French Studies and the Nation

by Todd W. Reeser, Associate Professor of French

Department of French and Italian, University of Pittsburgh

With recent events and cultural trends in France putting into question what “France” and “francité” (“Frenchness”) mean, students and scholars working in French departments and programs are increasingly thinking about what these terms and the ideas behind them suggest in the 20th and 21st centuries as well as in earlier periods. Approaching such questions often entails examining how national constructs are articulated discursively, as well as conducting theoretically and contextually informed readings of primary texts, such as literature, film, art, architecture, media, advertisements, comic strips, maps, music, travel guides, travel narratives, political tracts, and other cultural artifacts. We might reconsider a classic or canonical literary text that has not been read from the perspective of the French nation, or we might bring in other kinds of texts that have rarely been taken into account. Or we might do both. We are often as interested in how France is constructed as we are in how the French nation is a slippery construct, how it is never fully present, and how it is in constant danger of coming into non-existence. Literary and cultural texts, then, are read as both constructing and deconstructing the nation.

French faculty and PhD students in the Department of French and Italian at the University of Pittsburgh are actively engaged in thinking about the meaning of “France” and “francité” from a number of vantage points. Consequently, faculty research in these areas focuses on questions of nation and politics in a variety of different socio-historical contexts. In pre-modern French contexts, questions of gender, religion, and kingship are frequently essential to these questions, and studying the early French nation often involves entering into paradigms radically different from those that we are used to seeing in the twenty-first century. For instance, a major topic of debate around the nation in the medieval and Renaissance periods was whether France had been settled by Trojans who had left Asia Minor after the Greeks captured Troy (and thus whether the French were “cousins” of the Romans whose ancestors were supposedly Trojan).

The French nation in its modern sense is often considered a nineteenth-century invention, but pre-modern texts reveal all kinds of ways in which a proto-nation or a nation-like entity is being thought and articulated, many of which are studied and taught by the pre-modern specialists in the Department. A medieval specialist, Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski is currently studying two 14th-century political thinkers (Pierre Dubois and Philippe de Mézières) whose writings on the recuperation and colonization of the Holy Land reveal a marked tension between national and international interests. While crusades and military orders have international dimensions, the focus on France’s role in these endeavors shows a marked interest in defining France as a nation in a European context. This work is part of her current book project, “The Dream World of Philippe de Mézières: Politics and Spirituality in the Later Middle Ages.”

Kirsten Fudeman, who recently completed a monograph dealing with the roles played by the French language and French literary culture in shaping medieval Jewish identity, is working on a second, entitled “Sweet France’ and the Jews,” which explores how French- and Occitan-
Monday, March 15th
Lecture: “Rights, Difference, Exclusions”
Etienne Balibar is Professor Emeritus at Université de Paris X-Nanterre and Distinguished Professor of French and Italian and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Irvine. This lecture will be followed by a reception. 5:00 p.m., University Club Ballroom B. For more information about any of the Balibar lectures, visit www.humcenter.pitt.edu or contact Todd Reeser at reeser@pitt.edu.

Tuesday, March 16th
Lecture: “Ideas of Europe: Colloquium and Discussion”
Prof. Etienne Balibar. 12:30 p.m., 4130 Posvar Hall.

Thursday, March 18th
Lecture: “Crime and Madness: A Dubious Abnormality”
Prof. Etienne Balibar. The suggested reading for this event is Michel Foucault's Abnormal, Lectures at the Collège de France 1974-1975.

Saturday, March 20th
5th Graduate Conference on the EU: “The EU Past and Present: Historical and Ongoing Discussions and Debates”
This conference highlights student research that addresses some of the challenges currently facing the EU. For more information, visit www.ucis.pitt.edu/euce/events/gradconf/index.html. Contact EUconf@pitt.edu with questions.

Monday, March 22nd
European Colloquium Lecture: “Violence and Gender in Central Europe After World War I”
Dr. Eliza Ablovatski of Kenyon College was a fellow at the Center of Comparative European History in Berlin for two years and holds a PhD from Columbia University. 4:00 - 5:45 p.m., History Lounge, Posvar Hall.

