

LANGUAGE MATTERS

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues, Students and Friends of the Language Research Centre, happy 2019! I hope you had a relaxing holiday break and are prepared to take on the exciting challenges of the new year.

As the new semester has just begun, it is time to summarize the work that the LRC completed in the previous semester and introduce tasks that the LRC will undertake in the new semester. In Fall 2018, the LRC hosted four talks in the Speaker Series and brought scholars from outside the campus to share their research expertise. The LRC also hosted the Work-in-Progress talks at the beginning of the Fall semester, which provided our School members an opportunity to share and showcase their research.

The annual "I'd Like to Know More About..." workshop included three sessions focusing on natural language processing, French cinema and data visualization. It provided participants from the campus and beyond with hands-on training in the use of research tools and theoretical knowledge in advancing their research.

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The Language Teaching and Learning Working Group and the Literary and Cultural Studies Working Group met regularly to discuss topics of common concern and engage in academic discussions on new developments in their focus areas.

Winter 2019 is going to be a very busy semester for the LRC. The LRC will host a number of events, including Speaker Series talks, one workshop and the annual Student Poster Symposium (in tandem with the SLLLC Graduate Forum). The LRC will organize an event showcasing the School's research work and teaching innovations on March 22, 2019. It will feature, in the format of poster presentations, research or teaching projects that our colleagues will have just completed, have in progress or are starting soon. The two working groups will continue to hold their monthly meetings. In addition, the Literary and Cultural Studies Working Group will organize a symposium including individual presentations of our colleagues and panel discussions involving scholars from outside the School.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for your support of the LRC's work. Special thanks are due to Francey Pisicoli for her consistent and valuable work for the LRC. I would like to thank Yoko and Martin for coordinating the two working groups, as well as the hosts of the Speaker Series talks.



I hope to see you at upcoming LRC events.

Please contact me if you have any questions or ideas on the LRC's future events and endeavours.

Wei Cai, LRC Director
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UPCOMING EVENTS

All the talks and workshops will take place on Fridays at 3 pm in CHD 420, unless otherwise specified.

Speaker Series	
January 11	Colin Phillips (University of Maryland): The Relation Between Speaking and Understanding
February 1	Pavel Trofimovich (Concordia University): Individual, Contextual, and Interactive Factors in Second Language Comprehensibility
March 1	Pierre Frath (l'Université de Reims Champagne-Ardenne):
March 8	Kohei Saito (Osaka City University): Karl Marx's Ecosocialism in His Ecological Notebooks
March 29	Trent Portigal: What's Wrong with Modern Heroism?
Event	
March 22	Showcasing the School's Research Work and Teaching Innovations
Workshop	
February 15	Sarah Eaton and Roswita Dressler (University of Calgary): Multilingual Essay Mills: Understanding Contract Cheating among Second Language Learners
Language Teaching and Learning Working Group	Literary and Cultural Studies Working Group
January 30	January 23
February 27 (CHD301A)	February 27
March 13	March 27
	April 16 9:30 am-12:30 pm CHE 212 Literature Symposium
All meetings will take place on Wednesdays from 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm in CHD 419 unless specified otherwise.	
Symposium	
Date: TBA	Annual Student Poster Symposium (in tandem with the SLLLC Graduate Forum)

SHARING KNOWLEDGE

WORK IN PROGRESS

The LRC hosted the Work in Progress (WiP) talks on September 21, 2018. Fifteen faculty members and graduate students from all five divisions presented their studies. This event allowed colleagues to share their current research with others in the SLLLC. This year, the WiP talks continued to use the "three-minute thesis" format for this event: Participants presented their work for three minutes with the use of a single static PowerPoint slide. There were two minutes for questions after each presentation.

