

Newsletter, 2020-2021

Northwestern | Department of German



Letter from the Chair



Message from the Chair:

Just a few days ago, sixty of our undergraduate students, staff, and faculty gathered to celebrate the annual end-of-the-year Grillfest on the lawn outside of Kresge Hall. It was our first in-person event since the COVID-19 pandemic began in March of 2020, and I very much hope that this event was the first of many steps towards a return to campus in the fall. Without the dedication of our brilliant faculty and staff, the last year of zoom-meetings and remote instruction would have been even more difficult. The end of this academic year presents the perfect opportunity to celebrate these achievements.

I would also like to congratulate our graduating majors and minors and wish them all the best for their future. While it is unfortunate that their junior and senior years were so deeply affected by the pandemic they more than overcame these difficulties and excelled.

Although we will likely return to in-person instruction in the fall, the traumas and losses of the last year will not simply disappear. Therefore, I would like you all to join me and the Department of German to continue to work through these challenges and create a sense of community that is shaped not only by the experiences of the pandemic, but also by and the political upheavals that took place in 2020/21. I think it became painfully clear that health is not just a medical but is also a social issue. When we can meet in person again, we should all strive to work towards an atmosphere of diversity, equity, and inclusion that is sensitive to the varied experiences of all members of our community.

Best,
Jörg

Jörg Kreienbrock
Professor
Chair
Dept. of German
Program in Comparative Literary Studies



Faculty Spotlight: Christine Helmer

Professor Christine Helmer published three books in 2020: an edited volume, [The Medieval Luther](#), with Mohr Siebeck, a publishing house in Tübingen, Germany; the Korean translation of her monograph, [Theology and the End of Doctrine](#), with 100 Publishing in South Korea; and a Chinese translation of an unpublished monograph, *A Constructive Theology in Conversation with Christians in Tainan*, published by the Taiwanese Presbyterian Church Press. Professor Helmer also published a number of essays: “The Priesthood and its Critics” that looks at how Luther’s idea of the ordained priesthood appropriates the political thought of fourteenth-century Franciscan philosophical theologian William Ockham; “The Primacy of Intersubjectivity in Schleiermacher’s Dialectics,” in a volume celebrating the 250th birthday of Friedrich Schleiermacher and the 200th anniversary of Hegel’s tenure at the University of Berlin; “To Refer or Not to Refer, That is the Question,” in a volume analyzing the phenomenon of visibility in art and

language; as well as shorter essays “[The Medieval Luther: A New Direction in Luther Scholarship](#)”; and “[human](#)”. Dr. Helmer gave a talk at the University of Edinburgh (on zoom) entitled “Towards a Post-Critical Hermeneutics and Why This Matters for Theology.” She organized and moderated a panel, “New Directions in Luther Scholarship,” at the 2020 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion. Professor Helmer taught a brand-new graduate course in both the German and Religious Studies departments, “Critical Theory and Religion”; a first-year seminar on religion and politics in the Olympics from 1936 (Berlin) and 1968 (Mexico City); as well as a course for 50 students in the Religious Studies department, “Introduction to Theology.” Professor Helmer worked with three students on a WCAS Baker Grant for Undergraduate Research during the summer 2020 on a project addressing the kind of knowledge that theology contributes to the contemporary university.



Doerte Bischoff

New Faculty Member Profile: Doerte Bischoff

Doerte Bischoff is Professor of 20th Century German Literature and Contemporary Literature and the Director of the Walter A. Berendsohn Research Center for German Exile Literature. She also taught at the Universities of Siegen, Münster, and Cincinnati. Her research areas include: Literature, Exile, and Migration; German-Jewish Literature; Memory Studies, Gender Studies, Transnationalism and Transculturalism in Literature. She is the author of *Poetischer Fetischismus: Der Kult der Dinge im 19. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Fink 2013), and *Ausgesetzte Schöpfung: Figuren der Souveränität und Ethik der Differenz in der Prosa Else Lasker-Schülers* (Tübingen: Niemeyer 2002). She also edited several volumes including *Figuren des Transnationalen: (Re-)Visionen der deutschsprachigen Gegenwartsliteratur*; *Handbuch Literatur & Transnationalität*; and *Literatur und Exil. Neue Perspektiven*. She is also an editor of *Exilforschung: Ein internationales Jahrbuch*, herausgegeben im Auftrag der Gesellschaft für Exilforschung / Society of Exile Studies. Her numerous essays cover a broad range of topics including Exile Literature, Transnationalism, Holocaust Literature, Fetishism, Gender Studies, and Rhetoric.

