

Women in French Newsletter

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President's Letter

Cecilia Beach

Alfred University

Dear Colleagues,

In these times of turmoil and dissent both at home and abroad, I believe that the mission of Women in French, indeed of our profession in general, is all the more important. As professors of French and Francophone languages, literatures and cultures, and as scholars of women's creative production, feminist thought and gender theory, we all contribute not only to improving intercultural understanding, but also to promoting social justice throughout the world. I am honored and grateful to be able to serve as president of this organization, and I would like to begin by thanking you all for your participation in Women in French.

The highlight of the past six months for our organization was the Women in French conference at Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania on June 9-11, 2016, which was superbly organized by Florence Ramond Jurney. The conference, whose theme was Fluid Identities: Margins and Centers in French and Francophone Women's Literature, Cinema and Art, attracted 89 participants from around the world. Our keynote speaker, Yanick Lahens, a Haitian author who received the Prix Fémina in 2014 for her novel *Bain de lune*, gave an insightful talk entitled "Les femmes écrivent dans l'oeil du cyclone." Her novel was also the focus of our inaugural One

Book One WIF program with a discussion led by Linda Brindeau (please see Stephanie Schechner's description of the program on p. 8).

Another exciting aspect of this year's conference was that we had in attendance all of the presidents of Women in French since 1990, the period when Women in French officially became an independent association and an Allied Organization of the MLA: Annabelle Rea (1990-1995), Colette Trout (1995-1999), Catherine Montfort (1999 -2003), Mary Rice-Defosse (2003-2007), Juliette Rogers (2007-2011), and Mary Anne Garnett (2011-2015). Their presence was testimony to the strong sense of community that I believe is one of the important characteristics of our organization.

I was also very encouraged to hear so many excellent papers by graduate students and other emerging scholars at the conference. The future of our organization and of the profession depends of course on their participation. Seven of the graduate students present received a

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WIF Travel Grant to attend the conference: Rosanne Abdulla (U of Waterloo), Stacie Allan (U of Bristol), Lisa Karakaya (CUNY Graduate Center), Meghan Kort (U of Victoria), Noelle Lindstrom (Indiana U Bloomington), Sabrina Medouda (U de Toulouse II—Jean Jaurès), and Annemie Treier (U of Toronto).

Providing a supportive and inspiring community to emerging scholars is one of the strengths of our organization. In addition to providing opportunities for informal mentoring and networking, Women in French also has a more formal mentoring program for graduate students or junior faculty, a mock interview program for job seekers, essay awards for both graduate and undergraduate students, and travel grants to regional and national MLA conferences. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate Meredith Scheiring, advised by Dr. Grace M. Armstrong of Bryn Mawr College, who won the 2016 WIF undergraduate essay award with her paper "Soumise(s) ou révoltée(s) dans *Une si longue lettre* et *L'Enfant de sable*."

I have the great pleasure to announce that the next Women in French conference will be hosted by Florida State University in Tallahassee thanks to Aimée Boutin. The conference will take place in February 2018 and the theme will be *Le Bruit des femmes / Women and Sound*. Please keep your eyes open for more information in the coming months.

Many thanks to all the board members and to the regional officers who have been busy organizing WIF sessions at the regional MLA conferences. In December, we will have elections for six of the offices: Secretary, Treasurer, three Regional Representatives—Central and Rocky Mountain, Great Lakes, and Middle Atlantic—and a Graduate Student Representative.

Over the summer, the WIF board agreed that it would be in our best interest to redefine our regional structure to correspond more closely to the MLA conference regions rather than the MLA electoral regions given that the main role of our regional representatives is to organize sessions at the regional conferences. We will therefore be voting on this issue in December. If the proposal is approved by a majority of the members, we will implement the new regional structure over the next few years as the elected representatives finish their terms.

Once again, thank you all for your participation in Women in French. I wish you all the best in these final months of 2016!

Cecilia Beach

WIF Business & News

WIF ELECTIONS 2016

In the late fall, WIF members will be notified that voting will take place on Votingplace.net. All members may participate in the election of the Secretary and the Graduate Representative, but only members residing in the regions in question may vote for their representative: Central and Rocky Mountain (Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Wyoming); Great Lakes (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin); Middle Atlantic (Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, West Virginia)

Secretary

Theresa Varney Kennedy

Women in French has played a key role in Theresa Varney Kennedy's professional

development since beginning her career at Baylor University where she is now a tenured Associate Professor of French. Kennedy has published in *WIF Studies*, presented papers on WIF panels, chaired WIF panels at SCMLA, and served as Southern States Representative (2012-2013). Kennedy is a detail-oriented person, responds quickly to email, and has excellent computer skills. If re-elected as Secretary, Kennedy promises to work towards recruiting burgeoning young scholars interested in women's studies as well as retaining those who have been faithful members of WIF for many years.

Representative for the Central and Rocky Mountains

Arline Cravens

Arline Cravens is an Assistant Professor of French at Saint Louis University and currently serves as the WIF representative. Her research and publications focus on women authors of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. "I would be honored to continue serving WIF as the Representative. During my tenure, I have been thrilled with the enthusiastic response from WIF members and their participation in the RMMLA. If re-elected, my priorities will be to continue promoting WIF at the RMMLA, to increase WIF's visibility with other national organizations through organizing WIF sessions and events, and to recruit new members by publicizing WIF activities."

Representative for the Great Lakes: (2 candidates—vote for one)

1. Vicki De Vries

I am an associate professor of French at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan and have been a member of WIF for more than ten years. I joined as a graduate student at Michigan State University, where I completed the Ph.D. in 2006. This summer, I attended my first WIF conference, and was delighted and

energized by the high levels of both scholarship and collegiality. I've been talking up the experience and the organization ever since, and would be honored to serve and promote WIF as the Great Lakes representative.

2. Nevine El Nossery

Having already served one mandate, I'm aware of the importance of the work that this position entails. I was pleased to be able to contribute to the flourishing of WIF and would be happy to continue by serving another term. As the Great Lakes Regional Representative, I tried and will continue to help to further WIF's aims. I will also continue to promote WIF intellectual life, especially by organizing events and panels at MMLA. Just as a reminder, in 2015 I organized 4 panels with 13 WIF members at the MMLA which was held in Columbus, Nov. 12-14. This year I am organizing 3 panels with 11 WIF members.

