Dear Friends of the Graziadio Center, CSULB, it is truly an honor to write to you this Fall about all of the things the Center has been up to over the past year and has planned for the 2019-2020 academic year. First of all, let’s focus on the great news about our program and our students!

2019 is a year to be remembered, for in 2019, the MA program in Italian Studies at CSULB was recognized by Chancellor Tim White as an official program after a successful five-year pilot. His letter of February 6, 2019, read as follows:

“The Division of Academic and Student Affairs has reviewed the proposal to convert the California State University, Long Beach Master of Arts degree program in Italian Studies from pilot to permanent status. This degree appears on the campus Academic Plan as approved by the California State University Board of Trustee... Upon recommendation of my staff, I am pleased to grant permanent approval for California State University to offer the state-supported Master of Arts degree program in Italian Studies, effective fall 2019.”

Anyone who knows me is well aware of how much this letter meant to me. From the time I set foot on this campus in 1988, it had been a goal to establish a graduate program in Italian Studies. There is no way to thank the many, many people over the years who have been doing all of the things that are required for a new program to launch and I am not even going to try. However, you can be assured that the program has been scrutinized and studied from all possible angles to ensure its viability for students and its role and place in the education plan for citizens of the State of California.

During our five-year pilot status which ran from Fall 2014 to Spring 2019, we offered new courses and graduated the following list of outstanding students, our first cohorts of students graduating with the MA degree in Italian Studies.

- Lucia Rovetta (Fall ‘15)
- Arash Davarian (Spring ‘16)
- Alessandro Russo (Spring ‘16)
- Kiawna Brewster (Fall ‘16)
- Raffaella Creal (Fall ‘16)
- Marilyn Anania (Spring ‘17)
- Manuel Romero (Spring ‘17)
- Patricia Scarfone (Spring ‘17)
- Silvia Stefania (Spring ‘17)
- Yubeli Urrea (Spring ‘17)
- Elizabeth Chan (Spring ‘18)
- Patricia Holbrook (Spring ‘18)
- Homa Mayani (Spring ‘18)
- Horacio Ochoa (Spring ‘18)
- Daniela Pino (Spring ‘18)
- Lourdes Renteria (Spring ‘18)
- Mary Caputi (Spring ‘19)
- Breanna Campos (Spring ‘19)
- Francesca Ricciardelli (Spring ‘19)
- Giacomo Sproccati (Summer ‘19)

We are proud of you and your accomplishments! You have paved the way of excellence for future generations of MA students in Italian Studies at CSULB!

Bravissime e Bravissimi!!!

- Clorinda Donato
Faculty Profile: Enrico Vettore
My Sabbatical: An Overview

The intoxicating elation I felt upon reading a couple of short stories by Gianni Celati a few years ago most likely sprang from the author's ability to render complex philosophical themes through a deceptively plain writing style. This elation spurred me to go beyond the surface of the narrative and to finally understand, perhaps, that there are three main strongly connected themes that Celati persistently returns to: the impermanence of things and their emptiness, human identity, and the worrying interrelation between humans and nature. Since the only monograph in English on Celati does not focus on how these themes intertwine, I conceived the idea of writing something that would fill this gap and started looking for a theoretical framework that could both explain the author's ideas and be applied to all his oeuvre. I found that what works best is a blend of Zen Buddhist philosophy and ecopsychology.

Zen Buddhist philosophy is predicated upon a meditative practice whose goal is to make its practitioners realize experientially that the self and the world are impermanent, non-substantial and coextensive; ecopsychology (especially James Hillman’s version of it) blurs the boundaries between human subject and the environment and illuminates the innate emotional bonds between person and planet. Both Zen and ecopsychology’s goal is selflessness that in turn creates empathy, compassion and care for all sentient beings (that includes the environment and animals). During my sabbatical, I applied Zen philosophy and ecopsychology to the intertwined topics of identity and the environment in Celati’s oeuvre, while also working to dispel some misconceptions on Zen’s relations with environmentalism in order to reinforce my theoretical background. I eventually was able to show that Celati’s characters, in line with Zen and ecopsychology’s main tenets, follow a path that leads to a shift from the ego-self to the external world to reach a state of “identity” deeply interlaced with that of the environment. If it is true that the author seems to claim that humans and the environment are not only interdependent but essentially one, we could draw the conclusion that to heal the environment means also to heal humans, and vice versa.

