From November 10-12, 2011, the Department of French and Italian, along with an interdisciplinary advisory committee chaired by Professor Todd Reeser, hosted a major international conference titled “The Idea of France.” Through a series of talks and colloquia, the major question asked was not so much what France actually is or has been, but how Frenchness, or francité, has been imagined from a variety of perspectives and across various time periods. Those constructs of francité take various forms, expressed through language, literature, or cultural production such as film, TV, museums, visual art, or dance.

The conference took an unusual approach as we aimed to destabilize—or even disband—disciplinary and departmental boundaries, as scholars of the Middle Ages spoke to twentieth-century specialists, and as the Renaissance was in dialogue with the Enlightenment. Our approach was global and transnational: we held a discussion-based colloquium with Professors Susan Suleiman (Harvard) and Christie McDonald (Harvard) on their ground-breaking volume from 2010 *French Global: A New Approach to Literary History*, while anthropologist John Bowen (Washington University) led a second colloquium on his 2010 book *Can Islam be French?: Pluralism and Pragmatism in a Secularist State*. Scholars came from Europe, Africa, and North America to present on topics from a wide variety of disciplines: literary and cultural studies, history, political science, linguistics, film, art history, anthropology, sociology, Jewish studies, gender studies, and law, among others. Sixty-five papers were given on ideas of France from the Hexagon or from regions of the Hexagon, as well as from places such as Poland, Senegal, Haiti, the U.S., Latin America, Morocco, Algeria, Cairo, and others. Topics of papers included the global Alliance Française, medieval passion plays, animation, the Concord, fairy tales, the French Tarzan, diplomatic gifts under Louis XIV, and even dancing Frenchness in the *Ballet de cour*.

The event included five keynote lectures by distinguished professors from the U.S. and Europe. Domna Stanton (CUNY) spoke on new universalism and cosmo-

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Alberta Sbragia, Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and former EUCE/ESC Director, hosted a round table discussion about the current economic and political crisis in Italy on November 21st. Dr. Sbragia was also interviewed on this topic by Pimm Fox on Bloomberg Television’s “Taking Stock,” which aired lived on November 9th. A video of the interview can be found at http://www.bloomberg.com/video/79853622/.

Maciej Pisarski, Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of the Republic of Poland, gave a lecture titled “Implications of the Polish Presidency of the EU for Europe and Transatlantic Affairs” on November 10th. Pisarski has been at his current post in Washington, D.C. since August 2010. Previously, he was the acting director of the Department of Strategy and Policy Planning in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw, Poland.
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topolitanism versus the French Republican subject. Laurence Grove (Glasgow) regaled a packed Humanities Center with images of Frenchness in emblems and comics. Lawrence Kritzman (Dartmouth) spoke on the complexities of modern Judaism and the French nation. Judge Olivier Dutheillet de Lamothe (Conseil d’Etat) gave a talk in French on Montesquieu and judicial review, and historian David Bell (Princeton) filled the University Club Ballroom to deliver an illustrated lecture on French ideas of the Revolution of 1789.

The conference will lead to an edited volume of the journal *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies*, to be published in March 2013. For more information on the conference, visit [www.ideaoffrance.pitt.edu](http://www.ideaoffrance.pitt.edu). The event was made possible thanks to the generosity of 17 University of Pittsburgh sponsors: European Union Center of Excellence and European Studies Center; Department of French and Italian; Department of History; Jewish Studies Program; Cultural Studies Program; Global Studies Center; University Center for International Studies; Faculty Research and Scholarship Program, Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences; Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies, Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences; Humanities Center; World History Center; Department of Sociology; Eighteenth-Century Studies at Pitt; Film Studies Program; University Honors College; Department of Anthropology; School of Law.

**Below:** Lawrence Kritzman (Dartmouth) and Giuseppina Mecchia (Pitt French). **Right, from top:** Suan Suleiman (Harvard) and Christie McDonald (Harvard); Carrie Klaus (Depauw) and Charles-Louis Morand-Métrievoir (Pitt French graduate student) enjoy lunch; David Bell (Princeton) and Seymour Drescher (Pitt History); part of an exhibit by ULS librarian Greg McCormick (Pitt) on display at the conference. (Photographs courtesy of Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski)
RESEARCHING RENAISSANCE PLATONISM AT THE VITTORE BRANCA CENTER IN VENICE

by Todd Reeser, Associate Professor of French, Department of French and Italian, and Acting Director of the Humanities Center

