



Notes from Wescoe

2024

Chair's Message

by Bruce Hayes



I begin this year's message on a somber note. This year, our department lost two emeriti faculty, Bryant Freeman and Ted Johnson. You can find their obituaries at the end of the newsletter. Both of these faculty members retired before I came to KU, but one of the nicest things I've learned since I became chair is that faculty leave a lasting legacy. I have heard from so many people over the years about the impact Bryant and Ted had on them. I have been inspired by this. It has made me hope that I, too, am able to make a difference for my students. For both of these long-time members of our department, I celebrate their rich legacies as scholars and teachers.

Following national trends, we have become a smaller department, as increasing numbers have abandoned language study. As a department, we have been proactive in facing this challenge. When I became chair, we offered no online courses. Now we regularly offer an impressive number of online courses, starting with French 110 and Italian 110 and extending to outreach courses taught in English, but with a focus on French or Italian culture. Now every semester we offer at least one of these courses in-person each semester, with topics including Paris, Mafia Movies, Sci-Fi, and Cinema. We regularly teach first-year seminars and freshman honors seminars. These courses allow us to reach students we would otherwise miss, and of course, we have some success in convincing a number of these students to add French or Italian to their coursework.

We also dedicate an enormous amount of time and resources to recruitment. Inspired by the efforts of one of our fantastic alums, Alain-Philippe Durand, the Dorrance Dean of the College of Humanities at the University of Arizona, we have followed



Bruce Hayes with Alain-Philippe Durand.

his detailed plans for convincing students to add a minor or a major in French or Italian. This last year, I established relationships with the College recruiting team and the Director of Admissions at KU. This is because we are committed to recruiting at the high school level.

This fall, for the first time, a customized message from our department went out to thousands of high school students interested in KU and language study. Our efforts to connect with K-12 French teachers in the region through our annual French Immersion Day have already produced results. This coming year, we will be doing our most ambitious French Immersion Day yet, to be held in Kansas City as part of a regional conference for K-12 language teachers and which will include the participation of the Alliance française of Kansas City, the mayor of Kansas City, and a representative from the French Consulate in Chicago. Our message will be clear: the University of Kansas is the best positioned college or university in the region to provide the highest quality foreign language education with the largest number of faculty and resources. No one else is even close.



Faculty pose together at the conclusion of the Spring 2024 Graduation Ceremony.

As always, we brought in some wonderful speakers this past year. Two I would like to highlight are both alums. First is Alain-Philippe Durand, mentioned above. He was our keynote speaker for our annual French Immersion Day in January. While he was here, the dean of the College invited Alain-Philippe to come back to KU in the fall as the keynote speaker for a day-long event titled, "The Future of Humanities Education." For this event, I don't think KU has ever had so many prestigious humanities scholars and administrators on campus at one time. I was fortunate to attend the entire conference and left feeling inspired and with a list of things I would like to implement for our department.

This fall we also welcomed Jeff Kendrick, my first PhD student who has a very successful career as a faculty member and administrator at the Virginia Military Institute and who talked to us about implementing new assessment strategies in our lower-level language classes. As his "dissertation dad," I couldn't have been prouder. We truly have amazing alums.



Jeff Kendrick presents in Wescoe Hall.

I also hope that you appreciate what your financial contributions do for the department. Check out this year's "Postcards from France" and "Postcards from Italy." You'll see more student testimonials than we've ever had. We are making scholarship awards that make a difference. In my first year as chair, we gave more than \$40,000 in study abroad scholarships. This last year, we awarded more than \$80,000 in scholarships.

For many students, this makes the difference between going abroad or staying home. Getting our students abroad is central to the mission of our department, and we invest everything we can to make that happen. Thank you for what you do to help with this.

As long as this message is, there is always so much more I want to share with you. Ours is a very active and engaged department with a tremendous focus on student success. I enjoy this experience each year of taking stock, assessing what we have accomplished and what remains to be done. Your support is central to that. Thank you. I also want to express my gratitude for the outstanding people I work with. You'll see graduate student and faculty updates in the newsletter. We also have great lecturers who make considerable contributions to the life and vitality of our department. I would like especially to thank our administrative associate Rosalyn Lucas, who produces our newsletter and who, along with Wyatt Haywood, do so much to keep our department running.

Thank you for your support, and here's to 2025!



Attendees of the French Table held on Thursdays at Henry's Upstairs smile for a group picture.

