



**DEPARTMENT OF
GERMANIC LANGUAGES
AND LITERATURES**

**NEWSLETTER
WINTER 2020**



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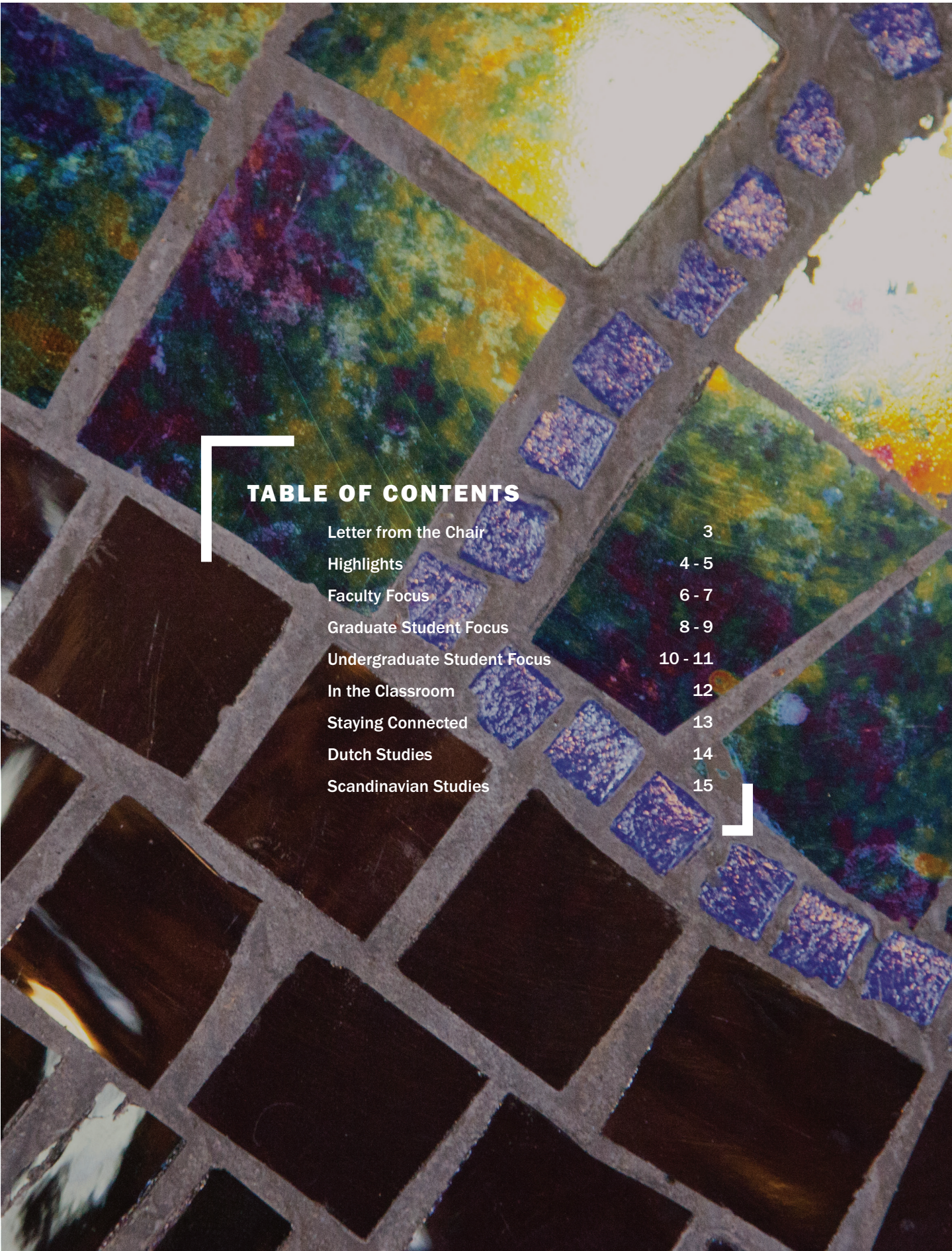


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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



Dear Friends of the Department,

Winter hit early and hard this year, blanketing southeast Michigan in eight inches of snow a full two weeks prior to Thanksgiving. Not that the whiteout slowed us down much. Just one day after the unseasonal snow had ground traffic in Ann Arbor to a halt, we gathered at the Institute for the Humanities to celebrate the publication of new books by our faculty. Following Julia Hell's *The Conquest of Ruins* and Tyler Whitney's *Eardrums*, which appeared this summer (see last Newsletter), the publication of Johannes von Moltke's edited volume of his grandparents' letters from Nazi prison, *Last Letters: The Prison Correspondence between Helmuth James and Freya von Moltke, 1944-45*, marked

the completion of a highly productive year of faculty research. I invite you to read Johannes' brief essay about *Last Letters* [pages 6-7] and indeed the book itself; it is a moving document of love and faith in dark times.

