

The French Department University of California, Berkeley

2017 Newsletter “Holiday Edition”

Bonjour from the Chair!

After some six years of stellar and selfless service, Tim Hampton has passed the baton: I'm happy to write as the new Chair of the Department of French. One of the great parts of the job is breaking out of the “silo” of one's own research and teaching, and getting to know in much more depth all the work everyone else in the department is doing — the innovative syllabi our lecturers, GSIs, and faculty put together so as to constantly renew their teaching; the conferences they attend, the events they put on, the papers they publish, the dissertations they file, thereby helping to knit scholarly communities and extend our understanding and expertise; the accomplishments of our current undergraduates, working on senior capstone projects, and of alumni, putting their degrees to work; the exemplary grace-under-pressure of our staff, keeping everything on track despite the challenges. It's an impressive spectacle, and my goal here is to let readers see some of it.

Nick Paige, Professor and Chair of French



Season's Greetings from the Staff and Chair (Gail, Mary, Carol, and Nick)

The Centenary of the Library of French Thought

The Library of French Thought — usually called just the French Library — is a hub of undergraduate, graduate, and faculty activity: undergraduates check out materials (such as dog-eared copies of Paris-Match!) for their language classes; graduates find a reserved space conducive to concentration; everyone makes use of its collections (routinely updated, as finances permit, with the latest scholarly editions)) while coming together there to listen to lectures and exchange information on the profession. Early this fall, following a Works-In-Progress presentation by graduate student **Trevor Sanders**, a fortuitous glance at a framed document revealed that that very day — September 6 — marked the 100th anniversary of the Library's dedication. (The date had been chosen because it was the Marquis de Lafayette's birthday.) The story is this. To participate in the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915, the French government sent a couple of shelves of books representing a cross-section of what was felt to be (at the time) the best of French letters. The outbreak of the Great War made repatriation of the volumes impossible, and they were donated to UC Berkeley as the seed collection of the Library (initially housed in Doe). On the wall of the present library in 4229 Dwinelle you can find the framed copy of the original invitation to the Library's grand opening. Happy birthday, books!

States of Siege

In October, in conjunction with Cal Performances and before a packed house in the Durham Studio Theater, some present and past members of the Department gave a round-table



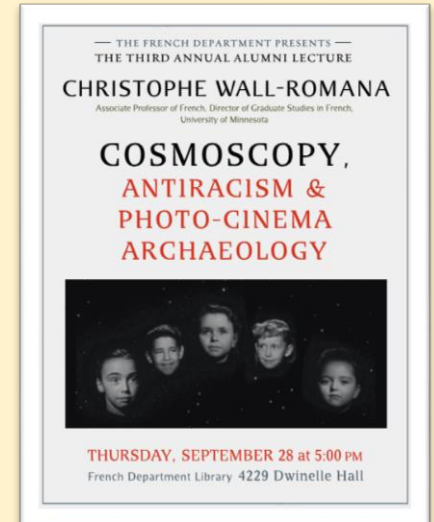
discussion of a little-seen play by Albert Camus. *Etat de siège*, a fantastical yet frightening 1948 political allegory about resistance and authoritarianism, was brought to campus (in French with English supertitles) by the Théâtre de la Ville and its director, Emmanuel Demarcy-Mota. The pre-performance discussion featured Professors **Déborah Blocker** and **Debarati Sanyal**, as well as **Dr. Vanessa Brutsche**, a 2017 PhD whose dissertation featured a chapter on the play, and who is currently a lecturer in the French department of UC Davis. While fielding questions from the audience, these three scholars discussed matters ranging from Camus's interest in Augustinian *caritas* to why this stage follow-up to the celebrated novel *La Peste* was a commercial flop, to the political and spiritual uses of allegory.

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The Alumni Lecture

This fall the Department sponsored its third annual Alumni Lecture. (Last year's, by Katherine Ibbett [University College London; now Oxford], was the first "official" one, but it in fact followed on a lecture the year before by Andrea Frisch [University of Maryland], which planted the idea for the series.) We were delighted to have back Prof. Christophe Wall-Romana, who teaches at the University of Minnesota Twin cities. Prof. Wall-Romana is actually a *double* alumnus of our program, since he earned both a B.A. (1999) and a PhD (2005) in the French Department. A holder of a prestigious ACLS fellowship, he has published extensively on cinema (especially its intersections with poetry), and is now completing *Cosmopolitics Black and White: Astronomy, Race, and The Emergence of Photosensitive Medias*. He treated a packed French Library to some of this truly surprising multidisciplinary work in September. Thank you, Christophe!