Tuesday, March 23rd
Lecture: “Race, Culture, and the Genealogical Order”
Prof. Etienne Balibar. The suggested reading for this event is William Faulkner’s Absalom, Absalom! 12:30 p.m., 602 Cathedral of Learning.

Thursday, March 25th
Lecture: “Masculinities/Feminities”
Prof. Etienne Balibar. The suggested reading for this event is Joan Copjec’s Sex and the Euthanasia of Reason.

Friday, March 26th
Lecture: “Thinking the Impossible Human”
Prof. Etienne Balibar. 2:00 p.m., G24 Cathedral of Learning.

Speaking Jews represented France and the royal domain in their vernacular and Hebrew writings from the 13th to the 15th centuries. Drawing on primary documents in Old French, Occitan, and Hebrew, she is studying how Jews repeatedly asserted their membership in a French national community bound together by the monarchy, as well as how they shared national symbols, a common past composed of real and mythic elements, and hope for a shared future.

Ideas about the nation can also be located within the text of translations themselves, usually by examining what a translator edits out of an ancient text or how he or she turns a phrase from another language into French. I recently finished a project on ways in which Renaissance translation factors in to the discursive construct of the French nation. In it, I examine how Virgil’s ideas on empire are “translated” (as per its Latin sense, “brought across”) from the Aeneid into an early modern context, where the French nation is still very much an unstable construct in need of classical models of empire to solidify itself. I am also continuing to work on a book project on the “translation” of ancient Greek sexuality into various linguistic and cultural contexts of the 15th and 16th centuries.

Other faculty research focuses more directly on political culture and philosophy. Chloé Hogg’s research explores how the political culture of 17th-century absolutism was impacted by new modes of affect, information, subjectivity, and commerce. She is also studying Louis XIV’s wars in a literary and cultural context, with a focus on the relationship between the wars and the development of journalism and early modern practices and concepts of literature, and she is completing a book manuscript, “Absolutist Affections: Love and War in Louis XIV’s France.” A 19th- and 20th-century specialist with long-standing interests in politics, Giuseppina Mecchia recently completed a contribution to a book devoted to the well-known French political philosopher Jacques Rancière, which treats his relation to the history of political philosophy. She is also finishing a chapter for a book entitled Biopolitics and Its Vicissitudes on the contributions of Antonin Artaud and Félix Guattari to Michel Foucault’s formulation of the biopolitical field. Her larger project concerns Franco-Italian connections around political thought from the late 1960s to the current day.

Graduate student interests and coursework are closely connected to questions of politics and the nation as well. We
Is French Fit?

Brett Wells, Lecturer

Department of French and Italian, University of Pittsburgh

Is French fit? It seems French-speakers have been asking themselves this question for centuries. Indeed, when we think of linguistic prescriptivism par excellence, we think perhaps first and foremost of the French and the particular concern they have for the langue de Molière (Grimes 2006). It is precisely this concern that has spawned efforts to purify, and keep pure, the French language. Given anglophones’ relative insouciance in matters of linguistic purity, we might well ask why is it important for the French to have properly “French” terms for things and ideas when borrowed English terms have come along first and have perhaps already been adopted by large numbers of francophones. For example, while pourriel is a perfectly appropriate French word, the English spam is what dominates in everyday speech when speaking about unwanted and unsolicited e-mail messages. What is the point of (re)francizing terminologies? The short answer is that, for French speakers, having French words for things is important even if those words are never used. Indeed, many, perhaps most refrancizations never make their way into spoken discourse. But their existence and possible adoption makes French a “fitter” language than it would be otherwise. Such concern for proper vocabulary often surprises Americans who take pleasure in mocking the failures of authoritative language bodies such as the Académie française or the Office québécois de la langue française to get approved words into francophone mouths. But have they always failed? Have some of their propositions been adopted by speakers? If so, is it possible to explain why certain terms have been accepted and others rejected? These are the questions that drive my present study.

