



WINTER 2023

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear ESC colleagues, students, and friends,

The last three months have been very busy ones at the European Studies Center. On December 7th we received over 200 high school students at the University to participate in our High School Model European Union. We held our college Model EU on February 10 and 11 (see article on Model EUs in this newsletter). On New Year's Day we welcomed Professor Daniela Fargione to Pittsburgh; Daniela, Associate Professor of American Literature at the University of Turin, is our Fulbright Scholar from Italy who is visiting and teaching a course in the Department of French and Italian in the spring term. Her course is entitled "Pane, Amore e Fantasia: Italy and the Environmental Crisis." She will also be giving a talk on March 29 called "We and 'the Unloved Others': Stories of Extinction"; look for an announcement soon. Our associate director, Pawel Lewicki initiated a new one-credit course and lecture series entitled "Europe Today." (see article in newsletter).

Our monthly Conversations on Europe also continued with a December session on "Challenging Europe: State of Democracy in Europe" organized by Professor Mohammed Bamyeh and John Markoff in Sociology; a January session on "Legacies and Manifestations of Irish Nationalism" organized by Professor Jennifer Keating of the English Department; and a February session on "Climate Change: Perspectives from France and Italy" organized by Professor Giuseppina Mecchia of the Department of French and Italian.



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Director's Message cont.

In honor of the retirement of Dr. John Markoff, Distinguished University Professor, the Department of Sociology held a conference on "Democracy in Europe, Democracy beyond Europe," on January 25 to 27, which the ESC sponsored (see article in this newsletter). On January 20 to 26 our EU Film Festival was held at the Harris Theatre in downtown Pittsburgh. The festival featured seven films from different European countries with two showings each (see article on EUFF in this newsletter).

Three more students have joined or rejoined the staff of the ESC for the spring term. Jacquelyn Pixley, a graduate student in Applied Linguistics, was recently hired as our Critical Area Studies for Europe Graduate Student Assistant. Continuing from the fall term are Kathleen Brett, our Activities GSA, and Goldie Segol, our Communications GSA. After spending their fall term at Sciences Po Reims, France, Danielle Obisie-Orlu and Joseph Montrey have returned to their roles as Student Ambassadors for the ESC. They join Ryleigh Lord and Tatiana Grinberg Limonic who were also Student Ambassadors in the fall term. The Student Ambassadors visit classes to promote ESC certificates and programs, prepare articles for social media, and do other projects for the Center. For example, Danielle is organizing a "Global Voices" creative chapbook for Pitt students to allow Pitt students to share their globally-themed poetry, fiction, nonfiction, photography and even music in an online edition.

Over these last three months we also prepared a proposal for a new Jean Monnet Center of Excellence grant from the European Union, which we submitted on February 13. If we receive the three-year grant, it will allow us to expand on themes initiated in our Title VI grant from the Department of Education received last summer. The major focus of the grant is Critical Area Studies for Europe (CASE), where we rethink European and EU Studies for the 21st century and broaden the scope of area studies. Through the grant we hope to foster transdisciplinary research and teaching and reach more faculty and students. We will address contemporary European policymaking, particularly in the areas of sustainability and security. We will offer training in archival research not only with Pitt's Archive of European Integration but also with the Historical Archive of the European Union in Florence.

New Virtual Lecture Series "Europe Today"

The ESC is offering a new virtual lecture series this spring term, which is also available to Pitt students as a one-credit course. The series, organized by Associate Director Pawel Lewicki, offers a weekly lecture on Wednesday afternoons from 4 to 5 PM ET on current issues in Europe and the European Union. The speakers are from both Europe and the United States, and many of them are members the European Union Studies Association (EUSA) as well.

If you miss a talk, recordings of them will be available afterwards on the same website. Upcoming talks include

- March 1: "Identity, Nation Building, and the War in Ukraine" by Oxana Shevel, Tufts University
- March 15: "Forging Consensus in Crisis: Changing Macroeconomic Regimes and European Integration" by Matthias Matthijs, Johns Hopkins University —
- March 22: "European Security and NATO Policy after the Outbreak of the War in Ukraine" Stephanie Hoffmann, European University Institute, Italy
- March 29: "What is Populism and What to Do with It?" by Jan Kubik, Rutgers University and University of London
- April 5: "Norway's Version of the American Dream," by Stephen Lund, University of Pittsburgh
- April 12: "European Energy Transitions" by Andrzej Ceglaz, Technical University Munich, Germany

[Click here](#) to view the full schedule and to register for an upcoming talk.

