



NOVEMBER 2006 • VOLUME ONE

# fR FABELLA ROMANICA

FRENCH, ITALIAN, SPANISH, AND PORTUGUESE AT NOTRE DAME

## Perry Knighted by French Ministry of National Education

Earlier this year, Catherine Perry, associate professor of French, was appointed a Chevalier (“knight”) in the Ordre des Palmes Académiques by the French Ministry of National Education. She was decorated with the insignia of the order in March at an on-campus ceremony conducted by the French consul general from Chicago.

Created in 1808 by Napoleon I, the Palmes Académiques was originally designed to honor outstanding members of the faculty of the University of Paris. Membership later was expanded to include people beyond the French university system, including other nationals and French scholars living outside the country whose work promotes French language, culture, and educational activities.

Perry, who specializes in French literature of the 19th and early 20th centuries, is undergraduate advisor for the Program in French and Francophone Studies. She is a faculty fellow in the Nanovic Institute for European Studies and in the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies.

A past president of the international Francophone Studies association Conseil International d’Études Francophones, Perry is the current editor in chief of that organization’s academic journal, *Nouvelles Études Francophones*.



Catherine Perry

## From the Chair

We are pleased to present *Fabella Romanica* (fR), the annual newsletter of the Department of Romance

Languages and Literatures at the University of Notre Dame. *Fabella* (a story, tale, or anecdote) is the diminutive form of the Latin *fabula*, from which several of the earliest words in the Romance languages for communicating through speech (old Italian: *favellare*; Portuguese: *falar*; old Spanish: *fablar*; Spanish: *hablar*) were derived. *Romanica* refers to the worlds of Romance, including all those places across the globe where the languages that descended from the Latin of the Roman Empire—principally Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian,

and Catalan—are spoken.

The goal of fR is simply to share “a little tale” about the achievements of the Department’s students and faculty. We welcome your feedback and thank you for your support and interest in our work.

Theodore J. Cachey Jr., *Professor and Chair*

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### Did you know?

The Romance languages, which share a common origin in Latin and include French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish, have nearly 700 million native speakers worldwide.

\*Source: World Almanac and Book of Facts 2006



## NOW AVAILABLE

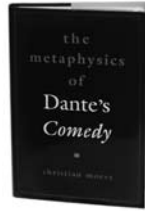
Recently Published Faculty Books



***Everything in Its Place:  
The Life and Works of  
Virgilio Piñera***

By Thomas Anderson,  
Associate Professor of Spanish

Considered the most comprehensive study to date of the life and work of Virgilio Piñera, *Everything in Its Place* (Bucknell University Press) is the first book in English on this major 20th-century Cuban author. Anderson, whose research was supported by a fellowship from Notre Dame's Kellogg Institute for International Studies, draws extensively on unpublished manuscripts and diverse critical writings. His study brings new insights into how Piñera's works responded to key literary influences as well as events in his life and in Cuban political and cultural history.

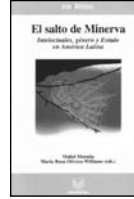


***The Metaphysics  
of Dante's Comedy***

By Christian Moevs,  
Associate Professor of Italian

**Winner of the 2006 Best Book  
Prize From the American  
Association for Italian Studies**

Moevs' *The Metaphysics of Dante's Comedy* (Oxford University Press) is the first sustained treatment of how the poet's metaphysics—his understanding of reality—grounds and motivates his most well-known work. Because Dante's conception is very different from our own, Moevs argues that presenting his ideas within a contemporary context, as is usually done, does not fully capture the essence of those ideas. Recovering Dante's metaphysics, Moevs is able to address a series of issues long associated with interpreting the *Comedy*. Among his conclusions is the assertion that Dante's poetry cannot be distinguished from his theology.



***El salto de Minerva:  
Intelectuales, género  
y Estado en América  
Latina (Minerva's Leap:  
Intellectuals, Gender  
and the State in Latin  
America)***

Co-edited by María Rosa  
Olivera-Williams,  
Associate Professor of Spanish

Together with Mabel Moraña of Washington University in St. Louis, Olivera-Williams compiled and edited *El salto de Minerva* (Iberoamericana/Vervuert). Taking Latin American feminine literature as its focus, the book incorporates perspectives from multiple disciplines to analyze how the writing process intersects with re-formulations of gender and the institutionalization of political and cultural power. Olivera-Williams co-authored the introduction with Moraña and also wrote the chapter titled "Virgenes en fuga: Pasión y escritura en los tiempos de la globalización" ("Fugitive Virgins: Passion and Writing in the Era of Globalization").



