



THE FORUM

News for Alumni and Friends of the Department of French and Italian



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THE FORUM

The Forum is the alumni newsletter of the Department of French and Italian at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

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WORDS FROM THE CHAIR



Bonjour/Buongiorno! We are so happy to reconnect with you at the start of a new academic year and to share some of our latest projects and accomplishments.

As you will see from our main feature, we are committed to keeping in touch with our alumni, many of whom are enjoying global careers. Recently, we had the pleasure of catching up with one of our most distinguished alumni, Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist Lynsey Addario. While she was on campus in 2016 to receive an Honorary Degree, a group of Italian undergraduate students had the opportunity to interview her. We hope you enjoy reading about her

beginnings at UW and how they have supported her career.

I am pleased to report that our department continues to attract a diverse and multi-talented group of students with interests spanning from the humanities to STEM. In fact, nearly 40% of our majors and certificate students are pursuing additional studies in a STEM field. And they're doing terrific work. We are extremely proud of recent graduate Swetha Saseedhar ('17, French & Biology), who was awarded a Wisconsin Idea Fellowship for her study assessing poverty in southern Wisconsin. Our graduate students have also been making important contributions to the campus community, notably PhD student Lauren Goodspeed who received a 2017 Campus-Wide TA Award for Innovation in Teaching.

Nationally, our department remains a leader in language teaching. Results from a new assessment initiative on learning outcomes show that our undergraduate students are graduating with higher than average oral proficiency when compared with students in similar programs. To see where many of them go after graduation, take a look at the graphic on page 8.

We're also proud of the recent achievements and leadership of our faculty. Professor Jan Miernowski was one of only ten UW faculty members selected this year for a WARF Professorship; Professors Florence Vatan and Kristin-Phillips Court each received a prestigious 2017 Vilas Award; and Professors Jelena Todorovic and Vlad Dima each received tenure since our last newsletter. Congratulations to you all! I am particularly proud of our faculty's dedication to collaboration, which can be seen in their efforts on campus and with partners across the nation. Their interest in interdisciplinarity has led to fascinating projects with on-campus groups like the Center for Early Modern Studies and the Middle East Studies Program, as well as with national organizations like the Modern Language Association and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

The department continues to lead from the inside as well. Last year, we launched a new committee dedicated to climate and wellness within the department. This initiative has also fostered meaningful connections with the surrounding community through a biannual effort to support local charities, including the Boys and Girls Club of Dane County, local refugee resettlement agencies, and a student food pantry. We will continue to work to provide a positive environment and educational experience for our students, faculty, and staff, and to put the Wisconsin Idea into action.

Lastly, I'd like to share what we have on our horizon. In 2018, we'll be launching a new Masters track in the Professional French Masters Program designed for French teachers in collaboration with our partners at Aix-Marseille Université. Our colleague Kristin Phillips-Court will lead the UW in Florence study abroad program, and the French House will celebrate its 100th anniversary, with events taking place throughout the year to mark this important milestone. We hope you'll be able to join us for some of them!

On, Wisconsin!

Gilles Bousquet, Chair



NEW GRADUATE OFFERINGS

PFMP CALLS ON K12 FRENCH TEACHERS TO EXPAND ITS PROGRAM

UW–Madison’s Professional French Masters Program (PFMP) is pleased to announce the development of new graduate offerings tailored to K12 teachers of French. The new Masters and Certificate tracks are being designed in collaboration with an Advisory Board of K12 French teachers and administrators from across the state. Expected to launch in 2018, this track will feature online language and pedagogy courses as well as summer sessions in Madison and Aix-en-Provence, France.

On May 23, the Advisory Board held its inaugural meeting at Union South to discuss program goals and the challenges faced by world language programs at the K12 level. FRIT representatives Gilles Bousquet and Heather Willis Allen presented

the history and status of the new degree program, while PFMP directors Ritt Deitz and Martine Debaisieux explained how this track would complement UW–Madison’s existing French Studies offerings focused on Business, European Union Affairs, International Development, and Media/Arts/Cultural Production. Gerhard Fischer, from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, described the state of language teaching and licensing in the US, emphasizing that UW–Madison’s proposal offers a unique opportunity for language instructors to build strong communities in support of K12 world language programs while furthering their knowledge of current topics in second language acquisition.