Central European Studies Certificate Is Attracting Students

Last fall, the European Studies Center introduced a new certificate in Central European Studies in partnership with the Center for Russian, Eastern European and Eurasian Studies. Five undergraduate students have already signed up for the certificate and our newsletter editor, Goldie Segol, talked to several of them to learn why.



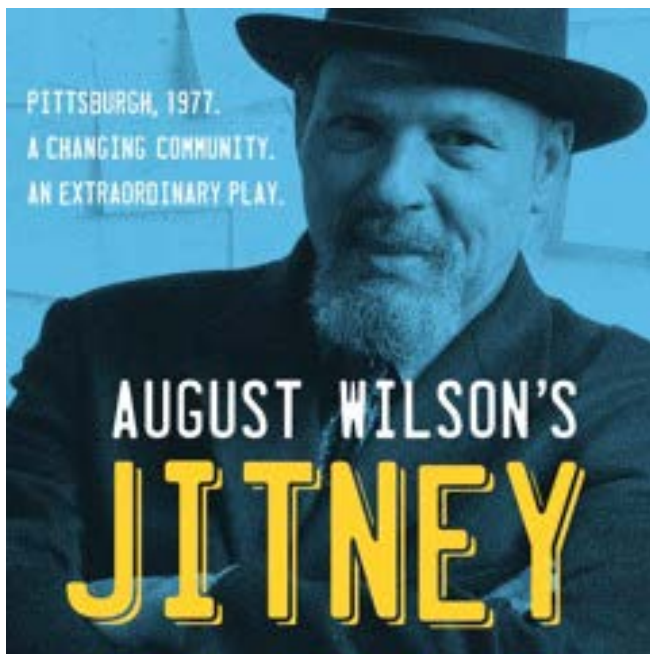
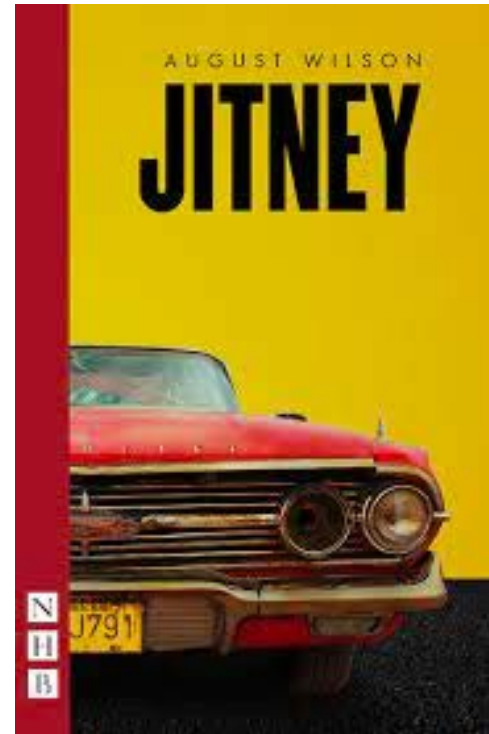
Angel Cramer, a sophomore majoring in history, said that her first history class at Pitt was about Central Europe, which intrigued her because in high school, her history classes discussed Europe only in terms of East and West. She feels those old distinctions do not accurately reflect the particular countries and themes she wants to study, so she enrolled in the new program. Lily Wilson, a junior majoring in history and German, concurs. After taking the core course for the certificate, “Between Kafka and Hitler: How Central Europe Shaped the Modern World,” she realized the new program was a way to take additional coursework that combines her love of Germany and history. She will be studying in Germany this coming summer and later hopes to do a Fulbright there. Her history honors thesis will examine German immigrants in America and the role they played in nativist movements, especially against Polish and Czechoslovakian immigrants. After graduation she hopes to earn a master’s in public history in either Germany or Ireland.

