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From the French House to the Campaign Trail: Lauren Peterson

Professor Aliko Songolo Retires
Bonjour / Buongiorno! We are delighted to once again reconnect with our friends and alumni. In our increasingly fast-paced world, we appreciate this annual opportunity to slow down, reflect on the past year, and share the achievements and impact of our students, faculty, and programs.

Firstly, we are pleased to announce that enrollment is up, even as national enrollment in the humanities is down. This is the result of a concerted, multi-year effort by many within the department and by our associate chairs in particular. Increasing enrollment requires commitment and innovation at all levels of instruction, as well as staying tuned in to our academic environment and the needs of our stakeholders. Building on the success of achieving a unique and collegial dynamic in the department, we recently launched a call for new courses in French and Italian, including online and hybrid courses, that will appeal to the many students across campus with an interest in the literatures and cultures of Italy, France, and the French-speaking world. Re-examining our curriculum will ensure that it reflects the latest advancements in our fields and prepares students for success as professionals and citizens.

2018 has been special for another reason: in January we began celebrating 100 years of the French House at UW–Madison. We marked this milestone during Homecoming Weekend (October 19–20) with friends and alumni to honor the past and look forward to the next century of francophone language and culture on our campus.

In addition to looking forward, the department is also looking outward. We’ve done some interesting work examining foreign investment in Wisconsin, and we think you’ll be surprised to see the many French and Italian companies doing business in our state. As the graphics on page 9 make clear, Wisconsin continues to attract international companies seeking to benefit from our business climate, strong universities, and skilled workforce. It’s an important reminder that our world is increasingly global, and will require globally minded graduates.

Lastly, we would like to recognize the ongoing impact of our talented and dedicated faculty, who have collaborated with units across campus (and across the Atlantic) over the past year on a variety of intellectual exchanges. As you would expect, a number of our colleagues have also contributed to research in their field, nationally and internationally (see page 11 for details). We are extremely proud of our ongoing commitment to academic excellence through such intellectual endeavors.

Thank you for taking some time to catch up with French and Italian! If you have news to share, or would like to reconnect, we would love to hear from you.

Until then,

On, Wisconsin!

Gilles Bousquet, Chair
Stefania Buccini, Associate Chair of Italian
Martine Debaisieux, Associate Chair of French
MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

Every year, I wait eagerly for the results of the Chancellor’s Distinguished Teaching Awards. The honor has been given out since 1953 to recognize the university’s finest educators. The vast majority—at least nine out of twelve every year—go to L&S faculty.

I’m always humbled and a bit surprised. After all, we have only 39% of the faculty at UW–Madison. But in Letters & Science we care about great teaching because we teach 64% of undergraduate credit hours (and 57% of all credit hours taught on the UW–Madison campus). Moreover, knowledge creation, and outstanding teaching often go hand in hand.

It is a myth that great research comes at the expense of great experiences in the classroom. Many of our internationally known scholars can be found working with undergraduates in labs and in archives, organizing first-year interest groups, and developing innovative teaching methods. We call these “high-impact practices,” and they happen across the college, in large lecture classes (where one professor implemented small but important changes in the way he called on students, ensuring that all had a voice), and smaller courses (like the Shakespeare course that visited the Chazen Museum to view relics from the bard’s era).

Our faculty bring talent, passion, imagination, humor, and empathy into their classrooms every day. If you could see, as I do, the notes from our graduating L&S seniors recalling their favorite professors, you would understand that not only do our faculty create knowledge, but they also change lives. I couldn’t be more proud of what they do.

Your support of our teaching and learning efforts is greatly appreciated. Visit ls.wisc.edu/about/our-faculty to find out more about teaching and learning in L&S. And visit allwaysforward.org/ls to support our work.

On, Wisconsin!

Dean John Karl Scholz

Students and Companies Meet to Talk Language

This spring, the department collaborated with the new personal and professional development resource for L&S students, SuccessWorks, on a career event for students of French and Italian. The event brought undergraduates face to face with representatives from organizations that recruit students with an L&S skillset, including Rock Auto, Epic Systems, Case New Holland Industrial, and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Hosted at SuccessWorks’ new location above the University Book Store, company representatives presented their organizations and hiring practices before meeting with students to discuss career paths and opportunities after graduation.

