



**DEPARTMENT OF
GERMANIC LANGUAGES
AND LITERATURES**

**NEWSLETTER
WINTER 2017**



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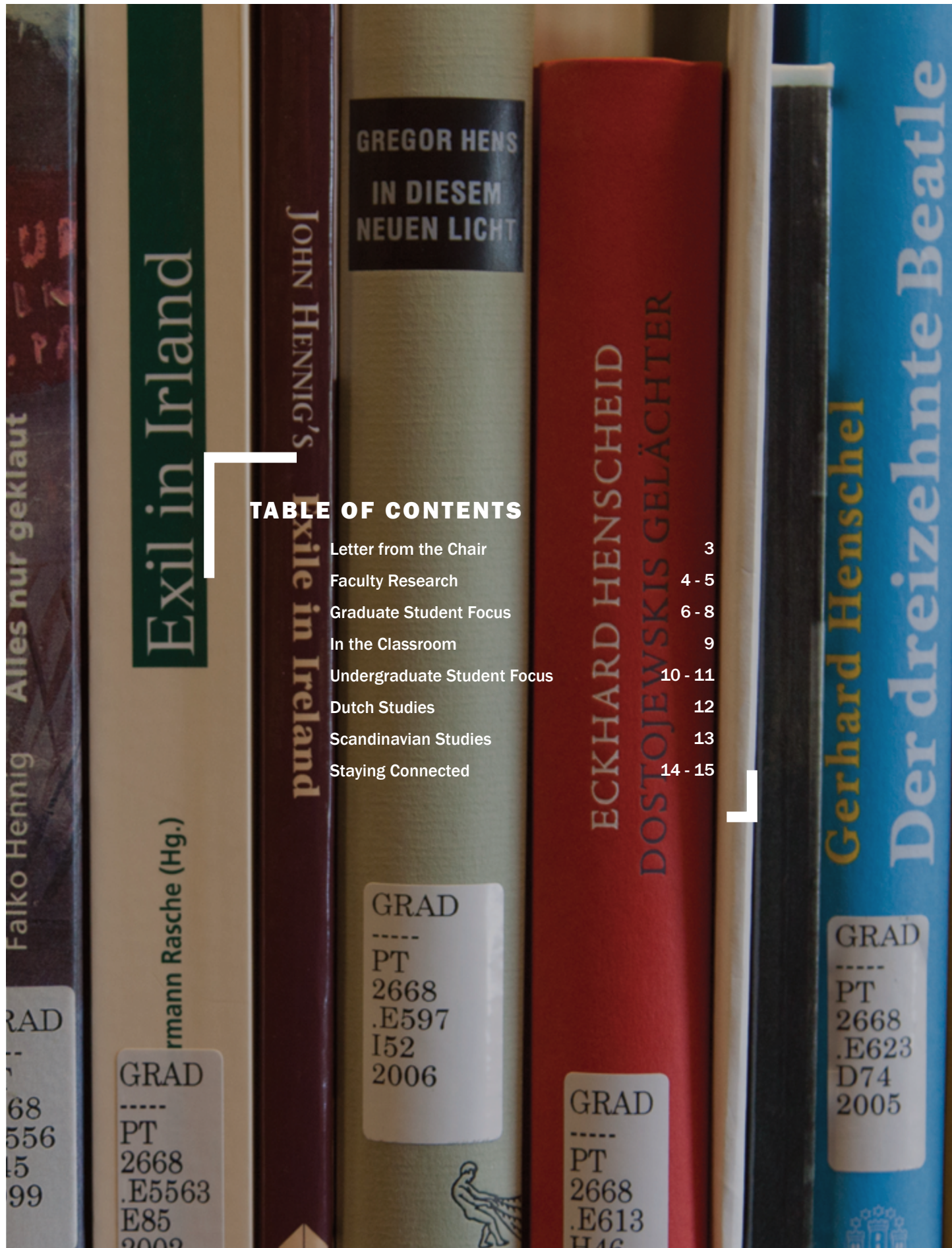


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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Friends,

As we begin the new year in the middle of a characteristically frigid Michigan winter, I send warm greetings from the MLB and invite you to peruse our newsletter for a look back at an eventful Fall Semester.

As most of those reading this are well aware, German at U-M is known for having widened the scope from the more traditional concerns with language and literature to include the full array of German Studies, from history and film to music and politics, from museum studies to media theory. It would be wrong, however, to see in this broadening a displacement of literature, which remains central to much of what we do here in the German Department. Take only the impressive series of events and residencies that we hosted this past semester, anchored by our inaugural Max Kade visiting author, Selim Özdoğan. Thanks to the generous support of the Kade Foundation, we were able to host Özdoğan in Ann Arbor for a 4-month stay, during which he offered public readings from his work, visited classes and taught a seminar of his own (see p. 9), and completed his new novel, the third in a trilogy.

