Our department is very excited to announce that it will host the annual meeting of The American Comparative Literature Association in Spring 2014 at NYU Washington Square Campus.

The theme of next year’s conference is “CAPITALS”. The 2014 ACLA meeting in New York City offers a singular opportunity to interrogate the city’s tenuous reputation as a global capital. As other cities are gradually overtaking New York as a political, cultural, and financial hub, in what sense can we still speak of New York City as a global capital? In what sense do we speak of capitals (and capital) at all? The difficulty of these questions is rooted in the semantic density of the term ‘capital’ itself.

Unpacking these diverse valences, in turn, points to the capital importance of the term for the critical projects in which Comparative Literature is engaged. Marx has pointed to the hegemonic configurations that emerge around capital; What hegemonic configurations/ configurations of power and privilege emerge around capitals? What constitutes a capital? What institutes a capital? How does capital move? How do we move a capital? How do we spend (political, economic, cultural) capital? How do we accumulate it? How do we understand the fragmentation of capitals and capital? How do competing capitals negotiate their spheres of influence or dominance? What happens when we shift from a local to a global sense of capital, and vice versa? How can we trace effects of the movement from a local to a global sense of capital and vice versa?

Possible topics falling under this heading include, but are not limited to: The Metropolis and the Metropole; Empire and the (Post)Colonies; Cultural Capitals; Capitalization; the Persistence of Capital; Economy of Translations; the Center and the Periphery; Canons and Capital and The Capital and the Corporeal.

In addition to a plenary session, workshops, and other events in and around the New York University campus, the ACLA 2014 conference is centered around 8-12 person panel/seminars meeting for either two or three days and intended to foster discussion. One such panel will focus on the Dictionary of Untranslatables, co-edited by Emily Apter, Jacques Lezra and Michael Wood. The tentative plenary session will be organized by the Center for Ancient Studies.

Special thanks to Carlos Aguirre and Sonia Werner for their contribution to the CFP and to the ACLA Organization Committee!

We welcome and encourage everyone’s involvement. Stay tuned for more information on this exciting event!

Ozen Dolcerocca is a 5th year Ph.D student and is coordinating the department’s side of ACLA 2014.

Inside the Issue:
ACLA 1
Speaker Series 1
Grad Colloquium 2
Political Concepts 111 3
Poetics and Theory 4
Place & Sanders Perform! 4
Alumni Highlight Wang Ping 5
Brio Undergraduate Journal 6
Grad News 8
Alumni News 9

Speaker Series: New Directions in Comparative Literature
by Anastasiya Osipova

With funding from the Arts and Science deans, Comp Lit launched a special Speaker Series this year to explore cutting-edge New Directions in Comparative Literature. To guide us in this exploration, we invited exciting scholars at the forefront of such new comparative, interdisciplinary directions – Roberto Dainotto (Duke), Karen Pinkus (Cornell), Eyal Peretz (Indiana), Jennifer Bajorek (NYU/London), and Lynn Enterline (Vanderbilt). First up: Roberto Dainotto.

In October of 2012, the Department of Comparative Literature at NYU was delighted to welcome back its own graduate, Roberto Dainotto. Since defending his dissertation, All Regions Do Smilingly Revolt: Region, Place, Literature, he continues to investigate the questions of the national and place in literature, while sustaining rigorous attention to the problems of history and politics.

(Cont on page 2)
Dainotto is now professor of Italian at Duke University. With his lively and witty writing style, “localized” expertise of Italian culture and a truly comparatist rigor, he never loses sight of history and ideology in favor of geography. He is a wonderful example of a scholar who manages to wear both “national” and “comparatist” hats with elegance.

The following problems have occupied a central place in Dainotto’s work since his days at NYU: (I) the extent to which notions of the national and the regional can be useful in representing and theorizing the heterogeneous and shifting culture and ideology, (II) the issue of the metaphysics of place as something that does not allow an account for history and lacks ideological dimension.