Our year-long study-abroad program in Freiburg continues to flourish, with our department sending record numbers of students: 12 in 2018/19, and 11 in 2019/20. One of these students is Zackariah Farah, who is the first recipient of a new scholarship funded by a large gift from two of our most generous donors, Mr. and Mrs. Sturm [page 10]. The experience of living and studying abroad has never been more vital than in today's increasingly diverse and globalized world. According to the German statistical office, a third of those living in Germany today under the age of 25 have a "migration background." The work of Afro-German writer, activist, and filmmaker Mo Asumang, whom we invited to campus as part of our German Film Series, explores the tensions surrounding these new demographic shifts through in-depth conversations with right-wing

activists and racists in her 2014 film *Die Arier (The Aryans)* [page 5]. Like Asumang's film, whose screening and discussion attracted a large audience of both students and community members, the conference on the "Cultural Formations of the Alt Right," co-organized by Johannes von Moltke and Associate Dean Alex Stern, emphasized the connection between the new right-wing movements in the U.S. and in Europe. We are living in dangerous times.

Our graduate program is attracting attention as well. Mary Hennessy, who is currently completing a dissertation on women and media technologies in German film, won the 2018 Women in German best article prize for her essay [page 9], and in October our graduate students organized a fascinating conference on visuality and the body that brought together students from across the U.S. and Europe [page 4]. Judging by the innovative and amazing work our graduate students do, the future of German Studies is in good hands.

And there is much more happening in our department. Have a look at the following

pages for updates about our Dutch and Scandinavian programs [pages 14-15], get to know our new graduate students [page 8], and learn about the redesign of one of our most important classes [page 12]. And please follow us on our departmental website (<https://lsa.umich.edu/german>) to read about upcoming events. There is much to look forward to, and I invite you to stop by and see us. Whether it's for one of our many events or just to drop by and chat, we are always thrilled to welcome friends and welcome back our alumni.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andreas Gailus".

Andreas Gailus
germanchair@umich.edu

HIGHLIGHTS

Embodying Vision/Envisioning Embodiment, Graduate Student Conference

by Elizabeth McNeill, Ph.D. Student



From our first brainstorming sessions, Lauren Beck, Tina Tahir, Onyx Henry, and I envisioned the department's biannual graduate student conference as a timely platform to think about how the modes, media, and spaces of seeing shape embodied subjectivities in culturally specific ways. The resulting conference, "Embodying Vision/Envisioning Embodiment," brought together graduate students from across the University of Michigan, North America, and the German-speaking world to explore the distinction between looking and seeing and the ways in which the object stares back.

On October 17, W. J. T. Mitchell of the University of Chicago gave the keynote lecture, "Present Tense: Time, Madness, and Democracy." As part of his ongoing engagement in philosophical reflections on time informed by current events, Mitchell asked not "What is time?" but rather "How do we picture time?" How do we feel about the times in which we live, and how does that feeling congeal into images and iconic moments?

The graduate student panels on October 18 and October 19 continued to grapple with the cultural, political, and aesthetic problems surrounding visibility. The panels examined the role of the spectator, the experience of viewing another's (or one's own) pain, the construction of seeing and subjectivity, the musealization of visions, the rendering (in)visible of certain bodies in certain spaces, and the varying temporalities of embodiment.

The closing remarks by Johannes von Moltke and Julia Hell highlighted how mediated forms of looking reveal the layering of the spectator position. In summing up the panelist's papers, they called for self-reflexivity as an ethical act of viewing that begins with close-reading/-looking/-listening.

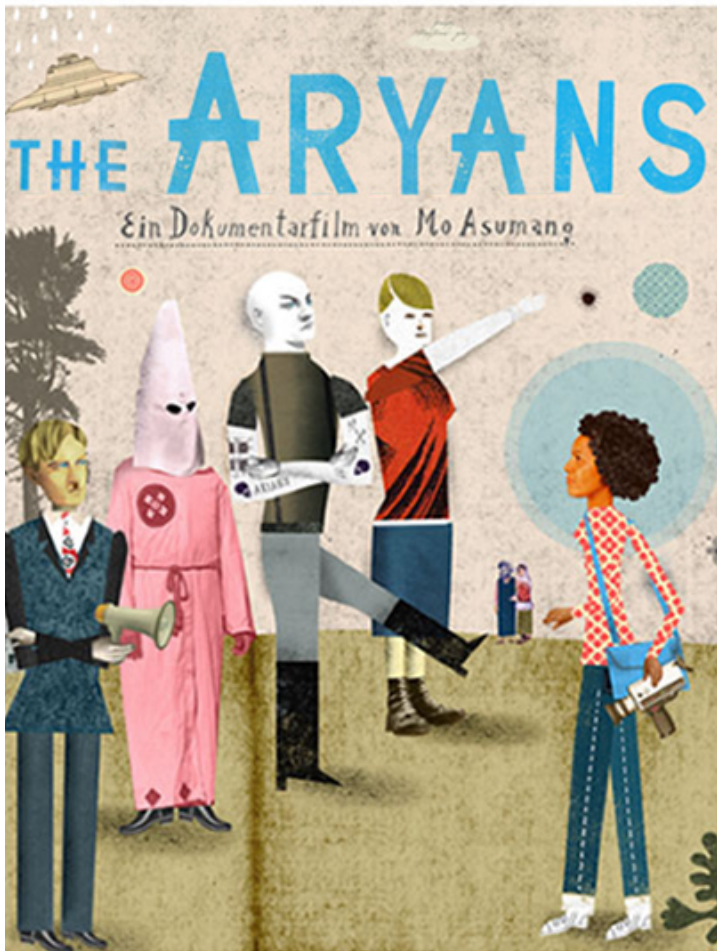
Top
Lauren Beck, Elizabeth McNeill, Tina Tahir, W.J.T. Mitchell, and Onyx Henry

