

Volume 8 | Issue 1
Summer 2017

Comparative Literature Program

“Tend your garden.”—Voltaire,
Candide, regularly taught in
CMPL 26700.



From the Director



Greetings from Comparative Literature. I was on sabbatical in 2015 and came back to a new department head, a new dean, and a lot of activity in the way of dissertations, courses, and job placements that have kept me from putting together a newsletter until now. We are excited by our success on the job market despite the down-turn in 2008 and look forward to working with the newly re-designed School of Interdisciplinary Studies, which has kept

me busy with committee assignments.

--Charles Ross, Director, Comparative Literature Program (2001-2017)

World Literature

The Comparative Literature Program regularly offers CMPL 26600, World Literature from the Beginnings to the Renaissance (cross-listed with English). Works include *Gilgamesh*, *Oedipus*, *The Histories* of Herodotus, the *Bible*, Aesop's Fables, Confucius's sayings, an Indian play, and Dante's *Divine Comedy*.



Tiffany Hunsinger leads a discussion in Charles Ross's CMPL 26600 class in the Fall 2016. Tiffany wrote a paper on morality in Aesop's Fables and another that the search for morality in Dante and "Don Quixote."



Update on Our Dinner Chez Mitch

A few years ago, President Mitch Daniels was kind enough to invite graduate students in Comparative Literature to dinner (see the previous newsletter). To his (what seemed to me) consternation, the table was laid out somewhat unusually, he and I placed opposite in the middle of the long sides of the table, surrounded by students. To show that it's not an unheard-of arrangement, I append a photograph I took last summer at Mount Stewart in Northern Ireland, where Winston Churchill, the guest of honor (see the name card), sat across his host on the long side of the table, as I did at Westwood. --Charles Ross, Director, Comparative Literature Program



Christina Weiler

Teaching Award, Dissertation, Job Offer

Comparative Literature Graduate student, Christina Weiler received a competitive year-long grant from the Purdue Research Foundation. Listen as she talks about how she combines her German culture with her passion for comparative literature. After choosing Purdue for its highly ranked Comparative Literature program, she now finds great support and career opportunities on our campus. Read more about her experiences and takes on campus life. <http://bit.ly/2o0XRET>.

Christina defended her dissertation "The Romantic Roots of Cognitive Poetics: A Comparative Study of Poetic Metaphor in Herder, Novalis, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley," May 2017.

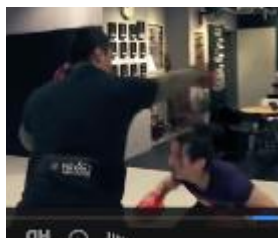
She has accepted a job as a visiting assistant professor at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

[Dragon Girls: Les Amazones Pop Asiatiques.](#)

Ya-chen Chen

Film Project

Comparative Literature doctoral alumna Ya-chen Chen wrote and published an English-language monograph about women and gender in Chinese-language kungfu movies in 2012. This book resulted in a French filmmaker's inclusion of Ya-chen and this book in a documentary film about Sino-Japanese dragon girls in 2016. The TV version of this French documentary film can be seen via internet now. The current TV version of this French documentary film lasts for 52 minutes.



*Some fields are
inherently
comparative.*

What is the Comparative Literature Program?

The founding purpose of the Comparative Literature Program has been to foster cooperation between the Department of English and the School of Languages and Cultures. The program achieves this purpose by encouraging the study of literature, by promoting the study of a second or third foreign language, and by sponsoring courses and dissertations that cut across national boundaries. The program in Comparative Literature provides an opportunity for students to work at the graduate level in fields that do not have undergraduate programs but not autonomous Ph.D. programs, such as Greek and Latin, Chinese, Japanese, Italian, and Arabic.