Topics of the WiP talks were “‘Covert Polemics’ in Early Islamic History” (Mushegh Asatryan, Arabic), “The Origins of Sound Symbolism” (Angeliki Athanasopoulou, Linguistics), “V-V Ambiguities in Turkic Languages” (Eyup Bacanli, Linguistics), “Girlhood and Sexuality in Contemporary French & Indian Cinema” (Neha Bhatia, French), “Dante’s Memory” (Eleonora Buonocore, Italian), “Teaching Scholars Block Week Project: Year 3” (Conny Burian, German), “An Analysis of Chinese textbooks and the HSK Test (with Shuo Kang)” (Wei Cai, Chinese), “Modelling the Acquisition of Only” (Lindsay Hracs, Linguistics), “Translating Wars of Independence in Spanish American Newspapers” (Gabriela Iturriza, Spanish), “Can Speech Ratings Be Primed? (with Pavel Trofimovich, Kym Taylor Reid and Allison Baajt)” (Mary O’Brien, German), “Exploring the Syntax–Pragmatics Interface” (Elizabeth Ritter, Linguistics), “Using and Making Voice Recordings in Japanese Classes” (Akiko Sharp, Japanese), “Variation in English th-self pronouns” (Dennis Storoshenko, Linguistics), “You Gotta ‘Stress Out’: Why Lexical Stress Is Important” (Lisa Suessenbach, German), and “Chronic Immune-Mediated Inflammatory Diseases” (Joseph Windsor, Linguistics).



Joseph Windsor presenting, “*Chronic Immune-Mediated Inflammatory Diseases*”

- Mushegh Asatryan, Division of German Studies, Russian Studies, Arabic Language and Muslim Cultures, SLLLC

I have participated in the WiP talks almost every year since I began teaching at the University of Calgary in 2015. Since then, I have presented on a variety of topics that I have been working on, including the discourse on magic in medieval Baghdad, and "secret polemics" in early Islamic sectarianism.

During the WiP talks, most of our faculty and many graduate students briefly present on a project they are currently researching. Each person has five minutes to briefly outline the project and to take two or three questions. This may seem like a tight time frame to meaningfully engage with one another's work, but I find this format useful nonetheless. First, it gives most people in our rather large school the opportunity to learn about what everyone else is doing. Second, it focuses one's attention on the most important aspects of one's work, and teaches her/him to talk about it in a way that educated non-specialists will understand.

Most importantly, it's an occasion to hang out, to chat and to eat cookies.



Dr. Conny Burian presenting, *"Teaching Scholars Block Week Project: Year 3"*

SPEAKER SERIES

In Fall 2018, the LRC offered the following four talks in the Speaker Series: “Feature Gluttony and the Syntax of Hierarchy Effects” (Jessica Coon, McGill University), “Arabic Linguistic Diversity Across Time and Space” (Alexander Magidow, University of Rhode Island), “Using Popular Culture to Make Children into Soldiers: Propaganda Kamishibai in WWII Japan” (Sharalyn Orbaugh, University of British Columbia), and “Wilhelm Raabe and the Crisis of Narration” (Ervin Malakaj, University of British Columbia).

Jessica Coon (McGill University): “*Feature Gluttony and the Syntax of Hierarchy Effects*” - Elizabeth Ritter, Division of Linguistics, SLLLC

The LRC hosted two talks by Dr. Jessica Coon, Canada Research Chair in Syntax and Indigenous Languages at McGill University, on September 14 and 15, 2018. The first talk, which was entitled “The Linguistics of Arrival: Aliens, Fieldwork and Universal Grammar,” was aimed at a general audience, and provided an accessible and informative view of some of the big questions that linguistic research seeks to answer. Dr. Coon’s point of departure was her experience as the science consultant for the linguistics content in the 2016 movie *Arrival*. Although she has never worked with an alien, Dr. Coon used the opportunity to discuss her own fieldwork on Mayan languages, and what these languages can tell us about linguistic diversity and linguistic unity.

This talk, which was held at the Rosza Centre, attracted over 80 people, including not only linguistics faculty, graduate students and undergraduate students, but also many linguistics alumni, interested faculty and students from other Divisions of SLLLC, other departments in the Faculty of Arts, and members of the broader Calgary community.

As a warm-up for this talk, Verbatim, the Undergraduate Linguistics Club, hosted a screening of *Arrival* the previous evening. We would like to acknowledge the generous support of the Faculty of Arts, the Department of Anthropology and Archeology, SLLLC and Alumni Relations. We are especially grateful to Francey Pisicoli of SLLLC and Emily Aalbers of the Alumni Relations office for all that they did to get the word out and to help organize this very successful event.



