



DEPARTMENT OF
GERMANIC LANGUAGES
AND LITERATURES

NEWSLETTER
SUMMER 2023



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



Dear friends,

A few weeks ago, we celebrated the largest graduation ceremony in the history of our department. Attended by more than 300

students and parents, this joyous event is a testament to the importance of community and friendship. This year's class had more than its ordinary share of challenges on its way to graduation. Due to the pandemic, our students had to postpone study abroad plans, endure countless hours on Zoom, and abandon dorms and campus life in the middle of the semester. No wonder an unprecedented percentage of our majors and minors (95%) attended this year's graduation ceremony. Seeing them celebrate this momentous event in the presence of their peers, parents, and instructors was a deeply moving experience.

Revitalizing our sense of community was at the core of our activities this year. We returned to in-person meetings, hosted important scholars in the field, resumed our German film studies series, and, yes, threw a few departmental parties. Among the highlights of this year were the visits of three influential contemporary writers and essayists. Max Czollek, a poet and antisemitism scholar, spoke about revenge fantasies in German-Jewish literature; Sharon Dodua Otoo, a Berlin-based African-German-English novelist and political activist, read from her new book, *Ada's Room [Adas Raum]*; and Dorothee Elmiger, a Swiss writer, discussed her

novel *Out of the Sugar Factory [Aus der Zuckerfabrik]*, which was shortlisted for the German Book Prize in 2020. Elmiger will return to Ann Arbor this fall to teach an undergraduate creative-writing class in German, give lectures and readings, and collaborate with graduate students working on contemporary German literature. Her visit inaugurates our new writer-in-residence program. Starting this fall, we will host a contemporary German writer or filmmaker every other year for six to eight weeks. I'm very excited about this new program, which will add to the vibrancy of the department's intellectual life and keep us in touch with cutting-edge artistic developments in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland.

This program was funded by a Max Kade Foundation grant and donations from you, our cherished alumni. But it is also made possible by the creativity and industriousness of three of my younger colleagues—Kristin Dickinson, Megan Ewing, and Jon Cho-Polizzi—who, in addition to being outstanding scholars, are also sought-after translators (Jon has translated Czollek's essays and Otoo's recent work, Megan translated Elmiger's novels, Kristin translated several German-Turkish writers). Together with Silke Weineck and Andrew Mills, these colleagues have made our department a preeminent center for German translation and translation studies.

There is much more to report, of course. Our study abroad programs in Freiburg and Tübingen are flourishing, and 48 of our majors and minors are attending summer language courses at Goethe Institutes in Germany, all with significant financial support from our donors. Thanks to our amazing advisors, Kalli

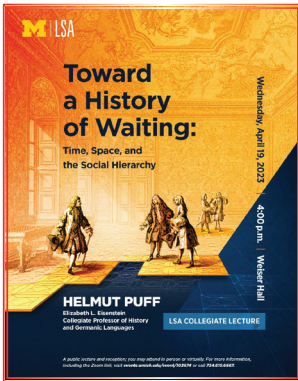
Federhofer and Mary Rodena-Krasan, we hosted three German high school cohorts, each comprising of 40 to 60 students, and launched a new program that brings German culture and literature to local high schools that do not currently teach German. Helmut Puff delivered a beautiful and highly attended Collegiate Professor Lecture [page 3]. Our graduate students defended dissertations and won awards [page 6]. Several colleagues won prestigious fellowships [page 4]. And our Dutch and Scandinavian programs, bucking nationwide trends, continue to grow and flourish [page 10 & 11]. Read about these and other stories in this Newsletter, and please follow us on our departmental website lsa.umich.edu/german, to read about upcoming events. For now, I wish you a warm and relaxing summer.

