

Introduction

The quality of research activity in French at Westminster is underpinned by two well-established research groups: the Francophone Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Research Group (FACPRG), based in French Studies, and the Group for War and Culture Studies (GWACS), an inter-university group led by Westminster. Both groups continue to consolidate and develop a culture of innovative individual and collective scholarly production that includes editorship and publication of two peer-reviewed scholarly journals, the *Bulletin of Francophone Africa (BFA)* and *Journal for War and Culture Studies (JWACS)*, as well as a wide programme of research seminars, conferences and other activities with colleagues both nationally and internationally. Since 2001, the four members of staff entered in RA2 have published two monographs and over twenty book chapters and journal articles (covering cultural history, literature, cultural studies, visual culture, text and image studies). Two highly competitive grants were awarded by ILTHE for projects in the subject area linking research and pedagogy. Substantial research funding was also awarded by HEFCE/Subject Centre under the 'Routes into Languages' initiative, and by the AHRC under its Research Workshops (Museums and Galleries) Scheme, both of which are led by French and focused on extending our range of research activities into knowledge transfer, a key priority for the University.

1. Research Structure

1.1 French is located in the Department of Modern Languages, in the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Languages (SSHL). Research strategy is led by the Dean of School and managed by a School Research Director, with a Deputy Director (**Kelly**) whose brief is to manage and monitor the training and progression of research degree students. In 2003 SSHL established a series of seven research clusters, defined by cognate areas and working across established subject boundaries, thereby facilitating the sharing of existing expertise and collaborative partnerships, essential for smaller research areas. The two research groups in French are located in the European Historical and Cultural Studies Research Cluster (EHCS) (see <http://www.ac.uk/sshl/pdf/ehcs.pdf>). **Kelly** is one of two co-ordinators of the Cluster who manage a devolved research budget and sit on SSHL's Research Strategy Committee, which is responsible for the planning, delivery and monitoring of all School research activity and funding. The EHCS Cluster has a Research Office with a 0.6 administrator who provides support with funding applications and preparation of publications (including the two journals). The Cluster also provides dedicated research facilities for staff and doctoral students. At University level, WestmARC (Applied Research and Consultancy Office) further supports staff in bidding for external funding.

1.2 French benefits considerably from the collaborative research culture within SSHL, notably with English Literature (UoA57) and History (UoA62) in EHCS, as well as with other research clusters in Politics and International Relations, and in Language and Linguistics. Interdisciplinary and collaborative research is further enhanced by its research facilities being located in a 'hub' of

research centres (with the Centre for the Study of Democracy, and Centre for Arts Research, Technology and Education) and their respective programmes of scholarly activities.

1.3 The University has demonstrated particular support for research in French through its internal mechanisms for the allocation of research funding. RAE2001 monies were distributed to units of submission, and French was able to allocate QR money according to its research priorities, subject to clearly defined monitoring and auditing processes. After the withdrawal of national research funding for those areas that were rated 3a in 2001, it was able to continue development thanks to the University's creation of a central Research Development Fund, which recognised the strength of our research. A further source of funding was created in 2006 using increased fee income and focusing on the relationship between teaching and research.

1.4 **The Francophone ACP Research Group** (developed from the Maghreb Research Group, founded in 1991) focuses on colonial and postcolonial studies with an emphasis on the interface between France and the wider Francophone communities in North and Sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, and in the Francophone diaspora in France. It also publishes the refereed journal *Bulletin of Francophone Africa* (BFA), now in its fifteenth year. Its main areas of research continue to be social, political and cultural history, and linguistic and identity issues in the Francophone world, but recent research reflects a growing concern with visual culture, notably cinema and the visual arts, as evidenced in the publications of **Bray**, **Gill** and **Press**. This marks a planned and focused expansion of its interests since its inception.

1.5 Research in the Francophone ACP Group is in all cases clearly defined. **Bray's** research focuses on post-colonial relationships between France and her ex-colonies. Working with Calatayud (0.2 post in French at Westminster), her many publications have sought to highlight differences between the perceived monolithic French response to colonialism/postcolonialism, and the actual diverse approaches identifiable in French society, particularly in the productions of French popular culture. More recently, ongoing work with Gill on the Franco-Chadian filmmaker Mahamet-Saleh Haroun argues for its significance as a new departure from the frequently didactic films of Francophone sub-Saharan Africa. **Gill's** own research contributes particularly to the critique of visual productions from the colonial era. A major interest has been Orientalist painting of the mid to late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, resulting in the monograph published in 2003. Her current work focuses on themes related to historical context, postcolonial discourse (seeking to re-problematise Saidian theory), and visual expression. **Kelly's** main focus in this area concerns the politics and poetics of identity, and the work of textual memory. Her writings explore the question of the relationship between the writer's self and literary expression, and the ways in which the act of literary creation 'intervenes' in the world, and are engaged in the restoration of the complexity of cultural memory denied both by colonialist and nationalist discourses. **Press's** research over the last three years has focused on the works of contemporary female visual artists and writers of North African origin working in Europe, who deal with the aftermath of

colonisation and address the realities of postcolonial life, playing an important role in transforming Western views and concepts of migrancy. Her research is now developing around the geographical notion of a transitional landscape.