Message from the Director of Graduate Studies

by Van Kelly



As we close the fall semester, it is, as always, a great pleasure to review the accomplishments of our graduate students in French and Francophone Studies. This fall, we welcomed an impressive class of three M.A. candidates and two Ph.D. candidates: Caleb Downs who

did his undergraduate degree(s) in French and Francophone Studies as well as Visual Art at KU before entering the M.A. program in French; Marcus Hooper, who double majored in French and Francophone Studies and in Linguistics at KU; Laila Vehabovic, neo-Jayhawk and graduate exchange student from the Université de Franche-Comté, where she obtained a B.A. and a Masters in English and English Language Pedagogy; Patrick Herring, who holds a B.A. and M.A. from Gonville and Caius College of Cambridge University, and served as Head of Modern Languages and Deputy Academic Head at Winchester College in the UK, as well as Head of Modern Languages at St. Edward's School, before matriculating to the Ph.D. program at KU ("ad astra per aspera," as Latinizing Jayhawks say); and, last but not least, Seth Middleton, medievalist *extraordinaire* who graduated with a KU M.A. in French and Francophone Studies in spring 2024 and decided to re-up for the Ph.D. this fall. Members of our M.A. and Ph.D. class of 2023—Laurel Aspegren, John Gorman, Kamba Kombat, and Michelle Roesner—are busy making very good progress on their course work and literature reading lists for the Masters and Doctorate, although Michelle has the pleasure of accomplishing this program of cultural and

literary self-enrichment while serving as the Exchange Graduate Teaching Assistant at the Université de Franche-Comté in Besançon. Five members of the graduate classes of 2022 and prior—Zoe Chan, Noah Christilles, Cesar Fluckiger, Mathis Philippe, and the aforementioned Seth Middleton—graduated with the M.A. in French this past spring. Congratulations to these five *magistri artium* who join the hallowed ranks! And special congratulations to Rebecca Wetzel who received the Ph.D. in spring 2024, pursuant to her successful defense of her dissertation, "Montaigne's Other Bodies: Onanism, Animals, and Anthropophagy in the *Essais*," directed by Professor Bruce Hayes.



Faculty congratulate Zoe Chan during the Spring 2024 FFIT Graduation Ceremony.

The honors that our graduate students have so rightly and righteously earned do not stop there. At our spring graduate recognition ceremony, Mathis Philippe received the award for Excellence in M.A. Graduate Studies in French and *doctorant* Ousmane Lecoq Diop the award for excellence in Ph.D. Graduate Studies. Laurel Aspegren and Michelle Roesner received the award for Outstanding Departmental Service for their excellent work organizing and hosting the French Club and other French and Francophone cultural activities for the department. Zoe Chan and Mathis Philippe, excellent teachers of beginning French, received the David Dinneen awards for Pedagogical Excellence in French. This December, at the Department's

annual Introduction to Graduate Studies Mock Conference—held at the Max Kade Center, in a gesture of Franco-German cooperation—M.A. candidates Downs and Vehabovic presented innovative research papers on Marguerite Duras's *La Douleur*, an autobiographical text about Duras's anguished wait for her husband Robert Antelme, deported for *faits de resistance* during World War II and the German Occupation. M.A. candidate Hooper and doctoral candidate Herring, in a parallel wartime circuit, delivered incisive analyses of 2014 Nobel-prizewinner Patrick Modiano's novel about the Shoah and its aftereffects, *Voyage de noces*. Doctoral candidates Ousmane Lecoq Diop and Brigid Enchill are writing the final chapters of their dissertations (Ousmane, "Navigation et traduction culturelles multidimensionnelles: La question des langues entre Sénégalité et cosmopolitisme au Sénégal contemporain"; Brigid, "Literary and Filmic Representations of Sovereignty, Corruption, and Governance in Francophone Haiti and Western Africa").

Our graduate students have been very active in the field



Seth Middleton presents at the 20th and 21st Century International French and Francophone Studies Colloquium at Villanova University.

of French and Francophone Studies. Ousmane Lecoq Diop and Kamba Kombat were instrumental in hosting and accompanying the visit of internationally-renowned Senegalese filmmaker Moussa Sene Absa in spring 2025, whose trilogy *Tableau ferraille*, *Madame Brouette*, and *Xalé* was shown for a

campus-wide audience, sponsored by the KU French Center of Excellence. This fall semester, doctoral candidate Brigid Enchill is a Sias Graduate Doctoral Fellow at the Hall Center for the Humanities, a dissertation-completion fellowship. In spring 2024, she presented her scholarly paper, "The Dangers of Aid as a Tool of Neo-Colonialism: The Case of Raoul Peck's, *Assistance Mortelle* and Makenzy Orcel's *L'ombre animale*" at the 20th and 21st Century International French and Francophone Studies Colloquium at Villanova University. At the same conference, then-M.A. candidate Seth Middleton presented his paper on literature and culture of Mauritius, entitled "Harnessing Chaos in a Crazy World in Ananda Devi's *Pagli*" Seth also was the Co-Director for our 2023 Summer Language Olympics and French Institute in Paris, and he was ably assisted by Laurel Aspegren who served as the Graduate Assistant for the program.

Congratulations to all these graduate students, whose activities continue to be impressive and impactful. They represent us in an exemplary fashion in the university community, nationally, and abroad. We have many reasons to be proud of our students, as they further our longstanding excellence in French and Francophone graduate studies.



Brigid Enchill presenting at the Hall Center.

French Undergraduate Program

by Paul Scott



Paul Scott with students at the Fall Coffee Tasting.

As the Chair underscores, we have been pro-active in meeting the challenges facing the humanities. Some of our outreach classes this past year have reached the highest enrolled French classes in living memory (at least 50 students in two sections). We have offerings that range from

grammar, phonetics and conversation to medieval chivalry, humor, detective fiction, and science fiction.