German Department Faculty Updates

Erica Weitzman - Erica Weitzman was promoted to Associate Professor in June of 2020. Professor Weitzman's second book, *At the Limit of the Obscene: German Realism and the Disgrace of Matter*, came out in February 2021 with Northwestern University Press. She has since presented her book in online talks at the University of California, Berkeley, Columbia University, and the German Department at Northwestern, and organized the panel "Realism as Theory" at the 2021 American Comparative Literature Association, where she delivered a paper on materialism and late style in the novelist Wilhelm Raabe. Her essay "Better Weapons," a commentary essay on Paul North's Kafka-study *The Yield*, appeared March 2021 in the online forum *Syndicate* (<https://syndicate.network/symposia/philosophy/the-yield>). In June 2020, Professor Weitzman was awarded an AT&T Research Fellowship from Northwestern University for the years 2020-2022.

Samuel Weber - Due to Covid, my "travels" were mainly on Zoom. I gave a double seminar in November for Shanghai University, organized by Shannon Zhang, a former visiting graduate student in German now teaching at that University. The seminar was organized around some chapters of a forthcoming book of mine on "Singularity: Politics and Poetics." In March I did a similar seminar-discussion with faculty and students of Dundee University in Scotland. Otherwise, the book on Singularity is scheduled for publication as I write this, i.e. in May of 2021, by the University of Minnesota Press. Finally, I completed work on a book entitled "Pre-existing Conditions: Recounting the Plague," which uses Walter Benjamin's theory of storytelling as a framework to analyze the ways plagues are narrated. I am currently negotiating with publishers and hope that the book will appear in early 2022. I have been invited to give "keynote" lectures at Brown University for the Spring of 2022, and at a Derrida Today conference planned for June 2022, to be held in Washington, DC.

Peter Fenves - Peter Fenves: In 2020 Stanford University Press published a volume I co-edited with Julia Ng that

is dedicated to Werner Hamacher's writings on Friedrich Hölderlin. In June this year Stanford University Press will publish an expansive volume organized around a new translation of Walter Benjamin's influential essay "Toward the Critique of Violence" (originally published in 1921, hence in the early years of the Weimar Republic). This, too, I co-edited with Julia Ng, who received her PhD from Northwestern's CLS program. A dozen or so items of mine appeared in various venues, including old and new essays that were translated into Italian, Greek, Chinese, and Spanish. I also wrote a foreword to Anthony Adler's wonderful new book, *Politics and Truth in Hölderlin*, which derives in part from a dissertation he produced for the Northwestern German department (Camden House Press).

Prof. Anna Parkinson wins Kaplan Fellowship



Jörg Kreienbrock - Jörg Kreienbrock is finishing a long-term project on questions of philosophical, scientific, and literary representations of space in early 20th century Germany under the title *Anti-Copernican Turns: World, Field, Structure*. He presented a paper at the ACLA on the famous first sentence of Heimito von Doderer's novel *Die Strudlhofstiege* and prepared a forthcoming essay on "Precarious Property: Poetic Appropriations in Adam Müller and Ludwig Tieck." In December, he presented his recently published book *Sich Weltall orientieren* at the IFK, Vienna. A

video trailer for the event can be found here: <https://www.ifk.ac.at/medien-detail/trailer-zu-sich-im-weltraum-orientieren.html>

Anna Parkinson - In Fall 2020, Anna Parkinson's three-year collaboration with WiSER (Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research), University of Witwatersrand, South Africa, part of the Mellon-funded project "Critical Theory in the Global South," culminated in her teaching an interdisciplinary graduate course. Titled "Trauma, Politics, and the Uses of Memory," the course was curated with visiting predoctoral Mellon Fellow Candice Jansen (WiSER). Professor Parkinson has two forthcoming essays drawn from her project on the fiction and psychoanalytic writing of Jewish-German exile Hans Keilson. For the upcoming academic year, she received a fellowship at the Kaplan Institute for the Humanities for her project "Contrapuntal Humanism: The Afterlives of Humanism in Holocaust Studies." Due to COVID-19, she postponed until Summer 2022 planned research trips abroad towards her new project on forensic evidence.