The proposal was met with great

enthusiasm, and the Advisory Board was especially interested in the potential for transatlantic exchanges between teachers and schools in the US and in France. The new teacher track will run parallel to similar offerings being implemented by the School of Education at Aix-Marseille Université, giving program participants the opportunity to connect with their European counterparts during the summer sessions in Madison and in Aix-en-Provence. Over the summer, UW–Madison representatives shared the Advisory Board’s feedback with faculty from Aix-Marseille Université’s School of Education. The Advisory Board will reconvene in October to discuss progress and evaluate ongoing initiatives.



GAFIS ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

GAFIS TURNS 30!

The Graduate Association of French and Italian Students (GAFIS) held its 30th annual symposium, *Turning Points*, March 31 and April 1, 2017, at Union South.

This year’s symposium, organized by Cari Torres and Tessa Sermet, featured presentations by 11 current FRIT graduates. Presentations focused on the

changes that take place across societies and disciplines, especially with regard to how these changes are reflected in literature or other forms of cultural production.

A longstanding institution within the Department of French and Italian, GAFIS is a student-run organization that seeks to build community between graduate

students while offering opportunities for professional development.

For more information about this event, including a full list of panelists and presentations, check out the GAFIS Symposium website: gafis.frit.wisc.edu

FRIT AROUND THE WORLD

LYNSEY ADDARIO



John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation (2)

Lynsey Addario ('95) is a proud Italian alum and Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist, currently following the journeys of several Syrian refugee families in Europe as part of *TIME* magazine's multimedia "Finding Home" project. During a recent visit to UW-Madison to receive an Honorary Degree, Lynsey spoke with a group of undergraduate Italian students about language, hospitality, and working abroad.

How did studying Italian and international studies affect your work and your career?

I think it provided a really strong base to do this work. Because first of all, to be a journalist, a foreign correspondent, or someone who works overseas, you have to have a good sense of the countries you're working in. You have to understand the politics, the government, the culture, understand how things work. Having that major in Italian and international studies was key to understanding, to being able to parachute into a country. I had to do my homework, and still have to do my homework every time I go on assignment. I have to understand where I'm going and what I'm doing. Studying Italian was really important because languages are fundamental. I work in countries where I hire a translator, even if I speak the language because it's important to have a

local who can show you around. Learning a language, having that discipline, is very important and teaches you that doors really open when you speak the language of the country you're working in.

How did your studies help you to understand other cultures you encountered in your travels?

It's interesting, in most of the world there's this incredible hospitality and focus on family, and family is really at the root of everything. It depends where you grow up in the US, but I think that's kind of lost here a little bit. I grew up in a very tight family where every Sunday we went to my grandmother's and we went to church and you see that a lot in the rest of the world. Family and extended family is everything, a network that really provides for everything. Things are also more communal.

Someone doesn't just earn a living, earn a salary for himself; they earn a salary that gets pooled into the family resource. So it's just a different philosophy. Having learned about Italian culture, I felt immediately at home overseas because it was very much like the family I grew up in.

What were some of your favorite experiences at UW-Madison?

My favorite experiences were things like running along Lake Shore path, you know, just living that carefree life as a student. Being exposed to people, students, and professors from all over the world, I think that's a real privilege. The fact that there were so many undergrads and grads. You know, there's diversity, which I loved. Being in the Midwest, people are so nice and open. So there were so many different experiences, I just think it's the little things that you don't realize are such big experiences at the time, that you look back on very fondly afterward.



Addario receives UW-Madison Honorary Degree

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LOOKING BACK

LA CENTENAIRE



Wisconsin Historical Society

The French House at 1105 University Avenue

With more than 2,000 undergraduate residents over the years, scores of conferences and lectures hosted and celebrated, and who knows how many baguettes and bourguignons consumed, what was once a bright idea of a few dedicated faculty in 1918 has blossomed into a Madison landmark.

The French House will celebrate its 100th anniversary beginning in January 2018. Events will take place throughout the year for current residents, students of French, alumni, and Friends of the French House, and will culminate in our Centennial Celebration the weekend of UW's Homecoming 2018. To help us gather memories and ideas, organizers of the celebration would like to hear from our alumni and friends. If you have any special memories or photos to share, please submit them at <http://uwfrenchhouse.org/100>.



Google Map



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The French House today



Courtesy of Gavin Hussey

Gavin Hussey



Stock: Nina Hiltukha

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

GAVIN HUSSEY (BA '11, ECONOMICS & FRENCH)

Current Position: Finance Manager at RightHand Technologies, Chicago, IL

1) Tell us a bit about your current employer, RightHand Technologies.

