



ROMS Newsletter - Fall/Winter 2022

We are delighted to share with you some news and updates from the Department of Romance Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill! In this issue:

- discover ROMS's new podcast
- follow Professor Serenella Iovino on her Italian book tour
- meet new Portuguese professor Nilzimar Vieira
- learn about undergraduate Anna Batty's summer in Montpellier
- catch up with alumni Jocelyn Frelie and Will Thomason
- and see how ROMS celebrated Latinx Heritage Month.

We hope you enjoy...

Recent Highlights



- Undergraduate student Joanna Nino-Chay received the Gump Family Undergraduate Research Award from the College of Arts & Sciences for her honors thesis on "La conquista de México" (1668) by Spanish crypto-Jewish playwright Fernando de Zárte.
- [Professor Oswaldo Estrada](#)'s most recent work of fiction, *Las guerras perdidas* (Sudaquia, 2021) was awarded a gold medal for "Best Collection of Short Stories in Spanish" by the International Latino Book Awards 2022.
- [Professor Paulo R. Rodrigues Ferreira](#) won a 2022 UNC Student Undergraduate Teaching and Staff Award. He was also awarded a fellowship from the National Library of Portugal's Fundação Luso-Americana para o Desenvolvimento (FLAD).
- The Italian Studies program had a culturally active semester: [Pina Gemboni](#) hosted writer Igiabo Scego (*La linea del colore*, 2020) in October (pictured above) and [Toni Veneri](#) organized a screening and discussion with documentary filmmaker Andrea Segre (*Welcome Venice*, 2021) in November.
- Graduate students in French & Francophone Studies [Alex Goldych](#) and [Aubrey Lewis](#) organized the Albertine Cinémathèque French Film Festival on the UNC campus in September.

Just Launched: The ROMS Podcast!



The department of Romance Studies now has a podcast! Produced and edited by [Dr. Paola Cadena Pardo](#) with assistance from PhD student [Caro Register](#), this audio series invites you to hear more about ROMS researchers, teachers, and students in their own words and voices. [Episode 1](#) explores the experiences of graduate exchange students in the department. [Episode 2](#) uncovers how ROMS instructors and students incorporate community service into their learning activities in courses.

Listen and subscribe on any of these platforms:

Website: <https://romancestudies.unc.edu/roms-podcast/>

Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/0dtBnmBwgheFTeatfI7gU9>

Apple podcast: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/roms-podcast/id1647198194>

Amazon Music: https://music.amazon.com/podcasts/b34ecf57-da1b-41e5-ba4a-86e3eb635282/roms-podcast?ref=dm_sh_pnnL452o3m4sKYqk2IXS8x1IC

Leading the Conversation on Environment and Culture in Italy



1 - Serenella Iovino at her book launch in Rome with UNESCO Secretary-General for Italy, Ambassador Enrico Vicenti.

[Professor Serenella Iovino](#)'s most recent book, [Paesaggio Civile: Storie di ambiente, cultura e resistenza](#) (*Civil Landscape: Stories of Environment, Culture, and Resistance*), came out in September from the

Italian trade publisher Il Saggiatore. The book continues the discussions Professor Iovino began in her award-winning [*Ecocriticism and Italy: Ecology, Resistance, and Liberation*](#) (Bloomsbury 2016), here reframed for a wide Italian audience. Through engaging narrative and insightful analysis, the new book explores iconic and lesser-known Italian landscapes, from Venice to the earthquake-stricken territories of the South. Situating Italian cases with respect to global issues, Professor Iovino analyzes how the landscape mirrors identities, political challenges, cultural values, and environmental transformations. The book is already creating a national dialogue in Italy. It has been reviewed in major newspapers *La Repubblica* and *Il Corriere della Sera*. On October 19, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) hosted a book launch at Palazzo Altemps, one of Rome's most prominent cultural venues. More public events showcasing the book will take place in Rome, Venice, and Naples throughout this autumn and winter.

Meet Professor Nilzimar Vieira

[Nilzimar Vieira](#) joined the Portuguese faculty in January 2022 directly from her Ph.D. program in Portuguese at Indiana University. She has previously studied and taught German and Spanish as well as Portuguese.



How would you describe your area(s) of expertise?

My area of expertise is Afro-Brazilian feminist literature and cinema. Through my research, I contribute to the discussion on race and racism led by Black women on Afro-diasporic scholarship. My academic work is in dialogue with Luso-Brazilian and Black studies, as the literature and films produced by Black women in Brazil and Portugal celebrate *ancestralidade* and demonstrate new ways of representing Black experiences that have been largely understudied by Western academia.