***The Interdisciplinary  
Century: Tensions and  
Convergences in 18th-  
Century Art, History,  
and Literature***

Co-edited by Julia Douthwaite,  
Professor of French

Judging by most contemporary accounts, the virtues of cross-disciplinary research, teaching, and scholarship are above reproach, an attitude that is not without historical precedent. Such collaboration was especially prevalent in the 18th century, when scholars, scientists, artists, and writers engaged in spirited, multilingual, and long-term correspondence with colleagues throughout Europe. *The Interdisciplinary Century* (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation), edited by Douthwaite and Mary Vidal of the University of California, San Diego, examines controversies concerning how this enthusiasm for interdisciplinarity has impacted our understanding of the past.



**Christian Moevs**, associate professor of Italian, won the 2006 Sheedy Award, given annually to an outstanding teacher in the College of Arts and Letters. He is the first member of the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures to win this award.



### Douthwaite Named Guggenheim Fellow

Julia Douthwaite, professor of French and assistant provost for international studies, was one of 187 artists, scholars, and scientists awarded a Guggenheim fellowship in 2006. Recipients were selected from a pool of some 3,000 applicants.

The fellowship will support a yearlong sabbatical in 2007, during which Douthwaite will work on her project "A Literary History of the French Revolution." She plans to study how French novels during the revolution reflected, refracted, and corrected history even as it was being made. In her research, she has already discovered strategies used by authors to rework the stock imagery, conventions, and storylines of the old regime to undermine or promote revolutionary political aims.



### Ferreira Gould Receives Grant to Enhance Portuguese Program

Isabel Ferreira Gould, assistant professor of Portuguese and Brazilian studies, was recently awarded a \$75,000 grant from the Luso-American Development Foundation (FLAD).

The grant will support and promote the Department's Portuguese Program and the Kellogg Institute for International Studies from 2006 to 2009. This is the first time FLAD has awarded a grant to Notre Dame.

"This new funding will allow us to enhance undergraduate enrollment in Portuguese language classes, to provide...support for student research, to increase awareness in the broader community of Portuguese studies, and to nurture scholarly research on Portugal," said Ferreira Gould, who directs the Portuguese Program.

Included in the activities that she is pursuing are library acquisitions, speakers, an

*The grant will support and promote the Department's Portuguese Program and the Kellogg Institute for International Studies from 2006 to 2009.*

artist-in-residence, faculty and graduate research grants, and prizes for undergraduate excellence in advanced courses.

The grant also will provide funding for an international conference titled "Africa in Portuguese, the

Portuguese in Africa" planned for Spring 2008. The two-day event will cover various subjects, ranging from anthropology to film, and intends to challenge an exclusively Anglophone-centered conception of multiculturalism.

A specialist in Luso-Brazilian and Luso-African literatures of the 20th and 21st centuries, Ferreira Gould is a faculty fellow of the Kellogg Institute and the Nanovic Institute for European Studies. She is currently working on a book project that examines the significance of the familial dimension of empire in the construction of colonial and post-imperial Portuguese identity.

## Graduate Students Win Fulbright Scholarships

Two doctoral students with primary fields in Romance languages and literatures were awarded Fulbright U.S. Student scholarships to pursue dissertation research during the 2006–07 academic year.

**Daniel Colón**, a student in the Ph.D. in Literature program focusing on Spanish-American literature, is studying in Chile. His research centers on a re-reading/re-interpretation of some of Pablo Neruda’s major works—especially his political poetry—from a post-Cold War perspective.

The Medieval Institute’s **James Kriesel**, who specializes in medieval Italian literature, is in Italy pursuing research on “Boccaccio’s First and Second Friend: Dante, Petrarch, and

Boccaccio’s Synthesis of Vernacular and Latin Poetics.”

The Ph.D. in Literature is an interdisciplinary program that allows students to explore literature from a transnational and intercultural perspective. Proficiency in at least two languages

in addition to one’s native language is required, and a majority of current students have a primary field in the Department of

Romance Languages and Literatures.

Founded in 1946, the Medieval Institute coordinates the teaching and research of the largest group of medievalists at any North American university. Romance Languages and Literatures faculty teach and direct dissertations in the Institute’s doctoral program.