We design and manufacture embedded computers for the aerospace industry. Our embedded computers do things like stream video to seatback displays, control the lighting of the cabin, give the passenger control over their seat, and display video for passengers to watch. The majority of our products are used in business and private aircraft.

2) What were the most valuable skills you developed as a French major?

There are two skills I gained as a French major that have greatly helped me after graduation. First, learning to speak and write in a different language forced me to think about how to effectively communicate. This extra effort carried over and improved my communication in English, and it is my experience that many problems can be avoided if clear communication is used to place everyone on the same page.

The second valuable skill came from studying abroad in France. I was exposed to many new experiences that helped improve

my understanding of people, gave me a better ability to appreciate our differences and similarities, and improved my ability to interact with people from all over. The US is one country, but it is a big country with many different regional cultures. Most jobs are going to have you interacting with different regions of the US (and likely world) in some form. Having studied in France has helped me be more effective when I interact with people from different places.

3) Do you have any career advice for current French students interested in both language and the tech world?

Companies everywhere are looking for people to fill technology and business roles, and a second language allows you to work at more of them. Use this to gain experience that will make you more and more valuable as your career goes on.

There is no textbook answer to solving problems in work or life. They are always varied and will force you to draw upon different experiences to know how to solve them. The more experiences you have, the better you will be able to solve problems, and the more valuable you will be to a company. A second language opens many more ways to gain experience, so go use it!



YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

// KEEP FRIT MOVING FORWARD! //

To mail a donation, please include the fund number (#112546940) and designation (French and Italian) on your check, made payable to the University of Wisconsin Foundation.

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AWARDS

UNDERGRADUATE RECEIVES WISCONSIN IDEA FELLOWSHIP



The Department is proud to recognize recent FRIT graduate **Swetha Saseedhar**, recipient of a 2016-2017 Wisconsin Idea Fellowship.

In collaboration with the Community Action Coalition of South Central Wisconsin, Swetha and her research partner designed a project to address poverty in Dane, Waukesha, and Jefferson

counties. Their project was one of only nine selected by the Morgridge Center for Public Service last year.

In a conversation with FRIT PhD student Ben Hair, Swetha described how her work in French, specifically with Professors Ewa Miernowska and Florence Vatan, supported her extracurricular pursuits.

"Learning a foreign language puts you in a place where you're not completely comfortable all the time, which I think is great. When you're in a classroom and you're not comfortable, that means you're doing things right because you're learning. And that has taught me to be a better leader—a leader in general—and to think critically about our society, which relates to my [Wisconsin Idea Fellowship] project."

During her time at UW–Madison, Swetha was an active member of the campus community. In addition to completing a double major in French and Biology, she served as the Director of WUD Global Connections, and as an Ambassador for the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

You can read about the seven key findings of Swetha's assessment at morgridge.wisc.edu/news-poverty-study.

BOOKSHELF



Sonic Space in Djibril Diop Mambety's Films by Vlad Dima proposes a new reading of Mambety's entire filmography from the perspective of sound. Following recent analytical patterns in film studies that challenge the primacy of the visual, Dima argues that Mambety uses voices, noise, and silence as narrative tools that generate their own stories and sonic space.

Early Modern Humanism and Postmodern Antihumanism in Dialogue by Jan Miernowski addresses contemporary concerns such as the moral responsibility of the artist, the place of religious beliefs in our secular societies, legal rights ex-



tended to nonhuman species, the sense of 'normality' applied to the human body, the politics of migration, individual political freedom, and international terrorism.

The Father's America by Ernesto Livorni is a collection of poems written by the author while he was a PhD student in the 1980s. It was translated into English by Jason Laine in 2016.

Dante and the Dynamics of Textual Exchange by Jelena Todorovic is the first book-length study to explore the question of poetry and genre in Dante's *Vita Nova* (c. 1292-1294). It complements the current state of scholarship by providing



information and answers informed by an in-depth analysis of manuscript culture and its role in the birth and development of European vernacular traditions.

A Multiliteracies Framework for Collegiate Foreign Language Teaching (Theory and Practice in Second Language Classroom Instruction) by Heather Willis Allen helps educators transform both the material taught in their courses and how it is taught. The text develops broader and more comprehensive curricula, evaluates objectives and assessments, and presents the material in a coherent manner for educators.



French & Italian graduates employed in the private sector 2005-2015