Gianni Celati, here in a photo by his friend Luigi Ghirri, is one Italy’s most important writers. He writes novels, short stories, travel narratives, essays, and has worked as a translator.

Faculty Profile: Clorinda Donato

The year in research has flown by for Clorinda Donato, with many, many projects in the works and in varying stages of beginnings and endings, but there is none that makes her prouder than her forthcoming volume with the Voltaire Foundation’s series, Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment, The Life and Legend of Catterina Vizzani: Sexual Identity, Science and Sensationalism in Eighteenth-Century Italy and England, slated for publication one year from now in fall 2020. She has worked on this volume for over twenty years, evidence of how long it takes, sometimes to bring scholarly work to fruition.

When students come to her expressing frustration with their own research, she reminds them of the importance of meeting deadlines, but at the same time, the role of persistence and revision. Maybe you only have time to write a footnote or check a source, but sometimes five minutes a day can keep you grounded and connected to your project. And sometimes you have to shut your door, even if you only do it for those five minutes.

There will be a more fulsome write up on this volume once it comes out, but for now, the following brief summary will suffice. The Life and Legend of Catterina Vizzani: Sexual Identity, Science and Sensationalism in Eighteenth-Century Italy and England offers a cross-cultural view of transgender in the eighteenth century through the analysis of the medical novella “The Brief History of Catterina Vizzani,” published by Italian anatomist Giovanni Bianchi in 1744. Bianchi wrote his medical novella to discuss the anatomy of gender identity and preference in the interest of proving that one’s anatomy has little to do with one’s sexual preference, quite a forward-thinking hypothesis in 1744.

The “Breve Storia” made quite a sensation in England, where an increasing number of “female husbands” had been discovered and written about by writers such as Henry Fielding. In England in 1751 and 1755, it was translated by John Cleland, author of the controversial novel Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure, better known as Fanny Hill. You can see the frontispieces below, and judge for yourselves by the way the title has been changed by Cleland, not to mention the other editorial editions, the difference between Bianchi and Cleland’s views on the changing discussions about human sexuality, discussions which very closely mirror those of today.
Student Spotlight: Emily Cota

Emily Cota is in her second year of the Italian Studies MA Program. She is also a teaching associate, teaching Italian 100A (Italian for Spanish Speakers), and is this year's Graziadio Center graduate assistant. She graduated from CSULB in Spring 2018, obtaining a BA in Italian Studies and a BA in Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies. Emily has studied Italian since her first year at Venice High School and after coming to CSULB, studied abroad at Università Ca’ Foscari in Venice, Italy in 2015. After studying abroad for a year, she continued to travel back to Italy during summer breaks. In summer 2019, she was an intern for the CSULB Criminal Justice Department to help facilitate a group of 24 students going to Florence, Italy to study Italian serial killers. The following excerpt is Emily’s reflection on her experience in Florence.

During the Fall 2018 semester, I took RGR 603 (Theory and Practice of Literary Translation) and ITAL 460 (Exploring Italian Translation). It was difficult taking both classes during the same semester but I’m happy that I did. I never expected that what I learned that semester would directly impact my future. RGR 603 was a graduate course in which we focused on the theories of literary translation while ITAL 460 explored the process of translating texts from a variety of genres and professional contexts. From travel brochures to medicine labels, we had to apply specific rules and techniques to our various translations. The translations were always challenging in their own way and I remember thinking, “Wow, I could never translate for a living!” I certainly had a newfound respect for translators and interpreters.

