

German Studies Highlights 2008

2008 marks the inauguration of our German Studies newsletter. It is to serve as a source of information for prospective and potential students, colleagues, alumni, and anyone else interested in the yearly activities of our growing German Studies program in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages at the University of Connecticut, Storrs. The section is now home to **6 faculty**, and it boasts **over 90 majors**. Our graduate program has grown to accommodate a group of **12-13 M.A. and Ph.D. students**, on average, from the U.S. and all over the world, including Germany, Austria, Croatia, Poland, and India. Our undergraduates continue to value the close attention of faculty during classes and beyond, readily available advising, and a considerable array of programs to choose from for double majoring, including engineering (EUROTECH) – not to mention “Kaffee und Kuchen + Musik” during our regular *Kaffeestunden*. In May, UConn welcomed Dr. Peter Frankenberg, Minister of Science, Research, and the Arts of Connecticut’s German partner state Baden Württemberg and discussed the possibility of intensifying the existing UConn-Baden-Württemberg Exchange.

To give you a glimpse of the German Studies Section’s work and accomplishments during the past year, here are the various activities for 2007-2008:

Undergraduate Students

At the department’s annual celebration of the “Academic Achievement Awards,” several of our German students were honored for their hard work, investment in and great enthusiasm for German-speaking cultures and German Studies. Among them are **Amanda Pickett**, who received the Lederer Prize, **Sarah Roberge** who received the prize for Excellence in German in the Eurotech Program, and an overwhelming 17 students (**Nathan Barlow, Michelle Bold, Allison Fuller, Jonathan Grzes, Albinko Hasic, Christopher Jackson, Michael Lalli, Jennifer Lebaron, Peter McCarron, Zachary Morek, Yalimar Pagan, Douglas Palmer, Amanda Pickett,**

Zheina Pramatarova, Nicholas Robinson, Jason Schinis, and Daniel Stanley) received a very substantial amount in total from the state of Baden-Württemberg for “Study Abroad Scholarships,” thanks to the untiring and generous support from the Exchange Program’s director, Renate Seitz. Awards in the Linkage Through Language Program (<http://www.languages.uconn.edu/programs/ltl/index.html>) are too numerous to list here, but a total of 45 awards were given to students who took content-focused language courses linked to lectures in various disciplines. Finally, **Ashley Martin** was named the “Outstanding Senior Scholar in German.”

ALUMNI: **Daisy Michaels** is now assistant to Renate Seitz, Director of the academic

Connecticut-Baden-Württemberg (Germany) Exchange at the Connecticut Department of

Higher Education in Hartford. **Beth Cheney** will commence her graduate studies in chemical and environmental engineering at the University of Delaware, and **Molly McNair** has been accepted into the very selective Teach for America program. **Pawel Herman** finished his B.A./B.S (Eurotech) while in Germany – and decided

GERMAN CLUB: The German Club met every Friday for “Stammtisch” in South Dining Hall where U.S. students and German-speaking exchange students could come together, talk, and get to know each other. During the 2008 spring semester, the club organized three well-attended film evenings, and **Molly McNair** (president),

to stay: he was accepted into the prestigious graduate program in engineering at the University of Karlsruhe! **Ryan Reif** serves in the Peace Corps. And **William Dolce** works for a German company in Connecticut. Please help us update our alumni information by sending e-mail to anke.finger@uconn.edu!

Amanda Pickett (Vice President), **Emily Fournier** (Treasurer), **Einer Dossantos** and **Navina Vemuri** (PR officers) all worked hard to make the German Club an interesting and exciting organization where students and other German-speakers could learn more and just hang out.

Graduate Students

Graduate commencement saw quite a large group of graduates from the German Section in full graduating attire (cap and gown) this May 2008: **Edward Shaw** celebrated his doctoral degree after completing his dissertation on the impact of virtual community on motivation when learning a foreign language, entitled “Redrawing the Proximal Landscape: A Theoretical Study on the Impact of Virtual Community on Foreign Language Learner Motivation” (advisor: von Hammerstein). And **Silvia Flotzinger** (Austria; M.A. Thesis: “Language Rights for Immigrants and their Implementation in Austria”), **Bernadette Grubner** (Austria; M.A. Thesis: “‘Im Zustand einer halb vollzogenen Metamorphose’. Victor Klemperers LTI zwischen Sprachanalyse, Ideologiekritik und Autobiographie”), **Alexandra Hepp** (US/Germany), **Fabienne Koller** (Germany), **Katarzyna Krach** (Poland), and **Julia Maricic** (Croatia; M.A. Thesis: “Entwicklungen im Staatsangehörigkeitsrecht. Chancen für die Integration durch doppelte Staatsbürgerschaft”)