Middle
Tyler Whitney and panelists Steven Kurtz, Bassam Sidiki, and Markus Diepold

Bottom
Pavel Brunssen, Erin Johnston-Weiss, and Natalie Cincotta

The Aryans

By Kristin Dickinson, Assistant Professor



On Wednesday, October 23, the graduate student working group Alamanya: Transnational German Studies collaborated with the German Film Series and Max Kade House to bring Afro-German writer, activist, and filmmaker Mo Asumang to campus for a screening of her award-winning documentary *The Aryans* (*Die Arier*, 2014). Throughout the film, Asumang seeks to uncover the etymology of

the word “Aryan,” which has served as a central point of identification for Neo-Nazis and Ku Klux Klan members in both Germany and the United States. While these groups and others understand Aryan to designate a “pure” Germanic or northern European (white) race, Asumang uncovers its Indo-Iranian roots, as a term that forms the etymological basis of the country name Iran.

Yet more than show the paradoxical manner in which this term was hijacked by the far right as a designation of racial superiority, Asumang achieves something greater in this film by engaging racist individuals in candid conversations and in-depth face-to-face interviews. While many right-wing protesters refuse to talk to her, others speak openly to her about their beliefs. The film ends

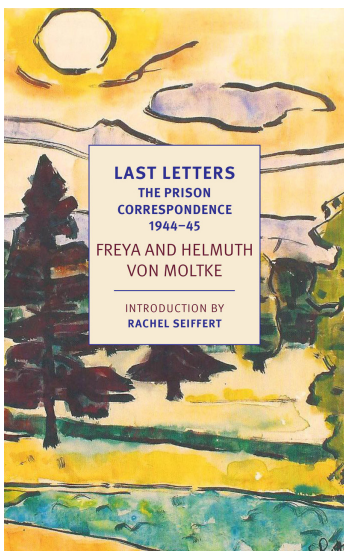
with a shot of Asumang and a former Neo-Nazi walking side by side following a long and friendly conversation. In an extensive live Q&A following the screening, Asumang related that it is these kinds of unexpected relationships that give her hope and inspire her to forge on with her diverse artistic and activist practices.

Right
Mo Asumang and Kristin Dickinson

FACULTY FOCUS

Last Letters

By Johannes von Moltke, Professor



"Sometimes I think about the fate of our long written conversations, and whether you and our sons will find them worth reading after ten, twenty or more years. They originated in a situation that most likely has rarely been captured in writing, because normally the contact winds up being ruptured or monitored. When this time is over, when true peace has been restored, what will people say about these kinds of contemplations? Will they be understood? Will it be believed that these were extreme situations that made people hysterical, will people be able to grasp the notion that a human being, this wondrous animal, can grow accustomed even to being executed?"

Helmuth James von Moltke (1907-1945) wrote these words in a letter to his wife Freya (1911-2010) on January 2, 1945, three weeks before his own execution for high treason by the National Socialists. That letter, part of the "long written conversations" to which he refers, is now available in English in a book co-edited by Helmuth and Freya's grandson, Johannes von Moltke. Entitled *Last Letters: The Prison Correspondence, 1944-1945*, the book assembles the near daily letters between Helmuth and Freya that were smuggled in and out of a Nazi prison at great risk by the prison chaplain. Thinking back over this correspondence in the face of death and with war still raging about him in Berlin, Helmuth nevertheless manages to imagine a better future: a future for his wife and sons, a future after National Socialism, a future without war.

To the degree that such a future is our present, the questions that Helmuth poses are for us to answer, and *Last Letters* invites each reader to do just that. The book allows readers to partake in the long written conversations between Helmuth and Freya, suspended, as it were, between their married life prior to Helmuth's arrest and the near certainty of his approaching trial and death, between hope and occasional despair, between love, faith, and cool rationality. Few accounts can match the immediacy of daily letters such as these and their power to capture how people think, feel, and act in the face of a murderous regime, how we, as "wondrous animals" react, behave, and preserve our humanity in the face of the extreme terror that humans, too, are capable of.