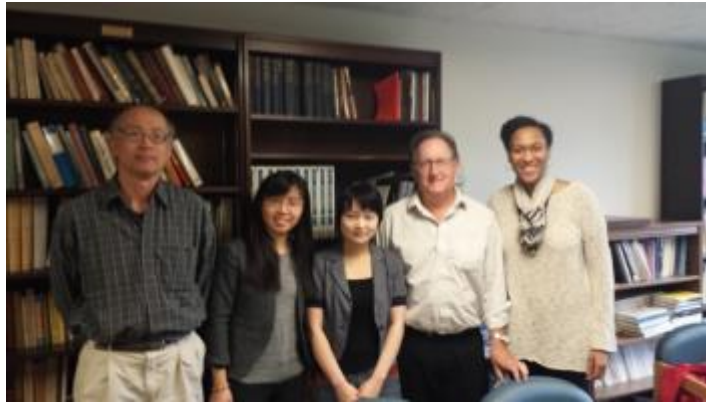
Although students from all fields may find a home in Comparative Literature, some fields - classics, medieval studies, Renaissance, post-colonial - are inherently comparative, and the program seeks to facilitate the work of students and scholars in these fields. The program also recognizes the role of other disciplines-particularly history and philosophy, the social sciences and psychology in developing theoretical approaches to literature.

While recognizing the value of cultural studies and linguistics, and encouraging investigations based in these disciplines, the program recognizes that other areas make these disciplines their priority. By contrast, Comparative Literature takes as its special mandate the teaching and comparing of world literature, not only as social documents but also as works of art whose full appreciation depends on the study of languages, an understanding of diversity and globalization, and an appreciation of various media.

Sijia Yao

Dissertation, Job Offer

Sijia Yao defended her dissertation “Twentieth-Century Ideas of Love in D. H. Lawrence and Eileen Chang,” May 2016.



Left to right: Daniel Hsieh, Hongjian Wang, Sijia Yao, Charles Ross, Jennifer Freeman Marshall. Sijia is currently teaching Chinese at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln.



After years of sitting on Prof. Ross's rickety chair, Sijia glued together the arm as a thank you.

Monica O'Neil

Dissertation, Job Offer

Monica O'Neil defended her dissertation in May 2017. Titled "Trickster Geographies in Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*," the work sets Shakespeare's early comedy against its sources in the Latin playwright Plautus. Monica's committee members were Eric Moodie, Angelica Duran, Charles Ross, and

Monica and Friends



Left to right: Yuhan Huang, Rose O'Neil, Monica O'Neil, Christina Weiler, Tulin Tosun, Laura Moreno.

Chinese Modern Fiction

Modern Fiction Studies Special Issue:

Charles Ross, Director of Comparative Literature, served as coeditor along with Wang Ning, Changjiang Distinguished Professor of English at Tsinghua University, and edited the first issue of *Modern Fiction Studies* ever devoted to Chinese literature. The December 2016, issue features an introduction co-authored by Professor Ross and includes essays on Chinese metafiction and avant-garde writing of the 1980s and 1990s, as well as essays on such writers as Gao Xingjian, Yan Lianke, and Yan Geling.

Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Chinese Fiction



Angelica's Cakes

Angelica Duran's Parties

Angelica Duran traveled widely in Mexico during 2016-2017. When she is in town, she loves to bring cakes to our Comparative Literature celebrations. In the spring of 2016 she was a Ransom Center Fellow at the University of Texas, Austen, TX. In the fall of 2016, she held a Fulbright-García Robles grant in Mexico.



Brady Spangenberg

Working in Industry

Brady Spangenberg (Ph.D. 2010), has been a generous contributor to the Comparative Literature Program. Brady spent three years with BASF in Germany and now lives in a large house in Raleigh, North Carolina. On April 4, 2016, we held a dinner in Brady's honor during one of his visits to Purdue, where he works with the agriculture department.

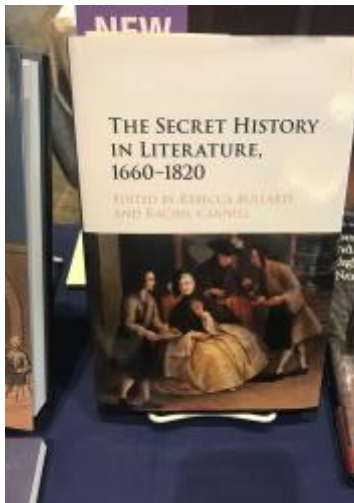
BASF



Dinner in honor of Brady Spangenberg at the Szechuan Restaurant, West Lafayette, May 4, 2016.

