Stanford



Laura Wittman

Associate Professor of French and Italian

Curriculum Vitae available Online

Bio

BIO

Laura Wittman primarily works on 19th- and 20th-century Italian and French literature from a comparative perspective. She is interested in how modernity articulates new relationships between religious experience, embodiment, mortality, health, and politics, and how these are mediated by literary and artistic creations.

Her book, The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Modern Mourning, and the Reinvention of the Mystical Body (University of Toronto Press, 2011) was awarded the Marraro Award of the Society for Italian Historical Studies for 2012. It explores the creation and reception of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier – an Italian, French, and British invention at the end of the First World War – as an emblem for modern mourning, from a cultural, historical, and literary perspective. It draws on literary and filmic evocations of the Unknown Soldier, as well as archival materials, to show that Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is not pro-war, nationalist, or even proto-Fascist. Rather, it is a monument that heals trauma in two ways: first, it refuses facile consolations, and forcefully dramatizes the fact that suffering cannot be spiritualized or justified by any ideology; second, it rejects despair by enacting, through the concreteness of a particular body, a human solidarity in suffering that commands respect. Anticipating recent analyses of PTSD, the Memorial shows that when traumatic events are relived in a ritual, embodied, empathetic setting, healing occurs not via analysis but via symbolic communication and transmission of emotion.

Laura Wittman is the editor of a special issue of the Romanic Review entitled Italy and France: Imagined Geographies (2006), as well as the co-editor of an anthology of Futurist manifestos and literary works, Futurism: An Anthology (Yale University Press, 2009). She has published articles on d'Annunzio, Marinetti, Fogazzaro, Ungaretti, Montale, Sereni, and Merini, as well as on decadent-era culture and Italian cinema. With Jon Snyder and Simonetta Falasca Zamponi, she recently co-edited a special issue of California Italian Studies on "The Sacred in Italian Culture" (2015).

She received her Ph.D. in 2001 from Yale University where she wrote a dissertation entitled "Mystics Without God: Spirituality and Form in Italian and French Modernism," an analysis of the historical and intellectual context for the self-descriptive use of the term "mystic without God" in the works of Gabriele d'Annununzio and Paul Valéry.

In Spring 2009, she was organizer of the California Interdisciplinary Consortium for Italian Studies (CICIS) Annual Conference, held at the Stanford Humanities Center; she is currently the organizer of the upcoming CICIS 2019 conference, also to be held at the Stanford Humanities Center. She was also organizer of the interdisciplinary conference on Language, Literature, and Mysticism held at the Stanford Humanities Center on 15 and 16 October 2010.

She is currently working on a new book entitled Lazarus' Silence that explores visions of the afterlife and visits to the underworld in modern literature and culture, as a window toward our changing attitudes toward death, accepting our mortality, and accompanying the dying.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Associate Professor, French and Italian

ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS

- Associate Professor of French and Italian, Department of French and Italian, Stanford University, (2012- present)
- Assistant Professor of French and Italian (tenure track), Department of French and Italian, Stanford University, (2004-2012)
- Assistant Professor of Italian (tenure track), Department of French and Italian, University of California, Santa Barbara, (2000-2004)
- Instructor, Department of Italian Language and Literature, Yale University, (1994-1995)

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Charles S. Ryskamp Fellowship, American Council of Learned Societies (2014 - 2015)
- NEH Fellowship, National Endowment for the Humanities (2014 - 2015)
- Summer Research Fellowship, American Academy in Rome (2008)
- Faculty Career Development Award, University of California, Santa Barbara (2003)
- Humanities and Arts Fellowship, University of California, Santa Barbara (2003)
- Junior Faculty Research Incentive Award, University of California, Santa Barbara (2001 - 2002)
- Regents' Junior Faculty Fellowship, University of California, Santa Barbara (2001)
- Rome Prize Fellowship, American Academy in Rome (Post-Classical Humanistic Studies) (1997 - 1998)
- Charlotte W. Newcombe Dissertation Fellowship, Woodrow Wilson Foundation (1996 - 1997)
- Graduate Fellowship, Yale University (1992 - 1994)
- Fulbright Scholar, University of Bologna (1991 - 1992)
- Elected to Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Beta Kappa Society (1991)
- Thomas C. Bergin Prize for Best Essay, Italian Department, Yale University (1989)
- Montaigne Prize for French Translation, French Department, Yale University (1988)

