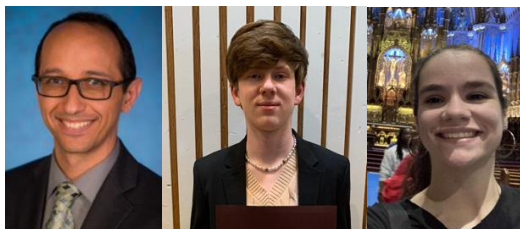


# A l'écoute



## French/ESL/Arabic Studies Modern Languages Newsletter Spring 2023

### French Award Winners 2023



All three award winners are extremely passionate about French:

**Kambiz Ghazinour Naini, Modern Languages Award**, is chair of Cyber Security at SUNY Canton, but has been in love with French since childhood.

**Stephen Higgins, Philibert Award**, is passionate about French but also interested in anthropology, International studies and politics.

**Ami Porter, Canfield Award**, is a transfer student from Clinton Community College who aims to apply her passion to becoming a French teacher.

### French Club Activities

French major, Ami Porter, devoted herself to reviving the French Club, with help from Steven Higgins, Annabelle Kahle, Mohamed Sako, who gave a report on the Ivory Coast, and Eve Borelli, who designed the new French Club logo and made buttons for club members to wear. Ami planned games each week on French and Francophone language and culture to both entertain and inform. Danielle Edwards, adjunct instructor, now retired from Pierrepont High School, supported the group by bringing homemade cookies several times, as well as sharing detailed cultural knowledge on whatever was the topic of the day!

### Montreal Fieldtrips

Hurray! After three years dealing with COVID

restrictions, we resumed our Montreal fieldtrips on October 8, 2022. We went to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts with students from French club, French classes, WAYS 103 "French in North America," and three art students, led by professors **Caroline Downing** (Art History) and **Lora Lunt** (Modern Languages).



Avery Sullivan, Lora Lunt, Jacob Froats, Annabelle Kahle, Ami Porter, Hannah Manning, Madison Mundy, C McGinnis, Charles Patterson (photo by Caroline Downing) October 2022

The spring fieldtrip featured the Pointe à Caillère Museum of archeology and history and important sites in the Vieille Ville, with trip leaders Lora Lunt and **Danielle Edwards**.



The Basilique de Notre Dame, with Eve Borelli, Steven Higgins, Lora Lunt, Mohamed Sako, Ali Dia, Ami Porter, Catherine Phippen, Danielle Edwards, Denzel Dwaah

## Student reflections on the fieldtrips

Fall 2022

“Dear Dr. Lunt, Thank you so much for bringing us on this trip. It was truly an amazing experience going to Montreal with such a fun group and being able to immerse myself into the artwork at the fine arts museum. Also, I found a lot of joy in connecting with the other students in our group because we shared a common interest, and we were able to express it with each other. I feel like some of the connections I made, specifically the ones with Zach and Avery, are some that I’ll have a very long time. So once again, thank you Dr. Lunt, for bringing us on this trip and creating an environment where we were able to connect with ourselves, each other, and the beauty of art. This was an unforgettable experience.



WAYS 103 students next to the mummy exhibit

**Caleb Froats** (Music), **Zach Seitzer**, faithful French Club supporter, **Avery Sullivan**, Arabic Studies minor, International Studies, French student

“My favorite parts of the trip were seeing the artwork from Ancient Egypt and Africa. Also, the indigenous art exhibit on the top floor of the Quebec Pavillion, and the really large abstract paintings on the bottom floor were really interesting to me. Lastly, eating lunch in Montreal and having free time in the old city was really enjoyable for me.”

Sincerely, **Caleb Froats**, WAYS 103

## Spring 2023 fieldtrip reflections:

### Notre Dame de Bonsecours



**Ali Dia**, **Mohamed Sako**, and **Denzel Dwaah**, with the camera he used to make a video of the fieldtrip, which he showed to his WAYS 103 class. Denzel commented, “Best trip ever!”

**Catherine Phippen** (WAYS 103) reports, “I have never visited Canada before, so this was a positive first experience! Visiting the Notre Dame Basilica showed how beautiful French Catholic architecture is. Montreal is such a beautiful city and I’m glad I got the chance to visit.”

**Grace Mashaw** (WAYS 103). “Visiting Canada was a very enriching experience. Seeing the churches with the art and architecture was informative. Also being around people who spoke French was a good way to be involved in French culture.”



**Hanna Manning** (Spanish Major, French for Business student) with **Ami Porter** (French major) in the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts October 8, 2022

**Eve Borelli**: “Overall, the trip taught me how to immerse myself in another culture through learning about their history, art, and religion. I learned what it felt like to walk into a country not knowing about their culture and language.”



**Ali Dia**, **Mohamed Sako**, **Denzel Dwaah**, **Lora Lunt**, **Ami Porter**, **Eve Borelli** (photo by Danielle Edwards)

## Alumni

**Yanilvia Reyes-Medrano** (French major)

“This year has started as a roulette for me: January 16 I started a new job after 3 years and 7 months of working as a Case Manager with victims of domestic violence.” Dissatisfied with working as Resource Coordinator in the area of housing for victims of domestic violence, and

eager to work directly with clients, she found the job she wanted: “on February 16th I started my first job as a Social Worker with victims of domestic violence. Better yet, work is only 20 minutes from home and with the privilege of working 2 days from home.”