Slaney Ross

Slaney Ross (Ph.D. 2015) was selected to study at the Walpole Center, Yale University, during the spring of 2017. Slaney lives in New York City and works as an adjunct professor at Fordham University. Slaney published a book chapter, “Secret History and Spy Narratives,” in the volume *The Secret History in Literature, 1660-1820*, published by Cambridge University Press (2017).



Slaney Ross (second from right) with other Walpole Library Fellowship winners, at a reception in their honor at the annual AESECS (18th-Century Studies Conference), April 6, 2016.

Beate Allert

Comparative Literature steering committee member Beate Allert has been named director of Graduate Studies in the School of Languages and Cultures for 2017-2018. She also received her deserved promotion to full professor. Congratulations, Beate!



Earlier in the year, Beate sponsored a talk by the German novelist Ulrich Pelzer at the West Lafayette Public Library next week on Thursday, September 15, 2016. Plus she developed a new course in comparative literature theory.

News from the Graduate Program

Christiana Alcantara accepted a job teaching at the Honors College at Arizona State University.



Christiana Alcantara prepares to receive her Ph.D. diploma in the Eliot Hall of Music, Purdue University, May 2016.

Ghaleb Alomaish is preparing his prelim exam on 9/11 fiction in the Saudi Gulf region with Achmed Idrissi, Shaun Hughes, and John Duvall.

Joanna Benskin defended her dissertation “Perceval’s Sister and Juliet Capulet as Disruptive Guides in Spiritual Quests,” December 2016. She has had a major article published in the *Studies in Philology*. She now work as for the Vigo County Library in Terre Haunt, IN.

Malick Coly successfully past his prelims and his working on his dissertation with Shaun Hughes, Achmed Idrissi, and Tom Broden.

Jiacheng Fan finished his MA thesis, “Strategies of Fantasy in E. T. A. Hoffman and Pu Songling.”



Jiacheng Fan with committee members Daniel Hsieh, Charles Ross, and Beate Allert at the Ichiban Restaurant, Lafayette, IN.

Adam Hancock defended his dissertation titled “New Motherlands: Nineteenth-Century South American National Personifications” and graduated, May 2017. His committee members were Paul Dixon, Dawn Stinchcomb, Charles Ross, and Elena Coda.

Kate Kopyy accepted a post-doc position at Marymount College in Washington, D.C., complete with salary, benefits, and mentoring.

Jason Lotz has accepted a full-time, tenure track position in English at SUNY Farmingdale, in New York.

Wei Lu is working on Shakespeare with Charles Ross and Sandford Goodhart. She is also taking exams in Japanese and studying French.



Wei Lu (second from right) attended a lecture on Dante by Frank J. Warnke, February 27, 2016.

Stacey Smythe is teaching art history and preparing a dissertation on art history pedagogy.

Tulin Tosun is working for the new PLACE program, developing courses in English for international students.



Presentation of a class project in Tulin Tosun's World Literature course.

Ricardo Quintana Vallejo, our social secretary, hosted a lunch and lecture by an undergraduate from a historically black college. Riccardo is moving up from the MA program to the Ph.D. program. He will shift from teaching Spanish to teaching German in the fall of 2017.

Comparative Literature students and faculty turned out on November 3, 2016, for the lunch and lecture organized by Ricardo Vallejo to help recruitment. From the left are Hongjian Wang, Yuhan Huang, Monica O'Neil, Jiacheng Fan, Wei Lu, Beate Allert, visiting student Tamara Rutledge, Ricardo Vallejo, Tulin Tosun, Purdue undergraduate student Olivia Hetrick, Renae Shackelford, Zihan Wang, Stacey Smythe, and Howard Mancing.



Luyang Wang accepted a job at Mercyhurst University, Erie, Pennsylvania, in 2016.

Meng Wang took over the position at Mercyhurst University in 2017.

Lang Wang has chosen to continue teaching French as she finishes her course work.