The idea for such an event was initially conceived by the French and Italian Outreach Committee, currently chaired by Professional French Masters Program Director Ritt Deitz. Students from his advanced undergraduate course, Contemporary Issues in Government, Organizations and Enterprise, attended the event for class credit. “It was great to see our students in conversation with former language students who now have careers in these organizations,” said Deitz, who lectures regularly around the country on connecting language, the liberal arts, and careers. “You could literally see them thinking, often for the first time, how they might take their language to work.”
In November, UW students, faculty, and community members celebrated the Week of Italian Cuisine in the World, an annual celebration of Italian gastronomy abroad, with public lectures, food demonstrations, and tastings both on and off campus. Events focused on quality, sustainability, culture, food security, right to food, education, identity, territory, and biodiversity. Organized by Professor Grazia Menechella, who teaches a first-year interest group (FIG) course on Food Cultures of Italy, the event’s first iteration drew large and diverse crowds looking to learn more about the history and culture of Italian food as well as how to prepare classic dishes at home.

The Director of the Italian Cultural Institute of Chicago, Alberta Lai, kicked off the week with welcoming remarks on Thursday, November 16, 2017. Later that day, food historian and medieval scholar Massimo Montanari from the University of Bologna gave a public talk called “Eating Italy: A History of Italian Food and Identity,” that focused on issues of identity in Italian history from the Middle Ages to the present.

The week also included two hands-on opportunities for participants to learn how to make homemade pasta from experts in the kitchen. Teacher-chef “Marietta” Barbara Asioli from Casa Artusi in Forlimpopoli, Italy, held a pasta-making demonstration for students at Slow Food UW, a campus chapter of the international movement that promotes “good, clean, and fair food for all.” Casa Artusi is a culinary institution devoted to the legacy of Pellegrino Artusi, author of the 1891 cookbook Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well. In addition to learning about and sampling homemade pasta, students heard about the history of Casa Artusi and Pellegrino Artusi from Professor Montanari.

An equally popular pasta demonstration and tasting at downtown restaurant Osteria Papavero provided a convivial and celebratory end to a week of learning, sharing, and eating. Osteria Papavero owner and chef, Francesco Mangano, and Casa Artusi’s Marietta demonstrated how to make pasta dishes from the northern Emilia-Romagna region (known for its rich gastronomy) and offered a tasting menu for guests. Remarks and a final presentation on the legacy of Pellegrino Artusi were provided by Professor Grazia Menechella.

The booklet “Tutto fa brodo,” with writings by Massimo Montanari, Grazia Menechella, Alberto Capatti, Bruno Marangoni, and Laila Tentoni, and recipes from Artusi’s cookbook, were published on this occasion by Casa Artusi.

UW–Madison will celebrate the 2018 Week of Italian Cuisine in the World this November. Events will include public talks on “Gastronomy, Pizza, Pasta, and Other Italian Food” by Professor Marino Niola (Suor Orsola Benincasa University, Naples) and on “Mediterranean Diet: a Cultural Pattern which connects Environment, Conviviality, and Longevity” by Professor Elisabetta Moro (Suor Orsola Benincasa University, Naples), as well as an exhibition titled “Pellegrino Artusi and the Culinary Unification of Italy.”

For more information on the Week of Italian Cuisine in the World at UW–Madison, please contact Professor Grazia Menechella.
Talking Trouble with French House Alum Lauren Peterson

Lauren Peterson, a former French House resident and Madison native, is co-author of Make Trouble: Standing Up, Speaking Out, and Finding the Courage to Lead with former Planned Parenthood President Cecile Richards.

During your time at UW–Madison, you majored in political science but you also studied French, Spanish, Theater, Women's Studies, and Communication Arts. How did these and other courses prepare you for your present career as a speechwriter?

That’s one of the reasons I chose UW–Madison in the first place—I had a lot of different interests, and I wanted the chance to take classes in a lot of different areas so I could figure out my passion. When I first came to campus, I thought I wanted to be an actor.