His dissertation was eventually developed into Place in Literature: Regions, Cultures, Communities (Cornell UP, 2000). He followed this work with Europe (In Theory) (Duke UP, 2007), which offers a genealogy of Eurocentrism. In this text, Dainotto sets out to reveal Eurocentrism’s underlying dialectical nature by addressing not only the commonplace theories of Europe (Montesquieu, Voltaire, Madame de Sade, Hegel), but also the perspective of marginalized southern writers – such as an eighteenth-century Spanish Jesuit Juan Andrés. This book is an exciting attempt to theorize Europe both from the southern margins and from the center, borrowing much of its strategies and discourse from postcolonial and subaltern studies and was awarded the 2010 Shannon Prize in Contemporary European Studies.

The talk that Roberto Dainotto gave at NYU, titled “History and the Novel”, was an excerpt from his forthcoming book concerning the theory of the novel and its relationship to history. Dainotto traced a variety of Western theories of the novel and focused a great deal on Erich Auerbach’s Mimesis to evaluate the historical conditions that gave “rise” to this genre. Present in the audience were Kristin Ross, Ana Dopico, Gabriela Basterra, Jacques Lezra as well as several students whose research is tightly connected with theories of the novel. Both the talk and the Q&A session that followed were lively, rigorous, and engaging. It was a great honor to have Professor Dainotto return to his Alma Mater, and both students and faculty are looking forward to further dialogue in the future.

Anastasiya Osipova is a 6th year PhD student in Comp Lit, whose work focuses on the rhetoric of vitality in Soviet literary theory and the novels of production of the 1920s and 1930s.

Speaker Series Scholars—Roberto Dainotto (Duke University), Karen Pinkus (Cornell), Eyal Peretz (Indiana), Jennifer Bajorek (NYU/London), and Lynn Enterrline (Vanderbilt).

Notes on the Colloquium

Looking through the archives of the Comp Lit Graduate Student Colloquium website (http://comparatorium.wordpress.com/), I’m struck by an inappropriately strong tide of nostalgia — inappropriate both because the events listed there happened in the recent past, and also since, as this article proves, the colloquium is very much alive and kicking and in no danger of fading into departmental legend.

Looking back at past events does, however, evoke exactly that sense of departmental community that our funding applications stress every year — I remember attending one of these as an accepted candidate in Spring 2009, and in my first week here as a student in the Fall. Colloquia have marked other important milestones, but, even more importantly, reading the names of student presenters, most of whom are now gainfully employed and/or elsewhere in the world, is a wonderful reminder of the varied and interesting group of friends I have met since starting here almost four years ago.

But I digress (quite unforfievably). Stepping into the almost unfilled void left by Sage Anderson’s departure to Berlin at the end of last semester, we very quickly realized that her (metaphorically, just to be clear) enormous shoes could only be filled by a committee of dedicated organizers (the secret: a group of people who respond promptly to emails, and a googlegroup to coordinate them). Our recipe for this year has been: fewer events; more lavish catering (something that appeals to the graduate student mentality, and perhaps also that of many a faculty member…) We’ve been assisted in this regard by a generous Student Life Grant from the Graduate Student Government. When we, somewhat inevitably, run out of funds towards the end of the semester, we’ll come up with a new strategy — until then, look out for tasty, hearty catering!

The final event at the end of last semester was a discussion of a pre-distributed paper by new departmental faculty hire Jay Garcia on Richard Wright’s Comic Corrective. We followed up on this successful model by starting off this year with other new faculty hire Emma Bianchi’s pre-distributed paper, “Becoming Mythological: Barthes with Butler and Aristotle.”

Our second event last semester comprised of presentations by current Ph.D. candidates Liang-Hua Yu and Bilal Hashmi (special thanks to Bilal, who came all the way from Toronto for the colloquium. They presented on, respectively, “Locked in the Present Time Travel Romance, Neoliberal Governance and the Rise of a Digital Sinosphere” and “Naturalism Redux” both papers distilled from chapters of their dissertations.

Our first event for the Spring semester was a presentation by Ilya Kliger, a faculty member in the department of Russian and Slavic Studies, speaking on “Untimely Community: Tragic Nationalism in Dostoievsky and Nietzsche.” Stay tuned for more Spring semester programming!

