

IN TRANSIT: a focus on changes and exchanges in the department

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INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE: Lina-Sophie Raith



Lina (above, left), an MA student at the Humboldt Universität Berlin, joined us at Duke in January, and will be teaching with Duke in Berlin this summer and back in Durham for the fall semester. Below, she shares her thoughts on the exchange...

Before I joined the Carolina-Duke program, I was both studying and working in Berlin. I was about to finish my Masters in German as a Foreign Language at Humboldt University, and working as a German teacher in the Duke in Berlin exchange program. My boss in the program heard about the new Humboldt-Duke grad exchange, and when he asked me if I wanted to go across the pond for a year, I jumped for joy and said yes without hesitation. (continued on page 5)

A Letter from Thomas Pfau, Outgoing Department Chair



As I prepare to turn over the role of department chair to Stefani Engelstein, I would like to briefly review some of the accomplishments of the past two years, as well as outline a few areas in which our department will want to invest its energies in the coming years.

Following the exodus of all tenured faculty in the Fall of 2014, the department found itself suddenly working with a skeleton staff of two assistant professors and two professors of the practice. Facing these extraordinary constraints, the department had to count on the dedication of time and invaluable professional input of some of its secondary faculty, including Laura Lieber, Bryan Gilliam, Martin Eisner, as well as Eric Downing. Thanks to their joint efforts, we were able to make two stellar hires in Stefani Engelstein and Henry Pickford. By now, both Stefani and Henry have become crucial pillars of our department, and it seems hard to imagine that they have only been here for two years. Other happy developments in the area of personnel include the promotion of Jakob Norberg to the rank of Associate Professor (with tenure), and the renewal of Kata Gellen, who during the coming year will be serving as the Andrew Mellon Assistant Professor of German. Thus replenished, our joint faculty was able to complete yet another successful search for our new LPD; we are delighted to welcome Cori Crane, who will start in that position this Fall.

Even as Jakob, Henry, and Inge will be enjoying amply deserved research leaves during the coming academic year, various ongoing initiatives continue – among them the Major Speaker series (directed by Stefani) and the Migration & Refugee lecture series (directed by Jakob). Together with the vitally important semester- and summer programs in Berlin that Jakob and Susanne Freytag continue to supervise with great care and attention to detail, our department is well positioned to confront a number of challenges during the coming years.

Among these, I consider the following three to be particularly pressing:

1) for the CDG Program to continue to raise its profile in Germany and to find ways to attract more top-notch applicants from among Bachelor and *Magister* students in Germany. Increasing the number of graduate applicants and, thus, improving on our selectivity will be vital for the continued success of our joint program.

2) To consolidate existing and forge new connections with pre-professional units at Duke (e.g., Engineering, Public Policy, Business) and impress on students in those tracks the value of acquiring language proficiency and cultural literacy in all things German. Doing so will undoubtedly help us respond well to a major overhaul of the university curriculum, which is likely to get underway this coming year.

3) Finally, to assist Cori Crane and our terrific long-time instructors – Susanne Freytag, April Henry, Kristen Dolan – with tweaking the German Language Program and raise its profile among various undergraduate constituencies, both within Arts & Sciences and in the various pre-professional schools.

Let me close by thanking all of the above, and also our dedicated cadre of graduate students and –instructors, for having done so much to help me succeed (within my native limits) as department chair. Serving as your chair has been a privilege and a pleasure. Wishing everyone a productive and restorative summer,

— Thomas Pfau



PHOTO: *The German Reichstag*, by Maegan Burns, a current Duke in Berlin exchange student

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: an interview with Professor Henry Pickford



Professor Pickford, who joined us in 2015, shares his perspectives on the program and his current research

DG. You just finished your second year with the Duke German Department. How would you describe your experience here so far? How is it different/similar to your experience at your previous institution?

HP. My experience so far in Duke German, and the Carolina-Duke Graduate (CDG) Program in German, has been overwhelmingly positive. I feel very lucky to be in a department and graduate program whose faculty are incredibly knowledgeable, smart, collegial and generous with their time and wisdom, whose graduate students are intellectually curious, talented, and motivated, and whose staff are dedicated to making the entire endeavor seem effortless, when we all know that it is far from it. The Duke Philosophy department, where I have a secondary appointment, has also been remarkably welcoming, and I've greatly enjoyed teaching courses cross-listed with Philosophy (and other departments/programs) such "Marx, Nietzsche, Freud," and a first-year seminar on ethics in philosophy and literature.

