



Comparative
Studies

FALL 2020 - SPRING 2021

KUDOS NEWSLETTER

Ph.D. in Comparative Studies Program | Florida Atlantic University



Letter from the Director

Hello! Welcome to Kudos, the Comparative Studies Program newsletter. We are now coming out of one of the hardest years in the program's history (not to mention FAU itself, our country, and the world!). I am thrilled to be able to greet you with a sense of optimism (and crossed fingers) as we prepare to enter the summer and get ready for the 2021-22 academic year. Right now, our plan is to return to some semblance of normality in 21-22, with in-person classes and events, and the ability and desire to welcome students into our offices and back on campus. Even with all of the COVID-19 related struggles, the PhD program in Comparative Studies continues to grow. Over 20-21 and 21-22, we have admitted more than 20 new students into the program, all extremely qualified with intriguing research interests. We are excited to be admitting our third cohort of students into the CSP track (Culture, Society, and Politics), growing our program in new and exciting directions. Though COVID has prevented many of our students from doing the avid conferencing that they are used to, we have had students like Luke Wilson and Matthew Elfenbein win exciting awards, and we have been able to cosponsor a series of philosophical Zooms with three potential partner institutions in Israel (Bezalel Academy of Fine Art, Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, and Shenkar College of Engineering and Design). The enriching discussions of artificial intelligence, photography, and glamour helped to keep the tradition of intellectual engagement and debate alive, even during these difficult times. Likewise, in April we held an exciting Zoom event celebrating the successes of several of our alumni who contributed to a book called *Collateral Damage: Women Write About War*. Contributors to the book read from their chapters and a vigorous roundtable discussion followed, moderated by Peace, Justice, and Human Rights initiative director Dr. Kelly Shannon. As we (fingers crossed) emerge from a socially-distanced and Zooming world, we hope to arrange more events like these in person to help reconnect our community as soon as it is safe to do so. Likewise, I hope this newsletter helps reconnect us with our fantastic alumni. Please, alumni, maintain an association with the program! If you haven't been in contact with the us for a while, please reach out to me or to Gabby. We would love to hear about what you are currently doing. We want to share in your accomplishments, post about them, and celebrate you!

Eric Berlatsky

Director - Ph.D. in Comparative Studies Program

2021 Comparative Studies Student Association Conference

On March 5, 2021, the Comparative Studies Student Association held its annual graduate conference, reflecting on the theme of "Navigating (Un)Certainty: Chaos, Coping, and Reconciliation". Despite the event being held in a completely virtual format this year, a CSSA first, our conference-turned-symposium welcomed global attendees and presenters. Our twelve speakers represented a variety of academic disciplines, including—but not limited to—literature, political science, and communication, highlighting one of CSSA's goals of fostering the importance of interdisciplinarity. These panels welcomed upwards of thirty attendees at one time throughout the day, and while there were certainly elements of the in-person experience that could not be replicated, CSSA was able to build up our repertoire for engaging in exciting scholarship and inviting environments for next year's conference.



CSSA Presents:
**NAVIGATING
(UN)CERTAINTY: CHAOS,
COPING, AND
RECONCILIATION IN ERAS
OF DISARRAY**

MARCH 5TH, 2021

10:15AM | Eric Berlatsky, Ph.D. - Director of Comparative Studies Program
Opening Remarks

**10:30AM
TO
11:45AM** |

- Aishik Saha - The Neoliberal Uncertainty: Examining the Spectacle Reorganization of Politics and Authenticity
- Maha Wright - The Modern Oasis
- Veronica Stewart - Achieving the Ideal While Harming my Relationship: Self Discrepancy, Photo-manipulation, & Instagram-related Conflict
- Denise Pinnaro - The (Sea)Scape Between: Liminality, the Mediterranean, and Clandestine Immigration

**12:00PM
TO
1:15PM** |

- Ali Tal-mason - Undercurrents in Nancy Gardner Prince's West Indies Pamphlet: U.S. Abolitionist Perspectives and Exchange in the Wake of Britain's 1833 Slavery Abolition Act
- Marietta Kosma - Precarious Lives: Facing and Coping with Uncertainty in Shange's "For colored girls who have considered suicide/ when the rainbow is enuf."
- Anne Molinas - In Search of our Foremothers: The Erasure of Indigenous Women and "Argentina. Historia del Descubrimiento y Conquista del Rio de la Plata"
- Viviana Pezzullo - Écriture féminine/féministe and Literary Collaboration in Catherine Clément and Hélène Cixous's "La jeune née"