The fitness of classified and specialized vocabularies has been of particular concern since the 1970s when terminological campaigns were launched in both France and Quebec to counter the influx of anglicisms in an effort to demonstrate and ensure that French is as terminologically “fit” as English to function in technical domains. Such work has logically led to terminometric studies to measure the adoption of terms specifically coined to replace borrowed Anglo-Americanisms. Most of these studies have focused on technical vocabularies of obvious political and economic interest: education, the automotive industry, computers, and the internet. Francization efforts in other areas have been more limited. Indeed, very few adoption studies have seriously examined specialized pop culture domains, erroneously assuming that they warrant less attention. Yet it is in these areas that the competition between “properly French” and “borrowed English” terms is most salient because more people know and use the langues de spécialité in question. I attempt to determine how “fit” such French terminologies are in the most literal sense of the term by looking at exercise and fitness vocabularies.

The primary objective of this study is to determine which properly French terms are used when people talk about workouts. In such a context, “properly French” means that the term is featured in a standard or terminological dictionary such as Le Petit Robert or the Grand Dictionnaire Terminologique and/or has been recommended as a replacement for an anglicism. Thus we would want to know whether lifters say développé couché when referring to the bench press, whether aerobic aficionados talk about getting on the escaladery to get their heart rate going, or if people ont déjà fait du cardiovelo when they want to sign up for a new spin class.

To find out to what extent people work out en français, I am using both oral interviews and illustrated surveys to measure the use and/or rejection of properly and necessarily prescriptive French denominations among francophone fitness buffs, weight lifters, and personal trainers. The oral interviews focus on personal workouts or what people do to develop particular parts of the body. Both collection protocols ask subjects to identify physical objects and to describe workout routines (after Paquot 1988). In this way, words for equipment and movements as well as their most common phraseologies can be solicited. The use of both written surveys and oral interviews allows access to what linguist and terminology specialist Jean Quirion (2003) has called “real use” or what people actually say, as well as what Quirion has called “declared use,” or what they say they say. Given the practical, cultural, and symbolic value attached to foreign and especially Anglo-American terms in Quebec and France, gauging both types of “uses” is essential in establishing a metric for implantation, or the extent to which a particular term has made its way into a specialized popular jargon. For example, is développé couché the only term used to refer to the bench press? Is it one of two or more? Is it rarely used? “Declared use” in the written questionnaires reflects the perceived currency of terms and as such helps determine attitudes toward particular denominations and their potential for adoption, reuse, or reassignment. Spontaneous use in the oral interviews, inasmuch as it can be ascertained within a controlled exchange, should reflect actual or “real” term currency. In the course of the interviews conducted and written questionnaires collected thus far, however, a number of unexpected complications have arisen. First, the competition between denominations is not limited to

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FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AND OPPORTUNITIES

SUMMER 2010 & 2010-2011 OPPORTUNITIES

EU STUDIES SUMMER PROGRAM IN BRUSSELS
The EU Studies Summer Program in Brussels offers U.S. and Canadian students the opportunity to study the emergence of a united Europe in its dynamic core. This summer program at the Université Libre de Bruxelles is designed for advanced undergraduate students interested in the politics of the EU. The five-week program features lectures and seminars, meetings with European officials, and site visits to major European institutions and organizations. The program is supplemented by cultural and social events in and around the city, as well as a three-day trip to Luxembourg. For more information, please visit jsis.washington.edu/euc/brussels/ or contact Mark Di Virgilio at euc@u.washington.edu or 206-616-2415. The deadline for applications is March 12, 2010.

UCIS INTERNATIONAL STUDIES FUND
The International Studies Fund is intended to help students at the University of Pittsburgh to conduct research on international issues or in international settings. Full-time graduate and undergraduate students at the University of Pittsburgh from all Schools and Campuses, including degree-seeking international students, are eligible to submit a proposal. For more information, please visit www.ucis.pitt.edu/main/isf.html. Please contact eweiner@pitt.edu with any questions. The deadline for applications is March 15, 2010.

