

# GLS

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# Letter from the Chair

## Dear Friends,



As I am writing to you from the chair's office, the fall foliage has turned the trees in front of the Modern Languages Building into a symphony of colors. The academic year is in full swing, the department as energetic as ever.

It is time to say a big "Thank you!" to Scott Spector, who stood at the helm for the past three years. He has shown terrific leadership, making the department a better place of learning in all respects. As a reader of this newsletter, you are the best judge!

Despite the fact that only several months have passed since our last communication went out, there is quite a bit to report.

The recent exit survey of our majors and minors indicates that we are serving our students well. Here is how two of them describe their experience with us: "As I was finishing my German requirement I really fell in love with the department and wanted to continue studying the language," writes one student. And another: "I didn't come to university with any intention of minoring in German. But after fulfilling my humanities credit, I couldn't imagine going through the rest of my undergrad without it!" This is what we strive to achieve, and we are delighted to know that our efforts are appreciated.

This fall we proudly issued our first graduate certificate in German Studies, a recognition given to graduate students who have taken a good number of classes with us – testament to the appeal the department's offerings have across the university.

In addition, we are seeking to reach out to various constituencies in novel ways. My colleagues Johannes von Moltke and Kerstin Barndt invited high school teachers to a one-day workshop on "Teaching Language / Teaching Film" that revolved around how to productively integrate German movies into the high school curriculum.

The department's name is sometimes understood to state that German is the only language offered. As you know, this is not the case. We have taught classes in Dutch and Swedish Studies for many years. Annemarie Toebosch recently hosted an event that attracted quite a bit of attention, Prof. Duyvendak's (University of Amsterdam) well-attended lecture on "What Happened to a Progressive, Multicultural, and Tolerant Country: The Rise of Nativism in the Netherlands" – an event that brought together undergraduate and graduate students, research faculty, and members of the Dutch community in the area. Such an event makes the department the forum for lively exchange it is.

2014 promises to be another year of success for the department. Research faculty prepare book publications that will see the light of day this coming year when Johannes von Moltke, my successor in the chair's office, will write to you.

If we are doing so many things on so many levels, then this is possible only because our staff – Kevin Calhoun, Jen White, and Sheri Sytsema-Geiger – are doing an outstanding job in helping us achieve our goals. Thanks!

The most important *Thank you*, however, goes to you, the friends of the department,

Helmut Puff  
Professor of History and of German Studies  
[puffh@umich.edu]

# Community Connection

## 13th Annual Grilk Lecture

By Kader Konuk

Kafka has shaped our understanding of modernity and inspired reflections on the nature of justice in the modern world. Over the course of a century, Kafka's work provoked modern and postmodern, religious and existentialist, structuralist and postmodern readings. How do we explain these vastly different approaches, even paradoxes in Kafka criticism? Kafka Studies are alive and well—arguably because Kafka's hybrid figures such as Odradek, the miming ape Red Peter, provoke a search for meaning that is constantly deferred. Kafka's creatures have become enigmas of the modern age.

Among all the critics engaging Kafka's writings today, few can match the accomplishments of Vivian Liska, Professor of German literature and Director of the Institute of Jewish Studies at the University of Antwerp, Belgium. Her lecture titled "Kafka, Narrative, and the Law" illuminated the ways in which Kafka inspired concepts of justice in modern thinkers from Gershom Scholem and Walter Benjamin to Jacques Derrida and Giorgio Agamben. While none of Kafka's

hybrid creatures inspired Liska's lecture, she chose the equally enigmatic narrative "Before the Law" (1915) as a point of departure—a story in which a man tries in vain to gain entry to the "Law." Critics have discussed "Before the Law" as a legend, satire, parable, or allegory. While it remains impossible to pin the story to a specific form, the question of form generated one of the most significant debates about the nature of justice in a secularized world. Vivian Liska's lecture emphasized the juridical and religious interpretations that Kafka's work elicited among critics focusing on Benjamin's messianism, Scholem's mystical reading, and Derrida's insight into the infinite deferrals that characterize Kafka's prose. Liska argues that references to the law pervade Kafka's writings, while their meaning remains elusive. Perhaps because of this elusive, indefinable nature of Kafka's prose that resists essentialisms and rigid notions of form, the interest in Kafka in the twenty-first is undiminished.



