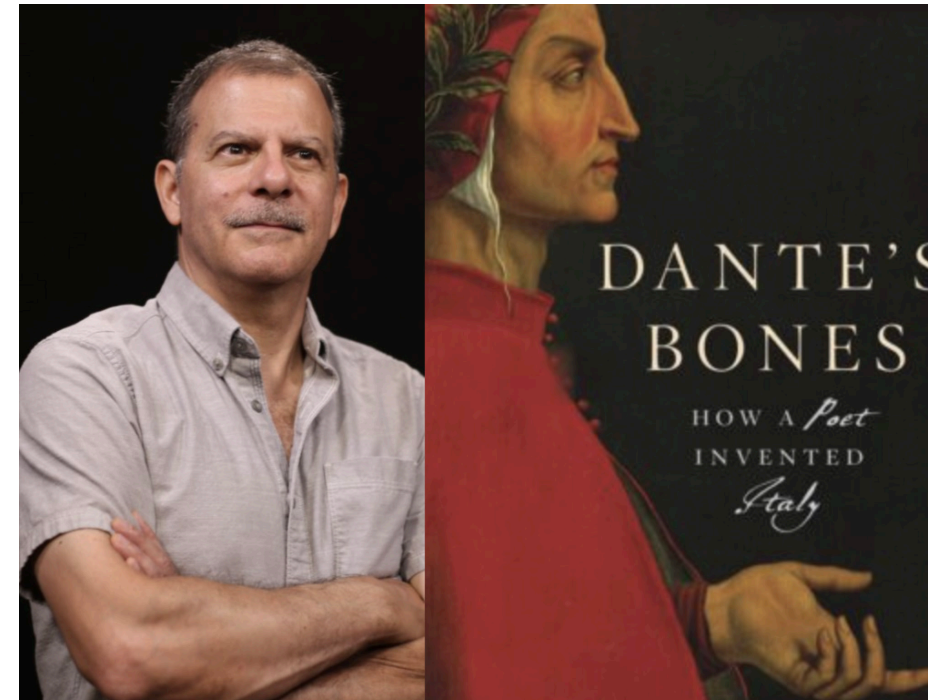
By Dr. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza

2021 saw the recognition and promotion of three of our colleagues to full professor. Internationally distinguished scholars, lauded teachers and exceptional colleagues who serve the university and the program in a myriad of ways, Drs. Karen Grumberg, Guy Raffa, and Helena Woodard enrich our community in so many ways.

**Dr. Grumberg** (PhD in Comparative Literature, UCLA) is the Director of the [Center for Middle Eastern Studies](#) and affiliated with the [Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies](#). She has published [Place and Ideology in Contemporary Hebrew Literature](#) (Syracuse UP, 2011) and [Hebrew Gothic: History and the Poetics of Persecution](#) (Indiana UP, 2019) along with articles in *Comparative Literature*, *Prooftexts*, and other academic journals. Besides comparative/global gothics and space/place, her interests include: intersections of literary modernism in Norwegian and Hebrew; “juxtapositional”; comparative methodologies; Hebrew translation culture; a regional, comparatively grounded conceptualization of Hebrew within the Middle East region and in the context of multiple histories. She regularly teaches graduate seminars on “Space and Place in Literature” and “Writing In-Betweenness” and has been awarded the Jean Holloway Teaching Award.



**Dr. Raffa's** (B.S. in Computer Science and Mathematics, Duke U, and a Ph.D. in Italian Literature, Indiana U) primary scholarly field is medieval Italian literature, especially Dante, with a secondary interest in modern Italian authors, particularly Italo Calvino and Umberto Eco. His latest book is [Dante's Bones: How a Poet Invented Italy](#) (Harvard UP, 2020). In addition to articles and book-essays, he has written [Divine Dialectic: Dante's Incarnational Poetry](#) (Toronto UP, 2000), [The Complete Danteworlds: A Reader's Guide to the "Divine Comedy"](#) (Chicago UP, 2009). For his work on Dante's graveyard history and cultural legacy, he won research fellowships from the [American Council of Learned Societies](#) and the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#). His new book project, tentatively titled *Dante's American Afterlife* was awarded an [NEH Public Scholars Fellowship](#). A faculty member in the [Department of French and Italian](#), his teaching was recognized with the President's Associates Teaching Excellence Award and the Gold Award for Innovative Instructional Technology. (continued on next page)



(cont'd) His award-winning [Danteworlds project](#) takes visitors on a multimedia journey through Dante's Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise.

