

DUKE GERMAN NEWSLETTER

"Sage nicht alles, was du weißt, aber wisse immer, was du sagest."
– Matthias Claudius (1740-1815)



Endings and Beginnings

Dear Readers,

In this issue, we celebrate our undergraduate students, who have persisted in learning during a very unusual year. We're especially proud of our graduating German majors! For this issue, we've also interviewed some of our German 101 students, who've just started their language-learning journey, on their experiences in the program.

We would like to congratulate Stefani Engelstein on a great job during her four years as Chair—we appreciate all your hard work, not least during the covid pandemic and virtual teaching! Many thanks also to Kata Gellen for her work as Director of Undergraduate Studies, and to Margy and Dorothy for their constant support! In the fall, we welcome Jakob Norberg in the position of Chair.

Editors Amy Jones and Lukas Hoffmann

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Graduating German
Majors!



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Graduate Lea Greenberg!

CONGRATS TO OUR GRADUATING GERMAN MAJORS!

We reached out to the seniors who graduated from Duke German in Spring 2021. Here are their favorite memories at Duke:



Sydney McKinney

My name is Sydney McKinney, and I am from Atlanta, Georgia. At Duke, I double-majored in German and Public Policy. My academic interests include criminal justice reform, and the intersection of politics, media and anti-racism. After Duke, I will be headed to DC to work as a Strategy Analyst at Deloitte. My favorite class at Duke German was “Images of America”

with Kata Gellen, where we discussed (auf Deutsch) how Germans depicted and interacted with Americans throughout history. My favorite memory, though, was the weekly Friday debates we had in my Duke in Berlin Advanced German class. Each week was a different current topic, and the debates were always judged by a panel of other students. I am so grateful to the Duke German program for all the memories!

Sibora Seranaj

Duke German has followed me since my first semester freshman year (8:30 am beginner class), until my last semester (independent project in modern literature). My favorite memories include studying art history in Berlin, drinking beer with Professor Freytag, and almost every class with Professor Gellen. From politics to theater to current media to mythology, the department offers it all. The professors are amazing — very knowledgeable and inspiring — and they treat us students equally regardless of our level of German. I have also noticed that German classes tend to be quite diverse



when it comes to people’s nationalities, which contributes to productive discussions and clashing perspectives. I would encourage every student to try out a German class (especially 300-400 level courses), but if that seems a little intimidating, German

Conversation half credit is a nice, laid-back course, and Professor Madden's freshly baked goodies only add to its appeal. :) Thank you to everyone in the department!!! I hold you in my heart.

Sibora Seranaj is from Albania and she graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Statistics and a Bachelor of Arts in German. After Duke, she will pursue a Master of Science in Applied Analytics at Columbia University. Her interests are Data Science and contemporary art.



Stephanie Crater

I'm from New Jersey and have a triple major in Biomedical Engineering, Electrical and Computer Engineering, and German. After graduation, I'm moving to Seattle to work as a software engineer at Microsoft, but I eventually hope to go back to school to get a PhD in Biomedical Engineering.

I've absolutely loved studying German at Duke - half of my family lives in Germany, but I didn't grow up speaking German, so it was important to me to become fluent and be able to connect with them! I first studied abroad in Berlin the summer after my freshman year, but I didn't plan on completing a German major at the time. I loved the program and Berlin so much that I went back from January-August of my sophomore year as well. I was even able to combine my interests in engineering and

German to take engineering classes in German at the TU Berlin, and I joined a biomedical research lab at the TU also! I ended up presenting my research at a conference back in the US and then decided to get more involved in research back at Duke. It's been really cool to see how much I've learned by studying German at Duke, both as a German speaker and an engineer (especially thanks to Duke in Berlin)!

Cassandra Turk

Cass is graduating with a double major in German and Economics, and a minor in Math. After taking a gap year, she plans on attending graduate school to get a PhD in economics.

[Cass could not be reached for a personal statement regarding her memories at Duke.]



For more on the graduates of 2021, see: <https://german.duke.edu/news/class-2021>

A CHAT WITH ALEXANDRIA SWAINE

Interview by Amy Jones



What German class(es) have you taken at Duke? What is your favorite thing you've learned?