IREX U.S. EMBASSY POLICY SPECIALIST (EPS) PROGRAM
The EPS program provides fellowships to U.S. scholars and professionals for up to eight weeks to serve U.S. Embassies in Eurasia as policy specialists on a chosen topic and pursue their own research project independently. For an application and more information, please visit www.irex.org/programs/us_scholars/uss_info.asp. Please contact the EPS Program Staff at eps@irex.org or 202-628-8188 with any questions. The deadline for applications is March 15, 2010.

TRANS-ATLANTIC SUMMER INSTITUTE IN EUROPEAN STUDIES
The DAAD Center for German & European Studies at the University of Minnesota invites applications to the 10th Trans-Atlantic Summer Institute in European Studies (TASI), July 19-30, 2010. The Institute will bring together 12 European and 12 North American advanced graduate students for an intensive two-week seminar at the University of Minnesota. The 2010 topic is “Gender and Immigrant Life in Europe and North America.” For more information and an application, please visit www.cges.umn.edu/fellowships/tasi.htm. The deadline for applications is March 15, 2010.

SLAVIC AND EAST EUROPEAN SUMMER LANGUAGE INSTITUTE
The 2010 Slavic and East European Summer Language Institute at the University of Pittsburgh offers summer instruction equivalent to one academic year of college level language instruction in the following languages: Russian, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Bulgarian, Czech, Hungarian, Polish, Slovak, and Ukrainian. For more information, visit sli.slavic.pitt.edu. The deadline for applications is March 19, 2010.

NEWMAN AWARD FOR INTERNATIONAL INTERGENERATIONAL PROJECT INITIATIVES
The University Center for International Studies announces the Newman Award for International Intergenerational Project Initiatives. This award is intended to partially support the expenses of international travel incurred by University of Pittsburgh undergraduate and graduate students involved in an academic project with an international intergenerational component. For more information, visit www.ucis.pitt.edu/main/newman.html. The deadline for applications is March 19, 2010.

UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS IN BRATISLAVA SUMMER SCHOOL
The University of Economics in Bratislava, in cooperation with the Vienna University of Economics and Business and the University of Economics-Prague, announces the Summer School of Central European Studies for Slovak and foreign students from August 1-15, 2010 in Bratislava, Vienna, and Prague on the topic “Political and Economic Transformation of Central Europe – Successes and Pitfalls.” For more information, please visit www.euba.sk/summer-school. Please direct questions to cnas@euba.sk. The deadline for applications is March 31, 2010.

2010 SUMMER RESEARCH LABORATORY ON RUSSIA, EAST EUROPE, AND EURASIA
The Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center and the Slavic and East European Library at the University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign are pleased to announce the 2010 Summer Research Laboratory (SRL) on Russia, Eastern Europe, and Eurasia (REEE). Since 1973, the SRL has provided scholars with access to the university’s Slavic and East European Library (one of the largest REEE collections in the country), the services of Slavic Reference Service librarians, and specialized workshops and forums for junior scholars. For more information, please visit www.reeec.illinois.edu/srl/. The deadline for international applicants is April 1, 2010, and the deadline for U.S. citizens and permanent resident applicants is April 15, 2010.

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CALLS FOR PAPERS

TALLINN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY 2ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: “ECONOMIES OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE”


EUCE DALHOUISIE UNIVERSITY FOURTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE: “THE EU’S LISBON TREATY”

The EU Centre of Excellence at Dalhousie University invites paper proposals for its fourth Annual in Halifax, Canada, from June 6-8, 2010. Please direct questions to the EUCE director, Professor Finn Laursen at finn.laursen@dal.ca For more information, please visit www.euce.dal.ca. The deadline for abstracts is March 19, 2010.

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS

ANGLO-GERMAN “STATE OF THE STATE” FELLOWSHIPS

The Universities of Bremen and Göttingen (Dept of Politics) and the University of Oxford (Dept of Politics and International Relations & Institute of European and Comparative Law) invite applications from scholars for two-year postdoctoral Fellowships based mainly at the University of Oxford. The Fellowships are open to people of all nationalities who work in the fields of political science, law, history, sociology, or economics studying the transformation of the modern state (broadly conceived) with a focus on Western Europe and/or European integration. For more information, visit www.politics.ox.ac.uk/about/vacancies/. Please direct questions to Dr. Sara Hobolt at sara.hobolt@politics.ox.ac.uk. The deadline for applications is March 15, 2010.