Christophe Wall-Romana,
Nick Paige,
and (*de dos*)
David Hult



And presenting... the Rex Lecture

In 2018 we will inaugurate a spring pendant to the fall Alumni Lecture. Named in honor of Professor Walter ("Ted") E. Rex III, whose generous bequest supports graduate students in the Department, the Rex Lecture will be run by the latter, who will choose and invite a speaker whose research interests them. In April, we are looking forward to welcoming the distinguished Cambridge linguist Wendy Aryes-Bennett. If you'd like to learn more about our late colleague Ted Rex (whose philanthropy supports the Music Department as well), please go to <http://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/files/inmemoriam/html/walteredwinrexIII.html>.

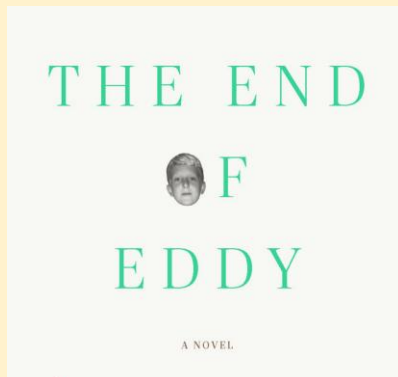
Comings and goings: faculty and lecturers

As always, there has been lots of research activity originating in the 4200 block of Dwinelle Hall. Here's a quick and alphabetical run-down (next year we'll go from Z to A!).

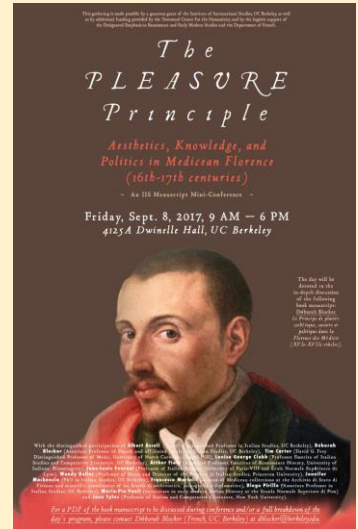
With the help of a grant from the Institute of European Studies, **Déborah Blocker** held a day-long miniconference this Fall on her recently completed book manuscript, which deals with a secretive and heretofore obscure Renaissance Italian academy and its role in the invention of modern aesthetics. The book is now under contract with the Parisian publishing house Les Belles Lettres. After a well-deserved sabbatical, **Karl Britto** is now back with a good chunk of his book manuscript on the immigrant body. **Seda Chavdarian** was at the Rocky Mountain MLA in October, where she presented a paper on the immigrant women writers Andrée Chedid and Chahdortt Djavann. Since the end of spring semester, **Eglantine Colon** has been holed up on sabbatical, finishing her book on the contemporary writer Antoine Volodine. Do not disturb! **Suzanne Guerlac**, who continues to co-chair the Program in Critical Theory, has been lecturing widely, including this past summer at the Venice Biennale.

Recent articles include essays on photography and the everyday, and on Rancière and Proust. She also taught a seminar at the 2017 Dartmouth Summer Institute in French Cultural Studies.

Tim Hampton has started his new appointment as the Director of the Townsend Center for the Humanities. In conjunction with this new job, he has initiated a series of Townsend Research Seminars at the Institut d'Etudes Avancées in Paris; the first, on the topic of "The Embodied Self," was held this past July. He has two books *en chantier*, one on Bob Dylan and a second on the history of cheerfulness. As the new Program Director for Summer Sessions Paris, **Daniel Hoffman** (assisted by lecturer **Ariel Shannon** and graduate student **Brock Imel**) led a group of 30 students; he'll be reprising next year the role he filled so successfully this summer. Daniel is also a Lecturer Teaching Fellow at the Center for Teaching & Learning, where he's at work on a curriculum that uses curatorial practice to bring the language classroom into museums. **David Hult** is devoting his overdue sabbatical to a book on vernacular authorship in the Medieval French tradition. Continuing in his role as Director of the Berkeley Language Center, **Rick Kern** has just wrapped up co-editing *Online Multimodal Communication and Intercultural Encounters: Theoretical and Educational Perspectives* (Routledge); on sabbatical this fall, he is starting a new