Franziska Lys - This academic year Professor Lys was focused on researching, developing, and sharing sound practices with faculty members for teaching languages virtually. Based on survey results from faculty and staff at Northwestern, she was named Influencer by the Searle Center for Advancing Learning and Teaching (along with other 22 faculty members). According to the faculty development research literature, an influencer is an individual who is central to shifting the perspectives and practices of a group of faculty. Research demonstrates that the influencer's role is key as a change agent within a community of practice. Professor Lys was also instrumental in leading a discussion among chairs of language departments and the WCAS Dean's office about reducing the current 9-course load for language instructors. She is excited to report that, beginning Fall 2021, all non-tenure line faculty are now required to teach only 6 courses a year for full-time status. When not researching and developing new teaching materials, Professor Lys takes care of German majors and minors in her

role as Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS). She is also responsible for keeping the electronic course catalogue up-to-date, for helping develop the early and quarterly schedule, and for attending regular DUS meetings. Professor Lys also works with the faculty in the Middle East and North African Languages Program which she has been directing for the last three years. As program director she is responsible for hiring, reappointment, and promotion of faculty, new course development and budgeting. One of the highlights this year was the development and implementation of six new courses in the MENA Languages program using new ACTFL goals with accompanying can-do-statements. The six new courses were: exploring the multi-faceted language and cultural history of The Thousand and One Nights (in Arabic), two courses on Media in the Middle East (one in Arabic and one in Hebrew), and three culture courses (Cairo and the seven layers of civilization (in Arabic), The four-dimensional Jerusalem (In Hebrew), and Istanbul, gateway between the East and the West (in Turkish). Many of the course development activities were supported by grants. Professor Lys presented these new teaching approaches together with the instructors at several conferences throughout the year.

Isabel von Holt - research and teaching interests include the dialogue between the early modern and the (post-)modern, cultural theory, and transnational literature with a specialization on literary relations between Germany and Latin America. She holds a PhD in Modern German Literature and an MA in German Philology and Latin American Studies, all received from Freie Universität Berlin. Prior to joining the Department of German at Northwestern University, she was a research associate at the Collaborative Research Center "Episteme in Motion" and at the Department of German and Dutch Philology at Freie Universität Berlin. Her first book *Figurationen des Bösen im barocken Trauerspiel* is forthcoming at De Gruyter in the "Frühe Neuzeit" series. Her study deepens the understanding of 17th century literary and cultural production by reassessing the dramatic writing from authors such as Andreas Gryphius and Daniel Casper von Lohenstein as an aesthetics of evil avant la lettre. The book project received awards from the Fonte-Stiftung, the Ernst-Reuter-Gesellschaft (ERG) and Deutscher Akademikerinnenbund (DAB). Her next

project 'Barocke' Bewegungen: Literarische Praxis und Kulturtheorie in Deutschland und Lateinamerika seit 1970 explores the postmodern afterlives of the pre- and early modern in a comparative framework. This project was awarded a DAAD Postdoctoral Fellowship and a Hilde Domin Fellowship for German-Latin American Literary Relations.



Students in Professor Zeller's German 245 visit downtown Chicago

Ingrid Zeller - In Summer 2020, Ingrid Zeller taught German 102, served as an AP Reader, and gave an invited workshop on Black Germans for the Maryland AATG Chapter together with Mohamed Esa, McDaniel College, and Mariah Ligas, Antietam High School. In Fall 2020, she gave virtual presentations on Beethoven and Beyond in honor of Beethoven's 250th Birthday, and on Games for all Seasons at the ICTFL (Illinois Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) Conference. At the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) Conference, she co-presented on Teaching Diversity and Inclusion through Short Films and also gave an invited presentation on short films and Black Germans for the Connecticut AATG Chapter. At the CSCTFL (Central States Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) Conference in March, Ingrid gave a presentation on Beethoven and

Beyond and on Shadows of the Past, Visions of the Future, in which she discussed the recent espionage series Deutschland 89. Most recently, she co-presented with Mohamed Esa again on Teaching Diversity and Inclusion through Short Films at the NECTFL Conference (Northeast Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) in April.