Alexander Magidow (University of Rhode Island): "*Arabic Linguistic Diversity Across Time and Space*" - Rachel Friedman, Division of German, Russian, and Arabic Language and Muslim Cultures, SLLLC

On October 19, 2018, Dr. Alexander Magidow delivered a lecture about different varieties of Arabic and the relationship between classical Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic, and the range of Arabic dialects spoken today. He described the types of similarities and differences that exist among Arabic dialects today and provided striking examples of the ways in which they differ, for example in high-frequency lexical items. Dr. Magidow also highlighted exciting new research in the field that challenges the conventional narrative of the Arabic language's origins. While many have claimed that Arabic emanated from the southern region of the Arabian Peninsula, recent findings show that Arabic was used in the Levant and written in a form different from the one that Arabic eventually took. Varieties of Arabic also developed certain characteristics in contact with other languages. He also touched on challenges that linguists face when studying the historical spread and development of the Arabic language. For example, there is speculation about why Arabic became the dominant language in some parts of the Islamic world but not others.



Drs. Alexander Magidow (left), Rachel Friedman and Mushegh Asatryan

Sharalyn Orbaugh (University of British Columbia): *"Using Popular Culture to Make Children into Soldiers: Propaganda Kamishibai in WWII Japan"*

- Ben Whaley, Division of Chinese Studies and Japanese Studies, SLLLC

On November 2, 2018, the LRC welcomed Dr. Sharalyn Orbaugh, professor of modern Japanese literature and popular culture at the University of British Columbia. In her talk titled "Using Popular Culture to Make Children into Soldiers," Dr. Orbaugh discussed the visual and textual elements in propaganda kamishibai (paper theatre) plays aimed at young children. This unique, multi-modal theatrical form in Japan saw performers giving propaganda plays in support of the war effort to groups of neighbourhood children between 1938 and 1945. Dr. Orbaugh's talk unpacked useful distinctions between propaganda and children's education and children's culture, showing that Japanese children during WWII were inculcated through these plays and mobilized in the war effort to a far greater degree than seen in the United States and Britain. For more on this exciting topic, Dr. Orbaugh's monograph *Propaganda Performed: Kamishibai in Japan's Fifteen-Year War* (2016) is available through Brill's Japanese Visual Culture series.



Drs. Wei Cai (left), Ben Whaley and Sharalyn Orbaugh | Dr. Orbaugh's presentation

Ervin Malakaj (University of British Columbia): *"Wilhelm Raabe and the Crisis of Narration"* - Martin Wagner, Division of German Studies, Russian Studies, Arabic Language and Muslim Cultures, SLLLC

Dr. Ervin Malakaj, newly appointed assistant professor of German Studies at the University of British Columbia, visited the University of Calgary on November 23, 2018, to discuss his research with graduate students and faculty members. Dr. Malakaj's main activities on campus included a workshop presentation on the emerging culture of stardom in German Weimar-era cinema as well as a research talk on nineteenth-century writers' response to the new existence of a literary market.

In the morning, Dr. Malakaj discussed a paper on Weimar film culture with the LRC Literary and Cultural Studies Working Group. In his paper, Dr. Malakaj analyzes the work of Marianne Raschig, who, in the 1920s, filled a column in a German film magazine with palm readings of well-known actors. As became clear from Dr. Malakaj's paper and the ensuing discussion, these palm readings are, more than merely a curiosity of film history, a theoretically and historically important focal point at which a range of different cultural and aesthetic traditions intersect.

In his talk in the afternoon, Dr. Malakaj focused on the German nineteenth-century writer Wilhelm Raabe and explained how Raabe's growing frustration with the demands of the new literary market is reflected in the changes in Raabe's narrative technique. The discussion that followed the talk raised the question of to what extent Raabe's rejection of the literary market intersects with his understanding of gender and race, specifically with his anti-Semitism.



Drs. Ervin Malakaj (left), Jan Süselbeck, Martin Wagner and Conny Burian

THE EIGHTH ANNUAL "I'D LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT..." WORKSHOP

The LRC hosted the "I'd Like to Know More About..." workshop on November 16, 2018. The workshop instructors were Drs. Michael Ulyot (Department of English), Matthew Croombs (Department of Communication, Media and Film) and John Brosz (Taylor Family Digital Library). The workshop sessions included "A Gentle Introduction to Natural Language Processing," "Cinema Against State Terror: October in Paris and the Work of Parallel Documentary" and "Data Visualization: Chart Types and Encoding Data with the Visual Variables."

John Brosz: Data Visualization: *Chart Types and Encoding Data with the Visual Variables* - John Brosz, Taylor Family Digital Library, University of Calgary

Data visualization is an important tool for researchers, assisting in both analysis and communication of results. The use of *appropriate* visualization techniques can greatly increase the ability to gain insight *from and ease* the communication of data.