received their Master of Arts in German Studies along with flowers and balloons. **Alfred Schler** (Austria) who became famous campus-wide thanks to an article about his popular “Intensive German” class in the UConn campus paper (<http://advance.uconn.edu/2007/071105/07110510.htm>), unfortunately, could not attend graduation. He is teaching in the *Sommerschule am Atlantik* (Rhode Island), however, during the 2008 summer months. Ph.D.-students **Martina Lüke** (Germany; dissertation on “About Romantics and War”) and **Oliver Hiob** (Germany; dissertation entitled “Mythologische Strafgedanken in den Texten von deutschsprachigen, jüdischen Schriftstellern am Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts”) gave papers at national conferences, e.g., Oliver Hiob presented “Emptiness and Memory: Architecture in W.G. Sebald’s Austerlitz” at the ACLA. He also organized the Humanities Institute’s Author’s Reception in the fall and wrote the Humanities Institute’s Online Calendar (<http://web.uconn.edu/uchi/calendar.php>).

Martina Lüke attended a workshop on teaching German-American culture, organized by AAGT's Connecticut Chapter and presented a paper on teaching "The Lives of Others." **Ahalya Desikan** (India) is continuing to work on her dissertation about Romantics and Post-structuralism. Graduate students' assignments this year ranged from teaching language/culture courses, translation courses for Music graduates, writing-intensive and business German courses to assisting in the administration of the inter-disciplinary

Linkage Through Language program (director: Wagner) and the editing of the *Brecht Yearbook* (editor-in-chief: Weidauer). **Ute Bettray** (Germany) joins the Department as a Ph.D. student in Fall 2008; **Christiana Dehnen** (Germany), **Florian Meusel** (Germany), **Andreas Rainer** (Austria), **Jens Schmidtke** (Germany), and **Claire Wolff** (Netherlands) join **Julie Anderson** (U.S.A.), **Anne Marquardt** (Germany), and **Sophia Pasternack** (Germany) as M.A. students.

Faculty

Since arriving from Johns Hopkins University last year, **Joshua Robert Gold** has taught courses on German film, literature, and culture, as well as a survey course on world literature. In addition to these teaching activities, he has also participated in conferences and pursued his research. In October 2007 he organized a panel on the "religious turn" in contemporary theory for the annual meeting of the German Studies Association; this was followed by a second panel, organized for the annual meeting of the Modern Language Association, on politics and literature in the writings of

Hannah Arendt. Although Professor Gold is presently working on a study on the writings of Friedrich Hölderlin, he is also in the process of revising an article for the *European Romantic Review* on Heinrich von Kleist's short story "Betrothal in San Domingo," and completing two contributions for an anthology on Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus*, which is to be published in Germany. An article on Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin's elegy "Heimkunft" appeared in the most recent issue of *Colloquium Helveticum*.

Anke Finger continued her research on the GDR in Germany during her sabbatical semester and finished an anthology on the total artwork she is co-editing with Danielle Follett for the Johns Hopkins University Press. In March, she co-authored *Vilém Flusser: uma introdução* (Annablume) was published in Brazil, and the authors (Gustavo Bernardo, Anke Finger, and Rainer Guldin) already signed the contract for a German edition, due out in March 2009. Her paper on "Hot Spot oder Hot Rod: Interdisziplinarität und Interkulturelle Kompetenz" is forthcoming in a collection on teaching intercultural

competencies. She presented several talks on the total artwork, Flusser, and on East Germany (in Prague, in New Orleans, and at the University of Denver as a Marsico Scholar), and she has commenced research for a new book on the avant-gardes, to be co-authored with Ralf B. Korte. As of January 2008, her administrative duties include (again) Director of the German Language Program and (new) Chair of the General Education Oversight Sub-Committee on Multiculturalism and Diversity. Since November 2005, she has served as the president of the Connecticut Chapter of AATG, and this year

was particularly active, with participation on the part of German teachers at the CTColt conference and a German-American history

Katharina von Hammerstein just published two books: one is the first commented English-language edition of *Ashantee* (2007), Austrian author Peter Altenberg's impressionist take on the 1896 "Aschanti Völkerschau" that presented Africans as "living objects" in the Vienna Zoo; the other is a co-edited (w/Katrin Horn) collection of interdisciplinary articles about German Romantic Sophie Mereau(-Brentano): *Verbindungslinien in Zeit und Raum* (2008). A separate article on *Ashantee* appeared in *Jahrbuch für internationale Germanistik* (2007). Katharina von Hammerstein's interest in postcolonial studies is furthermore reflected in her article about conservative feminist and colonialist Frieda von Bülow (2007) as well as in her commented editions (2008) of two of Bülow's late-nineteenth-century articles about the