Supported by a Fulbright Senior Scholar Award, **Kristine Ibsen**, professor of Spanish, spent Spring 2006 at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) and the National Library of Mexico. She was conducting research for her book *Imperial Dreams*, a cross-disciplinary analysis of literary and artistic representations of the Mexican Second Empire.

## Of Note in the Ph.D. in Lit.

**Mara Pastor**, a student in the Ph.D. in Literature program focusing on contemporary Caribbean and Brazilian literatures, has published her first book of poetry, *Alabalacera* (Terranova Editors). She is considered one of the strongest and most innovative young poetic voices in Puerto Rico.

**Loren Higbee**, with a primary field of Italian, received a Notre Dame Presidential Fellowship and started the program during 2005–06.

**Harry Karahalios**, who specializes in Spanish and Italian, served with fellow graduate student Martin Laina (M.A. in Spanish) as the student organizers of the film series/conference “Gay and Lesbian Film: Filmmakers, Narratives, and Spectatorships.”

Graduating seniors Bethany Caron (Spanish) and Paige Courtney Barnes, Daniel Kettinger, Gena Robinson, Jean Marinangeli, Claire Kelley, and Katherine Zackel (French) each received **Fulbright Teaching Assistantships** in 2006.

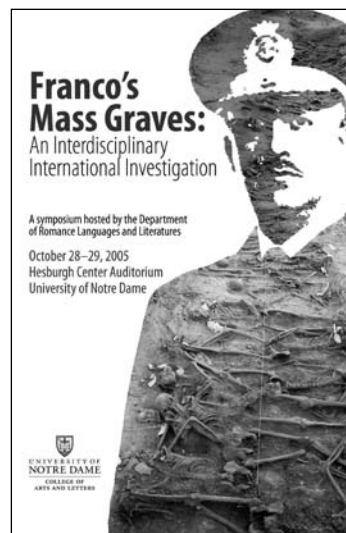
## Department Hosts Three Major Conferences in 2005–06

Scholars from Notre Dame, across the country, and around the world came together for three on-campus conferences initiated by the Department last year.

“Franco’s Mass Graves: An Interdisciplinary, International Investigation” was a major international symposium that featured some of the leading thinkers in anthropology, history, transitional justice, literary criticism, cultural analysis, TV journalism, and documentary filmmaking. Organized by **Carlos Jerez-Farrán**, professor of Spanish, the event gave those in attendance a forum to address and debate issues related to the legacy of Gen. Francisco Franco, Spain’s dictator from 1939–1975.

**Christian Moevs**, associate professor of Italian, organized “Italy and the Performing Arts,” an international conference jointly sponsored by the Italian programs of Saint Mary’s College and Notre Dame. The conference’s presentations focused on *Commedia dell’Arte*—an improvisational style of Italian theatre popular from the 16th to 18th century—opera, and playwright Dario Fo.

A group of 18 speakers from Notre Dame and other universities convened for “The Place of Italian Studies in the Modern University.” The conference was organized by **Theodore Cachey**, the Department’s chairperson and Ravarino Family Director of Dante and Italian Studies, and was highlighted by three panels: “The Paths Forward: Institutional Options, Opportunities, Paradigms”; “Intersections: At the Crossroads of Interdisciplinary Research and Teaching”; and “All Roads Lead to Rome: The Eternal City as a Site for Interdisciplinary Research and Teaching.”



## Student Plays Take Center Stage



Students are normally discouraged from acting out during class. But for undergraduates in the Department’s French, Italian, and Spanish theatre courses—where English is never spoken, on or off stage—quite the opposite is true.

Students who enroll in **Paul McDowell’s** “French Theatre Production” form L’Illustre Théâtre de l’Université de Notre Dame du Lac, an undergraduate theatre company that performs a different comedy by 17th-century playwright Molière each year. In 2006, the group presented *L’École des femmes*.

McDowell, an associate professional specialist, started the course in 1993. His work inspired the creation of theatre workshops in the other languages.

When she was a senior, Italian student **Laura Colangelo** (B.A. ’02) received a grant from Notre Dame’s Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts, which she used to create the Italian Theatre Workshop. Associate Professor **Colleen Ryan-Scheutz** served as her advisor and continues to teach the course. This spring, the troupe presented Eduardo Scarpetta’s *Miseria e nobiltà* as its fifth annual production.