I didn’t realize it at the time, but having the chance to learn about everything from traditional Kabuki theater to the history of radio (one of my favorite classes I took on campus!) was excellent preparation to work as a speechwriter. In my job, I have to be able to learn about a new topic or policy area almost every day, and be able to write about it as though I am an expert (which I’m usually not!). And, of course, there are some classes that turned out to be directly relevant to my work. Professor Edward Friedman’s course on the world economy was something I thought about on a regular basis when I was a speechwriter on Hillary Clinton’s 2016 campaign. I was constantly thankful that I had taken a women’s health class in the gender studies department when I went to work at Planned Parenthood—shout out to Women’s Studies 103! And Norma Saldivar’s directing class completely changed the way I look at written text that’s meant to be spoken out loud.

Looking back, do you think your experience learning French might have influenced your career in politics and communications?

Definitely! Learning French helped me discover a love for languages, which is the reason I’m a writer today. It also made it easier for me to learn other languages, including Spanish. And learning to communicate in French definitely strengthened my communication skills in English—it’s all about expressing yourself clearly, no matter what language you’re speaking or writing. Beyond language classes, exploring other cultures has informed my view of the world, which helps me every time I’m writing about foreign policy and global issues.

When you think back on your time as a resident of the French House, what stands out?

Great friends and faculty—including a few people I still keep in touch with. I also loved living at the French House because it helped me get over the intimidation of speaking a new language out loud. We really did speak French almost all the time, and while we didn’t always know the right word or expression in the moment we needed it, there was a real spirit of camaraderie as we struggled together to figure it out. The meals that were open to the public were another highlight, and a great chance to practice meeting people and making conversation with strangers, knowing the one thing we all had in common was a love for French!

As a professional communicator who has worked on behalf of very public figures, what do you think distinguishes good communicators from great ones?

Great question! Gloria Steinem has said she can tell someone’s really smart when everyone they’re speaking to can understand what they’re talking about. I think that’s so true. Great communicators are clear and accessible. They don’t throw around complicated sentences or acronyms—they speak in a way everyone can understand.

I also believe that two of the most important tools of communication are stories and a sense of humor. That’s one of the reasons I love working for people like Cecile Richards and Hillary Clinton—they understand that if you can make someone laugh, or move them with a story that gets to the heart of an issue, that person is much more likely to remember what you said.

What do you want readers to take away from the book you co-wrote with Cecile Richards, Make Trouble?

Someone on our book tour put it so well: they said the book is a love letter to the fellow travelers Cecile has gotten to know throughout a lifetime of organizing and making trouble, and it’s an open invitation to activism. I hope people reading this book will see that activism, grassroots organizing, and politics are not only an impactful way to spend your time, they’re a lot of fun.

Any advice for current Badgers interested in a career in politics?

Don’t make the mistake of thinking you have to have just the right internships, to have taken all the right political science classes, to know the right people. Within the four walls of a campaign office, none of that matters.

Find a campaign, candidate, or cause you want to work for, and find a way in—whether it’s an internship, a volunteer gig, or an entry-level job. Campaigns are a meritocracy—if you’re talented and you do the work, you’ll do just fine.
**GAFIS SHOWS SOME SKIN**

In early April, the Department of French and Italian celebrated graduate student research with the annual GAFIS (Graduate Association of French and Italian Students) symposium. This year’s theme, *Skin*, invited reflections on the various ways in which skin affects human expression and interaction. Naminata Diabate, currently an Assistant Professor at Cornell University, launched the conversation with her keynote address “The Skin of Blackness and the Cinema of Nakedness.” The second day of the conference featured eighteen graduate student presentations, including eleven speakers from the UW–Madison French and Italian program. Now in its 31st year, the symposium brings together dynamic student presenters from various institutions and disciplines, and serves as a meaningful professional development opportunity for the members of the organizing committee. This year’s organizing team, led by Lauren Surovi and Jeffrey Thomas, is especially grateful to the Brittingham Fund for its continued support of this longstanding event.