1.6 Since 2001, FACPRG has organised a series of research seminars, lectures, public talks, and a one-day conference with speakers from the Memorial Leclerc (Paris), University of Montreal, York University (Toronto) and University of Innsbruck; the latter by Dr Beate Burtscher-Bechter, Visiting Fellow in 2003-4 (see <http://www.wmin.ac.uk/sshl/page-1321>). The *BFA* celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2002 with a Round Table hosted by the French Institute: *Hybridity and the Postcolonial World*. In recent years the journal has included a wide range of authors and topics, focusing, for example, on the literature of various Sub-Saharan African countries including Cameroon, R. D. Congo, and Côte d'Ivoire, with contributions from Francophone scholars from or in the countries under study; the present situation and future prospects of Rwanda; the role and status of the French language in Egypt; and current broadcasting in France by members of the African 'diaspora'.

1.7 **The Group for War and Culture Studies (GWACS)**, founded at Westminster in 1995 to explore the relationships between war and cultural production in all its forms, and originally focusing on France in the twentieth century, has developed significantly since RAE2001. Very highly regarded in its field, the comments of one AHRC Assessor were that: '[GWACS] has revolutionised the cultural history of war in the twentieth century through its approach based on concepts of representation, memory and identity'. Its collaborative and interdisciplinary approach continues to be its driving force, reflected in its publications, its research seminar and annual conference series, and, most recently, the establishment of a refereed academic journal, the *Journal of War and Culture Studies (JWACS)*. While the scope of the journal embraces other European cultures, and indeed - for comparative analysis - the cultures of other major allies and adversaries in twentieth and twenty-first century conflicts (an expansion of GWACS's research concerns since 2001), France retains its position as a major focus of the Group's work. This is evident in both the composition of the journal's Editorial Board, and the position papers and articles contained in its first issue, which contains an overview of the past, present and future of war and culture studies. Future seminars/conferences in GWACS will coordinate with the continued development of the journal (<http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals.php?issn=17526272>).

1.8 Since 2001, GWACS - of which **Kelly** is the Director - has continued its research seminar series and annual conference. (The very full list of its activities can be found at <http://www.wmin.ac.uk/sshl/page-1322>.) Research seminars have included speakers from the UK (e.g. Oxford, Cambridge, Glasgow, UCL), as well as the USA, Canada, South Africa and Switzerland. Other highlights included a one-day Symposium *Violence and Language* (March 2002) organized with the Centre for the Study of Democracy, with speakers including Tom Paulin, and a two-day conference organised with UCL and the National Portrait Gallery, *War, Art and Medicine* (November 2003), when

speakers included Kate Adie, BBC Chief News Correspondent. In the annual conference series, supported each year by the French Embassy, *The Body at War* (June 2004) was organised in association with Carleton University, Ottawa, with speakers from the UK, France and USA. The three-day 10th annual conference *War without Limits: Spain 1936-39 and beyond* at the University of Bristol (July 2006) was also supported by a British Academy Conference Grant and by The Institute for Advanced Studies (Bristol), with speakers from the UK, Spain, New Zealand, USA, Canada, Australia, France, Ireland, Italy and Israel.

2. Staff and Students

2.1 Individual researchers, whether well-established, returning or new, are invited each year to bid, through the Research Cluster, for a share of internal research allocations. Most of the money allocated covers specified time for research, and is subject to a competitive bidding and monitoring process. Funding for research is also made available through the Departmental Staff Development Budget, administered by the Head of Department, which predominantly funds conference attendance and organisation, research-related travel expenses, and staff training. Staff are further expected to apply for external funding, encouraged via incentives in terms of internally-funded research time, and are supported in this at School level by the EHCS research support office and at University level by WestmARC.

2.2 In 2003, the University demonstrated its recognition of the strength of research in French by the promotion of **Kelly** to Professor of French and Francophone Literary and Cultural Studies. Since 2001, **Gill** has been awarded a doctorate through published work, following the publication of her well-received monograph. A supportive internal mechanism of research funding also allowed **Press**, who is submitted here for the first time in an RAE, to return to research with a focus on Francophone visual culture.