Gegenwartsliteratur—contemporary German literature—emerged, in fact, as something of a theme for our Fall semester, which began with a panel of three renowned German authors reading from their works and debating the state of German letters today: Özdoğan, whom we barely gave time to cure his jetlag, was joined by Kerstin Hensel and Ulrich Peltzer, both members of the *Akademie der Künste*, Germany's academy of arts. Our lively discussions with the authors ranged from how they write (the importance of the pencil!) to whether it is possible to adequately render today's media environments and mediated experience in literature. It was exciting for faculty, graduate and undergraduate students alike to have the opportunity to engage at such close range, so to speak, with practicing literary authors from Germany.

A few weeks later, the well-known author Esther Dischereit visited Michigan with a moving reading/performance of her opera, *Blumen für Otello*. Organized by the transnational German studies group Alamanya, the evening brought together dancers, musicians, and

two authors—Dischereit and Özdoğan—reading in German and Turkish from the libretto, a series of *Klagelieder* (laments) for the victims of crimes committed in recent years by a neo-fascist group in Germany.

And just days before boarding a plane back to Cologne, Özdoğan gave a wonderful reading of excerpts from his own most recent novel, which students in Professor Kristin Dickinson's translation class had rendered into English. For their translation, they were able to draw on the author's own insights and suggestions; look for some of the results on the Comparative Literature translation blog at U-M and in the online journal *Transit* at UC Berkeley in the coming months!

All of this is to say nothing of the fascinating research that goes on in this department (see p. 4-6), of the flourishing Dutch and Scandinavian programs (p. 10-13), or of the countless ways in which students can encounter German language and culture—whether translating in seminars on translation, singing in courses on “German Song,” handling bees in “The German Life



of Bees,” or... reading and engaging with German literature in all of the above.

I hope you'll find plenty of interesting news in the following pages and invite you, as ever, to stop by and see us: as much as we like to share what goes on here, we love hearing what goes on in the lives of our friends and alumni beyond Michigan!

Mit herzlichen Grüßen,

Johannes v. Moltke

Johannes von Moltke
moltke@umich.edu

FACULTY RESEARCH

Updates on German Faculty Publications and Projects



Kerstin Barndt

Wearing her Museums Studies hat this year, Kerstin Barndt is finalizing a co-edited book on the history of research museums and collecting, *Object Lessons and the Formation of Knowledge: The University of Michigan's Museums, Libraries and Collections, 1817-2017*. Research findings from this project have also inspired her to pursue two exhibition projects: one small exhibition about nineteenth century zoological glass models designed by a father and son team, Leopold and Rudolf Blaschka, in Dresden, Germany; and another larger exhibition for the University's bicentennial year showcasing the very first teaching and research collections for the arts, humanities, and sciences.

Kristin Dickinson

Kristin Dickinson edited a special issue on Sabahattin Ali titled "Sabahattin Ali's Translingual Transnationalism" in the *Türkisch-Deutsche Studien Jahrbuch* (December

2016). She also has an article forthcoming with *New German Critique* titled "Zafer Şenocak's 'Turkish Turn': Acts of Crosslinguistic Remembrance in Köşk (*The Pavilion*)."

Geoff Eley

Along with Jennifer Jenkins and Tracie Matysik, Geoff Eley co-edited *German Modernities from Wilhelm to Weimar: A Contest of Futures* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), which grew from a series of workshops between 2005 and 2012 with heavy U-M participation, past and present. He is currently on leave writing a general history of Europe in the 20th century.

Andreas Gailus

Andreas Gailus is completing his book, titled *Forms of Life*, which explores the discourse of life in German culture from the late 18th century to 1945. During the Fall, Andreas presented parts of his book at the GSA in San Diego and at the U-M Institute for the Humanities, where he was a Fellow last year.

Julia Hell

Julia Hell completed *The Conquest of Ruins: European Empires and the Fall of Rome*. Tracing an arc from the Roman Empire to the Third Reich, *The Conquest of Ruins* reconstructs and analyzes the long afterlife of the Roman Empire, arguing that acts of post-Roman mimesis and the imperial imaginaries that they engendered revolved around scoposcopic scenarios visualizing the end of the Roman Empire. This obsession with the empire's end did not begin with Rome's imitators. On the contrary, the idea of the empire's inevitable end arose at the very moment when the Roman Empire established its hegemony in the Mediterranean. In the imagination of Europe's political and intellectual elites, this model empire is thus at once triumphantly powerful and a remarkably fragile fabrication, a monumental memory-fortress and a vast ruinscape that continues to exert pressure on our ways of thinking about empire.