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HIGHLIGHTS

Collegiate Professor Inaugural Lecture



On April 19, 2023, Helmut Puff delivered his inaugural lecture as the Elizabeth L. Eisenstein Collegiate Professorship in History and Germanic Languages and Literatures. Drawing from his forthcoming book, the lecture was titled “Toward a History of Waiting: Time, Space, and the Social Hierarchy.” Waiting is one temporal modality among others that makes time experiential. Waiting portions out the flow of time as waiters anticipate what is to come. Yet is there a history of waiting? Puff’s lecture proposed to anchor such a history in the spaces where people waited, especially the early modern antechamber. By doing so, it draws attention to the significance of waiting and letting others wait when studying society and culture.

Professor Puff is one of the world’s leading scholars of German literature, history, and culture in the late medieval and early modern period. He specializes in gender studies, the history of sexuality, media history, the history of reading, and the literature of the Reformation and the Renaissance.

Over the last five years, he has continued his remarkable scholarly output, publishing a series of articles and organizing exhibitions. His major research project of the last years has been his book-length study on waiting, entitled *The Antechamber: Toward a History of Waiting*, which will appear with Stanford University Press in fall 2023.

Professor Puff was originally appointed as the Elizabeth L. Eisenstein Collegiate Professor of History and Germanic Languages Literatures in 2017 and was recently reappointed for another five years through 2027. The LSA Collegiate Professorship is the college’s highest faculty honor. It is awarded to those who demonstrate a sustained record of excellence in research and scholarship, in teaching, in service, and in other contributions to the university. Collegiate Lectures commemorate this significant milestone in a professor’s career.



GERMAN DAY

Friday, April 12th, 2024

**Die deutsche/österreichische/Schweizer Küche:
Essen und Getränke im deutschsprachigen Raum**

Students will explore and investigate the history and importance of the myriad of dishes served in the German speaking world. For more information, visit: <https://lsa.umich.edu/german/germanday.html>

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FACULTY FOCUS

Michigan Humanities Award

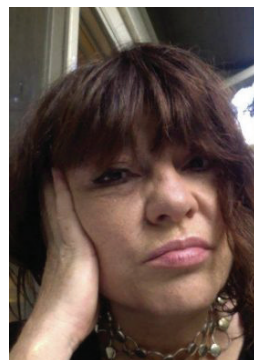
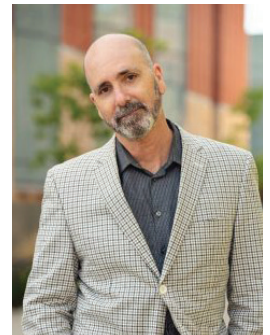
Andreas Gailus, Professor of German

University professors spend most of their working hours teaching classes, advising dissertations, and doing administrative work, yet their scholarly reputation is almost entirely based on their publication record. Writing and the research that goes into it is time-consuming. Archives need to be visited, existing scholarships read and evaluated, and articles and books drafted and redrafted. This is why all academics covet scholarly leaves that provide them with sustained periods of research time. Enter the Michigan Humanities Award, which offers LSA tenured faculty a scholarly activity leave for an entire semester. This year, three of my colleagues received this prestigious award.



The link between ruins and museums is the topic of **Kerstin Barndt's** new book, *Museums in Ruins. Representing History, Memory, and Time in Contemporary Germany*. Kerstin's project focuses on two recent exhibition sites: the Neues Museum with its recently inaugurated Humboldt Forum in Berlin, and two large industrial parks located in the former coal mining regions of the Ruhr region to the West, and Lutatia to the East. How, Barndt asks, do these very different exhibition sites register and signify processes of decay, displacement, violence, and social transformation? How do the logics of musealization and ruination inform each other to either foreground or elide the violent histories of nation and empire building on the one hand, and capitalism and (de)industrialization on the other?

Scott Spector is widely recognized as one of the leading cultural historians of modern central Europe. His numerous books and articles focus on the rich intellectual life of German and Austrian Jews in the nineteenth and twentieth century, the history of sexuality, the scientific and popular fascination with crimes and criminals, and the politics of history writing, among other topics. For his new book project, Spector draws on his impressively broad expertise as a cultural and intellectual historian, political theorist and literary scholar. *Atlas of an Invisible Empire: National, Imperial, and Global Belonging in Cities of Central Europe* explores the history of the Habsburg Empire from the point of view of the lived experience of its citizens. Spector will spend this fall in Austria to complete archival work and put the finishing touches on what promises to be a rich and exciting book.