project on linguistic and cultural identity in study abroad. Unbowed by his work as Chair of the Budget Committee, **Michael Lucey** found the time (with Andrew Garrett of Linguistics and Tom McEnaney of Comp Lit) to apply for and be awarded a Mellon Foundation Sawyer Seminar Grant on the subject of "Linguistic Anthropology and Cultural Critique." His translation of Edouard Louis's novel *The End of Eddy* (*En finir avec Eddy Bellegueule*) has been widely reviewed (in *The New Yorker* and *The New York Times*, among others). This



summer, he participated in Cambridge's Art of Friendship in France project. **Susan Maslan** was invited to give a keynote lecture — "Thinking with Animals in the Enlightenment: Society, Property, Domination" — at the Norwegian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies' biennial conference in August at NTNU Trondheim. **Mairi McLaughlin**, who has been continuing her study of the evolution of journalistic French in periodicals of the Ancien Régime, coauthored an essay on French translations of the famous Griselda tale from the *Decameron* with graduate students from French and Comp Lit; see her remarks on this fruitful collaboration below.

Nicholas Paige has brought his new quantitative history of the (mostly French) novel to the brink of completion; a couple of preview studies (with lots of graphs) are coming out in journals. In the past year, **Vesna Rodic** has become a network collaborator for the newly established UC-CSU Knowledge Action Network for Transformative Climate and Sustainability Education and Action — a joint collaboration of UC and CSU educators to scale and intensify California students' literacy in climate change, climate justice, carbon neutrality/greenhouse gas emissions reductions, and sustainability. Vesna is currently developing materials for incorporating the theme of ecology and sustainability in our undergraduate curriculum, both in undergraduate language courses and in upper-division literature and writing courses.

Installments of **Debarati Sanyal's** new book project, *The Poetics of Flight and Asylum: Refugees, Biopolitics, and Arts of Resistance*, are beginning to appear in print — check out her piece on Calais's so-called "jungle," in *Representations*. Debarati is also co-organizing an international conference in Johannesburg next Spring for the International Consortium of Critical Theory Programs. And her last book, *Memory and Complicity*, is currently being translated for the Presses Universitaires de Vincennes. **Soraya Tlatli** went to Dakar in November; one of over 50 writers, artists, and academics invited to participate in the second-annual Ateliers de la pensée, on the theme of "Condition planétaire et politique du vivant," she presented a paper on Walter Benjamin et Mohammed Dib. And besides shepherding his book *Making Sex Public* through publication, **Damon Young** has been applying for grants (he was awarded both a Townsend Fellowship and a Berkeley Center for New Media Faculty Seed Grant for his new research project) and organizing conferences. The biggest of these was a two-day event last April,