Victoria Piontkivska is a senior majoring in economics and business administration. She is originally from Ukraine but has lived in several Central European locations because of her parents’ jobs. She also studied in Berlin last spring. She commented that it was interesting to take classes in different countries because the ways they are taught and the topics they emphasize are very different. Her concentration within the certificate is policy responses to conflicts and crises. Last fall her capstone paper in international economics focused on the damage to the transportation infrastructure in Ukraine and potential ways to restore the infrastructure. This also related to the environmental agenda Ukraine must follow to join the European Union. She hopes to do a master’s degree in Europe in global affairs, international affairs, and conflict resolution; her long-term goal is to do work that will help Ukraine, such as developing a reconstruction agenda.

Olivia Maratea is also a senior, majoring in political science with a minor in German. When the Central European Certificate was introduced, she added it to the certificates she was already doing in Western European Studies and Transatlantic studies because so many of her elective classes focused on Germany. Her theme within the certificate is “Migration of People.” She has taken several courses that dealt with the movement of people and found that the core class “Between Kafka and Hitler: How Central Europe Shaped the Modern World,” helped her tie the migration themes together. Although she thinks her long-term goal is to be an international lawyer, she is going to study for a master’s in international relations in London next year.

August Wilson's Play "Jitney" to be Presented in Italy in May

This May, Italians will have the opportunity for the first time to see August Wilson's play "Jitney" performed in Italian. The play is part of The Wilson Project supported by the General Consul of the United States in Milan and the U.S. Department of State and produced by La Piccionaia Centro di Produzione Teatrale (The Pigeon House Theater Production Center) in partnership with the August Wilson Legacy LLC, the University of Padova's Department of Linguistic Studies and Literature, and the University of Pittsburgh. The project aims to introduce the Italian public to the life and works of Pittsburgh's famous African American playwright and to foster an understanding of Wilson in the social and cultural contexts in which he lived and worked. The play, directed by Renzo Carbonera, will premiere on May 12 in Vicenza, Italy and later will be distributed on the national and international theatre market. The play takes us inside a jitney (illegal taxi) station in 1977 Pittsburgh. On stage, the stories of some of the taxi drivers and their passengers alternate with the syncopated rhythm of jazz and street language, questioning how to heal the wounds of the past and have faith in an uncertain future. Wilson lets the audience discover the stories, conflicts, and small victories of an African American community that, despite the achievements of the civil rights movement, continues to be excluded from the "American Dream."



Pitt and particularly, Professor Lina Insana, have played an important role in the creation of the Wilson Project. Renzo Carbonera discovered August Wilson and his work on his first trip to Pittsburgh, when he was invited by Pitt's Italian Film Festival to present his 2018 film "Resina." Returning to Italy, he began reading Wilson's Century Cycle, some of which Professor Insana had given him as a gift. Staging Wilson's work became a pandemic project for Carbonera. He began working with La Piccionaia to plan the Wilson Project and he travelled twice to Pitt to do research in Pitt's August Wilson Archive (held by the University Library System) with support from the Department of French and Italian, the Film and Media Studies Program, and the European Studies Center. On one trip he and the play's translator, Angela Soldà, met with students in Professor Insana's Italian Translation Workshop to discuss the translation's first draft. The students' feedback was incorporated into the final version of the play.



“Jitney” cont.

Many other activities are planned around the Wilson Project. On February 24, there was a reading and concert featuring two of the actors in “Jitney,” Alessandra Arcangelo and Aaron Tewelde, followed by a talk with director Renzo Carbonera and Riccardo Brazzale, Artistic Director of Vicenza Jazz. A series of webinars will lead up to the premiere of the play. They include:

- March 7 at noon EST, “August Wilson: The Theatre’s Poet of Black America”, with Constanza Romero-Wilson (widow of August Wilson), Chris Rawson (Pitt Professor Emeritus of English and theatre critic), and Renzo Carbonera;
- March 21 at noon EDT, “The Language of Black America: Jitney by August Wilson and the Translation into Italian” with Lina Insana, Fiona Clare Dalziel (Associate Professor at University of Padova) and Angela Soldà;
- April 4 at noon EDT, “The Discourse on Race in the US and in Italy” with Anna Scacchi (Associate Professor at University of Padova) and Ngofeen Mputubwele (podcast producer at the New Yorker)
- April 18 at noon EDT, “African-American Voices in Contemporary Italian Culture and Art” with Igiaba Scego (Italian writer and journalist) and Ngofeen Mputubwele. For more information on the Wilson Project and for links to the webinars please go to the website <https://www.piccionaia.org/evento/black-history-month-twp/>.