BOARDS, ADVISORY COMMITTEES, PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Education, Stanford University, Course Development Grant (2012 - 2012)
- Language, Literature, and Mysticism Research Unit, Stanford University (2010 - 2014)
- Chair of Undergraduate Studies for Italian, Department of French and Italian, Stanford University (2010 - 2013)
- Undergraduate Affairs Committee, Member, Division of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages, Stanford University (2004 - 2006)
- Undergraduate Affairs Committee, Member, Division of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages, Stanford University (2010 - 2013)
- Chair, Committee for Italian Undergraduate Essay Awards, Stanford University (2011 - 2011)
- Chair, Committee for Italian Undergraduate Essay Awards, Stanford University (2012 - 2012)
- Chair, Committee for Italian Undergraduate Essay Awards, Stanford University (2013 - 2013)
- Co-Chair, Committee for French and Italian Undergraduate Summer Grants, Stanford University (2011 - 2011)
- Co-Chair, Committee for French and Italian Undergraduate Summer Grants, Stanford University (2012 - 2012)
- Co-Chair, Committee for French and Italian Undergraduate Summer Grants, Stanford University (2013 - 2013)
- Graduate Admissions Committee, member, French and Italian, Stanford University (2005 - 2005)

- Graduate Admissions Committee, member, Italian, Stanford University (2006 - 2006)
- Graduate Admissions Committee, member, Italian, Stanford University (2008 - 2008)
- Graduate Admissions Committee, member, French and Italian, Stanford University (2009 - 2009)
- Graduate Admissions Committee, member, Italian, Stanford University (2010 - 2010)
- Graduate Admissions Committee,, French and Italian, Stanford University (2011 - 2011)
- Graduate Admissions Committee, member, French and Italian, Stanford University (2012 - 2012)
- Graduate Admissions Committee, member, French and Italian, Stanford University (2013 - 2013)
- Committee for a new minor in Translation Studies, member, Division of Literature, Cultures and Languages (DLCL), Stanford University (2011 - 2012)
- Committee for a new minor in Translation Studies, member, Division of Literature, Cultures and Languages (DLCL), Stanford University (2012 - 2013)
- Faculty College, member, Stanford University (2011 - present)
- Member, Personnel and Planning Committee, Junior Faculty Representative, Division of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages, Stanford University (2009 - 2010)
- Modern Language Association Delegate, Twentieth-Century Italian Studies (2011 - 2014)
- Member, California Interdisciplinary Consortium for Italian Studies Steering Committee (2007 - 2008)
- Member, California Interdisciplinary Consortium for Italian Studies Steering Committee (2008 - 2009)
- Member, California Interdisciplinary Consortium for Italian Studies Best Graduate Student Paper Award Committee (2008 - 2008)
- Member, California Interdisciplinary Consortium for Italian Studies Best Graduate Student Paper Award Committee (2013 - 2013)
- Member, Student Conduct Committee, University of California, Santa Barbara, Departmental Representative (2003 - 2004)
- Managing Editor, Modernism/Modernity (Johns Hopkins Press) (1993 - 1995)
- Director of Undergraduate Studies for French, Department of French and Italian, Stanford University (2005 - 2006)
- Chair, Committee for French Undergraduate Essay Awards, Stanford University (2006 - 2006)

PROGRAM AFFILIATIONS

- Philosophy and Literature

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- Ph.D., Yale University , Department of Italian Language and Literature (2001)
- MPhil, Yale University , Department of Italian Language and Literature (1996)
- M.A., Yale University , Department of Italian Language and Literature (1995)
- B.A., Yale University , French and Italian (1991)
- Baccalaureate, Lycée Français de Washington , French (1986)

Teaching

COURSES

2026-27

- Introduction to the Medical Humanities: ANTHRO 120H, DLCL 120, FRENCH 120E, ITALIAN 120 (Win)
- Medical Humanities Workshop: ANTHRO 143, ANTHRO 443 (Win)
- Writing, Memory, and the Self: FRENCH 251, FRENCH 351, ITALIAN 251, ITALIAN 351 (Spr)

2024-25

- Introduction to the Medical Humanities: ANTHRO 120H, DLCL 120, FRENCH 120E, ITALIAN 120 (Win)
- Sacred and Profane Love in Florentine Literature and Art: OSPFLOR 68F (Aut)

- Simone Weil, Simone de Beauvoir, Hannah Arendt, and Adriana Cavarero: COMPLIT 257, COMPLIT 357A, FEMGEN 257X, FEMGEN 357X, FRENCH 257, FRENCH 357, ITALIAN 257, ITALIAN 357 (Win)
- Symbolism in Literature and the Arts: COMPLIT 362 (Win)