In her research, **Dr. Woodard** (PhD in English, UNC Chapel Hill) focuses on 18th-Century British Literature; Ethnic and Third World Literature; American Literature, critical race theory; and women and gender. Her recent publications include articles and chapters on Equiano, slave archives and narratives, and contemporary African American culture. She has published [African-British Writings in the Eighteenth Century: The Politics of Race and Reason](#) (Greenwood, 1999) and [Slave Sites on Display: Reflecting Slavery's Legacy through Contemporary "Flash" Moments](#) (U of Mississippi, 2019). She is on the faculty of the [English Department](#) and of the [John L. Warfield Center for African and African American Studies](#). She is a winner of the Friars Centennial Teaching Fellowship Award, the African American Diaspora Department Teaching Award, and the President's Associates Teaching Award.



## Weeping for Jorie (but mostly congratulating her on her retirement!)

By Dr. Hannah Wojciehowski



For the past thirty years, Professor Marjorie (Jorie) Woods has inspired and challenged her colleagues and students to think about not only what we teach but how we teach, about how what we read in classrooms informs who we are and how we imagine our lives. Dr. Woods' interest in education and teaching began with her own peripatetic childhood, where constant encounters with different institutions and pedagogies sparked her interest in how students were taught to write in medieval schools and in how to imagine the possible uses of premodern classroom exercises in the modern classroom. Her work has at its center inclusivity, attending to the diversity of learners by offering a student-centered approach to the history of education for the past millennium. In 2010 she published her decades-long study of the teachers' notes in margins of the manuscripts of a medieval rhetorical treatise, entitled *Classroom Commentaries: Teaching the Poetria nova across Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Ohio State UP). Her most recent monograph, *Weeping for Dido: The Classics in the Medieval Classroom* (Princeton UP, 2019) tracks the ways in which boys were encouraged to identify with and perform female characters like Dido and Thetis in the early modern classroom. Between these two studies lie dozens of articles and essays which have expanded our appreciation of not only the role of classical education but also the affinities between the medieval and the post-modern in terms of gender and pedagogy.

The international community of scholars have taken multiple opportunities to recognize Dr. Woods. She is the recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Humanities Center, and the Center for Epigraphical and Palaeographical Studies at The Ohio State University, as well as research grants from the American Council of Learned Societies and the American Philosophical Society. *An Early Commentary on the Poetria nova of Geoffrey of Vinsauf* (1985) received Honorable Mention for the John Nicholas Brown Award of the Medieval Academy of America. *Classroom Commentaries* was awarded the 2010 Rhetoric Society of America Book Award. She received the Rome Prize in Renaissance and Early Modern Studies from the American Academy in Rome, where she spent 2007-2008 working on *Weeping for Dido*. She continued work on this project as a Member of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton during 2011-2012. During 2014-15 she presented the results as the (continued on next page)

(cont'd) Gombrich Lectures at the Warburg Institute in London and conducted further manuscript research at the American Academy in Berlin; All Souls College, Oxford; and the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel.

Her extraordinary scholarship has always been complemented by a passionate devotion to teaching, one which students from their first year as freshman to their final day defending their dissertation have cherished. The excellence of our cohort of graduate students who focus on Medieval and Renaissance Studies has been enabled and mentored by Dr. Woods in ways that have blossomed into projects on digital humanities approaches to the Inquisition in the New World and popular culture in performance in Golden Age Spain. Equally committed to those who are newly arrived in higher education, she has been recognized with the Harry Ransom Award for Teaching Excellence, the University President's Associates' Teaching Excellence Award, and the Chad Oliver Plan II Teaching Award.

All of us in the program wish Dr. Woods many beautiful hours on a Hawaiian beach and will miss her engaged and engaging, inspired and inspiring presence in the hallways and classrooms of Parlin and Calhoun!



# Prizes and Fellowships

Elizabeth Warnock Fernea  
Memorial Endowment Fellowship



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

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

Thanks to the generosity of the Fernea Endowment and the College of Liberal Arts, we are able to supplement the studies of Ipek Sahinler and Emma Wilson.

## 2022-23 U.S. Fulbright Scholar Competition Open

The 2022-2023 Fulbright U.S. Student competition is open to graduate students, undergraduates who will have completed their degree by the beginning of the grant period. The competition will close at 5:00 p.m., Eastern Time on October 12, 2021. The program is restricted to U.S. citizens. The grants are for study and research abroad, and are available for most countries. A number of countries also offer grants for those who wish to serve as English teaching assistants.

