

THERE THEY ARE THURSDAYS 2025-2026!

Listed below by alphabetical order, you will find examples of what other UNCW students have studied alongside French, and the wonderful things they have been doing after graduation.

Note that, Thursday after Thursday, more disciplines from all of UNCW's Colleges will gradually be listed. If you would like to chat and inquire about how your other field(s) of academic interest can be matched with a French major/minor (because yes they can!), please do not hesitate to contact one of your UNCW French professors.

To search by discipline, use the bookmarks below in yellow. To search alumni by name, press Ctrl + F.

We love our alumni! Our hope is that these profiles will inspire you, dear current Seahawk, and encourage you in your studies and endeavors.

ACCOUNTING	EXERCISE SCIENCE	MARKETING STRATEGY	SPANISH
ANTHROPOLOGY	FILM STUDIES	MATHEMATICS	STUDIO ART
ART HISTORY	FRENCH (just French B.A.)	MUSIC	THEATER
BIOLOGY	FRENCH WITH TEACHING LICENSURE	NURSING	
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION	GEOLOGY	PHILOSOPHY	
CHEMISTRY	HISTORY	PHYSICS	
COASTAL ENGINEERING	INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS	POLITICAL SCIENCE	
COMMUNICATIONS STUDIES	INTERNATIONAL STUDIES	PRE-MED	
COMPUTER SCIENCE	JOURNALISM	PSYCHOLOGY	
		PUBLIC HEALTH	

CREATIVE WRITING	LEADERSHIP STUDIES	RECREATION, SPORTS	
CRIMINOLOGY	MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS	LEADERSHIP & TOURISM MANAGEMENT	
ENGLISH	MARINE BIOLOGY	SOCIOLOGY	
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES			

ACCOUNTING

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Kellee Meiners

CLASS
OF
2019

International Business, Accounting and French

Why did you study French?

I studied French throughout high school and wanted to continue to advance my skills in college. My original goal in college was to complete study abroad in a francophone country and potentially get involved after graduation in an international company with job opportunities in French-speaking countries.

What do you do now?

I work as an auditor for a Big4 accounting firm and have opportunities to work with Canadian or French teams on my clients. Since it is a large international company, I can opt into work programs where I can be based out of our Paris office for up to two years (among other international opportunities).



Study Abroad: Czech Republic + Belgium

UPDATE: Audit Manager at Deloitte & Touche
Je travaille à Genève, en Suisse!



Deloitte

PS: Je m'appelle Kellee Cox, maintenant!



Kellee Meiners

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Bray Woodard

Accounting & French (minor)

CLASS
OF
2024

Ancienne Présidente du French Club

Bray, can you tell us why you studied French?

My dream is to live and work in France at an accounting firm.

What do you do now?  **H&R BLOCK**

I start the Masters of Accountancy Program at UNCW in the fall. In the meantime I am preparing tax returns at H&R Block. On the H&R Block website it is noted I speak French, so any francophone clients can do their taxes with me.



Study Abroad: Marseille, France

Anything else you'd like to share?

Join French Club!! :) French club is a fun way to practice French outside the classroom and the French department is filled with wonderful people.

UNCWORLD

[NOTE from Dr. Spieser-Landes: Bray placed into FRH 202 right at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic when everything was remote; yet she succeeded so well. *Allez les balbuzards-pêcheurs!!!*]

Bray Woodard

ANTHROPOLOGY

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Daphne C. Watkins

Anthropology and French

CLASS
OF
2002

Why did you study French?

I studied French in high school and wanted to continue my studies in college. It is a beautiful language and my French studies at UNCW have made substantial contributions to the way I see the world.

What do you do now?

I am a Professor of Social Work (Diversity and Social Transformation) and Director of a Research Center at the University of Michigan. I also serve on committees and advisory boards aimed at improving men's health equity both domestically and globally.



Daphne C. Watkins

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Patricia (Patty) Korman

French and Anthropology/Archaeology

CLASS
OF
2004

Who is Mrs Korman?

As a small child I lived in New Orleans where I learned to talk and presumably picked up my lifelong affinity for all things French. [...] After I graduated, I worked in a corporate setting doing software support for many years before I went back to school to get my teaching license (7th and 8th science teacher).

After seven years in the classroom, I returned to school at NC State as a Science Scholar Leader Fellow and completed a Master's degree in STEM education and a graduate certificate in Climate Change Adaptation, the program requirements of which required me to use the GIS software which I have grown to be quite fond of as it is a powerful tool against all environmental threats, be they ecological or sociological (or as is frequently the case... both). I decided to further my education in GIS because I was completely impressed by how powerful this software is. I am interested in potentially even transitioning into a role where I can put that knowledge to use for a local government, business or NGO.



Patricia (Patty) Korman

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Susanna Pantas

Studio Art, Anthropology & French

CLASS
OF
2002



Study Abroad: Paris, France

EDUCATION

- 2002 Bachelor of Art, University of North Carolina at Wilmington. Cum Laude.
- 2000 University of Paris (the Sorbonne). Paris, France. Fall 2000. Concentration: French and Art History.



Contemplation: Monarch Dream
oil on canvas, 14"x11"

In all things of nature, there is something of the marvelous - Aristotle

Source: www.susannapantas.com

Susanna Pantas

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Courtney Wilson

Anthropology & French (minor)

CLASS
OF
2022



Why did you study French?

I started studying French while in high school because I thought being able to speak a second language would be really cool! I've always thought the French language was beautiful and I knew I wanted to travel to France one day so that's what I chose.

What do you do now?

I currently work for Disney Cruise Line as a Youth Activities Counselor. Since graduation, I worked for almost a year at Walt Disney World where I had many opportunities to make a little magic in some French-speaking guests' day by surprising them by speaking French. I worked as a Character Attendant and I was able to use French to translate what the characters were saying. One day in the future, it's possible that I will transfer to work at Disneyland Paris and spend some time living in France!

Study Abroad:

Without Covid, I would have double majored in French and Anthropology, as I had plans to study abroad in Paris.

I see your studies were impacted by Covid. Did you do no study abroad at all?

Well, I actually did, although it was not the kind of program that would help me finish my major, unfortunately. I did the Semester at Sea program where I lived on a cruise ship for four months, taking classes and spending weeks traveling and learning about different countries while we sailed around the world. In many of the countries we visited; such as Vietnam, Morocco, India, and Mauritius I had the opportunity to speak French with locals or with other visiting tour groups. After my program ended in Europe, I traveled to France and spent a few days in Paris and a few days in Nice!

Courtney Wilson

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Cailyn Trevaskiss

History + French & Anthropology minors

CLASS
OF
2017

Hello former UNCW French Club President! What have you been up to since graduation?

I just finished graduate school! I completed two Master's degrees from Wichita State University, one in Anthropology, and the other one in Public Administration. As part of my research for my first Master's, I worked on French sociologist Emile Durkheim:

"Durkheim's Judaism: The Dominion of Lingering Religiosity in the Theoretical Development of Modern Anthropology," the full abstract of which may be found on the American Anthropological Association's website. I am now working for a nonprofit (*une organisation à but non lucratif, oui, oui, dans un rôle de gestion!*)



Study Abroad: Scotland (en Ecosse!)



Cailyn Trevaskiss

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Jennifer Rankin Dai

Anthropology & minors in French & Biology

... and also former French Club President!



Why did you study French?

In high school I chose to take French as my foreign language and loved it. At UNCW I took French for my language requirement and the faculty and students in the department were fantastic! I realized I wanted to learn more about the language, history, and culture, so I decided to minor in French.



What do you do now?

Study Abroad: Bali, Indonesia

I am currently a veterinary assistant and am rarely able to use French in my life but I do continue to try to practice and remember all I learned. I am applying to graduate school for library science where I hope to use m French more often.

UPDATE: *Bonjour! J'ai de bonnes nouvelles! Je vais aller à UNC Chapel-Hill pour mes études supérieures! Merci beaucoup pour votre aide! [avec la lettre de recommandation] J'espère que vous passez un bel été et merci encore!*
Jen

Jennifer Rankin Dai

ART HISTORY

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Audrey Pontin

Art History and French

CLASS
OF
2018

Why did you study French?

I wanted to learn of French linguistics and immerse myself in its beautiful culture. I also wanted to communicate efficiently when travelling to French-speaking countries.

What do you do now?

I am a Graphic Designer for a marketing agency in Wilmington, NC. I often incorporate French culture into my art and teach others of the language. I plan on obtaining my PhD in Art History with a concentration in French impressionism. Then I will travel to France for future summers to conduct and translate research for my students.



Study Abroad: Paris, France
(through the UNCW Wentworth Fellowship)

Audrey Pontin

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Pamela Arellano Zamera

Art History and French

CLASS
OF
2016

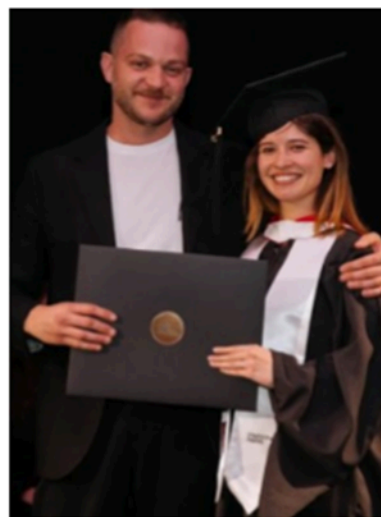
Why did you study French?

I had studied French since middle school and, ever since a high school trip to France, I had plans to eventually live there!

What do you do now?

I'm living in Paris, France. I came for a Master's Program at Parsons Paris for Curatorial Studies and an internship at the Musée d'Orsay in August of 2017 and have stayed since. I would like to continue living here. Currently, I am working at a bilingual school, teaching English to very young French students!

Study Abroad: Berlin, Germany



Pamela Arellano Zamera

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Christina Wytko Marchington

Art History and French

CLASS
OF
2016



Study Abroad: Marseille, France
(through the UNCW-KEDGE partnership)

Why did you study French?

I was always fascinated with the French language even as a kid. I even wrote a story in 1st grade about parachuting off of the Eiffel Tower with my friends. I wasn't able to take French in middle or high school so when I had the opportunity to travel to Paris my sophomore year of high school, I was determined to learn in college.

I started in French 101 my freshman year and worked my way all the way through the major while also majoring in Art History. Learning a language was also vital to my pursuing a master's degree in art history, as most programs require at least a reading knowledge of one (in my case, two) languages other than English.

What do you do now?

After graduating, I completed a master's degree in Art History from the University of Missouri and worked at La Petite Ecole, a French immersion kindergarten in Columbia, Missouri.

I am now employed at the Gregg Museum of Art & Design at NC State University. I do use French as a museum professional in my research, tours, and outreach. My director relies on me whenever there is something to proofread or edit in French.

Anything else you would like to share?

I miss all the faculty in the French department and I appreciate all the time spent to educate me. My French degree is something that I am very proud of and comparing my language comprehension now to when I first started in 2012 is really astonishing. If Dr. Juall is reading this, I'd like him to know that his linguistics class is still the most useful French class I've ever taken. The spelling and pronunciation rules I learned in that class have stuck with me and are applicable to every part of the language.

Christina Wytko Marchington

BIOLOGY

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Ivan A. Alger

Biology, Chemistry & French

CLASS
OF
2010

Current employment:

Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.)

Source:  RIVERSIDE
Medical Group

Honors while at UNCW:

UNCW student wins scholarship

SOUTHEASTERN N.C. | The New Hanover-Pender County Medical Society has named Ivan Alexander Alger its Premedical Scholarship recipient for this year.

The scholarship has been awarded since 1989 to a rising University of North Carolina Wilmington senior planning a career in medicine.

Alger, who will graduate from UNCW in May with a degree in biology and minors in chemistry and French, was selected this year for the award, which covers tuition and fees for one year.

Alger and his family immigrated to the United States from Ukraine when he was 5. He maintains a high academic average, has done research and volunteered at a hospital emergency department in Virginia Beach.



Source:  StarNews
ONLINE

Ivan A. Alger

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Molly Miskiewicz

Biology & French

CLASS
OF
2016

Dr. Molly Miskiewicz is a recent graduate of University of Wisconsin School of Veterinary Medicine where she obtained her DVM in May 2020. She is now employed at [All Creatures Veterinary Clinic](#). Although a new graduate, her favorite part of veterinary medicine is being able to provide care to the creatures of this world that cannot help themselves. She is excited to continuously learn in her new career at All Creatures.



All Creatures Veterinary Clinic - Gives 1% Back to Those in Need

Committed to improving the quality of animal & human lives worldwide we will donate 1% of our profits to Haiti, Tanzania & area charities next year.

Our Veterinarians have visited Haiti to educate veterinary agents. They teach an assortment of procedures such as small & large animal restraint, vaccine & medication administration & even a variety of surgeries. We are especially proud of our Veterinarians for continuing to amaze us with all the good things they do for animals & humans alike. We are also humbled, as we hear about the hardships of other countries & consider ourselves very blessed with what we have.

Molly Miskiewicz

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Jessica Olson

Biology (Pre-Dentistry) and French

Jessie, for those who don't know you, you are the former French Club president (thank you so much for your service!); can you also tell us about how adding a French major and Studying Abroad impacted your undergraduate studies?

Absolutely! Thanks to my work at a laboratory in dental research during my semester in Strasbourg with IFE, I was able to co-author and publish an article in the fall 2020 issue of *The Journal of Craniomandibular & Sleep Practice*!

What are your short-term plans?

For the next year or two, I will remain in Wilmington and work in a dental office as a dental assistant to gain experience for dental school. I plan on volunteering for a local non-profit called Operation Pretty Things (for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault), which is affiliated with the student organization that I founded named Brush of Empowerment. Hopefully, I will get into a dental school in North Carolina, but I am also looking at Boston University's dental school due to the opportunity to volunteer in Haiti for a semester. Of course, I will be happy to go wherever I get in.

And long-term?

After attending dental school, I aim to practice dentistry for a couple of years before opening a practice or furthering my education to specialize. I also plan on getting certified in Forensic Odontology after graduating. No matter where I am or how busy I become, I will be volunteering my time to food banks, dental clinics, and more. I want to continue being a global citizen. Finally, I hope to live in France post-retirement :)

Jessica Olson

CLASS
OF
2021



Study Abroad: Strasbourg, France
(through IFE – Internships in Francophone Europe/Institute for Field Education)



There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Anna Todd

Biology & French (+ a minor in Chemistry)

CLASS
OF
2022



What do you do now?

I work full time as a Medical Assistant and I'm in the process of applying for Medical School!

Study Abroad: Paris, France

“*La vie a été formidable pour moi. Très occupée! Je travaille à temps plein comme Assistante Médicale et je passe mon temps libre avec mon neveu, le premier bébé né dans la famille! En dehors de cela, j'ai été occupée à m'inscrire à l'école et à étudier pour l'examen d'entrée. C'est étrange d'être une "adulte" maintenant, mais j'adore travailler en médecine et je suis contente de mon choix. L'UNCW et le temps passé là-bas me manquent, ainsi que le fait de parler français plus régulièrement que maintenant. Je suis si heureuse de vous voir!*”

What is a unique way in which you combined your two degrees in Biology and French?



I did a FRH 491 (Directed Independent Study) under the supervision of Dr. Spieser-Landes titled "Furthering Scientifico-Medical French Language Through Media," in which I watched episodes of the popular TV show "C'est pas sorcier" on topics such as Anesthesia, Diabetes, Medicines Manufacturing, Heart Disease, Pesticides, Antibiotics, Phytoplankton, the French Police Forensic Team, and more. Of course, as part of the DIS, I then had to write about them. I thus gained a lot of extra linguistic as well as scientific knowledge. *J'ai passé un moment incroyable à regarder la science à travers les yeux d'un(e) jeune Français(e)!*

UPDATE:

Dr. Spieser-Landes,

I just wanted to let you know I just got accepted into medical school. Your support throughout undergrad and through your letter of recommendation meant so much to me, and I was so grateful to have an amazing professor and advisor to learn from. Thank you so much for believing in me and helping me!

Hope you and the family are well, and that you enjoyed the recent snow days!!!

Best,
Anna

Anna Todd

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Sabrina Raynor

Biology and French

CLASS
OF
2022



What do you do now?

After getting my MA in Sustainability from Wake Forest University this year (2023), I started in May at Mott MacDonald as an Environmental Planner in Raleigh, NC. This is a global company with offices in multiple French-speaking countries, so I am hoping I can work with the Francophonie in the near future!



Why did you study French?

I picked it up pretty quickly in high school –my high school teacher was incredible– and when I took the placement test for French at UNCW, it placed me at the 300 level, so I only needed a few more classes to get a minor. Then, when I completed my minor by my junior year of college, I was sad my French-learning journey was ending, and Mme Lord encouraged me to go for a second major, so I did! I enjoyed taking French classes at UNCW and tutoring French at the ULC in my last two years. I developed great relationships with the French faculty; ultimately, a welcoming learning environment is what kept me engaged and excited to come to French class each day over the years!

Study Abroad:

N/A: "Hurricane Florence and Covid made this pretty difficult to plan out!"

Anything else you'd like to share?

If you're looking for ways to keep up with your French outside of school, I've found that Tandem is a great app to use to continue practicing!



Sabrina Raynor

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Jennifer Rankin Dai

Anthropology & minors in French & Biology

... and also former French Club President!



Why did you study French?

In high school I chose to take French as my foreign language and loved it. At UNCW I took French for my language requirement and the faculty and students in the department were fantastic! I realized I wanted to learn more about the language, history, and culture, so I decided to minor in French.



What do you do now?

Study Abroad: Bali, Indonesia

I am currently a veterinary assistant and am rarely able to use French in my life but I do continue to try to practice and remember all I learned. I am applying to graduate school for library science where I hope to use m French more often.

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Jen

Jennifer Rankin Dai

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Alea Aul

Business Administration, Marketing Strategy & French

CLASS
OF
2019

Why did you study French?

While French had always been my favorite course throughout high school, I honestly didn't plan on studying it in college because I was not sure if it was necessary for following my future career aspirations. It took me one semester to know that I was making a mistake. I missed the enjoyment of learning French and realized that if this was something that interested me, I should just do it. Majoring in it personally challenged me and gave me a more worldly view. I believe it can be a great addition to anyone's studies.

What do you do now?

I am a Project Coordinator at an advertising company in Raleigh. After I was hired, I found out that when I was applying, my resume stood out amongst 75 other applicants due to my degree in French. The person reviewing my resume had also studied French and was impressed that I had that background alongside my Business degree.



Study Abroad: Marseille, France
(through the Cameron School of Business -
Kedge École de Commerce partnership)

UPDATE: Alea went from Project Coordinator to Marketing Manager to Marketing Director!



Alea Aul

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Walter Kearnan

**French and Business Administration
(International Business Concentration)
and Political Science**

CLASS
OF
2016



What did you do after graduation?

I was at first a Political Affairs intern, then a Regional Director, for The Borgen Project, a nonprofit that advocates to make global poverty a greater focus of US foreign policy. For two years, I also worked for Live Oak Bank as a Loan Closing Specialist in their Renewable Energy department. In that role, I had the unique opportunity to directly impact renewable energy projects across the US. I had the privilege of working alongside energy developers, industry experts and others to finance large-scale energy projects.

Study Abroad: Marseille, France
(through the UNCW – Kedge partnership)

What do you do now?

I joined the FBI and hope to do some overseas work and use my French language skills at some point. Prior to that, I was a Special Agent for the US Capitol Police where I primarily worked on the security details for House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi. I sometimes used my French with French, Canadian or Francophone visitors.

How did you like studying abroad in Marseille?

I LOVED IT!!!! I wish I could do it again.

Any notable achievements while studying French at UNCW?

My Honors Thesis with Dr. Juall was published in an undergraduate research journal!

Walter Kearnan

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Charlotte Tyminski

French & Business Administration - Finance

CLASS
OF
2017

Current Employment: Senior Financial Analyst
Charlotte, North Carolina

**Stanley
Black &
Decker**

Past Employment:
Administrative Assistant



Study Abroad: Marseille, France
(through the UNCW-Kedge partnership)



Studied abroad at KEDGE Business School in Marseille, France during the summer, where I was able to explore the French-Mediterranean culture while completing coursework in American Organizational Management and French Culture

Charlotte Tyminski

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Davis Ann Talton Cacciatore

Business Administration-Economics & French

CLASS
OF
2011

"Post-graduation I accepted a position with Fidelity Investments in Cincinnati, OH, as a Financial Representative. I now serve as a Planning Consultant in the same company."



Study Abroad: Paris, France

David Ann Talton Cacciatore

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Anna Medina

Business Administration-Marketing & French

CLASS
OF
2018



Current Employment:



Senior Assistant Buyer - Branded & Fine Jewelry

Further studies after UNCW?



GIA (Gemological Institute of America) Applied Jewelry Professional

Some UNCW courses I have considered especially important to my career:

Branding MKT 495	Competitive Strategy MGT 455	International Marketing MKT 442	International Business INB 300	Sales Force Automation MKT 441
Marketing Intelligence & Communication MKT 343	Marketing Strategy Professional Selling MKT 445	Sales Management MKT 448		
French for the Professions FRH 304				

Study Abroad:

Buenos Aires, Argentina



Anything else you would like to share?

I studied French because of my love for and interest in the fashion industry as well as French culture. I aspired to a career in the industry and knew with French being one of the most spoken languages in the luxury sector, it would be both beneficial and an asset to be able to communicate and understand the language. Since graduation, I have had the pleasure of working with some of the largest names in the jewelry industry. I currently use French for branding purposes and product storytelling. In general, knowing French is a skill that allowed me to stand out from other candidates and coworkers.

Anna Medina

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Austin Ward

B.A. in French, B.S. in Business Administration

CLASS
OF
2021



Current Employment: Pricing Analyst for 

I oversee pricing needs for dealers in Canada as well as Major Accounts within the logistics industry.

Skills required for this job: Analytical skills - Pricing Analysis - Pricing Strategy - Marketing – Sales - **French** - Microsoft Excel - Consumer Services

Study Abroad: Lyon, France

What were some highlights in your college career at UNCW?

I loved serving the international community by volunteering as an international student mentor and a study abroad ambassador. Oh, and being a French tutor! Not to mention that I completed a FRH 498 (internship) at The Wall Printer company in Wilmington, working as a social media manager and translator.



Austin Ward

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

John Jewell

Business Administration/Business Analytics & French (minor)

What do you do now?

I now live in Paris and work in B2B marketing as an international sales manager.



INFOPRO
digital

INSTITUTE
FOR FIELD
EDUCATION

CLASS
OF
2022



Can you tell us a bit about how this professional move happened?