Andy Markovits

Andy Markovits just published a new book called *Hillel At Michigan 1926/7 - 1945: Struggles of Jewish Identity in a Pivotal Era* (Ann Arbor: Maize Books, 2016) [co-authored with Kenneth Garner].

Peter Mclsaac

For the seminar "Material Culture and its Discontents" at the 2016 German Studies Association in San Diego, Peter Mclsaac recently presented part of his work on popular anatomy exhibition. In this project, Mclsaac explores the visually arresting and at times challenging objects that have helped popular anatomy displays draw more visitors than any other type of exhibition in German history since the late nineteenth century. By refining the theoretical precision with which to think about material objects in these exhibitions, Mclsaac is working to understand the ways popular exhibitions operate as a kind of mass medium.

Helmut Puff

Toward a History of Waiting (1200-1800)

The putative omnipresence of the experience notwithstanding, waiting has hitherto largely escaped historical investigation. It "is a temporal region hardly mapped and badly documented," as Harold Schweizer formulates. For the individual, waiting can be said to be a temporally bounded condition in which time becomes experiential. From the vantage point of society, waiting orders social interactions on a variety of levels – and this is what Helmut Puff seeks to capture in his study.

Scott Spector

Scott Spector just published his long-term research project, *Violent Sensations: Sex, Crime, and Utopia in Vienna and Berlin, 1860-1900*, which explores the growing metropolises of turn-of-the-century central Europe as the stage where decadent and enlightened images

of the modern world met. Exploring sensational cases of violence involving figures on the social margins—homosexuals, prostitutes, sexual murderers, the criminally insane, and the fantasy of ritual murder—*Violent Sensations* unlocks the ties between the advances in expert knowledge and the irrational outbursts of violence that would characterize the twentieth century.

Kira Thurman

Kira Thurman's latest article, "Singing the Civilizing Mission in the Land of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms: the Fisk Jubilee Singers in Nineteenth-Century Germany" appeared in September in the *Journal of World History*. The article examines Germans' first sustained cultural encounter with African American music.



Top image: Specimens from Kerstin Barndt's research.
Second image: From Julia Hell's research: *Contemplating the Ruins of Palmyra: Volney, Ruines, ou Meditations sur les Revolutions des Empires* (1791).
Bottom image: Image from Scott Spector's research

GRADUATE STUDENT FOCUS

Welcome Fall 2016 Graduate Student Cohort!

Lauren Beck



Lauren Beck returns to the University of Michigan, where she received her bachelors degree in Russian, Eastern European, and Eurasian Studies and German Honors in 2015. Before returning to U-M, she taught English in Saxony through the Fulbright English Teaching Assistant program. Lauren is broadly interested in visual culture, particularly poster and leaflet art in the interwar period and WWII, and East German literature, among many other areas. She also maintains an interest in Soviet culture and history and often seeks out connections between Germany and Eastern Europe.

Elizabeth McNeill received her BA summa cum laude from the University of Florida in 2013, majoring in History and her own Interdisciplinary Studies major, Gender Representation in History. Upon graduating from UF, Elizabeth developed her language skills by taking German language classes at the Heinrich Heine Universität Düsseldorf and living with a German family as their au pair. Elizabeth studied at the Justus Liebig Universität in Gießen, where she also worked as a bilingual editor and translator at the International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture. Elizabeth's research interests revolve around 20th-century literary and visual culture, gender and sexuality, and modernity.

Rhiannon's research interests currently lie in the contemporary representations of Arab-Germans, especially in German rap music, and translation theory.

Erik Pomrenke graduated from the University of Virginia with High Honors in 2014, where he studied German Literature and Anthropology. After his graduation from the University of Virginia, he taught English as an ETA through the Fulbright scholarship in Dresden, Germany, where he developed a great fondness for all things East German. He is interested broadly in the intellectual history of Europe, focusing mainly on intersections of theology, lyrical poetry, and hermeneutics.

Tina Tahir is an installation artist whose temporary site interventions and textual ruins cross the boundaries of art, design, experimental writing, and critical theory. She received an MFA in Studio Arts from the University of Illinois at Chicago and an MA in Visual and Critical Studies from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Tahir is a current fellow of the transdisciplinary, intercollegiate Field Trip/Field Notes/Field Guide Consortium hosted by the University of Chicago.