What drew you to study Afro-Brazilian and Afro-Portuguese women's narratives?

Conversations with my family regarding our Black experiences have influenced me throughout my life, specifically on how I view the concept of race. In the first years of graduate school, I noticed that authentic and personable Afro-Brazilian narratives rarely appeared in literature and films representing Brazilian culture.

Throughout my graduate studies, I searched for stories that reflect the experiences of Afro-Brazilian lives. Although Brazil has the largest Black population outside of Africa, portrayals of Black people in literature and films have often been based on racial stereotypes. However, recent advocacy has amplified Afro-Brazilian voices in the media and popular culture.

Is there a book or film from your research that you would particularly recommend to others, and why?

I recommend Grada Kilomba's book *Plantation Memories: Episodes of Everyday Racism* (2008). In her book, Kilomba analyzes racism and its consequences, linking them to the legacy of colonialism and perpetual oppression in the African diaspora. Kilomba's ideas help us to understand the generational effects of chattel slavery in Brazil and different spheres of racism and oppression in marginalized communities.

How does your research influence your Languages Across the Curriculum course this semester?

Since I started working at UNC in January 2022, my primary objective has been to offer diverse content to my students. For this reason, as part of the courses' content, I have included films about Afro-Brazilians and the African diaspora, such as *K-bela* (2015) by Yasmin Thayná and *O dia de Jerusa* (2014) by Viviane Ferreira. As well as literature texts like *O perigo de uma história única* (2019) (The Danger of a Single Story) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Through these sources, students receive the opportunity to analyze Brazilian culture through an Afro-Brazilian lens. Consequently, students learn about the importance of diversity, broadening their understanding of the construct of race and how racism affects societies.

What has it been like so far teaching Portuguese at UNC?

I am grateful to work in such a welcoming environment with brilliant faculty and staff. Furthermore, I appreciate the opportunity to share my knowledge about the African diaspora and how it applies to our department's pedagogy.

A Life-Changing Summer in Montpellier

Anna Batty (BA '23) reflects on her experience in the Summer program in Montpellier



2 - Program participants Anna Batty and Courtney Frye in Sète

The time I spent in Montpellier this summer was invaluable, not only in improving my confidence in spoken French, but also in expanding my worldview in terms of sustainability and environmental legislation.

There are many aspects of the French way of life in the Occitanie region that encouraged me to reflect on my American perspective. On the first day of the program, our program director Carol Huber described Americans as having “XXL” personalities in regard to our volume, energy, and unfortunately, our consumption habits. During the month I spent in France, all of us tried to reign in our “XXL” in favor of the simpler, cleaner Montpellier lifestyle. (Which wasn’t hard to do in the idyllic South of France.)

It was inspiring to see how the people of Montpellier make a collective effort to reduce waste and protect the fragile biodiversity of the Camargue wetlands and the greater Occitanie region, something we were able to witness firsthand on the weekly *sorties*.

Blending language immersion with a course on French public policy allowed us to feel we played an active role in the Montpellier community during our stay.

Another cultural difference that struck me during my time in France was the French relationship to food. In America, we often eat quick, convenient meals on the go, often prepackaged in single-use plastics. In France, food and mealtime in general is a cherished part of the culture and an opportunity for social communion. Since I returned to the States, I have tried to be more thoughtful about my food consumption by buying produce from local markets more often and cooking meals with my friends. This simple change has allowed me to be more climate-conscious in my daily life.

During our short program, we were able to see breathtaking sights such as the Roman aqueducts at *Pont du Gard* and take a scenic boat ride to the oyster tables in *l'Etang de Thau*, but one of my favorite components of the program was being able to stay with a French host family. Every night over a home-cooked meal, we shared stories speaking only French, and to my surprise, I started thinking and dreaming in French. In my seven years of studying the language, I had never experienced this type of full immersion. I still write emails to my host Mom.

I had an all-around amazing experience in Montpellier, and I would highly recommend this program to a French student of any level looking to get out of their comfort zone and experience a completely different way of life.