Yes! I had been learning French for a few years already and wanted to take college-level classes as a way to stay connected with the language, while also increasing my knowledge of the culture. As I was taking FRH 304 -French for the Professions- my French professor told me about IFE, which is a program that allows students to do internships in French companies in their majors. This program is what led to me being hired and staying in Paris. I'm amazed that everything worked according to plan!

Study Abroad: Paris, France
(through IFE – Institute for Field Education/
Internships in Francophone Europe)

How did your internship go?

In their report, my supervisor wrote: "All of the international marketing team are very happy with John's contributions and his seamless integration into the team. He is on excellent terms with his colleagues and doesn't even feel like an intern. John does not hesitate to ask questions or make comments, which is highly appreciated by those around him." My internship site was InfoPro Digital, which produces information management and marketing solutions for clients worldwide. As for the academic side of the internship, I wrote a paper exploring the proposed US-EU agreement on personal data storage.

Anything else you'd like to share?

If you're passionate about French, work hard every day to learn as much as you can. It can only lead to good things and is worth much more than the time and effort you invest. The people you meet, the things you see, and the conversations you have with people that you wouldn't have otherwise, are things you will carry with you for the rest of your life.

“Ça me plaît, je peux beaucoup voyager and rencontrer plein de gens.
Je suis déjà allé à NY, Londres, et Barcelone pour le travail.”

John Jewell

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Taylor Clarkin

Film Studies & French (+ a Business minor)

CLASS
OF
2022

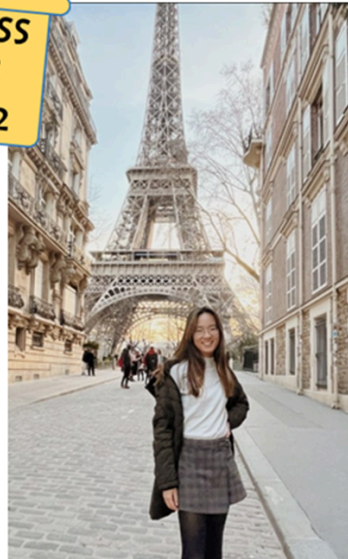
What do you do now?

I'm a Communications Administrative Associate for the Reading Musical Foundation, which has been proudly advancing and advocating for music education in Berks County, PA, since 1926. We invest more than \$200,000 each year in scholarships for Berks County student musicians!



What other professional experiences have you had?

I've worked as an in-house Production Assistant for Simone Associates, ensuring the smooth running of the studio. I also assisted the Costume Department in prepping hundreds of garments for the Tom James Clothing fall collection photoshoot. While a student at UNCW, I also interned at the Anderson Group and worked for Take One Productions as well as MAKE/FILMS.



Study Abroad: Paris, France
(NC in Paris Consortium)

Can you name one highlight of your Study Abroad experience?

Yes, volunteering for the disaster and humanitarian relief organization "L'un est l'autre" through the partnership the NC in Paris Consortium Program has with France Bénévolat. I packaged and distributed hot meals.



Taylor Clarkin

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Janelle McLaughlin

**Business Administration & Marketing Strategy
+ French (minor)**

CLASS
OF
2019



Why did you study French?

My French journey started in elementary school when I got the opportunity to attend a public French immersion elementary school. Since then, I have always appreciated the ability to speak a second language. While at UNCW, I made sure to keep up and improve my French language skills!

What do you do now?

Most recently, I returned to the US from spending time in Saudi Arabia in an English language teaching position at an international girl's school in the Eastern Province. Prior to my time in Saudi Arabia, I did get to use my French at work while working for 2 years at EF's International Language Campus in San Diego. I was the sole member of the staff on the San Diego team that spoke French, which allowed for many opportunities to put my French to use in order to assist francophone students at the school whose English may not have been as advanced. I love the opportunities for connection that speaking more than 1 language brings!



INTERNATIONAL
LANGUAGE
CAMPUSES

Janelle McLaughlin

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Luc Le Chatton

Business Administration, International Business & French (minor)

Luc! You worked for us at the Dub Hub as a Language Exchange Leader! What do you do now?

Dub Hub



I'm a Hospitality Manager at Sea Scapes Properties!

What were some of your achievements while at UNCW?

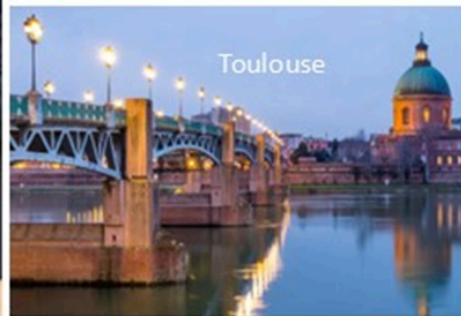
I was honored to receive UNCW's 2024-25 Global Citizen Award, presented to a student who demonstrates a commitment to internationalization and global engagement. Studying abroad twice, pursuing a French minor, and serving as a Language Exchange Leader at the Dub Hub all shaped my global perspectives.



Study Abroad: Marseille, France
Toulouse, France



KEDGE Business School
Cross Cultural Negotiations & Business Law



[NOTE: Luc was also a recipient of the Outstanding Graduate in International Business Award!]

“I've developed cultural awareness and adaptability through international study abroad programs [...]. These experiences [...] sharpened my initiative, observational skills, and ability to thrive in diverse environments. These are qualities I look forward to bringing into a variety of roles throughout my career.”

Luc Le Chatton

CHEMISTRY

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Reem Hakeem

Chemistry and French

CLASS
OF
2014

Reem was featured many times in our UNCW French brochure :



"As a double major in French and chemistry, I interned as a research associate in a Structural Motility Group at the Curie Institute in Paris. I worked on sub-cloning, crystallogenesis, and purification of the Myosin XVIII protein. Being a French major enabled me to communicate with my co-workers who were francophone and spoke little to no English. This experience enriched my use of the language in the scientific field. Nevertheless, spending a semester in Paris meant daily interaction with the language, culture, and history. This allowed me to see the multiple dimensions of France. I have formed amazing friendships and wonderful memories in this culturally rich country. I hope to continue working in a research lab and apply to Medical School in the future," Reem, May 2014



Where did she go next?



Research Associate
National Institutes of Health
Sep 2014 – Sep 2016



SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Biochemistry and Biophysics

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Biophysics
2016 – 2021

Diversity Committee Member

Reem Hakeem

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Mackenzie Torcasio

Chemistry and French

CLASS
OF
2018

What did you do with  ?

During my semester abroad with IFE, I received the chance to have an immersive internship with the Center of Cardiovascular Research at the Georges Pompidou Hospital in Paris. I worked with a team of molecular biologists studying the physiology of arteries and veins on how to better the current health treatments for a myriad of cardiovascular diseases.



What do you do now?

I am currently an English Language Assistant with the Académie de Paris, through the TAPIF program.

Teaching Assistant Program in
FRANCE

Study Abroad: Paris, France

(through IFE – Institute for Field Education/
Internships in Francophone Europe)

Any future projects or aspirations?

Yes! I am in the process of applying for a Master's + Ph.D. program in cognitive psychology here in Paris.

Mackenzie Torcasio

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Justine Benjamin

Pre-Med with French Studies major
Minors: Music, Chemistry

CLASS
OF
2021



I now work for Foundation Medicine in Morrisville, NC as an Accessioning Technician; Foundation Medicine is a molecular information company dedicated to transforming cancer patient care by providing specific genomic insights into each patient's cancer and matching them with relevant targeted therapies, immunotherapies and clinical trials.

My role as an Accessioner is to provide critical sample receipt and data entry while working closely with Client Services and Histology departments to ensure a short turn-around time of samples for our patients.

I am currently involved in several committees dedicated to improving the quality and efficacy of the company, including Enhancement, Engagement and Diversity Committees.

Study Abroad: Paris, France
(through IFE –Institute for Field Education/Internships in Franco-phone Europe)



During my IFE internship at L'Hôpital Bichat as a Lab Technician, I performed experiments focused on healing digestive cancer with a research team under the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research.

Justine Benjamin

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Henry Tollefson

Chemistry & French (+ a minor in Mathematics)

CLASS
OF
2013



I am now a Head Coach for ***TOLLEFSON SWIMMING*** !

I'm a life-long competitive swimmer through high school and began coaching summer swimming while still in high school. In my current position as Head Coach, there is a focus on qualifying for top-level competitions such as Junior Olympics, IMX, ISCA, and Zones.

At UNCW, my second major was Chemistry. At the time, I wanted to apply for medical school. After graduation, I did a two-year post-baccalaureate fellowship at the National Institute of Health in Bethesda, MD. I worked in a retrovirology lab that studied retroviral budding, specifically HIV-1. I used my French quite a bit then to converse with French coworkers.

French was a huge part of my career at UNCW and has given me the opportunity to meet various wonderful professors, learn amazing cultural things and most importantly give me a different perspective.

Henry Tollefson

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Anna Todd

Biology & French (+ a minor in Chemistry)

CLASS
OF
2022



What do you do now?

I work full time as a Medical Assistant and I'm in the process of applying for Medical School!

Study Abroad: Paris, France

“*La vie a été formidable pour moi. Très occupée! Je travaille à temps plein comme Assistante Médicale et je passe mon temps libre avec mon neveu, le premier bébé né dans la famille! En dehors de cela, j'ai été occupée à m'inscrire à l'école et à étudier pour l'examen d'entrée. C'est étrange d'être une "adulte" maintenant, mais j'adore travailler en médecine et je suis contente de mon choix. L'UNCW et le temps passé là-bas me manquent, ainsi que le fait de parler français plus régulièrement que maintenant. Je suis si heureuse de vous voir!*”

What is a unique way in which you combined your two degrees in Biology and French?



I did a FRH 491 (Directed Independent Study) under the supervision of Dr. Spieser-Landes titled “Furthering Scientifico-Medical French Language Through Media,” in which I watched episodes of the popular TV show “*C'est pas sorcier*” on topics such as Anesthesia, Diabetes, Medicines Manufacturing, Heart Disease, Pesticides, Antibiotics, Phytoplankton, the French Police Forensic Team, and more. Of course, as part of the DIS, I then had to write about them. I thus gained a lot of extra linguistic as well as scientific knowledge. *J'ai passé un moment incroyable à regarder la science à travers les yeux d'un(e) jeune Français(e)!*

UPDATE:

Dr. Spieser-Landes,

I just wanted to let you know I just got accepted into medical school. Your support throughout undergrad and through your letter of recommendation meant so much to me, and I was so grateful to have an amazing professor and advisor to learn from. Thank you so much for believing in me and helping me!

Hope you and the family are well, and that you enjoyed the recent snow days!!!

Best,
Anna

Anna Todd

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Lauren Grimes

Chemistry & French



Current employment: CVS Pharmacy Manager (Fort Myers, Florida)

Further studies after graduation?

UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy

Doctor of Pharmacy - PharmD, Pharmacy



What did you do between your graduation from UNCW and graduate studies?

I was an AmeriCorps Member! I mentored middle-schoolers who were having trouble academically or socially at Port Angeles Middle School in Port Angeles, WA.



Do you have a personal motto? Yes: "Helping people on their path to better health."

UPDATE: Now working, still as a Pharmacist, for 

Lauren Grimes

COMMUNICATIONS STUDIES

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Stephanie Anne Hilaire

French and Communication Studies

CLASS
OF
2018

Why did you study French?

At first, it felt more like a hobby! I fell in love with the culture and the language. I've always had an affinity for cross-cultural exchange and my majors in French and Communications Studies were perfect to become involved in that.

What do you do now?

I am a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (Guinea, West Africa, 2018-2020). While serving there, I taught English and helped create a daycare for female University students who couldn't afford childcare. I am currently working as a home loan specialist for Penny Mac and have applied for an MBA at Penn State and two other graduate programs.

Study Abroad: Paris, France



Stephanie Anne Hilaire

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Katherine Curtis

Communication Studies and French

CLASS
OF
2020



Study Abroad: Cannes, France
(through AIFS)

Why did you study French?

After spending time in the south of France when I was little and growing up around French culture as we have family living in France, I decided to take French language in middle school/high school. I felt I was never very good at it, but with time, practice and effort, I was able to push through and take French at UNCW. The French professors at UNCW inspired me and genuinely believed in me, which gave me confidence and skills to pursue French as my second major!

What do you do now?

I work for a K-12 software sales company, LINQ, based out of Wilmington, NC. On the side, I have a start-up business which offers customizable solutions for documenting/selling valuable antiques and items. I also do freelance graphic design and I serve on the board of directors of FACES: The National Craniofacial Association. As for French, I have enjoyed the ability to speak with my French family with ease, and I look forward to the next time I am able to visit France!

Anything else you would like to share?

Yes! Two things: 1) I recommend Study Abroad in Cannes to anyone at UNCW looking for an opportunity to study French abroad because it is on the beach and film is very relevant to Cannes, so this may appeal to those who love those aspects of UNCW too! 2) I am extremely grateful for the true dedication and support that the UNCW French professors embody in their teaching!

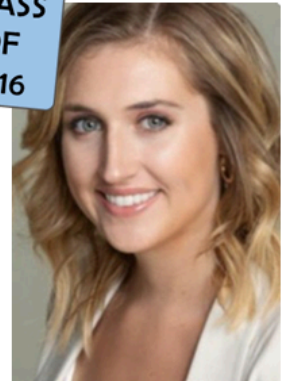
Katherine Curtis

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Juliane Wilson

Communication Studies and French

CLASS
OF
2016



Current Employment: Senior Social Media Specialist



Luxury Presence

Website and marketing system used by the world's leading real estate agents and brokers.

Past Employment:



Marketing Coordinator

Commercial real estate's global standard for professional achievement



Talent Sourcing Specialist

InnerWorkings



Marketing and Advertising Intern

Study Abroad: Australia

Juliane Wilson

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Reagan Satterwhite

Communication Studies & French

CLASS
OF
2016

Current Employment:

I'm a flight attendant for Delta Airlines. I use French regularly at work, especially when travelling to Europe and Africa. The photo is from Dakar, Senegal, at the most western point in continental Africa. I fly there all the time for work with my French certification at Delta. You can tell students they get free flights anywhere in the world if they become flight attendants! We always need more language speakers.

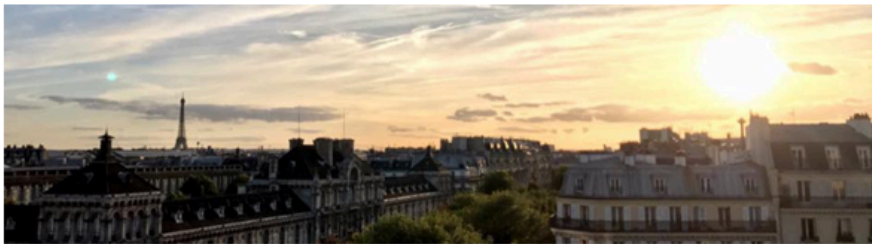


What did you do right after graduation?

I lived in Paris and worked as an Assistante de Langue with the TAPIF program. I also worked as an au pair when school was not in session. I was able to have this position for two years. Obviously living in Paris my skills improved immensely. This was the view from my window:



Study Abroad: Paris, France
(with the NC in Paris Consortium)



I often go back to France now for work and it always feels like home. The process of learning another language in college also helped me to better understand other Latin-based languages as well. I can travel through Spain and Italy quite easily.

May we ask why you studied French at UNCW?

My relationship with the French language began as a language course requirement, but after my first class I was so intrigued. French was also one of the first school subjects I was very good with, and that I also enjoyed learning. Once I started to learn more about the French culture as well I was even more in love :)

Reagan Satterwhite

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Jamie Thompson

French & Communication Studies

CLASS
OF
2003



Bonsoir Prof. Spieser-Landes! Your email about “There They Are Thursdays” both took me by surprise and made me smile. I was just talking today to my daughter and her friend about my French degree as they were debating which language to take. It was fun regaling them with tales of my time in Marseille and Paris.

I’ve worked as a Development Director for Coastal Horizons and am now employed by Optimum Fire & Security as their Business Operations Director

Fun fact: my first job after graduation, I was a wine representative and reached the \$100,000 sales goal in 5 months.

My French degree remains a source of great pride and I will forever be a Francophile!

Study Abroad: Marseille, France
Paris, France
(NC in Paris Consortium)



Jamie Thompson

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Stephanie Karampelas

French & Communication Studies (+ a minor in Journalism)

CLASS
OF
2010



What do you do now?

I am a Middle and Upper School French Teacher and Chair of the Modern Languages Department at Saint David's School in Raleigh.

What did you do after graduation?



MINISTÈRE
DE L'ÉDUCATION
NATIONALE



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL



ST. DAVID'S SCHOOL
FAITH • VIRTUE • KNOWLEDGE

Study Abroad: Aix-en-Provence

I first taught English in a French middle/high school for seven months. Then I got my Master's in French Language and Literature from Chapel Hill, graduating with concentrations in 20th century literature, the Algerian War and Franco-Arab studies. During that time, I received a FLAS Fellowship to study Arabic! Following this, I returned to France to become a substitute English teacher in the French public school system.

Stephanie Karampelas

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Cameron Walker

French and Communication Studies

CLASS
OF
2002

Career path after graduation:

After getting my Master's degree in Communication from the University of Southern Indiana, I worked as a broker, a realtor, a Marketing Communications Writer (for the NC State Wilson College of Textiles – the only college in North America dedicated to textiles), and I am now a freelance writer.



Study Abroad: Paris, France
(through the NC in Paris Consortium)



NC STATE
WILSON

Cameron Walker

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Emily Baxter

French & Communication Studies

CLASS
OF
2018



Study Abroad: Marseille, France
(through Kedge)

Why did you study French?

Love of language /culture and desire to be fluent. And the best professors!

What do you do now?

I am a Senior Account Executive at a healthcare data SAAS company, specializing in revenue cycle management. While I am currently not using my French in my job, I try to use it as often as possible in my personal life!

Anything else you'd like to share?

Thankful for all of the amazing French professors at UNCW who made my major fun to pursue!



Emily Baxter

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Celine LeDoux

French & Communication Studies
(concentration in Integrated Marketing Communication)
+ a minor in Leadership Studies

CLASS
OF
2025



“ Bonjour à tous!

J'espère que vous allez bien et que le semestre se passe bien. I wanted to reach out and tell you that everything is going great in Bordeaux! Classes are going well and I've definitely found my footing as a Lectrice. The group of lecturers that I'm with are amazing, and we are all getting along really well!



Study Abroad: Paris, France
(with NC in Paris Consortium)

I've been able to do a couple day trips to Arcachon and St. Emilion, which was absolutely stunning. We have a break at the end of October and I'll be going to Paris and Reims! Bordeaux is breathtaking and I'm loving life in the city!



[...] Thanks UNCW x UBM exchange! ”



La baie d'Arcachon



Les vignes de Saint-Emilion

BORDEAUX



Place de la Bourse, et le Miroir d'eau

Celine LeDoux

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Heather Curtis

Communication Studies & French (minor)

CLASS
OF
2007

Current position: Director of Sales and Marketing

At Tormach, a US-based manufacturer of CNC machines and robots, [...] [I lead] teams across technical sales, e-commerce, content marketing, training and education.



Further education after UNCW:



Duke University
Certificate, Technical Communications

May 10, 2024 **Medium**
**Heather Curtis Of Tormach On How
We Can Increase Girls' Participation
in Engineering and Robotics**

An Interview With Vanessa Ogle

Heather Curtis

COASTAL ENGINEERING

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Colby Lyon

Coastal Engineering & French

CLASS
OF
2024

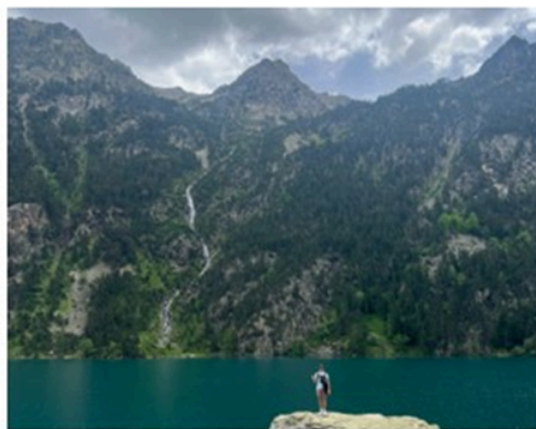
Why did you study French?

To explore new cultures, travel the world and expand my horizons.

What do you do now?

I am currently continuing my education at UNCW, getting my masters in Marine Science. I plan on graduating in 2026. After that I plan on working a seasonal job of some sort in France, possibly on a ski mountain in the Alps or at a hostel in the Basque region. After that I plan on starting my career in coastal engineering working in the dredging industry or at a private firm doing coastal resilience.

Anything else you'd like to share?



In my last year of undergraduate studies, I also did a DIS with Dr. Spieser-Landes titled "Les Jeux Olympiques de surf de 2024 à Tahiti et leur impact sur l'économie, la culture et l'environnement de l'île"!



Study Abroad: Pau, France



After my study abroad I backpacked around France for about 3 months which influenced me to add French as a major and continue studying the language and culture. Studying abroad changed my path of life completely, it encouraged me to explore other parts of the world I would have never truly known about. Now, when I retire, I plan on living in France.



Colby Lyon

COMPUTER SCIENCE

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Jonathan Gengler

Computer Science & French (minor)

CLASS
OF
2002



Current employment:

I've been a software engineer for the past 13 years, working for Epsilon.

What is Epsilon?

We are a global advertising and marketing technology company positioned at the center of Publicis Groupe, a French multinational advertising and public relations company, headquartered in Paris.



Picture: "ECA2 Turns Publicis Headquarters Into Nighttime Spectacle on the Champs Elysées" (InPark Magazine)



Jonathan Gengler

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

DeVante Pickering

Computer Science & French (minor)

CLASS
OF
2017



Since 2015, I've dedicated my career to solving complex problems in the technology industry. My journey in technology began at UNCW, where I worked at an ed-tech startup modernizing The Universal Writing Continuum, an educational tool aimed at improving student performance from K-12.

I honed my skills further at Wells Fargo as a member of their Early Talent Program and continued my professional development at Barings (a subsidiary of Mass Mutual) and Ally Financial.

Currently, I work at A Cultivated Mindset, where I provide custom solutions for clients, and I also lead the technical strategy at Disctopia, where we are building a next-generation streaming platform for content creators.

A CULTIVATED MINDSET

DISCTOPIA

I am proud that my UNCW degree includes a minor in French!

Source:  Sessionize

Devante Pickering

CREATIVE WRITING

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Ireland Headrick

CLASS
OF
2020

French and Creative Writing

Why did you study French?

I took Dr. Juall's 102 class and never looked back. I love the cadence and the structure of French, and I find the cultures of France and the francophone world endlessly fascinating.

What do you do now?