I've only taken German 101 so far, but it has definitely been one of the best courses I've taken at Duke! I loved learning about anything cultural. It was really interesting to see how free time is spent in German-speaking countries and how concepts like friendships and small talk are viewed so differently.

How did you get interested in German?

I lived in Germany for a few years as a child while my dad was completing a tour in the military. I never actually learned how to speak German, despite having gone back to visit. So, there was always that part of me that wanted to feel more connected to the people and culture in Germany, and one way to do that was by getting immersed in the language.

If you could go anywhere in Germany, Austria, or Switzerland, where would you go?

I would go to the Neuschwanstein Castle! It's so incredibly beautiful, and I'd love to see the architecture and picturesque countryside.

Do you have any advice for other Duke students considering starting German as a foreign language?

Find German media that you like. Watching movies/shows and listening to German music makes the language learning process much more enjoyable, and you'll learn so many things along the way! In general, just go for it! You won't regret it. I'm sure you've probably heard that German is really hard because of the three genders, super long words, or the word order— and I was worried about those things, too, going into the class. But because of the way the class is taught, I was able to overcome those obstacles, and I think my classmates all feel the same way.

Was ist Ihr Lieblingswort? (What's your favorite German word?)

Mein aktuelles Lieblingswort ist „Waldeinsamkeit.“ It basically describes the feeling of solitude you get while being in the forest.



GETTING TO KNOW CONNOR BLUE

Interview by Amy Jones

What German class(es) have you taken at Duke? What is your favorite thing you've learned?

So far I have taken German 101 and 102. I don't know if I have one "favorite thing" that I have learned. However, my favorite German word is "Bürgermeister." There is no real reason for my attraction to this word, I just really like to say it.

Tell us how you got into German opera and operetta! I know you enjoy listening to pieces like Johann Strauss's Die Fledermaus. Have you discovered any new pieces or composers lately?

I got into classical music thanks to my grandma. She is a lover of classical music and has been taking me to see The Nutcracker since I was eight years old. I've always been interested in opera but never really knew where or how to begin. When I learned that I would need to complete Kulturpunkte for my German 101 class, I realized that it would be the perfect opportunity to start listening to opera.



**"Deutsch ist meine
Lieblingssprache!"**

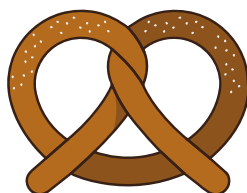
I usually talk to my professor and my grandma to pick the pieces I listen to. Unfortunately, I have not discovered anything new recently, although I do keep coming back to *Die Fledermaus* time and time again. I've discovered that the more I listen to it, the more I enjoy it.

Do you have any plans to go to Germany, Austria, or Switzerland in the future?

I do! My current plans involve going to medical school after Duke, but I know that I am going to take two gap years after undergrad. My goal is to spend the first year teaching English in Germany or Austria, either through Fulbright or the USTA program.

Other than music, what's your favorite thing about German culture? Is it food (Brezeln, Kartoffeln), or maybe castles?

I still have a lot of growing up to do when it comes to German culture. I can't say that I've actually tried any foods that are explicitly German. I'm from Denver, CO and I recently discovered that there is a traditional German bakery in town that I look forward to trying this summer.



CONGRATS TO OUR NEWEST CAROLINA-DUKE GRADUATES!

Lea Greenberg graduated this spring and will start working in the fall as a Visiting Assistant Professor at Knox College in Illinois. We wish you all the best as you start your new endeavor!

Congratulations as well to **Edana Kleinhans** and **Martin Dawson** for graduating this spring and summer, respectively!



SEE YOU IN THE FALL!

After more than a year in pandemic mode, we hope to see one another in person in the fall, thanks in large part to the vaccine!

We're especially excited to meet our new Carolina-Duke Graduate students in person. Welcome to first-years **Katja Riegler, Wei Quan, Merlin Ganzevoort, Luca Pixner, and Theresa Sambruno Spanhoff!** And to the second-year cohort: we are looking forward to seeing you all in the same place (that isn't Zoom!).

Undergraduates, we'll be delighted to offer Kaffeestunde and Filmabend in person!



HAPPY SUMMER!