Representative for the Middle Atlantic: (2 candidates—vote for one)

1. Mercédès Baillargeon, Assistant Professor of French, School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, University of Maryland

As a junior scholar, I have always been involved in initiatives that foster a sense of community in academia, by organizing conferences, workshops, and professionalization activities -- a mission that I would pursue as Regional Representative for the Middle Atlantic. With the use of social media and technology, as well as by encouraging participation at our regional MLA conference, I wish to strengthen the ties between WIF members across generations to help promote, and expand the study of French and Francophone women's literature. By creating collaborations across disciplines, especially through digital media, I hope to help bring awareness to WIF's mission and to recruit new members.

2. Stephanie Schechner

I am a full professor of French at Widener University where I have taught and served as an administrator since 1999. My research has focused on French and Francophone women writers including Rachilde, Colette, Duras, Sarraute, and Jovette Marchessault. My specialization is on the French, lesbian, working-class writer Mireille Best. Recently, I have led the One Book, One WIF initiative which represents my interest in fostering increased collaboration among scholars of women's writing in French worldwide. If elected as Mid-Atlantic Regional representative, I will seek to increase our membership and our cooperation with colleagues in our region and beyond.

Graduate Representative

Leah K. S. Holz

I am committed to representing the graduate students within WIF, an organization that has been so valuable to me for mentorship, networking, and professional development opportunities. At CU Boulder I was voted graduate representative to the faculty last year and department representative to the graduate student governing body on campus for two years. I have also been in charge of my department's social media accounts. I feel strongly about committing to service in academia beyond our home institutions and this position is an excellent way to use my leadership skills to support graduate students and the WIF organization. Nominated by Florence Ramond Jurney.

VOLUNTEER POSITION OPEN

Book Review Editor/s, *WIF Studies*

This position is open to a member (or members) of Women in French. It is usually a three- to five-year position and would begin

with the 2017 annual volume of *Women in French Studies*.

Main responsibilities:

- Request, receive, and compile books for review
- Send call for reviewers (once each Fall semester)
- Receive and organize requests for review (includes checking qualifications, membership status, due date feasibility, and last review submitted)
- Receive and evaluate unsolicited reviews (includes checking qualifications, membership status, appropriateness of materials reviewed for *WIF Studies*)
- Distribute criteria for review, prepare address labels and mail books (mailing books to reviewers is usually at the expense of the review editor or her institution, but WIF can help with these costs)
- Remind reviewers of deadlines
- Compile and edit reviews
- Correspond with reviewers about editing questions
- Work closely with *WIF Studies* editor and production manager to edit, review proofs and finalize the book review section (generally late summer or fall)
- Correspond throughout the year with reviewers and WIF members
- Manage Book Review Editor's email account for correspondence with reviewers, publishers, WIF members and Editorial Board.

Please contact **Juliette Rogers**, Editor-in-Chief, if interested: jmrogers@macalester.edu

MINUTES: WIF BOARD MEETING AT 2016 WIF CONFERENCE

Called to order 5:30 p.m.

Attendees: Adrienne Angelo, Aimée Boutin, Cecilia Beach, Arline Cravens, Mary Ann Garnett, Elizabeth (Liz) Hall, Florence Journey, Catherine Montfort, Annabelle Rea, Mary Rice-Defosse, Juliette Rogers, Michèle Schaal, Colette Trout, Virginia (Ginny) Osbourne, Anna Rocca

- Introductions
- Thank you to Florence!
- Thank you to outgoing officers: Mary Ann (President), Molly Enz (treasurer), Amy Reid (South), Catherine Montfort (Western US & Canada)
- Welcome to incoming officers and representatives:
 - Co-Vice Presidents, Patrice Proulx and Susan Ireland
 - Annabelle Dolidon, Western U.S. and Western Canada
 - Adrienne Angelo, South
 - Liz Hall, treasurer
- Acknowledgement of past presidents present:
 - Annabelle Rea 1990-1995
 - Colette Trout 1995-1999
 - Catherine Montfort 1999 -2003
 - Mary Rice-Defosse 2003-2007
 - Juliette Rogers 2007-2011
 - Mary Anne Garnett 2011-2015
- *Women in French Studies* report—Juliette Rogers (Editor)—discussion of questions sent to board by email
 - Fees to charge for journals that want to republish WIF articles; Annabelle suggests contacting CELJ & do as they suggest
- Formal procedure for WIF special volumes (for 2020 & forward). Suggestions: have call in newsletter, listserv, website; vote by Editorial Board; encourage institutions to help subsidize.
- Two Advisory Board members have passed away--Gita May and Marie-Odile Sweetzer—as has Editorial Board member Donna Kuizinga; we have lots of submissions on Caribbean, Maghreb, sub-Saharan Africa, so could use advisory board members in those areas. Have call in newsletter, listserv, website. Request CV and letter of interest.
- Michèle suggested issues include acceptance rate for articles.
- Project Muse— Many thanks to Catherine Montfort!
 - All regular and special issues of *WIF Studies* now available.
 - Conference issues not on Project Muse because they are not blind submissions. That might need another contract; Catherine will look into it.
- Financial report from Liz Hall (new treasurer). Thanks to Project Muse earnings we are doing fine financially.
- Newsletter—Cecilia read an email from Cheryl Morgan.
 - Cheryl is concerned about interest in the Newsletter: “number of people submitting reports of publications seems to have dropped in recent years. [...] For the last several issues, we had reached out to readers to ask them to submit recommended readings or films