To most Americans, the figure of the sports coach is perhaps so familiar as to be unremarkable. Why should a university, such as ours, not erect a statue to one of its most successful coaches, Glenn Edwards "Bo" Schembechler, whose teams won or shared 13 Big Ten conference titles? But Schembechler, **Silke Weineck** reminds us, has also been credibly accused of having known about the sexual abuse Dr. Robert Anderson inflicted on U-M athletes for decades. So why, at a time when traditional representatives of male authority have come under intense scrutiny, did calls to remove Schembechler's statue fall on deaf ears? This is one of the questions Weineck asks in her new book project, *American Coach*, which explores the figure of the football coach and its centrality to a dominant strain of American cultural identity. There are hundreds of films and TV series that depict the coach as a simultaneously brutal and caring authority figure who provides otherwise wayward or lost men with the direction and will to succeed that they lack without his moral authority. Yet there has been no book that has systematically analyzed this figure and its role in the public imagination. Weineck's monograph will fill this gap.

FACULTY FOCUS

Fulbright Guest Professorship at the Paris Lodron University of Salzburg

Scott Spector, Rudolf Mrázek Collegiate Professor of History and German Studies

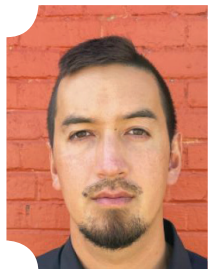


I have had the honor of accepting the Fulbright Guest Professorship at the Paris Lodron University of Salzburg, Austria in Summer Semester 2023. This was not a position I sought out, but several colleagues in the university's German Department kindly invited me to come, and when I realized the timing could work for me this term, I submitted my application to the Fulbright Foundation. I hope it has been a unique opportunity for my Austrian students to gain a different perspective on their own culture and history. Their responses to the material I offer to our U-M students have in turn changed the way I look at the topic and how to discuss it with undergraduate and graduate students.

The courses I teach include a seminar for master's students called "The 'Jewish Question' in German and Austrian Culture." Even in this city of just over 200,000 with hardly any Jewish community at all, students know that Jewish people lived among Austrians for many hundreds of years. Yet, they may not have considered that looking at Jewish integration into the broader society as a "question" that needed to be resolved emerged first in the 18th-century Enlightenment. They certainly know the end of the story—the Nazi's so-called "final solution" to Jewish question. We work through many literary texts, political arguments, personal writing, and films to explore the evolution of this storied history. My second class is a lecture course with an enrollment of around 70 advanced students on the topic of "minor literature," or the theories and practices of writing in German by various minorities. When we cover areas that they are less apt to hear about from their Salzburg professors, such as the history of sexuality, their sense of curiosity is palpable. I am finding both experiences genuinely rewarding.



The director of the office of international relations here has proposed a possible continuing instructor exchange, which we are beginning to explore. My collaboration with colleagues here has also led to plans for an international workshop and a special issue of the flagship journal *Austrian Studies*. All of this will have an impact on German Studies at U-M.



Jon Cho-Polizzi published three major translations (from German to English): as co-editor and co-translator, he published *Your Homeland is our Nightmare: An Antifascist Essay Collection* by Fatma Aydemir and Hengameh Yaghoobifarah; as translator: a collection of essays by Max Czollek, *De-Integrate! A Jewish Survival Guide for the 21st Century* (Restless Books 2023), and Sharon Dodua Otoo's novel *Ada's Room (U.S.)/Ada's Realm (UK)* with Riverhead Books (U.S.) and MacLehose Press (UK).



Julia Hell co-edited *New German Critique* no. 147 on "Peter Weiss and The Aesthetics of Resistance" (vol. 49.3/2022) and is currently at work on a co-edited volume with Duke University Press, *Overcoming the Present: Art and Resistance in the Work of Peter Weiss and Others*. In addition, Hell is researching and writing a book analyzing Weiss's epic novel together with William Kentridge's epic mural-frieze, *Triumphs and Laments* (2015-2023).