2.3 All members of French are integrated into a wider research culture. A further full-time member of French staff, **Cook** (administrative head of French), contributes to the research culture of FACPRG as Reviews Editor for the *BFA*. **Calatayud** publishes with **Bray**. As a practising translator, the work of another 0.2 member of staff, **Huc-Hepher**, is placed within the Language and Linguistics Research Cluster, and she is Project Researcher on the HEFCE-funded 'Languages and International Events' Research Project.

2.4 There are currently five part-time doctoral students in the subject area, with a particularly strong concentration of research student activity in Francophone Postcolonial Studies. **Randall** is also a Visiting Lecturer, whose research is supported by a School fee waiver. She was supported in 2006 to make a funding bid to the British Academy UK-Africa Partnership for a research workshop series on contemporary Cameroonian culture. Other doctoral students have made successful bids for fee payment to the EHCS Research Cluster, which has a bursary fund lodged with the Scholarships Office, and have been funded internally to carry out archival research in France.

2.5 SSHL is at the forefront of doctoral training in the University, covering the whole research degree experience from methodologies, to giving papers, to writing for publication, to preparing for the viva and after. **Kelly** co-organises the SSHL Research Student Training Programme and chairs the Research Degrees Committee. She is also Acting Chair, Research Degrees Committee for the University, and Chair of the University Research Students Committee. These structures (comprehensively reviewed since 2001) have been instrumental in maintaining and developing our high standards of doctoral research and training.

2.6 Two doctoral students in French, **Randall** and **Bolfek-Radovani**, established and organise the SSHL Graduate Forum for research students and are currently working on a new online postgraduate journal (<http://wmin.ac.uk/sshl/page-2315>). Both of these ventures have significantly enhanced the ways in which research students interact with each other, and are now integral to the School training programme. Students in French enjoy close links with the doctoral training programme and events at the Institute of Germanic and Romance Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London, regularly attending seminars and conferences there, and giving papers in the IGRS Graduate Forum. SSHL training events are also entered in the Database of Research in Modern Languages, administered from the IGRS.

2.7 In 2007, a former student (**Chevalier**; 0.5 Roehampton), whose doctoral work was co-supervised by Kelly with Nabil Farès, University of Grenoble (under the Eurodoc scheme) – and which is to be published in two volumes by L’Harmattan (2007/08) - was made Associate Researcher to the FACPRG. Also in 2007, **Dr Valerie Holman**, First Visiting GWACS Research Fellow, returned as GWACS Associate Research Fellow, following the completion of her Leverhulme Fellowship in Book History at the University of Reading. A monograph, focusing on British publishing in the Second World War and building on research work carried out while at Westminster, is to be published in Spring 2008.

3. Strategy

3.1 The strategy of this comparatively small team continues to be fostering individual, collaborative and interdisciplinary research to ensure a continuing national and international profile. The development of research through the work of our two research groups was the principal aim of research plans submitted for RAE2001, and both groups have successfully expanded their research activity, networks and fields of interest, attracting both visiting professors and associate researchers. The Department of Modern Languages as a whole also recognises issues concerning the age profile of staff, and the new Head is committed to a planned strategic emphasis, over the next five years, on the appointment of younger staff starting out on their research careers, as well as on fostering the research careers of existing staff.

3.2 The general aim of developing new and interdisciplinary approaches to French and Francophone Studies as outlined above will continue. The

principal outcome will be, as before, a critical mass of individual and joint publications with internationally-recognised journals and publishers, and the organisation of and participation in conferences in the UK and abroad. In the case of FACPRG, the focus will continue to be French and Francophone colonial and postcolonial studies with an emphasis on visual culture. A co-authored book is planned by **Bray** and **Gill** on sub-Saharan African cinema (including Haroun, Sembene Ousmane, Abderahmane Sissako). The *BFA* will continue to publish the work of national and international scholars in the field, and will serve to develop further its wide research contact network.

3.3 GWACS will continue to focus on the impact of war on culture with an emphasis on cultural history and on cultural production as a significant force that has shaped the experience, representation and memory of war. **Kelly's** current projects include a study of the place of biography in Franco-British cultural relations (as a member of the Steering Group of the 'Culture FB' network of French and British scholars), which includes a focus on relations during war-time, and an edited volume on the theme of *Private Selves and Public Histories: The Self as Witness to History in the Twentieth Century*. The *JWACS* will also work to extend the Group's already substantial contribution to the emphasis on war as a cultural rather than solely political and/or military phenomenon. The journal includes an Editorial Assistants Board comprised of younger academics in the field, which will work alongside the main Editorial Board, and this is envisaged as a particularly concrete way of supporting younger researchers in the subject.