A Pitt team currently filming a documentary about the August Wilson House is planning to fly to Italy for the film’s premiere to conduct cast interviews, which will be integrated into the documentary.

Two Model EUs Held this Winter



The European Studies Center once again hosted two in-person Model European Union simulations for students this academic year. Students debated topics including energy and food security, EU-NATO relations, and the Greece-Turkey maritime dispute.

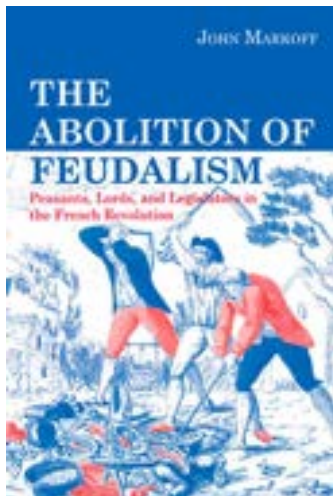
In December 2022, we hosted our 18th annual High School Model EU. This is one of our larger events, running four concurrent simulation rooms. We welcomed 215 high school students and their teachers from 14 schools in the Pittsburgh area. Each room included student delegates in the roles of Head of Government and Attaché for each of the 27 EU member states, who were presided over by Pitt

students volunteering as President and Secretary. Together, the delegates in each room spent the day debating the topics and trying to reach consensus on a resolution.

February 2023 saw our 23rd annual Undergraduate Model EU, with 27 student delegates from six universities pictured above. While smaller than our high school event, the Model EU for undergraduates is a more formal event taking place over a Friday evening and all day on a Saturday. In addition to students from the University of Pittsburgh-Oakland, we also welcomed students from: Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, Florida International University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg, and University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. Dr. James R. Maloy, Teaching Associate Professor in the Department of Economics at the University of Pittsburgh, gave the Keynote Address. Both events were organized by our Engagement Coordinator, Samantha Moik, with assistance from Ingrid Gomez-O’Toole, our Activities Coordinator, other ESC staff members and student volunteers.

Conference on Democracy Held in Honor of John Markoff

To celebrate Markoff's retirement, the Department of Sociology, with support from the European Studies Center, held a conference in January to recognize his contributions to the history of democratization. Appointed Distinguished University Professor in 2006, Markoff was on the faculty at Pitt for more than 50 years. A professor of Sociology, he had joint appointments in History and Political Science and was a research professor in UCIS. He received numerous awards over his career including The Chancellor's Distinguished Research Award (2001), the Provost's Award for Excellence in Mentoring (2019) and two Pinkney Prizes for the best book in French History for *The Abolition of Feudalism* (1997) and *Revolutionary Demands* (1999).



In honor of Professor John Markoff's retirement last year, the Department of Sociology, with support from the European Studies Center, held a conference in January to celebrate Markoff's contributions to the history of democratization. Appointed Distinguished University Professor in 2006, Markoff was on the faculty at Pitt for more than 50 years. A professor of Sociology, he had joint appointments in History and Political Science and was a research professor in UCIS. He received numerous awards over his career including The Chancellor's Distinguished Research Award (2001), the Provost's Award for Excellence in Mentoring (2019) and two Pinkney Prizes for the best book in French History for *The Abolition of Feudalism* (1997) and *Revolutionary Demands* (1999).

Markoff has written broadly on the history of democratization, with a particular focus on the French Revolution and Latin American politics. Recently his research has focused on the ways in which social movements and democratization are intertwined, transnational aspects of democratization, and the ways in which the meaning of "democracy" has changed. It was fitting that the conference in his honor was entitled "Democracy in Europe, Democracy beyond Europe." The conference, organized under the leadership of Mohammed Bamyeh and held from January 25 to 27, featured many scholars in fields related to his research. Formats varied from individual talks to panel discussions. Many faculty members in Sociology and other departments at Pitt served as moderators and in a concluding roundtable.