## Teaching Language Through Film

By Kerstin Barndt

On the last Saturday in October, the department invited high school teachers of German to its first continuing education workshop. The topic "Teaching Language/Teaching Film" piggybacked on the theme of the 2013 German Day, "Deutscher Film," which had brought over 950 high school students to campus. At the crossroads between art and politics, films touch on historical issues of great importance to students of German. Engaging with movies, students expand their listening comprehension, their aesthetic and cultural sensibility, and grapple with authentic linguistic material that enriches the language classroom.

During the workshop, Hartmut Rastalsky, Catherine Marquardt, and Nic Heckner presented how they have successfully integrated a variety of feature

length and short films into the departmental language sequence. They shared a wealth of teaching materials and best pedagogic practices. Johannes von Moltke then introduced us to the cinema of the "Berlin School", a group of contemporary film directors whose unconventional movies have received great attention in Germany and abroad (including at the Museum of Modern Art which curated a series of Berlin School films in November). After a screening of *Barbara* (2012, dir. Christian Petzold), a film that portrays a regime-critical female doctor in a small GDR town in the early 1980s, we explored how the aesthetics of the film heighten the sense of surveillance. We also analyzed how the film's formal elements carve out a very particular space for the



(continued on page 10)

# Faculty Farewell

## Best Wishes, Jan!

By Janet VanValkenburg & Helmut Puff

**Janet, I am delighted that you have agreed to be interviewed for this issue of our newsletter. You recently retired, and we are, and you certainly should be, proud of the many, many contributions you have made to the department while you were at the University of Michigan. How did you come to study German? Why did you decide to get a Ph.D. in this field?**



I only started learning German in the first semester of my Freshman year at the University of Illinois. I had Latin in High School, but I wanted to learn a modern language. I was required to take four semesters of a language at the University, and I chose German. I loved the language and my professors. So I kept taking German classes, and earned my BA in German and Pedagogy. After teaching German in high school and traveling in Germany, I wanted to learn more about everything German and completed my PhD at U of I.

**What, if any, are the changes that have shaped the institution and the department since you first joined?**

I started moving in a new direction in 1995. I no longer taught basic language courses. I started teaching Business German. I am very pleased with the part I played in developing a number of courses that contributed to the interdisciplinary direction of the department. I expanded the department's Business German offerings, and I also began to assist students in finding summer internships in Germany. The number of interns began to multiply. I then proposed a course that would allow students to earn credits for internships by writing a paper in German and giving an oral presentation in German about their internship. The course attracted students from such disciplines as Business, Engineering, Political Science, Architecture, the Sciences and, recently, Environmental Studies. Among the other courses I taught, "Other Victims of the Holocaust" was my favorite. During my last semester, I

introduced a course on sustainability in Germany, which was very enjoyable.

**What are your fondest memories of your time at U-M?**

I have many wonderful memories from my time in the German Department. During my first year at U-M, I organized a "German Day" for high school students of German. About 175 students attended. By the time I stepped aside twenty years later, German Day had become well-known in southeast Michigan, and more than 1000 students were attending every year. It is really gratifying to me to have introduced the University of Michigan and German at U-M to so many Michigan high school students and to see that their enthusiasm continues.

I have nothing but fond memories of all the students I worked with during my years teaching in the German Department. I appreciated interacting with them and getting to know them. I am so impressed with University of Michigan students – how gifted and competent they are and what they accomplish here at the university and in their lives. They are interesting and intelligent and have a good sense of humor.

**Any wisdom or advice you want to share as a successful pedagogue? What allowed you to keep a fresh approach to teaching through the years?**

I think it is important for a teacher to be open to new ideas and information. It isn't a 40-hour-a-week job. It is imperative to listen, to read, to think and to keep up with the newest information in one's field. Most important is to love and enjoy what you are doing.

**What are your plans for the future?**

At the top of my list is traveling. But, I'm still reading German books and newspapers and watching German TV and movies. I don't want to "unlearn" (verlernen) my German. I'm also spending a lot more time working with the Community Volunteer Board of the University of Michigan Depression Center.