The first half of this workshop *described* visual variables. Use of visual variables is one approach to encoding data into a *visual* representation. This theory, first put forward by Bertin [1], describes how marks, basic units of visual expression, can be manipulated to effectively represent data. Marks can be manipulated by changing their position, size, shape, colour, orientation and texture; these properties are known as the visual variables. These variables have different strengths and weaknesses, and these must be well understood to effectively represent different types of data. If you wish to know more about this, a quick write-up is available on the InfoVis Wiki [2], or Sheelagh Carpendale, a local professor in the Computer Science Department, has a succinct report [3].

In the second half of the workshop I quickly described a variety of chart types. This discussion was modelled after the presentation of different charts by Munzner in her book Visualization Analysis & Design [4]. Lastly I provided an overview of free and available software at the University of Calgary. This list can be found on my slides [5], but I also recommend that interested parties explore the resources section of Kirk's Visualizing Data blog [6].

An exciting visualization resource on campus is the Taylor Family Digital Library's Visualization Studio, which features a 34.5-million-pixel, 16-by-6-foot screen custom designed for visualizing data [7]. This large display is particularly well suited to displaying large and detailed datasets and imagery. If you would like to make use of this facility or would like advice or assistance in creating data visualizations, I am available to help and can be reached at jdlbrosz@ucalgary.ca.

[1] Bertin, J. *Semiology of Graphics*. University of Wisconsin Press, 1983.

[2] InfoVis:Wiki. https://infovis-wiki.net/wiki/Visual_Variables. Community platform created and maintained by InfoVis:Wiki team Aigner, W., Gschwandtner, T., Alsallakh, B., Miksch, S., and Schadler, M. and hosted by Vienna University of Technology, 2012–2018.

[3] Carpendale, M. S. T. *Considering Visual Variables as a Basis for Information Visualisation*, University of Calgary, 2001-693-16, 2003. <https://prism.ucalgary.ca/handle/1880/45758>

[4] Munzner, T. *Visualization Analysis & Design*. CRC Press Taylor & Francis Group LLC, 2015.

[5] Brosz, J. *Data Visualization: Chart Types and Encoding Data with the Visual Variables*, Nov 2018. [http://brosz.ca/mgs/2018116 Visualization.pptx](http://brosz.ca/mgs/2018116%20Visualization.pptx)

[6] Kirk, A. *Visualizing Data Blog*. <http://www.visualisingdata.com/resources/>, 2009-2018.

[7] Taylor Family Digital Library Visualization Studio. <https://library.ucalgary.ca/visualization>.

- Maria Koukias, Division of French and Francophone Studies, Division of Spanish Studies and Italian Studies, SLLLC

Overall, one can describe the “I’d Like to Know More About...” workshop as an insightful and wonderful opportunity to learn about new ways to engage and present texts and research. Dr. Michael Ulliot opened the workshop with an introduction into NLP, natural language processing. His goal was to demonstrate how and why it is beneficial to be familiar with computer science basics. Using examples relevant to his domain in English literature, he proved the usefulness of NLP in regard to collecting vast amounts of data in order to seek specific details in natural language. In his case, the use of the program Voyant to process and sort samples from Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*. The second speaker, Dr. Matthew Coombs, provided a change of pace, an insight into parallel documentary with a case study of the 1962 film *October in Paris*. His findings demonstrated the continuing relevance of post-colonial studies, for the legacies of oppression may still be witnessed in our day and age. Despite the fact that a theme of *October in Paris* was the Algerian drama which originated from the French colonial influence, there are still continual conflicts in this area that must be addressed, in order to make progress. To close the workshop, Dr. John Brosz shared important points to consider when one is presenting data. He also provided ample software useful for the easy demonstration and sharing data of nearly any type, be it experiment results, or texts. Together, the three speakers made the workshop an informative and beneficial experience.

As a student of second languages in a linguistic and arts respect, I feel I benefitted from the workshop because I found ways to more efficiently search texts for particular passages and points of interest. This workshop introduced me to the tool Voyant. I can say with confidence that I will use this in my future research. As well, the advice regarding data presentation serves me well because it gave me inspiration for new ways to integrate imagery into my presentations on various subjects, in order to better demonstrate my knowledge to my viewers. As well, the case study on *October in Paris* was directly connected to my studies as a French major, on top of my interest in cinema in general.