GRADUATE STUDENT FOCUS

Congratulations!

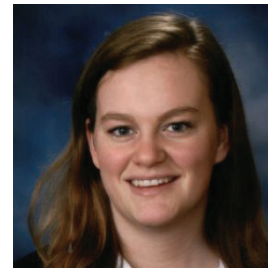
Graduate Students



Pavel Brunssen passed the oral defense of his dissertation, *The Making of "Jew Clubs": Performing Jewishness and Antisemitism in European Soccer and Fan Cultures* in March 2023. His dissertation already garnered this year's Marshall Weinberg Prize from U-M's Jean and Samuel Frankel Center for Judaic Studies.



Onyx Henry won a Rackham Predoctoral Fellowship for AY 2023-24 to advance her dissertation on *Representations of Blackness in Postwar German-Language Children's and Youth Literature*.



Veronica Williamson won a Rackham Predoctoral Fellowship for AY 2023-24, which will help Veronica develop her dissertation on *Postmonolingual Treffpunkte: Dialogic Translation and Participatory Worlding in Contemporary Germany*.

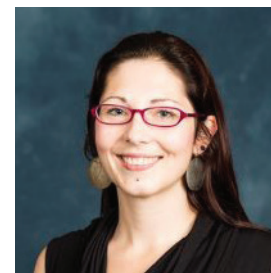
Recent Graduates



Mary Hennessy (Ph.D. 2021) signed a tenure-track contract with the University of Wisconsin-Madison as Assistant Professor in the Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic+. Her term will begin in Fall 2023.



Kathryn Holihan (Ph.D. 2020) accepted a tenure-track offer at Rhodes College, Memphis, where she now joins the German Department as Assistant Professor.



Biz Nijdam (Ph.D. 2017) received an offer for a permanent position as Teaching Professor in the Department of Central, Eastern and Northern European Studies at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

STAYING CONNECTED

Answers from Alums

In the Winter 2023 issue of the Germanic Newsletter, Kalli Federhofer, one of German's undergraduate advisors, asked the question, "What are you doing with your German degree?" We received fascinating responses from our alumni, which we thought you might enjoy.

Alex Tsigdinos, class of 1980, responded that he founded a consulting firm some 20 years after completing his German degree at U-M, adding that knowing German became key to his professional endeavors. Some of his clients were German companies that became mainstays of his consulting business, and the German language was fundamental to the work he did – reading internal material, writing, or translating sensitive documents. It was also key to building professional and personal relationships with colleagues. Although they all spoke excellent English, he received the competitive advantage being able to communicate with his colleagues in German. It was essential to retaining a high-quality "anchor client" through many management changes over the final two decades of his professional career until retirement.



Another alum taught German language at Coldwater High School from 1966-1980. D. 'Herr' Olsen developed a following of students and parents by teaching students that learning German could be fun and useful. He planned many fun activities on the weekends and after-school, like swimming, hiking,

camping, and hosting home-cooked German meals. He also took 10-12 students on a trip to their Sister City in Germany during the students' second year of studying German. He found he needed "experiments" to make German fun, risks were always involved to be successful, and he made teaching German important in his school's curriculum and in his student's lives. Many of his

high school students went on to study German in college, went to Germany to work in various industries and jobs, married native Germans, and two even took up German citizenship.

We love hearing your stories – please keep them coming at german.alums@umich.edu!

We want to connect you to other students or alums who share the same academic or professional trajectory. Please send us your story or information at german.alums@umich.edu.