Over the past few years, I have been looking into the idea of offering a version of the Paris Summer Language Institute in English to run alongside the version in French, thus offering students with no previous French the opportunity to spend time discovering the country, history, and culture. I am thrilled that this English version, the Paris Summer Institute, is rolling out in the summer of 2025 and will also offer Honors credit. Although it is the English version, students will take a one-credit hour asynchronous class in basic French once accepted into the program and will be encouraged to use this with their homestay hosts in Paris. From many years of having co-directed the summer program, there are always students who intended to do the program to finish up their language requirement but return and go on to embrace a minor or major in French or even go on to spend a semester in Angers. In a similar way,

we hope -and expect- the Paris Summer Institute will attract students to take French further. Our generous scholarships are instrumental in helping students make studying abroad a reality. I have always been struck by how many of our students who embark on a study-abroad program have never been out of the country before.

French Table and French Club have been extremely active, led by enthusiastic undergraduate and graduate students. It is an occasion to practice French in an informal setting and to meet others who love the language, whether they be complete beginners, enjoy *Emily in Paris*, or are ex-pats in the Midwest. In what has now become a tradition, French Table and Italian Table ended the semester with a joint coffee tasting at local roastery Repetition. At the end of fall semester, the crowd was in excess of a hundred attendees. These events are always an opportunity to meet new people but faculty and graduate students also have moments to talk to attendees about classes we offer, promote study abroad, or offer some informal advising.



Faculty congratulate graduates at the Spring 2024 Graduation ceremony.



Top: French Table, held on Thursdays at Henrys Upstairs. Bottom: Students and faculty play pétanque/bocce ball on the lawn of Watson Library.



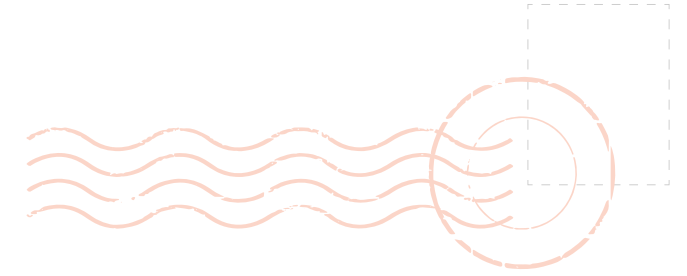
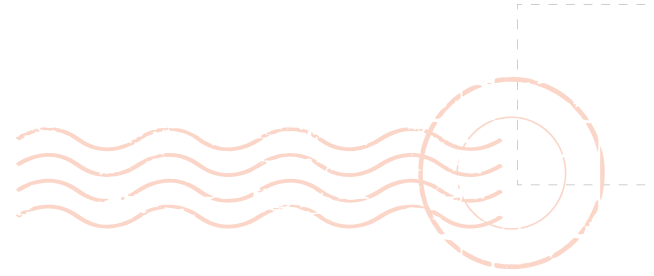
Students enjoy hot drinks and sweets during the Fall Coffee Tasting at Repetition Coffee.



Students learn about French cuisine at the French Cooking event put on by the French Club.

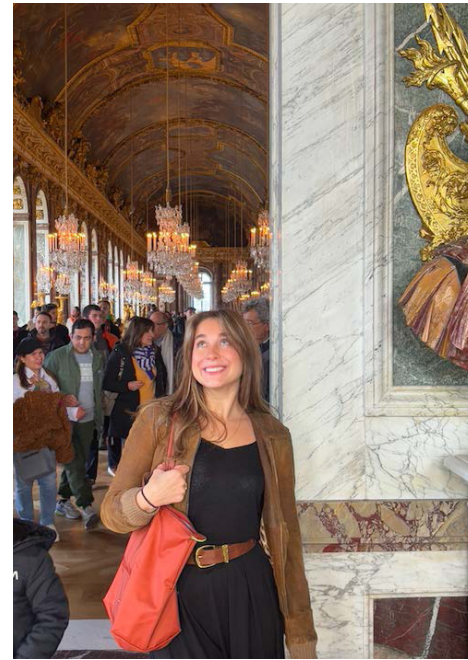


Postcards from France



I cannot put into words how much I appreciate this opportunity to learn and grow abroad. My experience in France has taught me far beyond the French language, giving me new skill sets that will aid me throughout my life and experiences I will never forget.

Audrey Elward



My time abroad has granted me friends around the world and memories I'll cherish forever. The cultural diversity I've been a part of has allowed me a level of personal growth that I never could have dreamt. Oh, and I saw lots of castles too!

-Wynn Griffin



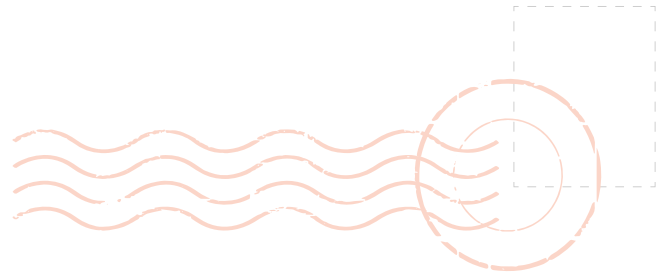
Studying abroad in France has meant so much to me, giving me a chance to grow academically and personally. I've met so many great people, learned from a lot of great professors, and explored so many career opportunities. I'm more than grateful for the KU French Department for sending me here!

