

A l'écoute

French/Arabic/ESL studies

Modern Language Newsletter Spring 2022

Award winners 2022

There were three winners of the Celine Philibert award, all French minors:

1. Steven Higgins is a first-year student from Buffalo, interested in anthropology and politics, and passionate about French, who has just been elected vice-president of the SGA. This spring Steven helped to plan and host the visit of high school students on exchange from Nogent, France who habitually spend one day at the College. He helped design and run a scavenger hunt with information about the College and the North Country. Below is Stephen (center) in the FREN 103 class, with his guitar that he brought to support the subjunctive workshop, in which Lunt typically uses a folksong with extra verses supplied by the students pertinent to their own lives. We sang each new verse. Former French students may well remember "Mon Papa ne veut pas que je danse la polka" as an ear worm!



David Charles (left, Brazilian-Parisian student), Steven (center) & Debra Backus (right)

2. Lee Kenneth-Walsh is a graduating senior psychology major with minors in French and Human services. She will be attending University of Buffalo in the fall for her Masters in Social Work. She hopes to pursue a career in school or community counseling. Here is Lee at graduation with Lora Lunt and with her family.



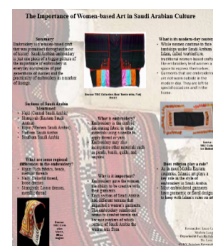
3. Rebecca Matte, from Rome, NY, finished her senior year at SUNY Potsdam with flying colors. As a voice student, she played major roles in this

year's operas and included pieces in French in her senior recital. Ms. Matte is a member of both French and Music Honors societies, and, as our PAC (Peer Academic Councilor, photo on left below) in fall 2021, she played a leadership role in the programs of the Department of Modern Languages. For the Honors Society induction ceremony, Rebecca performed a solo in French, with piano accompaniment by Crane School professor Jeff Francom (recital photo on right).



Dr. Kambiz Ghazinour, Departmental Scholar Award, is Associate Professor of Cyber Security at SUNY Canton. As a Persian-Canadian he speaks multiple languages, but his passion for French language has led him to pursue a 2nd BA in French. He considers himself lucky to have the opportunity to still be a student after 12 years of post-secondary education.

News from our programs

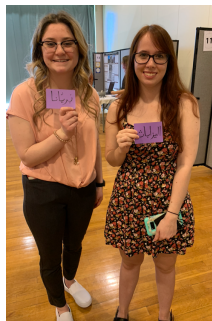


French and Arabic students were active in this year's in-person **Research Fair**. Students from Arabic 102 challenged passers-by to identify at least one Arab country on our map of the Middle East North Africa. (Only one identified all, with a little help.) Three students shared posters of their research: **Avery Sullivan** (*History of Tunisian politics*) and **Lacie Castile** (*The Importance of women-based Art in Saudi Arabian Culture*-image above), and Debra Backus (FREN 103).

French 103 students made Jeopardy game questions on French and Francophone cultures, including information and statistics about France's (superior) health care, based on research by auditor **Debra Backus**, retired instructor of Nursing from SUNY Canton, who actively engaged in the class in preparation for running the Paris marathon in September 2022! Debra's poster with information on health care in France for tourists is on the right; Avery's is on the left in the photo below.



Ayisha Khalid (ARAB 203) and Avery Sullivan (ARAB 102) engaging with Tabitha Brown, applied learning adviser from the Loughheed Center for Applied Learning, who comments: "It was wonderful to see the enthusiasm that you and your students have for your languages and cultures! My children - in their 20's - were very excited to see their names written in Arabic, and I will be giving them the cards with their names when next I see them- to use as bookmarks. What a personal way to share the language!"



Happy students, Briana and Elizabeth, holding their names in Arabic (above) and interacting with Avery Sullivan (below).



Lacie Castile (Arabic Studies Minor, below), while presenting her research on Saudi women's art, also wrote names in Arabic, here shown with Karen Kus-Misiak, Career Services, while explaining Arabic writing and her research.



Students pause to check out MENA map

Arabic Club



We felt safe enough to plan an Arabic Club activity, masked, decorating eggs with geometric and floral patterns. We even tried some of the calligraphy word stamps donated by Gunnar Anderson, though they were difficult to use on a curved surface. Participants: Avery Sullivan + two Clarkson students.

Alumni

John Davidson (French Major, Arabic & Linguistics minors, class of 2019) reports: "My teaching job has been such a delight; I truly enjoy working with kids in the school and all the challenges that come along with it. I've been subbing all over the school

district for K-12 and I think the younger children are much easier, ...though there are a slew of problems these days that I never had in high school and that was only 6 years ago. But all in all I've been enjoying substituting and it's been making me strongly consider applying for a masters in education. I hope all is well up in Potsdam with graduation approaching!"

At the opening of the "Hearth" by the Anthropology Department this spring, Lora Lunt found a fascinating and well-written article by John, *Language: Uniquely Human, But How Long Have We had it?* in the 2019 **Collegiate Anthropologist** journal.