BIGSSS PHD AND POSTDOCTORAL PROGRAMS

The Bremen International Graduate School of Social Sciences (BIGSSS) invites applications to its PhD and postdoctoral programs. BIGSSS is an inter-university institute of the University of Bremen and Jacobs University and is funded by the German Excellence Initiative. For more information, visit www.bigss-s-bremen.de. For additional inquiries, please check the online FAQ or contact admissions-officer@bigss-s-bremen.de. The deadline for applications is March 15, 2010.

KOLLEG-FORSCHERGRUPPE IN BERLIN

The Kolleg-Forschergruppe (KFG) “The Transformative Power of Europe” invites applicants for six 10-month postdoctoral fellowships to begin in October 2010. The KFG examines the role of the EU as promoter and recipient of ideas, analyzing the mechanisms and effects of internal and external diffusion processes in three research areas: identity and the public sphere; compliance, conditionality, and beyond; and comparative regionalism and Europe’s external relations. For more information, please visit www.transformeurope@fu-berlin.de. The deadline for applications is April 1, 2010.

OPEN POSITIONS

SCIENCES PO: EUROPEAN POLICIES AND POLITICS

The Centre d’études européennes at Sciences Po announces an open position in the domain of the analysis of the dynamics and impacts of the process of European integration and of the Europeanisation of polical systems and public policies. For full details, please visit www.cee.sciences-po.fr/en.html. The deadline for applications is March 15, 2010.

UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA: PROFESSOR IN EUROPEAN POLITICS & PROFESSOR IN POLITICAL THEORY

The Faculty of Social Sciences and Economics and the European Institute of the University of Geneva announces a joint position as full or associate professor with a specialization in European politics, as well as a joint position as full or associate professor with a specialization in political theory. The ideal candidate for either position will be a scholar with an international reputation, a distinguished research record, international publications, and excellent teaching record. For full details about these announcements, please visit www.unige.ch/sem/faculteSES/emploi.html. The deadline for applications for the European politics position is March 26, 2010. The deadline for applications for the political theory position is April 2, 2010.

EUCE/ESC Newsletter:

Acting Director: Professor Carolyn Ban
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Singular yet Peripheral: French and Italian Language Literatures of Switzerland

by Mert Ertunaga

PhD Student, Department of French and Italian

Mert Ertunaga was the recipient of a Foreign Language Area Studies (FLAS) fellowship for the 2009-2010 academic year.

As a graduate student in the Department of French and Italian Languages and Literatures at the University of Pittsburgh, my Foreign Language Area Studies (FLAS) fellowship for this academic year is allowing me to expand my study of Swiss-French literature by enabling me to compare and contrast its linguistic and theme-related aspects to its Swiss-Italian counterpart. My goal is to improve my Italian language skills to a level where I can conduct my own research and be able to understand the works of Swiss-Italian writers. It is highly uncommon for Swiss-Italian writers to have their literary works translated and published in other languages. Hence, my FLAS fellowship has been a tremendous asset for me and is enabling me to improve my Italian and overcome the language barrier.

As a teenage student in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, I took some beginner-level courses in Italian as a second language. They proved useful in later enabling me to begin with an intermediate level course at my university. Nevertheless, I knew that I was not at the level needed to pursue my goal. After one semester of further study, I am already able to look at any Italian text and understand most of its contents. This spring semester, after taking my second level Intermediate Italian course which specifically concentrates on analyzing articles and literary excerpts, I firmly believe that I will come closer to the desired level needed in order to read and understand texts written by prominent Swiss-Italian writers such as Francesco Chiesa and Plinio Martini.