Thanks to support from an EUCE faculty research grant, I spent May 2011 at the Cini Foundation located on the Venetian island of San Giorgio Maggiore, just across the lagoon from Saint Mark’s Square. The Vittore Branca Center is a comprehensive retreat and conference center for scholars working on topics related to Venice or Italy. Scholars live, work, and eat together in the newly-refurbished lodging facilities and have the option of participating in numerous cultural initiatives organized by the Foundation (seminars, conferences, exhibitions, concerts, etc.). Closed to tourists, the back side of the island contains a series of sylvan walking paths, ideal for peaceful contemplation about scholarly topics. Also on-site is the stunning Nuova Manica Lunga, the former dormitory of a Benedictine monastery, which has been converted into a modern, stylish library and research space. While housed in the stimulating environment of the Cini, I had easy access to the collection of Renaissance books in the Nuova Manica Lunga as well as in other libraries a short vaporetto (water bus) ride away, especially the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana (the National Library of St. Mark’s) and the smaller but cozier Biblioteca del Museo Correr. My academic interest pertained to texts that manifest tensions between Platonic sexuality (in the original sense of the term) and philological approaches to Plato. These texts require a contextualized understanding. As 15th century Italian Humanists began to read, digest, and translate Plato, they found themselves faced with a fundamental problem. On the one hand, the rebirth of the ancients in the Renaissance implied a “fidelity” to the sense of Greek texts. On the other hand, most Humanists refused to translate faithfully and to propagate the institution of pederasty or the other homoerotic elements of the Platonic corpus. With the rebirth of the ancients in a Christian context, however, these texts were very widely read and known, forming the basis for Renaissance theories of male friendship and male/female love. As one leg of a book-length study in its advanced stages, I continue to examine this problematic relation between Platonic same-sex sexuality and the translations and commentaries of key Italian Humanists, especially Leonardo Bruni and Marsilio Ficino.

The Marciana was a particularly appropriate library for my project because the collection originated as the library to house the manuscripts of the early 15th century Byzantine humanist Cardinal Bessarion, whose In Calumniatorem Platonis (Against the Calumny of Plato) famously critiques George of Trebizond’s vehement diatribe against Platonic immorality and positions Plato as a foundational theoretician for Renaissance Christianity. I consulted a number of his texts relevant to my project at the Marciana and considered how his work sets the stage for later Platonists to deal with the reception of same-sex sexuality. Bessarion only tangentially discusses the problem of same-sex Platonic sexuality and the extent to which it should be an integral element of the Platonic corpus, but his basic ideas on Platonic sexuality became influential in the period. Plato does not have to be considered immoral and the men do not act “as if” they are married, Bessarion argues.

Because Venice was a printing capital in the Renaissance, numerous other Latin and Italian texts relating to Plato were available in the libraries I visited. The Venetian Aldine Press published a Greek edition of Plato in 1513, a major event in the history of the reception of Plato. Although the actual physical press no longer exists (a plaque marks its former location), Aldine books are widely available in Venice. The Marciana and the Correr house other important books and manuscripts by Marsilio Ficino and Leonardo Bruni that I was able to consult and integrate into my project. €
As a PhD student focusing on comparative politics, I have found that one of the best ways to grasp politics in a comparative way is to travel and meet people from different places. The European Consortium of Political Research (ECPR) is one of the most renowned organizations enabling students like me to enhance their knowledge and experience of politics through different programs. For instance, the ECPR annually organizes a series of prestigious summer schools in different subfields of political science. These summer school programs are hosted in various European cities. In addition to a methods school in Ljubljana, the ECPR offers courses on issues such as federalism, interest groups, Latin American politics, organized crime, political parties, and international relations in other cities, such as Kent, Antwerpen, Leuven, Brussels, Salamanca, and Barcelona. Since the topic of political parties and party systems constitutes one of my main research interests, I decided to apply to the ECPR Summer School “Political Parties in Modern Democracies” that was held in Brussels.

After I was accepted to this program, with the generous encouragement of Professor Ronald Linden, I applied for and received a travel grant to attend the Summer School from the University of Pittsburgh’s European Union Center of Excellence. Thus, I was all set to go and learn about party politics in Brussels! The Political Parties Summer School is now in its twenty first edition and was held in Brussels for the second time from September 11-23, 2011.