I am a content writer at N2, a magazine publishing company headquartered in Wilmington, NC. Because I was hired during the pandemic, my position is fully remote, which hopefully means I will be able to move to France and do all of my writing from there! I miss my French classes and professors already; I am maintaining my fluency by reading novels and watching French TV shows on Netflix. Because I currently live outside of DC, once the Alliance Française of Washington can safely offer in-person coursework again, I plan on enrolling in some conversation classes!



Study Abroad: Paris, France

UPDATE: Bonjour Dr. Juall,

I recently revisited my honors thesis from 2020 and was amazed, four years later, at just how comprehensive and interesting it was. It was such a rewarding experience to take on such a large academic challenge and see it through, and I know I couldn't have done it without your support and guidance. Since graduating from UNCW in 2020, I've lived in DC for one year and New York City for three. I've been able to visit France twice—once last year, on an amazing road trip from Marseille to Nice, and once this year, for a wedding in Oppède. The travels prompted me to take a refresher course in Brooklyn, and I'm hoping to take another in Paris next year.

I hope you're doing well at UNCW. It was a pleasure taking so many classes with you as a student, and I'll always be thankful for how you encouraged me to pursue French as a major, not just a minor. The experience made me a much more confident, capable communicator, and it deepened my appreciation and love for language.

Wishing you well in your teaching and research!

Best,
Ireland

Ireland Headrick

Vasilios Moschouris

French and Creative Writing

Why did you study French?

I very quickly fell in love with the process of learning the language, both its structure and phonetics, as well as its history and how it has impacted the world. As someone who works with language for a living, learning French was an incredibly rewarding and refreshing way to engage with the written and spoken word in a very different way than I was used to in the Creative Writing world.

What do you do now?

Since finishing my BFA and BA last year, I've returned to UNCW to pursue my Master's degree in Creative Writing. Most recently, I was added to the reading staff of *The Adroit Journal*, one of modern literature's premier literary magazines.

Anything else you would like to share?

I loved every minute I spent in the French department in undergrad; working with UNCW's French department changed the course of my life. I would be much lesser without the friends, knowledge and experiences that my French studies brought me.

Vasilios Moschouris

CLASS
OF
2020



Study Abroad: Morocco

Faculty-led; I went just before Covid shut the world down. It was an amazing experience and it did wonders for my French speaking ability!

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Tara Slagle

Creative Writing & French

CLASS
OF
2013



Current employment: Senior Content Development Editor at SAGE Publishing

Further studies after UNCW? Master of Science (MS), Publishing

What were some of your experiences before landing the job at Sage?



For WILMA (the Greater Wilmington Business Journal), I wrote articles, conducted interviews, researched events, took photos, performed social media upkeep, etc. Then I moved to New York and had a bunch of different jobs. At the Jennifer De Chiara Literary Agency, I assisted Associate Agent Linda Epstein with reading and responding to queries, reading requested manuscripts, etc. At Saint Martin's Press, I assisted marketing managers with campaigns for titles in the genres of Women's Fiction, Romance, Cookbooks and Craft books. I also worked for DeBartlo & Co, Egmont USA, HarperCollins Publishers, Regan Arts and MPS Limited, acting as the main contact point for a particular higher education publishing customer.



DEBARTLO & CO.
BOOK PUBLICITY & MARKETING



HarperCollins Publishers

Regan
Arts.

MPS Limited

Tara Slagle

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Mason Hamberlin

Creative Writing, with three (3) minors:
French, Psychology & English Literature

CLASS
OF
2018

Current employment: English Instructor
University of Iowa



Past employment: Book Buyer & Manager
Epilogue Books, Brews, & Chocolate
Design, Marketing, & Social Media
Flyleaf Books



Further studies after UNCW: University of Iowa
Master of Fine Arts - MFA, Nonfiction Writers' Workshop

What was one of your highlights at UNCW, related to French?

I worked on a project in which I reviewed relief initiatives by Secours Islamique France (SIF), a nonprofit, and reported to New Tactics, a branch of the Center for Victims of Torture aimed at scoring the effectiveness of NGOs (and in turn, developing newer approaches to relief where old ones fail). This project required corresponding with SIF employees in French, as well as reading and assessing their francophone materials. Research regarding child slavery ("restaveks") in Haiti was conducted through Haitian, French, American news articles.

Mason Hamberlin

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Elly Colwell

French & English, MFA in Creative Writing

CLASS
OF
2017

Why did study French?

I really enjoyed the challenge of learning to communicate with native French speakers. I enjoyed the diversity of the courses offered in the French Department and was thankful for the opportunity to continue my French studies at UNCW.

What did you do after graduation?

I took a lectrice (instructor) position at Université Bordeaux Montaigne where I often used my French skills to navigate daily life and in my classroom when teaching beginner students of English. During my time there I also was introduced to an organization that works with refugees to help them assimilate to life in Bordeaux, and I began teaching intro French courses. That work (along with my other teaching experience at UBM) inspired me to continue teaching. Currently, I volunteer through the Cape Fear Literacy Council to teach ESL courses. Sometimes I get to work with native French speakers there too!



Anything else you'd like to share?

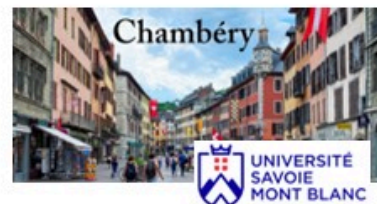
I also used my French skills quite a bit during my pursuit of an MFA in Creative Writing at UNCW. My non-fiction thesis was in part set in France and required some study of French Jewish history. Some of the curiosity for this project stemmed from studies I did with Dr. Barthe on the history of the Mediterranean.

“My French studies have certainly opened unexpected doors for me and it offered me the chance to live abroad after college, an experience that deeply changed me and informed who I am as a person today.”

Elly Colwell



Study Abroad: Chambéry
(Savoie, France)



What do you do now?



I currently manage a local non-profit farm here on College Rd, which ensures our community has access to fresh, chemical-free produce, while empowering local youth.

CRIMINOLOGY

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Maret Ellington

French and Criminology (plus a minor in Sociology)

CLASS
OF
2021

Why did you study French?

I started taking French in high school & fell in love with it! I wanted to keep learning and developing my skills so that I could become fluent and use it in my future endeavors. It was easy to keep taking classes at UNCW too because all the French professors are incredible, and each class is so fun and interactive!

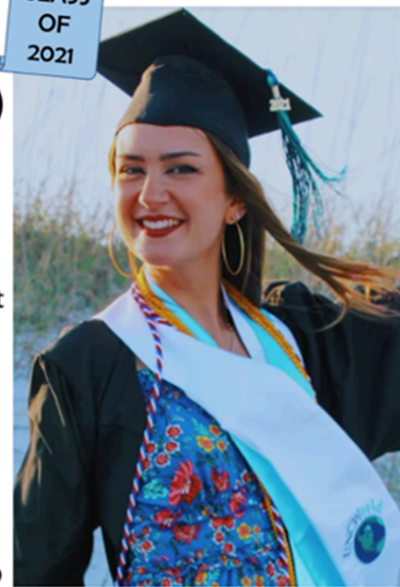
What do you do now?

I am currently attending NC State for a Master's in Social Work, and I am interning in a school within the Durham Public School System this year for my program. I also am working through an online tutoring system to tutor students in French to maintain my own skills and help others grow in theirs!

Is there anything else you would like to share?

In my senior year, I completed an Honors Thesis in French with Dr. Spieser-Landes and while it was a great challenge, it was an incredible experience that really helped me to grow in my abilities and communicate in French. I highly recommend looking into this departmental honors project if you have a specific area of interest in French culture!!

UPDATE: I've officially graduated from NC State with my Master's in Social Work! [...] I'm also very excited that I've accepted a position at Three Oaks Behavioral Health and Wellness as a clinical outpatient psychotherapist! Thankful is an understatement.



Study Abroad: Spring Break "Cruising the Cultures of the Mediterranean"
(through the UNCW Honors College)

Maret Ellington

ENGLISH

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Stephanie Leroy

English and French

CLASS
OF
1997



Why did you study French?

I love languages and started studying French in middle school. At the time, I felt some pressure that French was not as practical a language to study as Spanish and that choosing a language to study was a big decision and commitment. I chose French because I enjoyed the sound of the language and was interested in learning more about the countries and regions in the world where French is spoken. (Not that I have anything against Spanish—I have since learned Spanish too!) I double-majored in French and English and was able to compare literatures and movements between the francophone and anglophone worlds.

What do you do now?

I am the program director at a post-graduate fellowship organization called Princeton in Africa (www.princetonin africa.org). While I studied French more out of personal interest than due to professional aspirations, I feel my French degree and experience helped get me hired for this job. I have used my French traveling to visit host organizations in Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Senegal, Gabon, Rwanda and most recently this past March, Madagascar. My French skills have allowed me to navigate international travel and make personal connections with people that otherwise I would have not been able to communicate with. These language skills have been helpful not only in a business setting, but in chatting with taxi drivers, fruit vendors, business people waiting at elevators, etc. and learning about the culture and daily lives of people around the African continent.

Study Abroad: Bordeaux, France

I would highly recommend study abroad to any student considering it. I enjoyed my studies in France but would also encourage students to think about locations where they can improve their French language skills that are a little less traditional, such as francophone West Africa.

Stephanie also says:

My piece of advice for students working on their French would be to pursue the language as much as you can, study abroad if possible, connect with francophone communities, find people to speak French with that you can talk about everyday life with and, above all, don't be afraid to make mistakes.

Stephanie Leroy

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Robyn Smith

English Literature & French

CLASS
OF
2018



Why did you study French at UNCW?

I ended up in French a bit by accident, but the more I studied, the more I enjoyed learning about French language and culture!

What do you do now?

I'm the Student Services Coordinator in the Honors College at UNCW. Major accomplishments since graduating have been getting my Master of Arts in English and co-leading a study abroad to Paris and Berlin in 2019. I don't have to use French for my job, but it does come in handy to bond with prospective families or local businesses that have francophone roots.

Study Abroad: - Paris, France
- Reykjavik, Iceland - Berlin, Germany

Robyn Smith

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Liz Hatfield

CLASS
OF
2020

French and English Literary Studies

Why did you study French?

To create opportunities to immerse myself in a different culture and broaden my worldview.

What do you do now?

I am using my French in daily life while teaching English as a Lectrice d'anglais at the University of Bordeaux (Université Bordeaux Montaigne)!



Study Abroad: Strasbourg, France
(through IFE – Internships in Francophone Europe/Institute for Field Education)



“

UPDATE:

Je suis actuellement Maître de langue à l'INSPÉ de Strasbourg et j'adore travailler avec les futurs profs ! J'ai un peu de nostalgie pour Bordeaux, mais je me régale d'être de retour à Strasbourg.

”

Liz Hatfield

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Mason Hamberlin

Creative Writing, with three (3) minors:
French, Psychology & English Literature

CLASS
OF
2018

Current employment: English Instructor
University of Iowa



Past employment: Book Buyer & Manager
Epilogue Books, Brews, & Chocolate
Design, Marketing, & Social Media
Flyleaf Books



Further studies after UNCW: University of Iowa

Master of Fine Arts - MFA, Nonfiction Writers' Workshop

What was one of your highlights at UNCW, related to French?

I worked on a project in which I reviewed relief initiatives by Secours Islamique France (SIF), a nonprofit, and reported to New Tactics, a branch of the Center for Victims of Torture aimed at scoring the effectiveness of NGOs (and in turn, developing newer approaches to relief where old ones fail). This project required corresponding with SIF employees in French, as well as reading and assessing their francophone materials. Research regarding child slavery ("restaveks") in Haiti was conducted through Haitian, French, American news articles.

Mason Hamberlin

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Amanda Smith

French & English (minor)

Why did you study French?

To better understand my great-grandparents' culture and a deep love of learning languages.

What do you do now?

I have completed an apprenticeship and I am now a cake decorator. I use my French to speak with some customers and use my knowledge of

French culture to try to replicate some of their delicious desserts.

Fun fact: my French also came in handy when I had to read some ingredients labels and the English ones were damaged in shipping!

Anything else you'd like to share?

The French program at UNCW and the professors there will always be a part of some of my most cherished memories.

Amanda Smith

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Elly Colwell

French & English, MFA in Creative Writing

CLASS
OF
2017

Why did study French?

I really enjoyed the challenge of learning to communicate with native French speakers. I enjoyed the diversity of the courses offered in the French Department and was thankful for the opportunity to continue my French studies at UNCW.

What did you do after graduation?

I took a lectrice (instructor) position at Université Bordeaux Montaigne where I often used my French skills to navigate daily life and in my classroom when teaching beginner students of English. During my time there I also was introduced to an organization that works with refugees to help them assimilate to life in Bordeaux, and I began teaching intro French courses. That work (along with my other teaching experience at UBM) inspired me to continue teaching. Currently, I volunteer through the Cape Fear Literacy Council to teach ESL courses. Sometimes I get to work with native French speakers there too!



Anything else you'd like to share?

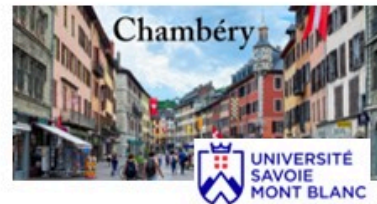
I also used my French skills quite a bit during my pursuit of an MFA in Creative Writing at UNCW. My non-fiction thesis was in part set in France and required some study of French Jewish history. Some of the curiosity for this project stemmed from studies I did with Dr. Barthe on the history of the Mediterranean.

“My French studies have certainly opened unexpected doors for me and it offered me the chance to live abroad after college, an experience that deeply changed me and informed who I am as a person today.”

Elly Colwell



Study Abroad: Chambéry
(Savoie, France)



What do you do now?



I currently manage a local non-profit farm here on College Rd, which ensures our community has access to fresh, chemical-free produce, while empowering local youth.

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

PJ Lapaire

Professeur de français Émérite à UNCW

Cher PJ, de quelle année à quelle année as-tu enseigné parmi nous?

De 1985 à 2019!

Et quels sont tes meilleurs souvenirs de tes années d'enseignement?

Les étudiants! Et aussi les autres profs de français à UNCW! J'ai toujours beaucoup aimé les discussions avec les étudiants dans mon bureau.

Sur quoi ont porté tes recherches?

J'ai publié des articles sur le poète Jules Supervielle, Baudelaire, le théâtre existentialiste, Camus, Sartre, Montherlant, les guerres coloniales françaises (Indochine, Algérie), le rock français, et autres.

Que fais-tu maintenant que tu es à la retraite?

Je voyage, je lis beaucoup... Tout très bien!

Quels conseils aurais-tu pour nos étudiant.e.s?

Voyagez à l'étranger, et parlez, parlez, parlez, français!!! Il faut toujours parler, la pratique rend parfait/e!

Quel a été ton parcours universitaire?

- Licence (B.A.) et Maîtrise en anglais (Université de Perpignan/Montpellier)
- Maîtrise et doctorat en littérature française de Chapel Hill



Prof. Lapaire en pleine action.



PJ Lapaire

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Melissa Elefante DuMond

Environmental Studies, Physics & French

CLASS
OF
1999

Current Employment

- California High-Speed Train Authority:
Director of Planning and Integration

Past Employment

- ARCADIS (an international consulting and engineering firm)
Environmental Planner

Studies after UNCW

- Master of Public Administration (MPA), NC State University
- Master of National Resources (MNR), NC State University
- AICP (American Institute of Certified Planners)



Source:



Melissa says: "As an environmental professional, you wear many different hats. [...] [Through my studies at UNCW], I got experience in everything from sampling to public relations."

Source: University of North Carolina Wilmington **magazine**

Melissa Elefante DuMond

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Casey Hastings

French and Environmental Studies



Why did you study French?

Originally I chose French in High School to be different from my friends. At UNCW I only intended to take it for the language credit and move on, but my experience in in that first course changed everything. I noticed a group of very knowledgeable, kind, and supportive faculty in the program that genuinely enjoyed seeing students develop their French skills. It was just a comfortable place to be for me, and it allowed me to learn French better because of that comfort level.

Study Abroad: Paris, France
(through the NC in Paris Consortium)

What do you do now?

I am currently serving in the Army, with French as an official skill identifier in my record. Prior to joining the Army, I was working for Louis Vuitton as a Team Manager for their North American contact center. My team received all French-speaking communication from clients in North America (mostly Canadian, but also any francophones in the US who preferred to communicate in French). I spoke French to some extent every day while working with that team, including handling escalated situations and speaking with clients in French. My French language skills set me apart from my peers in this environment, especially considering the heritage of the company. I was able to make more meaningful connections with the native French speakers in the company, including those at very high levels in Paris and NY. I had no previous luxury fashion experience to bring to the company, they hired me solely because I could speak French.



Anything else you would like to share?

TAPIF - Do it! This was one of the most important career decisions I ever made, and the experience of living and working in France as an employee of their national education system is so incredibly rewarding. This was a job that didn't feel like a job; I was genuinely happy to wake up every morning and do what I was doing!

Teaching Assistant Program in
FRANCE

Casey Hastings

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Hannah Whitaker

Marine Biology, Environmental Sciences & French

After graduation, I took a break in my studies in order to do hurricane relief. I am now a Master's student at Hawai'i Pacific University, in their sclerochronology lab. Our research focuses on unraveling the ocean's past, and addressing how changes in our ocean influence the functioning of precious coastal ecosystems. My own Master's thesis examines the ways in which tropical corals record the details of thermal stress events in their skeletons.

CLASS
OF
2019



THE HPU SCLERO LAB



UPDATE:



Doctoral Student

The University of Western Australia

PhD, Oceanography, Chemical and Physical

Hannah Whitaker

EXERCISE SCIENCE

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Vincent Tetreault



Exercise Science & French (minor)

CLASS
OF
2022

You are a native speaker of French from Québec –why did you take upper-division French classes at UNCW?

I initially met students taking upper-division courses, as well as the Faculty advisor to the French Club, through the French Club. It made me realize that the French department at UNCW is filled with wonderful teachers and students, and since I wanted to polish my writing, I decided to go for it. I really enjoyed my time taking French classes at UNCW! In addition to improving my writing abilities, from a cultural exchange point of view, it also allowed me to learn different perspectives from other francophone cultures. Merci beaucoup!

What do you do now?

Je travaille dans une clinique de physiothérapie (*Physical Therapy Technician*) avec le but de poser bientôt ma candidature à plusieurs écoles de physiothérapie.



Vincent Tetreault

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Kaitlyn Brown

Exercise Science & French (minor)

CLASS
OF
2016

Current employment: Certified Physician Assistant
American Family Care

Further studies after UNCW? South College
Masters, Physician Assistant



“ I am passionate about educating patients on their conditions in order to facilitate shared decision-making and improve patient outcomes. Additional strengths include adapting quickly in challenging and fast-paced environments and communicating with LGBTQIA+ patient populations. ”

Kaitlyn Brown

FILM STUDIES

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Matthew Johnson

Film Studies and French

CLASS
OF
2018

Why did you study French?

I wanted to broaden my understanding of the world and sharpen my ability to grasp nuances of meaning in French cinema.

What do you do now?

A native to North Carolina, I now live in New Zealand, working on a Master's Degree in Film Studies at the Victory University of Wellington, NZ. My knowledge of the French language is greatly helping me understand French impressionist theorists such as Germaine Dulac, Jean et Marie Epstein, René Clair and Louis Delluc. My goal is to pursue a career in academic Film Studies.



UPDATE: Matthew now works in the Archives department at Thalian Hall Center for the Performing Arts here in Wilmington! As an independent scholar, he currently serves as the Citation Ethics Editor for *Film Matters* and regularly publishes scholarly book reviews.

Matthew Johnson

Itorobong Etim-Barbosa (Tito)

CLASS
OF
2018

Film Studies and French

What do you do now?

After graduation I worked as a Post Production Coordinator at an Emmy award-winning film and television studio in Raleigh, as a liaison between production, network contacts, executive producers and the post production team. I am currently employed full-time as a Visual Producer, also in the Raleigh area.



Anything notable with French?

I wrote, produced, directed and acted in *Barriers*, which is a short film about a French immigrant to America struggling with the language barrier!

Itorobong Etim-Barbosa (Tito)

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Ryan Trimble

Film Studies and French

CLASS
OF
2013



Why did you study French?

When I was a child, I found the most fascinating book imaginable: my mother's French textbook from college ("Allons-y!") and the spark was lit within me. I dabbled in the language over the years, learning phrases where I could, memorizing Disney songs in French, collecting the French versions of maps made available at theme parks... When I was in high school, podcasts burst onto the scene. With the combination of listening and reading, I went from simply hoping to learn the language one day to placing into a 300-level class right out of high school.

What do you do now?

I am currently a video reporter for the entertainment website CBR.com, but I have taught French for years –notably teaching at the Lycée Français de Chicago. I also performed with a bilingual French-English comedy group called FROGPROV at the Chicago theater iO; I have done translation work for immigration services; published a (French-themed) novella titled *Fragments from 5th Avenue*; and, right out of college, worked for local Wilmington TV channels, for which my IFE internship prepared me immensely.

Study Abroad: Paris, France
(through IFE – Internships in Francophone Europe/Institute for Field Education)



Can you please expand on this?

Oh yes. I worked for the French TV show "Le Grand Journal," a late-night news and entertainment program; it taught me exactly how a television program is put together from top to bottom. We started every day with a meeting about what the day's show would entail. Sometimes, we started with nothing, but always at the end of the day, we had two hours of content to air. And I did talk my way into being on air a number of times! I am proud to have been the very first UNCW student to take part in IFE. It is a fantastic program that pairs students with an internship that would help further their career goals.

Ryan Trimble

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Melanie Crete

Film Studies and French

CLASS
OF
2016



Why did you study French?

I have always loved the sound of people speaking French and I am fascinated by the culture, especially after visiting France when I was 18. My paternal grandfather is Canadian, and I have always wanted to learn so I could talk to him in French as well. I think that everyone should learn at least one language outside of their native tongue, as well as the culture and history surrounding that language.

What do you do now?

I am currently the Office Manager for the Lighting & Grip Department at EUE/Screen Gems Studios here in Wilmington, NC. I manage the logistics of the lighting and grip rental equipment for film and television productions. I have held a few different positions after graduating from UNCW, one of my favorites having been as a Visitor Experience Associate for the North Carolina Museum of Art. I was able to practice some French helping the occasional French tourists. I also worked for the Merchandise department at PNC Arena for the Carolina Hurricanes where I was awarded the Distinguished Honors Award for the 2017-2018 season. I enjoyed getting to practice my French a little with Canadian hockey fans that would come down for a game. I aspire to further my career in the film industry and to keep practicing French, whether it be with the occasional vendor, client, or family member.