- or a brief report on a teaching topic etc, but no one submitted anything.”
- Cheryl suggested “expanding membership news to share information about papers given or research projects about women but that do not culminate in a publication might expand the interest of the Member News section.” Good idea.
 - Given the difficulty of finding bibliographies and the enthusiastic interest in teach pedagogy sessions at conferences, we decided to include a Teaching dossier in the fall issue. The spring will publish a bibliography as usual. Teaching dossiers will be easier to solicit thanks to conference sessions. Joyce Johnston, who suggested the teaching dossier, is managing the first one for this coming fall (Julia Frengs on pinterest/tech for teaching WIF). Need to actively solicit bibliographies (Patrice and Susan).
 - Perhaps we need to be more proactive about soliciting or finding information for the Newsletter. Could this be connected to the online Directory idea? When people register they could submit information about publications and such that could be accessed and compiled by Newsletter editor (or assistant). Michèle expressed concerns about privacy. Aimée suggested using Google Forms.
 - Is it possible to put all bibliographies online? We could pay an assistant.
- Social media: Gay Rawson has stepped down as Listserve manager and Michèle Schaal has taken it over. New title: Social media manager. Includes website, Twitter account, Facebook and listserv.
 - Directory: The idea of creating a WIF directory came up several times during the conference (see above under Newsletter too). Perhaps we could do a special 40th anniversary printed edition in 2017.
 - WIF Conference 2018 will be held in February at Florida State University in Tallahassee—organized by Aimée Boutin—theme: “Le Bruit des femmes/Women and Sound”. Unanimous vote of approval. Deadline for papers needed 1 year in advance: May 2017 in order for participants to have time to get funding.
 - (Cybelle McFadden said at the MLA that she might be able to host a future WIF conference)
 - One Book, One WIF. Suggestion by Stephanie Schechner. Original committee: Stephanie Schechner, Adrienne Angelo, Arline Cravens, Florence Jurney. Current book: Yanick Lahens, *Bain de Lune*. Next book: Mireille Best. *Camille en octobre*.
 - WIF regional reports:
 - Cecilia handed out a list of upcoming WIF sessions at various conferences
 - *Rocky Mountain Review* issue on Virginie Despentes, co-edited by Arline and Michèle
 - SAMLA (Adrienne) 2 sessions for 2016, hopes to increase to 4-5 sessions in 2017

- PAMLA – 2 panels
- MLA – both sessions accepted for 2017; including “Selfie” which had not been accepted the previous year
- NEMLA – Discussion of difficulties organizing WIF panels. NEMLA does not accept pre-formed panels; 2 sessions “sponsored by WIF” for 2016 but chair and panelists not WIF members. Uncertainty for future. NEMLA very expensive, not good for networking.
 - Suggestion: Regional representative and/or other regional WIF members could propose a WIF-sponsored panel. If accepted, WIF representative would advertise to WIF community (in addition to the general NEMLA call).
- Discussion on redoing WIF regions, esp. combining New York and New England/Eastern Canada. Need to check with MLA liaison to find out if WIF regions must conform to MLA regions. Official MLA regions are different from the regional MLA conferences.
- 5 open positions of which 3 regional reps are up for election: Rocky Mountain, Great Lakes, Mid-Atlantic. Discussion about whether to have term limits for regional representatives. 6 years is good but general concern that it is better not to have strict limits because of difficulty of some regions in finding reps.
- Need to think about graduate students who would be good grad reps.
- Student support:
 - Graduate student travel awards
 - Committee for 2016 WIF Conference: Arline Cravens, Eileen Angelini, Juliette Rogers, Catherine Montfort
 - 8 awards given but one of the recipients couldn’t come:
 - \$300 to Rosanne Abdulla, Stacie Allan and Sabrina Medouda
 - \$250 to Annemie Treir, Meghan Kort
 - \$200 to Lisa Karakaya, Noelle Lindstrom
 - Problem with how to reimburse. Our solution this year was to reimburse registration fees. This worked well.
 - Suggestion to change to “Graduate Student Conference Grant” (since it wouldn’t actually pay for travel).
 - Mock interviews—very few requests last year
 - Mentoring—difficulty of matching, need a larger data base of willing mentors. Directory might help. Newsletter could publish “success story” of mentorship (eg. Nancy Erenberg/Julia Frengs).
 - Graduate Student Essay Prize-- Katherine Stephenson—no award given in 2015 but she received many more papers this year.
 - Undergraduate Essay Prize— one per year, deadline June 15--

Karin Schwerdtner and Arline Cravens responsible—must be in French, 2015 award to Joelle Hageboutros (Swarthmore), “*Shérezade: A la recherche d’une identité post-coloniale*”
Advisor: Professor Alexandra Gueydan-Turek

- Cecilia proposed prize for best grad student paper at conference
 - Discussion of possible grad student sessions at next conference, either during conference or pre-conference. Some grad students like to mix with faculty, others like grad student panels.
 - Aimée suggested having a panel on professional issues at conference—one session or roundtable or discussion tables during lunch on different topics.
- Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

PERSPECTIVES ON THE WIF MENTORING PROJECT

With the current crisis of positions diminishing or disappearing in French programs across the country, it has become increasingly important for senior scholars to utilize their experience to assist junior faculty in their quest to secure a tenure-track position. To succeed at this daunting task, creativity, a communicative dialogue, and commitment are useful tools in providing an effective support system for assistant professors.

During the recent academic year of 2015-2016, I had the pleasure of mentoring Julia Frengs who earned her doctorate from the University of Oklahoma. Like many of her peers, Julia had been searching for a tenure-track position for several years, while teaching in temporary

positions in the US and Canada. Since Julia and I know each other from WIF panels at the RMMLA, our initial contact was quite collegial and comfortable. I quickly began guiding her search by proposing that she look at how she was marketing herself so as to broaden her employment opportunities. In reviewing the MLA job listings, it is important for junior professors to move away from the confining parameters of their specialized thesis areas to present themselves as more diversified candidates. Many departments are looking for people who can teach and develop a variety of general courses, mainly because faculty lines are becoming more and more restricted. A close analysis and discussion of the positions to apply for was the first task we tackled in the early fall.

By the end of 2015, Julia had numerous MLA and Skype interviews so our strategy was to become familiar with each program before facing the actual interviewers. We also prepared for these interviews by thinking about how Julia would outline her ideas for potential courses, including what texts she would select for any given literature course (if asked in the interview). In the first few months of 2016, Julia had six campus interviews and we maintained close contact to discuss each and every one in informal debriefing sessions. Here, my own interviewing experience was useful, as I was able to rely on the kind of questions that my colleagues and I ask, while emphasizing the importance of articulating one’s teaching approach. We also comprised a condensed version of Julia’s recent publication achievements, including how she would be able to outline the future direction of her research plans. A strong research agenda is very important because it is linked to the candidate’s overall plan for a successful path to tenure. In the spring of 2016, Julia had three offers that we discussed in depth. One of the most important aspects of this stage of the interview process is to have a candid, realistic

conversation about the tenure requirements for the job offer. Once again, I was able to draw on my experience as an interviewer. I asked Julia to think about which school coincided the most with her own professional aspirations. When offers were extended, the most exciting stage of the search, we also communicated closely about how to go about negotiating to secure the ideal academic position.

The WIF mentoring program is a most valuable support network for junior scholars in a very challenging job market. To ensure a tenure-track position, senior professors can assist by being involved in every step of the search process to provide the best advice for young scholars. To comment on her own experience in the WIF mentoring program, Julia has summarized her recent trajectory on the job market, culminating in securing an assistant professor position in a top-notch research university.