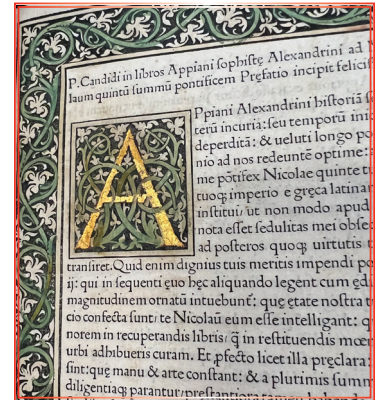
IN THE CLASSROOM

Book Openings

Helmut Puff, Elizabeth L. Eisenstein Collegiate Professor of History and Germanic Languages

In "History of the Book," German-, English-, History-, and History of Art-majors took learning literally into their own hands. During Fall 2022, students enrolled in this class studying the book as an object with a deep history.

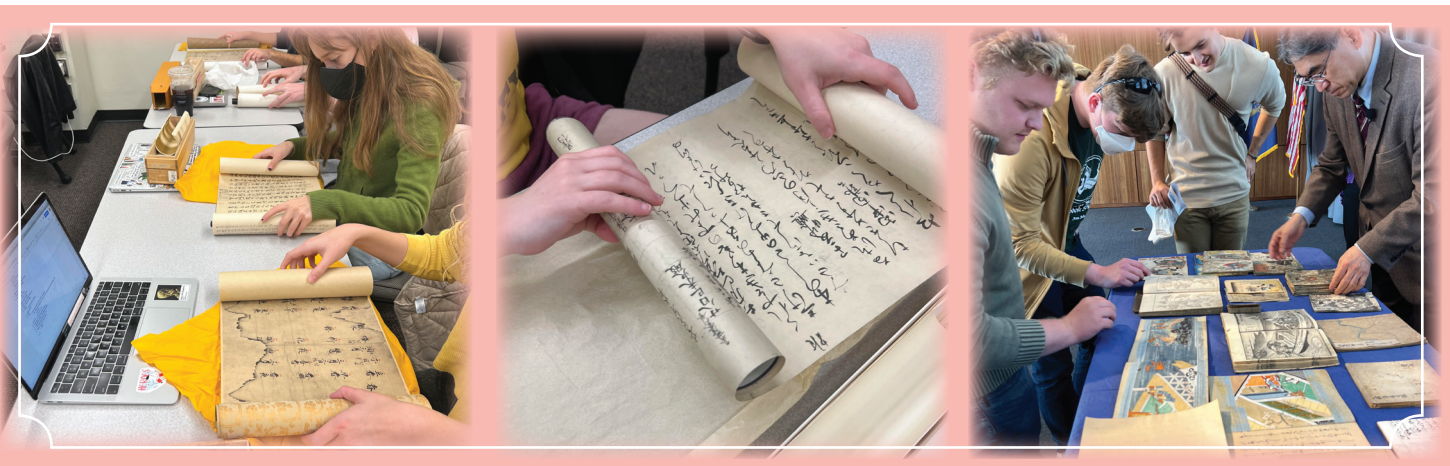
Books are more than repositories of information. When we study them as physical artifacts, we discover that their materials, making, organization, layout, fonts, etc. have much to do with how we read, as well as with who we are. By exploring papyri, manuscripts, incunabula, Chinese books, Japanese prints, comic books, political pamphlets, e-books, and book-themed visuals in the university art museum, this group of seventeen delved into the tremendously rich collections on campus. One of the highlights of the term was learning to print one single page as a team in The Book Arts Studio (Duderstadt Center).



What we discovered about the history of the book from the Middle Ages to the present, thanks to many helping hands all over campus, we shared with the public. As a final project, the students co-curated an exhibit on the sixth floor of Hatcher Library, whose doors opened in February 2023 and welcomed visitors until the end of May. "Openings" is also now accessible online for your viewing pleasure (<https://apps.lib.umich.edu/online-exhibits/exhibits/show/openings>).

Our thematic focus for this exhibit was an essential part of practically every modern book: The title page. Such pages signal and inform, incite pleasure and intrigue, as well as conceal and mislead. At the same time, such pages, with their identifiable and legally relevant information, emerged only when printers started to mass-produce books in the fifteenth century.

Take a look with your own eyes!