UPDATE:



Lighting Rental Coordinator

Sep 2023 - Sep 2025 · 2 yrs 1 mo



Lighting Operations Manager

Sep 2025 - Present · 2 mos



CINESPACE
STUDIOS

Melanie Crete

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Gigi Raines

Film Studies & French (+ a minor in Theater)

What do you know now?

I work for Life Out Loud Films, a production company that also provides production support and consulting services for both film and commercials.

Before that, some highlights include: I played Tom Hanks and Catherine Keener's daughter in the Oscar nominated film CAPTAIN PHILLIPS; I've worked on the major studio productions THE JUDGE, UNFINISHED BUSINESS, THE FORGER, AMERICAN HUSTLE in various capacities.



CLASS
OF
2009

Study Abroad: Dijon, France



How would you say did your French studies advance your career?

They helped in a myriad of ways! In almost every film I've been in or worked on, someone in the crew or actor has been to France, studied French or is from France. Having French in my arsenal has been invaluable form of striking up conversation and making a connection with someone. Also, my experience studying abroad, and doing an internship with ABB Reportages forced me to step outside my comfort level... It's the only way to get your foot in the door in this business and now I am pretty much fearless because of my experience in Dijon.



Gigi Raines

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Tara Lyman-Dobson

Film Studies & French

Current employment:

Assistant Set Designer on the Disney+ series *Weird but True* season 3 at Steve Rotfeld Productions Inc. 



Any further studies after UNCW?

 The George Washington University
Masters of Fine Arts, Production Design 2019

Activities and societies while at :

French Club Secretary 2012-2014, Flicker Film Society 2012-2014

CLASS
OF
2015



Study Abroad: Strasbourg, France



Tara Lyman-Dobson

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Fiona Costello

Film Studies & French (minor)

CLASS
OF
2021



Why did you study French?

I joined French club in high school and continued to take French all through high school and later college. I wanted to be bilingual, and I hope one day to be trilingual. I loved learning how to think differently and challenge myself in a way that no other field of study does. Now, post-graduation, I subscribed to a couple of French news outlets and I love it that I am still able to watch French movies!

What do you do now?

I do Marketing for the City of Wilmington!

Study Abroad:

I would have, if not for the pandemic. If I could go back and do college again, I would have studied abroad –and double majored in Film Studies and French.

Fiona Costello

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Morgan Edwards

Film Studies & French

CLASS
OF
2021

Why did you study French?

France's history was something I always thought was interesting, so I decided to take French as a language in high school. I planned on minoring in it in college, but after taking a couple French classes my freshmen year at UNCW, I decided to switch to a major. I met so many amazing professors and friends in the French department, and I'm forever grateful for the time I spent there.

What do you do now?

I work for INSP in Charlotte, NC as an assistant to the VP of Original Scripted Programming. We just finished production on our first original series. I watch French films to keep up with the language!

What are some highlights of your undergraduate years?

There are so many! I was a very active member of the French Club, Flicker Film Society and UNCW Beekeepers. I did a Directed Independent Study (DIS) on filmmakers Marc Caro and Jean-Pierre Jeunet with Dr. Scatton-Tessier; participated in the Volunteer Language Partner led by OIP (Office of International Programs), where I spoke with teachers from Uzbekistan to help them practice speaking English; and, during the summer of 2019, I studied abroad through the UNCW Faculty-Led program in Morocco with Dr. Barthe where we attended classes at the Université Internationale de Rabat. We stayed with host families in the capital city of Rabat and traveled around Morocco on the weekends. This immersive program gave me the opportunity to learn about different cultures and religions as well as the ability to practice French in a real-world setting!



Study Abroad: Rabat,
Morocco

Morgan Edwards

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Charlotte Walker

Film Studies & French (minor)

CLASS
OF
2022



Why did you study French?

I studied French in high school and decided to continue through college. I took World and French Cinema classes in my major and loved when my two areas of study meshed together. Understanding the films past solely reading subtitles was very helpful for me.

What do you do now?

I work as a videographer and video editor at Bon's Eye Marketing in Downtown Wilmington. I have also done some side projects with Honey Head Films and Wallaby Film. My biggest accomplishment so far has been getting hired in the exact position I wanted before I had graduated from UNCW. I have continued to grow and learn so much while being in my position and still love my job almost two years later. I've gotten to work with national franchises creating video content for social media, advertisements, and brand overview webinars that I produce mainly on my own. I don't use French in my job, but the discipline and dedication to learning a language is something that I carry with me through almost everything that I do. I don't have any set goals for the future but I am excited to see where I go!

Is there anything else you'd like to share?

I always love throwing out French words and phrases that I know to my friends and family. (I tell everyone that cul de sac means "ass of the bag" –thanks for that, Prof. Spieser-Landes!)

Charlotte Walker

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Taylor Clarkin

Film Studies & French (+ a Business minor)

CLASS
OF
2022

What do you do now?

I'm a Communications Administrative Associate for the Reading Musical Foundation, which has been proudly advancing and advocating for music education in Berks County, PA, since 1926. We invest more than \$200,000 each year in scholarships for Berks County student musicians!



What other professional experiences have you had?

I've worked as an in-house Production Assistant for Simone Associates, ensuring the smooth running of the studio. I also assisted the Costume Department in prepping hundreds of garments for the Tom James Clothing fall collection photoshoot. While a student at UNCW, I also interned at the Anderson Group and worked for Take One Productions as well as MAKE/FILMS.



Study Abroad: Paris, France
(NC in Paris Consortium)

Can you name one highlight of your Study Abroad experience?

Yes, volunteering for the disaster and humanitarian relief organization "L'un est l'autre" through the partnership the NC in Paris Consortium Program has with France Bénévolat. I packaged and distributed hot meals.



Taylor Clarkin

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Nathalie Fortunel

Film Studies & French (minor)

CLASS
OF
2014



Current position:

VFX Manager Original TV Series

NETFLIX

Selected previous positions held:

Visual Effects Assistant Coordinator

A Wrinkle in Time (2018), Director: Ava Duvernay

Walt Disney Pictures



Study Abroad: Paris, France
(with NC in Paris Consortium)



Visual Effects Staff Coordinator | Office of Mimi Steele - VFX Director

Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures Production

Projects included, but not limited to: Pete's Dragon (2016), Beauty and the Beast (2017),

A Wrinkle in Time (2018) and Mary Poppins Returns (2018).



Visual Effects Production Assistant

Alice in Wonderland: Through the Looking Glass (2016), Director: James Bobin

Walt Disney Pictures

Visual Effects Production Assistant

Fury (2014), Director: David Ayer

Sony Pictures Entertainment/Columbia Pictures



Nathalie Fortunel

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Elizabeth (Liz) Cherry

French & Sociology (+ a minor in Film Studies)

Current position:

Professor of Sociology at Manhattanville University



CLASS
OF
1999



How have you used French at work or in your life?

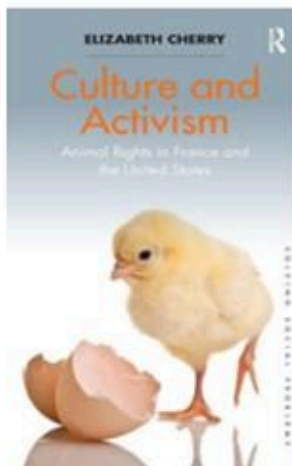
I have used my French major quite a bit in my career.

Study Abroad: Caen, France

In grad school, I got to work as a teaching assistant on a summer study abroad program in Avignon. Then I spent a year in France conducting ethnographic research (*en français, bien sûr*) for my dissertation, which led to my first book –about animal rights activism in France and the United States).

I also got to teach my own study abroad class in Paris one summer at my current institution.

I still visit France as often as possible, as I still have many friends from my time studying abroad!



Elizabeth (Liz) Cherry

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Elizabeth (Liz) Cherry

French & Sociology (+ a minor in Film Studies)

Current position:

Professor of Sociology at Manhattanville University



CLASS
OF
1999



Study Abroad: Caen, France

In last week's TTAT, we got to learn about how important French has been for your career. But why did you learn French in the first place?

I took French in high school and attended the North Carolina Governor's School for French. I specifically came to UNCW to study marine biology, and then that quickly changed. But I definitely knew I wanted to major in French. Coming from a small, rural town in eastern North Carolina, I loved how studying French language, literature, and cinema allowed me to virtually travel (and then literally travel when I took my junior year abroad at Université de Caen in Normandy).



**Governor's School
of North Carolina**



Elizabeth (Liz) Cherry

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Elizabeth (Liz) Cherry

French & Sociology (+ a minor in Film Studies)

Current position:

Professor of Sociology at Manhattanville University



CLASS
OF
1999



These past two weeks, we've learned about how study abroad shaped your life, and about how central to your job as a researcher French has been. Anything else you'd like to share?

Study Abroad: Caen, France

Je n'ai que des bons souvenirs! I truly loved the department –and still do! I mean, obviously I loved undergrad, as I chose to stay in school forever, haha. In addition to majoring in French, I worked in the department as a work-study student for several years, which also allowed me to get to know the professors better—including professors of other languages. I took courses with Ritt Deitz (now at Wisconsin), Jim McNab, Katia Campbell, and PJ Lapaire. I then came back from studying abroad and took a couple of semesters of German (is Raymond Burt still around?) I just loved how the department was so kind, and supportive, and treated us students like a little family.



Le Mémorial de Caen (Musée de la 2ème Guerre Mondiale)

Elizabeth (Liz) Cherry

FRENCH

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Jessica Farmer

B.A. in French

CLASS
OF
2018

Why did you study French?

I loved the program and the way it was set up.

What do you do now?

I'm a script supervisor on feature films in Atlanta. I also act and teach French to private clients on the side. My proficiency in French has allowed me to write for a travel site, and helps me learn new languages (currently, Italian) when I'm on set.



Jessica Farmer

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

David Koebley

B.A. in French

CLASS
OF
2004



Why did you study French?

I fell in love with the language and culture in high school and was always intrigued by people who speak multiple languages, so it became a passion of mine.

What do you do now?



Study Abroad: Marseille, France

I am now the National Sales Manager for Familia Zuccardi, a wine-making family from Argentina, so I travel the US representing the family's 2 wineries: Bodega Santa Julia, and Zuccardi Valle de Uco. I've been able to use my French pretty often working in the wine business, especially when I was selling French wines.

Because of my strong French language foundation, I was able to learn to speak Spanish very quickly, which I use now daily while working with an Argentine family. The gift of Language opens so many doors; personally, being able to connect with people you otherwise wouldn't be able to connect with, and professionally it has allowed me to work in multi-national and multi-cultural settings.

“Language [...] really does make life more beautiful.”

David Koebley

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Brian Gardner

B.A. in French

So incredibly thankful to [University of North Carolina Wilmington](#)! Today I graduated with a BA in French. Next step in the journey is 🌸 [University of New Orleans](#) 🌸

Félicitations Brian!! Tu le mérites! Bonne chance à l'université de la Nouvelle Orléans! 😊

Félicitations Bryan!! Bonne chance à toi à l'université de la Nouvelle Orléans!

Ouais! Félicitations Brian! Tu nous manques déjà à l'UNCW! Bonne chance!



Brian is now a Graduate Student at the University of New Orleans, with the career goal of teaching French!

Brian Gardner

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Anna Ross Simpson

French B.A.

Why did study French?

I decided to study French because I really enjoyed how interdisciplinary it was. I had the opportunity to learn a language as well as learn about world affairs and history which I thought was fascinating! My French teacher and professors throughout high school and college were also very influential as they were super encouraging of the language and the process to learn it.

What do you do now?

I am currently teaching English in France, so I can definitely say I use the language everyday, whether in work or life! In the near future/ future I hope to continue studying the language at graduate school and one day teach in a lycée in Canada.

Anything else you'd like to share?

Just keep trying!



Study Abroad: Rabat, Morocco

teach in france

Anna Ross Simpson

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Nicole Miller

French B.A.

CLASS
OF
1991

Bonjour Madame, où habitez-vous à présent?

J'habite au Luxembourg!



Can you please tell us about your career path after graduation?

Yes, absolutely! Fresh out of college, I worked for a year as a Project Manager for *A la française*, in Seattle. Then after a year as Assistant Coordinator of the French Undergraduate Program for the University of Washington, still in Seattle, I moved to France. There, I became a Training Specialist first for the Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Nantes St Nazaire, then for the Chambre de Commerce de la Mayenne in Laval. I also worked as a Consultant in cross-cultural communication and negotiation. Since 2010, however, I've worked for Amazon. Between 2013 and 2015, I was the Regional Learning Manager for France. I subsequently held a variety of positions, ranging from EU FC Learning Program Manager to Senior Program Manager (Employee Development), Senior Learning Business Partner...

In order to get there, did you further your education in any way?

I did! I then graduated with an MA in Romance Linguistics and another MA in English, TOESL, from the University of Washington.

What is your current role at Amazon?

I am the Head of EU Talent Development for Amazon Business.



UNIVERSITY of
WASHINGTON

Nicole Miller

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Mariana Molina

B.A. in French

CLASS
OF
2001



Current position: President & Founder of [Bella Vista Development Group](#)

After graduation, Mariana earned a J.D. from North Carolina Central University School of Law and an LL.M. in real estate law from John Marshall Law School. She then joined the real estate practice group of one of Chicago's most prestigious law firms where she practiced transactional real estate law [...].

Mariana eventually returned to North Carolina and served as General Counsel for her husband's Cary-based commercial real estate development company, Craig Davis Properties, Inc. ("CDP"). While working for CDP, Mariana developed a passion for the development aspect of the business and in 2019, she partnered with Craig and launched Bella Vista Development Group ("Bella Vista").

Bella Vista is a HUB-certified real estate development company that is dedicated to promoting the advancement of women in the commercial real estate industry. By partnering with women-led businesses throughout the development process, Bella Vista strives to make the commercial development industry more inclusive, while delivering development projects that are creative, financially sound and hold long-term significance in the community.

Source: 

Mariana Molina

FRENCH WITH TEACHING LICENSURE

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Caroline Hocutt

B.A. in French with Teaching Licensure



MOOREVILLE HIGH SCHOOL World Languages Teacher
French



American Association of Teachers of French: current Secretary of the NC Chapter

CLASS
OF
2015



When not at work, I enjoy gardening, cooking, and exploring francophone arts and media. I spend my summers supporting students as they navigate an immersive learning experience in Rennes, France.

Caroline Hocutt

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Victoria Leigh Register (Cooper)

B.A. in French with Teaching Licensure

CLASS
OF
2018



Why did you study French?

I chose to study French because when I was in my early 20s I had the wonderful blessing of being able to live in France and Switzerland for almost 2 years as a missionary for my church. I fell in love with the culture, the people, and the language. When I came home to the USA, I knew I wanted to share my passion for French with others and so I became a teacher. Which in learning to teach the French language I became even more enthralled!

I must add that I love the French Department at UNCW! They are the best and helped me develop a lifelong passion for learning and teaching. Also, when I attended UNCW my last name was Cooper –I've been married for almost a year now and it's the best decision outside of learning French that I've ever made!

What do you do now?

After graduation I taught French for 2 years at McDougale Middle School in Chapel Hill. I currently teach Science at West Lee Middle School in Sanford, NC, where I am trying to start a French Club to help promote interest and learning languages at a younger age.

Victoria Leigh Register (Cooper)

Alec Fontaine

CLASS
OF
2016

French and Teaching Licensure

Why did you study French?

Interest in world languages and cultures. Studying in this department has opened many unexpected doors for me and many of my professors in Leutze hall have been great inspirations in my life. Their wisdom continues to inform the decisions I make and the way I understand the world.

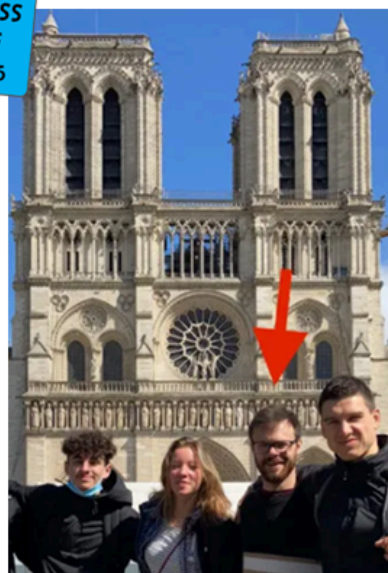
What do you do now?

After two years spent teaching English, one year in Nantes and one year in Paris, I am now a second-year Master's student in Strasbourg ("Sciences du Langage"). J'adore carrément la région! I use French every day to live, work, and socialize. Too many future aspirations to list, but I hope to stay in France/ Europe and continue to build my life here.

Anything notable about your Study Abroad experience?

Yes, I lived with a French family with whom I remain in close contact after 6 years.

Alec Fontaine



Study Abroad: Paris, France
(through the NC Consortium in Paris)

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Lyndsay Richardson Lowdermilk

B.A. in French with Teaching Licensure

Why did you study French?

I am passionate about language learning!

What do you do now?

I received my Masters in French language and literature from NCSU. I then spent a year teaching French at the high school level in Raleigh and I am currently an English language assistant in Laval, France.

Study Abroad: Chambéry, France
(capitale de la Savoie, dans les Alpes!)

Teaching Assistant Program in
FRANCE



UPDATE:



French Teacher
Wakefield High School

To read Lyndsay's full interview, go to:
<https://thehowler.org>

Q: What do you like to do after school?

A: Yoga, crocheting, reading French books, watching French shows on Netflix, [and] camping/hiking.

Q: What is your advice for students taking your class(es)?

A: Don't be afraid to make mistakes! Mistakes are important in the language learning process. Utilize all the cool technology resources we have nowadays such as Duolingo, etc.

Lyndsay Richardson Lowdermilk

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Megan Townsend

French & Teaching Licensure

Studying French has enriched my life! My French studies have helped me by providing me with the opportunity to live and work in France; living in France helped me to grow in so many ways professionally and personally. I now teach high school French.



High School Teacher
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
(2011-2015)



High School Teacher
North Carolina Virtual Public School
(2015-2018)



High School Teacher
Wake County Public School System
(2016 - present)



After graduation:
TAPIF in Nancy,
France



Megan Townsend

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Donna McQueen

B.A. in French with Teaching Licensure

CLASS
OF
1994

Why did you learn French?

My love for the language!

What have some of your major accomplishments been since graduating?

“ I just retired, but I taught French and Spanish in middle school; French in high school for 21 years and French at UNCW for 9 years! ”

Any further studies after your B.A. from UNCW?

MA in Romance Languages from Appalachian State University

Bonne retraite!



Study Abroad: Senegal



RÉPUBLIQUE DU SÉNÉGAL



Donna McQueen

GEOLOGY

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Sarah Simpson

Geology and French

CLASS
OF
2012

Degrees obtained after UNCW:



Western University
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Geology w/Planetary Science
2016 – 2020



The University of Glasgow
Master's Degree, Geological and Earth Sciences/Geosciences
2013 – 2015

Thesis title: Geochemical and mineralogical studies of meteorite impact-generated hydrothermal systems on Earth and tracing sources of water: observations from the Rochechouart impact structure, France.



Selected experience as a Graduate Student:



Canadian Space Agency | Agence spatiale canadienne

Featured award/scholarship:

Planetary Studies Foundation conference travel award for the 77th Annual Meeting of the Meteoritical Society in Casablanca, Morocco.

Sarah Simpson

HISTORY

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Jillian Kruse

History and French

CLASS
OF
2009

Why did you study French?

I initially took French because I needed to fulfill the language requirement and wanted to study abroad. Before I went to college my French classes had been focused mostly on grammar and I didn't enjoy them. Once I got to UNCW, however, I found that there was more to studying French than that. I found I could also study history, literature and culture through French and I loved it.

What do you do now?

I am currently a first-year PhD student in the Art History joint program at Case Western Reserve University and the Cleveland Museum of Art where I specialize in 19th-century European art and works on paper.



Study Abroad: Paris, France

After graduating I wasn't really sure what I wanted to do, but Prof. Scatton-Tessier encouraged me to try teaching English in France. I taught English in elementary schools in Brittany for a few years and received a Master's from the Université de Rennes II. I loved living in France and while I initially thought I would remain there, I made a difficult decision to leave to pursue a career working in museums. To that end, I earned a Master's degree in Public History and Cultural Heritage in 2015 and since then I have worked at the National Gallery of Ireland, the Museum of Fine Arts (Boston), the Hood Museum at Dartmouth College, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Last year I decided to return to academia to pursue a PhD, hoping to expand my knowledge of art and to advance my curatorial career.

Since finishing my undergraduate degree at UNCW in 2009, I have used French fairly regularly whether living in France, while conducting research, working on museum projects, or in exchanges with Francophone curators and scholars. Knowing French has offered me so many exciting opportunities and has allowed me to connect with people in ways I never imagined. I will never forget the sigh of relief of a curator from the Musée Rodin in Paris when I welcomed her in French for her research visit to the Philadelphia Museum of Art or the excitement of the first time I held a letter written by Camille Pissarro. French will also play an important role as I move forward and as I continue to pursue a career as a curator. As part of my doctoral degree, I will for instance have the opportunity to work on projects about 19th-century French drawings as well as the art of Edgar Degas during a year-long internship at the Cleveland Museum of Art in my third year.

Jillian Kruse

Brooklyn Crain

History and French

CLASS
OF
2015

Why did you study French?

I had always wanted to travel and learning French seemed like a perfect way to get started on that goal. I am so glad I never stopped pursuing my major in French, as learning French was a steppingstone to learning other languages. It sparked a curiosity in me to continue to learn about other cultures and learn other languages.

What do you do now?

After graduation, I got an amazing job teaching English in South Korea. I stayed there for two years before travelling around South-East Asia for a few months and eventually settling down in Vietnam for another year and a half where I taught English online. In my time teaching English, I learned that education was my passion. When the pandemic hit, I moved out of Vietnam to South Africa and began to pursue a Masters in Secondary Education from UNCW (virtually). I managed to make it back to America this past year and can say one of the things I am most proud of has been gaining my Masters and doing my internship during a pandemic. The experience I gained is invaluable. I was so lucky to be placed at New Hanover High School with an amazing internship teacher. While this past year was difficult, it has been an absolute pleasure to be a leader in the classroom and help my students in what ever way I could (virtually or face to face). Currently, I am back in South Africa. I am applying to teaching jobs in Johannesburg and hoping to find a school where I can continue to grow and help my students do the same. Learning French helped me understand just how difficult it can be to learn a new language, this helped me in so many ways when I taught English as a second language. This also helped me when interacting and helping students in American high schools that come from an ESL background.



How about Study Abroad?

Yes! I studied in Paris, France and in Montreal, Canada! Studying abroad is an amazing experience. Being on your own in an entirely new country is something I think every single person should experience. Without studying abroad during college, I'm not sure I would have had the confidence to pack up and move to South Korea.