I signed up for the WIF mentorship program at the RMMLA Convention in Santa Fe in October 2015. Not yet in a tenure-track position and beginning my third year on the tough job market, I found the idea of having a supportive WIF mentor appealing. After sending our President Cecilia Beach my CV and a little information about myself and my job search goals, she paired me with Nancy Arenberg. Nancy and I very quickly began exchanging emails. I sent her my job application documents (my CV and a cover letter template) as well as many of the job postings listed on the MLA Job Information List.

Nancy's advice regarding what skills and experiences I should emphasize in my cover letters was invaluable. She was able to read the sometimes very general-sounding job ads and discern what institutions might be looking for much more adeptly than I was. I quickly began receiving invitations to Skype interview, and

had two MLA convention interviews. In the spring, things got very exciting for me on the job front, with six campus visit invitations! Nancy's advice about what to emphasize at each campus visit, again, was vital. She reminded me to be aware of what it would take to get tenure, as well as to consider the balance between teaching and time for research. I received three job offers, and negotiating and considering these offers was another area where Nancy's advice proved essential. She helped me weigh the pros and cons of each position, and advised me while I negotiated with my top two choices. I am thrilled to be beginning my new position as Assistant Professor of French at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln this fall.

What made my job search successful this year as opposed to the first two years on the market (aside from more experience teaching and a few more articles under my belt)? Certainly, having someone like Nancy, a seasoned scholar and pedagogue with experience serving on search committees was indispensable. More importantly, she was invested in my success; she had signed up for the WIF mentoring program explicitly to help younger scholars. Knowing this was her intention, I did not feel as guilty about asking her to take time away from her busy schedule to look over my job application materials, or about asking her to help me navigate the often murky negotiation waters, as I might have felt asking an equally busy colleague or friend who had not signed up for this program. Since joining WIF in 2012, I have recognized its value not only as a scholarly organization, but also as a helpful system. The WIF mentoring program is yet another example of the supportive nature of the entire organization, and I am so pleased and proud to have been a part of it. I can imagine that having this program available at the beginning of one's job market adventure might shorten the length of time spent on the market, and I would encourage those currently looking

for a tenure-track position to take advantage of this opportunity. Thank you to Nancy, to Cecilia Beach, to Joyce Johnston (who wrote one of my letters of recommendation), to Frédérique Chevillot (who did a mock Skype interview with me back in 2013) and to the many other encouraging members of Women in French who contributed to my being able to share this successful story.

Julia Frengs
Assistant Professor of French
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Nancy Arenberg
Associate Professor of French
University of Arkansas

THE ONE BOOK PROJECT

We are pleased to announce a joint initiative launched by WIF North America and the organizers of the WIF UK Biannual Conference. This initiative is modeled on the One Book projects that have been run by a number of cities in the US (e.g. Philadelphia) to foster dialogue and collaboration by asking citizens to read a common book. A selection committee with representation from both groups will choose a book every two years to be read and discussed at both the WIF North America and WIF UK biannual conferences. Current members of the committee include Arline Cravens (St. Louis University), Adrienne Angelo (Auburn University), Florence Ramond-Jurney (Gettysburg College), Stephanie Schechner (Widener University) and the organizers of the next WIF UK conference: Maggie Allison (Bradford University), Elliot Evans (King's College London), Gillian Ni Cheallaigh (King's College London), and Carrie Tarr (Kingston University).

With this initiative, WIF North America and WIF UK seek to foster international

collaboration by the members of and participants in our two organizations and conferences. In addition, our goal is to draw the attention of scholars to the work of deserving, lesser-known women authors in France and throughout the Francophone world. Our hope is that this will lead to increased readership for and scholarship devoted to these authors. To the extent possible, it is our goal to include authors from all periods and countries. Finally, when living authors are chosen, we will encourage conference organizers to explore the possibility of the author attending the conference. We realize that this final goal will be a challenge due to availability, funding, etc. and thus, the choice of books will not be contingent upon the author's ability to attend the conference.

A pilot of the project was run this year with the book *Bain de lune* by the Haitian author Yanick Lahens. Attendees at the WIF North America Conference hosted by Gettysburg College in Gettysburg, PA last week had the opportunity to hear a keynote speech by Lahens and to attend a question and answer session with her that was led by Linda Brindeau (Dickinson College). Our discussions were wonderful and the initiative got off to a very promising start. Future conferences will include panel discussions on either the book selected or other works by the chosen author.

The book that has been chosen for 2017 and 2018 is *Camille en octobre* by Mireille Best (1943-2005).

Mireille Best, a lesbian, working class author, grew up in Le Havre. She suffered from a variety of health problems that led her to leave her formal studies incomplete. She was unable to sit for the bac. She worked in a factory that manufactured water-proof garments. Later, she became a civil servant and was able to obtain a transfer to the south of France due to her health. She met her life partner, Jo Crampon, at the age of 15. She was a voracious reader and began writing at a young age. Although she

wrote 4 volumes of short stories and 3 novels, all published by Gallimard, she is little known among scholars in France or abroad. Following in the wake of the New Novel, she experimented with style and punctuation, writing lyrical texts that remained grounded in the communities of her youth. This is a complete list of her publications:

Les mots de hasard, (short stories) 1980.

Le méchant petit jeune homme, (short stories) 1983.

Une extrême attention, (short stories) 1985.

Hymne aux murènes, (novel) 1986.

Camille en octobre, (novel) 1988.

Orphéa trois, (short stories) 1991.

Il n'y a pas d'hommes au paradis, (novel) 1995

An application form for the selection of future authors will be sent to members in 2017.

Questions regarding the initiative may be sent to Stephanie Schechner at saschechner@mail.widener.edu

CONFERENCE INFORMATION

Two Women in French panels took place at the **South Central Modern Language Association** in the Sheraton Dallas Hotel on Friday, November 4, 2016 in the City view 4 conference room:

WIF Session 1: Pre-Twentieth Century Writers
Chair: **Theresa Varney Kennedy**, Baylor U.
Secretary: **Marie-Dominique Boyce**, Fairfield U.

1) **Samantha Meeks**, Arkansas Tech U.
“Aude and Bramimond Stand Alone: The Role of Women in The Song of Roland.”

2) **Francis Mathieu**, Southwestern U. “Mme de Clèves épouse exemplaire: La Morale conjugale de *La Princesse de Clèves* de Marie-Madeleine de Lafayette.”

