



## Department of Comparative Literature and Intercultural Studies

*Franklin College of Arts and Sciences*

**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

### A NOTE FROM THE DEPARTMENT HEAD:

It is with pleasure that we publish the second issue of our newsletters. Along with the warming season, the department has renewed some of its activities. Particularly noteworthy is the speech event successfully organized by the graduate student organization, COMPASS. Please see below its details as well as faculty publications and a few members featured. I hope that you enjoy getting to know what is going on in the department.

### COMPARATIVE LITERATURE EVENTS and NEWS:

A lecture by Dr. Rosemary Jolly gave a talk on Thursday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, at 4:30 in Park Hall, Room 265 titled "Effluence in Disease: Ebola and HIV as Case Studies of Debility in the Postcolonial State". The lecture was sponsored by the Willson Center for Humanities and Arts, the African Studies Institute, and the Department of Comparative Literature. For more information please follow the link provided:

<https://calendar.uga.edu/event/dr-rosemary-jolly-effluence-in-disease-ebola-and-hiv-as-case-studies-of-debility-in-the-postcolonial-state>

The Department of Comparative Literature and Intercultural Studies was part host for a two-day conference called, **2023 Seuss Flic Zhonghe Dragon Conference** on Friday, February 24, 2023 - 2:30pm.

Established in 2018 in an effort to support focused intellectual conversations among East Asianists in the Southeast working in institutions at some distance from major national centers of Asian Studies, each year since 2020 SEUSS FLIC (Southeast Scholars and Friends of Late Imperial China) has hosted a regional conference at a southeast university.

Taking the name of the Zhonghe festival, which celebrates the waking of the dragon that brings spring rains, as a figure to commemorate our safe return to in-person meetings, this year the fourth annual SEUSS-FLIC conference was held at the University of Georgia from February 24-26. The keynote speaker was Dr. Wai-ye Li, the 1879 Professor of Chinese Literature at Harvard University. A scholar of impressive range and depth with more than ten published volumes and over sixty essays and articles that engage history, literature, and

culture from the Zhou period (1046-256 BCE) through the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368-1911), the groundbreaking nature of Dr. Li's research has shifted fundamental assumptions in Chinese studies.

The conference was made possible by a generous award from the James P. Geiss and Margaret Y. Hsu Foundation as well as support from the University of Georgia Office of the Provost, the Willson Center for Humanities and Arts, the Center for Asian Studies, and the Department of Comparative Literature and Intercultural Studies.

## **COMPASS is back!**

The Comparative Literature Graduate Student Association returns to full swing with a set of new faces. At the helm is the second-year PhD student, Casandra Aigbogun. Her second-in-command is Mounawar Abbouchi. Together with Abinash Dash Choudhury and Elliot Shaw, the four officials hope to revitalize the graduate organization with academic and social events throughout the year.

They recently kicked off their new lecture series with the guest lecturer Dr. Marc Maufort of the Université Libre de Bruxelles. Dr. Maufort gave a talk on Tuesday, March 14th titled "Towards a Non-Eurocentric Comparative Literature Poetics: Studying Representations of Indigeneity on the Oceanic Stage". Dr. Maufort interrogates the use of Western/European methodologies in the study of Comparative Literature and calls for the collaboration between European and Indigenous scholarship for a more hybrid and intellectually ethical Comparative Literature. Dr. Maufort is the editor of *Recherche Littéraire/Literary Research* and a long-time friend of the department. He has facilitated many graduate students' publications, often first publications, over the years.

The talk was followed by a reception in the lobby of Joe Brown during which the graduate students continued the discussion with Dr. Maufort about the state of the discipline and work in academia while sampling an array of burritos and salsas from Willy's Mexican Grill.

COMPASS plans to round out the semester and academic year with some much-needed social time among the graduate students. Busy graduate life often leaves very little time for bonding with peers, sharing thoughts about our research, and starting conversations that may lead to collaborations. In an effort to rebuild a communal spirit in the wake of the pandemic, COMPASS is planning on hosting

a coffee hour, game night, and other social activities to give us some time to unwind and spend time together. Look out for announcements in your emails soon!

One of our Comparative Literature Graduate Student and two Graduate Students who teach comparative literature subjects or language courses won the Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award. **Congratulations, Elliot Shaw, Ji Hyun Hong, and Pamela Kimario.** This is awarded to teaching assistants who demonstrate superior instructional skills while serving in the classroom.

#### PEOPLE SPOTLIGHT:



Dr. Peter O'Neill Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and Intercultural Studies

#### Tell us a bit about yourself.

I've been teaching at UGA for about 11 years. Before that, I taught at UC Davis for a brief spell after I'd completed my PhD in English, from the University of Southern California. I was born and raised in Derry City, in the North of Ireland, and attained a BA in Sociology from Leeds University. After coming to the US in the early 80s, I worked at various jobs, then went back to school in the late 90s. I combined the duties of a stay-at-home dad with my studies at San Francisco State, where I earned an MA in English and Creative Writing. (These days, our son is teaching in London and thinking about PhD studies.) Then on to Southern Cal, and soon after that, our Comp Lit Department.