Manuela Wagner is a *Teachers for a New Era* Fellow and Assistant Professor of Foreign Language Education. Her main research interest concerns the question, "How do we learn to communicate effectively in various circumstances?" Author of *First Steps to Communication: A Pragmatic Analysis*, she applies her question to the acquisition of a second language. Together with Terry Osborn and Jacqueline Davis, she is co-editing a second and revised edition of *The Foreign Language Teacher's Portfolio*, a book designed to provide future and current foreign language teachers with the newest research and tools to teach foreign languages effectively. In collaboration with her colleague Eduardo Urios-Aparisi, she is engaged in a longitudinal project investigating humor in the foreign language classroom. In another study (with Eduardo Urios-Aparisi) she examines

Friedemann Weidauer is currently the chair of the German section. His article „Jakob der Gerechte, Bruder Jesu? Zur messianischen Idee in Jurek Beckers *Jakob der Lügner*“

workshop. Starting July 2008, she will also be Director of the German Studies Graduate Program.

then new colony of Deutsch Ostafrika (approx. today's Tanzania). Investigating nineteenth and early-twentieth century women writers' political self-writings, von Hammerstein also published an article analyzing autobiographical texts by Louise Aston, Hedwig Dohm, and Franziska zu Reventlow. Wearing her curricular and administrative hat as chair of the committee that oversees General Education at the University of Connecticut, she gave presentations on "Faculty Governance of General Education" (American Association of Colleges & Universities Conference, 2008) and "Preparing Students for Global Citizenship" (Johns Hopkins Odyssey Day, UConnecticut, 2008). She continues to serve on the editorial boards of *Women in German Yearbook* and *The German Quarterly*.

the role of prosody and humor in the American HBO television series *Sex and the City*. Together with Salvatore Attardo, they are going to co-edit a special edition of *Pragmatics and Cognition on Prosody and Humor*. As director of the Critical Languages Program Manuela also engages in research in less commonly taught languages. Competencies in intercultural communication play an important role in today's world and they should be at the center of teaching and research as Wagner's latest article "Facilitating the development of cultural awareness through community" shows. As director of the program *Linkage Through Language*, which promotes the application of foreign languages across the curriculum, she applies her research interests to serve as an advocate for a multilingual and multicultural education.

appeared in the fall of 2007 in Hermand, Jost (ed. and foreword): *Positive Dialektik: Hoffnungsvolle Momente in der deutschen Kultur* (Peter Lang). In the Spring of 2008 the

journal *Seminar* published his article “Käferplagen und Kirchenburgen: Zwei Wenderomane Christoph Heins.” In the summer of 2008 the first volume of the *Brecht Yearbook* under his editorship will appear with the title *Gestus – Music – Text*. Our graduate student Bernadette Grubner was the editorial

assistant for this volume. The editorship of the *Brecht Yearbook* will be housed in our German section for the next four years and will allow graduate students to gain experience as editorial assistants.

Sebastian Wogenstein’s research and teaching focus is on German-Jewish and contemporary literature, theatre, and the intersection of human rights and the arts. In 2007, he published “‘Meine Nachahmung eine Neuschöpfung’ – Aneignung und Entstellung in Dea Lohers Manhattan Medea” in *Monatshefte* and an article on “Law and Action: Reflections on Hermann Cohen and Peter Szondi’s Reading of Hegel in *An Essay on the Tragic*” in *Telos*. He is currently working on a book project that investigates the relationship between the arts and the struggle for human rights since the Enlightenment. In a related panel at the conference *Knowledge, Creativity and Transformation of Societies* in Vienna and a workshop conference on *Narrativity and Human Rights* at the University of

Connecticut, he presented an outline of two main arguments of this project: Aesthetics in light of the human rights debate and the arts’ relation to totalitarian politics. In the spring of 2008, he also gave a paper entitled “Difficult episodes? Imaginary Israel in contemporary literature in German” at the conference workshop *Between Berlin and Jerusalem: Putting the German-Hebrew Conversation in Focus* at Stanford University. As undergraduate advisor, Sebastian Wogenstein worked with 76 advisees over the year and transferred the credits/grades of 21 students returning from studying abroad in Germany. He also served as advisor to three M.A. graduates, Silvia Flotzinger, Bernadette Grubner, and Julia Maricic, and one Ph.D. student, Oliver Hiob.

For more information about the UConn German Section or to provide additional information for German Studies Highlights 2008 please contact the editor, anke.finger@uconn.edu.