Every morning there was a lecture about some aspect of the study of political parties or party systems offered by some of the most well-known experts in the field, including professors from both European and American universities. These lectures were followed by general discussions in which students had the opportunity to interact with these prestigious scholars. The first lecture introduced (or re-introduced) students to the core concepts and debates in the field of political parties and party system stability. The following lectures dealt with different topics, such as “Restructuring West-European Party Systems in the Age of Globalization” (taught by Romain Lachat), “Political Parties and Electoral System Change” (taught by David Farrell), and “Political Parties and the Challenge of Right Wing Extremism” (taught by Nonna Mayer). Some professors gave general presentations about a given topic, but the most interesting lectures—in my view—presented cutting-edge research by these scholars. These lectures were both informative and thought-provoking. I came back to Pittsburgh full of ideas that I plan to develop in my dissertation and future research.

In the afternoon, two or three students presented their work in progress, at varying levels of completion. Some presented research proposals, while others presented more polished works. I found these presentations to be one of the most rewarding aspects of the summer school. A 20-minute presentation was followed by a general discussion of the paper by faculty members and fellow students. Since students came from different universities with different methodological and epistemological traditions, the discussions tended to be very stimulating. I learned a lot about party politics in Europe from the presentation of my colleagues in the Summer School. And I was very pleased to receive extremely useful feedback on my research from professors and students. My paper analyzed the institutional factors that facilitate the rise of outsider presidents in Latin America. I was very happy to receive the Party Politics prize for the best paper presented at the Summer School.

My European experience was fruitful not only in its academic aspects but also with regard to its social and culinary aspects. First of all, I was reminded once again...
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how easy it is to move across borders in Europe, thanks
to the great railway system and the EU’s Schengen sys-
tem. The day I went to Brussels, I woke up in Paris in
the morning, and within a few hours I found myself
in the Grande Place having coffee and famous Belgian
waffles! With my classmates, I discovered different res-
taurants and cafés and enjoyed some of the very deli-
cious Belgian beers and the Brussels pommes frites. Last
but not least, it was impossible to avoid the world fa-
mous Belgian chocolates! Another highlight of the trip
was our excursion to the European Parliament, located
near the famous Place de Luxembourg. There we had
the chance to talk to Italian and Belgian members of
the Parliament and to see the rooms where EU’s real policy-
making takes place.

While the gray skies and the cool weather of
September in Brussels gave us the feeling that this was
more like an “Autumn” School rather than a “Summer”
School, my colleagues and I benefited a lot from engag-
ing in the intellectually stimulating discussions, getting
to know people from different cultures, and networking
with some of the most respected professors in the field.
I will always remember these two weeks with great fond-
ness. I would like to thank the European Union Center
of Excellence for giving me this opportunity to attend
this program in the heart of Europe. €

a fixed application deadline (see below). Significant
consideration is given to how the proposal contrib-
utes to the EUCE’s mission. Applicants will be ex-
pected to show efforts to secure matching funds from
their department or school. For more information,
please visit http://www.ucis.pitt.edu/euce/node/41,
or contact Associate Director Timothy Thompson at
tst@pitt.edu or 412-624-3503. The deadline for ap-
lications is December 9, 2011.

2012 EUSA HAAS FUND FELLOWSHIP

The 2011-2013 EUSA Executive Committee is
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graduate student EU-related dissertation research.
Thanks entirely to contributions to our Ernst Haas
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2003 to honor the memory of the late scholar Ernst
B. Haas (1924-2003), EUSA will offer at least one
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an EU-related dissertation topic in the academic year
2012-2013. Applicants must be: be pursuing the doc-
toral degree (PhD) at an accredited institution in any
country; be writing a dissertation in English; have
an EU-related, doctoral dissertation topic approved
by the professor who will supervise it; and be able to
demonstrate clearly the relevance to EU studies of the
dissertation topic. For more information about the
application process, please visit http://www.eustud-
ies.org/files/haas_2012.pdf. The deadline for appli-
cations is January 6, 2012.

**UPCOMING GRANT AND**
**FELLOWSHIP DEADLINES**

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The European Union Center of Excellence, with sup-
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EUCE/ESC would like to thank the Delegation of the
European Union for support for the Center.
THE EU AT THE UN: 
POST-LISBON REFLECTIONS ON 
SECURITY COUNCIL REFORM

by Trudy Fraser

Trudy Fraser was formerly an Adjunct Professor of Political Science at the University of Pittsburgh and is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at the United Nations University in Tokyo, Japan.