### Besides reading, how do you relax?

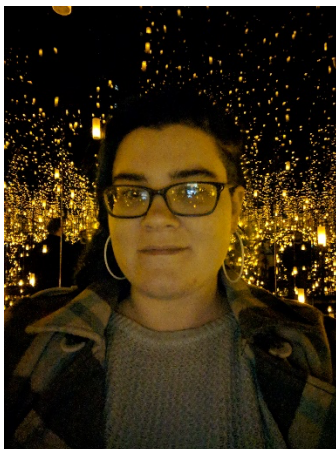
I watch a lot of soccer on TV—too much, my family would say. It's quite the job following my favorite teams, in the League of Ireland, the Scottish Premier League, the Bundesliga, and the English Premier League, and trading observations on Arsenal with its greatest supporter: my 13-year-old nephew in London. I also like rugby and Gaelic sports, American football (Dawgs, 'SC, Niners), baseball (Giants, of course), college basketball—even a bit of international cricket. Our wire fox terrier, Finnegan, is always ready to parade when a flâneur mood strikes.

### What books are on your nightstand?

Lately I've been going through a murder-mystery phase. I just finished Sam Lipsyte's hilarious (if a bit scatological) tale of a punker rocker's quest to find the killer of his drug-addled bandmate. Titled *No One Left to Come Looking for You*, the book made me nostalgic for New York's East Village in the early '90s.

### Have you any forthcoming publications?

Yes! Later this year, Palgrave Macmillan will publish an essay collection that I co-edited, *The Famine Diaspora and Irish American Women's Writing*. In addition, my essay entitled "White Nationalism and Irish American: A Cultural History" will appear in a 2023 Cambridge University Press collection, *Race in Irish Literature and Culture*.



## Graduate Student – Becky Sexton

As it's been edging into spring, the weather turning and pollen beginning to dust windshields, I've been spending most of my time inside, work on my dissertation progressing steadily as I aim to graduate roughly a year from now. My research is centered on literary portrayals of robots and A.I., which has recently been broadened in many interesting ways due to the discussion surrounding A.I. art and machine learning.

This is a discussion that has extended into a course I'm teaching this semester, CMLT 3080: Playing with Robots. Students have brought in their own backgrounds and interests in STEM and robotics, as well as in film, art, and architecture to our discussions, enriching them considerably and making the course an absolute delight to teach.

I am also teaching JPNS 2002 this semester, and the Japanese Program has just announced the annual Haiku Competition to students. We'll likewise be holding the Hanami-inspired Spring Celebration for the first time in years later this spring. Hanami, or "flower-viewing," is a Japanese tradition tied to the blossoming of cherry trees in the spring and a deep appreciation of nature which is likewise reflected in haiku writing. We'll be holding the celebration here in Joe Brown, and would love to see you all stop by to celebrate with us!



## Undergraduate Student—Jessamyn Greenbride

Jessamyn Greenbride is a Comparative Literature and English Education double major. She found her passion for world and multicultural literature in her freshman year sci-fi/fantasy class at UGA and aims to teach them in her future classroom. Jessamyn is reading five

books at the moment. One of the books that currently excites her is *Heavy*, a memoir by Kiese Laymon. She has a potentially unhealthy obsession with mushrooms, loves the outdoors, reading in a hammock, her cats, and Earl Grey tea.

Throughout her college experience, Jessamyn has made a point to experience a wide assortment of literature and viewpoints in order to bring diversity into her future classroom. Her passion for Comparative Literature allowed her to teach effective mini lessons at a local high school this year. Jessamyn's hard work has pushed her to make Deans list every year.

#### SELECT FACULTY PUBLICATIONS:

Dorothy Figueira, ed. *"Minor Minorities" and Multiculturalism: Italian American and Jewish American Literature*. Macerata: EUM Press, 2022. 416 p.

Alexander Fyfe and Madhu Krishnan, eds. *African Literatures as World Literature*. Literature as World Literature Series. New York: Bloomsbury Academic Publishing, 2022. 268 p.

Ari Lieberman. *Samson the Silent*. Tel Aviv: Achuzat Bayit Books, 2022. 247 p. In Hebrew.

Dainess Maganda. *Africa's Identity Revolution in the 21st century*. Cypress, TX: Freedom Life Books, 2022. 215 p.

Hyangsoon Yi, ed. *Tongasia Piguni* (Buddhist Nuns in East Asia). Seoul: Minsokwon, 2022. 536 p. In Korean.

Karin Myhre, "Borrowed Voices and Double Vision in Du Renjie's 'A Country Bumpkin Does Not Know

Theater.'" *Chinese Literature, Essays, Articles, Reviews* 44 (2022): 69-91.