Read more about the students' experiences at <https://uncamontpellier.wordpress.com/>

Alumni Spotlights

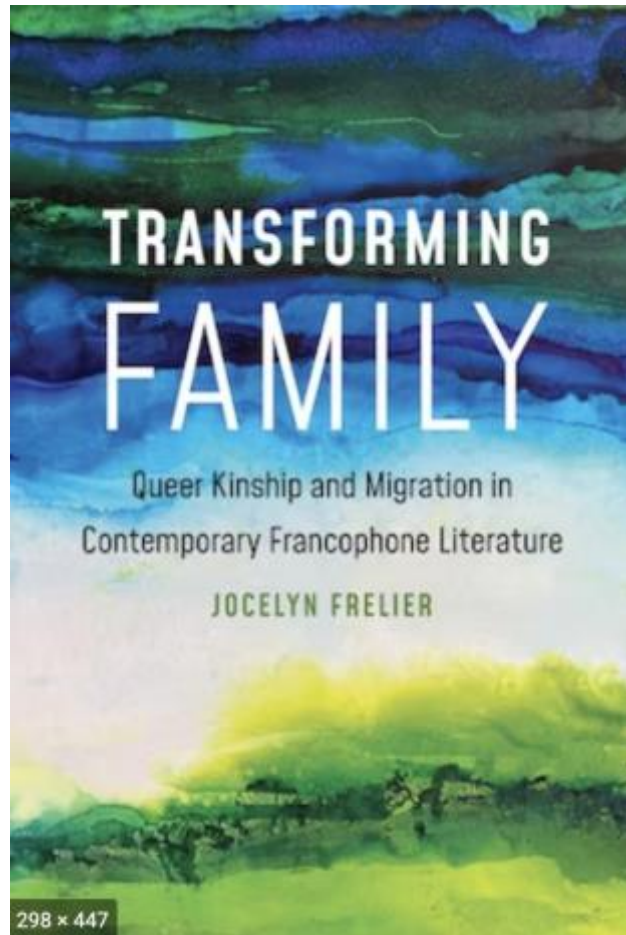


Jocelyn Freiler (BA 2011) on following her curiosity across and beyond university campuses

It has been over a decade since I bumped shoulders with classmates in the stairwell of Dey Hall but I remember it like I was there yesterday. This month, my book appears in print; perhaps it is only natural, then, that I find myself contemplating all that has transpired since I left Chapel Hill.

The path that led me to opt for a Romance Languages & Literatures major was a circuitous one. Evidence of my love for languages extends back into my K-12 education but it wasn't until I arrived at UNC that I discovered my desire to learn about storytelling.

I was lucky to have parents who saw university classrooms not for their professional applicability but for the personal and intellectual development they could provide. It is only in hindsight that I appreciate that gift.



Many of my peers and their parents, worried about employment prospects during the Great Recession, questioned the “utility” of a Humanities education, a trend that has only increased.

At the time of my graduation, I had taken classes in French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese and I had written an Honors thesis with [Dr. Dorothea Heitsch](#). I was admitted to a PhD program at the University of Michigan and I left for Ann Arbor, not sure what a PhD program was. It took me seven years to finish the coursework, pass the qualifying exams, write the prospectus and draft the chapters of the dissertation that would earn me a doctorate. Today, I admit that it took me at least two of those years to piece together that the majority of my PhD colleagues hoped to become university faculty.

I spent four years in higher education with two different employers, teaching, editing and submitting my book. While editing, I realized the writing had germinated pre-dissertation, likely in the worn-out desks in Dey Hall. I added a handful of mini chapters — now formatted as a prelude, several interludes, and postlude — where I dissected my relationship to my research and how that research had, in turn, shaped me.

By this time last year, I was increasingly confused by how I had come to live in rural Texas and work at Texas A&M. I did not have any light-bulb moment or apocryphal realizations, but I developed a gut instinct that I was in the wrong place. Today, I have left behind the university setting and opted for a career in non-profit, forever changed by the learning, research, and writing I undertook on university campuses.

Read more at www.JocelynFrelier.com

Will Thomason on his time as a Fulbright Fellow teaching in Colombia



As a recipient of the Fulbright Fellowship, I am currently working at a university in Pasto, Colombia, and I have the ROMS Department of UNC to thank for it. If I had not studied Spanish at UNC, I would not have received this grant and I would not have had the opportunity to immerse myself in the language and culture of Colombia.

Using the knowledge that I gained in the Spanish classes I took at UNC, I have been able to navigate living in this country with ease. I recall one of my favorite classes at UNC, a course in Latin American culture, where we analyzed different works of fiction and non-fiction, and I have been able to incorporate this knowledge in both informal and formal settings here in Colombia.

I hope to encourage others to pursue language-learning at UNC in order to expand their opportunities for travel and for intercultural exchange.

ROMS Celebrates Latinx Heritage Month



3 - ROMS Professors Raquel Maqueda, Martha Ruiz Garcia, Victoria Martin, and Grace Aaron participate in Latinx Heritage Month Kickoff in the Pit.