Onyx Henry



Onyx Henry completed her BA in German at Wofford College and an MEd in Foreign Language Education at Ohio State University. In the years following, she volunteered with the Ohio Reading Corps through AmeriCorps, and spent a year in Berlin as an English Teaching Assistant with the Fulbright Commission. Most recently, Onyx worked as a German lecturer at Furman University. Onyx's research interest deals with the representation of Afro-Germans, especially in 19th and 20th century German children's and youth literature.

Rhiannon Muncaster graduated summa cum laude from the University of Illinois at Chicago with a BA in Germanic Studies and Spanish. Her honors thesis, *The Evolution of Audiovisual Translation: the Norms and Methods of Amateur Translation in Anime Fansubbing*, dealt with the evolving standards of audiovisual translation practice as influenced by amateur, fan translations of Japanese anime through the analysis of German and Spanish fansubs.

Elizabeth McNeill



Rhiannon Muncaster



Erik Pomrenke



Tina Tahir



Research Snapshot at the Graduate Level

By Peter McIsaac

At the end of September, graduate students gathered along with Department faculty for the annual Summer Research Colloquium. Created as a venue for students to present results of the research they conduct between May and August, the Colloquium represents an opportunity for students to communicate core aspects of their projects to peers and faculty normally uninvolved with the details of their day-to-day work. Unlike any other Department event, the Colloquium presents a

snapshot of the entire range of research being conducted on the graduate level.

With eleven students taking part in the event and two joining via teleconference from Berlin, this year's Colloquium was fast paced and intense. Topics were rich and varied, reflecting the wide range of interdisciplinary approaches students are taking to German Studies material. Studies reconstructing public health exhibitions and the networks behind East

and West German post-industrial landscape parks were followed by projects on Nazi architecture and media, German colonialism in the Pacific, and important German gay rights activists. The work took students to libraries and archives not only all over the US and Germany, but also to Australia and Papua New Guinea. As many other presentations showed, students are interrogating an equally impressive variety of media and cultural production, ranging from film and literary writing to comics

and video games. Thanks to their careful preparation, students made the most of their allotted time, managing to review their research questions, how they sought answers, and the progress they made, all before taking questions and suggestions for future work. By the end of the Colloquium, it became clear that a single event might not suffice to do justice to the fascinating work taking place over the summer months.

Congratulations, Graduates!



Ariana Orozco successfully defended her dissertation, "Memory and Material Culture in Contemporary German Prose by Jenny Erpenbeck and Judith Schalansky," July 1, 2016. Degree conferral date: August 19, 2016. Ariana is currently a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at Kalamazoo College.

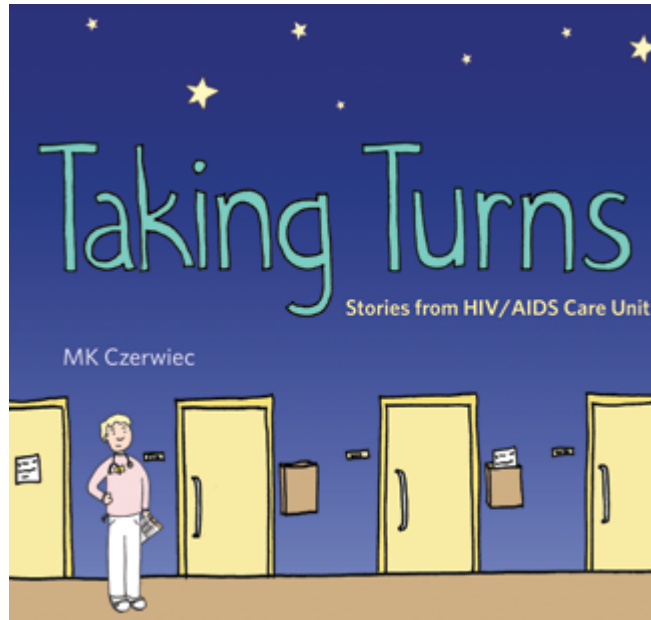


Jennie Cain successfully defended her dissertation, "The Aesthetics of Rudolf Steiner and Spiritual Modernism," September 9, 2016. Degree conferral date: December 18, 2016.