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION BRINGS GOLDONI PLAY TO WIDER AUDIENCE**

Undergraduate and graduate students in last spring’s Italian 450 took on an interesting project: translate Carlo Goldoni’s comedic play *La famiglia dell’antiquario* (*The Antiquarian’s Family*) into English. The project was inspired by the Wisconsin Dramatic Society, founded in 1910 by UW–Madison Professor Thomas H. Dickinson, with the purpose of producing lesser-known and foreign plays. Professor Stefania Buccini developed the course for advanced undergraduate students and native Italian graduate students. Her class spent the entire semester translating Goldoni’s play, which included dialogues in Venetian dialect. The English-language translation will allow Goldoni’s work to reach a larger Wisconsin audience—a great example of the Wisconsin Idea in action!

**Learn more:** Carlo Goldoni was an Italian playwright and librettist born in 1707 in Venice. Considered the founder of Italian realistic comedy, some of his most notable works include *Il servitor di due padroni* (*Servant of Two Masters*), *La locandiera* (*The Mistress of the Inn*), *I pettigolezzi delle donne* (*Women’s Gossip*), *Il bugiardo* (*The Liar*), and *Il vero amico* (*The True Friend*). He moved to Paris in 1762 to direct the Comédie-Italienne and at one point tutored the princesses at Versailles in Italian. As a result, he wrote much of his work in both French and Italian. Goldoni died in poverty in 1793 after losing his pension following the French Revolution.
A NEW RESEARCH TRADITION

As a complement to the annual GAFIS symposium, the French and Italian Department recently introduced an informal research seminar for scholars interested in sharing works in progress. This endeavor, first piloted two years ago, was conceptualized jointly by faculty and graduate students to promote the diverse research projects being completed by members of our department.

The seminar is typically held once a month and consists of a panel discussion with three or four presentations followed by an open conversation between presenters and their public. As each session includes a mix of faculty and student research, this initiative strengthens the intellectual community of our department by providing students the opportunity to share their work alongside their mentors. These conversations also offer a way for researchers to receive feedback from faculty and friends with overlapping interests.

Past presentations have included recent research on literary studies, alumni networks, second language acquisition, and more. If you are interested in joining these conversations, check the department website for a list of upcoming events.

WHERE OUR RECENT PHD GRADS ARE WORKING

Carlo Annelli — Assistant Professor, Truman State University
Carla Cornette — Lecturer, Penn State University
Daniele Forlino — Lecturer, Southern Methodist University
Sarah Forzley — Upper School French Teacher, Community School in Sun Valley, Idaho
Nathan Germain — Visiting Assistant Professor, Providence College
Lauren Goodspeed — Lecturer, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
Redouane Khamar — Assistant Professor, New Jersey City University
Sara Mattavelli — Lecturer, College of William and Mary
Jennifer Morgan — Admissions Consultant, Spark Admissions
Kathleen Prantil — Senior Lecturer, Florida State University
Jarmila Sawicka — Learning Designer, Cengage
Tessa Sermet — Assistant Professor, Lake Forest College
Jan Starczewski — Visiting Assistant Professor, Allegheny College
Caitlin Yocco-Locascio — Instructional Design Project Manager, Morgan Stanley

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Academic Partnership brings French Business Students to Wisconsin

Last fall, the Department of French and Italian had the pleasure of hosting a group of students from the Graduate School of Management (IAE) at Aix–Marseille Université in southern France. The group included International Business as well as Management Control & Reporting students, and was on campus as part of a rigorous academic study tour, the first of its kind organized between the two universities. IAE Dean Virginie de Barnier and two faculty members accompanied the group.

Co-sponsored by the UW–Madison Center for Interdisciplinary French Studies, the five-day tour consisted of presentations, case studies, discussions, and site visits in Madison and Milwaukee. Students toured the Harley-Davidson Powertrains Operations facility and Museum as well as the Water Council in Milwaukee, and UW Research Park and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation in Madison. The tour introduced students to the Wisconsin economy, economic development, entrepreneurship and innovation, cross-cultural management, and to the UW’s economic and entrepreneurial impact within and beyond the state.