The conference began on January 25 with a talk by Sidney Tarrow, Emeritus Maxwell Upson Professor of Government, Cornell University, entitled "Three Takes on Democracy and Movements: Markoff, Tilly, and Frank." On January 26, there were three talks and a panel focused primarily on Europe. Donatella della Porta, Scuola Normale Superior, Florence, Italy spoke on "Social Movements in the European Crises." Asef Bayat, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, discussed "Democracy and Everyday Life" and Jessica Greenberg, also from Illinois, discussed "Can the Rule of Law Save European Democracy?" The Panel on "Democratic Alternatives I" featured two professors from Pitt: Hillary Lazar and Benjamin Case. Lazar spoke on "Democracy and the Anarchist Turn in 21st Century Activism" and Case discussed "Ballot Initiatives as a Window into Democracy in Crisis."

Markoff Conference cont.

On the last day, topics focused mostly on "Democracy beyond Europe." Amber Reed of Spelman College discussed her research in South Africa in a talk entitled "Politics of Nostalgia: South Africa and Beyond." Next there was a Panel on "Histories of Democracy: Democracy and Executive Might in 19th Century Europe and the Americas." Eduardo Posada-Carbo of the University of Oxford discussed Simón Bolívar (South America) and Guy Thomson of the University of Warwick discussed Benito Juárez (Mexico). "Napoleon III and the Third Republic" was the subject of the presentation by Stephen Sawyer of American University. Joanna Innes, University of Oxford, was the commentator. The "Panel on Democratic Alternatives II" featured Jackie Smith of Pitt on "Globalization and the Future of Democracy Today" and Ben Manski of George Mason University, on "The Other World that Is Necessary: The Imperative of Next System Studies." The conference concluded with a roundtable discussion by Pitt faculty members on "Democratic Histories, Democratic Futures" with John Markoff, Diego Holstein (History), Michael Goodhart (Political Science), Mohammed Bamyeh (Sociology) and Randall Halle (German).

Seeing Europe Through Film



Thanks to the European Studies Center (ESC), Pittsburghers were able to spend a cold January week exploring Europe—without even leaving the city. ESC's annual EU Film Festival, now in its second year with the support of the European Commission, offered attendees the opportunity to visit Poland, Hungary, Denmark, Croatia, France, Germany, Spain, Slovakia, and Italy through film.

While the first year of festivities was still hybrid, ESC was able to make a fully in-person comeback with this latest installment. To provide a full theater experience, the center partnered with the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust and the Harris Theater, where films were screened over seven days. Features covered a variety of genres: comedy, war film, documentary, young adult, and more.

This year's festival featured 2022-23 MEETEU Emerging EU Filmmaker Vida Skerk and her 2022 film "Night Ride." Pawel Lewicki, Associate Director of the European Studies Center, said, "Vida's film, which can be seen as a series of dreams, is about the coming of age of a young queer woman living in Croatia. From a personal perspective it broaches such issues as belonging, anxiety, friendship, love and hope. Rather than addressing homophobia, it gives insights into dilemmas and choices of a queer person living in Croatia."

Director Lasse Lau's documentary "The Raven and the Seagull" was shown alongside Night Ride, with Lau joining audiences for both screenings. Other features included coming of age story Schoolgirls; war film "Eternal Winter"; family dramas "I Never Cry," "Let There Be Light," and "Lola"; thriller "An Uncertain Border"; and drama Rabiye Kurnaz vs. George W. Bush.



Europe Through Film cont.

Randall Halle, incoming Director of the European Studies Center, said, "This year's films seem strongly marked by family and love. In future years we are looking to have overarching themes for the selection committee around topics like climate, migration, colonial histories. But we will continue to provide a broad vision of the complexity and diversity of stories coming out of the European film scene."

The EU Film Festival not only brought award-winning European film to Pittsburgh, but also traveled to Ohio, Indiana, North Carolina, and Florida, where ESC works with partners to coordinate similar festivals and expand access to rich traditions of cinema around the world for years to come.

ESC NEWSLETTER

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