3) **Annick Bellemain**, U of Science and Arts of Oklahoma. “French Poetess Marceline Desbordes-Valmore.”

4) **Keri Yousif**, Indiana State U. “Seen But Not Heard: Zola, the Empress Eugénie, and the Gender Politics of Fame.”

WIF Session 2: Contemporary Writers
Chair: Theresa Varney Kennedy, Baylor University
Secretary: Marie-Dominique Boyce, Fairfield University

1) **Linda S. Alcott**, U of Colorado – Denver.
“Voiceless Dialog and Inaccessibility in Emmelie Prophète’s *Le bout du monde est une fenêtre*.”

2) **Patrice J. Proulx**, U of Nebraska – Omaha.
“The Transgressive Mother in Nancy Huston’s *Bad Girl: Classes de littérature*.”

3) **Andrea Jonsson**, Texas Tech U.
“Performing the Parisian non-lieu: Women’s Voices and Anonymity in Transit in the Spectacular City.”

WIF Member Publications & News

Anne Donadey recently published two articles. “In Memoriam: Assia Djebar, 1936-2015” appeared in *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 131.1 (January 2016). “Gender, Genre and Intertextuality in Rachid Bouchareb’s *Hors la loi*” was published in *Studies in French Cinema* 16.1 (March 2016). It is part of a pair of articles, the first of which appeared as

“‘Wars of Memory’: On Rachid Bouchareb’s *Hors la loi*” in *L’Esprit créateur* 54.4 (Winter 2014).

For those of you who also teach in Women’s Studies, Anne is pleased to announce the publication of a co-edited reader designed to be taught in Introduction to Women’s Studies classes or humanities-focused upper-division general education Women’s Studies classes. *Women in Culture: An Intersectional Anthology for Gender and Women’s Studies. Second Edition*, edited by Bonnie Kime Scott, Susan E. Cayleff, Anne Donadey, and Irene Lara, is published by Wiley Blackwell (2017, out August 2016). See <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-111854112X.html> for more information and to access a sample chapter.

Valérie Dusailant-Fernandes published two articles: “Le cancer au pays d’Alice : Lydia Flem et son conte à ne pas mourir debout”, *Interférences littéraires*, 18 (2016): 37-47
<http://interferenceslitteraires.be/sites/drupal.arts.kuleuven.be/interferences/files/illi18dusailant.pdf> and “Au fil du temps, les masques tombent : mémoire familiale et vérité chez Delphine de Vigan”, *French Forum*, 40. 2-3 (2015): 111-125
<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/609035/pdf>

Hanan Elsayed, *L’Histoire sacrée de l’Islam dans la fiction maghrébine* (Paris: Karthala, 2016). Comment représenter dans un cadre littéraire, impliquant par définition la liberté de création et d’imagination, des personnages historiques aussi importants que le Prophète Muhammad et des événements remontant à l’aube de l’Islam? Hanan Elsayed offre une analyse de la façon dont les ont traités des écrivains maghrébins aussi différents que les romancières Assia Djebar, Anissa Boumediène, et les romanciers Driss Chaïbi et

Salim Bachi. L’auteur part du concept du sacré en Islam et de ses exigences, puis elle se penche rigoureusement sur les sources historiographiques et philosophiques arabes, – dont les ouvrages de Ṭabarî, d’Ibn Saad et d’Ibn Arabî – ainsi que des productions européennes– telles le *Mahomet* de l’orientaliste français Maxime Rodinson – où ces écrivains ont puisé leur inspiration. Ce livre décode les rapports très différents que les écrivains retenus entretiennent avec leurs sources, dont le Coran.

Melanie Hawthorne is pleased to report the following recent publications: an article on the American roots of Renée Vivien (“Des antécédents américains de Renée Vivien” in *Histoires Littéraires* 66 (2016): 69-74); an article about the painter Romaine Brooks’s drawings (“When You Cannot Run, You Cannot Hide: Romaine Brooks Draws (On) the Past,” *Romance Studies* 34.1 (2016) 15-25); and the introduction to a new translation (by **Chelsea Ray**) of a recently discovered novel by Natalie Barney (*Women Lovers, or The Third Woman*, University of Wisconsin Press, 2016).

Adrianna M. Paliyenko, “Between Poetic Cultures: Ancient Sources of the Asian ‘Orient’ in Marceline Desbordes-Valmore and Louise Ackermann.” In “Cultural Exchange and Creative Identity: France/Asia in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” edited by Aimée Boutin and Elizabeth Emery, special issue, *L’Esprit Créateur* 56, no. 3 (2016): 14-27.

Chelsea Ray is pleased to announce the 2016 publication of her translation of Natalie Clifford Barney’s 1926 novel, *Women Lovers, or The Third Woman*, published by the University of Wisconsin Press and with an Introduction by **Melanie C. Hawthorne**. Here is a brief description, along with a link to a blog and a review. I also co-edited the French

edition, which came out in 2013. This could be a great work for undergraduate and graduate classes in modernism, LGBT studies, women's writing, and Paris.

“This long-lost novel recounts a passionate triangle of love and loss among three of the most daring women of belle époque Paris. In this barely disguised roman à clef, the legendary American heiress, writer and arts patron Natalie Clifford Barney, the dashing Italian baroness Mimi Franchetti, and the beautiful French courtesan Liane de Pougy share erotic liaisons that break all taboos and end in devastation as one unexpectedly becomes the “third woman.” Never before published in English and recently published in French, this modernist, experimental work has been brought to light by Chelsea Ray’s research and translation.”

<https://uwpres.wisc.edu/books/5173.htm>

<https://uwpres.wisc.edu/blog/?p=1940>
<http://www.shelf-awareness.com/readers-issue.html?issue=527#m9219>

Here is a link to the publication in French: <http://www.erosonyx.com/Un-inedit-de-Natalie-Clifford>

Annedith Schneider’s new book, *Turkish Immigration, Art and Narratives of Home in France* (Manchester UP, 2016) looks at music, theater and literature by artists of Turkish immigrant origin in France. While the book treats a particular group of "second generation" immigrants, its insights concerning cultural production, home and belonging are relevant to other immigration contexts, as well. The language used to talk about immigration determines the kinds of things that can be said about it. In contrast to the language of integration or assimilation which evaluates an immigrant’s success in relation to a static endpoint (e.g. integrated or not), the book

proposes the term ‘settling,’ which makes it possible to see how immigrants and their descendants engage in an ongoing process of adaptation. In order to understand this process of settling, it is important to pay particular attention to immigrants not only as consumers, but also as *producers* of culture, since artistic production provides a unique and nuanced perspective on immigrants’ sense of home and belonging, especially within the multi-generational process of settling.