**Elora Garland Clemens**  
**(French & Communications Majors)**

recently received a promotion from the French company, Schneider Electric where she has been working since leaving Potsdam. Elora is expecting her second child. Below: Elora & Naomi (soon to be age three).



**Taisha Carpentier** (French Minor) very kindly made herself available for a live interview Fall 2022 with the WAYS 103 class (on the theme of French in North America), representing the experience of immigrants from French-speaking countries. Students were pleased to see her working in an office at Columbia University. Taisha has just reported that she is now working for a **French** company in the US.

Spring 2023, after receiving one of the letters from the WAYS 103 class assignment (Write a letter to Taisha or Kadiatou showing your understanding of the personal and societal assumptions about differences and tell what you would have done to help them in your high school), Taisha replied: “It truly warms my heart to hear what they would have done if they were in the same school as me.”

**ESL Program**

**Corinne Spencer** (SIM in TESOL)

After completing a CGS in International Education Management at University at Albany, Rinn is now working on her PhD in Educational Policy & Leadership with a Higher Education concentration. She reports that she has a good doctoral committee and that her thesis topic is:

“References, expectations, and awareness of emergency communication by international students on US campuses.” She has been the administrator of SUNY Binghamton’s summer preparatory program for incoming first-year international students. At Potsdam she served as a teaching assistant for Lora Lunt in the ESL 497 course and the Conversation Partners program designed to help international students with both English language and American culture.

**Arabic Studies**

The “**Dialog Partners**” for students in the Arabic Studies program is an outgrowth and continuation of SUNY Potsdam’s 2006 exchange agreement with the Higher Institute of Management (ISG) in Tunis, Tunisia (funded by a State Department Middle East North Africa program initiative (MEPI) grant directed by **Ed Portugal**, Business, and **Lora Lunt**, Modern Languages). We have continued to collaborate with some of the eight faculty from the ISG who came to Potsdam in 2003-2004 to improve their English skills, and who were able to teach a course that year at SUNY Potsdam.

Professor **Imène Chakroun**, now teaching at the English-language **Tunis Business School**, provided partners fall 2022 for students in Arabic 101 and Arabic 350 (North African Literature and Culture), and, by special request, for Avery Sullivan, who was not in either class but who had enjoyed her dialog experiences in the previous year in both the Tunisia partner exchange (ARAB 101) and the SOLIYA program, and was eager to continue with the single-partner exchange experience.

Professor **Mourad Touzani**, at the **NEOMA Business School** in France, found partners for FREN 202 French for Business. A musician as well as a professor, Mourad shared his expertise with the ARAB 350 North African Literature and Culture class, on the topic of **Malouf**, the traditional music that represents a fusion of cultures that came back to North Africa with the 1492 expulsion of Muslims from Spain. Local imam, Tarik, very kindly gave an excellent lecture for the same class on the music of Egyptian star Umm Kulthoum.



Students in the virtual exchange enjoyed learning about and sharing news about the lives of their exchanger partners, which is the third objective of a Peace Corps experience that led their professor, Lora Lunt, to pursue her mission of international exchange and fostering cross-cultural understanding, based on her two years of service in Tunisia teaching English to the first generation of girls in Tunisia to get an education.

**Joshua Jones**, who participated in a Winterim 2009 Travel Course to Tunisia, responds to my comment on his Facebook post about the value of the study of philosophy: “Hey, you never know! They could be working in Paris or a former French colony, maybe even a place like Tunisia where everything you taught prepared them!” “Case in point. I became a history teacher and now teach about Carthage, Rome, the Islamic empires, the economics of olives, and modern revolutions. All of which you had a part in teaching me directly and indirectly! Plus the kids love seeing me with my baby face wearing a Berber cloak riding on a camel across the Sahara.” ❤️” We love hearing how people have applied the Travel Course experience!



Above: Joshua Jones (and Hilary Wilcox?)



Group photo, Tunisia Winterim, 2009. Students dressed to ride the “ship of the desert.” Joshua is 4<sup>th</sup> from the left. The course included 1 Chinese, 2 Taiwanese, and a Muslim American, and all contributed from diverse views of country of origin, ethnicity, religion, academic discipline, etc. The Taiwanese English Major, with only one

semester of French, and a French major from SUNY Albany were able to apply their language skills to serve as translators. One of the best field courses ever!

**Next travel course?** Diane Edwards and Lora Lunt are working on plans for a May 2024 travel course to France, following Graduation. Keep on the alert for updates!

### Graduation May 20, 2023



**Hanna Manning** (Spanish major), at graduation.

There were no French majors at graduation, evidence of our country’s turning away from the importance of language study in this global world. Hanna is an exception, a multi-lingual scholar who in her final semester courageously (and successfully) took FREN 202, coming straight from FREN 101, along with Arabic 101 (both with Lora Lunt) to add to her Spanish major and Italian heritage.

### Retirements

**Dr. Mylene Catel**, professor of French and our French poet-in-residence, celebrated retirement as of January 2023.

**Dr. Gunnar Anderson**, who plans to retire at the end of August, greatly contributed to the Arabic Studies program.

Our thanks go out to our colleagues, professors Catel and Anderson, for their years of service. We send them our very best wishes for an enjoyable, well-earned, and restful retirement!

**Editor** Lora G. Lunt