Swiss literature presents a special challenge. Switzerland has four official languages: German, French, Italian, and Romansch. The latter is spoken by less than one percent of the population; therefore, the other three languages comprise virtually all the literature of the country. The uniqueness of Swiss literature originates from the oddity that its writers have always found the language denominator for their literature outside the geographical borders of Switzerland in the neighboring countries with the same languages; for example, a Swiss-French writer's works’ denominator is French literature. This singularity is enhanced by the fact that most readers of Swiss literature live outside of Switzerland, and most of its publishers are located in foreign cities like Frankfurt, Paris, and Milan. Swiss literary theorist Rolf Kieser, in an article published in The Literary Review in 1993, explains eloquently the sentiments of modern day Swiss writers: “We have to accept the fact that there is no Swiss literature. Rather, there are at least four different literatures written simultaneously in a multitude of sharply distinct cultural regions of Switzerland, each of which has a unique cultural tradition. These four Swiss literatures do not face one another. Rather, they stand back-to-back looking toward the outside.”

Switzerland’s location in Europe adds to the unusual characteristic of its literature mentioned in the previous paragraph. It is mostly surrounded by three countries whose literatures serve as models for Swiss writers: France, Germany, and Italy. Another Swiss literary critic Elsbeth Pulver concludes that “from this standpoint, though geographically in the center, Switzerland is very much a peripheral state.” Equally, the Swiss writer finds himself in the periphery of the literary model in his linguistic culture.

Considering that the German-speaking region is the largest in Switzerland, why did I choose to improve my Italian language skills and not pursue German in order to compare it to Swiss-French literature? First, the spoken Swiss-German language differs considerably from “High-German,” which is the language taught in schools and understood and spoken by Germans themselves. Secondly, Swiss-German writers such as Max Frisch and Friedrich Dürrenmatt have been able to form, and sometimes to insist upon forming, their own identity by using a certain degree of Swiss-German dialect in their writings. Furthermore, they have occasionally but intentionally included the subject of double-language in their texts. This is not the case with Swiss-French and Swiss-Italian writers. They have shown no visible inclination to put barriers between their literature and the widely known literatures of France and Italy. In fact, one of my intentions during my study is to show that most Swiss writers of the French and Italian languages prefer to be included in the larger context of French and Italian literatures. It is often possible to read a text of a Swiss-French author and never know that he or she is not French. As I improve my Italian language skills further, my goal is to pinpoint if the same trends prevail in the works of Swiss-Italian writers as well. Ultimately, I am certain that such an angle of comparison of the two groups will give me the chance to analyze in greater detail Swiss literature as a component of Francophone studies in European cultures.

Although my studies of Swiss literature were initially limited to the French language texts, thanks to my FLAS fellowship and my progress in Italian, a new window has opened up for me to expand the scope of my studies of

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ERTUNGA Continued from page 6
this small but important country’s literature. Soon, I will not only be able to study Swiss-French literature but also determine its characteristics in-depth by making a comparative analysis of its Italian language counterpart. Consequently, I will be able to determine if one group’s desire to manifest its “Swiss ratio” in the writings prevails equally in the other, or to ascertain whether one or both groups even display such a desire at all. •

WELLS Continued from page 3
French versus English. Synonymous terms include English terms borrowed wholesale, partially francized English forms, as well as recommended gallicizations. For example, fitness, gym, club de fitness, centre de fitness, and centre de remise en forme are all possible realizations of gym.

Moreover, French speakers are seemingly very aware of the terminological choices they have, particularly in such “imported” popular domains. For example, when shown a picture of a fitness stepper or “stairmaster,” one informant wrote “stairmaster si on veut se faire comprendre ou escaladeur en ‘français’ (stairmaster if you want to be understood or escaladeur in ‘French’).” He has two denominations at his disposal but notes that one is more current than the other. The quotes around français are his, reflecting a particular view of ownership toward the properly French term of reference. His statement reveals, however, that the borrowed term has been so integrated into the fitness center discourse that it is now also ‘français’ to some degree. Awareness of such term choice is even more evident in the oral interviews. Two trainers apologized for their use of mixed English and French terms for exercises explaining that “les termes sont plus clairs lorsqu’on les appelle en anglais (the terms are clearer when we use them in English)” and that “l’anglais est plus rapide, mais on a à cœur de s’exprimer avec la terminologie française alors on fait des efforts de ce côté-là (English is faster; but we really want to express ourselves with the French terminology so we make an effort in that area).” These side remarks explain in part why both French and English terms are used in a single sentence.