Courtney Sullivan published *The Evolution of the French Courtesan Novel: From de Chabrillan to Colette* with Palgrave Macmillan in June 2016. *Evolution* examines the autobiographical fictions of nineteenth-century French courtesans. In response to damaging representations of their kind in Zola and Alexandre Dumas *filis* novels, Céleste de Chabrillan, Valtesse de la Bigne, and Liane de Pougy crafted fictions recounting their triumphs as celebrities of the *demi-monde* and their outcries against the social injustices that pushed them into prostitution. Although their works enjoyed huge success in the second half of the nineteenth century, male writers penned faux-memoirs mocking courtesan novels, and successfully sowed doubt about their authorship in a backlash against the profitable notoriety the novels earned these courtesans. Colette, who did not write from personal experience but rather out of sympathy for the courtesans with whom she socialized, innovated the genre when she wrote three novels exploring the *demi-mondaine’s* life beyond prostitution and youth.

Metka Zupancic, *La mythocritique contemporaine au contemporain. Dialogue entre théorie et pratique.* Paris : Karthala, mars 2016. Metka Zupančič, après son essai sur *Les écrivaines contemporaines et les mythes* (Karthala, 2013), a invité neuf poètes, écrivaines ou scientifiques pour participer au débat sur les mythes féminins contemporains.

Ces femmes de lettres, Myriam Watthee-Delmotte, Colette Nys-Mazure et Jacqueline De Clercq (Belgique), Louise Dupré, Andrée Christensen et Joëlle Cauville (Canada), Cheryl Toman (États-Unis), Souâd Guellouz (Tunisie) et Kamila Ouhibi Aitsiselmi (Grande-Bretagne), combinent souvent plusieurs voies par lesquelles elles font entendre leurs voix novatrices. La lecture et l'écriture permettent d'identifier les mythologies dont on a hérité ou qui nous ont été imposées. Qu'il s'agisse de la mythologie berbère ou islamique, mais aussi de la tradition judéo-chrétienne, elles côtoient la mythologie gréco-romaine à laquelle la mythocritique a eu longtemps tendance à recourir exclusivement, même pour aborder des cultures autres. C'est dans la prose que les figures mythiques du passé se voient souvent remodelées et appropriées selon la nouvelle parole féminine. La femme ayant besoin de trouver sa propre parole, de s'affirmer dans son contexte culturel ambiant, s'appuie sur des modèles autochtones qu'elle se réapproprie. Au-delà des cultures particulières, la visée des mythes est à la fois initiatique et éducative et ce qui importe, finalement, c'est qu'ils puissent devenir une manière de concevoir la vie, une façon d'être.

ONLINE WIF BIBLIOGRAPHY
PROJECT

CALL FOR PAST BIBLIOGRAPHIES!

We seek past Newsletter bibliographies to publish as an archive on the WIF website. We hope that authors will send to Cheryl Morgan (cmorgan@hamilton.edu) a Word file of their original or updated bibliography along with their consent to publish online. If you do not wish your bibliography to appear online, please let Cheryl Morgan know. We have a number of bibliographies dating back some years, but hope to hear from as many past authors as possible.

WIF TEACHING FEATURE

Pin It! Using Pinterest in the Classroom

Julia Frengs, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

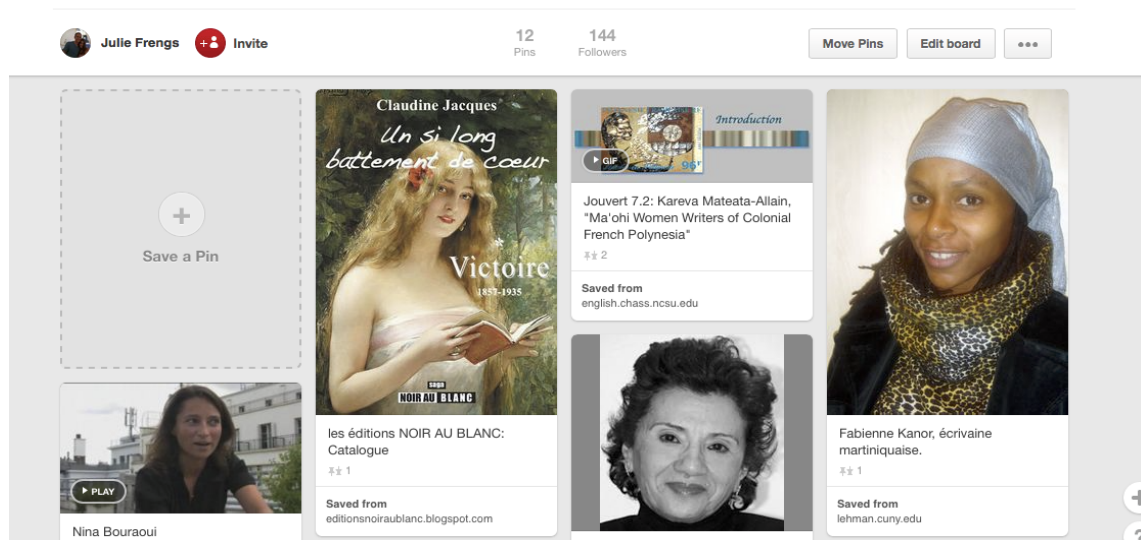
In November of 2013, the bulletin for the American Association of Teachers of French's "Technology Commission Report" listed Pinterest as an invaluable tool for teachers of languages, noting that the visually appealing bookmarking site allows teachers to share activities, videos, and cultural references. A month prior to this, I had given a talk at the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association's Annual Convention entitled "Get your Students 'On Board': Using Pinterest to Teach Women's Literature" on the WIF panel "Teaching Women in French." At this time, I had been using Pinterest as an extra-credit activity for my students at the University of Hawai'i, Mānoa for nearly two semesters, and my ideas for using the site were still developing. After receiving feedback on my presentation, I had some new thoughts on how I might use Pinterest. While I had been using the bookmarking site as a way for students take ownership of their learning and supplement the content of their language classes (I will further elaborate on how I did this below), I realized I could expand my use of Pinterest to promote women authors, to provide syllabus information, to add supplemental information on required class readings, to provide links to articles to my students, and to use it as an online discussion-board. Rather than using the discussion boards provided on most learning management systems (LMS) in literature and culture classes, I found I could use Pinterest to incorporate relevant discussions in the target language using an attractive social media outlet. Before describing how I did this in a civilization course, however, I would like to discuss why educators might choose to use Pinterest as a pedagogical tool.