For Chair Gilles Bousquet, principal organizer of the tour and an alumnus of Aix–Marseille Université who has worked for UW–Madison and the University of Wisconsin System since 1982, it was particularly rewarding to witness the interaction between French and American language and business students as well as the opportunities for future research collaborations. “Wisconsin is little known in France but once students and faculty come to our university and state, they can see for themselves why UW–Madison is a world-class institution,” he said.

Indeed, study tour participants reported learning a great deal about UW–Madison and about the state of Wisconsin more generally, including its primary economic sectors, challenges, and needs. Many also said they felt motivated, inspired, and more open-minded to new opportunities and ways of thinking by the end of the program.
To better understand how a degree in French and Italian can translate to a career in business, management or other private enterprise, the French and Italian Department has been tracking foreign direct investment in Wisconsin. Although the recent Foxconn investment has been the focus of local news, foreign direct investment has a long history in our state. Thanks to our state’s plentiful resources, including lakes and lumber, Wisconsin has been attracting investment from across the globe for centuries.

Today, foreign direct investment is a major driver of our state economy. According to a 2018 report published by the Economic Department of the French Embassy, Wisconsin exports $455 million worth of goods to France each year. These foreign investments especially support workers and companies producing technology, chemicals, and machinery in the state of Wisconsin.


**France — Top Companies**
- AXA (financial services)
- Saint-Gobain (manufacturing)
- Sephora (cosmetics)
- Sodexo (food services)

**Italy — Top Companies**
- Amplifon (hearing care technologies)
- Fincantieri Marine Group (ship manufacturing)
- Sofidel (paper products)

*Note: Original data from Uniworld Online and OneSource Global Business Browser*
OTHER HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2017 - 2018

- French Canadian writer Kim Thúy gave a talk on “De l’écriture migrante à l’écriture transculturelle” and discussed the immigrant experience and her book Ru at the French House.
- Ghanaian-Italian filmmaker, producer, and social activist Fred Kuwornu presented the campus screening of his film Blaxploitalian: 100 Years of Blackness in Italian Cinema.
- UW-Madison celebrated the inaugural Italian Film Festival USA with showings of the films La Tenerezza, Cucini, and Easy, introduced by director Andrea Magnani.
- In collaboration with the UW Division of Continuing Studies, owner of the Paris-based Breakfast in America restaurant chain Craig Carlson met with adult learners of French, PFMP students, and community francophiles at the French House and public library to talk about his book Pancakes in Paris and what it’s like to do business in France.
- Emeritus Professor of Italian Christopher Kleinhenz was named the inaugural recipient of a new award by the Council of the Dante Society. The award recognizes excellence in service to the Dante Society of America and to the field of Dante Studies in North America.
- In partnership with the Wisconsin chapter of the American Association of Teachers of French, the French House hosted a “Day for Future, New & Improved French Teachers,” with topics covering paths to certification in Wisconsin, teaching English in France, and a forum for current teachers.
- The new Consul General of France in Chicago, Guillaume Lacroix, visited FRIT and the French House and met with department faculty and staff.
- French Professor Jan Miernowski organized a discussion panel on The Future of the Humanities in Posthuman Times featuring Hilldale Lecturer Yves Citton, Sara Guyer, Frédéric Néyrat, and Ullrich Langer.

FRIT faculty hosted the following guest lectures:
- The Humanities as Arts of Attention in the Age of Computational Mediarchy, Hilldale Lecturer Yves Citton (Université Paris 8 Vincennes-Saint Denis)
- Dante’s Convivio: The Creation of a Cultural Icon, Beatrice Arduini (University of Washington-Seattle)
- Giacomo Leopardi: A Philosophical Reading, Francesca Bruncio (Università de zaragoza)
- Verso il modern: il Seicento tra accademia e mercato librario, Halls Visiting Scholar Lucinda Spera (Università per Stranieri di Siena)
- Living Room, Warren Motte (University of Colorado-Boulder)