Nienke Boer is a 4th year PhD student in Comparative Literature. Her dissertation is on the narratives produced by large group displacements between South Africa and South Asia in the 19th & early 20th Centuries.
On March 1-2, 2013, NYU took its turn at hosting the annual Reworking Political Concepts Conference, organized by Adi Ophir (Tel Aviv University), Ann Stoler (New School for Social Research), Hagar Kotef (Columbia University), and Jacques Lezra (NYU). The conference benefited from the generous support of the Humanities Initiative and the Department of Comparative Literature at NYU, the New School for Social Research, the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society at Columbia, and the Columbia University Society of Fellows in the Humanities, as well as from the invaluable assistance of Todd Kesselman (NSSR).

Reworking Political Concepts is a conference held yearly by the editors of Political Concepts: A Critical Lexicon (www.politicalconcepts.org) an annual journal devoted to critically reinvigorating political discourse by challenging inherited understandings of ideas that figure in it both centrally and, often in unsuspected or at least unanalyzed ways, around its periphery. While broadly encyclopedic in its form (each contributor is asked to “define” a single concept in view of its specifically political significance), the project seeks less to collate established or conventional definitions than, on the contrary, to foreground and to examine what in such definitions has heretofore remained implicit and unquestioned, and so to resituate each concept in its relation to political discourse and practice. Thus, the project is not a lexicon in any traditional sense but first and foremost an open-ended forum for critical and constructive engagement with those ideas that, in one way or another, from the quotidian to the exceptional, affect us all.

The Department of Comparative Literature had a particularly strong presence at this year’s conference, with paired presentations by Emily Apter, on “Impolitic”; Jacques Lezra, on “Enough”; and Avital Ronell, on “Authority.” George Shulman, a beloved professor in the Gallatin School of Individualized Study, also chaired a panel, while Ben Kafka, of the Department of Media, Culture, and Communication, delivered a paper on the concept of “Repression.” Other presentations included Souleymane Bachir Diagne (Columbia), on “Time”; Banu Bargu (New School), on “Sovereignty”; Richard J. Bernstein (NSSR), on “Violence”; Joan Copjec (SUNY Buffalo), on “Sexual Difference”; Nilüfer Göle (EHESS), on “Contemporary”; Stathis Gourgouris (Columbia), on “Human/Animal”; Nitzan Lebovic (Lehigh), on “Biometrics”; James Miller (NSSR), on “Consent”; Juan Obarrio (Johns Hopkins), on “Interest”; Antonio Vazquez-Arroyo (Minnesota), on “Liberal Democracy”; Roy Wagner (Hebrew Univ.), on “Alienation”; and Yves Winter (Minnesota), on “Siege.”

Whether or not you were able to make it to the conference this year, we strongly recommend that you keep an eye on Political Concepts as it continues to expand, with new entries published each year, as it is sure to be a significant and lasting resource for students and faculty alike.

Charles Gelman is a second-year French Ph.D. student working on modern French and German letters, literary theory, and philosophy.
Beginning in the Fall of 2011, the interdisciplinary graduate certificate Poetics and Theory (P&T) came to reside largely in NYU Comparative Literature Department. Poetics and Theory is “a transdisciplinary program that provides an institutional framework for diverse theoretical initiatives and practices,” which is to say, a program that at once provides a formal, institutional supplement to graduate degrees through coursework and conference presentation opportunities, and hosts a series of internal and external speakers as well as several more informal events and activities. Since its move to Comparative Literature, the Poetics and Theory program has become incredibly active.

Last year the graduate students in P&T, many from Comp Lit, organized a monthly Spinoza reading group; this year, we read Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit slowly, carefully, and while consuming several bottles of wine per session. The P&T reading group is considered the heart of the program for many of its students, and not only because of the free snacks and wine.

P&T also organized a series of events, including its annual September “Meet and Greet” as well as a talk by newly arrived English Professor Richard Halpern entitled, “‘What do we do now, now that we’re happy?’: Kojève and Beckett on the End of History.” We also organized a series of events with Armen Avanesian and Anke Hennig from the Speculative Poetics/Spekulative Poetik group. A series of seminars on Speculative Poetics led to a day-long workshop on Speculative Worlds, which included pre-circulated papers from Paul North, Kevin McLaughlin, and Suhaib Malik.