Since I moved from the University of Colorado-Boulder, where I was an assistant professor, to Duke, where I was soon promoted to associate professor, much is new for me. My former department housed German, Russian, Scandinavian and Hebrew, whereas Duke German is a small but autonomous department, where of necessity everyone does a fair amount of administrative work, but also therefore where collegial relations are based on mutual respect more than formal hierarchies. Regarding undergraduate teaching, at CU Boulder I mainly taught large 'outreach' courses in English, with anywhere from 40 to 300 students. Here at Duke I've taught a wider variety of courses, from small seminars taught in German to lecture courses in English of about 35 people (large for a humanities course at Duke, I'm told). I've been amazed by the intellectual abilities of my undergraduate students: I ask a lot from them in terms of preparation, synthesizing and critical thinking, but they never disappoint. With respect to graduate teaching the contrast is even starker. While my former department had a MA program in German Studies, the CDG Ph.D. program is one of the strongest in the country, so I really enjoy teaching very talented graduate students and helping them discover and deepen their intellectual interests.

Another major difference is the unparalleled research support I receive at Duke. Thanks to that support I'm able to conduct research abroad and present work at domestic and international conferences more often than I could in my former position. Additionally, Joseph Winters (of Religious Studies and African and African-American Studies) and I was lucky to receive a grant from the program in Philosophy, Arts and Literature and the Franklin Humanities Institute this past year to run a year-long university-wide seminar on the life and work of Theodor W. Adorno. We held a monthly reading group, which drew graduate students, faculty and local intellectuals and enjoyed occasional guest speakers. The seminar culminated in a very successful two-day international conference in March. These are wonderful opportunities that Duke support makes possible.

DG. How do you find life in the Durham area?

HP. My wife and I are from Colorado, and during my first year I more or less commuted back to the Denver-Boulder area. We settled in south-western Durham last summer, and have been getting to know the city and the state ever since. We're both avid outdoor enthusiasts, and although we miss the 14,000-foot Rocky Mountains and fresh powder, we enjoy hiking and biking in the area. We like the wonderful local restaurants, farmers' market, Duke Gardens, Duke Forest, the Smoky Mountains and the seashore, and are keen to discover further activities and opportunities in our new home.

DG. Could you tell us a little about your current research?

My current work focuses on Critical Theory, the interdisciplinary research program founded in the 1930s by an eclectic group of German intellectuals. While Critical Theory has continually evolved, it remains committed to developing and combining philosophical, sociological, and psychological approaches for the analysis and criticism of contemporary Western society and culture. I'm presently co-authoring a short intellectual biography of one of the founding members, Theodor W. Adorno, with a colleague in England, in which we're emphasizing Adorno's intersectional identity as German-Jew, haute bourgeois, émigré, and public intellectual, in relation to his theory and practice of philosophical and cultural criticism. *(continued on page 5)*

Language Program: The 2017 *Frühlingsfest* Tweet Contest

This April saw the inaugural Frühlingsfest, a springtime gathering of the different levels of the German language program to celebrate the achievements of our various classes. Language Program Director Dr. Inge Walther issued a call to the language classes for a Tweet contest. Across all levels of instruction, students submitted tweets from their favorite figures from German history, literature and philosophy. The question: what would these figures have to say about the modern world? A panel of professors judged the submissions using the most exacting standards available. Below are the winners:



Twitter ist der Eingang des Menschen in seine einfache unkreative selbstverschuldete Dummheit.

#lieseinbuch



14.48 - 11. April 2017



Hannah Arendt

@HannahArendt



Normale Jeans finde ich langweilig. Es gibt sowas wie eine Banality of Levi.
#Sophisticated #SupBritches
#IAintSayinHesaHeidegger



6:04 PM - 12 Apr 17 · Embed this Tweet

2nd Place: (tie)

Tweets Tweets & Antworten



Königin @nette_konigin · 1 Min.

Ich habe einen Flug bei #UnitedAirlines für mein liebes @Schneewittchen gebucht. Sicherer Flug! #Familie ❤️



Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

@JWGoethe



Die Bürger lachen in Deutschland. Warte nur, bald Bereust du es auch. #wählen #btw17



14.48 - 6. Mai 2015

Duke German Club: A Year in Review

From the German Club Executive Committee

The 2016-2017 school year was host to many engaging events for the German Club. This Spring, in addition to hosting our traditional meetings – weekly Kaffeestunde and bi-weekly Filmabend – we held an informational workshop. The session, entitled “Finding Careers with German” was led by Heidi Madden and Linda McCormick, who gave an overview of Duke’s many career search databases with a focus on finding German companies and tracking Germany industries of interest to students. They also offered tips on how to market students’ German language abilities in their career searches. The event was widely attended and of a great benefit for our many German majors and minors.