Dr. John Brosz: Data Visualization: Chart Types and Encoding Data

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TESTS

DELE: The Spanish Test, Instituto Cervantes Calgary

- Melania Pascual-Salcedo, Aula Cervantes Coordinator, Instituto Cervantes Calgary, Division of Spanish and Italian Studies, SLLLC

The DELE diplomas, granted by Instituto Cervantes on behalf of the Spanish Ministry of Education, are official and international accreditations of a person's degree of proficiency in Spanish. There were 112 students who took the DELE test on November 9 and 10 in Canada (49 candidates in Calgary, 26 in Edmonton, 18 in Toronto and 19 in Montreal). This year a total of 642 students sat the exam in different DELE centers around the country. The most important cities for the DELE 2018 test were Calgary (319 students), Montreal (132 students) and Edmonton (96 students).

A total of 73 candidates from Calgary and Montreal took the CCSE test in 2018. This exam is a sociocultural test required to obtain Spanish citizenship. Most of the candidates sitting the test are Sephardic Jews who originally come from countries such as Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, the United States and Canada.

The next dates for the DELE 2019 are on April 5, May 24 and 25, October 4, and November 22 and 23. For more information, please visit our websites: <https://slllc.ucalgary.ca/instituto-cervantes> and <https://examen.es/cervantes.es/>.

DELFDALF: The French Proficiency Test

- Fanny Macé, Division of French and Francophone Studies, SLLLC

As has been the tradition since 2012, the DELFDALF examination centre hosted at the University of Calgary provides different training and examination sessions for the French learning and teaching community in Calgary and beyond. Thus, each Winter and Spring semester, we offer an examiner training session (January–March), one or two certification renewals (April–May), and a preparation workshop session in May. Furthermore, the DELFDALF examination takes place every year in early June, and we usually offer all levels but A1. Our candidates are mostly students and pre-service teachers ranging from basic (A2) to proficient users (C2).

For the current academic year, we have started to provide information (<https://ucalgary.ca/delf/>) for the coming DELFDALF examination (June 3–8, 2019; at the French Centre) and the A-B examiner training taking place on March 2, 9 and 23, 2019.

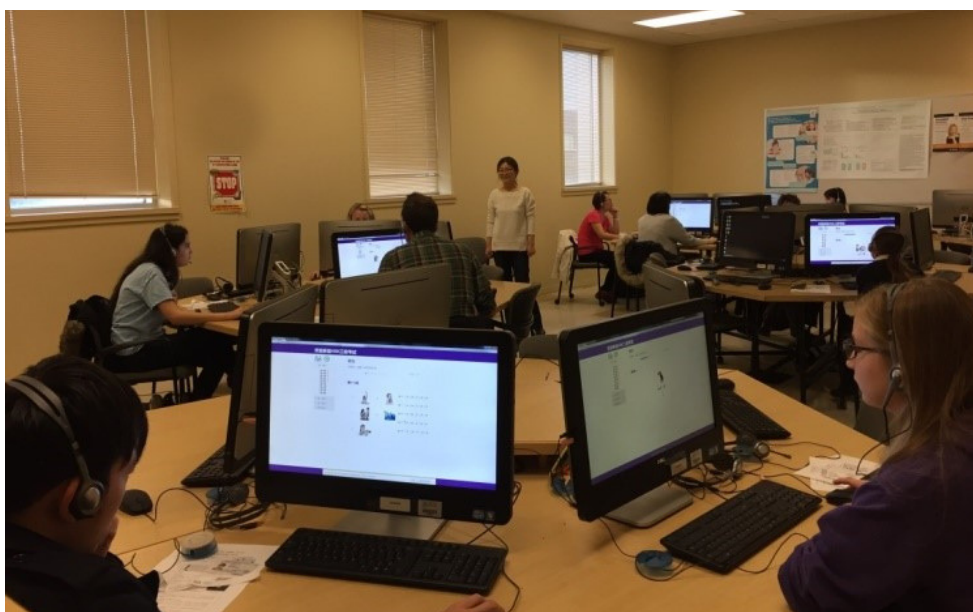
At this time, the certification renewal date has not yet been announced, but this year this training will take place at the Calgary Board of Education (CBE). For next June's examinations, the preparation workshops are scheduled from May 13 to May 24, 2019, according to student levels.