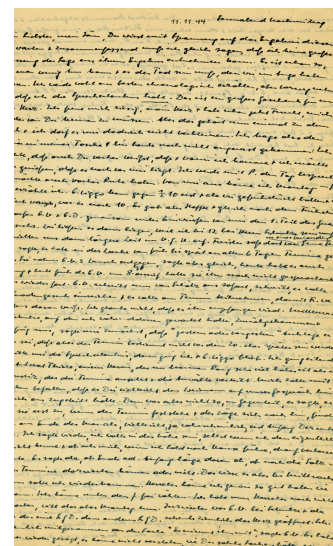
When the Nazis seized power in Germany on January 30th, 1933, Helmuth James and Freya von Moltke were two young, newly married law students pursuing their studies in Berlin. Opposed to Hitler from the very start, the couple became actively involved in the resistance against the regime in 1940, when they jointly agreed to assume the risks and began to engage in conspiratorial activity, gathering like-minded friends and collaborators in a group that would become known as the "Kreisau Circle." One of the most important resistance groups against the Nazi regime, the Kreisau Circle devised detailed political and economic plans for a democratic and European Germany after Hitler. Conscripted to work as a lawyer for the German Wehrmacht by day, Helmuth used his evenings, business trips abroad, and many a lunch hour conducting what he called "our internal war" against the dictatorship.

The trove of letters in Helmuth's minuscule writing and Freya's flowing longhand are now held at the German Literature Archive in Marbach. The fact that Freya and Helmuth were able to engage in these "long written conversations" at all is in itself something of a miracle. By all rights, they should not have been able to write to each other during the year of his incarceration—save for a few authorized, censored letters. After the failed attempt on Hitler's life on July 20, 1944, Helmuth was interrogated and placed under rigorous supervision, with contact between the couple strictly policed. Only by a stroke of incredible good fortune was Harald Poelchau the chaplain at Tegel Prison. Poelchau was a close friend of the Moltkes, a member of the "Kreisau Circle" who had also participated in the plenary meeting in Kreisau in the spring of 1942 but remained undetected.

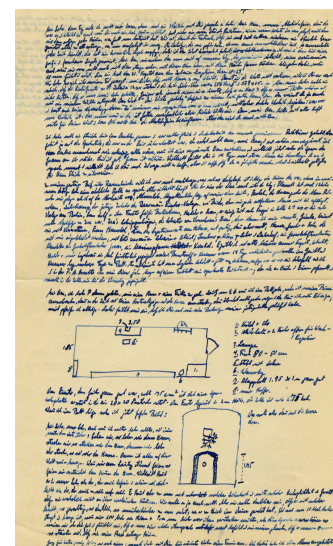
Thanks to Poelchau, the Moltkes suddenly found themselves in a position to carry on this clandestine correspondence, in which they were able to talk freely, allowing us now to walk beside them through the remaining days of their life together. Poelchau smuggled every one of the over 150 letters contained in this volume in and out past the guards on daily visits to Helmuth in prison, returning all correspondence to Freya after it had been read. She, in turn, hid the letters from the Gestapo in the beehives in Kreisau and safeguarded this treasure for the remainder of her life. Freya did not want these emotional letters in the public domain during her lifetime, but agreed to publication following her death on December 31, 2010 in Norwich, Vermont. They appeared in German in 2011 to great acclaim and are now being made available to an English audience.

Each of these letters is a farewell letter written in light of the constant threat of Helmuth's imminent execution, and each letter testifies anew to Helmuth's and Freya's clear-eyed assessment of their situation. With every letter, they prepare themselves and each other for Helmuth's execution and for Freya's life without him. With extraordinary constancy, love, and faith they sustain each other through the correspondence while reminding one another over and over again of the near inescapable conclusion toward which the passing days and weeks are drawing. During that time, however, both on occasion also lose the remarkable inner peace that otherwise buoys them, and about this, too, each reports openly to the other. From those depths of despair, they gradually emerge over the course of subsequent letters with the help and reassurance of the other. And so this correspondence is also infused with the power of hope. As the trial is postponed several times, Helmuth plots different lines of defense in his cell. Freya undertakes various attempts to secure support outside, stave off Helmuth's execution, and obtain a pardon from high-ranking Nazi officials. Just as Freya reports about her efforts on his behalf, which take her on far-flung errands through war-torn Berlin (and occasionally back to Kreisau to look after their little sons and the estate), Helmuth keeps his wife abreast of his thoughts and dreams, his moods, and the details of prison life. Separated by the prison walls the couple draws intensely close during these months—"closer than ever," as Freya writes a few days before Christmas. The last letters are from January 23, 1945, the day of Helmuth's execution. Freya would survive him by another 60 years, passing away on New Year's Eve, 2010.

These are love letters *in extremis*. They testify to the profound openness with which Helmuth and Freya confront their fears, declare their love, articulate their hopes, and find faith. Their import, however, far exceeds the singular couple who exchanges them. Written as bombs were falling on the German capital and the Eastern front was nearing Kreisau during the final months of the war, these letters are far-sighted historical documents of courage and resistance.



A letter from Freya to Helmuth



A letter from Helmuth to Freya

GRADUATE STUDENT FOCUS

Welcome New Graduate Students!