As coordinator of the film series, she is delighted to have had the opportunity to invite filmmaker Sheri Hagen to speak with the German Department about her film *Auf den zweiten Blick* as part of an initiative with the Goethe-Institut Chicago in December. Ingrid is grateful for the extraordinary collaboration with fantastic students and colleagues at Northwestern and the AATG and the Goethe-Institut. As advisor for the GUAB (German Undergraduate Advisory Board), she applauds the creative GUAB initiatives during this challenging year, and, most recently, the GUAB's active engagement during the eighth annual cross-institutional German college immersion experience in Illinois!

Denise Meuser - Denise Meuser serves as the Coordinator for the Beginning German program. Because the pandemic forced all courses online, a lot of work and collaboration went into getting the 101 curriculum Zoom-ready. Students will wrap up the year by performing their own dialogues during class. Let's hope 2022 will see the return of the German Department's Evening O'Skits- a cherished tradition! In addition to her teaching, Denise presented "Language through Art" as part of ACTFL's first virtual conference this past fall. She also joined the Master of Science in Higher Education Administration and Policy program. A course focusing on the law and ethics in higher education and a seminar on the theories of effective leadership have proven especially valuable. With the summer just around the corner, Denise is looking forward to garden projects and a family trip to South Carolina's Kiawah Island.

John Paluch - 2020/2021 Northwestern academic year began like many others since John Paluch's arrival in the Department of German in 1990. There were talented and enthusiastic students in his German 101 classes. Always with an eye on helping students to

find their own path to study German, John continued his tradition of allowing himself to fall into English if he felt that there were advantages to not sticking to his axiom “We can do it all in German.” The pivot to remote teaching allowed for experimentation with Zoom and the integration of all things German through the infinite resources available through the WWW. In the end, instruction through Zoom was liberating and expansive, with more live discussions with Germans, explorations of cities and an esprit de corps amongst the students that has to be the strongest ever established during any individual course. A year to be remembered!

Martina Kerlova - Martina has spent the past academic year teaching in both of her home departments, German and Slavic. In the German department, she continued as Coordinator of Intermediate German.

In Slavic, she continued to serve as Director of Undergraduate Studies and also taught a course about the Czechoslovak New Wave Film. Martina received a Provost’s Grant to conduct research in summer 2019 at the German Literature Archive in Marbach am Neckar about the work and life of Erich Heller, a Professor of German and the first Avalon Chair in Humanities at Northwestern University. She is also translating from Czech into English a memoir written by Heda Kaufmannová, a Jewish intellectual who was active in the anti-Nazi Czech underground and hid in Prague during the war.

Robert Ryder - Apart from teaching first and second year German, Rob has worked over the course of the last year to transfer all three business German courses for online instruction. He also continued his research in German and sound studies. He just submitted a double book review for Kata Gellen’s *Kafka and Noise* and Tyler Whitney’s *Eardrums*, which will be published in the journal, *Modernism/Modernity* this summer. He is also excited for the publication of his first book, *The Acoustical Unconscious: From Walter Benjamin to Alexander Kluge*, which will be available with De Gruyter Press in late Fall 2021.



Spring Trip Downtown: Bauhaus Architecture

Spring 2021 presented the exciting opportunity to conduct the course **German 245: Bauhaus and Beyond: German Influences on the Chicago Skyline** as a hybrid course. 15 advanced German students learned about the history of the Bauhaus and the influence of German architects on the Chicago skyline. The students gave their own German tours of selected buildings on the Northwestern Campus in small groups, wrote articles and filmed videos about campus buildings and Chicago buildings, and participated in an architectural river cruise along the Chicago River, led by Professor of Instruction Ingrid Zeller, also a volunteer docent for the Chicago Architecture Center.

Special course highlights further included virtual talks and discussions with German American architect Dirk Lohan, who is also Mies van der Rohe’s grandson, and German architect Joachim Schuessler of Goettsch Partners. The course culminated in interactive student presentations on a wide range of relevant architectural topics. A huge thank you goes to the German Department, WCAS, and the Council on Language Instruction for supporting the activities in the course!