- Braden Troyer

This semester has been amazing. It is my first time living in a city outside of Kansas, and has also allowed my family to have our first experience abroad together. This opportunity has provided me with so much valuable experience and has given me an opportunity to consider new paths for my future, such as potentially pursuing grad school in Europe. On another note, it was illuminating to witness a US election from outside the country and understand how the US is perceived internationally; whatever the future may entail I certainly hope there'll be more traveling in mine!

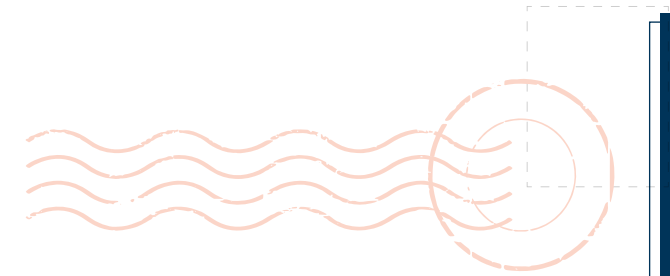
Bisous,
Delaney Rockers





Studying abroad has enriched my college experience by broadening my horizons, introducing me to new people, and deepening my understanding of French culture. Thanks to this study abroad program, I am leaving KU with extensive French language and cultural knowledge and experiences I'll remember forever.

-Ella Brown



The Paris SLI enabled me to improve both my formal and informal French language skills. Immersion in the language and culture catalyzed me in becoming a more fluent, organic, and culturally aware French speaker. In addition, I never thought I would get the chance to experience the Olympics or the Euro Cup in person, but this opportunity made that possible.

-Jack Shaw



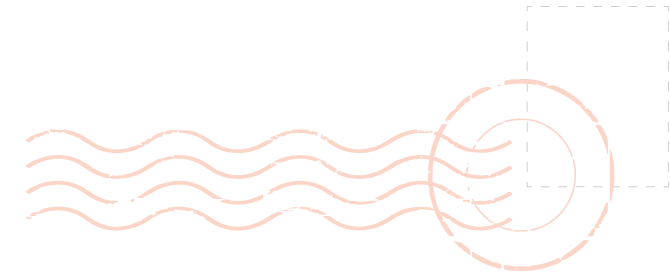
Studying abroad in France was a life-changing experience. My growth in communications, problem-solving, and confidence was greater than I could have ever imagined. I am grateful to have been afforded this opportunity and will continue to use the skills and knowledge I obtained while across the pond.

Best,
Kiersten Harris



France! Studying abroad has showed me that I can be myself no matter where I am or which language I am speaking. I met friends that I know I'll hold near my heart for the rest of my life. I'm eternally grateful for the scholarship I received so that I could explore France and strengthen my French language abilities

- Katie Ahern at l'Université de Picardie Jules Verne (UPJV) in Amiens, France for the Spring 2024 semester



This is a photo of myself this year from the Mont Saint-Michel excursion from the CIDEF program in Angers. This was my favorite location in France, it was beautiful. To me studying abroad was about challenging myself to learn about a new language and culture. Not only did I meet these goals, but I met some awesome people along the way, both from the US and from other countries. The best part of it all was traveling and meeting people from around the world. It is an experience I will never forget.

-Ricardo Palencia

I've been having the time of my life in Angers. Getting to explore the Loire valley and fully experience French culture has fully cemented my love of the language. My French has improved exponentially, and I've made so many new friends and memories. I will be forever grateful for this opportunity!

- Maureen Tuohey



Studying in France has meant laughs, joy, tears, surprises, lots of learning, new friends, opportunities of talking to random people, making small chats on a daily basis, and having host parents that feels like your own parents. Being in France been an incredible opportunity for growth. While it hasn't always been easy—real growth never is—it has been worth every moment.

- Raneem Alasmí



My study abroad experience was one of the most impactful and transformational experiences of my undergraduate experience at KU. Each day abroad I learned incredible amounts, not just about French language, history and culture, but also about engaging with others as a global citizen. I am immensely grateful for the friends I made, the food I got to try, and the memories that I will forever cherish.

- Allie Reed

Italian Undergraduate Program

by Patrizio Ceccagnoli



For the second year in a row, in 2024 we were delighted to receive a visit from the Director of the Italian Cultural Institute in Chicago, Luca Di Vito. As he ends his appointment, we warmly thank him for the meaningful interactions and fruitful collaborations in the past years. We are proud for the reiterated support of the Italian Foreign Ministry that acknowledges our cultural role as the only academic program of Italian in the State of Kansas.



Director of the Italian Cultural Institute in Chicago, Luca Di Vito, speaks before the *Tigre Reale* performance.