The Poetics and Theory Certificate offers interdisciplinary classes and a formal recognition on graduate transcripts of work done across disciplinary lines. This year offered two P&T seminars: Professor Jacques Lezra’s “Lyric and Abjection” and Professor Anselm Haverkamp’s “State of the Art: The Practice of Theory in Literary History.”

Anyone interested in being involved in P&T events or enrolling in the graduate certificate should check out the website at http://poeticsandtheory.com. Make sure to get your name on our email list to keep up to date!

Liza Blake is a PhD student in English, completing her dissertation on early modern literary physics, and is one of P&T’s two graduate coordinators. Next year she will be starting as an Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto.

**Minstrel Shows and Fanagalo: On Stage with Vanessa Place & Mark Sanders!**

On October 18, 2012, the Department of Comparative Literature hosted the premiere of a new work by the poet and performance artist Vanessa Place. “The Black and White Minstrel Show” was Place’s first work revolving explicitly around the themes of “race and mimicry.” Following Place, our own Mark Sanders delivered his own performance, “Fanagalo: A Golden Oldie.” Among the highlights of the fall semester, the double bill provided the forum for an unusually rich mix of performance, theory and conversation.

Place began the night with “The Black and White Minstrel Show,” a hypnotic exploration of the American racial imaginary centered on the figure of the “coon shouter.” Integral to the overall repertoire of American performance, the coon shouter was typically a white woman who styled herself after blackface minstrel singers. Taking on the role of the coon shouter, Place read her lines from sheets that fell to the ground as she finished with them. As she read, a series of projected images appeared before the audience that demonstrated the significant extent to which the vaudeville-an world of “coon songs” in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was saturated in imagery. Sheet music covers from the minstrel tradition emerged in steady succession throughout the performance by way of PowerPoint, providing audience members with a sense of the vast production of ephemera that helped to bring blackface minstrelsy and its various interesting parties to life.

Place deepened her interest in the meanings of the minstrel tradition by spending time in archives, including the Sheet Music Collection at the John Hay Library at Brown University. It was amid archival resources that Place came to the conclusion that there was “no point of authenticity, no point of origin” that could be said to inaugurate the practices of minstrel performance. Premised on this lack of origin, Place’s performance produces a sense of dislocation as her...
Wang Ping has an impressive résumé since graduating from NYU with her Ph.D. in comparative literature and is currently teaching creative writing at Macalaster College. As I called her up on what was a particularly chilly New York Monday, I felt it only fitting to begin with a question about her beginnings at Beijing University which she had entered with only primary education. “Apart from being really smart you must’ve also been intimidated or at least scared to go into such a setting with little background?” “Not at all,” she replies in a rather matter of fact way. “When I was in that situation I was simply forced to use all kinds of methods to get whatever I could. It was communist China, I wasn’t intimidated, I wanted to learn and I wanted to push my way through. I skipped a year in fact,” she says mischievously.

I proceeded to ask what her favorite part of her résumé was since she had come a long way from her time at Beijing University. “Hmmm I don’t know, I like to do different things. Well, right now I’m becoming a Chinese medical doctor, when you called I was taking a gynecology class on how to treat women with herbs. I’ve been treating patients that North Americans have no idea how to treat. Mostly pain issues, depression and infertility, I’m treating an MS patient, an HIV patient. I’m most interested in working with pain and depression.”

Finding this fascinating and seemingly unrelated to Ping’s other work I asked her why she chose to get involved in this field. “I work really hard and I get really stressed out and I’m in pain a lot so this work is quite personal. In my work environment as a woman and as an immigrant it is difficult to teach something that is the height, the tip of art which I consider poetry to be and I have to teach this art in a second tongue. It’s not hard for me but a lot of students have difficulty understanding me and we have New Yorkers are better, I lived in New York for 13 years. I’m more of an east coaster, I’m straight to the point you know.” We both laugh.

The topic moves to the Sonnet Crown as I ask her “What inspired you to write it?”

“I was invited to a poetry reading in Scotland and I was also making a film when Allen Ginsburg, who I was working with on a poetry project, asked me to go to London and do a recording. I didn’t really want to, I wanted to hike around the highlands instead but he really made me go and I took a train to work and then I flew to Edinburgh to fit in a hike. While I was waiting in the airport with a very expensive bottle of whiskey that I was very excited to bring home, a guy sat down next to me and we started chatting, we got onto the flight and I ended up forgetting my whiskey at the airport. I was devastated but later on I found out that the guy I was talking to is Lord Charles Bruce and he promised to send me a whole case of the whiskey! That was how I met Lord Bruce and ended up writing the sonnets for him. The first sonnet came to me and I would write to keep writing, it became an obsession and eventually turned into a crown. I’m in the process of setting it to music with Alex Wand.”

“Did Lord Bruce ever send you the whiskey?”

“No, never, I must remind him.”

I asked Ping if she had any parting words of advice for young students and she says, just know the longest journey is to know yourself and the amazing thing about knowing yourself is that anything is possible, you have infinite potential. Never close the doors and the windows in your mind.” Ping is also a photographer and multi-media artist. She has had three photo and multi-media exhibitions since 2007: “Behind the Gate: China in Flux” at Janet Fine Arts Gallery, St. Paul (www.behindthegateexhibit.org), “All Roads to Lhasa” at Banfil Locke Culture Center, and “Kinship of Rivers” at the Open Eye Figure Theatre (www.kinshipofrivers.org).

Nafeesa Dawoodbhooy is a senior in Comparative Literature and the editor of Brio, the Comp Lit Undergraduate Journal.

Correction: May 3, 2013: An earlier version of this interview misstated the name of the filmmaker who invited Wang Ping to record the poems she wrote for his film installation “Ten Thousand Waves”. It is Isaac Julien, the British filmmaker, not Allen Ginsberg.
Brio, The Undergraduate Comparative Literature Journal

Brio was revived in Fall 2010 and since has flourished into a prominent campus publication. Much like its definition, Brio is full of vivacity in both its publication and our dedicated team of editors. The journal is committed to representing comparative literature in all of its inter-disciplinary glory and we encourage submissions of poetry, prose, visual art, critical essays and foreign language pieces. During 2012-2013, we doubled our submissions through successful advertising and publicity throughout campus. We were also able to increase our budget to include prizes for our submission categories and host a celebratory reading and launch of the journal. The prizes for poetry and prose pieces were selected by Professor Jacques Lezra and the prizes for visual art and critical essays were chosen by Professor Jay Garcia. The Brio team sincerely wishes to thank them for their input and their support of the journal. Susan Protheroe was also absolutely invaluable in bringing the issue to publication and it just wouldn't have been possible without her so we wish to give her our immense gratitude. The prize winners are as follows: poetry – Mollyhall Seeley; prose – Marina Perezagua; critical essay – Erin Whitney; and visual art – Paul Anagnostopoulos. Here are a few selections from our Fall ‘12 edition!

A Poem from a larger collection entitled “Mundane Saints Society”
by Mollyhall Seeley, winner of best poem.

oh, my darling (saint casimir of youth)

Saint Casimir wears boots that cut off at the ankle. His feet are always wet with snow after he goes hunting, but he likes the way the buckle wraps around the heel. I look at his boots a lot because I am afraid to look too long at his face, at the way his dark hair curls over his head and his eyes go dark at sunset. He always calls on Fridays wanting to go out, but we end up sitting on the roof of my house instead. He plays the ukulele to make me smile, and when that doesn’t work he traps a lock of my hair between his thumb and forefinger and says, Don’t make me do it. I think he means that he’ll tug hard enough to hurt, but I don’t know, because I always smile. His mouth looks forever red, forever just-kissed. He lies back with his leg lined up against mine from the knee to the hip and points at the stars. This one is called, he says, and that one is--. Then he closes his eyes and I think he wants to sleep, but instead he pulls a pack of cigarettes out of his pocket and lights one up. I hate these things, he says, sounding old, and then barks out a laugh: No I don’t, that’s a lie, I love them, I love the way the smoke burns your throat as you swallow it. I say, Yeah. I say, I’m a little bit in love with you. He shrugs out his bright red coat and fastens it to my shoulders, even though it’s summer and I’m not cold. I shake it off and he looks at me with a face that says now do you see? I don’t, I say, and want to put the errant strand of dark hair in my mouth. He plucks out a tune on the ukulele that sounds like O My Darling, Clementine. Lost and gone forever, he muses. That’s the secret. I ask, the secret to what? And he says, wear the jacket.

He tugs on my hair and moves too quickly for me to be able to grab his hand. You know, they invoke me against the plague, he tells me thoughtfully as I zip the jacket up. Which plague? I ask, struggling with the buttons on the bottom. Saint Casimir spreads his arms out like he’s waiting for all the stars to fall into them and he says, who the fuck knows, nobody ever told me.
“coon shouter” voice flowed into the images of coon song lyric sheets and vice versa, creating an environment of fleeting yet incessant referents. Stretching into the twentieth century, blackface minstrelsy entered American life by way of countless “coon songs” and the sheet music purchased to play them. The sheet music, as Place pointed out, were themselves complex visual artifacts that often included a raced and caricatured body on the cover and another body, often that of the white female coon shouter, on the insert. Place as coon shouter enacts that dynamic of the insert – of the doubled body – and invites her audience to contemplate minstrelsy as historical artifact.” Place noted when asked about her performance, insofar as the ventriloquism and appropriation of minstrelsy derive from racial conflicts that have arguably prompted all of the products of American culture that may be said to be distinctive and genuinely “indigenous.”

Place was adamant that her performance had nothing to do with exculpation or condemnation. Her main interest was thinking about the minstrel tradition as an “expression of white desire” in which white performers projected all manner of desires and often betraying a “wish to escape one’s own condition into this other realm.” The closing and memorable line from Place’s performance – “I’ll not dance Jim Crow unless you hit me with a dollar” – evoked in a haunting way the commodification of “race” always already a part of the minstrel tradition. The question posed by Place’s performance, especially as it drew to a close, was how “race” continues to serve relations of commodification and various performative exchanges. Here, once more, the version of minstrelsy Place invoked was not marked by historical distance but rather by uncanny currency.

The same was true of “Fanagalo: A Golden Oldie,” for although Mark Sanders located a version of the song performed by the Woody Woodpeckers in the 1950s, it was the unexpected resonance of the song in the present that animated his piece. The remarkably catchy refrain from the song – “Fanagalo, Fanagalo/ A Zulu boy will understand/ Fanagalo, Fanagalo/ A magic word from Zululand” – is slowly read and reread and made the object of a reinterpretation. Sanders means for his listeners to dwell on the ironies of “Fanagalo” as pidgin invented by whites. Translating “Fanagalo” as “like this” or “do like this,” directives given by whites, Sanders’s performance draws attention to the odd impotence of the directive revealed through its continual repetition. Sanders’s performance, part of book project called “Learning Zulu: A Secret History of Language in South Africa,” emphasized the affective dimensions of the song and the complicated ways that it reveals “Fanagalo” to be a “magic word” indeed. In other parts of the song – for instance, “Jim, feeda lo baby/ Jim, feeda lo baby/ Missis hamba play lo golf” – the magic of “Fanagalo” is seamlessly attached to the everydayness of domestic chores and the reproduction of labor discipline. In doing research on language in South Africa, Sanders found that the song often came up in people’s memories of the 1950s. Not altogether unlike the songs in Place’s performance, “Fanagalo” in Sanders’s view enters the present not merely as an historical document but as a peculiar presence that unpredictably places pidgin in the mouths of the politically and socially dominant group, and in so doing creates a space from which to investigate anew the story of language in twentieth century South Africa.

It was not clear at the time of publication if Place and Sanders will reprise the double bill in New York soon or else take it on the road. Either way, future performances by Place and Sanders are not to be missed.