So how fit is French? The answer to this question depends on how we define “fit.” If terminological fitness means that properly French terms must be the only terms used, these terms need more, one might say, “strategic training.” If, however, a definition of “fitness” takes into account speakers’ attitudes and the esteem afforded the mere possibility of using recommended terminologies if they should so desire, properly French terms are in a sense “pulling their weight” although they will have to keep hitting the gym if they are to increase their “real use.” •

REESER Continued from page 2
offer a “Literature and Politics track” for students who want to specialize in these connections. Now an assistant professor at Iowa State University, Melissa Deininger defended her dissertation entitled “After the Revolution: Terror, Literature, and the Nation in Modern France” last academic year. Current PhD student Katie Moriarty, who holds an advanced degree in political science from the University of Geneva, has begun working on her dissertation project “Disorienting the Nation,” in which she will consider ways in which selected literary, cinematic, and cultural sources represent a French nation that has lost its orientation or its sense of direction in time and space.

Each year, the French faculty offer several graduate seminars in which questions of nation or politics play a central role. This past fall, Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski taught a course on literature and politics in the middle ages, and I taught a course on the idea of the French nation in the early modern period. With funding from the Humanities Center, we merged these related courses for two days, hosting two scholars who both spoke on the topic of Salic Law (a curious institution in France which forbids women from taking the throne). We also held a colloquium on selected texts on sovereignty and queenship with faculty, graduate students, and other interested members of the academic community. Last spring, Chloé Hogg offered a course organized around questions of power and sovereignty during the reign of Louis XIV. Next fall, Giuseppina Mecchia will teach a seminar entitled “Modernity and Its Discontents,” which will be devoted to the politics of the French novel in the 19th century. Currently, we are offering a course taught in English, funded by the Humanities Center, on the thought of the well-known political thinker Etienne Balibar. Enrolled students have been reading his published work with Professor Mecchia and will participate in a series of lectures and colloquia during Balibar’s two-week visit at the Humanities Center in March.

Looking further ahead, alongside faculty in other departments and schools interested in the French nation, the French faculty are currently planning to host a national conference on the topic “L’Idée de la France” (“The Idea of France”) in two years. Our hope is to gather academics who work in different disciplines and in different time periods to think together about Frenchness. •

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If you would like to be added to the EUCE/ESC newsletter's electronic distribution list, please email the Center at euce@pitt.edu. Include the subject line “Newsletter” and your name, address, and affiliation. You can also call us at 412-648-7405 or send a fax to 412-648-2199. In addition, the latest edition of the newsletter and a complete, updated list of events can always be found at our website: www.ucis.pitt.edu/euce/euce.html.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS**
- **March 15** - Lecture: “Rights, Difference, Exclusions.” 5:00 p.m., University Club Ballroom B.
- **March 16** - Lecture: “Ideas of Europe: Colloquium and Discussion” 12:30 p.m., 4130 Posvar Hall.
- **March 20** - 5th Graduate Conference on the EU: [www.ucis.pitt.edu/euce/events/gradconf/index.html](http://www.ucis.pitt.edu/euce/events/gradconf/index.html).
- **March 22** - Lecture: “Violence & Gender in Central Europe After World War I.” 4:00-5:45 p.m., History Lounge, Posvar Hall.
- **March 23** - Lecture: “Race, Culture, and the Genealogical Order.” 12:30 p.m., 602 Cathedral of Learning.
- **March 25** - Lecture: “Masculinities and Feminities.” 12:30 p.m., 602 Cathedral of Learning.
- **March 26** - Lecture: “Thinking the Impossible Human.” 2:00 p.m., G24 Cathedral of Learning.

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