Anything else?

A special thank you to Dr. Juall who was one of the most supportive and encouraging teachers I had at UNCW. Even after graduating, when I would email asking for references for teaching positions or so that I could return to UNCW for my Masters, Dr. Juall did not hesitate to take the time to help. The French department and students at UNCW are so lucky to have him.

Brooklyn Crain

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Lauren McAskill

History & French

CLASS
OF
2009

Following graduation, I served in the United States Peace Corps. I was assigned to the francophone country of Benin, located in West Africa. For two years, I served as an English teacher in a northern village of Benin and carried out various health and sanitation projects at the rural level. My knowledge of French made possible every daily interaction and facilitated my acquisition of local languages native to Benin. French was also very useful during my travels around Africa which included visits to Togo and Morocco. Then, for two years, I worked for IntraHealth International, a non-profit global health organization, which implements projects in most developing countries in the world. I am now employed as Sr. Director of Business Strategy by School-to-School International, whose flagship project is based in Guinea, West Africa. Our innovative "Whole Child Model" brings together interventions in strengthening education in schools, promoting healthy behaviors, and encouraging community engagement in education to create optimal conditions for student success.

My knowledge and experience of French is essential in communicating with international Francophone partners and the translation of certain key documents.



IntraHealth International



School-to-School International



Peace
Corps



Lauren McAskill

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Cailyn Trevaskiss

History + French & Anthropology minors

CLASS
OF
2017

Hello former UNCW French Club President! What have you been up to since graduation?

I just finished graduate school! I completed two Master's degrees from Wichita State University, one in Anthropology, and the other one in Public Administration. As part of my research for my first Master's, I worked on French sociologist Emile Durkheim:

"Durkheim's Judaism: The Dominion of Lingering Religiosity in the Theoretical Development of Modern Anthropology," the full abstract of which may be found on the American Anthropological Association's website. I am now working for a nonprofit (*une organisation à but non lucratif, oui, oui, dans un rôle de gestion!*)



Study Abroad: Scotland (en Ecosse!)



Cailyn Trevaskiss

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

Marie-Pierre Drian

International Business and French



Why did you study French?

I love the French language and wanted to be able to strengthen my language skills, as much of my dad's family only speaks French.

What do you do now?

I work as a KYC analyst at Credit Suisse in Raleigh. I often translate French documents for others. I would love to one day move back to France –that is my ultimate goal! I miss UNCW and all my amazing professors.



Study Abroad: Paris, France
(NC in Paris Consortium)

UPDATE: Crédit Suisse s'appelle maintenant UBS mais je travaille toujours là, tout va bien!

Marie-Pierre Drian

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Kaitlyn Woollen

International Business and French

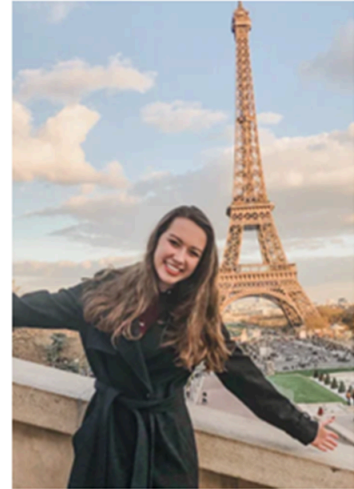
CLASS
OF
2019

Why did you study French?

I wanted to take advantage of UNCW's study abroad opportunities as well as learn a different language in the process. I already had the basics of French, but fell in love with learning the language under the wings of the French professors at UNCW. I was nudged to minor in the language at first, but then given my time abroad, I decided it would be best to major in French—giving my all to learn the most while I can.

What do you do now?

I am a Social Media Marketing Manager at a software company. Major accomplishments include my internship in Paris for a cloud computing company (through Kedge), working for the Walt Disney Company after graduation, staying in touch with friends from France, and networking with those working in France to possibly work abroad again one day! Learning a new language is so rewarding—there's a culture unique to its everyday lifestyle that you have to travel there to see for yourself...



Study Abroad: Marseille, France

(through the UNCW Cameron School of Business and Kedge Business School partnership)

Kaitlyn Woollen

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Kellee Meiners

CLASS
OF
2019

International Business, Accounting and French

Why did you study French?

I studied French throughout high school and wanted to continue to advance my skills in college. My original goal in college was to complete study abroad in a francophone country and potentially get involved after graduation in an international company with job opportunities in French-speaking countries.

What do you do now?

I work as an auditor for a Big4 accounting firm and have opportunities to work with Canadian or French teams on my clients. Since it is a large international company, I can opt into work programs where I can be based out of our Paris office for up to two years (among other international opportunities).



Study Abroad: Czech Republic + Belgium

Kellee Meiners

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Michelle R. Montpetit

CLASS
OF
2014

Business Administration and Management (Marketing),
Psychology and French

Current employment:

I serve as the Head of Financial Coaching at  Facet WEALTH. Prior to joining Facet, I worked at two prominent wealth management firms in the D.C. metropolitan area.

Education:

 UNCW KEDGE International Business, French

 Georgetown University
Certificate in Financial Planning

Study Abroad: Marseille, France

(through the UNCW Cameron School of Business and Kedge Business School partnership)



Michelle R. Montpetit

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Walter Kearnan

**French and Business Administration
(International Business Concentration)
and Political Science**

CLASS
OF
2016



What did you do after graduation?

I was at first a Political Affairs intern, then a Regional Director, for The Borgen Project, a nonprofit that advocates to make global poverty a greater focus of US foreign policy. For two years, I also worked for Live Oak Bank as a Loan Closing Specialist in their Renewable Energy department. In that role, I had the unique opportunity to directly impact renewable energy projects across the US. I had the privilege of working alongside energy developers, industry experts and others to finance large-scale energy projects.

Study Abroad: Marseille, France
(through the UNCW – Kedge partnership)

What do you do now?

I joined the FBI and hope to do some overseas work and use my French language skills at some point. Prior to that, I was a Special Agent for the US Capitol Police where I primarily worked on the security details for House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi. I sometimes used my French with French, Canadian or Francophone visitors.

How did you like studying abroad in Marseille?

I LOVED IT!!!! I wish I could do it again.

Any notable achievements while studying French at UNCW?

My Honors Thesis with Dr. Juall was published in an undergraduate research journal!

Walter Kearnan

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Jenna Gasper

International Business & French

CLASS
OF
2007



Current Employment:
Strategic Growth Leader
Gallagher



Prior to that, I was a Senior Vice-President for Aon for almost 9 years.



Study Abroad: Paris, France
(NC in Paris Consortium)

Further studies after UNCW?



The University of Texas at Austin
PHR/SPHR Certification Program



“Studying abroad with the NC in Paris Consortium was a life-changing experience which enabled me, along with my UNCW French classes, to reach full professional proficiency in French.”

Jenna Gasper

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Charlotte Castellano

French and International Business

CLASS
OF
2018

Why did you study French?

I grew up speaking French and wanted to improve my knowledge of the language! The French faculty are the best. They are all so friendly and helpful. It was a privilege to get to know them and I miss them all very much!

What do you do now?

I am a graduate student at UNC Chapel Hill pursuing a Master's degree in French. I use French everyday, and I hope to teach the language one day!



UPDATE: Charlotte now works with her sister Julia Castellano, running the very successful bakery on Wrightsville Avenue, **Little Loaf Bakery**, specializing in old world bread!



Study Abroad: Rabat, Morocco



“

Hungry for an authentic French baguette but coming up short of a local source, Castellano traveled to France last year to hone her baguette-making prowess under a seasoned French pastry chef. As a parting gift, Castellano scored an offshoot of the baker's 107-year-old sourdough starter, which she transported back to the United States in a small toiletry bottle in her luggage. It's that old French starter combined with her own that forms the base of Little Loaf's breads today.”

Source:



Charlotte Castellano

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Wayne Merritt

International Business & French

CLASS
OF
2013



What do you do now?

I'm a Maintenance & Materials supervisor for EmergeOrtho here in Wilmington. I'm using skills in Facilities Management, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Retention, Management and Inventory Management.



Any cool things that happened to you while in Marseille?

Absolutely! While in Marseille, I received a certificate in cross-cultural negotiation. It's a pretty big deal since Kedge is one of France's premier business schools. At Kedge, I also interned in their career services center (called "Trajectoire"), where I helped implement a more student-based career week/job fair, similar to that of Business Week, the weeklong career fair held at UNCW.

Study Abroad: Marseille, France
(Kedge Business School)

Anything else?

I am also a coach and referee for the Cape Fear Lacrosse Association, as well as a Basketball and Football official!



Wayne Merritt

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Emily Marlton

International Business & French

CLASS
OF
2002

Current Employment: Senior Implementation Engineer



Enterprise solutions for Education Abroad,
Travel Management, and International Student Services

Past Employment:



Assistant Director for Study Abroad
UNC Chapel Hill



Study Abroad Coordinator
North Carolina State University



<- À Marseille!



Study Abroad: Marseille, France

Any further studies after UNCW?



Master of International Studies (MIS), International Education & European Studies



Anything else worth noting? Yes, I'm a former French Club President!

Emily Marlton

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Luc Le Chatton

Business Administration, International Business & French (minor)

Luc! You worked for us at the Dub Hub as a Language Exchange Leader! What do you do now?

Dub Hub



I'm a Hospitality Manager at Sea Scapes Properties!

What were some of your achievements while at UNCW?

I was honored to receive UNCW's 2024-25 Global Citizen Award, presented to a student who demonstrates a commitment to internationalization and global engagement. Studying abroad twice, pursuing a French minor, and serving as a Language Exchange Leader at the Dub Hub all shaped my global perspectives.



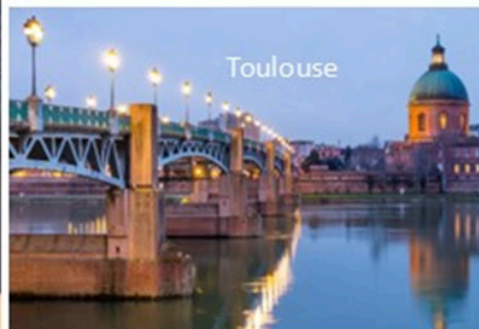
CLASS
OF
2025



Study Abroad: Marseille, France
Toulouse, France



KEDGE Business School
Cross Cultural Negotiations & Business Law



[NOTE: Luc was also a recipient of the Outstanding Graduate in International Business Award!]

“I've developed cultural awareness and adaptability through international study abroad programs [...]. These experiences [...] sharpened my initiative, observational skills, and ability to thrive in diverse environments. These are qualities I look forward to bringing into a variety of roles throughout my career.”

Luc Le Chatton

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Alex Fill

International Business & French

CLASS
OF
2025



Now that I've officially made it in the country, I am so happy to share that I've moved to Ireland to study at [Trinity College Dublin](#) in their International Management MSc program. The opportunity to learn at one of the world's best universities - ranked 75th worldwide to be exact ;) - under brilliant professors with incredible peers will be invaluable. This will be a difficult journey, but I'm excited to see what all is to come and am certain it will be amazing. Wish me luck ! 🍀



Alex, where did you do your internship with IFE in Strasbourg?

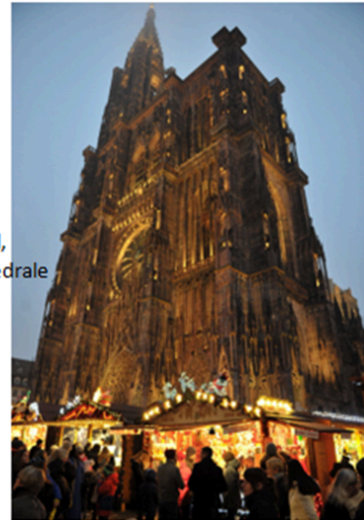
It was at an "association for professional reintegration through organic market gardening" called Les Jardins de la Montagne Verte. My independent research project at the end of the internship was titled "The impacts of regional trade agreements in Alsace and the influence of Alsatian trade worldwide"!



Le marché de Noël,
au pied de la cathédrale
de Strasbourg ->



Study Abroad: Strasbourg, France
(avec IFE – Institute for Field Education)



Alex Fill

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Shaheed Soligné-Stevenson

International Studies and French

Class
of
2019

Why did you study French?

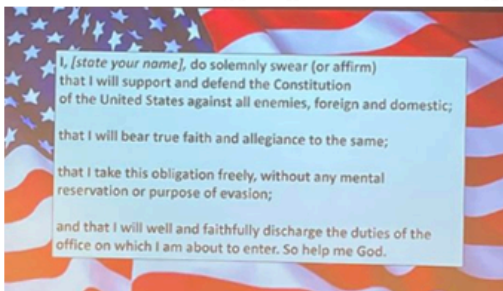
I wanted to reconnect with the country and language of my grandmother and the language commonly spoken throughout Western and Northern Africa. I also have various interests in Francophone regions throughout the globe. Last but not least I am working in partnership with CODOFIL in Louisiana to preserve French in that state.

What do you do now?

I am a graduate student at Penn State University and a Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellow. Upon completion of graduate school, I will go on to work for the U.S. Department of State as a Foreign Service Officer in Francophone countries. I now use French in my daily life more than English!



Study Abroad: Rabat, Morocco



I, [state your name], do solemnly swear (or affirm)
that I will support and defend the Constitution
of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic;
that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same;
that I take this obligation freely, without any mental
reservation or purpose of evasion;
and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the
office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.

UPDATE: I have now taken the Oath of Office to be a Foreign Service Officer for the US Department of State! I began this journey in September 2019 with the encouragement of Profs. Daniel Scott Masters and Lesley Daspit to apply for the Pickering Fellowship. Since then, I've graduated with a master's degree in International Affairs (African Diplomacy concentration), interned with the NEA Bureau Tunisia Desk, and the US Consulate in Mumbai. I speak 7 languages, including 2 endangered ones. I am beyond happy and thankful.

Shaheed Soligné-Stevenson

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Katie O'Neal

CLASS
OF
2018

French and International Studies

Study Abroad: Strasbourg, France

(through IFE, Internships in Francophone Europe/Institute for Field Education)

What did you do during your internship in France?

I worked as a Program Assistant for the Alsatian chapter of Caritas, a large international NGO helping disadvantaged and marginalized families.

What do you do now?

I am employed by a cyber security solutions company in Raleigh, in their sales department as a territory development representative. The company itself is based in NYC but we also have offices in Paris, London, Munich, Sydney and Cork. I would like to work my way up the ladder so eventually (after covid of course) I could be able to travel to those other offices and work with them.



Katie O'Neal

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Abigail Auerbach

CLASS
OF
2017

French and International Studies

Why did you study French?

Following exposure to the language in middle and high school courses, it was clear that a minor would be attainable and fit into my desire for a Political Science degree. As I pivoted towards International Studies and realized that I was able to study abroad in France and really use it in daily life, I pursued it as a second major.

What do you do now?

I am currently working in a sales position outside of D.C. and moved to the area to pursue an M.A. in International Affairs at The George Washington University. My positive experience in studying abroad through UNCW made me excitedly incorporate travel into my graduate program to collect data (most recently to Seoul, South Korea). The perspectives gained from my years of study, practical application, and bonds formed with friends through French is something I take great pride in.



Study Abroad: Lille, France

Abigail Auerbach

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Justine Marguerat

International Studies and French

CLASS
OF
2017

Why did you study French?

I grew up speaking French and wanted to perfect my writing skills + become more proficient. I originally intended to just minor in French but really enjoyed the classes offered and the professors in the department so I decided to major!

What do you do now?

I worked for an international nonprofit (ONE Campaign) in Washington D.C. for a year post-graduation before returning to UNCW to pursue my MPA (Master's in Public Administration) with a focus in nonprofit and public management. I did use French on occasion while working in D.C. (event planning in francophone countries, document translations, translations over the phone, etc.) While my job itself did not require French-speaking skills, I was known in the office for speaking French. This helped me network and get to know other people/departments in the office early on, which proved to be really helpful. I hope to continue my work in the nonprofit sector and feel confident that I will use French in one capacity or another.



Justine Marguerat

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Malia Benison

Political Science, International Studies & French

CLASS
OF
2019

Experience



Administrative Staff Lead
NC Department of Justice · Internship
Aug 2020 – Nov 2020 · 4 mos
Task Force for Racial Equity in Criminal Justice

District Attorney Intern
New Hanover & Pender County DAs office · Internship
Aug 2018 – Dec 2018 · 5 mos
Wilmington, North Carolina Area

Education (in addition to UNCW)



University of North Carolina School of Law
Juris Doctor
2019 – 2022



Qasid Arabic Institute
Modern Standard Arabic
2018 – 2018



AMIDEAST Education Abroad
French Language and Literature
2017 – 2017



Study Abroad: Rabat, Morocco

UPDATE:



Associate

ArentFox Schiff · Full-time Law Practice · Washington, D.C.

Malia Benison

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Emre Taner

CLASS
OF
2020

French & International Studies with a concentration in Globalization

Why did you study French?

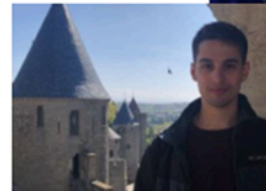
I wanted to learn the language and live in France.

What do you do now?

I got accepted into a Master's program (Public and International Affairs) at the University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Study Abroad: Paris, France

(NC in Paris Consortium)



Emre Taner

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Katiana Vazquez

International Studies and French

CLASS
OF
2020



Why did you study French?

Growing up I always loved the language and once I realized the major would enrich my fluency as well as educate me on francophone cultures, it was a no-brainer. Now after having completed the degree, it has proved to be more valuable than I ever imagined because of its diverse course load and expectations. My favorite advice for anyone skeptical about pursuing a foreign language: "One language, one life."

Study Abroad: Rabat, Morocco
(Faculty-led)

What do you do now?

Spanish is my native language therefore the completion of this BA granted me the title of being trilingual. I recently accepted a position for a social networking service as a customer liaison. My multilingualism was heavily highlighted throughout the hiring process because of the international nature of the company. I am excited to use my cultural fluency in a position where I can build relationships with people all over the world.

Any future projects or aspirations?

I hope to continue my education and pursue my MA in International Development.

Katiana Vazquez

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Zachary Tarrant

French and International Studies

CLASS
OF
2015

Current employment: **G | M | F** The German Marshall Fund
of the United States
STRENGTHENING TRANSATLANTIC COOPERATION

Program Coordinator, Strategic Convening and Communications
Washington, DC



What did you do for Study Abroad?

For my internship, IFE placed me with the Commercial Services of the US Embassy in Paris. My field research paper was entitled "Driving Forces in the Growth of the Cybersecurity Market."

Study Abroad: Paris, France
(through IFE – Internships in Francophone Europe/
Institute for Field Education)



Zachary Tarrant

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Marina Nicol

French and International Studies

CLASS
OF
2018

Why did you study French?

In 6th grade I took French as an elective and fell in love. Since then, I have always wanted to become proficient as well as learn another language!

What do you do now?

In the fall of 2020, I completed my dual international MBA degree at UNCW and recently got a job as a project coordinator at Chemonics International. I hope to gain experience in helping people and to one day work with refugees. As part of my MBA program, we were able to study abroad, and while I was in Spain, French did help me understand more of the Catalan dialect. With Chemonics International, I will be apart of the Latin American and Caribbean team, so I will be using a little bit of French there!



Study Abroad: Morocco

(Faculty-led with Dr. Barthe & Dr. Berg)



Marina Nicol

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Stephanie Newman

French and International Studies
(with Europe concentration)

CLASS
OF
2018

Why did you study French?

A degree with another language just provides you with more opportunities. I had taken French throughout high school and fell back in love with it during my first semester at UNCW (FRH 202 with Prof. Barthe)! I love the language, culture, history, and the UNCW French professors are amazing to learn from.



Study Abroad: Paris, France
(through the NC Consortium in Paris)

What do you do now?

I'm currently going through the clearance process to work for a government contractor. I anticipate using my French language in my future role and I'll hopefully be able to use it to acquire roles abroad. I'd love to live abroad for a few years at a time. Re: the picture above, I did the Disney College Program right after graduating and was the only French-speaking worker in my shift, which proved very helpful several times.

How was your Study Abroad experience?

Oh my, the NC in Paris Consortium Program was absolutely incredible. I was one of ten students that semester; lived in the banlieue of La Garenne-Colombe with a host family and did volunteering with Benenova. I explored Paris, other regions of France (esp. Strasbourg and Colmar using the TGV!) and traveled all around Europe.

Stephanie Newman

McKenzie Cooper

International Studies & French
+ Spanish minor

CLASS
OF
2019

Why did you study French?

I am so passionate about French language and culture, and the world that is opened when you can speak and understand a foreign language. I believe that everyone should have the opportunity to have their eyes opened to communities different from our own and be able to immerse yourself into that environment.

What do you do now?

I currently work for an HR Services company that works with French Canadian companies, providing customer service in French. After graduating from UNCW I continued with my French passion through the TAPIF program in Sarrebourg, France teaching English to French natives of all ages.

Anything else you would like to share?

Travel! I know the world is crazy these days and scarier than it has been, but I cannot stress enough how important it is to see the world when you can!

Teaching Assistant Program in
FRANCE



Study Abroad: Aix-en-Provence,
France

McKenzie Cooper

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Erin Gallagher

International Studies and French

CLASS
OF
2015

Study Abroad: Paris, France
Dakar, Senegal



Current Employment:



Fox Rothschild LLP
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Marketing Data Coordinator

Assist Marketing, Business Development, Communications and Events teams for nationwide Am Law Top 100 law firm.

Past Employment:



English Teacher



Learning Specialist



Communications and Outreach
Coordinator AmeriCorps VISTA



Consultant

Erin Gallagher



There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Emma Rose Cowen

French and International Studies

CLASS
OF
2021



Why did you study French?

I was drawn to both the language and the culture (au niveau mondial!)

What do you do now?



I have been hired to teach English at the Université de Bordeaux for the next few years as a Lectrice d'anglais! Prior to accepting this position, my knowledge of French gave me several opportunities ranging from tutoring students ages 6-18 to acting as the US-based assistant to the Vice-President for the American University of Paris.

Did you study abroad while at UNCW?

I am very grateful to Alfred and Anita Schnog whose travel grant enabled me to create a unique study abroad experience. I began in Lyon where I conducted research on the French resistance during WWII and how they interacted with space to aid the protection of the Jewish population. From there, I moved to a farm in the south of France where I spent several months completing a cross-cultural comparison of organic agriculture in the US and France. It was an incredible experience!



UPDATE: I am now doing a Master's degree at the Université de Toulouse, France —specializing in francophone literature!