GRADUATE STUDENT FOCUS

The Transnational Comics Studies Workshop

By Elizabeth (Biz) Nijdam



Above image: MK Czerwiec presented on AIDS in LGBTQ comics and her forthcoming publication, *Taking Turns: Stories from HIV/AIDS Care Unit 371*
Bottom image: Paul Buhle presented "Jews and American Comics, with a Strong Personal note" in October

Despite considerable evidence of the cultural significance of the comics medium, comics studies is still only an emerging discipline. Art Spiegelman's *Maus* may have won the Pulitzer Prize over two decades ago, signaling that comics had finally gained the recognition needed to allow them entry into academia, and the scholarly acceptance of graphic novels is widespread; but specialists in comics studies are rare, as are courses devoted to the medium. So while the question of whether comics have a place in academic scholarship has been settled, comic studies as an independent discipline still struggles for legitimacy. The question remains: where does this emerging field belong?

In 2015, Elizabeth (Biz) Nijdam founded the Transnational Comics Studies Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop as the first official forum for comics studies at the University of Michigan. Scholarship and teaching on comics and graphic novels had been gaining momentum across campus for years, most notably in the work on graphic memoir by Sid Smith and Maya Barzilai's recent book on the Golem figure, but there existed no formal

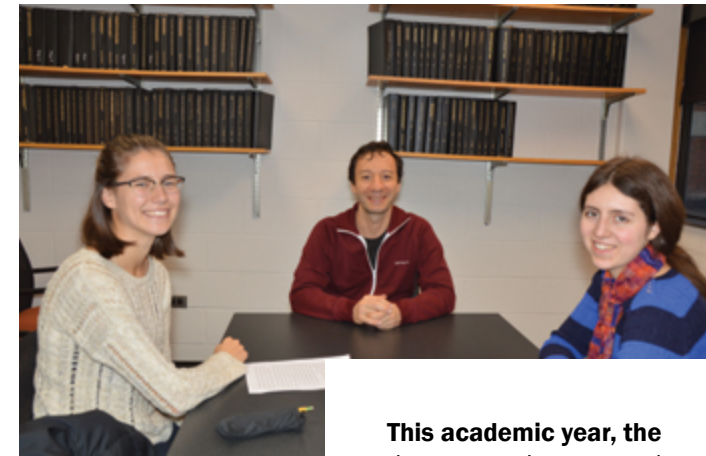
network for comic scholars to support each other. With the founding of the Transnational Comics Studies Workshop, students, lecturers, faculty members, staff, and librarians have come together to pursue topics in comics studies, workshop research, and participate in fieldtrips. Furthermore, thanks to the generous support of the Rackham Graduate School and many other departments on campus, the workshop has been able to invite a number of guest speakers to present on topics as diverse as the AIDS crisis in LGBTQ comics, comics and disability, Jewishness in American comics, and comics pedagogy.

For more information on the Transnational Comics Studies Workshop and to join the Transnational Comics Studies Google Group, please contact Biz Nijdam (enijdam@umich.edu). You can also like us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/transnationalcomicsstudies) and check out our website for upcoming events (<http://transnationalcomicsstudiesworkshop.blogspot.com>).

IN THE CLASSROOM

Max Kade Visiting Author: Selim Özdoğan

By Kristin Dickinson



Above image: Students Mary Boyd (left) and Susan LaMoreaux (right) with Özdoğan during his writing workshop.

To view his interview with the *Austin Chronicle*, visit www.austinchronicle.com/daily/arts/2016-11-15/looking-from-the-outside-with-selim-ozdogan/

This academic year, the department inaugurated a writer in residence program. With support of the Max Kade Foundation, we invited German novelist, writer, and spoken-word artist Selim Özdoğan to join the faculty during the Fall term. A bilingual German author of Turkish heritage, Özdoğan was born in Adana, Turkey in 1971 and moved to Germany at a young age. His first novel, *Es ist so einsam im Sattel, seit das Pferd tot ist* (*It's so Lonesome in the Saddle Since the Horse Died*) was published in 1995. He has since published ten novels and four short story collections. He is currently completing the last novel of a trilogy centered around the experiences of the protagonist Gül, from her early years as a young woman growing up in rural Turkey during the 1940s (*Die Tochter des Schmieds*), through her arrival and gradual integration in Germany (*Heimstraße 52*), to the final installment whose publication we now eagerly

await. The recipient of the Adelbert von Chamisso Prize Förderpreis in 1999, Özdoğan has held fellowships from diverse organizations such as the Literaturbüro NRW (2006), the Arts Foundation of North-Rhine Westphalia (2014), and the Robert Bosch Stiftung (2015). Özdoğan has also collaborated with the film director Fatih Akin (*Gegen die Wand; Auf der anderen Seite*), written a weekly column for *Zeit Online*, and has substantial experience working with students at different levels.