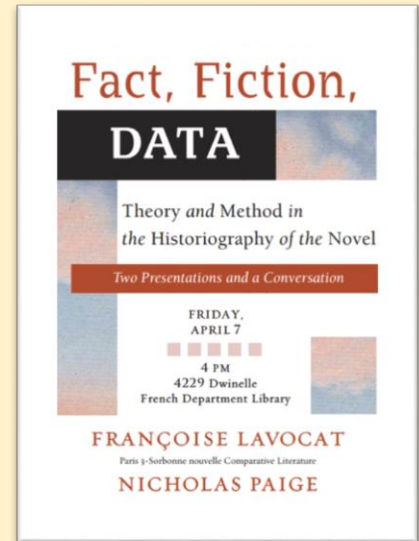
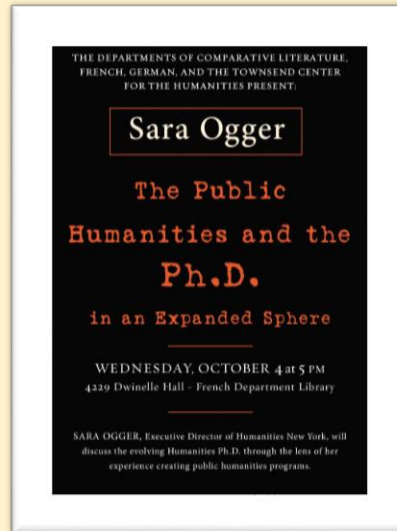
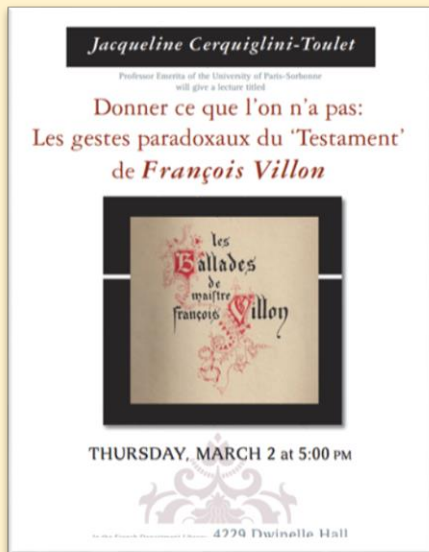
"French/Film/Theory." "F/F/T" allowed a team of French researchers (ranging from doctoral students to full professors) to present their research alongside UCB graduate students and faculty from French, Film & Media, Comparative Literature, as well as faculty from UC Davis. French film scholars from Cambridge, Oxford, and the University of Sydney were also on-hand to make it a truly international event!

← No fewer than FOUR (count 'em) of our French faculty contributed articles to (former Pajus Distinguished Visiting Professor) Christopher Prendergast's just-published *A History of Modern French Literature* (Princeton) — probably the most ambitious such volume since (former Berkeley faculty member) Denis Hollier's *A New History of French Literature* nearly 30 years ago. Order your copy now — it's aimed at the cultivated general reader.

A History of Modern French Literature

FROM THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY
TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

edited by
Christopher Prendergast



Two members of the French Department, Linda Louie and Mairi McLaughlin, and a member of the Comparative Literature Department, Diana Thow, published a co-authored essay on French translations of Boccaccio's Griselda tale from the *Decameron*. This is how Mairi describes the work — "Why Retranslate the Classics?" — which appears in, *Cultural Reception, Translation and Transformation from Medieval to Modern Italy. Essays in Honor of Martin McLaughlin*, ed. by Guido Bonsaver, Brian Richardson and Giuseppe Stellardi, Oxford: Legenda (2017).

"The essay blends literary history and translation studies to shed new light on the relationship between translations from different historical periods: the Renaissance, the eighteenth century and the twentieth century. We show for the first time the value in studying what we call 'genealogies of translation,' namely retranslations of a source text that rely on previous translations. This is the first time that I have co-authored with graduate students and it was one of the most fruitful – and enjoyable – experiences of my career. We came at the project from different perspectives: my background is in linguistics, while Linda and Diana were trained as literary scholars. However, all three of us work on translation and we are united in the belief that it should occupy a more central position in literary and linguistic studies. We are also committed to the development of a more rigorous methodology for the study of translation in these fields. Sitting down to write with Diana and Linda was incredibly inspiring: there was real interdisciplinarity, genuine intellectual curiosity, and a lot of laughter. I hope that I'll have the chance again in the future to collaborate with such bright, engaging students."

