At the beginning of the academic year, the Department of Italian Studies and the Department of French and Francophone Studies merged into one new department called The Department of French, Francophone and Italian Studies. We all look forward to exploring the great opportunities that the new department will create for students, faculty and staff and to a new adventure!

Faculty/Staff Updates

Daniela Bartalesi-Graf has converted into Open Access Resources the following two textbooks that she had authored:
- *Caleidoscopio* (at the intermediate level)
- *Voci dal Sud* (at the advanced level)

She has designed two websites for these projects and has made the two textbooks available for free to any interested instructor and/or learner of Italian worldwide. This project was made possible by a Faculty Research and Awards Grant and the competent help and expertise of our student Giulia Trevellin, 2024

In collaboration with colleagues from the University of British Columbia, Wesleyan University and the University Federico II of Naples, Daniela has created a website called “Open Resources to Teach and Learn Italian”.

The purpose of this website is to collect and share with anyone interested (instructors and students of Italian, and Italian language program coordinators) all Open Educational Resources and Open Access Resources to teach and learn the Italian language and culture at all levels, as well as Open Access Tools that teachers can use to create online teaching activities.

During her free time, Daniela loves to hike with her family and friends. Here is a picture from a hike in Northern Tuscany, Italy, taken in summer 2023.
Flavia Laviosa, Principal Editor of the Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies, has published several special issues on Italian cinema and media in the Mediterranean region and in Latin America as well as on international filmmakers who studied at the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome.

This academic year has been an eventful one for Jael Matos. Not only was it a busy start of the new academic year, but she was just newly engaged! Her fiancé Jason was totally unexpected and little did she know that this new love would change her life forever.

With her mother in recovery and slowly gaining her health and strength, Jael was able to focus not only on a new year at Wellesley but to plan her dream wedding. The date was set for May the 4th! No, they are not Star Wars fans! Jael and Jason actively planned their wedding in just 9 months! With Jael’s 20+ years working at Wellesley and planning events, this was second nature to her. But this was just not any event like at Wellesley; this was her dream wedding and she would plan it out down to the smallest detail. If you know Jael, she is very meticulous when she plans events at the College, so their wedding would be nothing short of perfection and it was. It was perfectly perfect. She was thankful that her parents and aunt Raquel were able to make the effort and travel from Puerto Rico to Boston, to be able to celebrate her wedding day.
On September 11th, 2023, Sergio Parussa was invited to participate in the presentation and discussion of the restored version of Vittorio De Sica’s film *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*, at the Coolidge Corner Theater, in Brookline, MA. During the Q&A session with the audience, Sergio and Fran Malino - Sophia Moses Robison Professor Emerita of Jewish Studies and History - discussed the film’s themes, style and historical context, also in relation to Joshua Harmon’s recent play *A Prayer for the French Republic*, which was on stage at the Huntington Theater last fall.

On December 14th, 2023, Sergio Parussa was invited to give a Zoom lecture entitled *Luoghi & Archivi Bassaniani* at the University of Rome, *La Sapienza*, in which he showed how archives dedicated to the preservation of manuscript materials by contemporary authors can offer critical insights as powerful as those dedicated to the works of authors from a distant past.

In Spring 2024, Sergio Parussa co-taught with Claire Fontijn, Phyllis Henderson Carey Professor of Music, a new course entitled *ITAS/MUS 223 - Italian Popular Song*. Dedicated to the connections between song and lyrical poetry in works from the Middle Ages to the present, from baroque melodrama to hip-hop, the course provided students with an overview of Italian musical history and introduced them to how poetry and music have contributed to the shaping of Italian national identity. The course also included field trips to the Special Collections of the Clapp Library, where students worked with rare prints and manuscripts, and to Boston theaters to hear Italian operas - Mozart’s *La clemenza di Tito* and *Don Giovanni* - as well as a concert by Italian-American jazz singer Sissy Castrogiovanni.

In April 2024, an essay by Sergio Parussa entitled *In the Garden of Beauty and Truth*, and dedicated to the relationship between Emily Dickinson’s poetry and Giorgio Bassani’s prose, was published in the volume *La poesia nel giardino* - a collective volume, edited by Gaia Litrico and published in Italy by Giorgio Pozzi, which gathers the essays presented at an international symposium on Giorgio Bassani held in Ferrara on June 1, 2022.
Last August, our language assistant Miriana Rognetta came to the US for the first time. Enthusiastic to embrace every opportunity, she quickly threw herself into the vibrant college life at Wellesley, joining as many events as she could. From cultural festivals to academic seminars, there was always something happening on campus!