As we did in previous years, over the course of 2024, we organized a series of international events. In February, for the Sixth Gamma Kappa Alpha Italian Honor Society, we hosted a lecture by Prof. Andrea Capra (NYU), who discussed the notion of horror in the Neapolitan works of Anna Maria Ortese. In March, in collaboration with the Italian Cultural Institute in Chicago, the Italian National Museum of Cinema in Turin and the KU School of Music, we organized a live musical performance and a screening of the Italian silent movie *Tigre Reale*, based on the novel by Giovanni Verga. In this Cine-Concert, Stefano Maccagno played the piano and Furio Di Castri the bass. Later in the Spring

our own Prof. Edward Bowen delivered a talk on his current research about Roman film distribution, while in the Fall he organized the public screening of the movie *L'ombra del giorno*.

As usual, our lively Italian Club organized an array of different initiatives: two film series, outdoor games, food tastings, and cooking classes. Prof. Francesca Beretta and the Language Program hosted the Italian Tavola, run weekly at Wheatfields Bakery. Two students graduated with honors and wrote theses on fascinating subjects; Kat Balke wrote on the role of Pampinea in Boccaccio's *Decameron* from a gender perspective, while Christian Due authored a first edition of a poetry collection originally written in Abruzzese dialect by Italo Iacaruso, which he translated into contemporary Italian.



Image from the silent movie *Tigre Reale*



Furio Di Castri, Luca Di Vito, Stefano Maccagno and KU Prof of Musicology Colin Roust.



Far Right: Students and faculty participated in a Bocce Ball event on Watson lawn.



Middle: Honors students Christian Due and Kat Balke.



Left: Students smile for a photo during Italian Cooking Night.



Left: The Italian and French Clubs face off in a volleyball match



Right: Members of Tavola Italiana at Wheatfields Bakery Cafe.

Postcards from Italy

Studying abroad has been a transformative journey, allowing me to immerse myself in a new culture, refine my language skills, and gain a deeper understanding of global perspectives. It has challenged me to adapt, grow, and embrace opportunities outside my comfort zone. This allowed me to meet people who grew up nothing like me, find things in common with them, and experience the world together. This opportunity has forever changed my life.

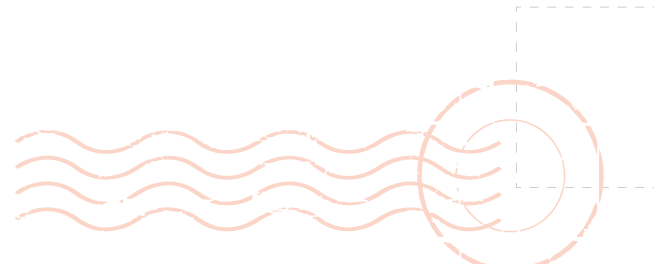
- Lucas Beach





I had the wonderful opportunity of studying abroad in Bologna, Italy for a full academic year. While navigating life in Bologna was incredibly challenging it was worth the effort. I ate some of the best Italian food in Bologna, saw the most amazing art in Ravenna and Cortona, and traveled down the Grand Canal in the beautiful city of Venice. On top of all the sights, I met fellow students from all over the world, some of whom I am still in touch with. Studying abroad in Italy was an incredible experience and I would definitely recommend it.

- Marcena Adrian

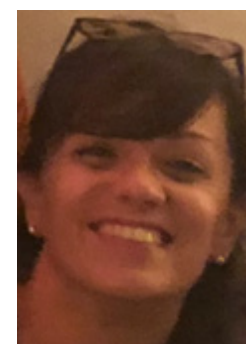


Faculty News



Christine Bourgeois started 2024 on research leave. While this leaves her little to report from the classroom, it was a golden opportunity to make progress on her first monograph, from which she was lucky enough to present material from different chapters at the Mid-America Medieval Association

Conference in September, the Hall Center for the Humanities in October, and newly-formed Medieval French in the Midwest working group in November. As she wraps up revision on her book, she has also branched out this year into wider questions of medieval compilation, a topic about which she plans to submit a new article in early 2025. Stay tuned for more updates!



Francesca Beretta has dedicated this academic year to developing the asynchronous online language track for first-year Italian (ITAL110 and ITAL120) in collaboration with the Center for Online Learning (CODL). Long-time Italian lecturers Massimo and Lauralyn have also

partnered with CODL, participating in weekly sessions to learn and integrate new tools into the hybrid language sequence. Francesca's research focuses on Generation Z, and her co-authored article is featured in the edited volume *Gen Z Around the World: Understanding the Global Cohort Culture of Generation Z* (2024). In October, she was invited to deliver the talk "Past, Present, and Future of Gen Z Inside and Outside the Italian Classroom" during the 30th-anniversary celebrations of Alma Edizioni, a renowned Italian publisher of instructional materials for teaching Italian as a second or foreign language.

For the second consecutive year, Francesca directed the

Study Abroad Program in Florence, where a talented group of Jayhawk students showcased the KU Italian Program's excellence at Scuola Toscana and with their host families. This year, many students enrolled in a newly offered cooking track, working with Florentine chefs and preparing delicious, authentic Italian dishes twice a week. Excursions included trips to Milan, Lake Como, Siena, Pisa, and throughout the Tuscan countryside. The group also spent a beautiful day in the coastal town of Castiglioncello, where Francesca's favorite phrase became: "Stop jumping from rocks!"