**Kelly Kingsbury**, a visiting assistant professional specialist who earned both her B.A. and M.A. in Spanish from Notre Dame, started the Spanish Theatre Workshop in 2004. In addition to its annual theatre productions, the group also produces *telenovelas* (soap operas) directed by **Elena Mangione-Lora**, assistant professional specialist, and **Kevin Barry**, associate professional specialist in the Kaneb Center. In April, the students performed Lope de Vega’s Golden Age play *Fuenteovejuna* and presented their telenovela, *Con locura y pasión*.

## AROUND THE DEPARTMENT

**Paul McDowell**, associate professional specialist in French, became the first Notre Dame special professional faculty member to be named a teaching fellow of the University's Kaneb Center, a position he holds in 2006–07. In addition, **Thomas Anderson**, associate professor of Spanish; **Ivis Menes**, lecturer in Spanish; and **Kathy Werner**, adjunct instructor in French, each received 2006 Kaneb Teaching Awards.

A fellow of Notre Dame's Nanovic Institute for European Studies, **Samuel Amago**, assistant professor of Spanish, chaired that group's film committee in 2005–06. The Institute's annual film series, this year titled "Diaspora," featured nine films—all of which deal with the immigrant experience in contemporary Europe—from six countries.

**Sister Mary Louise Gude, C.S.C.**, concurrent associate professor of French and one of the last Holy Cross sisters at Notre Dame, retired earlier this year from her position as assistant vice president for student affairs. As part of her work in that post, she chaired Notre Dame's Standing Committee on Gay and Lesbian Student Needs (recently renamed the Core Council for Gay and Lesbian Students). A specialist in 17th-century prose fiction and 20-century French intellectual history, Sister ML is teaching a survey of French literature this fall.

The Department **ranked first in the College of Arts and Letters** in terms of the number of 2006 graduates entering Ph.D. programs for the 2006–07 academic year.

Several graduate students who recently earned their M.A.s are now pursuing **doctoral degrees in some of the discipline's top programs:**

- Valerie Aguilar (French '06), Princeton University
- Osvaldo de la Torre (Spanish '05), Cornell University
- Jessica Greenfield (Italian '06), University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Daria Samokhina (French '05), Stanford University
- Abigail Stahl (French '06), Northwestern University

Two 2006 M.A. recipients accepted **lecturer positions at major universities** for 2006–07. Ana Castellanos is teaching Spanish at the University of Notre Dame, Jen Testa Italian at the University of Florida.

Before 2005–06, the Department and First Year of Studies introduced **online placement tests** in French and Spanish. Thanks in large part to this innovation, the number of entering students taking placement tests doubled from the previous year. Total enrollment of first-year students in Romance Languages and Literatures courses grew from 416 in Fall 2004 to 479 in Fall 2005, an increase of 15%.

Students from the Department who received **International Scholar Grants** from the Kellogg Institute for the 2006–07 academic year include seniors Lance Chapman and Kristina Leszczak (Spanish) and junior Stephanie Brauer (French). Chapman is studying health policy in Colombia. Leszczak, who also received

a grant from the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program, is examining Mexico's economic and political reforms under the Fox administration. Brauer is researching the globalization of illegal economies.

**Zygmunt G. Barański**, Serena Professor of Italian and Head of the Department of Italian in the Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages at the University of Cambridge, has been appointed Albert J. Ravarino Family Distinguished Visiting Professor in Italian Studies for 2006–07 and 2007–08. Baranski is one of the world's authorities on Dante, medieval poetics, and modern Italian literature, film, and culture. He will be in residence and will teach two courses during Fall 2007.

**Rubén Ríos Avila**, professor at the University of Puerto Rico, was appointed the José Enrique Fernández Caribbean Studies Distinguished Visiting Professor for Fall 2006. Ríos Avila's research interests include literary theory, Lacanian psychoanalysis, contemporary Latin American literature, identity politics, and film. He is teaching a graduate seminar on "Psychoanalysis and the Baroque" (and Neo-Baroque) and an undergraduate course on "Globalization and the Inhuman" this fall.

A professor and former head of the Department of Italian Studies at Warsaw University in Poland, **Piotr Salwa** is serving as a visiting fellow in Notre Dame's Nanovic Institute for European Studies during the fall semester. He is teaching two courses in the Department, one at the undergraduate level titled "Italy in Modern Europe" and a graduate seminar on "Boccaccio and the Novella Tradition."