Todd Maslyk

Todd is returning to Ann Arbor, having received both his BS in Germanic Languages and Literatures and his BSE in chemical engineering magna cum laude from U-M in 2016. As part of his undergraduate German degree, he completed a thesis on Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* in the context of the aesthetic theories of Richard Wagner, receiving high honors. Todd also completed an MSE in biomedical engineering at U-M in 2017, during which he received a Rackham Graduate Student Research Grant for work on the development of a selectively apoptotic cell line.

Todd's research interests touch upon almost everything under the sun, but specific areas of interest include media theory, German film, translation studies, fascist aesthetics, and the position of German-speaking Europe in the long 19th century. He also seeks to apply his interdisciplinary background to the investigation of the nexus of history, science, literature, and culture.



Elizabeth Sokol

Elizabeth's research interests include translation studies, Turkish-German studies, contemporary migrant literature, and East German film.

Elizabeth graduated from the University of Illinois at Chicago with a BA in German studies and history. Inspired by the writing of Yüksel Pazarkaya, her undergraduate thesis broadly explored parallels in the forms/functions of migrant and minority literature categorizations over the past 40 years in Germany. Elizabeth also participated in the Newberry Library Undergraduate Seminar, where she completed a research project titled "The Europeanization of the *Orphan of Zhao*." Her research traced the journey of a 13th century Chinese play, and examined the functions it assumed once various translators in the 17th century had shared the idea of using a place that constituted otherness, in this case China, as a platform for representing their own political ideals. This project sparked her interest in studying the politics behind translation—especially regarding works that come from the East to the West.

Kelsey Elamrani Joutey

Kelsey's primary research interests include the construction of national literatures (particularly via "canons"); literary mono- and multilingual paradigms; and translation practice and theory.

After transferring from City College of San Francisco, she received her BA in political economy from the University of California, Berkeley, in 2018, where she minored in German.

Hennessy Wins Best Article Prize



Hennessy's article uses feminist theory and Siegfried Kracauer's postwar theory on film realism to examine the connection between the contemporary Berlin School and 1970s feminist film culture.

German Studies doctoral candidate Mary Hennessy attended the Women in German annual conference in Sewanee, Tennessee, October 17-20, where she received the organization's 2019 Best Article Prize. Hennessy received this award for her 2018 *Camera Obscura* article "Photography, Subjectivity, and the Politics of the Image from Helke Sander to Angela Schanelec." Her article was published as part of a special issue of *Camera Obscura* on "Women's Film Authorship in Neoliberal Times: Revisiting Feminism and German Cinema," edited by Hester Baer and Angelica Fenner, that

posits German cinema as a key site for the theorization of women's film authorship and feminist film production today."

Hennessy's article uses feminist theory and Siegfried Kracauer's postwar theory on film realism to examine the connection between the contemporary Berlin School and 1970s feminist film culture. Specifically, the article focuses on female photographers in Angela Schalenec's *Marseille* (2004) and Helke Sander's *The All-Around Reduced Personality - Redupers* (1978). Hennessy argues that photography is a medium that allows both Schanelec and Sander "to

reflect on women's film authorship, film's role in mediating subjectivity, and film's relationship to the real. Insisting on a feminist understanding of the term counter-cinema," she argues that both films have "an investment in realism that has feminist critical potential." The prize committee described Hennessy's article as "an exciting and innovative piece of scholarship" that helps to show that the counter cinema of the Berlin School is also, crucially, women's cinema.

Congratulations, Graduates!



Andrea Rottmann, who in September successfully submitted her dissertation, *Queer Home Berlin? Making Queer Selves and Spaces in the Divided City, 1945-1970*, an incisive and truly inter-disciplinary re-examination of queer lives in post-war Berlin in September.



Calder Fong successfully submitted his dissertation, *Bergbau, Tagebau, Umbau: The Post-Industrial Landscape Aesthetics of Repurposed Coal Mines in Germany* in October. Fong's dissertation consisted of original interdisciplinary study and research of the role of immersive, sculptural and panoramic land art and garden projects in the redesign of industrial waste lands after the end of coal.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT FOCUS

First Recipient of the Sturm Immersive Study-Abroad Award

by Zackariah Farah, German and Biochemistry Major



Thank you for allowing me to introduce myself. My name is Zackariah Farah, and I have just finished my first year at the University of Michigan, where I am dual majoring in Biochemistry and German as a pre-med student. I began learning German in eighth grade, and like many students, it wasn't anywhere close to a priority in my life. After my first school trip to Germany, however, my interest in the language changed drastically. Having the ability to legitimately use my German skills motivated me to work towards being more fluent for my next trip to Germany. The following year I was a finalist in the annual national German test, and received the AATG Award of German Excellence.

My drive to learn German has also been greatly supported by my parents. My mom is a Spanish language teacher at Way Elementary School and my dad immigrated from Morocco to the U.S. when he was about my age. The constant exposure to foreign languages in my life helped spark my academic passion for German. Both of my parents have always highly valued education, and have given me incredible opportunities to study German by paying for my school trip to Germany, and always putting my academic needs first.