Comings and Goings: Graduate Students

This is the place, first, to welcome our incoming students this year — **Ben Beitler**, **Sarah Hastings-Rudolf**, and **Rachel Weiher** — and to wholeheartedly congratulate our “filers” since last December — **Margot Szarke**, **Vanessa Brutsche**, **Aubrey Gabel**, **Jessie Singer**, **Sajad Zafranchilar**, and **Linda Louie**. (Linda’s collaboration with Mairi McLaughlin has been described above.) Our other PhD. students have of course been busy as well. Two now have key roles in the Berkeley-Grad-Student-produced journal *Qui Parle* — **Patrick Lyons** serves as co-chief editor, while **Matthew Evans** is managing editor. Their latest issue contains Patrick’s translation of a Jean-Luc Nancy essay. The thirtieth-anniversary issue of the journal goes to press next month, and will feature — along with an article by Michael Lucey — **Victoria Bergstrom**’s translation of an as-yet-unpublished new work by poet Pierre Alferi. Two more students have been Graduate Student Researchers at the Berkeley Language Center. **Katherine Levine**, a fellow last year, completed a project on the use of medieval French in the L2 classroom — where modern French is the norm. Still on her BLC fellowship, **Elyse Ritchey** is also rethinking L2 norms by emphasizing regional variation: her curriculum, she writes, “comprises two foundational lessons on the ideology of the standard and sociolinguistic variation in French, [while] five more lessons offer information on and exposure to regional varieties through real speech.” A number of our students have been traveling. **Trevor Sanders**, who works on *Staël*, is currently in France working both at the BnF and networking with *staëliens* based in Paris, Rouen, and Lausanne. **Rupinder Kaur** attended the Institut d’Etudes Avancées’s seminar on “The Embodied Self” last summer in Paris. And thanks to Lurcy and Chateaubriand dissertation fellowships, **Emily Linares** has been spending the year in *le sud-ouest*: “My project,” she writes, “focuses on how Catalanophone Gitan students in Perpignan are socialized to literacy in French as a second language at school, and the implications for their identity.” Before leaving for Perpignan, Emily traveled to this year’s meeting of the Association Internationale de



Linguistique Appliquée, in Rio, to present a paper on ideologies of “accent reduction.” **Simon Rogghe** has published a translation of Aragon in the literary journal *Anomaly*, while his short fiction “Berkeley Burns” was published in *Entropy*. You can google both; and while you’re at it, google “Milo Metropolis KQED” for some coverage of Simon’s performance art, prompted by the appearance of another... less literary Milo on campus this fall. (Additional photographic evidence can be found right here!) **Lukas Ovrom** is delighted to see his first article in print, in the storied philological journal *Romania*,

no less. It was prepared by a couple of years of detective work; see his layman’s description of it below. And big, big thanks to **Mary Ajideh**, our Graduate Student Affairs Officer, for helping to hold it all together and keeping us all on track!



Emily Linares *au travail*

Emily, with Rick and Louise Kern



Here's Lukas Ostrom, on his "Lancelot innocenté? Étude sur un témoin tardif de *La Mort le roi Artu* (ms. BnF, fr. 120)," *Romania* 134 (2016): 261-93.

Ever wonder how Lancelot, renowned member of King Arthur's Round Table and secret lover of Queen Guinevere, can be at once the greatest knight in the world and a traitor in matters of love and politics? I found myself asking this question during a year of archival-type research in France back in 2014-15 that led to this article. In my reading of a luxury manuscript of *La Mort le roi Artu* (*The Death of King Arthur*) coming down to us from the beginning of the fifteenth century, I take up the question of Lancelot's guilt or lack thereof concerning the love affair with Guinevere and, relatedly, the disintegration of the Arthurian realm at the close of this thirteenth-century (Old) French romance. Therein, we might say, Lancelot gets a bit of a makeover, which serves to exonerate him in both cases. Indeed, the transformation of the text in this manuscript is not purely cosmetic, but invites a compelling new reading of Lancelot's ambiguous status between heroism and treason. Through its illustrations, section summaries (or "rubrics"), and a very particular version of the text itself, this manuscript offers a resolution of Lancelot's two faces, suggesting his innocence in unexpected — and sometimes even *unintended* — ways.

Undergraduate Life

The French corridor in Dwinelle continues to be a welcoming place for undergraduates interested in French, be they beginners or alums. Starting with the beginner side, the lower-division tutoring program, coordinated by Seda Chavdarian and Vesna Rodic, is going strong, with 10 tutors offering a combined 20 hours of free, drop-in French 1 and 2 tutoring per week.