**3:00PM
TO
4:15PM** |

- Matthew Ari Elfenbein - The Musical Body: Uncertainty through Digital Embodiment
- Stephen A. McGeary - Narratives of Transmissibility in the Early 1990's Rap Scene
- Charlie Cleek - Enjoying the Paratextual Cacophony
- Kimberly Bain - Writing in a Pandemic: Reviewing the case against content in "Devoid of Content" by Stanley Fish

**2021
CSSA
CONF**

Zoom Link:
<https://bit.ly/3sC8VJH>

If reasonable accommodation(s) for a disability is required, contact dpinnaro2014@fau.edu. Please make your needs known by Monday, March 1st for effective accommodations.

Ph.D. Student Spotlights



Anna Maldonado

Anna began on the Culture, Society, and Politics track of the Comparative Studies Program in Fall 2020, looking to specialize in Latin American Politics and Social Justice. Prior to the start of the program, she earned a Master of Arts in Political Science from FAU, where she was awarded the Provost Fellowship and the Rae Raskin Memorial Scholarship, and worked in the office of 15th Judicial Circuit Court Judge Samantha Schosberg Feuer. Anna has assisted with the education team of Project Micah, a non-profit organization founded by an FAU alum that addresses the issue of human sex trafficking. She has also contributed to the FAU Feminist Graduate Student Association, assisting in panelist outreach and moderating a panel discussion addressing Intimate Partner Violence. Currently, Anna works as a Consultant at the Career Center, serves as a Research Assistant for Dr. Aimee Arias, and teaches two sections of United States Government.

Matthew Elfenbein

"Within my academic world, 2020 was the year of learning more broadly about so many things beyond the classroom. One of the greatest gifts from a Ph.D. program is the ability to network and form bonds with your cohort, not just in the classroom and campus. Yet, that perk was changed into learning how to create and maintain virtual relationships. Being Internet-centric allowed me to broaden my research horizons and introduced me to new people through conferences and lectures that would normally be out of reach. I was given the opportunity to teach my own classes within the School of Multimedia and Communication Studies, which I continue to do in this virtual environment. Teaching film online forced me to reconceptualize the same framework I have been steeped in for years, but I have learned new methodologies and epistemologies that will only benefit me later in the job market. This year I also acted as the Treasurer for the Comparative Studies Student Association, where I learned how to form interpersonal connections from vastly different parts on the map. I had the privilege of presenting in a few conferences, such as the 23rd Film Studies Association of Canada Graduate Colloquium at the University of Toronto, the Comparative Studies Student Association symposium (which I helped organize), and ultimately the 42nd Annual Southwest Popular/American Culture Association conference. At this conference, I was conferred with the 'Historic & Contemporary Cultures Graduate Paper Award' among the many papers submitted, a real honor and accolade. Now I can take everything I have learned so far to continue teaching and get ready for the infamous comp exams."

Ph.D. Candidate Spotlight



Lucas Wilson

This past year, Lucas had some of his academic and public-facing work published. His book chapter, titled “Dismantling Christian Readings of Jewish American Literature in the Christian College: A. M. Klein’s *The Second Scroll*,” was included in *Teaching Jewish American Literature*, published by The MLA. He also has forthcoming articles being published in *The Journal of Jewish Identities* and *Canadian Jewish Studies*, along with book chapters slated for publication by The University of Alabama Press and DIO Press. His public-facing work has appeared in *LGBTQ Nation*, *Religion Dispatches*, *Queerty*, and *RVA Magazine*. He has also been interviewed by several media outlets—like *Rolling Stone*, *Straight White American Jesus Podcast*, *A Tiny Revolution*, etc.—about his work on gay conversion therapy.