Less than a few weeks after finals, I was offered an internship in Florence in summer 2019. My job would be to do a lot of interpreting for Italian officials who had worked on cases about Italian serial killers, specifically officials who worked on the Monster of Florence case and the Amanda Knox case (as part of the forensics team). I had never dealt with cases about serial killers, nor had I ever taken a criminal justice course, but I dove into dictionaries and asked questions all summer to completely understand the cases in order to be a more effective interpreter. It was the most challenging job I have ever had to do, but it was also the most rewarding. It taught me that speaking another language can open up so many opportunities for you and it helped me to see the direct link between the theories and strategies I had learned in my translation classes and their real-world applications. Those courses made me extra careful about word choice and they made me more aware of the tone of the content that I was translating, which is extremely important when you are dealing with a subject as sensitive as serial killers. I am grateful that I was able to take these courses prior to my internship experience because otherwise I do not think I would have been prepared for the complexities of translation and interpreting.
This past summer, Italian MA student Jaclyn Taylor did a one-month internship at the Museo dell’emigrazione marchigiana in Recanati, Italy. Over the past few years, students from the Italian Studies program at CSULB have filled various internship positions in Recanati, working for local museums, publishing houses, and the even the Italian language school Campus L’Infinito.

After hearing that Jaclyn had done her BA in Spanish, Samantha Ripa from the Museo dell’emigrazione marchigiana gave her the job of reviewing a series of panels that had been translated into Spanish by students from a local high school specializing in foreign languages. After reading and editing their translations, Jaclyn realized that they had only translated half of the total panels in the museum. She translated the rest herself and offered to translate all the panels into English as well.

The museum plans on embedding QR codes into the panels so that visitors can read or listen to the text in either Spanish or English. Overall, Jaclyn completed approximately 52 translations in 4 weeks, an impressive amount of output given the complex nature of her task. Thanks to the preparation that she received taking translation courses at CSULB, Jaclyn was able to identify and correct some common translation errors in the drafts that she initially copyedited. To be sure, these courses left her better prepared for her work as a copyeditor and translator.

Regarding her experience overall, Jaclyn wrote, “I found the experience to be really rewarding, challenging, and I learned a lot about how I like to work, located more resources for finding obscure contextual uses of Italian, and of course I got to know my coworkers at the museum and learn about Le Marche and its local traditions and history. I also want to express how grateful I am to Erika Tapia who took time to sit with me and review my Spanish translations to catch any errors or awkwardness that I may have missed.”

Club Italia

Club Italia would like to present this year’s officers:

- Joanna Tatro (President)
- Emily Cota (Vice-President)
- Diego Brol (Treasurer)
- Leslie Chavez (Secretary)

Club Italia would like to invite all of our students and Italian language enthusiasts to its bimonthly meetings, Tavola Italiana! The meetings will be held every other Wednesday from 12:30–1:30 pm outside of the Beach Hut at CSULB. For those of you who have never attended, Tavola Italiana is a conversation group in which anyone curious about the Italian language and/or culture can learn in a relaxed setting. Usually, the level of Italian of those who attend ranges from beginner to advanced/native. This creates a welcoming environment allowing everyone to learn Italian their own pace.

Besides the bimonthly meetings, Club Italia is planning two events for the Fall semester. They will be hosting a music event and a dinner at a local, Italian restaurant.

Lastly, Club Italia would like to thank all the professors of Italian for their continued support and for encouraging their students to practice their Italian outside of the classroom and to attend the cultural events put together by the club.

For more details, follow Club Italia on Instagram: (@csulbitalianclub) and on Facebook (Club Italia CSULB).
The 2019 Italian-American Studies Association Conference

Throughout the Spring 2019 semester, Italian MA students Alessandra Balzani, Brandon Bisby, Leslie Chavez, Emily Cota, Abigail Gonzalez, and Bria Pellandini worked with their professor and Visiting Fulbright Scholar Dr. Francesco Chianese to create a conference panel about the Italian American experience at this year’s Italian American Studies Association (IASA) conference. All of the students were enrolled in ITAL 688 (Italian American Migrations) where they explored a variety of Italian-American related topics for their final papers. They will all be presenting at the IASA conference in Houston, Texas this October. Below you will find bios for each presenter and the abstracts of their papers.

Brandon Bisby

**Bio:** Brandon is currently a graduate student in the Italian Studies MA program. He graduated with a BA in European Studies from San Diego State University in 2018 and is currently teaching Italian 101A at California State University, Long Beach.