IN THE CLASSROOM

Welcoming Dorothee Elmiger, Max Kade Writer-in-Residence for Fall 2023

Megan Ewing, Assistant Professor of German



This fall, we will host author Dorothee Elmiger for a three-month writing residency, generously funded by the Max Kade Foundation and a U-M Arts Initiative grant. Born in 1985 in Wetzikon, Switzerland, Elmiger's work incorporates themes of postcolonialism, migration, ecocriticism, feminism, and gender studies. She is currently at work on a fourth novel.

Her three previous books, *Aus der Zuckerfabrik* [Out of the Sugar Factory] (Hanser, 2020), *Schlafgänger* [Shift Sleepers] (DuMont, 2014), and *Einladung an die Waghalsigen* [Invitation to the Bold at Heart] (DuMont, 2010) have been awarded numerous literary prizes. Most recently, she received the Schillerpreis (2021) and Nicolas Born Prize (2022). In 2020, *Aus der Zuckerfabrik* was shortlisted for the German Book Prize and nominated for the Swiss Book Prize.

While in Ann Arbor, Elmiger will participate in a variety of departmental activities associated with our multifaceted writer-in-residence program. In addition to visiting other courses, she will teach a creative writing workshop on writing as a form of resistance (German 310: "The Aesthetics of Resistance"), which does not simply react to events in the world or record instances of oppression, but intervenes in them through the imagination of alternative pasts and futures. U-M students, as well as the larger Ann Arbor and Detroit communities, will have the opportunity to hear from Elmiger and explore the relationship between literature and resistance through bilingual public readings and interviews with Megan Ewing, assistant professor in the department and translator of Elmiger's two latest novels.



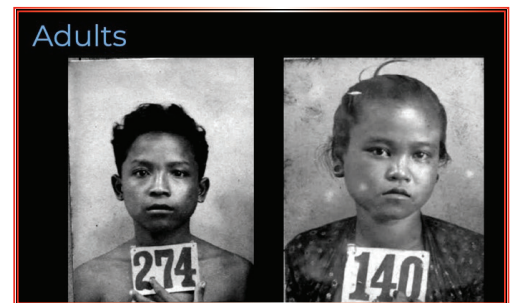
DUTCH STUDIES

The Global Colonial Boarding School System

Christa Wongsodikromo, Guest Lecturer in the Dutch program

I am a fourth-generation descendant of the Indonesian-Surinamese diaspora, born after Suriname's independence from the Netherlands in 1975, and the first generation that has not lived under colonialism. As a U-M guest lecturer in Dutch language and culture courses for the past four years, and speaker in the 50th anniversary events of the Dutch program last year, I have been sharing my family history and my analysis of colonial boarding schools as a worldwide system that includes U.S. and Canadian Indian boarding schools.

Students start by learning the hidden history. After the abolition of slavery, the Netherlands updated its slavery system in Suriname with an indentured labor system that continued until WWII. In the *Anne Frank in Context* course, which examines the intersections of Holocaust and colonial histories, students learn that at the same time that Hitler came to power next door, the Netherlands kidnapped my great-grandparents from Java (Indonesia), and shipped them to the other side of the world to work on the plantations in Suriname. Two of my great-grandparents were children, registered as adults to legalize their forced labor.



Once in Suriname, many members of my family were “re-educated” in boarding schools, where their culture was forcibly and violently suppressed to impose a westernized culture. In class, students connect my story to the U.S. and Canadian boarding school system while they learn from Navajo and American-Dutch writer, speaker and activist and 2020 candidate for U.S. president, Mark Charles, about the *Rehoboth Christian School* he attended on the border of Navajo Nation, an Indian boarding school with Dutch Calvinist roots.

In addition to learning about global colonial boarding schools as a general system, U-M Dutch students learn about the deeper layers of colonial trauma. My father was separated from his twin brother and biological family, adopted, and displaced to the Netherlands by boarding school missionaries, who had previously removed children from families across the colonial empire (including Curaçao, Suriname, Sri Lanka, the Moluccan Islands, and Papua). I grew up in the Netherlands in a family both ripped apart and forced together by colonialism. I carry their trauma as I re-create family connections with my family in Suriname and Indonesia that I recently located.