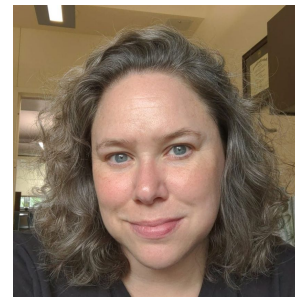


Gemma Small (2021 grad with majors in French and History Ed), enjoyed her first job teaching history this spring and reports her engagement to Tajae Hickson. At the 2021 Research Fair, Gemma won **first prize** for her Kilmer research project on the intersection of language, history and cultures, in Hergé's cartoon character *Tintin and the Blue Lotus* and the author's changing views of "the other" (the Japanese and Chinese).

Amanda (Pacquette) Lalonde (French Education, 2010), is an educator living in Cornwall, Ontario. Her youngest is about to start school in a Francophone environment, l'Ecole élémentaire catholique Marie Tanguay. It is a pleasure to see opportunities offered in neighboring Cornwall to support the French language.



Corinne Spencer (TESOL interdepartmental major) reports: "I completed my CGS in International Education Management at University at Albany, and continue to work on my PhD in Educational Policy & Leadership with a Higher Education concentration there. This summer I will step-up into the role of the Academic Achievement Training Coordinator, taking over our summer preparatory program for incoming, first-year international students at Binghamton University. I'm excited to take on my first truly administrative role. Despite being the ELI Tutor & Mentor Coordinator and ELI Web & Social Media Coordinator, I haven't had to deal with much in the way of admin, beyond crunching data, as the tutors and mentors are tied to classes and the social media bit rarely runs afoul. Finally, as if that wasn't enough, I completed Community Emergency Response Training. That will make sense next year, when I go ABD! My students are still a bit fuzzy, but I'm so happy to have them back face-to-face. When teaching ESL, writing online is a challenge, especially with most of the class in China!"



Faculty News

Mylene Catel has published a new book of poetry.

Lora Lunt did a peer review for Syracuse University Press of *Journals of Salt: Tunisian Women's Writings on Experiences of Political Imprisonment*, edited by Haifa Zangana, translated from Arabic by Katharine Halls and Nariman Yousef. She went to the ACTFL Conference this year by Zoom.

The new General Education Program

With the reduced language requirement in General education, we are teaching new courses in the general education "Pathways" program. In her new WAYS 103 **"French in North America: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion"**, Lora Lunt drew on some of the stories from the *Spark: Nos Histoires*, a collection of stories from former students at

Potsdam with a Francophone heritage that she created in 2019 to use in French 103 classes (after translating them into English). One was the story that **Philip Paige** (Madrid, NY) wrote about the lives of his Quebec ancestors of the Fournier family who immigrated to Massena, and his descent from the first baby born to the French in the New World, Hélène Deportes. The last story was the 2019 graduation speech by SGA President, Guinean-American **Kadiatou Balde**, poignantly describing the challenges she faced as an immigrant. Kadi took time to visit with students via Zoom so they could ask her questions.



Other guest speakers in the Diversity class were **Ryan Ransom**, our Mohawk instructor, discussing challenges faced by Akwesasne, and answering questions about the Mohawk language; and **Blair Madore**, Math Department and Faculty Assembly Chair (through a recording), remembering the ethnic cleansing of the Acadians in 1755 (all the students learned that date and its relationship to our own revolution), and introducing the “Speak White!” theme of challenges faced by those exiled Acadians as Cajuns in Louisiana.

College in High School Program

Local high school students have an option to get credit for FREN 103 and 203 through the College in High School program. After virtual class visits last year, Lora Lunt enjoyed in-person liaison visits in Colton-Pierrepont, Ogdensburg, and Massena (masked, of course).

In Ogdensburg, Potsdam alum **Jonathan Lomaki** was pleased that he had one French class with students getting College credit this year.



In Colton-Pierrepont High School, in **Danielle Dalbec Edwards’** class, Lunt had time not only to discuss North African culture with images from her travel courses to France - Tunisia or Spain-Morocco, but also to introduce Arabic letters and to write students names in Arabic (we can see the student names inscribed in Arabic on top of the PowerPoint in the photo above, as well as Lunt’s favorite calligraphy dove, drawn with the words “hub wa salaam” - love & peace). *Les étudiants de Madame Edwards savaient déjà quelque chose concernant l’art et l’architecture islamique.* Bravo! Lunt was pleased with the cultural knowledge as well as the speaking ability of Edwards’ students.

In **Massena Central School**, Lunt interacted with classes of our alumni **Debra Gainey** and **David DeRushia**. With BA and masters from SUNY Potsdam, DeRushia has taught English language learners in Lisbon and French in St Lawrence Central and Norwood Norfolk. Now at Massena High School, David is responsible for advanced students in French IV, V and the students in the IB program, some of whom are getting college credit through SUNY Potsdam. And one of the graduating seniors reported that she would be happy to devote herself to the French Club next fall when she is a new French major at SUNY Potsdam! We look forward to working with our incoming enthusiastic majors and minors!



Editor: Lora Lunt