# Faculty Focus

## Introducing Assistant Professor Tyler Whitney

Hailing from the Pennsylvania-Dutch hotbed of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Tyler Whitney first became interested in German in high school, where he also studied French and Spanish. At Haverford College, his fascination with foreign languages was soon coupled with a growing interest in literature and the cultural history of twentieth-century Germany. He became a double major in German Studies and Linguistics and graduated with a B.A. in 2003. After some time in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which he spent making music and parsing sentences in a computational linguistics laboratory, Whitney moved to New York City and began a graduate degree in the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures at Columbia University. It was there that he began to explore the related fields of media theory and the history of science, attempting to bring these emerging disciplines into dialogue with contemporary literary theory and the study of German modernism.

With the support of a DAAD Graduate Scholarship and the Whiting Fellowship from Columbia University, Whitney was able to travel to Germany to study with like-minded scholars pursuing a similarly interdisciplinary approach to German Studies at institutions such as the Free University of Berlin, the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, and the International College for Research in Cultural Technics and Media Philosophy (IKKM) at the Bauhaus University in Weimar. The result was a dissertation entitled, "Spaces of the Ear: Literature, Media, and the Science of Sound, 1870-1930," which examined the interrelations between modernist literature and the cultural and scientific histories of listening around 1900. In the spring

of 2013, he successfully defended his dissertation and, through what can only be understood as a realignment of the planets and the intervention of cosmic and occult forces, immediately began a position as an Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan.

Whitney's research interests include the history and theory of media, German modernism, and the convergence of literature and science. His teaching this year reflects those research interests. He is currently teaching a freshman seminar entitled "Media Matters: From Print to Screen Culture," where students read a wide range of literary and theoretical texts dealing with topics such as the histories of reading and writing, early film and sound recording, as well as more recent technologies like the iPhone and MP3. Already taking advantage of Michigan's countless academic resources, the class will travel to the Orson Welles Archive at Hatcher Graduate Library as part of their unit on "War of the Worlds," early radio, and the aesthetics of 'liveness' and catastrophe. When he is not teaching or working on his own research, Whitney can be found at one of Ann Arbor's many excellent music stores searching out early jazz records and other aesthetic antidotes to winter.



## Welcome Grad Students

### Katharina Erbe



Katharina joined the German Studies Department as well as the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies in fall 2013. She received her M.A. in contemporary history with a concentration in German Jewish Women's History from Humboldt University Berlin. During her M.A. she spent one year in Israel, studying German-Jewish Literature and volunteering at the Yad Vashem archives. Her research interests so far include gender and political agitation in 19th century Germany, social purity movements and literary approaches to history.

### Mary Hennessy



Mary joined the German Studies doctoral program at the University of Michigan in fall 2013. She earned her B.A. in Political Science from St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas, in 2010. She spent the 2010-2011 academic year teaching English on a Fulbright grant in Germany. Mary then went on to earn her M.A. in European Studies at Indiana University Bloomington. During this time, she also spent a semester at the Free University of Berlin. Her research interests include Critical Theory, German cinema, and Turkish-German studies.

## Summer Research Colloquium

By Andreas Gailus

Why does the fact that metal rusts matter to German attempts to represent the past? How do museums shape perception and point to objects? What happens when an 18-year old German joins the French Foreign Legion in Algiers and writes about his experience in 1936? These are some of the questions that our graduate students explored at the annual Graduate Student Research Colloquium in September. The Colloquium, which met for the second annual time, provides students with a forum to discuss their summer research projects and test out ideas for a dissertation. There was a staggering variety of work on display, reflecting a department, and a graduate cohort that pushes the boundaries of the field. One area of increasing interest is the field of Museum Studies, powerfully represented in our department through my colleagues Kerstin Barndt and Peter McIsaac. Three of the students explored topics in this area. Focusing on the Völklingen Ironworks, a former steel factory turned World Heritage site and amusement park, Calder Fong analyzed Germany's musealization of its industrial past; Kathryn Holihan discussed how the Haus der Kunst in Munich, founded by the Nazis in 1937, exhibits its past; and Andrea Rottmann showed

us how museums direct the gaze of viewers. The body as a site of power and resistance featured prominently in Emma Thomas' work, which examines German colonial practices in New Guinea. Colonialism also played a role in Naomi Vaughan's analysis of the aesthetization of colonial politics in Ernst Jünger's 1936-novel *Afrikanische Spiele*. Simon Walsh explained why and how post-war Austrian writers repeatedly turn to music to narrate their country's troubled historical trajectory after 1945. Finally, representing the furthest historical poles of the work done by our students, Sam Heidepriem gave us a sketch of his dissertation project on responses in German philosophy and literature to transformations in European society around 1800, while Nic Heckner analyzed the use of Nazi tropes and imagery in contemporary computer games. It's hard to imagine an event that could have proven more forcefully the claim, made in our GDS Graduate Brochure, that our "department offers a program of study rich in breadth, depth, and disciplinary scope." If you want to find out about new trends in the field of German Studies, make sure to attend next year's Graduate Student Research Colloquium.