I will be participating in the Academic Year in Freiburg study-abroad program from September 2019 until July 2020. I am

incredibly excited for this opportunity to live and study in Freiburg, Germany, for such a long period of time, and to live life exactly like a German student does. I am the first recipient of the "Sturm Immersive Study-Abroad Award", graciously established by the Sturm family. Thanks to them, I will be able to focus on my studies while I'm in Freiburg. I am tremendously thankful for their generosity in providing me this chance of a lifetime. During my year abroad, I intend to engage in a "Pflegepraktikum", which is a type of apprenticeship for German nursing students.

I'd like to thank all my incredible German teachers, who have greatly changed my life with their constant

devotion and passion for their jobs. In particular I'd like to thank Karl-Georg Federhofer and Krijn Faase. You have been the best teachers a student could hope to have. I'd also like to thank my parents for their unending love and support, and also all of the staff of the study abroad office who make the Freiburg program a reality.

Left
Zackariah and mom,
Susan Gardiner Farah

A Meaningful Experience

by Kristen Loszewski, Development Writer, LSA Advancement



Julia Siegle just returned home from five months in Tübingen, Germany, where she studied politics and German language at the Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen. A junior in the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy who's been studying the German language for six years, Julia jumped at the opportunity to expand her worldview and gain a global policy perspective in the picturesque German university town.

Julia's semester abroad was made possible by the Wilhelm and Mary Seeger Scholarship Fund, of which she was the first recipient.

"My grandparents are German immigrants who come from the region where I was studying, and I was also able to visit their hometown," said Julia. "I'm so grateful to the Seegers for this opportunity to connect my studies with my family's roots."

Bill (LSA, German 1959) and Mary Seeger committed their careers to the study of German and Slavic languages and culture. Together with several other young faculty in 1965, they established the Foreign Language Study Program at the newly-opened Grand Valley State University (GVSU). Passionate about introducing the German language and culture to American students, the Seegers were also instrumental in developing GVSU's International Studies Program, which sent its first student to Germany in 1967. Bill and Mary remained at GVSU until they retired as emeritus faculty in 2006 and 2005, respectively. Their pride in their ongoing educational legacy inspired them to endow funds at their various alma maters in support of study abroad and internship opportunities for

undergraduate students in German speaking countries.

Moving to a new country alone and navigating an entire immersive semester in German, Julia developed a newfound sense of independence and fearlessness.

"After two months—and more trips to the Tübingen McDonald's than I'd like to admit—Tübingen began to feel like home, which I never thought would happen on day one," she says. "I've seen a huge change in myself; I've become more open to people, opportunities, and the idea that life really is what you make of it."

The experience was transformative for Julia in more ways than one. In addition to a feeling of ease in the world-at-large and a much stronger grasp of the German language, Julia was also inspired by Germany's commitment to sustainability and environmentally friendly policies.

"At first I found their environmental efforts and trash systems excessively complex, but now I

honestly think that we as Americans can learn so much from Germans about making small lifestyle changes to protect our planet," Julia reflects. "I'm definitely a lot more conscious of my impact on the world since returning back to the States."

Julia's already looking for an opportunity to return to Germany.

"This past semester abroad showed me that the world really is so small. Germany itself is such a beautiful country with such a rich history, but the people I met are what made the trip so meaningful," she notes. "Now, I'm looking into different internships and graduate school programs in Germany. This trip has given me so many more ideas for what my future could look like."

IN THE CLASSROOM

Moving Forward with a Backward Design: Revisioning German 221/231

by Vicki Dischler and Mary Gell, Lecturers

Strolling the halls of the Modern Languages Building this term, you may wonder why pulsating electronic music emanates from the classrooms as students bob their heads to the beat and huddle around their phones. They are playing Quizlet Live or Kahoot! in German class. Part of this year's reconception of third semester German (221/231) is a bold goal: students will learn the 1,200 most frequently used German words. The research is compelling: knowing this vocabulary makes 70-75% of German comprehensible. With such engaging games, the task becomes fun.

Other evidence-based practices new to 221/231 include a backward-designed

course (outcomes first), daily writing in composition books, grades based on formative and summative assessments, and specifications grading. With "specs" grading, students must meet a minimum of above-average competency in a language task in order to receive credit. Students are thus empowered to decide how they will meet each assignment's criteria.

The objective is to see what students can do in real-world situations. For example, the first unit concludes with three summative assessments, one of which is a speaking test: partners must spontaneously form and answer questions in German in order to learn something about each others' childhoods. In keeping with

tradition, students can still vie for the real-world prize of best final group project in all sections with the Kothe-Hildner contest.

As before, texts in the course revolve around the theme of identity, but our new main text is Nora Krug's 2018 graphic memoir *Belonging: A German Reckons with Home and History*.

221/231 is a fulcrum course in the German Department's language program--a bridge between first-year German and the culmination of the LSA language requirement with 232. For years, 221/231 has been beloved by students and faculty for its breadth of content. Over time, however, the course had become so

dense with material that a re-structuring was proposed.