Pinterest allows for the creation and management of themed photo and video collections and for the sharing of these collections with friends or other connections. It is essentially a visually appealing way to bookmark websites, online news articles, videos, and more. Despite the fact that Pinterest is more popular among women than it is among men, it attracts an extremely diverse age demographic ("Mobile Messaging"), which is helpful in the college or university setting since many of us have students of diverse ages in our classes. Users of Pinterest can follow friends' pin boards, "like" and comment on pins, and can "repin" content to their own boards, a process similar to that of sharing a Facebook post or "retweeting" on Twitter. Part of the benefit in using Pinterest is that it is a popular social network, so when students use Pinterest in the classroom or for a project outside of class, they can see each others' pins and possibly develop an interest in what another student is researching. Additionally, they can become connected to pinners from across the world. The designers of the site have recently announced further efforts to increase usage (specifically in Europe) by decreasing clutter and ads, and by choosing a minimalist interface (Hempel). What was already a user-friendly site is consequently

becoming even simpler to use, which makes Pinterest an attractive option for educators. Furthermore, in contrast to most LMS, students can access Pinterest on their mobile devices as well as on their computers, which facilitates use of the site from anywhere.

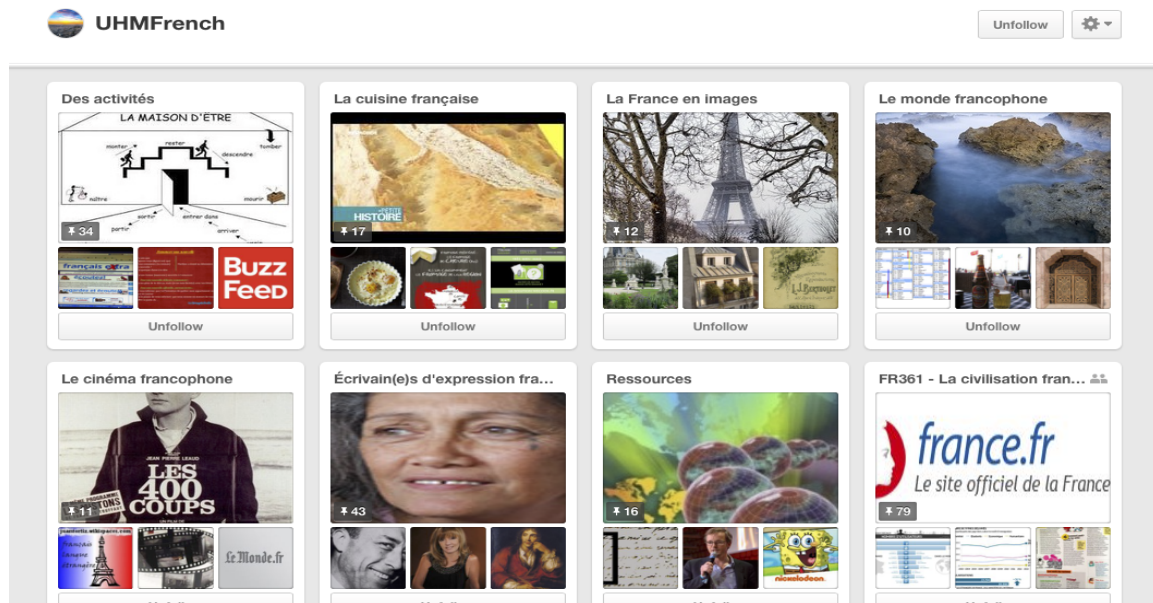
As an educator, one of the easiest ways to get started using Pinterest is to go directly to the “education” category on the site, where you will find an endless array of boards created by other members of Pinterest. You can “repin” anything you like for ideas for activities, exercises, or even just for photos you might want to use in class. You can create your own board, which for me has been more helpful in terms of organization than creating “bookmarks” in my bookmarks toolbar when I’m browsing the Internet for both teaching and research ideas. On my personal Pinterest account, I have categorized boards exclusively for teaching ideas, such as activities to use when teaching various vocabulary or grammar structures, as well as boards oriented more toward teaching literature and culture. Since my research focuses principally on francophone literatures of the Pacific and Caribbean oceans written by women, the website *Île en île* appears frequently on these boards. This site facilitates pinning because it has photos of each author next to his or her bio and bibliography (and oftentimes video interviews), and since Pinterest is visual, it is essential that there be photos or images of some kind in order to be able to pin an item. I have boards dedicated to teaching French and francophone women authors, to research on Indian Ocean authors, to research on Caribbean and Oceanic authors, to articles I am currently researching, and more.

Teaching Women in French



I am also a member of a collaborative board in which members from across the United States (and the world) contribute French learning resources, which can be found here: <https://www.pinterest.com/languagecomics/french-learning/>.

It is possible to adjust the language settings on Pinterest so that boards can be maintained and all navigation done exclusively in French as a way to keep language instructors connected, and to help share teaching ideas. I organized seven general boards for the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa:



The class activities board has links to videos, worksheets, and fun photos that help students memorize different grammar structures or vocabulary. If students ask about French films, we can quickly and easily direct them to the films board, and since many of the films are now available on Netflix or YouTube, students can watch them on their own. Students can “like” pins, or they can comment on them, similar to how they would “like” or comment on Facebook. Boards such as these are great tools for French clubs and extracurricular organizations within a French section or department. Instructors can provide a link to the Pinterest board on their syllabi or on an LMS, making it simple for students to access these resources.

I first used Pinterest as an extra-credit project in my intermediate-level language courses and found that it created the optimal affective conditions for students: there was no anxiety about this project, it was something that was fun to do, and students could tailor the project to their individual interests. In these courses, students were allowed to choose any French figure (literary, historical, musical, political, etc.) that interested them. Students chose figures such as Jean-Luc Godard, Simone de Beauvoir, and Marion Cotillard. If my students wanted to receive any points, they had to create a board and to pin at least five sites to it, two or more of which needed to be in French. I allowed them to conduct some research in English to ensure comprehension, because I was principally concerned with their cultural education through this project. The second and most important part of the project was the one-page essay (in French) on the figure of their choice, using the information they garnered from their Pinterest research. Finally, they were able to obtain more points for any extra work done as well as for creativity. Students emailed me their usernames, and through the UHM French Pinterest account, I

found them and followed only that board. Throughout the semester they added more pins, and I periodically checked to see what kinds of materials they were finding. I provided a handout describing the Pinterest project and my expectations, and made students aware that I would not follow any other boards except the ones for which they gave me a link, to avoid invading their privacy. On the notion of privacy, I do want to note that Pinterest makes it less complicated than a Facebook account might, since no private information is displayed. There is no “about me” section, no information about where you work, etc., unless a person chooses to provide this information. Students who might not feel comfortable using their names can use pseudonyms, and photos of oneself are not required.