# Kade Haus Happenings

## German Experience

By Kevin Durand

Last October, the Max Kade Haus hosted its first annual cultural experience, titled “Berlin There Done That,” at North Quadrangle Academic and Residential Complex. The event was a huge success, bringing more than 80 students together to learn about Germany’s capital with an evening of dancing, music, activities, and of course, food.

Seeking to build on last year’s successes and explorations of Viennese culture, this year’s residents of the Max Kade Haus presented “Wiener Takes All” for students, faculty, staff, and all those wanting to learn something about Vienna. This year’s destination for the Max Kade Study Tour will be Vienna, Austria, a city of great historical significance and home to many world-renowned museums where classical composers such as Mozart, Schubert, Strauss, and Brahms lived. A staggering 109 people attended this year’s event, many of whom stayed a long time to escape the busy school year and relax in our version of a Viennese *Kaffeehaus*. Our primary goal was to showcase the essential coffee house culture

of Vienna and provide a unique experience. Attendees were even required to order in German if they wanted one of the assorted desserts or one of four Viennese coffee mixtures from our *Kaffeehaus*.

Many other activities such as baking traditional Austrian cookies, decorating a tea cup at the *Schönbrunn Palace*, and learning about the elaborate marionette shows performed in Austrian theaters filled out the remainder of the evening. Attendees also had a very special opportunity to learn the Viennese Waltz from the Michigan Ballroom Dance Team, as made famous by acclaimed Viennese composer Johann Strauss II. The dancing and learning about another culture, in addition to the unique activities and authentic desserts, made for an enjoyable experience which won’t soon be forgotten.



## Kaffestunde

By Alexandra Kalinowski

Join the Max Kade Haus for a *Jause*. It’s quite fitting, eh?, that the Austrian word for *Nachmittagskaffee* rhymes with the German word *Pause*, as a *Jause* serves as a “kleine Pause,” or break from a hectic day. At 9 pm on Monday evenings, Kade residents, along with others wishing to speak German, gather in North Quad’s West Loft to sip coffee and tea, and to munch on savory or sweet treats. Not only is Kaffestunde a place to come to and socialize, but it’s a time set aside to learn more about German and Austrian culture. Because the MKH will take their 2014 Spring Break Trip to Vienna, Austria, much of Kaffestunde is spent incorporating the Austrian dialect into conversations, learning about the former royals and other historical tidbits, as well as the customs around eating and everyday

life through interactive activities such as baking, drawing, games, and role-plays. It’s also a place to celebrate and learn about the ways in which Germanic countries observe the holidays. Come on the right day and you may get a visit from St. Nikolaus or be sent on an Easter Egg Hunt. Returning resident Brandon McDole comments, “You’d be surprised how big a difference an hour or two a week can make in your German speaking. Everyone is friendly and will help you out as much as they can.” Either way, no matter what’s on the agenda for the day, rest assured your tummy will be satisfied—especially if you join the MKH for German-speaking dinners (*Deutschtisch*) on Thursdays between 7 and 8pm in the North Quad Dining Hall.

## The Rise of Nativism in The Netherlands

By Annemarie Toebosch

The twenty-first century Netherlands has shown an increasing intolerance toward immigrants, especially Muslim immigrants who first arrived under guest worker programs and subsequent family reunification and formation policies. This new reality stands in stark contrast to the

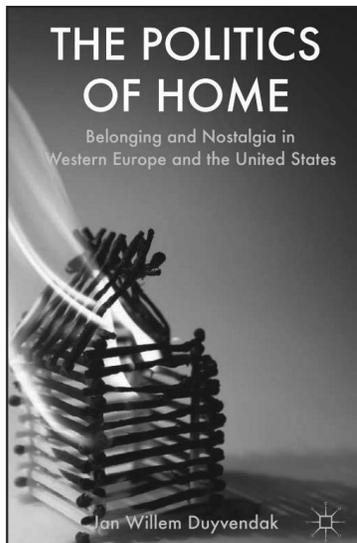
image of the country as a tolerant place. On October 22, Professor Jan Willem Duyvendak examined the nature of Dutch tolerance in the 18th Annual DeVries – Vanderkooy Memorial Lecture.

