Message from the Chair

Dear Colleagues and Friends of German Studies,

I am proud to share the good news of the past year, which is that the Department of German Studies continued its successes, not the least of which was the noticeable increase in the number of students who declared German as their minor or major. This upsurge has motivated all of us in the department—faculty and staff—to continue improving the overall academic rigor for our students. There are three components of the work we have done that focus on our undergraduate students.

This fall, the department will begin the first phase of a new curriculum that is more rigorously will overcome the divide between language classes and literature/culture courses by offering an integrated curriculum in which students learn the beginnings of German by reading literature from the start. Thanks to the guidance of Hiram Maxim, the entire Curriculum Committee worked hard this year to implement these first steps in a comprehensive, four-year curriculum.

Another enrichment of students' academic life came with the establishment of our Advisory Council. Ten committed citizens from the German-speaking business community in Atlanta have agreed to be ambassadors for our department, contributing new ideas as well as funds to benefit both students and the department. Through the energetic leadership of Christoph Rückel and Katja Ritterbusch, the council spared no time in establishing a speaker series that will enlarge our students' perspectives on German issues. The first guest was Karsten Voigt, the official representative of the German government for German-American relations. His enlightening talk about the German perception of this year's U.S. presidential election was well attended by students and people from the German-speaking community. Thanks to our tech-savvy T.A., Benjamin Becker, you can listen to Karsten Voigt's lecture via our website at www.german.emory.edu.

A third step that benefits our students has been the generous support of the Max Kade Foundation in New York. For the first time, we are able to support four students who want to join our longstanding Summer Study Abroad Program in Vienna but might not have the financial means to do so. I am writing this note from Vienna, where I find much joy in seeing these four students among the twenty-three who are exposed to the cultural riches of this beautiful city.

It is always good to remind ourselves that our students benefit from the research of our esteemed faculty, who are presenting at national and international conferences, publishing in scholarly journals, and working on book projects. Regarding the latter, we celebrate the most recent publication of Caroline Schaumann, Memory Matters: Generational Responses to Germany's Nazi Past in Recent Women's Literature. In addition, we invite scholars to campus—as we did in the spring when Ruth Klüger and Wibke Bruhns spoke to us about how much memory matters.

Finally, I want to express special thanks to my colleagues as well as the staff and students who have made my three-year term as chair a truly rewarding experience.

Peter Höyng
Faculty News

Cris Butler published two articles on Daniel Paul Senn in 2008. He also co-edited with Farkas the series "A Different Family Story": German Wartime Suffering in Women’s Writing of Wikke Bruhns, Ute Scheub, and Christina von Droste. Farkas is forthcoming this summer in the volume "German Women’s Fiction" in the Literary Fiction of the German Republic Conference of the Classism and Modern Literature Discussion Group of the Modern Language Association. In May, Swarthmore College invited Butler to be an honora examinor for graduating seniors.

In April 2008 Peter Rippon was invited to Hebrew University in Jerusalem, where he presented the paper "A Little Bit of That Ultra-Violence: Ambivalences and Ambiguities of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony (Through the Eyes of Stanley Kubrick’s A Clockwork Orange)." He attended conferences in Portland and San Diego and published several articles, among them "Shakespeare’s Bruder: Beethoven’s Shakespeare-Rezeption and Ihre Unverbohnen Folgen," which appears in Shakespeare in 18, Jahrbuch.
Yiddish at Emory

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iriam Udel-Lambert, who joined our faculty last year, asked her students at the end of the spring semester why they chose to study Yiddish, what they gained from the course, which material was most meaningful, and why they might use their new knowledge of Yiddish language and Jewish culture in the future. In their words:

Alyssa Nagler, a first-year student:
I chose to study Yiddish because I needed to take a language for my GER requirement. I took Spanish in high school, so I wanted something in the department and was always told Yiddish, and I always wondered what they were saying! Yiddish ended up being totally different than I expected. I really like relearning all of the Hebrew characters from my Hebrew school years and incorporating them into Germanic-sounding words. Honestly, I feel that I have gained so much because I think I have a real grasp on many parts of the language. This has also inspired me to want to go on, learn more, and become fluent.

My favorite parts of the class have been learning songs and cultural lessons/readings such as poems and newspaper articles, as well as the Four Questions [traditionally asked on Passover]. I plan to devote time to learning more about Yiddish culture (and maybe take Emory's Yiddish culture class) because while it is identical to Jewish culture and history as a whole in many ways, I'm really proud of the fact that I'm leaving my first year of college and I can actually respond with something impressive when people ask me what I've learned.