The most important part of my work at U-M in the Dutch program is not this historiography, or my analysis of global connections. Rather, my experiential teaching models to students that they can make the settler colonialism they live in, and the trauma it produces, visible to themselves. The U-M Law Quad architecture and the flag on the Diag that they walk by every day cannot pass by my colonial trauma unnoticed. They are, for me, symbols of colonial crimes, crimes that students more easily take in through the back door of a (to them) “neutral” Dutch history.

I thank Zoi Crampton, a student in U-M's Dutch program and co-chair of U-M's Native American Student Association (NASA), and Mark Charles, for teaching me about U.S. Indian boarding schools.

SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES

Trading Places and Other Updates

Johanna Eriksson, Scandinavian Program Director



Swedish students Sofia Ryan, Isabel Gil, Jesse Lange, Marc Snooks, and Mason Collard in Helsingborg

It was great to once again jump on a flight to Sweden for our Spring Break Study Trip after the interruption during the pandemic. This year marked 19 years for our exchange in collaboration with Katharina Nobs at ProCivitas Privata Gymnasium, a high school in Helsingborg. Nine second-year Swedish students traveled to Helsingborg with Johanna Eriksson and co-chaperone Nikole Hampton. In late March, the Scandinavian Program hosted ten ProCivitas students and two of their teachers.

In Sweden, our students loved spending time with their lovely host families, learning about the local culture. At ProCivitas, our students gave presentations about the University of Michigan and Ann Arbor as a whole, and we met with a group of senior high school students at Dunkers Kulturhus, exploring exhibits and discussing social norms, life and future goals, among many other things.

We also spent one day in the lovely city of Copenhagen, a short train ride away from Helsingborg. Here, we met up for lunch with the group's classmate Lindsay Kinsella, who was on an academic semester abroad with DIS Study Abroad in Scandinavia. This program, which is based in Copenhagen and Stockholm, is a very popular study abroad option for our students.

Highlights from the Swedes' time in Ann Arbor included a visit to second-year student Max Vestergaard's family farm on Wagner Road, where we got to interact with their happy animals, including a newborn calf. Thanks to Max and his family, we also got an in-depth guided visit of the Creature Conservancy in Saline, which rescues local wild and exotic animals that have been kept as pets. We are grateful to our U-M students for hosting in Ann Arbor, giving the Swedes an authentic glimpse into college life in the U.S.



Tekla Möller, Ina Lind, Olivia Kjellberg, Olivia Hedvall, Ebba Andersson, Smilla Blomgren, Klara Langenheim, Alice Järnum, Saga Carlsson, Emilia Swärth Ewander, Jenny Meri, and Johanna Eriksson



Celebrating Scandinavian Minors Matt Burkhard and Mila Havens with Johanna Eriksson

Two students graduated with a minor in Scandinavian Studies: Matt Burkhard and Mila Havens, who majored in Computer Science and will continue to work in the software industry after their studies. We celebrated them with a brunch at Zola's.

The Swedish Club (22398 Ruth St. Farmington Hills) will once again host a traditional Midsommar celebration on Saturday, June 24, 11 am - 3 pm. This event is sponsored by the Detroit Swedish Foundation and is arranged by the Swedish American Chamber of Commerce of Detroit. The \$10 tickets (purchase using the QR code) include midsummer lunch, live Swedish folk music by Bruce Sagan and the group En gång till, and dancing around the May pole to live music by Kicki Lidgren.



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Congratulations Class of 2023!

The Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures celebrated our students, their hard work, and many accomplishments in a graduation ceremony on Friday, April 28, 2023 in the Michigan League Ballroom. The ceremony included a warm welcome and remarks from Professor and Department Chair, Andreas Gailus, and included a recognition of the graduates and award winners by our department. A big thank you to graduates, their friends and families, and to all of the Germanic Languages and Literatures faculty and staff who helped to create a wonderful, lasting memory!



German Honors Students



German Majors



German Minors