Our spring film series focused on the issue of German and Migration/Immigration and included classics such as Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s *Angst Essen Seelen Auf* and newer films like Burhain Qurbani’s *Wir Sind Jung. Wir Sind Stark*.

(The German Club meets weekly for Kaffeestunde (a German-language conversation hour) and bi-weekly for the film series. Anyone interested in German Club activities should contact d.turner@duke.edu)

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES (continued from p. 1)

My boss was right about the courses – in my first semester here, I was at first very impressed (and a little intimidated) by the program students and the class discussions, and then, when I was finally able to enjoy it, completely overwhelmed by the end-of-the-semester work. I’ve never worked so hard for anything in my life before. And I’ve probably never been prouder of myself than the day I handed in my final papers.

I always enjoy teaching and was used to Duke students, but I found them more earnest and hard-working here, because, well, there are so many other things that demand attention in a semester abroad in Berlin... However, at the end of the semester, it added to my level of stress. I’m not sure if I could have done it without my amazing housemates. They call our big, old house on Trinity the *Womansion* – we’re four girls, and apart from me, no one studies at Duke or UNC which helped me focus on other things even during the toughest phase.

In the summer, I want to see more of North Carolina and the US. I was planning to hitchhike, but my friends almost fainted when I told them, so I’ll probably take the greyhound. I already know what I’ll miss next year: the intellectual stimuli, my friends from the program, the weather, and breakfast biscuits – in reversed order. I’ll continue working in the Duke in Berlin program and hope that I’ll have the opportunity to come back at some point.

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT (continued from p. 3)

Part of the challenge of this project is that Adorno was a genuine polyglot – a musical composer and critic, sociologist, philosopher, literary critic, educator and much more – whose multifarious writings and activities nonetheless are unified by a sophisticated and original understanding of the moral-political complexities of life in modern society that we try to make explicit. Within the ambit of this project I’m also co-editing a volume of contributed essays and publishing several book chapters on aspects of Adorno’s thought.

A second ongoing project examines elements of the 19th-century

background of Critical Theory, in particular Karl Marx’s thought in relation to Aristotle, whose writings Marx knew well and partly translated. Marx, I think, combined aspects of Aristotle’s naturalistic virtue ethics with Hegel’s thought to ground a normative critique of the political economy of his day. In various book chapters I explore how Marx reworks Aristotle’s concepts of production, action, and practice in ways that I believe remain useful today. The next step in this project is to study the theory of self-consciousness in German Idealism and its presence in Marx’s thought.

Across the Pond with The Duke-Essen Graduate Exchange

For years, Duke and the Uni Duisburg-Essen has had a graduate exchange in place of around six weeks. The program has now been expanded to around ten weeks. This year, Duke is sending two Graduate Students, Emma Goehler and Lukas Hoffmann. Here's what they'll be up to...

Emma Goehler. As a graduate exchange student at the Universität Duisburg-Essen, Emma will be participating in seminars, making connections with professors and other graduate students in Essen and traveling in her spare time. She is excited to get to know a new city and a new part of Germany, since this is her first time in the Ruhrgebiet/in Nordrhein-Westfalen. She is planning on making day trips to Cologne and several other cities in the area. She is also planning a long weekend trip to Vienna to participate in a conference and on spending several days in Berlin and in Prague later in the summer. While not at the university or traveling, Emma will be using her time in Essen to begin working on her Writing Proficiency Review and to rest before returning to Durham in August.



Lukas Hoffman is also participating in Duke University's Exchange program with the Universität Duisburg-Essen on the Essen Campus. While his primary goal for his time in Germany is to master his German skills, he is also auditing a seminar titled: *Ästhetik und Geschichtsphilosophie*, which is covering the Aesthetic Theories of Georg Lukács, Walther Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse. Aside from German Grammar and Aesthetics, Lukas is working on his research for his Writing Proficiency Review on Novalis' *Christenheit oder Europa* as a political solution to problems of subjectivity in the the *Fichte Studien*. On the weekends, he is also planning on visiting his colleagues at Duke in Berlin, as well as exploring Nordrhein-Westfalen and is looking forward to returning to the joint program in August.