Student Award Winners:

Award for Outstanding Achievement in First-Year German

Xamantha Laos Cueva, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, Class of 2024

Jorja Siemons, Medill School of Journalism, Marketing, Integrated Marketing Communications, Class of 2024

Award for Outstanding Achievement in Second-Year German

Sofia Stutz, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, Class of 2023

Samuel Rosner, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, Class of 2023

Géza von Molnár Award - Essay Award

Nikol N Kralimarkova, Weinberg College of Arts and Science, Class of 2021

Essay: *Uncertainty: an ultimate condition*

Alexander Milne, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, Class of 2021

Essay: *The City in Cinema; Cinema in the City*

Elizabeth Vogt

Essay: *Lifting "The Fear of a Lifetime": Kafka's "Odradek" and Bachmann's "The Barking" in Conversation*

Géza von Molnár Award - German Achievement Award

Jessa Shortridge, Bienen School of Music, German minor, Class of 2020

Essay: *Vergiss nicht die Vergangenheit: Perspektiven in Nachkriegs-
skurzgeschichten*

Fellowship Winners:

Mackenzie Gentz (WCAS '22) is the 2021 recipient of the Circumnavigator travel grant. She will be traveling to: Cuzco, Perú; Lisbon, Portugal; Forsthart, Bayern, Germany; Prague, Czech Republic; and Osaka, Japan. Her project looks at English as a Second Language (ESL) programs with regard to the language background of the program's city, the relative centralization of the program's curriculum, and the degree of accent training each program involves. The overarching goal of this research is to be able to make US policy recommendations about how to improve the way we teach ESL in the United States. Mackenzie was also elected as a junior Electees for Phi Beta Kappa

Christopher Mazurek was elected as a junior Electees for Phi Beta Kappa.

Chuyue Liu received a DAAD Study Scholarship 2020/2021

Orion Forowycz is currently an alternate for USTA in Austria

Erica Henschen (WCAS) received the Fulbright ETA to Germany

Kenya Lewis-Alexander received a RISE grant to go to Hannover in the summer.

Esil Elling (Philosophy), received the prestigious DAAD

Sashi Ayyangar (Musicology), received the prestigious DAAD

Enzo Vasquez Toral (Performance Studies) received the prestigious DAAD and the 2021 Language Grant

Congrats to the Class of 2021



Congratulations to all of our German majors and minors who graduated in June 2021. Below, our students tell prospective students why they studied German and what mattered to them most in choosing this path. You can also read about their career plans and personal dreams for the future.

Majors

ERICA HENSCHEN

I started learning German when I studied abroad in Hannover for six months in highschool. Prior to that, I hadn't taken any German classes and knew nothing about the culture or the language. Upon returning home from my time abroad, I decided to further my education in German by majoring in it here at Northwestern. I never would have guessed how many opportunities this decision would create for me. Since becoming a German major, I have studied abroad in Berlin, become co-chair of the German Undergraduate Advisory Board, become an ambassador for the Global Learning Office, and was even given the



opportunity to research sustainability efforts in Hamburg over spring break. I am extremely grateful for the time and effort every single individual in the German department has put into helping me succeed and grow not only as a student, but also as an individual. Thanks to them, I will be returning to Germany this upcoming year to teach English through Fulbright's English Teaching Assistant program.

Minors

SOREN CAMPBELL

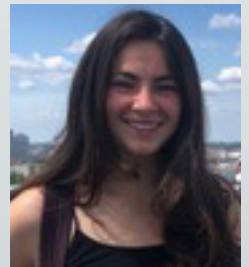
I initially took German language classes at Northwestern to fulfill my foreign language requirement, but I decided to minor in German as I found myself enjoying the language and wanting to



take my German education further. I later studied abroad in Berlin during the fall of my junior year, which was a great experience, allowing me to immerse myself in the culture and language even more. The classes I took in the department ranged from German literature to philosophy and history, which enhanced much of what I learned from my European history major. I hope to use my German language skills in the future by continuing to read German literature and using German in future research.

STELLA COLE

I started my German studies at Northwestern in a 300 level class with Professor Lys. Being in a class full of juniors and seniors could have been intimidating as a freshman, but Frau Lys made me feel so comfortable in our classroom. Every German class I have taken has been an incredible environment, especially because the class sizes are usually very small. The German department at NU has taught me so much and given me so many



mentors who have helped me carry German into other parts of my academic journey. My professors were so helpful in the process of applying for scholarships to study abroad in Germany. I had the opportunity to study at Humboldt University in Berlin for 3 months and am a semifinalist this year for the Germany ETA Fulbright. Northwestern's German department expanded my knowledge of German language and culture. I am graduating with an abundance of knowledge about German language, culture, film, and history.