Lucas furthermore presented his work at several conferences, including the Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference; the Western Jewish Studies Association Conference; and the University of California—Riverside Conference on Queer and Transgender Studies in Religion; and he also chaired at panel at the Northeast MLA. Additionally, Lucas has been invited to participate in several working groups, workshops, and institutes; he has been invited to be part of the Holocaust Educational Foundation’s Regional Institute on the Holocaust and Jewish Civilization; the American Academy for Jewish Research’s Workshop for Graduate Students; and University of Sussex’s Max and Hilde Kochmann Summer School; and he is currently part of The University of Alabama’s American Examples Program.

Lucas has also received several awards and fellowships over the past year, including The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi’s Dissertation Fellowship; Sigma Tau Delta International English Honor Society’s Edwin L. Stockton Jr. Graduate Scholarship; the Northeast MLA’s Graduate Student Caucus Essay Award; Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region’s Martha Ross Memorial Prize; Michigan State University’s Libraries Travel Grant; University of Minnesota’s Elmer L. Andersen Research Scholarship; the American Academy for Jewish Research’s Graduate Student Summer Funding; and the Association for Jewish Studies’ Charles Knapp Family Foundation Conference Subvention Grant. From FAU, Lucas received the Summer Dissertation Fellowship. Lucas is currently teaching at University of Toronto while finishing his dissertation.

Congratulations to our 2021 Graduates!



Dr. Dyanne K. Martin

"Of Race and Resistance: Inside and Out of Ethnic Lives in Modern Literature of the Americas"

Dyanne Martin is a native of Jamaica, a country whose national motto is "Out of many, one people." Her multicultural background fosters her deep interest in diasporic literatures across the Americas, with an emphasis on Caribbean literature. Her areas of scholarship also include classical rhetoric, semiotics, and Holocaust studies. Her research in the expanse of ethnic literatures examines identity formation, as well as overlooked spaces of healing and reconciliation.

Dr. Martin's dissertation, "Of Race and Resistance: Inside and Out of Ethnic lives in Modern Literature of the Americas," explores—through the genres of slave narrative, fiction, and memoir—the ways in which people understand and perform race. She examines the process of socio-semiogenesis in which customs allow people not only to form themselves in groups but also to disrupt, remediate, and invert the implicit racial codes that govern human interaction within and among such groups. Her study offers a Peircean, triadic approach to the dialectics of race—an approach that seeks to find a space in which dialogue and healing might occur even as it sheds light on those shades of biology and culture that both form and divide ethnic groups. Her peer-reviewed publications have appeared in the ALAN Review, Ideas Plus, the Philip Roth Journal, and the CEA Critic.

Dr. Martin has been teaching for twenty-two years, twelve of which were spent in secondary education—an invaluable experience she would not trade. After obtaining a tenured position at Broward College, she was blessed and humbled to be awarded both Professor of the Year and John S. and James L. Knight Endowed Teaching Chair. She will always be grateful for the colleagues and students she was privileged to know at Broward College. Dr. Martin now teaches Caribbean Literature, African American Literature, Holocaust Literature, Advanced Rhetoric, Visual Rhetoric, and Core Studies at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, where she has been awarded an Aldeen Grant and a Global Program Studies Curriculum Grant.

Her dissertation committee, chaired by Dr. Mary Ann Gosser Esquilín, included Dr. Sika Dagbovie-Mullins, Dr. Richard Shusterman, and Dr. Steven Blakemore. She is forever indebted to her stellar committee for their incomparable expertise and encouragement. She is also grateful for the instruction and guidance received over the years from Dr. Alan Berger and Professor Ayse Papatya Bucak, as well as for the knowledge she gained at Cornell's School of Criticism and Theory. In addition, Dr. Martin is thankful for the support of her husband, her family, and the friends in her cohort who became family: Amanda Dutton and Cora Bresciano.

Congratulations to our 2021 Graduates!