Francesca also manages the program's Instagram account, showcasing the students' adventures and weekly learning experiences. Follow along at: @ku_italian.



Students enjoying their study abroad in Florence.



Studying abroad in Florence was without exaggeration a life-changing experience. I learned so much, not just about the Italian language and culture, but about myself and what I'm capable of.

- Cole Courson





Edward Bowen, Assistant Professor of Italian, published an edited volume titled *Film Exhibition: The Italian Context* (Oxford: Legenda) in September 2024. It is the first book in English on film exhibition history in Italy. Bowen co-edited this volume with Damien Pollard of Northumbria University.

In June 2024, Bowen presented at the Journal of Italian Cinema and Media Studies International Conference at the American University of Rome. He remained in Rome for several weeks to conduct research for an article on the circulation of blockbuster films in Rome in the mid-1960s. The article was recently accepted and will appear in a special issue of *Comunicazioni sociali*, titled *(Italian) Cinemas and Moviegoing. Places, businesses, people*. In Summer 2024, Bowen taught a new online version of ITAL 332: Studies in Italian Cinema, cross-listed with Film & Media Studies. In Fall 2024, he converted ITAL/FMS 330: Cinematic Rome from an 8-week online course to a full semester, in-person course. One of the highlights of his year was teaching ITAL 110: Elementary Italian to a great group of students. Another memorable moment was hosting a true master of cinematography, Luciano Tovoli, in ITAL 330. Tovoli met with students on a videocall to discuss his work with Dario Argento on the giallo film *Tenebrae* (1982).



Patrizio Ceccagnoli had one of the most successful years of his career. His English translations of Antonella Anedda's *Historiae* (NYRB), in collaboration with Susan Stewart, was shortlisted for the Oxford-Weidenfeld Translation Prize and won two prestigious awards: the 2024 Derek Walcott Prize and the Harold Morton Landon Translation Award, conferred by the Academy of American Poets. He submitted the



Patrizio Ceccagnoli (center) with Antonella Anedda, her husband Flaminio, art historian Giulia Paoletti and film director Mamadou Dia

manuscript of two poetry books in English translation, an article on Giacomo Leopardi and animal studies, and interviewed the current Oxford Professor of Poetry, A. E. Stallings. Invited to talk at the Oxford Translation Day, he spoke about his work on Anne Carson's books. Professionally, the highlight of his year was the mini tour with one of his favorite writers, the Italian poet and essayist Antonella Anedda, with whom he spoke about contemporary literature and art at the University of Virginia and at Northwestern University. It was an unforgettable trip the memory of which he will treasure for the years to come.



In May, Bruce Hayes had the honor of hooding his doctoral student, Rebecca Wetzal, who successfully defended her dissertation on Montaigne. Rebecca is now a lecturer at Ohio State University. In February, he welcomed to campus his colleague Charles-Louis Morand Métivier from the University of Vermont

to talk about his latest research on emotions in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. In March, he was able to take his honors thesis student, Marian Frick, to Chicago to attend the Renaissance Society of America's annual conference, where she was able to share ideas related to her project on Marguerite de Navarre with top scholars in the field. While there, he also had

the chance to meet up with several KU alums in Chicago. In the spring, the highlight of his Business French class was having the students participate in a French version of the TV show *Shark Tank*, with several alums serving as judges of the students' start-up presentations via Zoom. It was a lot of fun, and if you would like to volunteer to be a judge next spring, please let him know! At the end of May, he met up with Caroline Jewers in Valencia, Spain for the annual Mediterranean Studies Association conference. After that, he was able to spend time in Montpellier with a couple of KU alums and had the chance to visit the School of Medicine there, where Rabelais was a student and where Laurent Joubert served as chancellor. He is currently finishing revisions on his study of Joubert's *Treatise on*



Top: Bruce Hayes and Rebecca Wetzal at her doctoral hooding ceremony. **Middle:** Bruce Hayes meeting with alums in Chicago. **Bottom:** Charles-Louis Morand Métivier presenting at the Hall Center.

Laughter that will be published next year. This fall he taught his freshman honors seminar on "Humor from the Margins of French Literature" and a combined undergraduate/graduate course on the obscene and the grotesque in French literature



This newsletter is a great place to remember fond moments from a year that has once again flown by. First up, Caroline Jewers enjoyed working with French Club this spring on a variety of events from cheese trivia (and tasting!) to a volunteer afternoon at the Humane Society. In the spring, along with teaching courses on French for Reading Knowledge and a course that juxtaposed medieval and modern fiction, she published an article in the journal *Neophilologus* on the Song of Roland, medieval encyclopedias, and the First Crusade. This year's graduation was gratifying and celebratory as always, and Professor Jewers enjoyed seeing her doctoral student Ellen Collier finally hooded after her successful defense in the fall of 2023, after which she left to take up a post-doctoral teaching position at the University of Burgundy in Dijon. In late May Professor



Students in the French and Italian Clubs volunteering at the Lawrence Humane Society

Jewers attended the Mediterranean Studies Association conference held in Valencia, Spain, and is pictured here with Bruce Hayes and KU graduates Marcus and Olivia Höhne, who were visiting with their lovely baby son, Johannes. Caroline Jewers gave a talk on the French mystery writer, Fred

Vargas, and Bruce Hayes spoke on Rabelais and Calvin. After returning to London, she even caught up with Patrizio Ceccagnoli as he attended a poetry prize-giving in Oxford. Professor Jewers is on leave currently, and this break from teaching allowed her to fulfill an ambition she has had since her undergraduate years: to take Italian language again! She spent five weeks in Assisi going diligently to classes and was very happy to be a student once more!