HUNTER FEELEY

I started learning German in high school to fulfill my foreign language requirement, but I liked the language so much that I decided to continue learning it at Northwestern. The German classes I've taken here have all been great learning experiences not only in terms of improving my language skills, but also in terms of improving my knowledge of German culture and literature. Although my German skills probably will not be useful to me in my career, I feel very lucky that I had the opportunity to spend so much time learning the language and I hope to have opportunities to practice and maintain my German skills after graduation.



ORION FOROWYCZ Upon coming to Northwestern, I had not expected to end up studying German. I even took French my first year to finish



my language requirement. But as it turns out, studying German these last two years has been such an incredibly wonderful part of my time here. My journey started in 2019, when I was immensely excited to participate in the DAAD RISE summer research program in Germany. To prepare myself, I of course wanted to start learning German. So I started learning German for the first time by taking German 115 with Prof. Zeller that spring. This class was such a pleasant introduction to the language, and really helped provide a nice starting point for interacting with others in Germany that summer. Since then, I've always wanted to return to Germany, so I've continued studying the language to help facilitate that. Along the way, I've had a great time meeting and learning from so many excellent professors, and diving into so much practical knowledge about German life and culture. Joining and taking a leading role in the German Undergraduate Advisory Board (GUAB) has also been very worthwhile, given all the great people who participate and the many fun events that we've been able to help organize. And now I'm incredibly excited for the future, since I'll be returning to Europe for a masters program this fall. After a semester first in Italy, I'll be studying in Hamburg or Vienna, and likely remain there for the rest of the two-year program. It was a long process to get to this point, but I know that studying German was critical to making this dream happen.

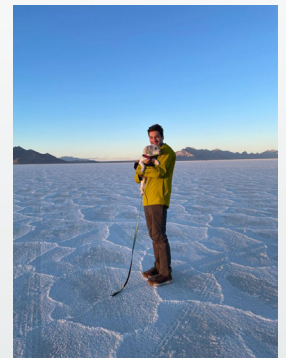
TYLER KUEHN Admittedly, I took my first German class here without much thought- I was a freshman Bienen student who



needed an elective credit, so I figured it might be interesting to learn about a region from which so much great classical music comes. What followed this single decision was a four-year journey with the German language that has created meaningful relationships, a heightened openness to the world around me, and unique career paths that I wouldn't have previously imagined. The faculty here has quite an ability to ignite a passion for language-learning in anybody!

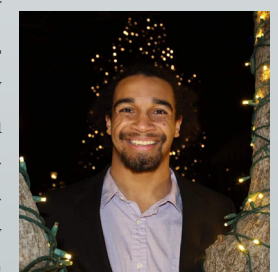
KAI VEITINGER - Coming from a home

where I grew up speaking German but never officially learned to read, write or do grammar by any other method than



by ear, I decided to take a German class at the end of my Freshman year. I really enjoyed the class and began adding German classes to my schedule when I had an opening in my schedule in order to pursue a minor and improve in the areas mentioned above. I intend to one day live in Germany and improving my grammar and reading comprehension, as well as learning more vocabulary that is used outside of daily conversations will hopefully allow me to make an easier transition if a career opportunity in Germany arrives.

KAYDEN WASHINGTON - My interest in German started as several of my close friends



had taken German throughout high school. They became quite fluent in the language and through the exchange program, I got the opportunity to meet and spend time with their German exchange students. This furthered my interest in both the language and the culture. I started my German career here at Northwestern and intend to continue it beyond NU. Unfortunately, COVID-19 prevented me from going abroad to Freiberg last Fall, but I still plan on going to Germany in the upcoming year. I hope to be able to take my knowledge of the German language and the culture to better my understanding of people as I prepare to enter the medical field. The German department has been so supportive in all of my pursuits and I hope to continue my education of German culture.

Business German

MOLLY LIU

After spending a summer in Berlin with Northwestern's study abroad program, I decided to add the German minor and it was one of the best decisions I made in college. I have taken some of the most fascinating and intellectually challenging classes with the German Department, and I always feel supported by the faculty. When I first picked up German for fun in 7th grade, I didn't expect my journey to go this far, but I'm very grateful for the friendship and mentorship I've established through the German Department at Northwestern.