**Abstract:** “The Reality of Illusive Expectations in Things that Happened before the Earthquake (2017) and Vita (2010)”

This paper analyzes various moments in the novels Things That Happened Before the Earthquake by Chiara Barzini and Vita by Melania Mazzucco in which the reader is confronted with one idea of what America and the American dream is against a counteracting narrative of what these ideas actually are. This paper also briefly discusses the idea of the Italian Dream in present day Italy for migrants coming from Africa. Ideas about what the American and Italian dreams are and how they are actually experienced are very prevalent in both of these contexts: from the space of pre-departure where this idea is often imagined and over fantasized, to the in-between space where this imagined and fantasized idea continues to be a figment of the imagination, and lastly, to the final realization upon arrival that what has been said is anything but true. The stories relayed to many migrants at the time did not match the reality of what they experienced upon arrival in America in the early 1900s, the late 1900s, and in present day Italy. This paper explores how the novels Things That Happened Before the Earthquake and Vita show that what one expects very often does not reflect reality.

Alessandra Balzani

**Bio:** Alessandra was born and raised in Forlì, Italy and holds a BA in Translation Studies from the University of Bologna and a BA in Cultural Anthropology from Durham University (U.K.). She is currently pursuing an MA in Italian Studies at California State University, Long Beach with a focus on linguistics and language acquisition.

**Abstract:** “The issue of Italicità in the Italian American context: a critical comparison of the experiences of a native and a self-taught Italian”

The expanding scholarship on the Italian American cultural development in the United States is rich in perspectives, as the first immigrants came from a variety of Italian regional traditions that they tried to maintain while almost being forced into assimilation by mainstream society. In this paper, I focus on a more recent timeframe and on the slightly unusual experiences of Italicità provided by Claudia Durastanti, an Italian born in Brooklyn who later resettled in Basilicata in her youth, and Jhumpa Lahiri, a New York native of Bengali origins who chose to become Italian through the acquisition of the language and a voluntary immersion into Italian culture in her adulthood. These two authors have major elements in common, such as the starting point in New York, the movement toward Italy, the adaptation of Italian language and culture, and then the departure from Italy. Their perspectives, however, are opposite: Durastanti comes from a more common Italian American narrative, but feels estranged while living in Italy, while Lahiri has no ties to the Peninsula, but paradoxically claims a stronger connection to it. Through the critical analysis of La Straniera and In Altre Parole, this essay wants to raise awareness of the performed rather than ascribed character of italicità, which goes beyond the classical Italian American narratives of the mid-20th century, and propose a perspective that could also be applied to the discussion of current issues in acknowledging the legitimacy of second generation Italians in Italy.
Bria Pellandini

Bio: Bria is in her second year of the Italian Studies MA program at California State University, Long Beach. Bria is an Italian American from the West Coast and started learning Italian and diving into her Italian roots only two and a half years ago. After obtaining her BA in Acting from the University of Northern Colorado, Bria moved to Los Angeles. Since then, she has been working in the entertainment business. After yearning for travel and the opportunity to immerse herself in Italian and Italian culture, she accepted an internship at Teatro Verdi in Florence, Italy. There, she worked on biography translations for the artists, which encouraged Bria to continue studying the Italian language, culture, and art at CSULB.

Abstract: “The Italian and Italian-American Female Coming-of-Age Perspectives Between the Boundaries of West and East Coast Experiences”

A comparative analysis of the Italian and Italian American diaspora from a young female perspective exposes two contrasting Italian immigration and coming-of-age experiences. In The Things that Happened Before the Earthquake by Chiara Barzini and Sometimes I Dream in Italian by Rita Ciresi, we follow two young women, one Italian and one Italian American, as they go through their own coming-of-age stories. In the novels, we find two contrasting patriarchal structures, struggles with accepting one’s heritage, questions of belonging, poverty, desires to escape, and also what Barzini refers to as a “rubber coat” that creates layers of foreignness and feelings of being “other.” A comparative analysis is done of both patriarchal figures (one Italian and the other Italian American) and how these father-daughter relationships affect their overall coming-of-age stories. Eugenia in Los Angeles and Angel in New Haven both use this “rubber coat” defense mechanism in order to feel assimilated in their environment (e.g., at school or at home) and avoid showing too much emotion or allowing others to see them in a vulnerable state as they process their own understanding of the people and environments around them.