Toulouse
Midi-Pyrénées



Emma Rose Cowen

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

James Bailey

International Studies, Spanish & French (minor)

CLASS
OF
2018



Current Employment:



Operations Coordinator, Production & Sourcing

URBN (Urban Outfitters, Anthropologie Group, Free People & Nuuly)

I work with Urban Outfitters as a production and sourcing operations coordinator working with the daily logistics of the manufacturing for the home department. [...] I hope to one day leverage my French knowledge to get more international operations of the business.

Further studies after UNCW?



SKEMA Business School

Master of Science - MS · Global Luxury and Management

Why did you study French at UNCW?

Originally I had taken Spanish and always loved language, when I got to college I wanted to expand on that and so I decided on French and immediately enjoyed it.

Anything else you would like to share?

"Les cours de français et d'espagnol me manquent toujours maintenant que je suis dans le monde 'réel'!"



Study Abroad: Marseille, France

AND Brussels, Belgium (IFE, Institute for Field Education/Internships in Francophone Europe)

Given my academic profile and interests, IFE matched me with Caritas, an international Catholic aid organization. I translated documents from French into English, and even Spanish. I also accompanied social workers in interviews with refugees. My supervisor made an effort to diversify my activities so that I could reach my goal to understand the complexity of the European immigration system.



"You will never regret studying abroad, do it as many times as you can before you graduate!"

James Bailey

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Joseph Chambers

CLASS
OF
2013

French & International Studies (+ a minor in Politics)

What do you do now?

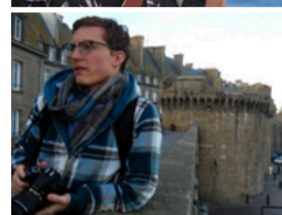
For the last five years, I have worked in fine dining at a lovely restaurant called Truluck's. I am a key employee, working as a server, lead bartender, banquet captain, wine & spirits educator, key manager, and corporate trainer. Truluck's is a wonderful place to work that has allowed me flexibility to travel frequently. Beyond vacationing abroad, I often use my language skills to study wine independently. Nearly every year, I've traveled abroad to various wine regions in Spain, France, Italy, and Germany. Most jobs wouldn't allow me the time off for that, so I'm very grateful to the restaurant industry for providing me all those opportunities.

TRULUCK'S
OCEAN'S FINEST SEAFOOD & CRAB

With credit to my French language skills, learning Spanish and Italian have been relatively easy. I'm not fluent, but I'm conversational in both languages. That never would have been a possibility without French. I recently moved to San Diego, California from Houston, Texas. Both cities have strong ties to Spanish speaking communities. I have plenty of opportunities to use Spanish on a daily basis. Even at work I am able to take care of guests in multiple languages. I'm very proud to have accomplished the various levels of proficiency in three languages over the last decade. None of it would have been possible without having studied abroad.

Can you tell us more about that?

Absolutely! I have however so many good things to say about how important and critical it was for me and my career... How about in another "There They Are Thursdays"?



Study Abroad: Nantes, France

Joseph Chambers

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Joseph Chambers

French & International Studies (+ a minor in Politics)



You offered to tell us more about Study Abroad. Thank you!

Yes! The idea of studying abroad was an exciting and intimidating concept to me when I first began considering it. I hesitated at first, not sure if it was right for me. Then I filled out the paperwork, filling in the information for one semester abroad. At the last minute, I changed everything and applied for a year abroad. I was terrified. Did I make the right choice? Was that too long?

Would it affect my plans to graduate? I had all these doubts pop up, **but after speaking to other students who did a year abroad**, they reassured me it was going to be alright. It turned out to be the most amazing experience for me that really motivated me afterwards. Loads of my accomplishments since have roots in that year in France. I loved that year, and I wouldn't change it for the world.

Study Abroad: Nantes, France

[Note: most UNCW students studying abroad go for one semester]

You told us last TTAT about your career path; what did you do right after graduation, though?



I took part in the Teaching Assistant Program in France (TAPIF). I taught spoken English at a high school (Lycée) in Angers, France. Interacting with students from 12-22 years old, I learned so much about the French culture and daily life. On top of that, I got to speak French with all of my colleagues and made plenty of French friends that year. My French language skills went through the roof thanks to that time in Angers.

Currently? In addition to my job, thanks to my linguistic abilities and knowledge of wine, I am working with a Master Sommelier in Houston to set up a wine tourism business traveling to Italy, France and Spain. I am very excited!

Joseph Chambers

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Shaheed Soligné-Stevenson

International Studies & French

UPDATE

I can finally exhale after 2&1/2 years of preparation for this moment.

I am thrilled to announce that I will be relocating to Mexico as a Vice Consul at the US Embassy Mexico City! I am also deeply honored to have been selected by my class to receive the Glenn Muro Award for Outstanding Potential and Leadership. 🇺🇸 🇫🇷 🇲🇽 [#USDiplomat](#)



Study Abroad: Rabat, Morocco

Félicitations!

BRAVO!

à notre ancien Président du Cercle Français!!



“ My heart is absolutely full. *C'est un rêve devenu réalité, même s'il a connu de nombreux rebondissements.* To my UNCW Spanish Language friends, I'm so glad we shared the TA Lounge because I had no clue that I'd be going to Mexico. But the Foreign Service is really about blooming where you are planted. And today I feel as bright as a sunflower. Thank you/*Merci mille fois/Mil gracias.* ”

Shaheed Soligné-Stevenson

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Jade Oakes

Spanish & International Studies + French minor

CLASS
OF
2018



What have you done since graduation?

I have been the owner of **Jade's Tutoring**, which is a business I started because I have a passion for languages and education. I believe that learning languages is important, and I wanted to provide a place for people to come and do just that. I also know that everyone learns differently. I enjoy getting to know the students and figuring out what methods work best for them. While at UNCW, I worked at the Tutoring Center as a Spanish tutor and earned my first level Lifetime Tutor Certification.

Can you please also tell us about your work with Pender County Schools?

Yes, I did work as a tutor of all subjects in three schools: Pender High School, Cape Fear Middle School and West Pender Middle School. I served the migrant population and worked either one-on-one or in small groups with students to help broaden their understanding of their assignments and to close any educational gaps that may have existed.

Any recent news you'd like to share?

In May 2023, I earned an Associate degree in Data Science and Programming Support Services from Wake Technical Community College. I then applied to graduate school and was accepted to University of Colorado Boulder, Indiana University Bloomington, University of Rochester, and Brandeis University. Brandeis offered me a merit scholarship and Rochester a tuition scholarship. I decided Brandeis would be the best choice for me, and I will be attending in the fall! I'm excited to take more linguistics courses as I really enjoyed the ones I took at UNCW—including Dr. Juall's FRH 308.



Jade Oakes

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Danielle Nelson

French & International Studies

CLASS
OF
2018

**I see you studied abroad with the NC in Paris Consortium.
Can you tell us about your experience?**

I think one of the most beneficial parts about this program was the host families! You get totally immersed in the language and they help you every day. I learned how to use the metro and do things on my own in Paris. There's so much to do all the time I didn't ever want to sleep! Studying abroad is important because it changes your entire view on life. I thought I knew what I wanted to do with my life before I went, but after going I was opened to so many different opportunities and connections through people I met halfway across the world.

What did you do after graduation?

I actually completed a Master's degree in Conflict Management and Resolution here at UNCW, and worked as a Graduate Teaching Assistant in the department of Public and International Affairs. After that I moved to Washington, DC to work for the American Enterprise Institute (focusing on West Africa and the Sahel region) and the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition (foreign policy and international aid).



Study Abroad: Paris, France
(NC in Paris Consortium)



American Enterprise Institute



Chemonics
Development works here.

UPDATE:

“

Hello Professor Juall!

I hope you are doing well. I wanted to reach out because I recently started a new position as a Senior Francophone Associate at Chemonics International! My job is almost completely in French & I might have the opportunity to travel to Cameroon later this year! Thank you so much for all your help throughout college. Speaking French has opened so many doors for me and allowed me to do so many cool things and travel to some amazing places! A bientôt!

”

Danielle Nelson

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Hannah (Lizzie) Harrop

**International Studies (Middle East),
French & Psychology**



Why did you study French?

I grew up speaking French and wanted to improve my French to communicate with old friends and to open more doors & potential jobs.

What do you do now?

I work for the Department of Justice in finance, so I do not currently use French in my job. Still, I am so glad that I took French because I can better speak, write, and understand my first language (I grew up in France) and I believe I may use it in the future.



UPDATE:

Je vais enfin commencer « law school » [les études de droit] cet automne! J'ai été acceptée dans plusieurs écoles; finalement, j'ai décidé d'aller à l'Université de Minnesota. Ils m'ont donné une bourse complète, alors je ne pouvais pas dire non!

Hannah (Lizzie) Harrop

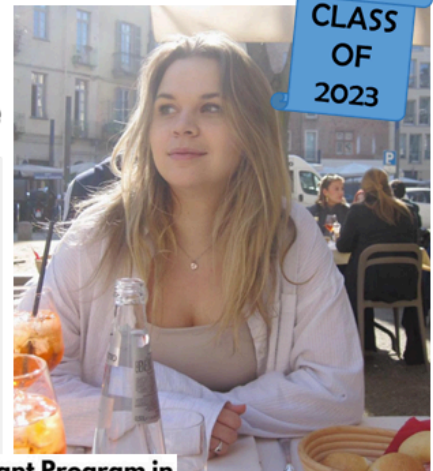
There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Catherine Turvin

International Studies & Political Science

Hello!! Just wanted to give you an update on what I have been up to in TAPIF! I was placed in Créteil in the suburbs of paris (although it was very close to the city so I have lived in Paris with my partner) I was in a high school and it was so so amazing, I think my low level of french at the start helped the kids a lot because it forced them to really speak in english to me. Every day was a new learning experience for me, navigating through a new job and the french system and changing lessons based on english levels of the students. My school requested for me to return for a second year and I just received the email that I was accepted to renew! Thank you and all of the french department for helping me with this. I think immersion has truly helped my french level (although I could definitely use a few more classes lol) I hope everything is going well at UNCW!



Teaching Assistant Program in
FRANCE

Catherine Turvin

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Erin Gallagher

International Studies and French

CLASS
OF
2015



What do you do now?

I am currently a graduate student at The American University of Rome in the Master of Food Studies: Policies for sustainable production and consumption program. My passion for this field was actually sparked in France, where I observed a different food culture and higher production standards and discovered that most of the global challenges we face meet in the food system.

Can you tell us why you were in France?

Yes, I was in France because of an opportunity shared with me by Dr. Barthe, who encouraged me to apply to be a lectrice d'anglais at the University of Bordeaux-Montaigne, **one of my favorite experiences post-graduation**. After discovering the food system there, I returned to the US to work as an AmeriCorps VISTA in a local food council in Raleigh, NC, and went on to work at law firms supporting environmental and international practice groups.

[NOTE: The UNCW-UBM (Université Bordeaux-Montaigne) partnership was made official in 2024; it now enables one UNCW graduate with a French B.A. to live and work in Bordeaux *every year*. Contact spieserd@uncw.edu, barthep@uncw.edu if interested]



Erin Gallagher

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Erin Gallagher
International Studies and French

CLASS
OF
2015



Why did you study French?

I started studying French in high school, and initially chose French because my mother had studied it. However, I fell in love with it (and languages in general!) and decided to continue to work towards fluency throughout my life. I also had envisioned a career abroad in diplomacy or an NGO, and French is a great asset being a widely-spoken language, and one of the main languages of the United Nations.

What do you do now?

En fait, je me trouve actuellement à FAO [Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations], à Rome, et j'utilise le français en ce moment pour comprendre les délégués des pays tels que le Maroc, la Suisse et la France. C'est absolument fou être ici et être capable de comprendre les discours et les négociations. Les étudiant.e.s peuvent aller n'importe où avec le français, y compris l'Italie ou les Nations Unies!

Erin Gallagher

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Erin Gallagher

International Studies and French

CLASS
OF
2015



We previously learned about your current (fascinating) occupation.

Could you please also tell us about your study abroad experiences while at UNCW?

In part thanks to the Lapaire-Stites French Studies scholarship, I was very lucky to have been able to study abroad in Paris, France, and Dakar, Senegal, from May to July of summer 2014. The program, Summer Francophone Studies, explored the questions of globalization and culture through a study of literature and film of France and other francophone countries, such as Senegal, who were former colonies. I had an amazing experience; I was able to spend a month in each city in a homestay with local families, and I learned about the differing rhythms of life in each place and culture. The experiences I had, from going to the top of the Eiffel Tower, visiting the catacombs, and touring a

château in Paris, as well as travelling to other French cities, to navigating the markets of Dakar, swimming on the westernmost edge of Africa, and learning Wolof as well as riding a camel in the Lompoul Desert really did change my worldview, and have stayed with me.



Erin Gallagher

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Université
BORDEAUX
MONTAIGNE

Erin Gallagher
International Studies and French

CLASS
OF
2015

Just to expand a little on what you were sharing with us last week about your study abroad experience... How did you get involved in this applied learning experience and, prior to your departure, what did you hope to gain from it?

I had wanted to study abroad since freshman year. I knew I wanted to study abroad in a French-speaking country to practice my language skills, as it was one of my majors, and wanted to visit a developing country, as that and globalization were my areas of interest and concentration in my other major, International Studies. Finally, I found a CIEE program which combined the two, and other than wishing it were longer, it was a perfect fit!

What did you gain from this experience?

I gained self-confidence and language skills – I also learned how to bargain! (Very important in Dakar markets...) I was able to conduct interviews in French for my Honors thesis project and gained insight on my topic which I could never have gotten from simple research here in the U.S. I formed lasting friendships, met amazing people who inspired me and pushed me to grow, and I evolved as a global citizen.



Next week, can we talk about what was challenging? Oui, absolument!

Erin Gallagher

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Erin Gallagher
International Studies and French

CLASS
OF
2015



Going back to your study abroad experience -what was challenging? What did you learn?

It was very challenging to get around places at first – in Paris, I had to use the metro, and I'd never been on a subway before, or even in a large city. In Dakar, sometimes taxi and bus drivers only spoke Wolof, and I only spoke French, English and a tiny amount of Wolof, so I ended up visiting lots of new places on accident! The most challenging aspect for me, however, was learning to let go of my preconceptions of each place, most of which were subconscious, and taking my vastly different and novel experiences and negotiating a new framework for myself and how I saw complex issues. This helped me learn much more about the practical "real world" side of International Studies and to stand on my own two feet – to accept being lost occasionally, to accept discomfort, to accept novelty, and to embrace whatever comes my way.



Monument de la Renaissance Africaine
(Dakar, Sénégal)

Your study abroad experience *was* really unique!

Yes, in the sense that I lived, studied and conducted research in two countries that share a language but have very different cultures. It cemented my love for French and sharpened my skills through the necessity of communication. In Senegal, I experienced the reality of the developing world, or at least a corner of it, and saw the issues of globalization which I had studied in textbooks in real life as I spoke with Africans on their views on my thesis topic – aid and its representations in and of Africa. It definitely helped me discern what I wanted my career path to be.

Erin Gallagher

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Erin Gallagher

International Studies and French

CLASS
OF
2015



We learned so much about you these past few weeks, and we are thankful for it. Any final words of wisdom you would like to share with our current Seahawks, aka “balbuzards-pêcheurs”?

While I explained before how French was absolutely instrumental in helping me get where I am today, right now I use French less often than I would like, but I do make sure to seek out opportunities such as events with my local Alliance Française, French bookstore or international groups. I also try to make conversation in French whenever I can. My future aspirations are to work for the UN or an international organization in which I can engage in food systems transformation and utilize French daily!

Keep your French alive by watching and listening to French media, engaging where you can, and even writing in French! Practice with friends, travel if able, and use the window onto the world that your language(s) provide you to discover what is out there!

Erin Gallagher

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Raul Gutierrez

French & International Studies

CLASS
OF
2024



Can you tell us a little bit about your internship with IFE?

Yes! I worked for RISE (Research Initiative in Sustainability and the Environment), which is part of the Université de Strasbourg. I assisted the Program Director with project management of environmental forums.

I also completed a research paper in French on pesticides found in underground water reserves in France and the USA.

While abroad, I interacted with many diverse cultures, which enhanced my skills in intercultural communication.

Did you get any special awards during your time at UNCW?

I received a Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship to study abroad!

What are you up to now?

I was accepted to the University of Exeter for my MA in International Relations. I am planning to undertake research on Latin American immigrants in both England and France.

UPDATE:



I postponed my enrollment at University of Exeter until 2026 and accepted a job with a law firm in Charlotte. They work with immigration law and were looking for an English-Spanish-French trilingual applicant.



Study Abroad: Toulouse, France
+ Strasbourg, France
(with IFE: Institute for Field Education)



Benjamin A. Gilman
International Scholarship



Raul Gutierrez

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Hannah Kent

International Studies & French (minor)

CLASS
OF
2019



Why did you study French at UNCW?

I was lucky enough to learn French at school in the UK. When I came to UNCW it was a natural choice for me to continue to advance my French language skills at university level. The professors at UNCW were incredibly kind, approachable and supportive and made the learning environment great fun and so enriching. I loved particularly courses that touched on cultural aspects of the francophone world and tied seamlessly into my international studies major. If I could go back and do it all again I 100% would (and have pushed for the major)

What do you do now?

I work for the government in the United Kingdom in Corporate Governance and Policy specializing in change management and performance. Since I graduated UNCW I returned to the United Kingdom and completed post graduate study in Migration Studies. I have always been fascinated with what moves people around the world. My postgraduate research explored the impact of Brexit on homeless EU migrants. Before working for the government, I worked at a university as a research assistant exploring barriers to accessing university for underrepresented students and then progressed into the NHS working in business intelligence for a few years. Future plans - continue to progress in my career in local government for now. Although I've been considering going back to school to complete a PhD furthering my research in migration at some point in the future. Re: French, I do have some friends who I get to speak with socially and it's always helpful whenever I get to travel.

Any study abroad while at UNCW?

No, BUT I spent my 3 summer breaks at a language immersion school in Burgundy in France working as a language and activity assistant for British students learning French and French students learning English. This was a magical experience to work in a bilingual environment in the beautiful Morvan National park.



Anything else you'd like to share?

Grasp every opportunity you are offered whilst at UNCW. Four years feels like a long time but it will fly by!

Hannah Kent

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

“Hommage à Dr. Michael Wilhelm”

Former UNCW Chief of Staff
Former UNCW Associate Provost for Global Partnerships
and International Education

Michael, while you were not a “UNCW French alumnus,” you showed the world what one can do with a dual B.A. in International Studies and Foreign Languages and a Master of Arts in Foreign Languages. Thank you for everything you did for UNCW.

In Chancellor Volety’s words:

“Michael truly was a global citizen. I’ve had the privilege of traveling with him to many international partner campuses to put in place collaborative programs and faculty, staff and student exchanges. I’ve marveled at how seamlessly he transitioned between cultures and languages. Be it Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Spanish, and Hindi, to name a few, or his favorite language — French, his language skills and connecting with people from various parts of the world were beyond impressive.

His leadership expanded UNCW’s international partnerships, strengthened our global engagement and opened doors for Seahawks to experience the world in ways that have shaped their lives and careers.

Merci

”

Michael Wilhelm

JOURNALISM



Michael, here featured alongside UNCW French graduate Luc Le Chatton during the 2024-2025 Global Citizen Award ceremony.

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Stephanie Karampelas

French & Communication Studies (+ a minor in Journalism)

CLASS
OF
2010



Study Abroad: Aix-en-Provence

What do you do now?

I am a Middle and Upper School French Teacher and Chair of the Modern Languages Department at Saint David's School in Raleigh.

What did you do after graduation?



MINISTÈRE
DE L'ÉDUCATION
NATIONALE



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL



ST. DAVID'S SCHOOL
FAITH • VIRTUE • KNOWLEDGE

I first taught English in a French middle/high school for seven months. Then I got my Master's in French Language and Literature from Chapel Hill, graduating with concentrations in 20th century literature, the Algerian War and Franco-Arab studies. During that time, I received a FLAS Fellowship to study Arabic! Following this, I returned to France to become a substitute English teacher in the French public school system.

Stephanie Karampelas

LEADERSHIP STUDIES

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Celine LeDoux

French & Communication Studies
(concentration in Integrated Marketing Communication)
+ a minor in Leadership Studies

CLASS
OF
2025



“ Bonjour à tous!

J'espère que vous allez bien et que le semestre se passe bien. I wanted to reach out and tell you that everything is going great in Bordeaux! Classes are going well and I've definitely found my footing as a Lectrice. The group of lecturers that I'm with are amazing, and we are all getting along really well!



Study Abroad: Paris, France
(with NC in Paris Consortium)

I've been able to do a couple day trips to Arcachon and St. Emilion, which was absolutely stunning. We have a break at the end of October and I'll be going to Paris and Reims! Bordeaux is breathtaking and I'm loving life in the city!



[...] Thanks UNCW x UBM exchange! ”



La baie d'Arcachon



Les vignes de Saint-Emilion

BORDEAUX



Place de la Bourse, et le Miroir d'eau

Celine LeDoux

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Ambrose Nmah

French and Management Information Systems

CLASS
OF
2016



Current employment:

Back in 2015, I was a summer intern at Crédit Suisse in Raleigh, which enabled me, after graduation, to be hired first as a Business Analyst and now a Front-End Developer.

Ambrose Nmah

MARINE BIOLOGY

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Natalie Panasiak

Marine Biology and French

CLASS
OF
2019

Why did you study French?

I originally grew up in Vermont close to the Canadian border, so I've been listening to French ever since I was little. When it came time to decide what major to take at UNCW, I chose French as one of my two majors because I wanted to continue having the French language be a part of my life. It wasn't until about halfway through my time at UNCW that I realized I could legitimately use French to complement a career in marine science.

What do you do now?

I am doing a Master's degree in Aquaculture, Environment and Society. In this specific program, students study for one semester in Scotland, one semester at the University of Crete (Greece), one semester at the Université de Nantes (France) and one semester anywhere in the world. This is my Nantes semester and being able to communicate in French has definitely made my life a lot easier compared to some of my international friends in the cohort. I plan on getting a job in the aquaculture industry after I graduate.



Study Abroad: Station Biologique de Roscoff (Bretagne, France)



UPDATE: I am now an RDI technician at AquaBioTech Group in Malta. After gaining more knowledge of the European aquaculture industry and its various species and farming techniques, my academic background has shifted focus from algal calcification to optimization of fish cultivation. As part of a collaborative effort with AquaBioTech Group and the Horizon 2020 iFishIENci project, I completed my master's dissertation on utilizing IA technologies to investigate the relationship between

stomach fullness and feeding behavior of salmonids to improve efficiency in RAS. At AquaBioTech Group, I am currently responsible for the implementation of EU and national aquaculture projects as well as the scientific and technical management, coordination and reporting of a novel zebrafish husbandry and breeding facility.