She spent most of her time between the (amazing!) Italian Department, where she could enjoy some good espresso while grading homework, and the Science Center, where she worked on biology problem sets. She tried to make the most of her time by cross-registering at MIT. The academic challenge was thrilling, however, nothing compared to the feeling of coming back from Cambridge to the beautiful, welcoming Wellesley campus, which soon started feeling like home.

The best part about working and studying at Wellesley was the opportunity to meet such passionate mentors and students with diverse backgrounds and ambitious goals. Miriana found it inspiring to see how this institution empowers students to think creatively and motivates them to excel.

Miriana didn’t just stick to the campus, though. One of her biggest adventures was a trip to Puerto Rico with Beatriz (Spanish LA), Louise (French LA), and Nour (Arabic LA). Here, they experienced the warm hospitality, beautiful beaches, and the rich cultural heritage of the island.

Back in (freezing!) Massachusetts, Miriana fell in love with Boston’s historic charm and lively neighborhoods. Whether she was wandering through the streets of Beacon Hill or exploring the museums, she always found something new and exciting.

Miriana’s time as a language assistant was filled with new friendships and countless adventures. She feels truly grateful for all this wonderful experience. She will hold these memories close to her heart and carry them with her always.
On January 26th, 2024, Italian Studies organized a campus screening and discussion of Pupi Avati’s new film Dante, at the Collins Cinema, inspired by the youth of the father of Italian language.
Italian Society Events

The Italian Society presents
Caffettino & Cannoli
Friday, Nov 3, 4pm (Founders 224)
Join us for some great espresso and cannoli! And share your ideas on future activities!

ECCO COOKING NIGHT
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26TH
5PM - 7PM
LAKE HOUSE KITCHEN

Enjoy some cooking while learning about the Wellesley Study Abroad Program in Bologna/Italy

Questions: ksaubers@wellesley.edu
Accessibility Resources: accessibility@wellesley.edu
The Italian Society presents

**VENETIAN MASKS**

Come over to build your Venetian mask!

**Thursday, Feb 22, 7-10 pm, Bates Dining Hall**

Expo: 2/23
77 ml126@wellesley.edu
Accessibility and Disability Resources
accessibility@wellesley.edu
Alumnae Updates

Alexandra Solimano ‘10 is doing well and is thrilled to share that she started a new job in March! She’s a consultant with SEI, a management consulting firm. While SEI has a national presence, it operates through a local model, so Alexandra gets to work with clients in the Boston area, remain involved in her community and spend time on the Cape. Alexandra’s first engagement is with a client in the business services industry - she’s excited to lean on her financial services and tech background to help them figure out their AI strategy. A big thanks to Flavia, Sergio and David, who supported her throughout her job search. Personally, Alexandra is training for her 11th marathon and 19th half marathon, which will be back to back in Falmouth this fall (this wacky undertaking is called the Clam Chowdah Challenge), and is getting ready to travel to Italy by way of London. She’s celebrating her friend’s wedding in Monforte d’Alba and is also visiting her beloved Bologna (and reconnecting with Italian friends and professors from study abroad!) as well as Firenze and Roma. It’s a homecoming 14 years in the making!

“Ciao a tutte! This past year, I graduated with a Masters in Landscape Architecture and have been working in Cambridge at MVVA, a landscape architecture firm that has designed a few Wellesley landscapes you all would know well.

I am thankful that now five years out of college and the Italian classroom, I have found ways for Italian to still be an important part of my life and daily routine. While drawing at work, I love listening to Italian podcasts like Morgana (a recommendation by former language assistant Elena Gnudi- let me know if you have others!). I’ve also been exploring shows on Lingopie, which is basically Netflix for language learning. When I catch up with Adri Tan ‘19, we both try our best to speak only in Italian. Living in Boston, I love supporting IAM books in the North End and found the restaurant Fioritaly in Medford where the waiters are always happy to chat in Italian.

When I graduated from my Masters, I was fortunate to receive a travel grant to spend an extended amount of time abroad for research. More to come in a future newsletter but I am planning on spending Fall 2025 in Italy. I am looking forward to having a sabbatical with a project that will combine my love of Italian culture and language with my love of landscapes. I would love to connect with any Wellesley alums living in Italy during my time in Italy! - Lara Prebble ‘22
Student Achievements

Congratulations to Astara Bastille ‘24 on defending her Thesis
“Knight’s Fights and Women’s Rights: The Chivalric Epics of Moderata Fonte and Lucrezia Marinella”
The Elizabeth Robinson ‘78 Italian Studies Essay Prize Winner has been awarded to Vera Staub ‘24

CONGRATULAZIONI!

If you’d like to be featured in our next edition under “Alumnae Updates”, please send an email to Jael Matos at jmatos@wellesley.edu