Professor Duyvendak is professor of Sociology at the University of Amsterdam and distinguished fellow at the CUNY Graduate Center. In a compelling analysis, he explained the seeming paradox of

Dutch progressive values and intolerance as resulting from a sense of native superiority and monoculturalist thinking: those who were first there have a right to define what the country is, and tolerance is given only to those who share in the majority (progressive) consensus.

As an example, Duyvendak discussed the controversy surrounding the Dutch holiday tradition of Sinterklaas and his helper Zwarte Piet, a character originally conceived in the stereotype of a black colonial servant. Duyvendak explained how the controversy reached new heights after 40% of Amsterdam Surinamese expressed in a recent survey that they feel the tradition to be racist. The majority of the native population finds the controversy at best mundane and at worst insulting in its challenge to a beloved native tradition by troublesome “others.” Many Dutch immigrant communities in North America (including our own local community) have done away with the tradition, seeing parallels to the American blackface tradition and regarding it as irreconcilable with modern professional and cultural American values.

The lecture had a large and diverse audience of over 80 people. Audience members included many graduate and undergraduate students as well as colleagues from Sociology, Political Science, the Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies, and our own department as well as many members of the local Dutch community. Professor Duyvendak’s visit was a great success and extended beyond the event in guest lectures and individual meetings with students and colleagues on campus. We wish to thank all who made his stay possible.



# Scandinavian Studies

## Swedish in the Classroom & Beyond

By Johanna Eriksson

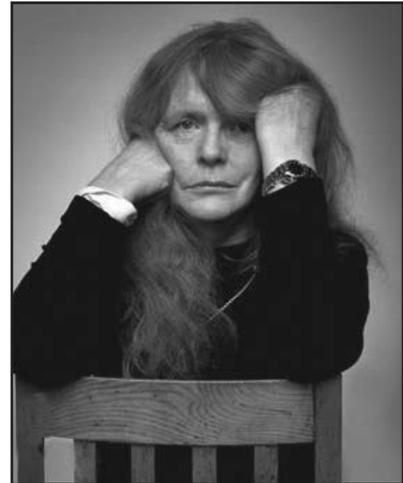
It is very inspiring when our students take initiative and create their own language learning communities. Our students have started a Scandinavian organization that meets weekly for coffee and other activities, usually on Tuesday nights at 7 PM. Several of them are planning to attend or work at the Swedish Women Educational Association's annual Christmas bazaar. Here, you can try traditional Swedish foods, buy homemade baked goods, locally handmade crafts as well as imported crafts from Sweden. Children are invited to make decorations for the Christmas tree and you can hear the children from the Swedish school sing in a Lucia pageant. It is a great start for the holiday season in Michigan!

The second year Swedish students are getting to know the students at ProCivitas Privata Gymnasium in Helsingborg. During the fall, the Swedish and American students are writing on a blog together and skype with each other. Our students investigate what Swedish and American teenagers think about life and the future, and present their findings in class. In January, we will start preparing for the annual study trip where we will actually meet these students.

The third year Swedish class is currently exploring the life and works of the Swedish director Ingmar Bergman. The class is also regularly writing and skyping with two former students who are spending a year in Sweden: Tessa Ayana, who is an au pair in Stockholm for the year, and Sara Ann

Knutson, who is an exchange student at Uppsala University. It was great to see Tessa and two of the children she is taking care of, and to see Sara Ann in her dorm room. We were very impressed by their Swedish, and happy to hear that both are having such a great time!

The next Signe Karlström Event will be held in April, 2014, in collaboration with the poet, translator and honorary consul of Chile, Mariela Griffor from Detroit, and the Zell Visiting Writers series at the University of Michigan. We are inviting the Swedish poet, dramatist and Swedish academy member Kristina Lugn for a poetry reading, and possibly a staged reading of one of her plays.