2023-24

- Future Text: AI and Literatures, Cultures, and Languages: DLCL 103, ITALIAN 103 (Aut)
- Honors Thesis Seminar: DLCL 189A (Aut)
- Introduction to the Medical Humanities: ANTHRO 120H, DLCL 120, FRENCH 120E, ITALIAN 120 (Win)
- Italian Lecture Series and Course: ITALIAN 200, ITALIAN 300 (Aut, Win, Spr)
- Why College? Your Education and the Good Life: COLLEGE 101 (Aut)

STANFORD ADVISEES

Doctoral Dissertation Reader (AC)

Ty Davidian

Doctoral Dissertation Advisor (AC)

Letizia Ghibaudo, Hannah Hudson

Publications

PUBLICATIONS

- **Undefended Communication** *Discourse, Boundary, Creation*
  Wittman, L.
  edited by Carravetta, P.
  New York: Bordighera Press.2013
- **Fogazzaro tra Occultismo e Modernismo (Fogazzaro between Occultism and Modernism)** *Fogazzaro nel mondo*
  Wittman, L.
  edited by Chemello, A., Finotti, F.
  2013
- **The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Modern Mourning, and the Reinvention of the Mystical Body**
  Wittman, L.
  Toronto: University of Toronto Press.2011
- **The Visible, Unexposed: Francesco Rosi's Salvatore Giuliano (1961)** *Mafia Movies*
  Wittman, L.
  edited by Renga, D.
  Toronto: University of Toronto Press.2011
- **'Cuore-proiettile' [projectile-heart]: From Marinetti's Mafarka to World War One and Ungaretti** *L'anello che non tiene*
  Wittman, L.
  2010; 22
- **Futurism: An Anthology**
  Wittman, L.
  edited by Poggi, C.
  New Haven: Yale University Press.2009
- **The Puccini Problem: Opera, Nationalism, and Modernity. (Book Review)** *CAMBRIDGE OPERA JOURNAL*
  Book Review Authored by: Wittman, L.
  2008; 20 (3): 303-306
- **Mystical insight and psychology in the Fin-de-Siecle novel: Huysmans, Bourget, d'Annunzio** *FORUM ITALICUM*

Wittman, L.
2008; 42 (1): 30-51

- **Mystical Insight and Psychoanalysis in the Fin-de-Siècle Novel: Huysmans, Bourget, d'Annunzio** *Forum Italicum*
  Wittman, L.
  2008; 32 (1): 30 - 51
- **Italy and France: Imagined Geographies** *Romanic Review*
  Wittman, L.
  2006
- **Giuseppe Ungaretti: Life of a Man** *World Literature and Its Times, vol. 7: Italian Literature and Its Times*
  Wittman, L.
  edited by Moss, J.
  Santa Monica, CA: Thomson Gale.2006
- **Eugenio Montale: Cuttlefish Bones, The Occasions, and The Storm, Etc** *World Literature and Its Times, vol. 7: Italian Literature and Its Times*
  Wittman, L.
  edited by Moss, J.
  Santa Monica, CA: Thomson Gale.2006
- **Omnes velut aqua dilabimur: Antonio Fogazzaro, The Saint, and Catholic Modernism** *Italian Modernism*
  Wittman, L.
  edited by Moroni, M., Somigli, L.
  Toronto: University of Toronto Press.2005
- **Madonnina**
  Chamlee, P.
  edited by Wittman, L.
  Revere, Penn.: Lodima Press.2004
- **Conflicting Modernisms: La Voce and the Myth of the New Italy** *Great Italy: The Rise and Fall of the Myth of the Nation in the Twentieth Century*
  Gentile, E.
  edited by Wittman, L.
  Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press.2004
- **A proposito di un dialogo post-francescano (A propos of a post-Franciscan dialogue)** *Yale Italian Poetry*
  Wittman, L.
  2003; VII: 257 - 267
- **Vittorio Sereni o l'istinto della gioia (Vittorio Sereni or the instinct for joy)** *Forum Italicum*
  Wittman, L.
  2001: 403 - 431
- **Benedetta's Lyrical Transfiguration of Matter** *Polytext*
  Wittman, L.
  2000: 180 - 192
- **The Other Modernism: F. T. Marinetti's Futurist Fiction of Power** *Modernism/Modernity*
  Blum, C. S., Wittman, L., Viola, G. E.
  1997; 4 (2): 197 - 203
- **Marinetti Papers: Letters and Postcards from Gino Severini to F. T. Marinetti, 1910-1915** *Hanson, Severini futurista: 1912-1917*
  Coffin, A.
  edited by Wittman, L.
  1995
- **Introduction and Notes to the Selections from the Unpublished Diaries of F. T. Marinetti** *odernism/Modernity*
  Wittman, L., Rainey, L.

1994; 1 (3): 1 - 25