Zihan Wang has formally chosen Dino Felluga assisted by Keith Dickson to direct his dissertation on eastern and western medicine in the early twentieth century.



Zihan Wang demonstrates Tai Chi for his beginning Chinese class.

Runlei Zhai defended her dissertation “Chinese Eco-Films and Their Pastoral Myth” in May 2017. She has accepted a position teaching Chinese at North Carolina State University.



Runlei Zhai and her daughter, with Charles Ross and her daughter, after defending her dissertation, May 2015.

Daniel Hsieh and the Chinese Studies Colloquium

Daniel Hsieh has been busy organizing the Chinese Literature Colloquium, which meets two or three times a semester on Thursday afternoons in Stanley Coulter Hall.

March 28, 2017: In conjunction with Asian Studies: Professor Richard Jean Soo (University of Chicago), “Transpacific Community: America, China, and the Rise and Fall of a Global Cultural Network”

<p>“The Globalization of the MFA: East Asian Writers at Iowa”</p>	
<p>Thurs., April 13 Smith 118 4:30 - 6:00 PM</p>	<p>Prof. Richard Jean Soo University of Chicago author of <i>Transpacific Community: America, China, and the Rise and Fall of a Global Cultural Network</i> Columbia University, Ph.D.</p>

March 28, 2017: Yuhan Huang: “Remembrance and Ruminantion: Cinematic and Literary Reflections on Childhood during the Cultural Revolution”



Daniel Hsieh introduces Yuhan Huang.

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February 23rd, 2017: Margaret Tillman, Assistant Professor of History (Purdue University): “The Potential of Neglected Subjects in Chinese History”

January 19, 2017: Professor Charles Ross (Purdue University): “Confucius, Morality, Mortality (and Dante)”

November 10, 2016: Professor Zhang, Hong (Binghamton University): “Chinese Through Song: A Teacher Training Workshop”



November 10, 2016: Professor Chen, Zuyan (SUNY Binghamton): “Succeeding in Confucianism”



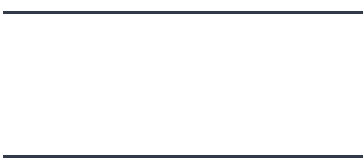
Zuyan Chen

October 24, 2016: Jonathan Schlesinger (Indiana University), “A world trimmed with fur: wild things, pristine places, and the natural fringes of Qing rule”



April 15, 2016: Tie Xiao: “Necessary Fictions: Crowds in Modern Chinese Thought”

March 1, 2016: Perry Link (Princeton University): “Conceptual Metaphor in Chinese and English”



February 18, 2016: Professor Jin, Lei (College of Charleston, South Carolina): “Despair and Hope in the Midst of the Industrial Ruin: Zhang Meng’s *The Piano in a Factory*”

January 26, 2016: Jonathan Petite (Associate Director, Center on Religion and Chinese Society, Purdue University): “Remapping Antiquity: Books and Readers in Early Daoism”

November 19, 2015: Wang, Meng (Purdue University): “Secularization of Utopia in Xingshi yinyuan zhuan 醒世姻缘传”

October 22, 2015: Professor Jinyu LIU (刘津渝 刘津瑜 DePauw University): “Translating Greek Tragedies in China in the Early Twentieth Century”

September 22, 2015: Dr. Nicholas Brasovan/庄思哲 (Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Religion, University of Central Arkansas: “Ecological Models and Environmental Ethics in Neo-Confucianism and Chinese Buddhism”



Cultural Studies?

2010 Ph.D. Yin Cong left Shanghai to spend time in New Zealand recently and sent us this picture:



Comparative Literature and Composition

Dave Bangert, reporter for the Lafayette *Journal and Courier*, stopped by on September 29, 2015, to answer questions on how he goes about composing news stories.

Comparative Literature Mission Statement

The graduate program in Comparative Literature provides students an opportunity to think and write critically about Western and world literature in two or more languages, thus providing the deeper understanding of social and philosophical diversity that comes with a knowledge of more than one culture.



Our old logo! That's all, folks.