GERMAN 290-1/CULANTH 290/LIT 290/MUSIC 290

Journeys of Sounds, Words, and Images: Popular Music and Identity

Professor Christoph Schaub

Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:40 – 5:55 pm



How does popular music shape identities and create communities beyond national, linguistic and cultural boundaries? How is a music style appropriated in a new context? The class explores the travels of popular music (primarily between the U.S. and Germany) and focuses on Reggae, Soul, R&B, Hip Hop, and Techno. Course materials include songs, music videos, documentary films, novels, and theoretical essays. Exploration of different media and key terms in cultural studies such as identity, hybridity, transculturality, and diaspora.

No knowledge of German required.

Fall 2017 Course Offerings: Undergraduate

In addition to these content courses, the Department of Germanic Studies offers the full range of German language courses, from the introductory to advanced levels. Meeting times/locations vary. See the Fall 2017 Course Search.

Fall 2017

Germany Confronts the Holocaust

Tues./Thurs. 4:40PM – 5:55PM

Ger 387

Hist 261 / Jewish St 369 / Lit 369

Taught in English

Professor Kristen Dolan

FALL 2017 – First-Year Seminar:
German 89S / AMI 89S / LIT 89S

Prof. Kata Gellen
Tuesday/Thursday
11:45am-1:00pm



SURVEILLANCE & SOCIETY

**Big Brother,
Secret Police,
and
Reality TV**

Do we live in a surveillance society, and why does it matter? This class will explore fundamental issues around surveillance, such as privacy, freedom, democracy, terrorism, security, and police states, as well as our 21st-century culture of self-display and surveillance as entertainment. Dystopian fiction, legal and philosophical writings, journalism & film.

Fall 2017 Course Offerings: Graduate Studies

At the center of his seminar will be an in-depth exploration Rilke's lyric oeuvre beginning with *Das Stundenbuch* (1899/1905) and *Das Buch der Bilder* (1902), extending via *Neue Gedichte* (1907) through his *Duineser Elegien* and *Sonette an Orpheus* (1922) and other late poetry. Additionally, we will take up some of Rilke's prose writings on aesthetics, including his short monograph on Rodin (1902), his letters on Cézanne (1907), a few short prose pieces, and a selection of his far-flung and remarkably probing letters.

Rilke's overriding concern lies not with "things" as such, nor for that matter with their mimetic or specifically ekphrastic "representation." Rather, his poetry (especially in *Neue Gedichte* and beyond) is concerned with capturing the way that perception of things and the spaces that contain them is qualitatively experienced by consciousness. It is this focus on experience as constitutive of the object- or thing-character of the world (and implicitly of the consciousness experiencing the *Lebenswelt*) that is being developed, during the same years, in the work of Edmund Husserl. The texts most pertinent for our purposes are Husserl's lectures on *Phantasie und Bildbewußtsein* (1905) and his *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie* (1913), of which we will read selections. Far more than Husserl, however, Rilke is concerned with the challenge of transposing so-called intentionale Eriebnisse into expressive verbal form. In giving metaphoric expression to *Ding*, *Bild*, and *Raum*, Rilke conceives of lyric speech as the crucial fulfillment of the "noetic" states that Husserl is only able to parse in descriptive, taxonomic fashion.

The last third of our seminar will trace Rilke's shift, in the *Elegien* and other late poems, to a phenomenology of existence or *Dasein* that has often, if not always convincingly, been mapped onto Heidegger's writings of the later 1920s. In fact, Heidegger appears to flatten Rilke's stunning metaphoric creativity when it comes to capture fleeting, albeit potentially epiphanic experiences that serendipitously present themselves to *Dasein*. Thus, in affirming "die herrlichen Überflüsse / unseres Daseins," and maintaining that "noch ist uns das Dasein verzaubert; an hundert / Stellen ist es noch Ursprung" (*AW* 2: 262) Rilke understands the encounter with the ontic realm ("der unerschöpfliche Gegenstand") to be shaped by an interweaving of finitude and transcendence: "Gesang, wie du ihn lehrst, ist nicht Begehrt, / nicht Werbung um ein endlich noch Erreichtes; / Gesang ist Dasein."

GERMAN/LIT 790S.01

FALL 2017

RILKE & PHENOMENOLOGY

1900-1926

Dr Thomas Pfau Tuesdays 4:40—7:10 PM



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