

### **Kate Melberg IRIS Award Update**

I used the IRIS funds to attend a private language school (ILA) in Montpellier, France. This course cost 3,500 euros, and the remainder of the funds was distributed to me as a per diem to cover some of the costs of my meals and travel. A typical day at the language school involved 4-6 hours of instruction in small class groups and 1-2 hours of individual tutoring. This accelerated pace allowed me to learn a large amount in a relatively short amount of time. After attending eight weeks of school, I was able to complete the A2 level of reading, speaking, and writing and move into B1. This level of language acquisition would normally demand at least a semester of study (something I wouldn't have time for during the academic year) but the intensity of the program allowed me to make progress quickly. This instruction has allowed me to read texts in French for my courses with much more speed, and has brought me closer to passing the French reading exam required for my degree.

The IRIS funds also covered my homestay with a French woman. She assisted me with my studies and helped me learn to navigate the city. In addition to language acquisition, I was able to use my weekends in France to visit ancient Roman sites across the Riviera, including the Théâtre Antique d'Orange, the arena and bath ruins in Nimes, an ancient warehouse in Arles, and multiple triumphal arches. I was also able to visit the museums surrounding these monuments. As I am a graduate student in the CANES department, this kind of contact with ancient sites was invaluable.

The ultimate goal of this travel was to establish a base level knowledge of French which would later allow me to pass the French reading exam and make use of works in that language in my studies and research. I have been continuing my language studies independently and plan to take the exam in December.