Students have been coming out strong for the regular meetings — and the special *goûters* — of Le Cercle français, animated by major **Harsimran Bhandal**. CalDay 2017 was a great success, with our own majors staffing the French table and giving out Cal-



colored macarons and chocolate enticements; Mairi McLaughlin gave a presentation on "French in the Media" and Seda Chavdarian taught mini French lessons ("French in a Flash"!). French majors with overlaps in the biological sciences love the summer "France for the Pre-Med" program in Nice, sponsored by University of Washington in St. Louis. Last summer's participant was **Liron Schlesinger**; here's his testimonial.

Le Goûter

Eat, talk, connect

Join the French-speaking community at Cal for this traditional social event: a wonderful opportunity to meet other Francophiles in a casual setting and enjoy free food!

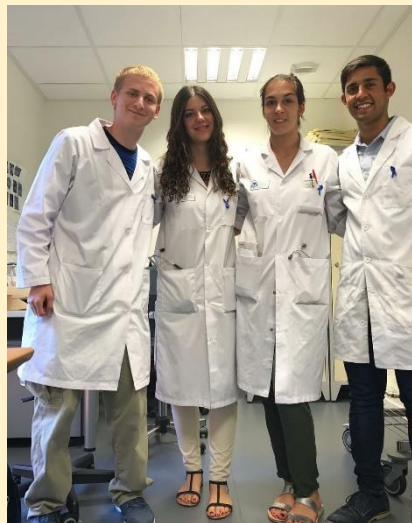


When: Friday, September 22nd 5-6:30 pm
Where: 4125A Dwinelle

Sponsored by Le cercle français, UC Berkeley's undergraduate French club

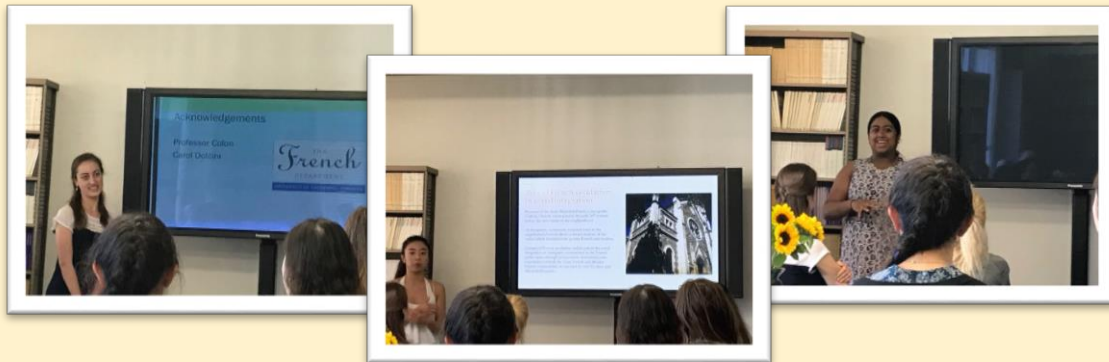
France for the Pre-Med

This summer, I got to participate in an incredible study abroad program in Nice, France. For five weeks, I would wake up, go to Hôpital Pasteur with their rounds, met patients and works in France as compared to classes at the university with professionals. I learned about but I also got to learn about the best part was that this program end of the program, I felt my I was living in France as any studying in one of the most world, studying abroad can be a your college experience. The program through Washington both an immersive culture and language program but also a unique medical/healthcare internship.



intern at the Hôpital du jour in Neurology team. I went on learned about how healthcare the U.S. and I got to take doctors and other healthcare medicine and medical culture, history and culture of Nice. The was entirely in French. By the fluency level soar and I felt like other local. As a Pre-Med competitive universities in the challenging thing to fit into France for the Pre-Med University at St. Louis offers

Seven current majors benefited from Paul Brun Memorial Scholarships; these need- and achievement-based awards, made possible through the generosity of a donor, are a little-known perk of majoring in French! And the Spring Breakfast for graduating minors and majors (and the GSIs, lecturers, and faculty who helped them celebrate), featured the presentations of three students completing honor's theses: **Maria Jelvis** (overseen by Prof. Colon), "Parler dans, parler hors de la masse: conformisme et résistance de l'individu dans *Rhinocéros* de Eugène Ionesco"; **Eda Yu** (Prof. Colon again!), "The Figure of the Postcolonial Asian Immigrant in Contemporary France"; and **Nisha Srinivasa** (Profs Kern and McLaughlin), "Les Idéologies et les opinions de l'éducation linguistique."