ANDREW PATRONIK - Andrew

Patronik is a student in Industrial Engineering at Northwestern University focusing on Computer Science. Andrew had a strong foundation of German in high school. After his senior year in high school, he did an internship in Alsbach-Hähnlein (South of Darmstadt) with Concat (a systems integrator firm implementing custom-tailored IT solutions). He was an information technology Intern at the same firm a year later from July 2010 to September 2019. Andrew took a variety of courses in German culture, Media, and Business German and he is graduating with a minor in Business German.

JULIA TOURNANT

Coming to Northwestern, studying German was not in my plans. I had learned it since middle school in France and only realized at the start of my sophomore year that I wanted to not lose my skills in this language—and why not try to become fluent. After all, I had always liked it. Enrolling in German turned out to be an excellent decision: not only was I able to pick up what I had previously learned and improve from there, but the professors and students I have met in the department have made me look forward to every class. Those were wonderful breaks from the more technical classes I was also taking. My interest in business made me lean towards the Business German minor, which has given me great insight to the work culture and vocabulary in Germany. Upon attending a master's program in Paris, I hope to use the German I have learned at Northwestern in my personal life or professional career!



From the Director of Undergraduate Studies

One of the most satisfying tasks as a Director of Undergraduate Studies in German is to go over the



course work with majors and minors just before they graduate. It's amazing to see how much each one of them has accomplished in only four years including extensive stays abroad in Germany to immerse themselves in language and culture. My heartfelt congratulations go to all of our eleven majors and minors who are graduating this year. Your language and culture skills will open new doors of opportunities and possibilities you might never have imagined!

I encourage everybody, students with different cultural backgrounds and academic career plans, monolinguals and multilinguals, as well as first-generation and non-first-generation students to pursue either a major or minor in German. Our program provides a caring and learning-rich environment and I am always available to discuss your plans and wishes.

Message from the German Undergraduate Advisory Board

This was certainly a memorable year for the GUAB (German Undergraduate Advisory Board) student group. There was a lot to adapt to given the need to remain virtual, but we still managed to help connect those interested in German language and culture despite the circumstances. Typically every other week, the board met in our GUAB zoom to share ideas and organize new events together. Last October, we started with our first Stammtisch of the year, with a new activity of online games that everyone could play together in addition to chatting. Next, we organized our first run of our Dialog auf Deutsch program. In groups of two or three, we paired 20 participants so that they could chat about their common interests in German language and culture. We had sophomores, juniors, seniors, graduates students, and even faculty members all participating in the program! The highlight of winter quarter was our Karneval event, where we had games and virtual masks/backgrounds for everyone to enjoy. Then in April, we had two events shared with other college students from across Illinois. The first was a very special Stammtisch where everyone got to chat and then play Pictionary, Stadt Land Fluss, Geoguessr, and Drawphone, all primarily in German! For the second, we then took part in the Destination DACHL panel on traveling, studying, and working in German-speaking countries. At the end of the year, it was then great for many of us to be able to see each other in person at the German-department Picnick. We would like to thank Professor Zeller for providing such valuable and important support for GUAB this year, as well as everyone who made it to our meetings and events!

From the DGS:

This year presented an unprecedented challenge for the graduate program in many more ways than one. Not only did we have to face a global pandemic and nail-biting political uncertainty, but we were also able to welcome our largest incoming graduate cohort in years – all of whom remained scattered across the globe as travel and visa processing screeched to a halt. Nevertheless, they, together with our previously enrolled graduate students, were able to navigate these myriad obstacles with enthusiasm, curiosity, and generosity. I have been grateful for everyone's grace under pressure this year, and for the spirit they brought to their work even under dispiriting conditions. As Director of Graduate Studies, I know how challenging the years of graduate study can be, even in the best of circumstances: and given the realities of this year as well as their grim toll on an already competitive academic job market, these have not been the best of circumstances. But I am heartened by the great work being done in the department – including two successfully defended dissertations! – and I look forward to continuing to foster a program in which the excitement of scholarly inquiry prevails, and in which intellectual ferment and collegial solidarity complement each other in equal measure.

-Professor Erica Weitzman



Grad News:

Wiebke Bullerman - Ph.D student Wiebke Bullermann graduated this spring with her dissertation “Die Auswirkungen von Migration, Flucht und Asyl auf Heimat und Identität in der deutsch-arabischen Migrationsliteratur”. Having had previous experience in the Not-For-Profit sector and in project management, Wiebke has accepted a position as a project manager and strategist for Peta Germany in Berlin. She is looking forward to applying her knowledge and skills acquired through the Ph.D program to the NGO and Not-for-Profit sector both on the national and international level.