Van Kelly attended one professional colloquium, the 20th and 21st Century International French and Francophone Studies in February, where he presented his paper “Anamorphoses of the Quest: Disappearing Authors and Texts in Mohamed Mbougar Sarr’s *La plus secrète mémoire des hommes*.” His article, “The Language Desert: Jubilation and Barrenness in Saint-John Perse’s *Anabase* and Lorand Gaspar’s *Sol absolu*,” appeared in the journal *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies: Sites*, volume 28.4 (2024). In the spring he taught a graduate seminar, “Paris in Film and Photography,” to a class of excellent French majors, minors, and graduate students, and in the fall he taught the celebrated French 326 where fifteen French majors and minors received their introduction to French drama, novel, and poetry (especially poetry, the last poems of the semester being Léopold Sédar Senghor’s “À New York” and Aimé Césaire’s “Mot macoumba” and “Ode à la Guinée”). In June, he visited Paris where he studied at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, but spent the afterhours at the fabulous Marché d’Aligre and then at his favorite *boîte de Crossfit*, “Original Addicts,” rue Bréguet, 11^{ème}.



Top: Caroline Jewers with Ellen Collier at Ellen’s doctoral hooding ceremony. Bottom: Sunset in Valencia, Spain.



Over the last year Mary Byrd Kelly has continued teaching French grammar and phonetics as well as a course she teaches in English on France and the French. The latter class is especially fun for her as it allows her to share French history, culture and traditions with students who may not speak a word of the French language. Mary also continues her translation work, with an article on Mitterand’s handling of Rwanda due to appear in the spring 2025.



I look back on this past year with fondness. I spent the summer in Busan perfecting my Korean (I have been learning for the past 18 months) and connecting to different scholars working on science fiction. There are many parallels between France and South Korea as both countries are very proud of their language and national cuisine, emphasize arts and culture, and have a long-standing ambivalent

relationship with their neighbor (Germany and Japan). I completed the final edits of a chapter on K-superzombies in TV shows that will appear in a collected volume in 2025. I argue in this piece that, in Korean zombie series, there is as great a fear of the imposition of martial law as of the zombie outbreak itself, and this has proved to



At a sheep café in Seoul

be a very time observation, given recent events in the country. Early in 2024, my critical edition of a 17th-century play was published as part of major collection on French provincial theater with Paris publishers Garnier. I gave a paper at a conference dedicated to Jean Racine’s *Phèdre*, a play I have taught



Enjoying bingsu, Korean shaved ice, in Busan with Prof. Alex Taek-Gwang Lee, a scholar of science fiction and French philosophy.

countless times but never published on; I am reworking my paper for inclusion in an edited volume. With former PhD student Christina Lord, now associate professor of French at UNC Wilmington, I co-edited a special issue of the French comic-book series “Valérien et Laureline” (1967-2010) for the journal *European Comic Art*, and it will come out in spring 2025. The science-fiction series has had a huge impact on popular culture, not least on George Lucas who

found a lot of inspiration for his *Star Wars* worldbuilding in the graphic novels. In recognition of our research on science fiction in French, both Christina and I were invited on to the advisory board of *ReS Futurae*, the leading French science-fiction journal and the sister publication of the iconic *Science Fiction Studies*.

Next year I look forward to co-directing the Paris Summer Language Institute and to helping oversee the roll-out of the Paris Summer Institute, the English version that will run concurrent to our traditional program. I will then spend a month in Seoul researching webtoons, developing my expertise in graphic novels.



Kim Swanson continues to serve as the director of the elementary and intermediate-level French program, and thoroughly enjoys working with our TAs and lecturers who teach our 100- and 200-level courses. After a couple of years of continually adapting our courses to the different teaching

modalities required by the pandemic, it is fantastic to be back fully in person, with the “normal” classroom interactions that are so essential to language learning! Professor Swanson continues work on her study of the effects (or lack of effects) of using dictation in elementary and intermediate-level French. Her newest project in conjunction with KU’s Open Language Resource Center is a French phonetics textbook/online program that will be open access, free for use by both university and K-12 teachers of French. The activities will be interactive and provide learners with immediate feedback, also making this a very useful resource for those who are learning French independently, outside of a classroom. While the program focuses on Standard/International French, as the version that is recognized and understood by Francophones around the world, it also presents variations found in other Francophone regions/countries.

Ted Johnson



J. Theodore “Ted” Johnson Jr. passed away peacefully at his home on September 29, 2024, with his wife and children nearby. Ted was born on June 8, 1936, in New York City to Barbara Salmon and J. Theodore Johnson. Ted’s father, a noted artist and Guggenheim Fellow, informed his

exploration of his artistic talents and interest in art, language and French culture. He spent his early years in Minneapolis, MN until the family moved to San José, CA in the early 1940s. Ted graduated from Fremont High School and graduated with great distinction and Honors in French from San José State College in 1958.