Natalie Panasiak

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Hannah Whitaker

Marine Biology, Environmental Sciences & French

After graduation, I took a break in my studies in order to do hurricane relief. I am now a Master's student at Hawai'i Pacific University, in their sclerochronology lab. Our research focuses on unraveling the ocean's past, and addressing how changes in our ocean influence the functioning of precious coastal ecosystems. My own Master's thesis examines the ways in which tropical corals record the details of thermal stress events in their skeletons.

CLASS
OF
2019



THE HPU SCLERO LAB



UPDATE:



Doctoral Student

The University of Western Australia

PhD, Oceanography, Chemical and Physical

Hannah Whitaker

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Phoebe Whitbeck

Marine Biology & French

CLASS
OF
2023



Study Abroad: Toulouse, France
(through CIEE) – went as soon as
Covid travel restrictions were lifted!



What do you do now?

After obtaining my USCG Captains License, I moved up to the role of captain, and more recently director, at Wrightsville Performance Sailing. I have worked various "water-centered" jobs the past several years, teaching sailing, lifeguarding, and working on boats. I enjoy captaining and hope to use that skill set in the field of ecotourism. I'm very passionate about combining my interests in marine conservation, sailing, and world cultures.

What was your Honors Thesis about? It was on the effect of blue light on corals!

How did your study abroad experience combine your interests in French and Biology?

I worked as a part-time intern at "Les Agribains," a French urban agriculture association in Toulouse. I introduced gardening and sustainable practices to kids at local primary schools. I also spent time in the office on individual projects such as creating infographics/posters, promotional videos, and conducting comparative research on nutrition education in the US and France.



Cultivons ensemble l'écologie urbaine

Can you tell us more about your experience in Toulouse?

Yes, in the next "There They Are Thursdays"!



Phoebe Whitbeck

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Phoebe Whitbeck

Marine Biology & French

CLASS
OF
2023



Study Abroad: Toulouse, France
(through CIEE) – went as soon as
Covid travel restrictions were lifted!



Alors, donc, Phoebe, tu peux nous en dire plus sur ton expérience d'études à l'étranger à Toulouse?

Oui, bien sûr! Voilà ce que j'ai écrit quand j'étais là-bas:

Depuis mon arrivée en France, mes expériences dans ce beau pays sont géniales! J'adore ma famille d'accueil, je me suis fait plusieurs nouveaux amis américains, étrangers, et français à mon université ici, et la culture française est tellement riche et intéressante. Il y a bien sûr des différences dans la vie académique et la culture qui sont difficiles d'abord, mais ça c'est le but des études à l'étranger, n'est-ce pas?! De plus, je peux sentir mon français améliorer avec chaque interaction et il n'est plus difficile ou fatigant de parler en français--c'est très naturel maintenant. J'adore Toulouse ! Malgré le fait qu'elle est la quatrième ville en France, Toulouse ressemble à un grand village avec toutes ses petites rues pavées. Le fleuve et le canal sont tellement beaux et parfaits pour se balader ou faire du vélo. Il y a aussi beaucoup de très bons restaurants, cafés, boulangeries, pâtisseries et marchés où tu peux passer du temps avec tes amis ou acheter quelque chose à manger au bord de la Garonne.



Le Canal du Midi avec mon vélo

Phoebe Whitbeck

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Alexis Marti

Marine Biology & French (minor)

CLASS
OF
2014



Current employment:

Environmental Scientist, Aquatic Resources

ERM Environmental Resources Management

Past employment:

Research Assistant

Center For Marine Science



Study Abroad: Marseille, France

Further studies after undergraduate diploma:



University of North Carolina Wilmington

Master of Science - MS, Marine Sciences

2017 - 2020

Alexis Marti

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Catherine Bachman

French & Marine Biology

CLASS
OF
2024

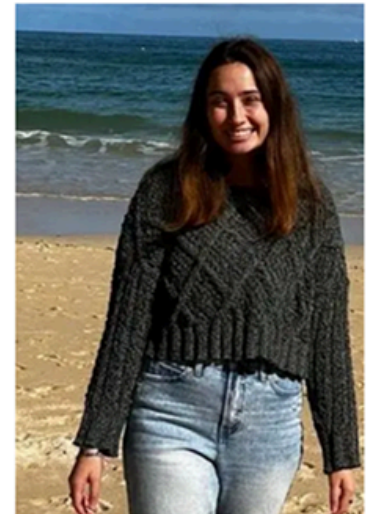


Why did you study French?

I studied French because my mom taught high school French and I had grown up learning the language from my immersion program and her. I was always interested in continuing to learn French because it is such a pretty language and there is so much culture behind the language itself.

What do you do now?

I am currently at the University of Exeter in Penryn, England, getting my MSc in Marine Vertebrate Ecology and Conservation. While there, I have met many people who speak French and have been able to talk with them in French. I am also always listening to French music.



University
of Exeter



Study Abroad: James Cook University
(Australie ~ pour la Biologie Marine)

Ancienne Vice-Présidente du French Club

Catherine Bachman

MARKETING STRATEGY

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Alea Aul

Business Administration, Marketing Strategy & French

CLASS
OF
2019

Why did you study French?

While French had always been my favorite course throughout high school, I honestly didn't plan on studying it in college because I was not sure if it was necessary for following my future career aspirations. It took me one semester to know that I was making a mistake. I missed the enjoyment of learning French and realized that if this was something that interested me, I should just do it. Majoring in it personally challenged me and gave me a more worldly view. I believe it can be a great addition to anyone's studies.

What do you do now?

I am a Project Coordinator at an advertising company in Raleigh. After I was hired, I found out that when I was applying, my resume stood out amongst 75 other applicants due to my degree in French. The person reviewing my resume had also studied French and was impressed that I had that background alongside my Business degree.



Study Abroad: Marseille, France
(through the Cameron School of Business -
Kedge École de Commerce partnership)

UPDATE: Alea went from Project Coordinator to Marketing Manager to Marketing Director!



Alea Aul

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Elizabeth Wellons Waine

Marketing & French

CLASS
OF
2007



Study Abroad: Paris, France
(with the NC in Paris Consortium)



Where did your career path take you after graduation?

While I am now a real estate listing specialist, my double major in Marketing and French enabled me to work successfully in the luxury industry for many years. After graduation, I moved to the south of France in Grasse and worked in Marketing for a Perfume company. I then moved to New York where I started working at Balenciaga, a French Luxury Fashion designer, owned by Gucci Group. I spent 5 years there and was promoted 4 times to be Wholesale Account Executive. I traveled to Paris about 10 times a year selling each collection. That entire time, I was the only person on the US sales team that spoke French. After that I was promoted to US Sales Director for Proenza Schouler, an American Luxury Fashion company. I then occupied the same position (US Sales Director) for Akris, a Switzerland-based luxury women's fashion brand, where I managed their \$65 million US and Canadian wholesale business. While at Proenza Schouler, I travelled to Paris often and used my French language skills daily. Being able to speak French allowed me to grow in each position quickly and form relationships with the French teams and clients.

I am so thankful for my time spent studying abroad in Paris and how it prepared me for my career.



GUCCI
PROENZA SCHOUER
A-K-R-I-S-

Elizabeth Wellons Waine

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Janelle McLaughlin

**Business Administration & Marketing Strategy
+ French (minor)**

CLASS
OF
2019



Why did you study French?

My French journey started in elementary school when I got the opportunity to attend a public French immersion elementary school. Since then, I have always appreciated the ability to speak a second language. While at UNCW, I made sure to keep up and improve my French language skills!

What do you do now?

Most recently, I returned to the US from spending time in Saudi Arabia in an English language teaching position at an international girl's school in the Eastern Province. Prior to my time in Saudi Arabia, I did get to use my French at work while working for 2 years at EF's International Language Campus in San Diego. I was the sole member of the staff on the San Diego team that spoke French, which allowed for many opportunities to put my French to use in order to assist francophone students at the school whose English may not have been as advanced. I love the opportunities for connection that speaking more than 1 language brings!



INTERNATIONAL
LANGUAGE
CAMPUSES

Janelle McLaughlin

MATHEMATICS

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

David R. Ansell

Mathematics and French

CLASS
OF
1967

CAREER HISTORY

Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director
1989 - 1991

Ecobank Transnational, Inc.

President
Prior

Citibank CJSC

Corporate Boards

Vice Chairman
2011 - Current

Equity Group Holdings Ltd.

Non-Executive Chairman
Current

Equity Bank Tanzania Ltd.

Non-Executive Chairman
-

Equity Bank Rwanda Ltd.

EDUCATION

Class of 1971

Thunderbird School of Global Management

Class of 1967

The University of North Carolina at Wilmington
University of Pennsylvania - The Wharton School



David Ansell, Outgoing Chairman with Prof Isaac Macharia, the Incoming EGH Plc Chairman during the Company's 16th Annual General Meeting held on 30th June 2020.



David R. Ansell

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Henry Tollefson

Chemistry & French (+ a minor in Mathematics)

CLASS
OF
2013



I am now a Head Coach for ***TOLLEFSON SWIMMING*** !

I'm a life-long competitive swimmer through high school and began coaching summer swimming while still in high school. In my current position as Head Coach, there is a focus on qualifying for top-level competitions such as Junior Olympics, IMX, ISCA, and Zones.

At UNCW, my second major was Chemistry. At the time, I wanted to apply for medical school. After graduation, I did a two-year post-baccalaureate fellowship at the National Institute of Health in Bethesda, MD. I worked in a retrovirology lab that studied retroviral budding, specifically HIV-1. I used my French quite a bit then to converse with French coworkers.

French was a huge part of my career at UNCW and has given me the opportunity to meet various wonderful professors, learn amazing cultural things and most importantly give me a different perspective.

Henry Tollefson

MUSIC

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Justine Benjamin

Pre-Med with French Studies major
Minors: Music, Chemistry

CLASS
OF
2021



I now work for Foundation Medicine in Morrisville, NC as an Accessioning Technician; Foundation Medicine is a molecular information company dedicated to transforming cancer patient care by providing specific genomic insights into each patient's cancer and matching them with relevant targeted therapies, immunotherapies and clinical trials.

My role as an Accessioner is to provide critical sample receipt and data entry while working closely with Client Services and Histology departments to ensure a short turn-around time of samples for our patients.

I am currently involved in several committees dedicated to improving the quality and efficacy of the company, including Enhancement, Engagement and Diversity Committees.

Study Abroad: Paris, France
(through IFE –Institute for Field Education/Internships in Franco-phone Europe)



During my IFE internship at L'Hôpital Bichat as a Lab Technician, I performed experiments focused on healing digestive cancer with a research team under the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research.

Justine Benjamin

NURSING

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Emma Dudding

BSN (Nursing) and French

CLASS
OF
2021



Why did you study French?

I'm a native speaker and I wanted to write and speak better and meet people from all over who speak French. I almost finished the major, but when the pandemic hit, I became very involved, as a Nursing student, in the fight against Covid, which meant that, alas, I couldn't finish it.

What do you do now?

I'm a behavioral health nurse here in North Carolina. I'm thankful for my UNCW French classes because we didn't just study French, but also feminism, trans-affirming care for the LGBTQ+ community and environmentalism, which, in fact, added so much to my nursing curriculum! In the research I've done for FRH 404, for instance, I learned about French scientific studies that now help me give patients more complete pain management care (e.g. advise to avoid high fructose corn syrup and red food coloring because those may interact with/inactivate their medications). Feminist concepts learnt in French class remind me that my goal when treating a woman is not to help her perform in the way a woman "should," but to help her body function as best it can so that she can make decision for herself (e.g. resist the pressure to be skinny on top of fighting a chronic digestive illness such as Crohn's or ulcerative colitis). I can see the many systems in place that are limiting certain populations; instead of treating depression or anxiety as simply a cognitive distortion, I can consider relevant racism, sexism and other prejudices as part of their story and healing process. In short, without my French classes I would have a very incomplete picture of medicine and the many beautiful ways it can be used. I feel far more confident as a health care provider because of what I was lucky enough to learn in my French classes.

Study Abroad: I had been accepted into the Washington University Pre-Med program in Nice, France but Covid had other plans...

PS: During nursing school I helped a woman who only spoke French deliver her baby.

Emma Dudding

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Angelina DeMarco

Nursing & French (minor)

CLASS
OF
2024

What do you do now?

I am a licensed RN working at Atrium Hospital! As a nurse, although I am not allowed to be a translator, I can help ease the pain of any French-speaking patients by speaking with them in their native language. In the future, I also hope to be able to visit France and other francophone countries and use the language with ease.

Why did you study French?

I studied French because I took it in high school and really enjoyed learning about all of the cultural aspects of France and other francophone countries. Being able to speak another language is a great skill and I enjoyed how beautiful French was to speak.



Angelina DeMarco

PHILOSOPHY

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Cristina Benavides

Philosophy, Political Science & French

CLASS
OF
2013

What do you do now?

I live in Peru and I'm the founder of , a brand of vegan nutritious foods made by women.

What did you do after graduation, related to French?

One year with AmeriCorps, followed by one year with Peace Corps in Cameroon! In Cameroon, I taught English as a foreign language in a secondary school in the town of Bahouoc, in the western part of the country; I also helped with health and agricultural projects. As an AmeriCorps VISTA member in Brooklyn, NY, I worked to improve public education in a poverty-stricken neighborhood. Most of the population were immigrants who couldn't speak English well or at all. Many came from French-speaking countries of the Caribbean or Africa. Even while working in this national service position, I learned that being able to speak French was an asset!



Study Abroad: Meknès, Morocco



Cristina Benavides

PHYSICS

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Melissa Elefante DuMond

Environmental Studies, Physics & French

CLASS
OF
1999

Current Employment

- California High-Speed Train Authority:
Director of Planning and Integration

Past Employment

- ARCADIS (an international consulting and engineering firm)
Environmental Planner

Studies after UNCW

- Master of Public Administration (MPA), NC State University
- Master of National Resources (MNR), NC State University
- AICP (American Institute of Certified Planners)



Source:



Melissa says: "As an environmental professional, you wear many different hats. [...] [Through my studies at UNCW], I got experience in everything from sampling to public relations."

Source: University of North Carolina Wilmington **magazine**

Melissa Elefante DuMond

POLITICAL SCIENCE

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Malia Benison

CLASS
OF
2019

Political Science, International Studies & French

Experience



Administrative Staff Lead

NC Department of Justice · Internship

Aug 2020 – Nov 2020 · 4 mos

Task Force for Racial Equity in Criminal Justice

District Attorney Intern

New Hanover & Pender County DAs office · Internship

Aug 2018 – Dec 2018 · 5 mos

Wilmington, North Carolina Area

Education (in addition to UNCW)



University of North Carolina School of Law

Juris Doctor

2019 – 2022



Qasid Arabic Institute

Modern Standard Arabic

2018 – 2018



AMIDEAST Education Abroad

French Language and Literature

2017 – 2017



Study Abroad: Rabat, Morocco

UPDATE:



Associate

ArentFox Schiff · Full-time Law Practice · Washington, D.C.

Malia Benison

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Walter Kearnan

**French and Business Administration
(International Business Concentration)
and Political Science**

CLASS
OF
2016



What did you do after graduation?

I was at first a Political Affairs intern, then a Regional Director, for The Borgen Project, a nonprofit that advocates to make global poverty a greater focus of US foreign policy. For two years, I also worked for Live Oak Bank as a Loan Closing Specialist in their Renewable Energy department. In that role, I had the unique opportunity to directly impact renewable energy projects across the US. I had the privilege of working alongside energy developers, industry experts and others to finance large-scale energy projects.

Study Abroad: Marseille, France
(through the UNCW – Kedge partnership)

What do you do now?

I joined the FBI and hope to do some overseas work and use my French language skills at some point. Prior to that, I was a Special Agent for the US Capitol Police where I primarily worked on the security details for House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi. I sometimes used my French with French, Canadian or Francophone visitors.

How did you like studying abroad in Marseille?

I LOVED IT!!!! I wish I could do it again.

Any notable achievements while studying French at UNCW?

My Honors Thesis with Dr. Juall was published in an undergraduate research journal!

Walter Kearnan

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Joseph Chambers

CLASS
OF
2013

French & International Studies (+ a minor in Politics)

What do you do now?

For the last five years, I have worked in fine dining at a lovely restaurant called Truluck's. I am a key employee, working as a server, lead bartender, banquet captain, wine & spirits educator, key manager, and corporate trainer. Truluck's is a wonderful place to work that has allowed me flexibility to travel frequently. Beyond vacationing abroad, I often use my language skills to study wine independently. Nearly every year, I've traveled abroad to various wine regions in Spain, France, Italy, and Germany. Most jobs wouldn't allow me the time off for that, so I'm very grateful to the restaurant industry for providing me all those opportunities.

TRULUCK'S
OCEAN'S FINEST SEAFOOD & CRAB

With credit to my French language skills, learning Spanish and Italian have been relatively easy. I'm not fluent, but I'm conversational in both languages. That never would have been a possibility without French. I recently moved to San Diego, California from Houston, Texas. Both cities have strong ties to Spanish speaking communities. I have plenty of opportunities to use Spanish on a daily basis. Even at work I am able to take care of guests in multiple languages. I'm very proud to have accomplished the various levels of proficiency in three languages over the last decade. None of it would have been possible without having studied abroad.

Can you tell us more about that?

Absolutely! I have however so many good things to say about how important and critical it was for me and my career... How about in another "There They Are Thursdays"?



Study Abroad: Nantes, France

Joseph Chambers

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Cristina Benavides

Philosophy, Political Science & French

CLASS
OF
2013

What do you do now?

I live in Peru and I'm the founder of  , a brand of vegan nutritious foods made by women.

What did you do after graduation, related to French?

One year with AmeriCorps, followed by one year with Peace Corps in Cameroon! In Cameroon, I taught English as a foreign language in a secondary school in the town of Bahouoc, in the western part of the country; I also helped with health and agricultural projects. As an AmeriCorps VISTA member in Brooklyn, NY, I worked to improve public education in a poverty-stricken neighborhood. Most of the population were immigrants who couldn't speak English well or at all. Many came from French-speaking countries of the Caribbean or Africa. Even while working in this national service position, I learned that being able to speak French was an asset!



Study Abroad: Meknès, Morocco



Cristina Benavides

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

John Lotan Corriher

Political Science & French

CLASS
OF
2011



What have you been up to since graduation?

From 2011 to 2013, I was **Director of Logistics** for the Charleston-based company Route des Vins Imports, LLC, founded by Frederick Corriher of Charlotte, NC, in association with Sharp Capital Group, LLC. Route des Vins Imports is a value-driven French wine import company dedicated to bringing high-quality, authentic wines from France to American consumers' tables. Frederick has used his relationships from 12 years of traveling in France to assemble a portfolio of wines made by dynamic, hard-working *vignerons*.

ROUTE DES VINS
Imports

In 2013, I joined OOCL (Orient Overseas Container Line), first as a Sales Analyst, then as a Process & System Support Business Analyst.



John Lotan Corriher

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Paris (Roxy) Rogers

Political Science & French

CLASS
OF
2023

Why did you study French?

I have family that is French, and I grew up in Belgium. I didn't want to lose the language!

What do you do now?

I am working in Belgium for a bank, and I use French all the time! I used to work at NATO too, and would use French there occasionally.

Can you give us more details about your internship in Paris with IFE?

I was Assistant to the Director of CEVIPOF, Politics & Political Life Research Institute, a major research center whose archives are three miles long. In addition to doing research for my "mémoire" (research paper) there at CEVIPOF, I was able to attend seminars, lectures and other events at SciencesPo, where CEVIPOF is located.

Regarding my internship properly speaking as Assistant to the Director, my supervisor described me in their report as "diligent, efficient, methodical and having good ideas." So yes, I guess you may say that the internship went very well!

Study Abroad: Paris, France
(IFE – Internships in Francophone Europe/Institute for Field Education)



Anything else you'd like to share?

The French department was one of my highlights at UNCW. The people working there are all some of the most lovely, kind, and intelligent people I know! I also loved working as a French tutor at the ULC.

SciencesPo
CEVIPOF

La Grand-Place de Bruxelles



Paris (Roxy) Rogers

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Catherine Turvin

International Studies & Political Science

Hello!! Just wanted to give you an update on what I have been up to in TAPIF! I was placed in Créteil in the suburbs of Paris (although it was very close to the city so I have lived in Paris with my partner) I was in a high school and it was so so amazing, I think my low level of French at the start helped the kids a lot because it forced them to really speak in English to me. Every day was a new learning experience for me, navigating through a new job and the French system and changing lessons based on English levels of the students. My school requested for me to return for a second year and I just received the email that I was accepted to renew! Thank you and all of the French department for helping me with this. I think immersion has truly helped my French level (although I could definitely use a few more classes lol) I hope everything is going well at UNCW!



Teaching Assistant Program in
FRANCE

* I have lived in Paris near here:



La Basilique du Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre

UPDATE:

Hello Dr. Juall, [...]

I have very much enjoyed my time in Paris, and I think next year I am going to pursue a master's degree at the American Graduate School in Paris in International Relations. I know I could do another year of TAPIF (my school already asked me to stay) but I think two years is enough for right now. I cannot thank you enough for helping me with this opportunity. I have changed so much the last two years and every day is something new.

Catherine Turvin

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Kate Wilson

Political Science & French

CLASS
OF
2011



Deloitte Manager, Human Capital Consulting

Employment while at UNCW:

Certified Tutor of French Language and Political Science (at the ULC)

Employment after graduation:



Deloitte

Further studies after UNCW?



University of Virginia Darden School of Business

Master of Business Administration - MBA

May 2024

Student organization officer position while at UNCW:

French Club Vice President



Félicitations!

Kate Wilson

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Rachel Keith

B.A., French and Political Science (NC State)
Master of Education (NC State)
Master of Public Administration (UNCW)

[NOTE: Rachel a obtenu son diplôme de NC State (une autre excellente Université), mais elle est aussi une balbuzard-pêcheur, depuis 2020 et sa Maîtrise! Aussi, elle est une figure importante de la vie locale de notre ville, Wilmington!]

Rachel, why did you study French in college?

I started French in middle school and wanted to continue building my knowledge.

What do you do now?

I am a reporter for WHQR Public Media. In 2007, I applied for the French Embassy teaching assistantship [TAPIF] and got assigned to La Réunion. It was a wonderful year abroad, and I learned some of the island's Creole as well. It was there that I knew I wanted to be a teacher, so I returned to NC State to pursue a Master of Education. I ended up teaching for about 8 years in North Carolina's public schools but then took a break to have a family. I returned to UNCW in 2017 to pursue a Master of Public Administration, thinking I wanted to go into local government. However, I got the internship at WHQR Public Media and fell in love with journalism. I think these threads come together to form a career in public service.