For more information, visit:  
<https://us.fulbrightonline.org/applicants>

## Comparative Literature Graduate Excellence Fellowships

### University Graduate Continuing Fellowship

Hamza Iqbal (2020-21)  
Diana Leite (2020-21)  
Marlena Cravens (2020-21)  
Claudio de Oliveira (2021-22)  
Alex Thomas (2021-22)

### FLAS Fellowship

Bianca Quintanilla (Summer 2020)  
Katie Field (2021-22)  
Amber Taylor (2021-22)  
Keith Wagner (2021-22)

### CL Graduate Recruitment Fellowship

Ana Duclaud (2021-22)  
Qianqian Li (2021-22)  
Anna Vilner (2020-21)  
Asadullah Alvi (2021-22)  
Ting-fu Chen (2021-22)  
Oleksiy Ostaltsev (2021-22)

### Provost's Graduate Excellence Fellowship

Poorna Swami (2021-26)

### College Continuing Fellowship

Oscar Chaidez (2020-21)  
Monica Mohseni (Fall 2020)  
Emma Wilson (Fall 2021)

### College of Liberal Arts Dissertation Writing Fellowship

Aycan Akcamete (Summer 2021)  
Liza Goodstein (Summer 2021)  
Thais Rutledge (Summer 2021)

### Thematic Fellowship

Emma Wilson (2020-21)  
Bianca Quintanilla (2021-22)

### Sherzer Endowed Graduate Professional Development Fellowship

Nanjun Zhou (Summer 2021)

### University Graduate Professional Development Award

Andra Bailard (Summer 2021)  
Marlena Cravens (Fall 2020, Spring 2021, Summer 2021)  
Katie Field (Spring 2021)  
Hamza Iqbal (Summer 2021)  
Claudio de Oliveira (Spring 2021)  
Thais Rutledge (Spring 2021)  
Ipek Sahinler (Fall 2020)  
Silvana Scott (Spring 2021)

# Connect with Us

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## Comparative Literature Program Staff

### Director

#### Graduate Adviser

Elizabeth Richmond-Garza

#### Incoming Graduate Adviser

César Salgado

#### GSC Chair

Lynn Wilkinson

#### Graduate Coordinator

Elizabeth Davis

### Attention Alumni:

The Program in Comparative Literature welcomes contributions about any aspects of your post-UT Austin lives and careers. The newsletter's goal is to celebrate the achievements of students and faculty and share important news about our alumni. It is your successes and undertakings which have made this such a strong program, and we would like the opportunity to congratulate you publicly.

Please send your news for publication in the 2022 newsletter to:

[complit@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:complit@austin.utexas.edu)

## Postdoctoral Placements & Updates

Tia Butler (ABD) has accepted position with an international baccalaureate school in downtown Austin, Headwaters School, to teach Latin American Literature and will defend her dissertation in 2021-22.

Chienyn Chi (Class of 2019) accepted a position of Assistant Professor of English at Southern Nazarene University starting in August of 2021.

Jamila Davey (Class of 2019) taught virtually for Huston-Tillotson University for 2020-21 and has relocated to Delaware.

Michael Reyes Salas (Class of 2020) has accepted a position in Vassar College's Africana Studies Program as an Assistant Professor of Critical Carceral Studies. While his faculty appointment begins in 2021-22, he will be on unpaid leave that year to serve as a Chester Dale Fellow in New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art, where his research into visual materials on policing and incarceration will be hosted by the Department of Photographs. During his Mellon Engaged Scholar Initiative Postdoctoral Fellowship, Michael worked alongside an international team of student activists to co-organize *Abolition Is...*, an online platform aimed at involving students and youth in the movement for prison abolition.

Sarah Ropp (Class of 2020) is serving as the Program Coordinator for the [Difficult Dialogues](#) program at the UT [Humanities Institute](#) and is also developing a project in public-facing scholarship as part of a Mellon [Engaged Scholar Initiative](#) postdoctoral fellowship at UT Austin.

Amy Vidor (Class of 2019) has been recruited as an educational content developer for MELE Associates, a veteran and minority owned business that focuses on compliance and communication in national security, nonproliferation, program management, information technology, engineering, technical, and analytical skills.

Xinyao Xiao (Class of 2020) has accepted a position as an assistant professor of Comparative Literature with Chongqing University's Institute for Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences.