



Romance News

Fall/Winter 2018

Letter from the Chair

Dear Friends of Romance Studies,

When I left my teaching job in the Northeast fourteen years ago to join the faculty at UNC, it was an exciting career move: I was coming to the oldest state university in the United States, the place where public higher education started in our country. This is a college with longer traditions than most, including that of teaching romance languages: in the spring of 1795, when about forty students came to the new college in Chapel Hill, among the few subjects they all studied was French.

Here in Dey Hall, we've taught French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese for well over a hundred years. Many Tar Heels continue to regard their classes with us as one of the best parts of their education. More than a thousand students major or minor in one of the romance languages, and the pleasure of teaching them is testimony to the talent that UNC continues to attract.

Just as the number of our students has grown, so has the scope of our instruction. Whereas studying the romance languages once meant learning about France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal, it now extends to all the regions of the globe where French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese are spoken and to all the peoples who speak them. Hence many of our faculty specialize in Latin America; we teach many classes on the multilingual literatures and cultures of Africa, Asia, Québec, and the Caribbean.

We've also become highly interdisciplinary. Our professors' research and teaching incorporate philosophy, politics, gender and sexuality studies, indigenous studies, film studies, and medical science, among other fields. In January we'll have the pleasure of welcoming our newest colleague, Prof. Serenella Iovino, a world-renowned scholar of the environmental humanities who will be leaving the University of Turin in Italy for Chapel Hill. Prof. Iovino has published books and articles on environmentalism, literature, culture, and film; she has been a guest lecturer at many institutions in both the United States and Europe. She'll bring a dynamic and innovative dimension to our Department and UNC.

The present and future of the Department of Romance Studies are exciting. We hope those of you who've kept in touch over the years will continue to do so. If you're in Chapel Hill, please let us know.

Yours,

Hassan Melehy
Professor of French and Francophone Studies
Interim Chair, Department of Romance Studies

Meet Teaching Professor Glynis Cowell



What do you most enjoy about your work at UNC?

I enjoy working with our amazing students, both graduate and undergraduate, and wonderful colleagues in the department and across campus. I was privileged to serve as a faculty assistant dean in the Academic Advising Program for a number of years and, through that experience, was able to work with a variety of new people as well as learn a great deal about University policy and procedures and the General Education undergraduate curriculum. Those experiences helped equip me to be more effective in my current administrative roles. Also, working closely with students in an advising capacity helped me better understand the complex nature of our student body and the challenges many of our students face. As a result, I feel that I am more mindful of student differences and needs in how I plan and execute my classes.

I also thrive on challenges, so my job is perfect for me. Each day I look forward to a new situation or issue to tackle, knowing that there is always a solution if you listen, reflect, draw on experience, and tap into other resources on campus as needed.

I am an oddity—I hold a BA, an MA, and a PhD from UNC-CH and have had a long teaching and administrative career here. I was privileged to be an undergraduate student in the inaugural UNC-in-Seville study abroad program, so that longstanding student opportunity is important to me, as are all our study abroad programs.

You wear many hats at UNC. Can you tell us what a typical day on campus is like for you?

Most mornings I walk by the Bell Tower as it tolls 9:00 am, thanking my lucky stars for the hats I am able to wear on campus. On any given day I juggle a variety of teaching and administrative responsibilities and tasks. Most importantly, I am a professor of some remarkable undergraduate and graduate students. I get to teach undergraduates all about Spanish language and cultures and the graduate students the theories and techniques of teaching foreign languages. I serve on a variety of committees across campus, working with outstanding faculty, administrators, and staff. I devote the majority of my day to performing duties related to my departmental administrative roles as Director of Undergraduate Studies and Director of Spanish Language Instruction. My days can vary greatly but there is generally one constant—an issue that requires special attention.

What is the latest project/interest that you are pursuing?

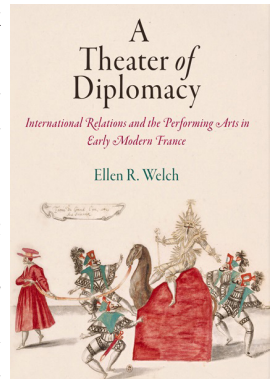
My co-author Jean LeLoup, who teaches at the Air Force Academy, and I are beginning work on the 4th edition of our two lower-level Spanish instructional programs, *¡Anda!: Curso elemental* and *¡Anda!: Curso intermedio*.

I am always looking for the next project, and to date, most have involved solving curricular issues or have focused on teaching, learning, and the community. I enjoy identifying project opportunities and then matching those projects with potentially interested colleagues or graduate students, then working alongside them or finding ways to support them as they develop those projects. Some examples include the National Center for Academic Transformation course redesign project that resulted in the development of our hybrid versions of SPAN 101 and 102, our ROMS Course Correspondents Program, pilots of different learning apps, and the ROMS-Chatham County initiative.



Prof. Ellen Welch's Research & Study Assignment

While on Research & Study Assignment in Fall 2018, Ellen Welch is working on a book project tentatively titled *Common Noise: The Sound of Opposition in Early Modern France*. When seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French writers wanted to discuss commonly held attitudes or widely shared information, they usually reached for a metaphor and described it as “noise.” They wrote about murmurs (*murmures*) of dissent, whistles (*sifflets*) of group displeasure, fracas and brouhaha. What did it mean to characterize collective discourse in this way? Studying noise imagery in a variety of literary texts alongside the history of acoustic science and early modern political theory, Prof. Welch's project examines how metaphor facilitated the transfer of sonic ways of thinking to the political realm and inspired new ways of imagining communication and social assemblage. While rooted in an early modern French context, then, the book is also about what literary language contributes to political thought, and why literary study matters for understanding larger social and political issues. It also considers how this aspect of early modern writing may resonate with our own time, and the new kinds of chattering, tweeting, echo-chamber-bound collectivities enabled by digital media.



Aguas del Pozo/Waters of the Well

The journal *Aguas del Pozo / Waters of the Well* emerges from the heart of Spanish 394: Creative Writing Workshop in Spanish, a course offered in the Spanish language at our university. This Journal is dedicated only to the short story genre. It was published for the first time in 2013. It is bilingual, and it aims to disseminate the best stories written by students in the course, along with select photographs and paintings that illustrate our central theme: the well. It also publishes works by independent authors if they are presented in English as well as Spanish. While the “official” languages are English and Spanish, originals or translations of some of the works can be read in Korean, Chinese, Bulgarian, Basque, French, Hebrew, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, and Vietnamese. Its Editor in Chief is Luis Marcelino Gómez.



In the last issue, we reported on several colleagues from the Department of Romance Studies: Professors Tamara Cabrera, Julia Cardona Mack, and Oswaldo Estrada. We also featured doctoral students Sarah Booker, Sam Krieg, and Giuliano Migliore. Also appearing in this issue are former students Karl von Zabern (photographer) and Barrett Caison, who kindly translated the editorial.

The Contemporary Maya Literary Movement



Prof. Emilio del Valle Escalante, Associate Professor of Spanish, has recently completed a monograph that studies the contemporary Maya literary movement in Guatemala through an analysis of the poetry of ten contemporary Maya writers. In the book, he highlights three different historical phases during which Maya authors engage with the violent legacies of the military dictatorships while elaborating a new poetics that dignifies Maya cultural and linguistic identities. The book is titled *Le Maya Q'atzij / Our Maya Word: Poetics of Resistance and Emancipation from Iximulew/Guatemala (1960-2012)* and is scheduled to appear in 2019 from the University of Minnesota Press. In addition, Prof. del Valle Escalante has finished editing a volume on transnational Indigenous politics for Duke University Press titled *Global Indigeneity and Decoloniality: Theory, Praxis and Liberation*. The book includes ten chapters written by some of the most prominent voices in Indigenous Studies in the Americas and Australia.

Department of Romance Studies
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
238 Dey Hall
CB #3170
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3170

romladmin@unc.edu | (919) 962-9093 | <http://romancestudies.unc.edu>

We always appreciate your generous gifts.

Some of the funding from alumni donations supports the professional development of our graduate students. We recently awarded Amanda Moelenpah (PhD candidate, French) a travel grant to present her research on social dances in early modern England and France at the Graduate Forum of the Institute of Modern Languages Research in London. We will also be assisting Rhi Johnson (PhD candidate, Spanish) to travel to the annual convention of the Modern Language Association, where she will give a lecture on nineteenth-century Spanish poetry.

A Few of Our Funds

Jacques Hardré Fund

For a range of departmental needs, including an annual award for undergraduates. With additional funding, we hope to establish summer research awards for undergraduate French majors.

Romance Studies Gift Fund

Support for faculty to develop new courses and travel to conferences; to fund graduate students' travel to research facilities worldwide; and to modernize teaching and research technologies.

The Larry D. King Post-Graduate Fellowship

Awards a graduating Spanish major a nine-month stay in Seville, Spain.

To donate, please visit romancestudies.unc.edu and click on "Donate Today!" at the top of the page.