Over eight years ago, in the aftermath of failed UN peacekeeping in Rwanda and Bosnia and following the advent of the Iraq War, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan commissioned a High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change to examine the adequacy of the existing UN structure to meet contemporary challenges to international peace and security. The subsequent report of the Secretary-General’s High Level Panel contained over 100 recommendations for reforming the UN in general and two models for reforming the structure of the Security Council in particular. A group of four states—Brazil, Germany, India and Japan (known as the G4)—launched an immediate and aggressive campaign to be considered the natural candidates for any new permanent Security Council seats. The consequent indecision on the part of the UN members at the 2005 World Summit to make any substantive reforms resulted in the G4 candidacy being considered “dead in the water.” However, the failure to enact Security Council reform in 2005 was neither the beginning, nor the end, of the UN Security Council reform agenda—it continues to morph and shift in relation to the ever-changing global landscape and remains a hot topic on the UN agenda, pursued and debated equally by those UN Member States who would wish to see change to the Security Council structure and membership and by those who wish to maintain the status quo.

The constantly shifting European landscape continues to impact the UN Security Council reform agenda—and Germany’s aspirations to a permanent seat. The EU is the single largest financial contributor to the UN system. The 27 EU Member States fund 38 percent of the UN’s regular budget, more than two-fifths of UN peacekeeping operations, and about one half of all UN Member States’ contributions to UN funds and programs. As an observer within the UN, the EU has no vote as such but regularly speaks as a single voice within the organization. Back in 2004, when Germany launched itself as one of the natural candidates for a new permanent Security Council seat, it did so to the vocal chagrin of many of its EU neighbours and allies—particularly Italy, who led the Uniting for Consensus group with an alternative reform model based on adding ten non-permanent members to the Security Council (whose election would be based on equitable geographic distribution: six from African states, five from Asian states, four from Latin America and Caribbean states, three from Western Europe and other states and two from Eastern European states). At the heart of Italy’s campaign was their hesitance to see another EU Member State join the UK and France as UN Security Council permanent members, a move which would push three individual EU states to the forefront of international politics with no guarantee that the UK, France, and Germany would use their Council seats for the promotion of EU interests. In such a scenario, Italy feared that EU interests would be secondary to British, French, and German national interests, and feared that such a move would subvert any progress that had been made towards a single EU voice at the UN. Not least, Italy was concerned that their own voice (which is stronger as part of the EU) would be lost if EU interests were directed by the UK, France, and Germany.

The potential addition of Germany as a Security Council permanent member opened up a general discourse concerning EU over-representation and initiated discussion at the UN about the possibility of a single EU seat to replace those held by the UK and France on the Security Council. With Treaty of Lisbon entering into force in December 2009, the EU now has a full-fledged legal personality with increased capacity for international action. The Treaty of Lisbon reaffirms the EU commitment to the principles of the UN Charter and brings to the fore once again the idea that the EU might be in a position to move closer to having this new distinct legal personality translated into a single voice in the UN Security Council. To date, however, this notion has not translated into moves in that direction from EU Member States. During negotiations regarding Libya in March 2011, the EU was unable to maintain a united front. Initially, the EU worked together and was successful in introducing new EU sanctions on Libyan companies. When it came to harsher measures against the

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Qadhafi regime—however—the EU’s united front began to crack. The UK and France were key players in drafting a resolution to introduce a no-fly zone in Libyan airspace (a move that would require military support) and in the eventual vote for Resolution 1973 (which demanded an immediate ceasefire in Libya, imposed a no-fly zone in Libyan airspace, and tightened sanctions on the Qadhafi regime and its supporters), the EU was split. Germany abstained—along with China, Russia, India, and Brazil (the latter being two other members of the G4)—whilst Security Council permanent members the UK and France voted “yes.” The idea of a united EU front was further broken when France stepped out on their own—without consensus by the wider EU community—to recognize the Libyan rebel forces. Although EU Council President Herman Van Rompuy made efforts to downplay the division—citing that all key European states came together days later to agree upon military action and that Germany would be increasing their presence in Afghanistan to free up UK and French planes to conduct operations in Libya—it remains the case that there is no such thing as a single European voice at the UN. Whether the current financial crisis in the Eurozone impacts the EU at the UN remains to be seen.

Germany remains committed to pursuing a permanent seat—a position that is supported by current permanent members France and the UK. Once again, Italy is the most vocal opponent to this position, suggesting instead that a reformed Security Council should include only new non-permanent members “where membership is earned as a privileged responsibility, not granted as a permanent right.” Previously, Italy has suggested that they would support a single EU seat that did not give special privilege to any single European member, but thus far the move towards a single EU seat has been very much secondary to the aspirations of Germany to win their own permanent seat. Whether or not the individual aspiration for a German seat will survive the current negotiations that are taking place in New York remains to be seen, but until it does, it seems unlikely that the impact of the Treat of Lisbon will transcend individual EU Member States and their individual aspirations at the UN. €