Having arrived at the beginning of September, Özdoğan visited a number of classes within the Department, ranging from our workshop in literary translation to seminars in literature and culture. He also read from and discussed his writings at a Symposium on Contemporary German Literature in September, participated in the live performance of Esther Dischereit's *Blumen für Otello* (*Flowers for Otello*) last October, and traveled to other University campuses in the US for readings and discussions. During his last visit, which took him to the University of Texas at Austin, Özdoğan gave an interview to the *Austin Chronicle*, entitled "Looking from the Outside." In the interview, he describes the impact the recently

deceased Leonard Cohen had on his own writing, muses on his American experience in the "bubble" that is Ann Arbor and the University of Michigan, responds to the recent election in the US and the situation in Turkey, compares German and American politics, notes the differences between his fictional characters and himself, and riffs on the complicated German notion of *Heimat*.

At the core of his residency with the department was a one-credit writing workshop, which met for two hours a week over the course of seven weeks. In the course, students learned about literature and its techniques by creating their own short story. Student Mary Boyd writes, "It was a good opportunity to revisit creative writing after years of writing analytical, argument-based papers. He wanted us to question the way we interact with creativity and art in our daily lives." Susan LaMoreaux shares, "What I enjoyed most about our time with Selim was the way he worked to flip the classroom. I found it very rewarding to work with a teacher who both challenged and encouraged students, promoting true growth." The Department extends a fond "Auf Wiedersehen" to Selim and looks forward to return visits!

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT FOCUS

Wonen in Nederland

Living in the Netherlands

By Mylaica Cobbin Conner (AB '17)



In September 2015, I decided that I wanted to end my undergraduate program in another country, on a continent that I had never been to. I applied for a program at Leiden University that required me to live in the Netherlands for six months. I knew it would be a challenge, but I was completely willing to take it on. I signed up for a plethora of psychology courses that would count towards my major and a Dutch language course to complete my fourth semester language requirement. I was able to learn more about Dutch and European culture in general while also being able to meet people from various walks of life and various countries. I was able to expand my cultural lens and learn about myself in the process.

Culture is beautiful to me; it's one of those things that contribute to the way people view the world, make decisions, and interact with others, and it is quite fascinating. I chose the Netherlands because I think one of the keys to understanding a culture is to understand the language. Prior to going abroad I had taken three semesters of Dutch. Being in the Netherlands gave me the opportunity to speak Dutch

outside of the classroom. I was able to practice at stores, restaurants, walking down streets reading signs, listening to conductors while traveling, and interacting with locals. A small cultural thing I learned in my language course is the difference between saying 'my friend' or 'mijn vriend' and 'a friend of mine' or 'een vriend van mij'; one introduces a romantic partner, no matter the gender, while the other introduces a friend. Learning small things like that allowed me to understand the meaning of dialogue.

My daily life included attending lecture, going to the library (during exam time), exploring Den Haag, Leiden and Amsterdam (solo or with others), going to the grocery store, cooking dinner and watching Netflix. My weekends were full of exploring and attending parties and gatherings put on by international groups on campus. I learned the train and tram system quite well and was able to travel to Scheveningen daily (a beach in Den Haag), Kasteel de Haar for Mother's Day with my parents, Amsterdam if I wanted excitement, Leiden for lecture and my friends, and the Frisian Islands as a way to end my time abroad with a group of amazing people.

I met many people during my time abroad; some that I know will be lifelong friends and others who have inspired me in many ways. I was fortunate to have English as my first language and to learn Dutch before and while in the Netherlands; most of my peers did not have that background. From them I learned bravery and fearlessness to embark on any journey I set my mind to. In my psychology courses I was able to compare the different cultures of education and be challenged.

From the moment I arrived and got completely lost and confused to the day I left feeling like I could help people find their way and communicate in Dutch, it was amazing. I am extremely grateful for my experience in such a beautiful country. Being in the Netherlands for so long taught me so much and I feel I will never say goodbye, but see you later, to the wonderful country.

DUTCH STUDIES

21st Annual De Vries – Van der Kooy Memorial Lecture with Ronald Bartlema

By Annemarie Toebosch

In the 1970s, well before the United Nations drafted its language of children's rights to news and information, the national public television organization of the Netherlands, NOS, asked Dutch children if they would like a news program of their own. The large majority of Dutch children said they would. They asked for a program presented by both genders, with big national and international news, with news about children, and with humor. The *NOS Jeugdjournaal* was born in 1981 as the second children's news program in the world. On October 6, Ronald Bartlema, *Jeugdjournaal* Editor-in-Chief of 17 years, captivated an audience of nearly 100 university and community members as he presented the 21st De Vries – Van der Kooy Memorial lecture "NOS *Jeugdjournaal*: How a Pioneer in Children's News Prepares Dutch Children for the World".