Robyn Deutsch, a graduating senior:
I first became interested in Yiddish because of the love and passion my bohe (grandmother) has for the language and culture. Yiddish was a source of comfort and great joy to her, and consequently it became a part of my life. I had no idea that Yiddish would be offered in college, but when I was told about the Yiddish culture and language classes available, I knew I had to take them. Those classes have offered me a window into the lives of my ancestors and gave me a chance to connect with my grandparents on a special level. I have loved learning how to have conversations in Yiddish, watching Yiddish movies, singing Yiddish songs, and learning about Yiddish culture from Professor Udel-Lambert for two reasons: first, she made it interesting and fun, but second, she was able to place Yiddish within a greater context of linguistics and world culture. I will continue to converse with my grandma and other family members in Yiddish and will ask questions and teach some of my knowledge to them. My experiences with Yiddish at Emory have been a great source of pride for my family and myself and will continue to be so throughout my life.

I'm still very much interested in Yiddish and plan to continue learning more about it.

Country: The Story of a German Family (2008), the English translation of her bestselling Metines Vaterland: Geschichte einer deutschen Familie (2004). Brunnke became known as Germany's first female newscaster, presenting the hei...
News from Our Students

Sarah Brandt, 2008 Graduate and German Major

German is not my first language. It’s not a language my family speaks, nor does my family claim any German heritage. I didn’t even start learning German until high school—after I had already taken six years of French and three years of Spanish. In other words, there must be a really good explanation for the fact that I’m now able to slip in and out of the language without much effort, and on levels ranging from casual and routine to academic and formal. When I arrived at Emory, I placed into the 300 level, where the analytic interpretation of classic German literature was definitely a bit of a jump from the paragraphs I had been writing about my hobbies and pets. Although the classes were challenging, I think it’s also fair to say that I was afforded every opportunity and the most supportive advisers I could hope ever had for over the course of my time with the German department.

The professors challenged me both in class and outside it to pursue my interests in German language and culture and then, this past year, to share these interests and help as a tutor to students in 101 and 102. With the guidance of the faculty, I was also fortunate enough to be awarded two separate grants: first from DAAD for studying abroad in Berlin and then from SIRE for conducting an independent research project in the city. The year I spent in Berlin opened my eyes to the challenges of multiculturalism in the city and led to pursuing a study of the city's school system and the unfortunate treatment of minority students. These experiences are, without a doubt, some of the most rewarding of my life and would not have been possible without my mentors in the German Department.

I’m not sure I can fairly articulate how large an impact my classes, professors, and advisers in the department have had on me. I’m incredibly grateful to have been able to be a part of such a supportive and inspiring group of people. For other students in the German department or those considering taking German classes, the best advice I can give is to tap into the wealth of knowledge and experience the faculty has—they’re more than willing to share everything they can with you. Although I’m sure I’ll stay in touch, there’s no question I’ll miss the atmosphere and the people who have been such monumental influences in my life as an Emory student. I know I’m merely joining the ranks of former students who feel the same way. Vielen Dank!

Sarah Brandt ready to eat some chocolate during the awards ceremony

Max Kade Scholarship

Thanks to the generosity of the Max Kade Foundation in New York, we were able to offer four scholarships to students participating in our Summer Study Abroad Program in Vienna. The recipients are Esther Albrecht, Matthew Kirk, Daniel McGrath, and William Sheldomore.

Awards

On April 24 the department held a separate awards ceremony to honor the many recipients of awards and grants and to present diplomas to the inductees of honor societies. Graduating senior Sarah Brandt stood out with the Department of German Studies Excellence Award for German, a SIRE grant, and a one-year DAAD stipend to study in Berlin. Andre L. Shoenig received the Emory College Language Center Excellence Award for German Paul Syers earned a DAAD summer stipend for Munich. Jonathan Jackson received a summer SIRE grant for translating Das Blaue Mal by Hugo Bettau.

Prizes for the department’s most successful first- and second-year students of German were awarded to Joshua Keller, Sarah Richards, Alexander Shaff, and Christina Welsh.

The inductees into the National German Honor Society Delta Phi Alpha were Daniel Brunner, Michael Cover, Vlad Golgot, Jonathan Jackson, Abigail Kahn, and Erica Umingerre.