Leslie Chavez

Bio: Leslie graduated from CSULB in May 2018 with a double BA in French & Francophone Studies and Italian Studies and is currently pursuing an MA in Italian Studies. She has devoted a total of 9 years to her passion of learning Romance languages and looks forward to continuing her language studies in the years to come.

Abstract: “Language Repercussion in the Pursuit of Identity”

This paper explores the role of language and identity formation with regard to the Italian language in Helen Barolini’s essay “Buried Alive by Language” and Jhumpa Lahiri’s book In altre parole. Barolini, an Italian American writer, explores how putting down roots in a particular place, childhood memories, and cultural associations establish personal locality. She notes how over time, picture images that form a sort of language replace spoken language, particularly in immigrant communities. Lahiri, instead, chooses to incorporate Italianess into her identity by purposefully learning Italian and using it as a medium for literary expression. Taken together, these two contrasting works convey the dynamics of language, place, and identity, and the evolving nature of such configurations as the notions of received and constructed ethnicities are made visible to readers in their pages.

Emily Cota

Bio: Emily is in her second year of the Italian Studies MA Program. She graduated from CSULB as a double major in Spring 2018, obtaining a BA in
The 2019 Italian-American Studies Association Conference (cont’d)

Italian Studies and Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies. Emily has studied Italian since her first year at Venice High School and after coming to CSULB she studied at Università Ca’ Foscari in Venice, Italy in 2015. This Summer 2019, she was an intern for the CSULB Criminal Justice Department assisting a group of 24 students that went to Florence, Italy to study Italian serial killers. After she completes the Italian MA program she hopes to continue her studies at the doctoral level.

Abstract: “Italian and New Italian Migrations: The Intersectionality of Family Structures and Sexuality”

Adolescent years can arguably be considered the most crucial time period for people because that is when they begin to discover their own identities. Chiara Barzini’s novel, Things That Happened Before the Earthquake, and Rita Ciresi’s novel, Sometimes I Dream in Italian, depict the lives of two completely different Italian families. The purpose of this essay is to unpack how the opposite family structures impacted the protagonists’ “coming of age” process by means of their sexuality.

Protagonists Eugenia, from Barzini’s novel, and Angelina, from Ciresi’s novel, each have important events in their lives that make them begin their own sexual explorations. Eugenia, who comes from a family with no parenting structure, was drugged and raped within the first few months of arriving in America from Rome. Her sexual explorations started as a method of protecting herself from being hurt or taken advantage of again, after her parents did not notice she was gone that night and she decided not to tell them. Angelina, on the other hand, spent time romanticizing her father because she and her older sister, Lina, knew nothing about him. They only knew that they needed to marry a man like him. A hard worker and provider. The girls had their moments of sexual exploration and in many ways, they craved the sort of male attention that their father never gave them, and their conservative mother forbade. This essay compares and contrasts the family structures and specific events in the novels to reveal the intersections with sexuality.

Abigail Gonzalez

Bio: Abigail Gonzalez is currently in her second year of the Italian Studies MA program at California State University, Long Beach. She graduated from CSULB in Spring 2018 with a BA in Italian Studies. Prior to her BA, Abigail graduated from Pasadena City College with three associate degrees; she holds degrees in Humanities, French, and Italian. Abigail is very passionate about the language, culture, people and, of course, the food of Italy. She hopes to teach and encourage others to learn the beautiful language of Italian.

Abstract: “Identity as a Performance”

How can a person perform their ethnic identity? First a person must understand what it means to perform an identity. Judith Butler states that a person can identify their gender through performance. She disagrees that a woman must act feminine and be attracted to men, and men must be masculine and be attracted to women. Butler believes that a man or a woman can identify him or herself with whichever gender they associate most. The same concept can be applied to a person’s ethnic identity. For instance, an Italian American might not speak Italian or have any connections with Italy but will feel more Italian than American. It would therefore be acceptable to identify oneself as being Italian.