3.4 Among the department's specific targets for the next five years must be to continue to secure funding from external bodies for both individual and group projects. We have had notable successes in gaining such funding for two projects since 2001, detailed in Additional Information below. However, we still wish to take this further. Both the Cluster and the University have devoted considerable resources in this regard, and we are confident of our growing ability to make successful bids for external funding in the future. A further aim in 2001 was the development of our postgraduate programme, which has again been fulfilled, with further doctoral applications for 07/08. A portfolio of MAs for the Department of Modern Languages is currently at the planning stage, based on the model of the MA French and Francophone Studies, again developing the strength of our graduate base.

4. Additional information

4.1 French is at the forefront of Languages and Humanities-based Knowledge Transfer at Westminster, key to the sustainability of its wider research environment. **Kelly** is Co-ordinator and Principal Investigator for a research project entitled 'Museums and Galleries and the International Visitor Experience' (MGIVE) focusing on the gap between the information provided for international visitors and their linguistic and cultural expectations. The project originated in French, and now covers six languages. A pilot project was funded by the Research and Consultancy office of the University, and a workshop series is currently being funded by the AHRC (£16,000). Steering Group members include the communications and marketing directors of the National Gallery, the V&A and the British Museum. It has further attracted the

interest and support of London's other leading galleries and museums, resulting in invitations to present the findings at the conferences of the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA) and UKINBOUND (Association of UK Tour Operators) in December 2007.

4.2 In May 2007 Westminster was awarded the HEFCE-funded 'Languages and International Events' Research Project (£40,000), under the Subject Centre-managed 'Routes into Languages' initiative, to report on the contribution that can be made by HE language departments to high-profile international sporting and cultural events such as the Olympics, and on ways to apply their knowledge and expertise to develop the national role of HE languages as a motor of economic and civic regeneration, producing mutual benefits and raising the profile of HE languages amongst the broader public.

4.3 In addition, the Department of Modern Language's successful bids to the University's own Centre of Excellence for Professional Learning in the Workplace, and the establishment of an intercultural communication consultancy with Westfocus (www.westfocus.org.uk; led by **Kelly** with WestmARC), ensure a high profile for Modern Languages, and for French in particular, in another priority area for Westminster.

5. Esteem Indicators

Kelly was made Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques by the French Government in 2006, in recognition of her services to French language, literature and culture. Her national committee roles include: member of AHRC Peer Review College (also Independent Assessor and Referee); elected Ordinary Member of the Executive Committee of the Association of University Professors and Heads of French (2004-2007), and Secretary in 2007. She currently represents French Studies subject area associations at Advisory Board of Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies. She was also an invited member of 'comité scientifique' for two international conferences in 2004, commemorating the centenary of the signing of the Entente Cordiale, and financed by the French Embassy in London and British Embassy in Paris; an invited member of Steering Group of the resulting research network, 'Culture FB'; and an invited member of coordinating team of Modern French History Seminar, Institute of Historical Research since 2005. Advisory roles include: member of Advisory Panel for Centre for the Cultural History of Modern War, University of Manchester; member of 'Expert Group' for HEFCE review of research in Modern Languages and review of Benchmarking Statement for Languages and Related Subjects (invited by Subject Centre for Language, Linguistics and Area Studies). She has been external examiner for research degrees at Universities of Leeds (2001); Paris III-Sorbonne Nouvelle (2002); UCL (2004); Goldsmiths College London (2004); Ulster (2005); Birkbeck College London (2006 and 2007); Oxford Brookes (2007). Kelly's editorial work includes: Founding Editor *JWACS*; board member *Francophone Postcolonial Studies*; refereeing for *International Journal of Francophone Studies*, *Modern and Contemporary France*. Invited lectures, seminars and conference papers include, among many others: School of Advanced Study, University of

London, Institute of Romance Studies (2001 and 2002); Trinity College Dublin (2002); Université de Savoie (2003); Queen Mary University of London, centenary of French department conference (2006); Université de Versailles-Saint Quentin en Yvelines (2007). Kelly's monograph *Autobiography and Independence* was also the subject of a long review article in the electronic journal *H-France Review* (available at www.h-france.net/vol6reviews/zimra.html).

Gill was invited by the BBC in 2003 to take part in a filmed interview on Delacroix for the Open University programme, 'Delacroix', as part of the *Enlightenment and Romanticism* series (BBC/Open University). **Bray** and **Gill**'s collaborative research has produced a number of invitations to speak at the annual conferences of the Society of Francophone Postcolonial Studies and the Conseil International des Etudes Francophones (CIEF). Following a joint paper given at CIEF in July 2007, they have been invited to organise a session on Cinema and 'Francophonie' in Limoges in 2008. They are also editors of the *Bulletin of Francophone Africa*. **Press** gave a number of invited papers on the theme of transcultural representations, including at Queen's University Belfast, Frankfurt-am-Main, and University College Dublin. Both **Bray** and **Press** received ILTHE Small Grants Awards.