Teaching Assistant Program in
FRANCE

CLASS
OF
2005

CLASS
OF
2020



Study Abroad: Lille, France



La Grand Place de Lille



LA REUNION
l'île intense

Rachel Keith

PRE-MED

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Justine Benjamin

Pre-Med with French Studies major
Minors: Music, Chemistry

CLASS
OF
2021



I now work for Foundation Medicine in Morrisville, NC as an Accessioning Technician; Foundation Medicine is a molecular information company dedicated to transforming cancer patient care by providing specific genomic insights into each patient's cancer and matching them with relevant targeted therapies, immunotherapies and clinical trials.

My role as an Accessioner is to provide critical sample receipt and data entry while working closely with Client Services and Histology departments to ensure a short turn-around time of samples for our patients.

I am currently involved in several committees dedicated to improving the quality and efficacy of the company, including Enhancement, Engagement and Diversity Committees.

Study Abroad: Paris, France
(through IFE –Institute for Field Education/Internships in Franco-phone Europe)



During my IFE internship at L'Hôpital Bichat as a Lab Technician, I performed experiments focused on healing digestive cancer with a research team under the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research.

Justine Benjamin

PSYCHOLOGY

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Evan Athanassiou

Psychology and French

CLASS
OF
2011



I work for **audible** -leading creator and provider of premium digital spoken audio content- in New York City. My double major helped me get the position of Senior Manager, Talent Acquisition Operations in HR. I'm entrusted with maintaining the happiness of employees, whether it be through ensuring low burn out rates, company outings, or perks.

Study Abroad: Paris, France
(through the NC in Paris Consortium Program)

Evan Athanassiou

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Michelle R. Montpetit

**Business Administration and Management (Marketing),
Psychology and French**

**CLASS
OF
2014**

Current employment:

I serve as the Head of Financial Coaching at  **Facet**
Prior to joining Facet, I worked at two prominent wealth management
firms in the D.C. metropolitan area.

Education:



KEDGE
BUSINESS SCHOOL

International Business, French



Georgetown University
Certificate in Financial Planning

Study Abroad: Marseille, France

(through the UNCW Cameron School of Business and Kedge
Business School partnership)



Michelle R. Montpetit

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Emilie Szupryna

Psychology and French

CLASS
OF
2014

Current Employment: Director of Development



Past Employment:



Amherst
College



Study Abroad:



Czupryna worked her way quickly up the ladder at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She began her career as the Assistant Director of External Affairs for Communication & Events. She continued her employment with the University where she was promoted to Associate Director of College Events. In December 2017, Emilie was selected for the position of Assistant Director of Development and in 2018 was promoted to Associate Director of Development.

Source:



Emilie Szupryna

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Hannah (Lizzie) Harrop

**International Studies (Middle East),
French & Psychology**

CLASS
OF
2019



Why did you study French?

I grew up speaking French and wanted to improve my French to communicate with old friends and to open more doors & potential jobs.

What do you do now?

I work for the Department of Justice in finance, so I do not currently use French in my job. Still, I am so glad that I took French because I can better speak, write, and understand my first language (I grew up in France) and I believe I may use it in the future.



Hannah (Lizzie) Harrop

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Mason Hamberlin

**Creative Writing, with three (3) minors:
French, Psychology & English Literature**

CLASS
OF
2018

Current employment: English Instructor
University of Iowa



Past employment: Book Buyer & Manager
Epilogue Books, Brews, & Chocolate
Design, Marketing, & Social Media
Flyleaf Books



Further studies after UNCW: University of Iowa

Master of Fine Arts - MFA, Nonfiction Writers' Workshop

What was one of your highlights at UNCW, related to French?

I worked on a project in which I reviewed relief initiatives by Secours Islamique France (SIF), a nonprofit, and reported to New Tactics, a branch of the Center for Victims of Torture aimed at scoring the effectiveness of NGOs (and in turn, developing newer approaches to relief where old ones fail). This project required corresponding with SIF employees in French, as well as reading and assessing their francophone materials. Research regarding child slavery ("restaveks") in Haiti was conducted through Haitian, French, American news articles.

Mason Hamberlin

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Gloria Meiers

Psychology & French

CLASS
OF
2017

What do you do now?

I am a Clinical Research Coordinator at Duke University School of Medicine working on the National Consortium on Alcohol and Neurodevelopment in Adolescence (NCANDA) study. This longitudinal study spans across the US and examines adolescent substance use and how it relates to neuropsychological function and brain development (assessed using magnetic resonance imaging [MRI])



Study Abroad: Paris, France
(with NC in Paris Consortium)

Further studies after undergraduate diploma?



University of North Carolina Wilmington
Master of Arts - MA, Psychological Science
2017 - 2019



Gloria Meiers

PUBLIC HEALTH

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Mackenzie Westaway

Public Health and French



Why did you study French?

I love French and I wanted to broaden my language skills and my job opportunities!

What do you do now?

I have a full-time job at Husqvarna where I use my French to work with Canadian customers.



Mackenzie Westaway

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Madeleine (Maddie) Weick

French and Public Health –with Pre-Clinical Concentration

CLASS
OF
2019



Current Employment:



Other experiences?

I have worked for the American Red Cross and the Pender County/New Hanover Regional Hospitals. I recently concluded a 9-month online volunteer stint as the Coordinator for a UN social development program. One of my roles was to help connect medical volunteers with a healthcare center dealing with the Covid crisis in Douala, Cameroon. My ultimate career goal remains the same as it was in 2019: to contribute to the establishment and strengthening of centers that deliver HIV/AIDS-related public healthcare and social-educational outreach in Francophone African countries.

Study Abroad: Paris, France
(through the NC in Paris consortium)

Any notable achievements while studying French at UNCW?

Yes, applying both majors, I completed a DIS on "The Biopolitics of HIV" under the direction of Prof. Bliss. This thesis explored the public health implications of the stigma of HIV in francophone Africa and how it affects the transmission and the treatment of the virus. Literature, films and journals came from a variety of countries including Burkina Faso, Tunisia, Cameroon, Haiti, and South Africa.

UPDATE: Biochemistry & Molecular Biology Ph.D Student
University of Miami
Miller School of Medicine



Madeleine (Maddie) Weick

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Brinn McNutt

Public Health & French

CLASS
OF
2021



Why did you study French?

I became obsessed with French culture at a young age, not sure why! My mom and grandma both studied French and I started reading and watching movies centered around Paris and just decided it made sense that I learn French.

What did you do after graduation & what do you do now?

I spent a year teaching English in the Paris region after graduating with TAPIF. It was incredibly rewarding and made me rethink about my career path!

Then an opportunity came up to apply for a master's in public health at École des Hautes Études en Santé Publique, which is located in Rennes but has a campus in Paris. So I have just finished my first semester of my master's degree and am planning on doing an internship soon in Paris related to public health. I would love to stay in Paris after I graduate to work at a non-profit centered around sexual and reproductive health.

Is there anything you would like to share?

Studying abroad was the best decision I made! It set me up for moving to France later, which I have been dreaming of doing since I was 12.

Would you please share more about your study abroad experience?

Absolutely! Living in Paris was an experience unlike anything I had ever done before. It was especially unique because of my connection and admiration for the French language. The museums, gardens, restaurants and people of Paris made studying abroad so fun. Every day was a new adventure, sometimes a bit challenging to not be completely fluent in French, but very rewarding. I loved living with my host family, it made Paris feel like home almost immediately and allowed me to really integrate into French culture rather smoothly. They made Paris feel like home.

Study Abroad: Paris, France
(NC in Paris Consortium)



Brinn McNutt

**RECREATION, SPORTS LEADERSHIP & TOURISM
MANAGEMENT**

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Morgan Thomas

**Recreation, Sports Leadership and Tourism Management
& French (minor)**

What do you do now?

I currently work as a Senior Marketing Specialist at an architecture and interior design firm, LS3P. The firm has 12 offices across the Southeast and recently completed the expansion and renovation of Randall Library and Discovery Hall. It is very exciting and rewarding to work for a company that helps shape physical spaces that are meaningful and that expand learning opportunities for current and future UNCW students.

Out of college, I worked in corporate event planning and at a hotel in guest activities. As for my French studies, I take tutoring lessons about once a month. During these sessions, we review grammar exercises, read and discuss French news, and translate short stories. My younger sister is a sophomore at UNCW (my sister and I with Sammy Seahawk in the pic) and is currently taking French. Sometimes she calls me and we study together. [Years after graduating,] I still encounter French words, culture, and influences often—whether on items at the store, in the news, or through music. My aspirations are to continue learning French and to push myself to further develop my writing and speaking skills. I would love to travel to a francophone country and possibly take additional academic French courses.

Morgan Thomas



Study Abroad: Spring Break cruise on the Mediterranean with Prof. Eric Tessier and Prof. Jara—to be developed in a next TTAT!

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Morgan Thomas

Recreation, Sports Leadership and Tourism Management
& French (minor)

CLASS
OF
2021



Why did you study French?

I started taking French classes in high school and quickly grew to enjoy learning about the language and its culture. I knew I wanted to continue studying French, so I took it to fulfill my basic language requirements when I began at UNCW. I loved the classes and the professors, which led me to pursue a minor in French. Learning another language broadened my perspective and changed the way I view many things. It's hard to explain, but expanding beyond your own culture and language enhances the way you think. Minor in French also challenged me—writing papers in French and taking oral exams pushed me out of my comfort zone.

Study Abroad: Spring Break cruise on the Mediterranean with Prof. Eric Tessier and Prof. Jara—to be developed in a next TTAT!

Morgan Thomas

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Morgan Thomas

Recreation, Sports Leadership and Tourism Management
& French (minor)



Study Abroad: Spring Break cruise on the Mediterranean



I studied abroad with a group of students and two professors (Prof. Eric Tessier et Prof. Jara) on a cruise around the Mediterranean during a Spring Break. Our first stop was in Marseille, France. We also stopped in Rome, Palermo, Barcelona, Palma de Mallorca, and Milan. We

got to tour and experience many cities in a short amount of time. It was my first time out of the country. I also made some of my best friends to this day on that trip.



Morgan Thomas

SOCIOLOGY

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Maret Ellington

French and Criminology (plus a minor in Sociology)

CLASS
OF
2021

Why did you study French?

I started taking French in high school & fell in love with it! I wanted to keep learning and developing my skills so that I could become fluent and use it in my future endeavors. It was easy to keep taking classes at UNCW too because all the French professors are incredible, and each class is so fun and interactive!

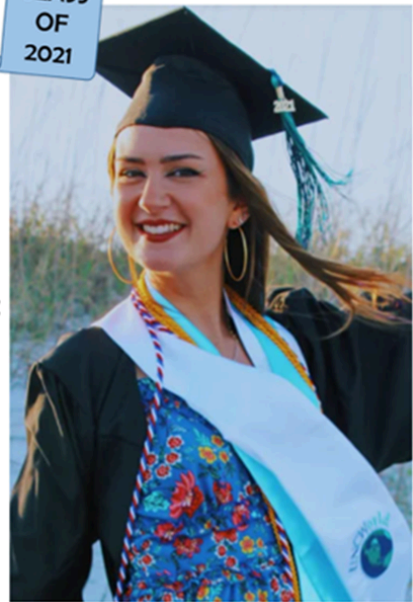
What do you do now?

I am currently attending NC State for a Master's in Social Work, and I am interning in a school within the Durham Public School System this year for my program. I also am working through an online tutoring system to tutor students in French to maintain my own skills and help others grow in theirs!

Is there anything else you would like to share?

In my senior year, I completed an Honors Thesis in French with Dr. Spieser-Landes and while it was a great challenge, it was an incredible experience that really helped me to grow in my abilities and communicate in French. I highly recommend looking into this departmental honors project if you have a specific area of interest in French culture!!

UPDATE: I've officially graduated from NC State with my Master's in Social Work! [...] I'm also very excited that I've accepted a position at Three Oaks Behavioral Health and Wellness as a clinical outpatient psychotherapist! Thankful is an understatement.



Study Abroad: Spring Break "Cruising the Cultures of the Mediterranean"
(through the UNCW Honors College)

Maret Ellington

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Elizabeth (Liz) Cherry

French & Sociology (+ a minor in Film Studies)

Current position:

Professor of Sociology at Manhattanville University



CLASS
OF
1999



How have you used French at work or in your life?

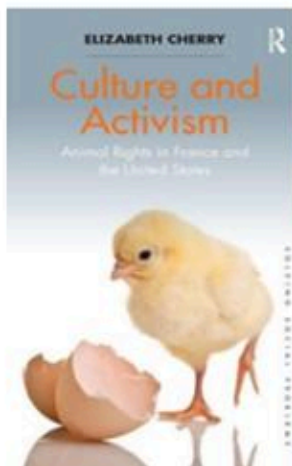
I have used my French major quite a bit in my career.

Study Abroad: Caen, France

In grad school, I got to work as a teaching assistant on a summer study abroad program in Avignon. Then I spent a year in France conducting ethnographic research (*en français, bien sûr*) for my dissertation, which led to my first book –about animal rights activism in France and the United States).

I also got to teach my own study abroad class in Paris one summer at my current institution.

I still visit France as often as possible, as I still have many friends from my time studying abroad!



Elizabeth (Liz) Cherry

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Elizabeth (Liz) Cherry

French & Sociology (+ a minor in Film Studies)

Current position:

Professor of Sociology at Manhattanville University



CLASS
OF
1999



Study Abroad: Caen, France

In last week's TTAT, we got to learn about how important French has been for your career. But why did you learn French in the first place?

I took French in high school and attended the North Carolina Governor's School for French. I specifically came to UNCW to study marine biology, and then that quickly changed. But I definitely knew I wanted to major in French. Coming from a small, rural town in eastern North Carolina, I loved how studying French language, literature, and cinema allowed me to virtually travel (and then literally travel when I took my junior year abroad at Université de Caen in Normandy).



**Governor's School
of North Carolina**



Elizabeth (Liz) Cherry

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Elizabeth (Liz) Cherry

French & Sociology (+ a minor in Film Studies)

Current position:

Professor of Sociology at Manhattanville University



CLASS
OF
1999



These past two weeks, we've learned about how study abroad shaped your life, and about how central to your job as a researcher French has been. Anything else you'd like to share?

Study Abroad: Caen, France

Je n'ai que des bons souvenirs! I truly loved the department –and still do! I mean, obviously I loved undergrad, as I chose to stay in school forever, haha. In addition to majoring in French, I worked in the department as a work-study student for several years, which also allowed me to get to know the professors better –including professors of other languages. I took courses with Ritt Deitz (now at Wisconsin), Jim McNab, Katia Campbell, and PJ Lapaire. I then came back from studying abroad and took a couple of semesters of German (is Raymond Burt still around?) I just loved how the department was so kind, and supportive, and treated us students like a little family.



Le Mémorial de Caen (Musée de la 2ème Guerre Mondiale)

Elizabeth (Liz) Cherry

SPANISH

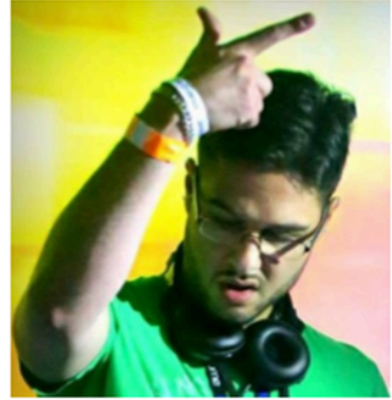
There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Ian Bernal

B.A. in Spanish and French

CLASS
OF
2008

I am the owner and DJ of I.G.B Entertainment. I have been living in the Northern Virginia area for the past several years now. I grew up in a military household that traveled frequently to places such as South Korea and Germany. I moved to the United States in the late 1990s, and later completed my Bachelor of Arts degree in Foreign Languages (Spanish and French) and Literatures at UNCW. While there, I found a passion for learning about different and amazing cultures. Being raised by my wonderful Puerto Rican parents, traveling the world, graduating from my University, and growing as an entrepreneur, have all given me the opportunity to develop into a diverse individual. I find it amusing when people ask me, "Where are you from?" There is always a little hesitation when I respond... after all, I've lived all over! The values I have obtained throughout my life have put I.G.B Entertainment in a great position as a trustworthy and professional business.



Ian Bernal

McKenzie Cooper

International Studies & French
+ Spanish minor

CLASS
OF
2019

Why did you study French?

I am so passionate about French language and culture, and the world that is opened when you can speak and understand a foreign language. I believe that everyone should have the opportunity to have their eyes opened to communities different from our own and be able to immerse yourself into that environment.

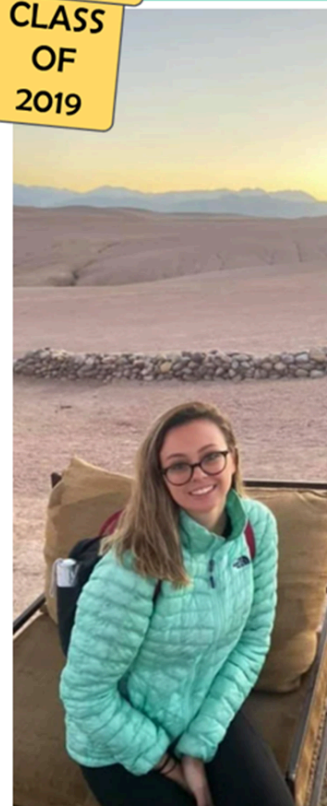
What do you do now?

I currently work for an HR Services company that works with French Canadian companies, providing customer service in French. After graduating from UNCW I continued with my French passion through the TAPIF program in Sarrebourg, France teaching English to French natives of all ages.

Anything else you would like to share?

Travel! I know the world is crazy these days and scarier than it has been, but I cannot stress enough how important it is to see the world when you can!

Teaching Assistant Program in
FRANCE



Study Abroad: Aix-en-Provence,
France

McKenzie Cooper

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

James Bailey

International Studies, Spanish & French (minor)

CLASS
OF
2018



Current Employment:



Operations Coordinator, Production & Sourcing

URBN (Urban Outfitters, Anthropologie Group, Free People & Nuuly)

I work with Urban Outfitters as a production and sourcing operations coordinator working with the daily logistics of the manufacturing for the home department. [...] I hope to one day leverage my French knowledge to get more international operations of the business.

Further studies after UNCW?



SKEMA Business School

Master of Science - MS · Global Luxury and Management

Why did you study French at UNCW?

Originally I had taken Spanish and always loved language, when I got to college I wanted to expand on that and so I decided on French and immediately enjoyed it.

Anything else you would like to share?

"Les cours de français et d'espagnol me manqueront toujours maintenant que je suis dans le monde 'réel'!"



Study Abroad: Marseille, France
AND Brussels, Belgium (IFE, Institute for Field Education/Internships in Francophone Europe)

Given my academic profile and interests, IFE matched me with Caritas, an international Catholic aid organization. I translated documents from French into English, and even Spanish. I also accompanied social workers in interviews with refugees. My supervisor made an effort to diversify my activities so that I could reach my goal to understand the complexity of the European immigration system.



"You will never regret studying abroad, do it as many times as you can before you graduate!"

James Bailey

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Jade Oakes

Spanish & International Studies + French minor

CLASS
OF
2018

What have you done since graduation?

I have been the owner of **Jade's Tutoring**, which is a business I started because I have a passion for languages and education. I believe that learning languages is important, and I wanted to provide a place for people to come and do just that. I also know that everyone learns differently. I enjoy getting to know the students and figuring out what methods work best for them. While at UNCW, I worked at the Tutoring Center as a Spanish tutor and earned my first level Lifetime Tutor Certification.

Can you please also tell us about your work with Pender County Schools?

Yes, I did work as a tutor of all subjects in three schools: Pender High School, Cape Fear Middle School and West Pender Middle School. I served the migrant population and worked either one-on-one or in small groups with students to help broaden their understanding of their assignments and to close any educational gaps that may have existed.

Any recent news you'd like to share?

In May 2023, I earned an Associate degree in Data Science and Programming Support Services from Wake Technical Community College. I then applied to graduate school and was accepted to University of Colorado Boulder, Indiana University Bloomington, University of Rochester, and Brandeis University. Brandeis offered me a merit scholarship and Rochester a tuition scholarship. I decided Brandeis would be the best choice for me, and I will be attending in the fall! I'm excited to take more linguistics courses as I really enjoyed the ones I took at UNCW—including Dr. Juall's FRH 308.



Study Abroad: Grenada, Spain;
Cusco, Peru; & Oaxaca, Mexico



Jade Oakes

STUDIO ART

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Susanna Pantas

Studio Art, Anthropology & French

CLASS
OF
2002



Study Abroad: Paris, France

EDUCATION

- 2002 Bachelor of Art, University of North Carolina at Wilmington. Cum Laude.
- 2000 University of Paris (the Sorbonne). Paris, France. Fall 2000. Concentration: French and Art History.



Contemplation: Monarch Dream
oil on canvas, 14"x11"

In all things of nature, there is something of the marvelous - Aristotle

Source: www.susannapantas.com

Susanna Pantas

THEATER

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni

Gigi Raines

Film Studies & French (+ a minor in Theater)

What do you know now?

I work for Life Out Loud Films, a production company that also provides production support and consulting services for both film and commercials.

Before that, some highlights include: I played Tom Hanks and Catherine Keener's daughter in the Oscar nominated film CAPTAIN PHILLIPS; I've worked on the major studio productions THE JUDGE, UNFINISHED BUSINESS, THE FORGER, AMERICAN HUSTLE in various capacities.



CLASS
OF
2009

Study Abroad: Dijon, France



How would you say did your French studies advance your career?

They helped in a myriad of ways! In almost every film I've been in or worked on, someone in the crew or actor has been to France, studied French or is from France. Having French in my arsenal has been invaluable form of striking up conversation and making a connection with someone. Also, my experience studying abroad, and doing an internship with ABB Reportages forced me to step outside my comfort level... It's the only way to get your foot in the door in this business and now I am pretty much fearless because of my experience in Dijon.

Abb
REPORTAGES

Gigi Raines

There They Are Thursdays: Stories of UNCW French Alumni



Grant Hedrick

CLASS
OF
2016

Theatre Performance & French



Study Abroad: Aix-en-Provence, France

Grant Hedrick

I am an actor currently based out of Atlanta, Georgia. I have had the pleasure to explore a multitude of characters during my acting career. I am proud that I am also proficient in French! I always list it under “special skills” in my resume, alongside Tae Kwon Do, guitar, and horseback riding.

After graduation, I worked for the New Hanover Public Library system, hosting conversation sessions in French for patrons.

Right now I am getting my MA in Library & Information Science from Valdosta State University while working full-time for the Cobb County Public Library.