Perhaps one’s ethnic identity can be chosen even if one has no ancestral connection with that ethnic group. In my essay I will explore the different Italian writers who either have or do not have direct connections with Italy, but perform their identity as Italians. In my essay I explain how Italian American writer Kym Ragusa, and Afro-Italian writer Igiaba Scego, use their feelings and memories to perform their Italian identity.
Study Abroad in Recanati, Italy

This past summer, Mona Aréchiga and Dorian Miraglia, along with 15 other students, had the opportunity to study abroad at Campus L’Infinito in the beautiful town of Recanati, Italy. The program gives students the opportunity to study abroad for one month over the summer at an affordable price.

Campus L’Infinito offers intensive Italian courses for a few hours a day, and then allows the students time to explore Recanati, the birthplace of the famous Italian poet Giacomo Leopardi. Campus L’Infinito also organizes trips to different parts of the country, allowing students to see the many different sides of Italian culture.

“My favorite thing about the program is that the program includes many trips that allow us to travel and explore most of Italy. It makes life easier for us students who plan to see many places while studying abroad.”

- Mona Aréchiga

Mona is an undergraduate student majoring in both Spanish and Italian Studies at Cal State Long Beach. When asked about her summer in Recanati, Mona said that attending Campus L’Infinito has improved her Italian tremendously. Mona had been to Recanati once prior to this past summer. She initially went to learn Italian because her Spanish degree requires two years of another language, and after taking Italian 100A and 100B (Fundamentals of Italian for Spanish Speakers), she decided to fully immerse herself in the Italian language and culture by going to Recanati.

After spending a second summer in Recanati, Mona says she feels very confident in her Italian and is grateful for all the experiences she’s had studying abroad in Italy. “[Studying abroad] gave me motivation to continue learning this beautiful language because there has been a lot of improvement in comparison to two years ago.” Mona now looks forward to graduating next Spring and applying to both the Italian MA program and the single-subject credential program.

Much like Mona, Dorian, a Cal State Long Beach undergraduate majoring History and minoring in Italian Studies, became passionate about learning Italian after taking Italian 100A and studying abroad in Recanati.

“I felt at home and the people that work for the school were the best people in the world. I enjoyed traveling to all the cities we visited and truly it was a trip of a lifetime and I look forward to doing it again.”

- Dorian Miraglia

Dorian, whose father is of Sicilian descent, was eager to learn Italian because he wanted to learn more about his culture and was interested to learn the differences between Italian and Italian-American cultures. When asked about his time abroad and the amount of Italian he has learned, Dorian said, “English is not allowed in the classrooms, so as a student, you must really work hard on speaking and communicating with the other students in the class.”

The school’s immersive environment challenges and pushes students to learn as much as they can. Dorian also said that the program taught him a lot about different Italian regions, dialects, and subcultures. He went on to say, “I think there are too many things about the program that were enticing, so I would say all of it was just an amazing experience; nothing can top it.”

Now that Dorian is back at CSULB, he has enrolled in his last Italian language and culture courses and is considering applying to the Italian MA program at CSULB or even applying to programs in Italy. Both he and Mona mentioned feeling welcomed by everyone in Italy, especially in Recanati, and being comfortable adjusting to the Italian way of life.
Sons of Italy and Licata Family Scholarship Recipients

Mona Arechiga and Marcus Gerstein received Sons of Italy and Licata Family scholarships to study in Italy this past summer. At a recent Sons and Daughters of Italy Renaissance Lodge meeting, Mona and Marcus shared stories about their trip and explained the importance of their study abroad experience.

From left to right: Mona Arechiga (Sons of Italy Scholarship recipient), Marcus Gerstein (Licata Family Scholarship recipient), Howie Fitzgerald (College of Liberal Arts, CSULB) and Mary Jane Cambria (President, Sons and Daughters of Italy Renaissance Lodge).

Upcoming Events

Global Ferrante: The Reception and Translation of Elena Ferrante’s My Brilliant Friend
October 30, 2019
4:30–9:00 pm
The Anatol Center (CSULB)

Translators and Linguists in Multilingual Media: A Burgeoning Industry
A conversation with Sue Bolton (Globalization PM Manager | Globalization Content Loc, Netflix)
November 2019
(exact date and time TBD)