Beyond providing the story of a specific news organization, the lecture painted a clear picture of the Dutch societal approach to child-raising, which normalizes (rather than dramatizes and idealizes) childhood, and respects

children as partners in society. Through depictions of news fragments and descriptions of protocols, Mr. Bartlema laid out the *NOS Jeugdjournaal's* mission:

"Raising engaged and critical-thinking citizens in today's world of unwieldy information"

In footage that included wars, refugee crises and environmental disasters, audience members saw what Dutch children see. And they learned of the care and thinking that go into bringing difficult news to children, always clear and free of taboos but never haphazard. All difficult *Jeugdjournaal* news is told with kid-appropriate expert explanations and with child perspectives given in children's own voices, on the scene and around the world. The audience also learned how American news is presented and perceived by Dutch children and the culture. 9/11 is a household word, Obama a Dutch children's hero, gun violence an outlandish phenomenon, and Miley Cyrus's sexually explicit video a normal Dutch elementary school discussion. Contrasts

in Dutch versus American politics were driven home implicitly. Dutch party leaders hold an intimate (and funny!) annual *Jeugdjournaal* debate for kids. American presidential candidates hold gameshow-like rallies and bombastic election grand-finales. This was a lecture that said it all without saying too much.

A video of the lecture can be found on the Germanic Languages and Literatures website, under Dutch and Flemish Studies, De Vries – Van der Kooy Memorial lecture. We thank all our donors for their generous sponsorship.



Top image: *Jeugdjournaal* logo/graphic
Bottom image: Annemarie Toebosch, Director of Dutch and Flemish Studies, with Ronald Bartlema

SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES

The Signe Karlström Event

By Johanna Eriksson



Top image: The audience waiting for *War*
Middle image: *War*
Bottom image: Visiting actors from Akvavit Theatre

The 2016 Signe Karlström Event was a three-day theatre festival celebrating the Swedish playwright Lars Norén, who has been widely performed in Sweden, throughout Scandinavia, and in other European countries since the early 1980s. Lars Norén, who is regarded as the most important Swedish playwright since August Strindberg, has written more than 70 plays and is still very active. Always in step with society, his newest plays deal with immigration, integration, and the tension between different ethnic groups.

For our festival, three of Norén's plays were performed at the Walgreen Drama Center: *Terminal 3*, *Blood*, and *War*. *Terminal 3* (2006), a staged reading directed by Residential College drama faculty Kate Mendeloff, is an emotionally charged drama about a couple in two different stages of life, sitting in a hospital waiting room: as young parents, waiting to give birth, and simultaneously, 20 years later, back to identify the body of their only son. It was a fine performance by Residential College students Will Arnuk and Emma McGlashen, long time Shakespeare in the Arb actors Graham Atkin and Rob Sulewski, and Mendeloff.

Akvavit Theatre, an independent theatre group from Chicago with a repertoire focused on contemporary Scandinavian Drama, read *Blood* (1994), directed by Kirstin Franklin Hambergren. The play is an Oedipus-drama revolving around a young son lost in the military coup in Chile in the 1970s.

In addition to the readings, Akvavit Theatre's Chad Bergman held a workshop for students, initially created for actors joining Akvavit theatre who are new to Scandinavian drama. Bergman explained these actors were often unaccustomed to the amount of silence and ambiguity found in contemporary Scandinavian drama. Theater students and Swedish language students worked together on exploring and learning to understand the style.

Most polished of the performances was professor Malcolm Tulip's studio production of *War* (2005). He directed an intensely physical and anxiously wired take on how war brutalizes people. Students Lila Hood, Lauren Balone, Aaron Huey, Zoey Bond and Ryan Rosenheim from the School of Music, Theatre and Dance were

fantastic in their roles. The production will travel to a theatre festival in Poland in the summer of 2017.

Swedish-born and New York-based translator Marita Lindholm Gochman was also with us for the weekend. She met with the Swedish students and participated in talkbacks. Marita has translated around 30 of Norén's plays into English since the 1980s. With the recent publication of the plays in her translation by Richard Altschuler & Associates, Inc./Chaucer Press Books, Norén may see a US breakthrough.