FRIT faculty collaborated on several lectures with units across campus including:
- Anthropology—After the Revolution: CLR James’s Good Life, Gary Wilder (City University of New York)
- English—Modernism Terminable and Interminable, Jean-Michel Rabaté
- Gender and Women’s Studies, The ‘Mal d’Archives’ and Tunisian Women Revolutionary Art, Nevine El Nossery
- Law—Le va-et-vient de la transnationalisation du droit dans une affaire de crime contre l’humanit, Vivian Curran (University of Pittsburgh)

*Events on this page were made possible with the support of the American Association of Teachers of French—Wisconsin Chapter, Assemblea Legislatura–Regione Emilia-Romagna, Borghesi-Mello Workshop, Consulata Emilia-Romagnoli Nel Mondo, Délégation du Québec, Food Studies Network, the French Embassy in the US, Instituto italiano di Cultura–Chicago, Osteria Papavero restaurant, and the following UW units: the Anonymous Fund, Brittingham Fund, Center for Humanities, Center for Interdisciplinary French Studies, Center for Research on Gender and Women, Department of African Cultural Studies, Hilldale Lecture Fund, Institute for Research in the Humanities, Slow Food UW, and University Lectures Committee.
This past year the department celebrated the achievements and contributions of Aliko Songolo, Professor of French and African Cultural Studies, who retired after 26 years with the university. Professor Songolo’s longstanding dedication to excellence in teaching, scholarship, and leadership has served to elevate the status of our department in the US and abroad and has undoubtedly touched the lives of multiple generations of students and colleagues for the better.

Professor Songolo has enjoyed a remarkable, successful, and impactful career, from all points of view: teaching, research, mentorship of young researchers, and leadership. Equally remarkable is the fact that his outstanding reputation and distinction extend across campus and have been recognized both nationally and internationally. He chaired his two departments and the Title VI National Resource Center African Studies Program; presided over both the African Studies Association and the African Literature Association; and chaired several Modern Language Association Divisions, including the Division of Francophone Literatures and Cultures. Over the course of his career, he was celebrated as a Distinguished Member of the African Literature Association and was elevated by the French Prime Minister and Minister of Education to the rank of Chevalier des Palmes Académiques.

Given Professor Songolo’s vast experience, intellectual mastery, and his indisputable dedication to our department and the university, his retirement is bittersweet for those who have had the privilege to work alongside him over the years. We are truly grateful for Professor Songolo’s many years of service to the profession and to our department, and we wish him much success and contentment in retirement!

**Suffering Scholars: Pathologies of the Intellectual in Enlightenment France** by Anne Vila focuses on the medical and literary dimensions of the cult of celebrity that developed around great intellectuals during the French Enlightenment. By showing how crucial the so-called “suffering scholar” was to debates about the mind-body relation as well as to sex and sensibility, Vila sheds light on the consequences book-learning was thought to have on both the individual body and the body politic, not only in the eighteenth century but also into the decades following the Revolution.

**French in Medieval Ireland, Ireland in Medieval French** by Emeritus Professor Keith Busby examines the cultural and linguistic consequences of the English invasion of Ireland in 1169, and the ways in which the country is portrayed in French literature of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries. Busby argues that increasing knowledge of the real Ireland did little to stymie the mirabilia hibernica (or “Wondrous Isle”) in French vernacular literature. The book is characterized by close attention to linguistic details of expression and communication, as well as historical, codicological, and literary contexts.

**Language Policy or the Politics of Language: Re-imagining the Role of Language in a Neoliberal Society** by François Tochon illustrates how neoliberal ideals interact with national values and how those interactions shape people’s life trajectories in relation to their language rights and language education experiences. Tochon presents diverse experiences of different speech communities around the world to understand the changing role of language in societies characterized by neoliberal values.

**The Roman de Troie by Benoît de Sainte-Maure** translated by Emeritus Professor Douglas Kelly is one of the three romances of antiquity, which together launched the plots, themes, and structures of the genre. Dating to around 1165, this is the first English translation, and is intended to bring the poem and author to a wider audience.

**Onora il Padre e la Madre: Poesie 1977–2010** by Ernesto Livorni, a book of poems that came out in 2015, was recently published in Romania and translated by George Popescu, Emeritus Professor of Italian Literature at the University of Craiova.