Finally, I would like to thank the local Scandinavian *Kristina Lugn, Photographer: Ulla Montan* organizations for inviting our students to their events and dinners! In October, Caroline Erickson, who spent the Winter semester at Uppsala University, and Mackenzie Bissett, who had an internship at ESRI, a GIS mapping software company, in Gävle, attended the yearly smorgasbord at the Detroit-Swedish Foundation. They had a great time and really appreciated the chance to get to know the community.

## Graduate Certificate in German Studies

By Spencer Hawkins

This spring I will defend my doctoral dissertation in Comparative Literature, and just last month I applied for a graduate certificate in German Studies. I want future employers to know that I am immersed in German language, philosophy, history, and literature. Earning a graduate certificate takes commitment; I must complete coursework and methods training, make scholarly contributions and teach. But I'm busy finishing a dissertation now—how can I meet these requirements?

**Graduate Certificate in the Department of Germanic Languages & Literatures**

The certificate provides a concise program of study that offers graduate students an in-depth introduction into key concepts and issues in German culture and contemporary German Studies. Further, students whose research touches upon German-speaking Europe a deeper understanding of German cultural and intellectual traditions, critical theory, and the humanistic ramifications of German political theory and historiography.

Students entering the Certificate Program will complement their PhD or MA with a "minor" in German Studies and benefit actively engaged in cross-disciplinary research. In the process, students will gain:

- Access to academic networks and resources in German Studies (publishing venues, conferences, journals)
- Research and teaching skills that benefit and strengthen job prospects and
- Collaboration with world-recognized scholars.

**Required Courses** .....

Students are required to take 12 credit hours of graduate course work in the following sequence in German Studies:

- Introduction to German Studies (GER 540) or Teaching Methods (GER 531) (3 credits)
- Choice between two seminars listed under GER 701/02, 701/02, 701/02, 701/02 (6 credits)
- German Studies Colloquium (GER 603): Presentation of Capstone Project and participation in the colloquium (3 credits). An advanced project, students are asked to present the outcome of their dissertation that is most closely related to issues in German Studies, or a research seminar paper that they wrote as one of the Certificate courses and that is accompanied with the student's dissertation work.

**Who is eligible to apply?** .....

Students who have been admitted or are currently enrolled in a graduate program (PhD and MA degrees) at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. The certificate is open to students in disciplines such as Comparative Literature, History, Slavic, Music, Political Science, History of Art, Audio Studies, Law, Business and Economics. Any relevant conditions are encouraged to apply.

**Application Requirements** .....

Applications will be accepted throughout the academic year on a rolling basis. Details on the application requirements and more information can be found on our website at:

[www.lsa.umich.edu/german/graduate/graduatecertificate](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/german/graduate/graduatecertificate)

 Germanic Languages and Literatures  
612 E. Washington St., 2100 MLB  
University of Michigan, 48106-1215  
Ann Arbor, MI

The answer is: I've *been* meeting requirements by *doing* German Studies. As I write about the role of imagery, translation, and intellectual inheritance in twentieth-century German philosophy, I have found most of the best interlocutors in U-M's German Department. My wayward interests have led me to pursue graduate

courses in French, Spanish, English, and ancient Greek, yet by and by I have become a Germanist.

My involvement in German Studies began with my undergraduate thesis on German Romantic nostalgia for ancient Greece. As a doctoral student, I have taken courses with Frederick Amrine, Kader Konuk, Silke-Maria Weineck, and Andreas Gailus on a range of topics: Robert Musil's *Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, metaphor, Goethe, the figure of the sovereign in political theory, and German to English translation. I have participated in the German Studies Colloquium and in Hartmut Rastalsky's pedagogical methods course, which prepared me to teach German 101 and 231.

I still do comparative work, for instance, when my dissertation compares the words used to depict "streaming" and "grounding" in various English translations of German phenomenology. But interaction with German faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates has shaped my approach to scholarship. Through the certificate, my transcript can reflect that.

The German Department's graduate certificate provides a concise program of study that offers graduate students in related fields an in-depth introduction into key concepts and issues in German culture and contemporary German Studies. It offers students whose research touches upon German speaking Europe a deeper understanding of German cultural and intellectual traditions, critical theory, and the humanistic ramifications of German political theory and historiography.