Jan Cao - Ph.D student Jan Cao graduated this spring with her dissertation, *Transplanting Languages: Botanical Poetics of Paul Celan and Yoko Tawada*. She has accepted a position at East China Normal University in Shanghai, where she will work as Junior Research Fellow at the Si-Mian Institute for Advanced Studies in Humanities and assistant professor in the Department of Chinese Language and Literature. Her recent paper “Tabletop Games in the Age of Remote Collaboration: Design Opportunities for a Socially Connected Game Experience,” written in collaboration with researchers from University of Minnesota’s department of Computer Science and Engineering, won an honorable mention award at CHI2021, the top conference in human-computer interactions. She will continue working on her next project on the critical theory of digital gaming, particularly the aesthetics of portals, a literary or artistic passage that allows its audience to travel from one world to another.

German Spring Picknick



Faculty and students enjoy seeing one another in person for the first time since March 2020!



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*Congratulations
to our graduating
majors, minors,
and academic
award winners*

*All smiles
(under the
masks)*



Thank you!

Fall Course Listing

Course number	Title	Instructor	Topic
101-1-21	Beginning German	Zeller	
101-1-22	Beginning German	Hutter	
101-1-23	Beginning German	Swistelnicki	
101-1-25	Beginning German	Meuser	
101-1-26	Beginning German	Meuser	
102-1-20	Intermediate German	Kerlova	
102-1-21	Intermediate German	Kerlova	
102-1-22	Intermediate German	Melovska	
102-1-22	Intermediate German	Ryder	
104-6-20	First Year Seminar	Weitzman	Lies, Sophistry, Propaganda, Bluster, Equivocation, and Bullshit
205-0	Focus Writing	Zeller	Berlin Faces of the Metropolis
209-0	German in the Business World	Ryder	
230-0	Berlin and the Culture of Democracy	Von Holt	
232-0	The Theme of Faust Through the Ages	Fenves	
303-0	Speaking as Discovery	Lys	
335-0	Minority Voices in Germany	von Holt	Minority Voices in Germany
402-0	History of Literature and Critical Thought, 1832-1900	Weber	
441-20	Studies in Communication and Culture	Weitzman	

Join us this Spring for a Workshop organized by

Jörg Kreienbrock and Visiting Max Kade
Professor Doerte Bischoff

Without Papers: Statelessness and the Literary Imagination

In her much-discussed account of “The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man,” Hannah Arendt focuses on the problem of stateless or displaced people, whom she identifies as “the most symptomatic group in modern politics”. The perplexity that this group brought into focus was the fact that depriving individuals of their rights as citizens de facto deprived them of their human rights and, in a more fundamental sense, of their humanity.

For Arendt, who herself was stateless for more than a decade, the production of refugees, displaced persons, and statelessness is inherent to the idea of the modern nation-state. In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, written in American exile in 1951, Arendt observes: “Since the Peace Treaties of 1919 and 1920, the refugees and the stateless have attached themselves like a curse to all the newly established states on earth which were created in the image of the nation-state.”



The reflection on the predicament of their status as stateless refugees is central to the writings of German exile authors of the Nazi period like Anna Seghers, Erich Maria Remarque, Joseph Roth, Bertolt Brecht. One concrete example of this literature examining the politics of migration is the reference to passports and other forms of identification papers. These papers are more than just a means of governance but represent an allegory of the precarious status of identity and its legal confirmation/documentation. What does it mean to lead an undocumented life? How do I verify my identity as a (legal) human being? As Doerte Bischoff points out: “Literary texts explore not only the conditions of the individuality and belonging under the conditions of modernity, they also delineate decentered, transnational, and transformed visions of communities that challenge the model of the nation-state and the related concept of identity.” In other words: Literature affords to develop a fundamentally diasporic understanding of human sociality.

Following Arendt, statelessness can be used as an analytical framework for looking at the fate of victimized minority groups who are trapped in the destruction of their humanity around the world. Therefore, an investigation into the literary imagination of statelessness by German exile writers of the 1930’s and 1940’s will offer valuable insights into contemporary debates on the precarious status of refugees, asylum seekers, and other immigrant groups.