Thanks to the Gilbert Whitaker Grant for the Improvement of Teaching we received from U-M's Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, we are devising a course that embraces teaching innovations and is more readily adaptable to developments in the German-speaking world. Thus, we will ensure our continued relevance to students, as they prepare to enter an increasingly global and connected society.

resources.german.lsa.umich.edu

by Hartmut Rastalsky, Language Program Director

In 2017, the Department of Germanic Languages & Literatures was recognized by the College of LSA with the Department Award for Outstanding Contributions to Undergraduate Education. Seeking to re-invest the award funds in the same area for which it earned this recognition, the department decided to overhaul an essential resource it provides for students: the German Language program website. As a result, the website has a new look, and a new name, "Resources for German Students and Teachers." The new site is searchable, more visually appealing, and much easier to navigate and edit.

Generous additional support was provided by the Language Resource Center (LRC). The new look was developed jointly by Jennifer Pan from Logic Solutions and Johnathon Beals from the LRC, who have provided essential support for the site over the years. Paul Chamberlain, an undergraduate German major, provided ideas and feedback, carefully proofread the entire site, and added clarifications and alt tags for images. A partial record of the many contributions to the site over the years is at resources.german.lsa.umich.edu/miscellaneous/credits/. We hope you will visit the site when you have time!

STAYING CONNECTED

Leading Me to Opportunities

by Eva (Kramer) Lytmer, Engineering BS '12, International Engineering and German Minor



Since graduating from the University of Michigan with an engineering degree and minors in German and international engineering in 2012, I hadn't put my German studies to good use for several years. After graduation, my career took an unexpected path — I found myself working quite happily as an environmental scientist researching Great Lakes ecology and water quality, fascinated by how much life can be found in a single drop of water. However, I still found myself thinking fondly about my summer spent in Erlangen through the CDS Internship Program and my other visits to Germany.

Then, in 2017, I began work on my Master's degree at the University of Toledo studying harmful algal blooms in Lake Erie. One of the most

important instruments for my research was the bbe FluoroProbe, a portable fluorometer which measures detailed data about algae present in the water. As luck would have it, that summer its inventor, Christian Moldaenke, spent two months working in our lab. He is from the northern German city of Kiel and delighted in testing my rusty German language skills and accompanying us on the boat for our weekly sampling trips. He headed back to Kiel with the promise that there was a spot at his company for me after I graduated, if I wanted it. When I heard about the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's German Chancellor Fellowship, I realized it was the perfect opportunity to work together with Christian, as well as bring together and improve my German language,

scientific, engineering, and education skills. We quickly developed a proposal for the development of a public environmental education program, using local data and easily adaptable materials to empower citizens to protect their local water quality and influence environmental policy.

My husband, our cat, and I moved to Kiel in February and I began working for Christian full time, not knowing if I would get the fellowship or not. I found out in April that I had been chosen for the program. I am just now beginning work on my project, having spent all of October attending the introductory seminar — a whirlwind of appointments in Bonn and Berlin. Our cohort of 50 fellows from the US, India, China, Russia, and Brazil

learned as much from one another as from our visits to government offices, nonprofit organizations, cultural events, and historical sites. Next year we will travel together again for a two week study tour, and in July we will meet our patron, Chancellor Angela Merkel. I feel incredibly honored to be part of this program, and I am looking forward to all of the learning and growth that this next year will bring! Studying German was always a fun pursuit in its own right, but it has also led to opportunities I never would have imagined otherwise. I am especially grateful to Kalli Federhofer, from whom I found out about the fellowship, and who has always been an inspiring, supportive teacher and mentor.

DUTCH STUDIES

Restitution

by Marjolein van Pagee, Lecturer



This fall I had the opportunity to teach and shape one month of Dutch culture courses at U-M. Students studied current racism, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in Dutch society and considered them in light of the historical roots of colonial injustice. How did colonialism shape Dutch identity? How did the

Netherlands become one of the wealthiest nations today?

Being specialized in Dutch colonization of Indonesia, I asked students to consider why Indonesia, 54 times larger than the Netherlands with 261 million inhabitants and the largest Muslim population in the world, is not

discussed in light of Dutch Islamophobia today. Students discovered that there is no “empire talking back” from the east due to the language barrier (Indonesia did not inherit the Dutch language) and underrepresentation of Indonesians in Dutch society. The Dutch East Indies colony remains a tropical paradise in the collective Dutch memory rather than the apartheid regime that it was.

Jeffry Pondaag, an Indonesian living in the Netherlands, has been changing this memory by putting the topic of reparations on the public agenda. His foundation assists Indonesian victims of Dutch war crimes in their successful suing of the Dutch State. Students learned about his work and will examine the

stark contrast of Indonesia being forced to pay 4.5 billion for its independence, described in new research by Michael van Zeijl.

I invited Pondaag and Van Zeijl to speak to students, bringing decolonial activism into class. Pondaag told them: “We can talk about the Netherlands, but you are colonial too, your country does not belong to white people, your country belongs to the Native Americans!” After one month of teaching, I am impressed by the students’ ability to analyze oppression and their own settler privilege. It is giving me a lot to think about as the Netherlands stubbornly attempts to maintain its colonial innocence.