(continued from Teaching Language/Teaching Film, page 3)

protagonist. In the classroom, *Barbara* could be compared to other films with a focus on the GDR's secret services such as *The Life of Others* (2006, dir. Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck).

While primarily geared towards high school teachers,

the workshop also attracted departmental lecturers and graduate students. It led to lively and engaged exchanges about language pedagogy, film culture, and the diverse classroom environments we teach in. The event thus modeled a mode of exchange that we hope to continue in the future.

# Staying Connected

## William Metzger ('06)

Greetings from Washington, DC!

You could say I ran the gamut of German study- and work-abroad opportunities offered at Michigan. As a result, my German concentration, combined with Political Science, provided me with a springboard to a career in international affairs.

My semester abroad in the Tübingen program was the highlight of my undergraduate career. I made lifelong friends, both with my fellow German majors from Michigan and with a community of international students from all over the world. I ended up staying in Germany another semester to do the Cultural Vistas German State Parliament Program in Wiesbaden. I came back to Michigan to graduate, then quickly set out for another Cultural Vistas internship at a European Union policy think tank in Berlin. I stayed there for about a year, also completing the International Parliamentary Scholarship, working as a legislative aide to a member of the Bundestag.

It was incredibly satisfying to use my knowledge of German not only to immerse myself in the culture, but also to start to get invaluable professional experience. That experience helped me get into a Master's Program at Georgetown, where I really studied the weeds of European policy, economics, and business.

During graduate school, I also spent time in Kazakhstan where I researched the fascinating German minority there. This experience proved that there are opportunities all over for students and professionals with a background in German. Once you get out into the world, it is a truly rare skill and can set you apart in a lot of situations.

These days, I work at the White House Office of Management & Budget in the wonky world of international affairs budgeting. I don't use German at all, but I can honestly say that I would not be here if I hadn't signed up to become a German major way back in 2003!



## Ryan McKown ('11)

I graduated from the University of Michigan in the spring of 2011 with a B.S.E Degree in Chemical Engineering and a minor in German. Within 24 hours of graduation, I was in Germany for an interview as a project manager in the Research and Development division with SGL Carbon GmbH in Meitingen (near Augsburg) where I had had an internship in the summer of 2010. After moving to Germany, I was invited to join the SGL Werkskapelle and play the trombone. There was an opening at the church in town for an organist, so in September 2011 I started playing for services on the weekends. At SGL, I've worked on a variety of projects, but most intensively on the development of Ceramic Fibers for use in the aerospace industry. This project takes place in Würzburg together with 4 other people from the Technology & Innovation division at SGL, so a typical week entails 2-3 days in Würzburg. At the start of this year, I was asked to play tuba for the Werkskapelle on occasion, such as the Thierhauptener Festwoche where

bands from the area get together and play in a parade as well as playing in the Bierzelt. Definitely a very different atmosphere from the Michigan Marching Band that I was used to in Ann Arbor! I've had the opportunity to travel to Berlin both on business as well as for a few concerts. Since moving to Meitingen, I've had the opportunity to work with people from Sweden, Canada, France, Italy, Hungary, Poland and England. In Meitingen, I've had the opportunity to play multiple concerts, learn a few instruments, and travel both for business and for pleasure. Yet the one thing I have not yet accomplished, is to teach the Germans how to pronounce my last name. Still working on that one...



**The Department of  
Germanic Languages & Literatures**

812 E. Washington St., 3110 MLB  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1275  
(734) 764-8018 • [www.lsa.umich.edu/german](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/german)

**Chair:** Helmut Puff

**Asst. Editor & Layout:** Chris Ford

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**The Regents of  
The University of Michigan**

Mark J. Bernstein

Laurence B. Deitch

Denise Ilitch

Andrew C. Richner

Julia Donovan Darlow

Shauna Ryder Diggs

Andrea Fischer Newman

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Mary Sue Coleman (ex officio)



## The 30th Annual GERMAN DAY Event

Friday, March 14th, 2014 • 9AM–2PM

at Rackham Graduate School, Michigan League, and North Quad

This year's theme is

***deutsche Musik***

Please email us at [german.day@umich.edu](mailto:german.day@umich.edu) for details.

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