The Norén festival was made possible thanks to funding from the Signe Karlström Fund, the Swedish Institute, and SWEA Michigan. It was organized by the Scandinavian Program in collaboration with The School of Music, Theatre and Dance and the U-M Residential College. Almost 400 people attended the events, which were free and open to the public.

STAYING CONNECTED

U-M German Graduate Student Reunion

By Jeff Vahlbusch



In the fall of 1983, five graduate students in Germanic Languages & Literatures rented a house together on First Street, wittily dubbed the *Burschenpalast*, by friend and fellow German graduate student, Geoff Howes, in conversation with the wonderful Mechthild Medzihradsky.

Beyond the shared love of German (and Dutch) language and culture, and the shared work of graduate classes and teaching, the key to this remarkable fellowship were the meals: each week night at dinnertime we gathered at the large round table in the dining room, and one Bursche cooked for all.

Most of us completed our graduate work just as personal computers were arriving on campus, and did our research using the Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library card catalog and scholarly bibliographies in book form. Somehow we still had time for happy hours at Thanos's Lamplighter on Liberty Street with its free buffet of fried smelt and other tidbits, where we celebrated exams completed and prospectuses defended.

In the fall of 2016, almost exactly thirty-three years later, the five original Burschen and Ehrenburschen Geoff Howes and Klaus Tappe got together again in Ann Arbor around a large table in a beautiful Air BnB. Fueled by great affection, extraordinary memories of department faculty and friends, and ein Bier oder vier, we talked through a whole long weekend.

We also visited old haunts like the MLB, Maison Edwards, and Frank's Restaurant, and mourned the passing of institutions like the original Borders Bookstore, White Market, and Drake's Sandwich Shop. Of course we made a pilgrimage to the house on First Street, where the photos of the original five Burschen were taken.



Above images: From left: Chris Stevens, Garry Davis, Martin Doettling, Jeff Vahlbusch, and Rob Bloomer in 1983 (top) and 2016 (bottom).

Rob Bloomer, PhD 1990

Since finishing the PhD in Germanic Linguistics (1990), I have continued working in the field, with jobs at the Universität Bayreuth (1989-1993) and the State University of New York at Stony Brook (1993 to present). On some weekends I enjoy a beer and a schnitzel at Zum Schneider in the East Village.

Garry Davis, PhD 1986

It was great to be back in Ann Arbor to see old friends! After getting my PhD I joined the German Department at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. I currently serve as Professor of German and Linguistics, and chair the Linguistics Department there. Milwaukee is a great German-American city, but there's no place like Ann Arbor!

Martin Doettling, ABD 1987

I came to Michigan after attaining an MA at Michigan State and doing undergraduate work at the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg. I completed my ABD in 1987 and moved west to Monterey, where I led the German Department at the Monterey Institute (today known as the

Middlebury Institute of International Studies).

The lure of the emerging Silicon Valley proved to be too much, and I joined the business world. Today I am chief marketing officer at Swrve, a mobile startup with headquarters in San Francisco and Dublin, Ireland.

Geoff Howes, PhD 1985

After finishing my dissertation on Robert Musil in 1985, I spent a year at Minnesota, and then taught at Bowling Green State University until I retired in 2015 to devote myself to literary translation. When I can, I visit my Doktorvater Ingo Seidler in Vienna, where he's lived since retiring.

Chris Stevens, PhD 1990

I wrote my dissertation, titled *Directional Adverbs in 14th Century Southwestern German: A Study in Historical Dialectology*, under the direction of Robert L. Kyes. After graduating in Spring of 1990, my first job was a tenure-track position in the department of Germanic Languages at UCLA and I have been here ever since.

Jeff Vahlbusch, PhD 1998

After finally completing my overgrown dissertation on Marxist responses to Nietzsche, also as a Doktorkind of Ingo Seidler, and after teaching at colleges and universities in Ohio, Maryland, and Kentucky, I joined the outstanding German program in the Department of Languages at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (1999). For the past 7+ years, I've also been director of the extraordinary University Honors Program there.

In Memoriam: Roy Cowen

Roy taught at U-M for over forty years, joining the German department with a PhD from Göttingen in 1960 and retiring at the end of 2001. The author of numerous books on the history of German literature, he served as the department chair from 1979 to 1985.

Cover Photos

Top photo: Detail from Rackham Graduate School, Sarah Nesbitt.

Bottom Left photo: Detail from Rackham Graduate School, Sarah Nesbitt.

Bottom Right photo: Detail of mural on the side of Potbelly, downtown Ann Arbor, Sarah Nesbitt.

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