## 2006 DEPARTMENTAL CONVOCATION SPEECH

*Michael Subialka, a double major in Italian and philosophy and winner of the Joseph Italo Bosco Award for Italian Studies, was one of several graduates who spoke at the Romance Languages and Literatures awards convocation in May. An excerpt of his remarks is reprinted here.*

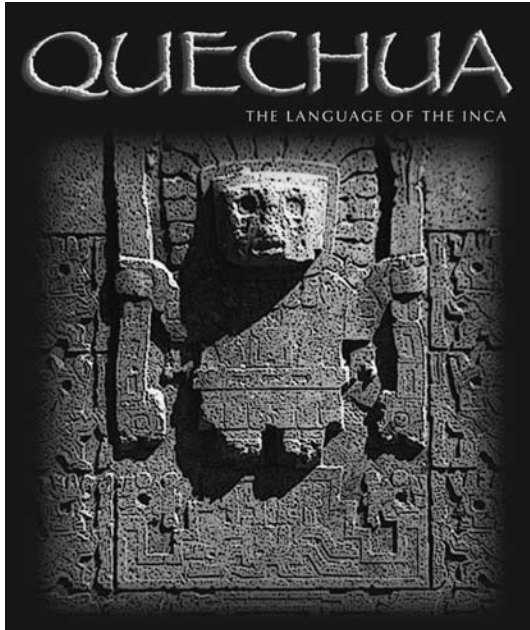
So, let's face it: many of us will never be making direct application of our Romance Languages and Literatures degree as a career option. To me, the lack of stunning job opportunities in the field seems at least counterintuitive. This area of study, after all, appears to encompass three of the most important and omnipresent aspects of human society: romance, which TV tells us is the driving force behind all things; language, which I would like to pause and thank for making this speech possible; and literature, which while the black sheep of this group is still seminally important for anyone who wants to really appreciate Tom Hanks' new blockbuster, *The Da Vinci Code*. Quite frankly, I would be shocked to find a job anywhere that *didn't* require proficiency in at least one of these areas.

So the difficulty, for those utilitarians in the crowd, seems to come from taking three essential areas of human thought and activity—romance, language, and literature—and putting them together into one single field of study. Someone erudite in romance is certainly destined for a happy marriage to a beautiful, prosperous spouse; an expert in language can become our president and then convince us that the problem with having an affair in the Oval Office isn't so much the whole "affair" thing as the definition of the word "is"; a master of literature will be able to write the great novel that changes the world or at least the book that gets turned into a Tom Hanks movie. Ca-ching. But an expert in Romance Languages and Literatures...well, she should probably hope she had a second major. A good cook knows: too many ingredients ruin the batter.

So, majoring in Romance Languages and Literatures is not a utilitarian career decision. We did not do it for the glamorous jobs and huge paychecks. No. Rather, it seems, we have chosen our field of study because we love it. Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, (cough) Romanian—they are not subjects tailored to a fast-track career in the field... We are not mastering a technical skill area. We are immersing ourselves in a sea of knowledge and culture. Learning a new language is literally the process of learning a new vocabulary and logic for our very thoughts themselves.

Right now, this second, it would be most useful to have a foot in on the fast-track to my successful business career; tomorrow, it will be most valuable to understand the world in which I live, to be more adaptable, to be creative, and to have a passion for what I do. If you ask me what the salient difference is between a randomly selected student from this tent and her equal in the business school, it is that we chose the better payoff for the long run. We chose a field of study that reshapes our character, challenges our view of who we are and what we believe, and equips us with the creative and analytic tools to re-conceive our world. The Department may suffer from a dearth of the "romance" that its name promises, as all of my fellow singles can attest, but Romance Languages and Literatures does more than just combine three essential areas of human activity: it forces us to think not only in a new light, but in a new vocabulary and grammar. It forces us to think differently.

And we have nothing short of a world to gain.



## Quechua Program Completes First Full Year in 2005–06

Quechua was the language of the Inca Empire and is still spoken by millions in South America today.

And thanks to the efforts of several organizations on campus, it's now being taught at Notre Dame.

In collaboration with the Department of History and the Kellogg Institute for International Studies, Romance Languages and Literatures launched a Quechua program in Spring 2005.

Sabine MacCormack, Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., Professor of Arts and Letters, supported the program's development with funds from her Mellon Foundation Distinguished Achievement Award.

The Department currently offers both a Quechua culture and elementary language course. Georgina Maldonado Gómez of Cuzco, Peru, is teaching the courses in 2006–07.

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