

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE HOLIDAY NEWSLETTER 2018

Dear alums and friends,

In the spirit of the season, I wanted to connect to share our news of the last year. It has been a year of celebrations, and we would like to invite you to several upcoming festivities this spring.

What we are grateful for . . .

Bob Alter's translation of the Hebrew Bible with his commentary was released by W.W. Norton this week. The New York Times Magazine profile of Bob comes out on Dec. 23rd. We will be celebrating at the Magnes museum with a program featuring a lecture by Bob on Feb 13 from 4-6:30 pm, and we hope that those of you who are in the Bay area will join us.

Tim Hampton continues his extraordinary stewardship of the Townsend Center. He has written some moving blog posts explaining why the Humanities are necessary in today's world of fake news and corporate irresponsibility. You can read them [here](#). Tim also gave the Commencement Speech at our Zellerbach commencement this past May.

Vicky Kahn gave the 2018 Martin Myerson Faculty Research lecture, one of the greatest honors that the university bestows upon its faculty. You'll be able to read her lecture, "The Trouble with Literature," in her forthcoming book of the same title.

Tom McEnaney's new American Cultures course, "Sounding American," was a huge hit, with close to 140 students. Tom was interviewed for a podcast on gender and voice featured on Berkeley's homepage – you can access it [here](#).

Comparative Literature won two of the three awards given university-wide at the Excellence in Advising Award. **Judith Butler**, nominated by a dozen of her graduate students, won in the category of Faculty Excellence in Advising, as did **Karina Palau**, who was nominated by the students in our pedagogy course. Judith couldn't attend the ceremony because she was in Japan receiving an honorary degree from Meiji University. As you can see in the pic of Karina below, there was a disco theme . . .



Barbara Spackman's [*Accidental Orientalists: Modern Italian Travelers in Ottoman Lands*](#) won the Best Book prize from the American Italian Studies Association in the category Renaissance, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries. *Accidental Orientalists* also won honorable mention from the Modern Language Association's Howard R. Marraro prize. Some of you may remember that Barbara won the Marraro prize twenty years ago for *Fascist Virilities*. Barbara is chairing the Academic Senate this year.

The Modern Languages Association's Best Book Prize went to our grad alum **Amanda Jo Goldstein** for [*Sweet Science: Romantic Materialism and the New Logics of Life*](#). Amanda is back from Cornell and teaching in our English department. This marks the third time in four years that one of our grad alums has won the best first book prize.

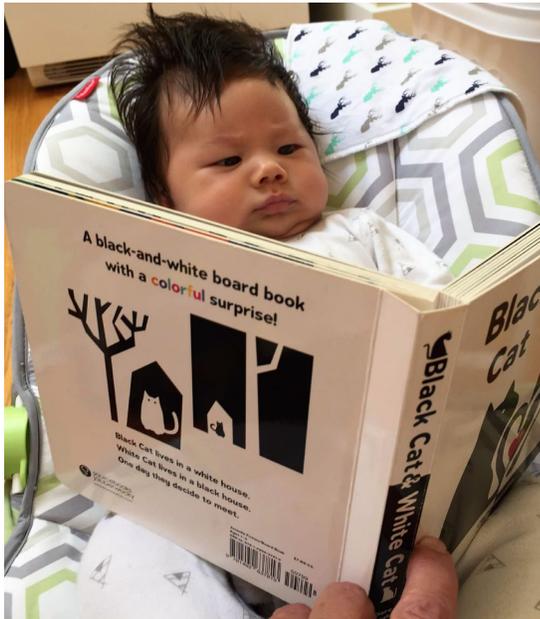
Tom McEnaney's [*Acoustic Properties: Radio, Narrative and the New Neighborhood of the Americas*](#) was a finalist for The Modernist Studies Association's Best Book Prize.

Michael Lucey and Tom McEnaney's Mellon funded Sawyer Seminar in Linguistic Anthropology and Literary and Culture Studies is in full swing, and featured a symposium in September entitled Translation/Transduction at which grad alums Elliot Colla and Toby Warner both spoke.

Francine Masiello's [*The Senses of Democracy: Perception, Politics and Culture in Latin America*](#), which has been hailed as a "paradigm shifting" study of how "embodied cognition helps define democratic practice and rebellion," was published last May. Francine gave a Book Talk at the Townsend Center this fall, with Tom McEnaney commenting.

James Monroe's students edited a volume in his honor entitled [*The Study of al-Andalus: the Scholarship and Legacy of James Monroe*](#). We celebrated the publication of the volume this fall with a reception in the Comp Lit library.

We are so happy to announce that assistant professor **Dora Zhang** has given birth to son Kai Giordano-Zhang, born in late August. As you can see in the pic below, Kai is already a sensitive reader of texts.



And here is a pic of grad student **Yael Segalovitz** with her second son Doron, like Kai nearly four months old.



Congratulations to our 2017-2018 graduates: **Francisco (Paco) Brito, Marianne Kaletzky, Gabriel Page, Irina Popescu, Yael Segalovitz, and Laura Wagner.** Yael is off to take a position at Ben Gurion University, Laura is teaching at Orange Coast College, and Irina is a Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow at Bowdoin University.

Katie Kadue (PhD 2017) has won the [2018 Charles Bernheimer Award](#), given by the American Comparative Literature Association for the best dissertation in Comparative Literature, for her dissertation “Domestic Georgic from Rabelais to Milton.” Katie’s Bernheimer prize marks the seventh year in a row that our department has won this prize.

Our grad students put on a conference in October entitled “Future (Im)perfect,” featuring keynote speaker Tavia Nyong’o. We are in awe of their capacity to organize such a major event so seamlessly.

Three graduate students – **Bristin Jones, Yael Segalovitz, and Paco Brito** – won the [Outstanding GSI award](#). In addition, **Bristin** won the Teaching Effectiveness Award, given to only twelve students across the university.

We are putting on our first-ever **Grad Alum Reunion** the weekend of May 3-5, 2019. We are envisioning a full day of talks on Saturday May 4 at which both alums and current grad students will present. If you’d like to come, please contact Rita Lindahl-Lynch at complitga@berkeley.edu.

As for our undergrads, they are hard at work publishing the UC Berkeley Comparative Literature Undergraduate Journal (CLUJ). You can read the current issue [here](#).

The 2019 Comp Lit **Undergrad Research Symposium** is scheduled for April 6th; this year’s theme is “Literature and History.” We’d like to invite our Bay area alums to join us (visit the [Comparative Literature site](#) for further updates).

We are thrilled that a few of our recent undergrads – **Yvonne Lin** and **Jiaqian Zhu** – are back on campus, both in the Ph.D. program in East Asian Languages and Cultures. **Marica Petrey** is performing in the Bay area and making films. **Madeline Zimring** is completing her Master’s Degree at Oxford, while **Yana Zlochistaya** is teaching in France with the TAPIF program. This past year, we heard **Margaret Zhou** perform on the *guqin* at Berkeley Art Museum.

In closing, it is easier for us to know what our alums in academia are up to, and we would really like to find a better way to stay in touch with our entire community – it is so important for our students to know about the wide range of possibilities for someone with a Comp Lit degree. We will be launching a new website in January, and will have a tab called “Alumni Stories” that allows alums to write in and let us know what they’re up to. I hope that you’ll take a minute to share your stories – it will mean a lot to our current students, and to us as well.

All best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sophie', is centered on a light gray rectangular background.

Sophie Volpp

Chair, Comparative Literature