Dr. Lochard Noël

*"Du Fantastique Français au Réel Merveilleux Haïtien:
L'incontournable va-et-vient Littéraire"*

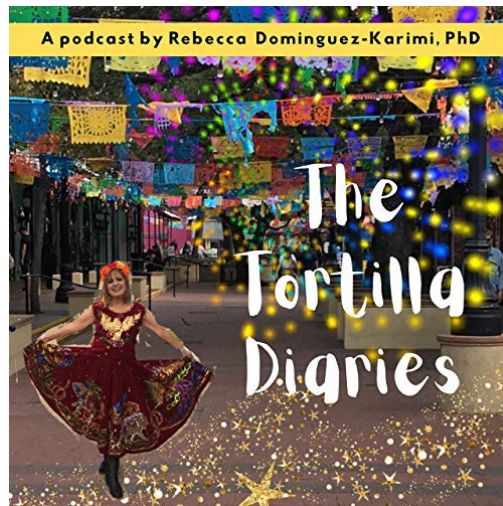
Dr. Lochard Noël was drawn to the Comparative Studies program because the program's interdisciplinary structure would allow him to incorporate the methods, philosophies, and perspectives from several fields of study, namely Literature and cultural Studies, Anthropology, and Post-Colonial studies. He started the program in the fall of 2014 and graduated in the fall of 2020. His research focuses have centered on French Fantastic literature and "Le reel merveilleux haïtien" culture, religion, zombification, and the influences of dictatorial regimes on literary works, fiction and non-fiction. In addition, Dr. Lochard Noël has more than 20 years of teaching experience, which include teaching high school ESOL students from Miami Dade County Public Schools, Union School in Haiti where he taught English, French and Social Studies for three years. Dr. Lochard Noël has published numerous works including novels, poetry, folktales and articles on arts and literary critiques. Dr. Lochard Noel is a member of the cultural group Sosyete Koukouy (Koukouy Society) since 1985. Prior to entering the Comparative Studies Program, Dr. Lochard Noel received his master's degree in French from FAU. His doctoral dissertation was supervised by Dr. Mary Ann Gosser Esquilín, Dr. Marcella Munson and Dr. Romain Rivaux.

Dr. Carmen Duarte

*"Cuando las Islas Tienen Alas: Diversidad e Inclusión Étnico-Racial y de Sexualidad
en la Dramaturgia Femenina Hispano-Caribeña en los Estados Unidos"*

Carmen Duarte's doctoral dissertation, "Cuando las islas tienen alas: Diversidad e inclusión étnico-racial y de sexualidad en la dramaturgia femenina hispano-caribeña en los Estados Unidos" was successfully defended in 2021. It is to be published by Editorial Aduana Vieja later on this year. Duarte, a Cuban playwright who emigrated to the United States in 1993, joined the Comparative Studies program in 2017 with the idea of doing research on Hispanic Caribbean women playwrights in the United States. Dr. Mary Ann Gosser-Esquilín, an expert in Caribbean literature accepted to be the Director from the onset of the project. Later, Dr. Nancy K. Poulson, an expert in Latin American literature and Dr. Carmen Cañete-Quesada, an expert in Dominican literature became the other members of the dissertation committee. The dissertation was completed during the COVID 19 pandemic, when to check out books from a library was a difficult process, and when it was not possible to conduct research in the archives of theatre groups in other states or seek other theatrical works for the project. Thanks to the internet and social media, we talked to specialist, libraries, and collected many plays, biographies, further bibliographic information, and even some theater shows. Despite the difficulties, we brought to fruition this ambitious dissertation, focused on the intersectionalities of ethnic, race, sex and gender identities of Hispanic Caribbean women in the United States though the study of their dramatic productions. Duarte has many other future projects as a playwright, novelist, and also as a researcher. In the immediate future she intends to continue the study of Hispanic Caribbean women playwrights in the diaspora, but not just in the United States, but also in Europe and Latin America.

Alumni Spotlight



Dr. Rebeca Dominguez-Karimi on her podcast, "The Tortilla Diaries"

“ The purpose of The Tortilla Diaries is to celebrate “la familia Latina”—Latinx families—through the culture—history, traditions, music, and arts. Latinx families share more similarities than differences to society at large and I seek to break down the barriers that exist between cultures and create a better understanding between peoples. My goal is to restore bonds severed by racism, discrimination, and misperceptions. By sharing life stories from the Latinx community, listeners will come away with a better understanding of this fascinating culture and people and will see that truly, we are all familia!