Ted received a Fulbright scholarship and studied at the Centre Médiéval at the University of Poitiers, France from 1958-1959. The following year he was a Fulbright lecturer at the University of Poitiers. Ted received his Master’s in French at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1961, the same year he met his future wife Mary Greenwood, a fellow PhD student. They met sorting slides of France for the French Club. Ted and Mary were married in June 1962 in Woodmere, NY. Ted received his PhD from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1964 and was hired as Assistant Professor of French at Princeton University, NJ, where he taught from 1964-1968.

In 1968, Ted and Mary with their children, Stephen and Anne, moved to Lawrence, KS, where Ted was hired as an Associate Professor of French from 1968-1975, then Chair of the Department of French and Italian from 1969-1971, and Professor of French from 1975 to 2001.

From 1972 to 1974, Ted directed the KU Junior Year Abroad Program in Bordeaux and the Johnsons lived in France, residing again in Bordeaux during the 1976-1977 academic year when Ted received a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship to study the interrelationship of

ideas surrounding the works of Marcel Proust and Claude Monet. He also co-directed the KU Summer Language Institute in Paris during the summers of 1981 and 1983.

Ted was a fervent supporter of the liberal arts and humanities, and conducted courses pro bono in the humanities as well as freshman honors tutorial programs at KU from 1975 to 2000. After retirement, he continued teaching the honors tutorial until 2010. He was a champion of the French Club and along with Mary hosted many dinner parties and events celebrating French culture over several decades, including their annual iconic Bastille Day party.

Teaching was one of Ted’s greatest joys. His teaching evaluations garnered accolades far above the norm for they reflect a professor who imparted wisdom and courage, bravery and risk to his pupils. The outpouring of love and remembrances from his former students has been a true testament to his lasting impact and his rare gifts. Student evaluations often named Ted as the best professor they ever had while attending KU. Ted was awarded the H.O.P.E. award in 1992, an award for which he was most proud as it was student generated. He also received a Mortar Board Teaching Award for outstanding educator in 1975, and the Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1978.

Ted left an indelible mark on friends, students, and all those with an open mind and heart by engaging in lively and memorable exchanges of ideas. In his gentle, improvisational manner, Ted nurtured new perceptions and interrelationships concerning a multitude of diverse topics. He freely offered this to all takers, expanding their view of the world and sense of creative potential and of shared humanness. He did this with sheer love and joy, and will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

You can read the full obituary and leave condolences [here](#).

Bryant C. Freeman



University of Kansas Professor Emeritus Bryant C. Freeman died February 3, 2024 at age 92, best known as Founder and Director of its Institute of Haitian Studies. First American admitted to France’s prestigious Ecole Normale Supérieure (Paris) and a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of

Virginia, he received an M.A. and Ph.D. in French Language and Literature from Yale University while both a Woodrow Wilson and Yale University Fellow. After teaching at Yale and the University of Virginia (1955-1971), he was appointed Professor of French at the University of Kansas (1971-2007), serving as Chair of French & Italian (1971-1976).

Beginning as a teen-ager, he was an inveterate world traveler, spending time in 85 countries.

While frequently on extended leave, Dr. Freeman was in charge of screening Haitian refugees for the Dept. of Justice at the US Naval Base, Guantánamo, Cuba, and served as instructor in Haiti for United Nations/OAS observers as well as for US Peace Corps volunteers. With the protocol rank of Major-General, he was advisor for US and UN Peace-Keeping Forces in Haiti.

Among his many publications are a six-volume Haitian-English English-Haitian Dictionary and a three-volume Medicine in Haiti, including Third-World Folk Beliefs and Practices: Haitian Medical Anthropology. His Survival Creole was published also in French, Spanish, and German editions. For publication in the Haitian language, he collected and edited two volumes of some 150 Haitian folktales, as well as an 18-volume edition of the complete works of Haiti’s great novelist Carrié Paultre. The US State Department entrusted him to provide the official English translation of President Aristide’s resignation message.

Almost his entire adult life was enhanced by the company

of Clumber Spaniels. He was a founding member of both the Charlottesville-Albemarle Kennel Club and the Clumber Spaniel Club of America, Inc., later serving as president of each. For many years he was the breed’s official representative to the American Kennel Club, and authored its Clumber column. He published nine books on Clumbers, and was on the committee to rewrite the breed’s Standard.


Among his numerous accolades are a Lifetime Achievement Award for Service to the Haitian People, a US Dept. of Justice Special Service Award, Kansas Humanities Council and Kansas French Educator of the Year Awards.

He is survived by his wife Stephanie Freeman of the home, and by his son Timothy Freeman and grandson Henrik Freeman, of Seattle, WA

You can read the full obituary and leave condolences [here](#).



Department of French, Francophone & Italian Studies

 frenital@ku.edu

 frenchitalian.ku.edu

 [/kufrenchitalian](https://www.facebook.com/kufrenchitalian)

 [@ku_italian](https://www.instagram.com/ku_italian)