Concerning the DELF-DALF examination in June, we will be offering an information session on February 6, 2019, at 2 pm (French Centre; Room CH C305), right after the first café-croissant of the winter semester. We hope to catch a lot of interest once again.

HSK: The Chinese Proficiency Test

- Wei Cai, Division of Chinese Studies and Japanese Studies, SLLLC

The HSK is a standardized test for learners of Chinese as a foreign language and is correlated with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The HSK test was held on October 14, 2018, in the Fall semester. Dr. Liang Tian, the Chinese Special Language Advisor from International Education Services, Alberta Education, attended and supervised the test. As the HSK testing centre since 2009, the School offers the test twice a year and has become an important venue for learners of Chinese across the city to take the test. As Dr. Tian commented, "The HSK test centre at the University of Calgary has provided professional testing service for Chinese language learners. With their increasing knowledge in the test and many study abroad programs in China, I believe more and more learners will be interested in writing the test. HSK test is not only a test; rather it is a door that opens a whole lot of exciting opportunities for Chinese learners."



WORKING GROUPS

Language Teaching and Learning Working Group

- Yoko Kodama, Division of Chinese Studies and Japanese Studies, SLLLC

The Language Teaching and Learning (LTL) Working Group met up twice and had very exciting and productive discussions in the Fall 2018 semester. In October, we exchanged information about each other's grading scales, discussed the benefits of a unified grading scale for SLLLC, and developed an idea to propose. In December, we talked about a potential LRC event organized by the LTL Working Group. This is an event that showcases our students' language and culture learning in different language programs. We would like to further discuss the event next semester and start forming a student volunteer group to help us organize the event, which will take place in the Fall 2019 semester. The LTL Working Group meetings are a friendly meeting place where participants can share information, learn from each other or create something new together with other language sections. We usually have a discussion theme based on members' interests. The LTL Working Group is open to all School members who are interested in language teaching, and we are looking forward to seeing more new faces next semester. There is no obligation of sign-up or commitment to attend all the meetings, so just come and join us at one of our meetings! We will have meetings on Wednesday, January 30, 3:00–4:30 pm (CHD419), Wednesday, February 27, 3:00–4:30 pm (CHD301A), and Wednesday, March 13, 3:00–4:30 pm (CHD419). If you have any questions, please contact Yoko Kodama at yykodama@ucalgary.ca.

Literary and Cultural Studies Working Group

- Martin Wagner, Division of German Studies, Russian Studies, Arabic Language and Muslim Cultures, SLLLC

In its second semester, the Literary and Cultural Studies Working Group continued to serve as an important venue for intellectual exchange among faculty members from across the School of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures and Cultures and beyond. The three meetings in Fall 2018 were devoted to workshopping papers on Marco Polo's depiction of China and India, Pierre Loti's writings on Egypt, and the emerging culture of stardom in German Weimar-era cinema.

The first meeting, on September 19, was devoted to Dr. Miao Li and Dr. Devika Vijayan's work on the travel writings of Marco Polo. Dr. Li and Dr. Vijayan focused on the different rhetorical strategies employed by Marco Polo in his depiction of China and India. The ensuing discussion raised the question of how the complex philological history of Marco Polo's travel writings affects the argument put forth by Dr. Li and Dr. Vijayan.

In the second meeting, on October 24, Dr. Nadia Sherbini presented her work on Pierre Loti's writings on Egypt. The presentation and subsequent discussion focused on the questions of how these writings fit into Loti's larger oeuvre and to what extent Loti's writings should be understood as typical products of colonialism.

In the final meeting, on November 23, Dr. Ervin Malakaj (University of British Columbia) shared his work on "Palmistry and Cinephilia in Weimar Film Magazine Culture." Focusing on the columns of Marianne Raschig, who presented palm readings of well-known contemporary actors, Dr. Malakaj explored the ways in which a culture of stardom was created in inter-war Germany. In the discussion that followed Dr. Malakaj's presentation, the group considered the various cultural traditions with which Raschig's practice of palmistry intersects, as well as the political and theoretical implications of her work in the context of the 1920s.

The group will continue its work in January 2019. Anyone interested in contributing to the group's activities or in attending its meetings is encouraged to contact Martin Wagner (martin.wagner@ucalgary.ca).