Here’s a little bit more about my monthly podcast, The Tortilla Diaries. Each month my program will feature a variety of topics. One month I may feature life stories taken from my “Treasures from Aztlan Oral History Project,” or I may highlight Latinx, Afrolatinx artists or indigenous artists performing their music, reading their poetry or short stories. Some months I may include a myth from the Latinx culture bordering on the whimsical side. In all, the program promises to enlighten listeners about different facets of our rich and diverse culture. Please join me on Apple podcasts, Amazon music, Spotify, or Google podcasts...and remember, we are all familia!

Here are some links to help guide you to my site:

Apple Podcasts

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-tortilla-diaries-podcast/id1536177213>

Spotify Podcasts

<https://open.spotify.com/show/4LmlXadcGBOEDrEcklOLBA>

Amazon Podcasts

<https://music.amazon.com/podcasts/8441f1e5-5ea1-4cc3-b6d1-a65ab26d241d/The->

Google Podcasts

<https://podcasts.google.com/search/The%20Tortilla%20Diaries>



Events Spotlight

The Comparative Studies Ph.D. Program was proud to host several online events this past academic year, working in collaboration with a variety of individuals and organizations. Below are some examples of those fantastic events!

FAU's PEACE, JUSTICE, AND HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVE
and the PH.D. PROGRAM IN COMPARATIVE STUDIES present

READINGS AND PANEL DISCUSSION
ON THE NEWLY RELEASED BOOK
**"COLLATERAL DAMAGE:
WOMEN WRITE ABOUT WAR"**

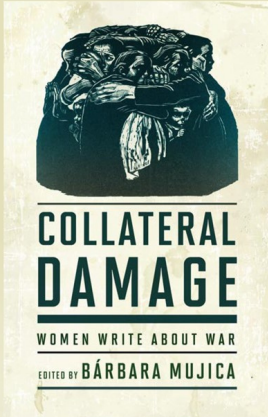
Edited by Bárbara Mujica, with contributions by
FAU Ph.D. Program alumna Trudy Mercadal and
Elizabeth Cruz Petersen, and current candidate
Carmen Duarte

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14
4:30 pm EDT | FREE ZOOM EVENT

GUEST PANELISTS
Marjorie Agosin, Ph.D., Wellesley College
Elizabeth Cruz Petersen, Ph.D., Independent Scholar
Carmen Duarte, Florida Atlantic University
Trudy Mercadal, Ph.D., Independent Scholar
Bárbara Mujica, Ph.D., Georgetown University
Domnica Radulescu, Ph.D., Washington and Lee University

Collateral Damage tells the stories of those who struggle on the margins of armed conflict or who attempt to rebuild their lives after a war. Bringing together the writings of female authors from across the world, this collection animates the wartime experiences of women as military mothers, combatants, supporters, war resisters, and victims. Their stories stretch from Rwanda to El Salvador, Romania to Sri Lanka, Chile to Iraq. Spanning fiction, poetry, drama, essay, memoir, and reportage, the selections are contextualized by brief author commentaries.

ZOOM LINK:
<https://fau-edu.zoom.us/j/89479995673?pwd=bitFR1JSM3NNV0F1Um9hODISS3pkdz09>



For more information, email
Eric Berlatsky: eberlats@fau.edu

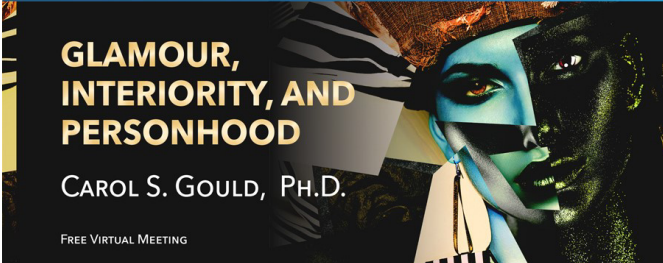
FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY
DOROTHY F. SCHMIDT COLLEGE OF ARTS AND LETTERS

FAU'S PH.D. PROGRAM IN COMPARATIVE STUDIES PRESENTS A JOINT SYMPOSIUM with
JERUSALEM ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND DANCE, SHENKAR COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND
DESIGN, and BEZALEL ACADEMY OF ARTS AND DESIGN

**GLAMOUR,
INTERIORITY, AND
PERSONHOOD**

CAROL S. GOULD, PH.D.