Left
Jeffry Pondaag (middle) in court, The Hague.

Indigenous Perspectives

by Annemarie Toebosch, Director of Dutch and Flemish Studies

This summer, Mark Charles from the Wooden Shoe People, from the Waters that Flow Together, and from the Bitter Water Clan became the first Native American Dutch-American candidate for U.S. President, and the only native candidate in 2020.

His candidacy inspires me to ask: Does our program tell

Dutch-American history from the perspective of native peoples?

I was given one such perspective at the annual conference of the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME 2019) where Dutch Studies was invited to discuss the difference between teaching about

racism and decolonial teaching that positions itself inside an antiracist movement. In a discussion with American Indian people, the idea of “trade nation” was redefined when I learned that the Dutch were the first to commodify scalping in the Americas. 30 years after Amsterdam invented the first central bank, the Netherlands turned

existing gift exchanges for scalps into currency.

As Jeffry Pondaag asked our students hard questions about their place on this land, the Dutch program asks itself how to include indigenous perspectives 400 years after New Amsterdam.

SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES

30th Signe Karlström Memorial Lecture: Swedish Food

by Johanna Eriksson, Director of Scandinavian Studies



The Scandinavian Program had some very interesting and enjoyable days with our Signe Karlström Memorial speaker Professor Richard Tellström in the first week of November. Tellström visited both second- and third-year Swedish, and the students got a chance to hear about contemporary Swedish food and the customs. A long list included specialty diets that makes it complicated to host a dinner or even run a restaurant. He lectured in Swedish about traditional foods, which includes many techniques of storing food, from drying and salting to smoking and fermenting, flavors that are still present in modern Scandinavian cuisine. For hundreds of years, grains were the staple of Swedish food. Tellström told us the majority of Swedes survived on a repetitive diet of bread, beer, and grits. The students were served crispbread, a style of bread which has been around for more than 1,000

years, topped with the ever so popular Kalles Kaviar, a fish roe spread. They also dared to try one of Sweden's favorite candies, the extremely salty and sweet licorice Djungelvrål. Tellström gave a lecture in the Scandinavian introductory course, which has 49 students enrolled this term. The students were struck by how challenging it was for Scandinavians before electricity to store food for such a long part of the year.

The Signe Karlström Memorial Lecture celebrated its 30th anniversary this year, and a large and enthusiastic audience of about 70 people crowded the Rackham East Conference Room. Many in the audience had a Scandinavian background, and several local Swedes were also there. Members of most local Swedish clubs were represented in the audience, and Michigan's honorary Swedish consul Tom Mark and his wife Melissa also attended.



Tellström is a captivating and humorous speaker who reads the audience extremely well. Many laughs and signs of recognition were heard when he was talking about Swedish-American traditional foods that have survived here in the U.S., while being long gone in Sweden. Only in Minnesota will you be able to go out for a lutefisk dinner in the company of hundreds of people throughout the month of December. And only Swedish-Americans are still making and eating potatiskorv.

On his final day with us in Ann Arbor, Tellström visited the Janice Bluestein Longone Culinary Archive at Hatcher University Library with our third-year students. Among other things, we were able to look through some late 19th century bilingual cookbooks for Swedish maids in U.S. households. The archive also has a collection of old church cookbooks from various Scandinavian congregations.

If any readers have cookbooks to donate, please contact Special Collections Librarian Juli McLone, jmclone@umich.edu.

Richard Tellström's visit was made possible thanks to the Signe Karlström Fund, with additional support from SI (The Swedish Institute), SWEA Michigan (Swedish Women's Educational Association), DSF (The Detroit Swedish Foundation) and Tom and Melissa Mark. The Scandinavian Program is fortunate to have such generous supporters.

Left
Class visit to Swedish 233

Right
At the Janice Bluestein Longone Culinary Archive. Kari Seres, Juli McLoone, Austin Teholiz and Tellström

**Department of Germanic Languages
and Literatures**

812 East Washington Street
3110 Modern Languages Building
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1275
(734) 764-8018 • www.lsa.umich.edu/german

Cover Images

Top Left: Deventer Skyline with Reflection. Bart Ros
Bottom Left: Charlottenburg Palace, Berlin, Germany.
30DaysReplay on Unsplash
Right: Lofoten Being Moody. Kym Ellis

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Detail from Rackham Graduate School. Photo by Sarah Nesbitt.

Chair: Andreas Gailus
Asst. Editor: Jennifer Lucas
Layout: Michele Dimond

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Denise Ilitch
Ron Weiser
Katherine E. White
Mark S. Schissel (ex officio)

German Day February 21, 2020



We look forward to welcoming hundreds of high school teachers and students to campus for German Day 2020! This year's theme—'Vielfalt gewinnt'—is intended to explore the theme of diversity in German society and beyond. What aspects of diversity do you find most fascinating? What does diversity mean to you? What are your experiences and expectations with living in a diverse society? We invite you and the students to explore these questions.