Jay Garcia is Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature. He received his Ph.D. in American Studies from Yale University in 2004 and he teaches courses on transnationalism in African American letters, comparative approaches to the study of American literature, and the intellectual history of American Studies and cultural studies.
From Graduate Student Awards for 2012-2013 ...

Sage Anderson: fellow in the Doctoral Program (Graduiertenkolleg) Lebensformen und Lebenswissen, directed jointly by the Universität Potsdam and the Europa-Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder).

Nienke Boer: 2012 GSAS Robert Holmes Travel/Research Award for African Scholarship

Brian Droitcour: 2012 GSAS summer predoctoral fellowship

Brian Droitcour & Ceci Moss: Humanities Initiative Grant-in-Aid in support of event series “Program: Media & Literature”

Bilal Hashmi: 2013 Anais Nin Fellowship

Daniel Howell: Summer 2012 FLAS Fellowship

Lucy Ives: 2013 Penfield Fellowship

Anastasiya Osipova: 2013 Deans Dissertation Fellowship

Katharina Piechocki: A special congratulations to Katharina who has accepted a position as an Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature at Harvard University. We wish her all the very best!

Erica Weitzman: Andrew W. Mellon Foundation/Volkswagen Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Humanities at the Universität Konstanz, Graduiertenkolleg “Das Reale in der Kultur der Moderne” for 2012-2013.

...to Graduate Student Pics = Good News & Good Vibes!
Alumni News


Lori Cole (PhD 2012) currently works at the Mandel Center at Brandeis University as a Charlotte Zysman Post-doctoral Fellow in the Humanities and Lecturer in Fine Arts.

David Georgi (PhD 2008) has a new translation of the poems of Francois Villion, which was published by Northwestern University Press. The dual-language edition, titled *Poems*, contains a newly-revised text of Villon’s work, reflecting the latest scholarship.

Robert McKee Irwin (PhD 1999) is the Principal Investigator of the research group, “Powerful Stories,” which has launched a community based digital storytelling project, working with sexually heterodox farm workers from California’s Central Valley. Irwin is conducting the project in collaboration with California Rural Legal Assistance and with funding from CalHumanities and the UC’s California Studies Consortium.

Edgar (Ned) Jackson wrote the libretto for an opera called “Big Jim and the Small-Time Investors,” with music by Eric Salzman. The opera was presented in a very successful workshop production by the Center for Contemporary Opera at the Flea Theater in New York City. In addition, the monkey stories he wrote, and his wife illustrated, continue to be presented and sold in a variety of situations, including auctions.

Brian Michael Norton (PhD 2006) is an Assistant Professor of English, Comparative Literature and Linguistics at California State University, Fullerton. He just published a new book entitled *Fiction and the Philosophy of Happiness: Ethical Inquiries in the Age of Enlightenment*.

Mickey (Edward) Smith (PhD 1991) just completed his 20th year at Rowan University (NJ). After a 7 year administrative hiatus in which he founded the University's International Center (2004-2010), he has returned to faculty and is teaching German and French within Rowan's Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. Over the last year and a half, after returning to faculty, he has built up the German program into one of the most enrolled programs at Rowan.

Jason Weiss (PhD 1998) published an essay, which the Hammer Museum will include in the catalog to a retrospective on Los Angeles artist Llyn Foulkes this spring. Also, his translation of the Argentine writer Silvina Ocampo’s selected poems will be published in a new poetry series by the New York Review of Books in the spring of 2014.

Erica Suzanne Weitzman (PhD 2012) received two postdoctoral scholarships, one from the Volkswagen Foundation and another from the Transatlantic Cooperation Network. Her dissertation on comic irony in the work of Robert Walser has been accepted for publication by Northwestern University Press.

Dear Comp Lit Alumni—

LET’S KEEP IN TOUCH! If you have news through the year or change your e-mail address, please let us know. Email Jane Kelly at jk154@nyu.edu with your updates. And, so you can keep an eye on what’s happening here, don’t forget to check our Comp Lit web site (www.complit.as.nyu.edu) for the latest in department news and events. If you’re local or in town and see an event that interests you, please join us! Once a Complitter, Always a Complitter!

Wishing you the Very Best!