FREE VIRTUAL MEETING



TUESDAY, MARCH 23 | 1 PM (FAU/EST), 7 PM (JERUSALEM/ISRAEL)

True glamour is a particularly elusive phenomenon, rare and easy to miss in our social media age. What is it in the collective imagination? A couture Balenciaga dress, a customized Bugatti, or some other accoutrements of the cultural or financial elite? If so, how is it that we also discern it in someone who has no apparent position of power or wealth? A truly glamorous person is like an original artwork on Walter Benjamin's model, which has an authenticity, a uniqueness—an aura. Thus, the work's aesthetic value is lost in mechanical reproduction. Similarly, Gould analyzes, one cannot copy the glamour of another person, for true glamour emerges from the interior self.

Carol S. Gould, Ph.D., explores why we need a philosophy of glamour and what it can show us about the aesthetics of everyday life and the ontology of personhood as an aesthetic category. She specializes in ancient philosophy, aesthetics, philosophy of literature, and philosophy of psychiatry. Her book titled *Aesthetics, Glamour, and Persons* is forthcoming with Bloomsbury Academic. **ZOOM meeting:**
<https://fau-edu.zoom.us/j/83551870459?pwd=VknGR20vWG1pRnd5RCXMi9XeGVMZz09>


For more information, contact eberlats@fau.edu



FAU'S PH.D. PROGRAM IN COMPARATIVE STUDIES PRESENTS A JOINT SYMPOSIUM with
JERUSALEM ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND DANCE, SHENKAR COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND DESIGN,
and BEZALEL ACADEMY OF ARTS AND DESIGN

CAN ALGORITHMS CREATE ART?

In 2018 Christie's sold the "Portrait of Edmond Belamy" for \$432,000. It was the first time that a painting generated via an AI algorithm reached the world auction stage. The portrait is not the first product of an algorithm that is classified as art. It was preceded by Tresset's art-painting robot and Weinberg's marimba-playing robot improvising jazz, to name a few. **This Symposium will examine whether these works can be considered art and explore the role of the human operator.**



12:30 PM, TUES, NOVEMBER, 24 | FREE VIRTUAL EVENT



GALIT WELLNER, PH.D.
BEZALEL ACADEMY OF ART AND DESIGN
Wellner is a lecturer at Bezalel Academy of Art and Design and Tel Aviv University. Her research focuses on digital technologies and their inter-relations with humans. She is an active member of the Postphenomenology Community.

REGISTER FOR ZOOM:
us02web.zoom.us/j/87563847008
Meeting ID: 875 6384 7008

For more information, contact
eberlats@fau.edu



FAU'S PH.D. PROGRAM IN COMPARATIVE STUDIES PRESENTS A JOINT SYMPOSIUM with
JERUSALEM ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND DANCE, SHENKAR COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND DESIGN,
and BEZALEL ACADEMY OF ARTS AND DESIGN

**PHOTOGRAPHY FROM
THE TURIN SHROUD
TO THE TURING
MACHINE**

YANAI TOISTER




Image: Gottfried Jäger, Lochblendenstruktur 3.8.14 D 3.5, 1967, (C) 2019

1 PM, TUESDAY, JANUARY 19 | FREE VIRTUAL EVENT



Yanai Toister, Ph.D., discusses the ideas in his new book which introduces two conceptual models of photography: the Turin Shroud and the universal Turing machine. The Turin Shroud inspires a discussion on photography's frequently acclaimed 'ontological privilege.' This is then contrasted with a discussion on the universal Turing machine.

Yanai Toister is an artist, curator and educator serving as Director of the Unit for History and Philosophy at Shenkar College of Engineering, Design & Art in Israel. Toister's artworks have been shown in numerous international venues. Toister's recent writing has been published in journals including *Philosophy of Photography*, *Ubiquity*, *Journal of Science and Technology of the Arts*, *Photographies* and *Digital Creativity*.

ZOOM MEETING: tiny.cc/toister
Meeting ID: 897 8036 4642

For more information, contact
eberlats@fau.edu