Maria, Eda, and Nisha



← Rachel Shuh, Vanessa Brutsche, and Eglantine Colon



Susan Maslan, Ariel Shannon, Daniel Hoffman, and Maya Sidhu

Finally, Undergraduate Student Affairs Officer **Carol Dolcini** has been continuing to foreground the many post-graduation possibilities for French majors with her popular “Pathways” events; these bring back alumni working in all walks of life. The Pathways event last spring featured alumni from Law (**Deborah Quick**, '99), Language and Tech (**Marissa Walsh**, '09), and Education and Research (**Laura Erickson**, '03); this coming spring, she hopes to orchestrate a pathways event with our alumni in the arts. Curious about what French alums are doing? Here’s a sample, from our French LinkedIn network: **Laura Rennels** ('17), Business Manager at TalentQ Technologies; **Tommy Queally** ('14), Admin Specialist at DropBox; **Alison Mackey** ('14), Lectrice d'Anglais at Université Grenoble Alpes; **Caroline Davidson** ('15), Communications Project Manager, viral hepatitis program; **Patrick Smith** ('14), Project Manager, NYC Department of Transportation; **William Vega** ('09), Ethnographer and Qualitative Researcher; **Elif Gulec** ('16), Consultant at United Nations; **James Magid** ('00), Counsel at Locke Lord LLP; **Laura Erickson** ('03), Associate Director & Head of Sustainability Initiative, Swissnex; **Kelsey Westphal**, ('12), Cartoon Biographer at Re/Search Publications; and **David Violet** ('79), Conference Interpreter with AIIC. If you’re an alum who’d like to share your “Pathway” with our current majors, please drop Carol a line! Her email is fredept@berkeley.edu.

Daniel, Ariel, and Brock with the Summer '17 in Paris gang



Celebrating the career and mentorship of Professor Joseph J. Duggan (1938-2016)



Last year Tim Hampton shared the very sad news of the passing of Joe Duggan, a longtime member of the Departments of French and Comparative Literature. This November, over forty of Joe's friends, colleagues, and students came together to celebrate this medievalist's extraordinary contributions to the scholarly life of the campus and far beyond. The event was held at the Women's Faculty Club, an



institution Joe supported and frequented for many years, and in the garden of which, thanks to contributions from all those touched by his influence, there will be a memorial bench endowed in his honor. If you would be interested in receiving a copy of the memorial booklet of remembrances produced for the occasion, or if you'd like to contribute to the bench (we're still a little short), please send the Chair an email: npaige@berkeley.edu.

Dr. Annalee Rejhon (Joe's widow and lecturer in Celtic Studies) and friends
(including, clockwise from Annalee [center] Seda Chavdariam, Rick Kern, Karl Britto, Debarati Sanyal,
Mairi McLaughlin, Ann Smock, Rick again, Basil Guy, and Michael Lucey)



Last but certainly not least: dernières parutions!

Finally, I'm very happy to announce the births of Sami Kheirbek, son of lecturer Maya Sidhu and Mazen Kheirbek; of Ingrid Victoria Gabel, daughter of Aubrey and Tom Gabel; and of Waylon Harry Evans, son of graduate students Victoria Bergstrom and Matthew Evans — which makes Waylon, on our reckoning, the first baby to be born into this world with *dual* French Department affiliation! Congratulations to the parents of Sami, Ingrid, and Waylon on this joyful occasion!

Give to French

Ours is a dynamic and growing program of study that encompasses culture, politics, current events, and translation. We are constantly developing new approaches and programs to enhance the experience of our extraordinary Cal students. But we cannot do everything they deserve without financial support from our friends. Last year, Chair Hampton announced the creation of a special fund to help defray the travel costs for needy undergraduates studying abroad — the Study Abroad Flight Fund. If you're able to help, please [click here](#). If you'd like to earmark your donation for a different cause (e.g., merit-based prizes, graduate student support, library upkeep), simply indicate as much in the space provided for this purpose. And don't forget to remember us during Big Give, on March 8!



*Things are looking up for our students.
Help keep it that way!*