4 - Rafael Osuba (founder of the El Quixote Festival), Miguel Rojas Sotelo (NC Latin American Film Festival director), Professor Gustavo Furtado (Duke), Professor Pedro Lopes de Almeida (UNC-ROMS) after a screening of the Brazilian film, Martírio.

Faculty Publications 2022



Binotti, Lucia and Amy Chambless. "VR Piazza italiana: Learning Language and Culture Through Presence and Embodiment." *Practitioner Proceedings of the 8th International Conference of the Immersive Learning Research Network Conference (iLRN2022)*, 2022.

Fernández-Fontecha, Leticia. *A favor o en contra: Autores británicos y norteamericanos se pronuncian sobre la guerra civil española*. La uña rota, 2022.

Fritz-Morkin, Maggie. "Poetry and Poetics in Gilles of Corbeil and Gentile da Foligno's *Carmina de urinarum iudiciis*." *Romanic Review* vol. 113, no. 1, 2022, pp.7-19.

Gómez-Castellano, Irene. [Podcast literario](#) sobre *En compañía de lobos* de Angela Carter. *El sillón de terciopelo verde* con Patricia Esteban Erlés e Irene Gómez Castellano. Aragón Radio. Emitido el 13 de marzo de 2022.

—. "Del Freak Show al compromiso: *La niña gorda* (1917) de Santiago Rusiñol desde una mirada contemporánea". [Bulletin of Hispanic Studies](#) vol. 99, no.9, 2022.

—. "Entrelazamientos cuánticos: *La habitación del niño* (2006) de Álex de la Iglesia y la teoría de los universos paralelos de Erwin Schrödinger," [Elojo que piensa. Revista de cine iberoamericano](#), vol. 24, 2022.

—. "Bécquer y los fractales". [Paraíso](#) vol. 19, 2022.

Hill, Chloe and Victoria Saramago, eds. *Narratives of the Apocalypse*, special dossier of *The Journal of Lusophone Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2022.

Hsu, Carmen. "Shipwreck, Exile, and Political Critique in the Comedia de Fernán Méndez Pinto en China (1631) by Antonio Enríquez Gómez." *Shipwreck in Early Modern Hispanic Literature and Culture*. Edited by Elena Rodríguez-Guridi and Carrie Ruiz. Bucknell University Press, 2022.

Iovino, Serenella. *Paesaggio Civile: Storie di ambiente, cultura e resistenza*. Il Saggiatore, 2022.

Lopes de Almeida, Pedro. "Globalização, técnica e modernidade no Rio de Janeiro das primeiras três décadas do século XX: Machado de Assis, João do Rio, e Lima Barreto em diálogo com textos de viajantes estrangeiros," *Luso-Brazilian Review*, vol. 59, no. 1, 2022, pp. 109-142.

—, "Para Aquele que Vive e Canta no Mau Tempo. Ou: Pensar o Mediterrâneo como Espaço de Travessias com Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen." *Sobre Sophia: Novas Leituras*, organized by Fernando Cabral Martins and Maria Andresen de Sousa Tavares. Assírio & Alvim, 2022, pp. 237-252.

Melehy, Hassan, "Le néo-stoïcisme ou la pensée de l'antisocial: Montaigne converse avec Lipse" ("Neostoicism or Antisocial Thought: Montaigne Speaks with Lipsius"). *Montaigne et le social* (Montaigne and the Social). Edited by Philippe Desan. Hermann, 2022, pp. 297-315.

—, "Doctrinal Shuffle" (poem). [Ink Sweat and Tears](#), August 2022.

—, "Glimmers of the Day," "Mirroring Data," "Only for Use in Bartering Over Creeds," "Our Divine Nowhere," "Stone Steps" (poems). [BlazeVOX](#), Fall 2022.

Rodrigues Ferreira, Paulo. "Imagination and reality in Lobo Antunes's *Comissão das Lágrimas*." *Hispanic and Lusophone Voices of Africa*, edited by Dave Mongor-Lizarrabengoa and Sarita Addy, Vernon Press, 2022, pp. 15-31.

Serrato, Erika. "Writing Amerindian Ayiti: Edwidge Danticat's Reclaimed Memory and Shifting Homes." *Narrating History, Home, and Diaspora: Critical Essays on Edwidge Danticat*. Edited by Maia Butler et al. University of Mississippi Press, 2022, pp. 71-84.

Welch, Ellen R. "Théophile de Viau and the Poetics of Noise Control under Louis XIII." *French Studies*, vol. 76, no. 2, 2022, pp. 175-192.

Contact Us

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