In a 300-level French civilization course at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, I incorporated Pinterest as a required part of the class. I asked my students to create individual boards as well as to collaborate in our group board (in the future, I would eliminate the individual board requirement, as this did not prove as valuable as the group board: students did not “follow” each others’ boards well, as the group board was easier to follow). The group board made a visually appealing discussion forum for the class. To get things rolling, I pinned several articles pertaining to the subjects of our class discussion, as well as helpful online resources. Students were expected to pin items to our board so that others could comment on them. As with Facebook, it is possible to “tag” friends, ensuring that a student receives a notification if their name is “tagged” underneath an article or in a comment. This enables the instructor to alert individual students to articles they may find particularly salient, or students can let their peers know if they have found an article relevant to their projects.

To avoid confusion and the possibility (inevitability?!) that students might wait until the very end of the semester to begin building their boards or contributing to our group board, I scaffolded the project. I gave my students specific dates by which they needed to have pinned an item, and a few more indicating by when they needed to comment and respond to remarks that others might have made on their own pins. For example, I had them pin one item, with their own description or analysis on that item, by March 17, and by April 5 they were to have made a second remark in response to another student’s comment. I gave students detailed guidelines regarding acceptable websites, and models of what I considered substantive, productive, and reflective comments, so that they were not tempted to simply say: “Oh I like that, it’s interesting.” The following examples provide good illustrations of what resulted on our group board:

FR361 - La civilisation fra...

Unfollow board

Monde

LES PEUPLES VAINCRONT
LES IMPÉRIALISMES ET LA REPRESSION

BnF - Esprit(s) de mai 68. @Keelan

Femen : le procès d'Eloïse Bouton renvoyé

World War I - French colonial North-African soldiers near the Western Front

Un carte historique des colonies françaises en Afrique. Ils ont influencé beaucoup de territoire pour un petite pays.

Le mouvement féministe

Ils ont essayé de retrouver le style des Années Folles. Le style "Flapper-girl" n'a pas disparu. Il y avait un esprit dans les 20s qui fascine les femmes d'aujourd'hui et le désigne intérieur du temps intéressé quelques personnes comme touriste.

Le ministre de la culture en France est retourné trois peintures de la Seconde Guerre mondiale aux héritiers des propriétaires. Je pense qu'il est fascinant parce qu'ils avaient trouvé les propriétaires, après plus d'un demi-siècle. Il y a encore beaucoup de peintures qui ne sont pas réclamés, mais je pense que le ministre de la culture va les trouver.

FR361 - La civilisation fra...

Unfollow board

Voilà! La mode Islamique! Ces femmes sont belles et elles expriment leurs personnalités par leurs vêtements comme beaucoup d'autres femmes qui sont Islamique ou pas.

Ce lien fournit des informations sur la Polynésie française par le point de vue de la France continental. (C'est mon photo.)

C'est le vidéo que j'ai présenté dans notre classe. On peut se sentir le colère, le frustration, et la tristesse. Cet événement est venu après les décennies de changement économique et sociale à cause de la colonisation par France; et les décennies des essais nucléaire sans permission ou communication avec les Tahitiens autochtones.

Exposition : Paris vaut bien une Mecque

Ukraine : les deux camps se font face à l'arme lourde à Sloviansk

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You might notice that there are some grammatical errors in the students' comments. Like on any discussion forum, these types of mistakes can and do happen, and it is up to the instructor to decide how to address them. For me, it depends on the objective of the discussion board and the type of class in which it is being used that determines the necessity of error feedback. Pinterest does enable private messaging, if an instructor were

to deem error correction appropriate. This does not seem to me to be the most efficient way to provide feedback, however. Rather, I might give students the opportunity to go back and edit their comments themselves, having them turn in a journal of corrected errors periodically throughout the semester, if one of the explicit goals of the discussion board is to build writing skills. Another option might be to choose a student's comment that is representative of the work they typically do, and to provide feedback on only one comment several times throughout the semester (particularly if students are required to post comments weekly). I find that the discussion board functions better if it is not strictly monitored for grammatical errors, as my main objective for this project is to encourage critical thinking in the target language, and to get students communicating with one another in a low-stakes environment.

When doing presentations throughout the semester, students often referred to articles they had pinned on the collaborative board. This became one of the more valuable aspects of the project, particularly when students came to class having read the articles the presenters had pinned beforehand. Access to this additional material prepared students for posing relevant, informed questions, allowing for a level of student engagement I had not seen before. Students were exposed not only to the course material I had provided, but also to articles related to our course that they had found themselves, thus allowing them significant ownership over their learning experiences in and outside of the classroom. Two of my students researching different waves of French feminism saw connections between their projects, and I was pleased to see the thought-provoking dialogue they maintained on our discussion board.

There are other ways to use Pinterest as a pedagogical tool, of course. Many educators not only dedicate boards to specific authors, to conferences, or to compiling articles they intend on reading later or want to share, but they also use Pinterest boards to create interactive, attractive syllabi. Since students can access Pinterest via their mobile devices, they therefore *always* have their syllabus available. If the instructor provides synopses of the course materials under a photo of each work, students have continual access to information on the next novel, poem, film, or short story they will be reading.

For me, Pinterest has proved to be an optimal way to provide rich images to support the language learning process and develop cultural understanding, using an increasingly popular, easily accessible medium. The fact that students comment in French on each other's pins and also repin promotes communication and connections, two of the major goals outlined in the ACTFL world-readiness standards. In addition, Pinterest can provide learners with access to authentic texts created by native speakers. The project thus ensures that students take an active role in their own language learning, and provides opportunities for interaction. Furthermore, Pinterest can be used to promote the study of French and francophone women authors, as well as our Women in French organization. On my Pinterest board devoted to "Teaching Women in French," I have pinned the link to the WIF website, which will hopefully serve to advertise the organization to other pinners. I encourage anyone interested to follow me, and I wish you happy pinning!

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Spring 2016

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