Megan Bootright, Sarah Brandt, Abigail Kahn, Rebecca Perch, Paul Syers, and Vlad Golgot were all inducted into the National Foreign Language Society Phi Sigma Iota. Congratulations to all of you!

[from left] William Sheldomore, Matthew Kirk, Peter Höyng, Esther Albrecht, and Daniel McGrath

Advisory Council

Under the leadership of Christoph Rueckel, our newly founded Advisory Council began its work by adopting its bylaws and planning many activities and events. The council’s main focus is to create a new form of interactive, international, and German-related communication for students, faculty, and members of the Atlanta community. In November 2007, a presentation by Karsten Voigt—coordinator of German American Cooperation with the Federal Government of Germany—offered a very successful start to the council’s activities. We thank all council member for their hard work and support.

The Council members are: Johannes Eckert, Peter Höyng (nonvoting member), Christopher Hughes, Ulrich Haus, Florian Igermann, Wolfgang Köpke, Thomas D. Lancaster, Katja Riedersdorff (Secretary), Ferdinand Seifried, Viola Westrock, Riva Wiedebrecht, and Christoph Rueckel (Chair).

Summer Abroad in Vienna 2007

In his year’s Study Abroad Program in Vienna boasted a record number of participants. Twenty-three students took German, music, and history classes while enjoying the cultural riches and the 2008 Euro Cup in soccer.

Alexandra Winson, a 2007 graduate and this year’s program assistant, wrote:

“As our program began, I thrilled in the music course. I greatly enjoyed German language class, seeing it as a way of increasing my ability to interact with the Viennese. Three weeks into the program, I noticed that my work in German class was paying off. I became more personally involved with language learning and started visiting cafes by myself, keeping a journal in German, and reading children’s picture books.

“After the fourth week, the music class was in full swing, and as all my planning, I had not contemplated what life in Vienna would be like when my academic purpose shifted entirely to learning German. In the second month of the program, with all of my attention focused on the development of my language skills, my Garnman began to bloom. In eight weeks I had progressed from reading “Little Polar Bear, Where Are You Going?” to Kafka’s short stories. As my competence increased, my confidence grew.

“My eight weeks in Vienna were essential for my professional development as well. Learning German past the 200 level enabled me to major in linguistics, helped me secure a position as a research assistant the following summer in Berlin, and will continue to contribute to my academic success in graduate school. The courage to try something new—a skill that I developed during my first summer in Vienna—has been far greater predictor of my success following the program. In my last free summer before I begin graduate school, I am serving as the program assistant for the Vienna Abroad Program. This position is particularly fulfilling because it allows me to spend time in Vienna, to continue to explore the complex Austrian culture, and

[from left] Vice Consul Sonke Lorenz, Karsten Voigt, Christoph Rueckel, Wolfgang Köpke, Peter Höyng, and Katja Riedersdorff during the Karsten Voigt event

Program director Peter Höyng with students participating in the 2007 Summer Abroad Program in Vienna

help to this year’s group of students have the best experience possible. It also has been interesting to reactivate to life in Vienna. I have seen an incredible boost in my language skills, a development that continues to inspire me to learn German—no longer as an academic, but rather as a personal, pursuit.”
Announcement  From April 23 to 26, 2009, the annual symposium of the Modern Austrian Literature and Culture Association (MALCA) will take place at Emory University under the auspices of the Department of German Studies. MALCA, founded in 1961, is the main scholarly organization in the United States devoted to the promotion and study of Austrian literature and culture. Its symposia regularly draw scholars in the field of Austrian studies from around the world. The topic of this year's meeting, Verfreundete Nachbarn, will examine the German-Austrian encounter in literature, film, and cultural discourse during the past two hundred years.

Alumni—Request for Information

Tell us about your recent accomplishments. We would like to share them with other alumni in our next issue.

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Newsworthy Item

If you would like to make a gift to support German Studies at Emory, please contact Randy Gorod at 404.770.7690 or randy.gorod@emory.edu. Checks can be mailed to his attention at 825 Houston Mill Road, Suite 107, Atlanta GA 30329. You also may go online to contribute at Emory’s giving page: https://www.alumnicconnections.com/olc/pub/EMR/onlinegiving/showGivingForm.jsp?form_id=282. Please indicate your support for German Studies with your contribution.

Gifts will be used for:
- German Studies Scholarly Enrichment Fund
- Student Awards
- Student Travel Support

Thank you for your support!

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