LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

A very warm welcome to all!

It is my sincere pleasure and honor to serve as chair at an especially promising turning point in the program's history. The recent inclusion of nine senior affiliates to join our core faculty signals a significant refurbishing and expansion of the department’s profile: in philosophy, intellectual history, socio-cultural history, musicology, historical linguistics, and art history, from the Medieval and Renaissance periods to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This array of disciplinary and historical range contributes to the already formidable strengths of the core faculty in literary history and criticism, film, and media studies. Needless to say, our undergraduate concentrators and graduate students stand to benefit a great deal from this exciting influx of senior colleagues, with new and wonderful opportunities for course-work, independent study, and advising.

Thanks to its resources, teaching, and advising, the department has been fortunate in attracting highly gifted cohorts of graduate students, who comprise the intellectual core of our program. Their research represents a stunning spectrum of interests and concerns, which is amply enhanced by a prominent German Studies Seminar at the Mahindra Humanities Center. In addition to the department’s rigorous language program, our undergraduate concentrators can take advantage of our annual dramatic performances as well as our three outstanding summer programs in Munich, Berlin, and Scandinavia. Altogether, I believe we have cultivated an inviting, collegial, and highly inspiring atmosphere, prepared to encourage academic excellence and thus foster the study of Germanic Languages and Literatures for the next generations of scholars and teachers.

John Hamilton

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Friday, February 28

"Enlightenment, Print Culture, Media." Professor Stefan Andriopoulos (Columbia University). Nebel Room, Barker Center 359, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, March 11

"Form as Judgment: The Paintings of Gerhard Richter." Professor Florian Klinger (University of Chicago/Harvard Society of Fellows). Nebel Room, Barker Center 359, 6 p.m.

Wednesday, March 12

"All Power to the Networks! Social Communication in the Age of Global Media." Professor Sorin Cucu (Baruch College). Comparative Literature Colloquium. Nebel Room, Barker Center 359, 5 p.m.

Thursday, March 13

"Imaginative Envisioning: Challenges in Kafka and Rilke." Jennifer Gosetti-Ferencei (Fordham), Classical Traditions Seminar, Mahindra Humanities Center. Nebel Room, Barker Center 359, 6 p.m.

Thursday, March 27

"The Dark Sides of Empathy: Nietzsche." Fritz Breithaupt (Indiana University). Nebel Room, Barker Center 359, 6 p.m.

Friday, March 28

Graduate Student Workshop with Fritz Breithaupt. 12-2 p.m. Nebel Room, Barker Center 359, 12-2 p.m.

Monday, March 31

"A Poetics of Limit: Celan, Mallarmé, and Heidegger." David Nowell-Smith (University of East Anglia). Germanic Circle Colloquium. Nebel Room, Barker Center 359, 6-8 p.m.

Wednesday, April 2

"Before and After Belting: From Byzantine Art History to Bildanthropologie." Jeffrey Hamburger (Harvard, Seminar on “German Studies: New Perspectives,” Mahindra Humanities Center. Nebel Room, Barker Center 359, 6-8 p.m.

Thursday, April 3

"Self-reflections in the Work of Heinrich of Morungen." Dr. Christiane Ackermann (Tübingen/Harvard). Nebel Room, Barker Center 359, 4 p.m.

Thursday, May 1

"The Ethics of the Algorithm: Close and Distant Listening to the Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive." Todd Presner (UCLA). Nebel Room, Barker Center 359, 2-4 p.m.

Spring Reception, Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures. Includes the annual award of prizes to undergraduate and graduate students. Thompson Room, Barker Center 110, 4-6 p.m.
Graduate Student Colloquium

As in most humanities departments, a certain tension between individual career aspirations and the communal sharing of ideas may be inevitable. Nonetheless, we are fortunate to have a group of peers in our department who enjoy intellectual exchange and have created a space where it can be both lively and mutually supportive. Eager to enhance this atmosphere, Steven Lydon and Gernot Waldner decided to seek support for the possibility of bringing an occasional graduate student from another university to present his or her work to our group. Encouraged by Professor Peter Burgard, Professor Judith Ryan and, especially, Professor Eric Rentschler, we applied for funding from the autonomous Graduate Student Council, and were granted a budget that enables us to invite graduate students and professors from other universities. Our colloquium, the Germanic Circle, is an independent forum for graduate students in the department.

Two events last semester, one with Ewan Jones (Cambridge University) and one with Carl Gelderloos (Cornell University), led to intriguing discussions here at Harvard and subsequent exchanges between participants. We would like to continue the principle of having two experts from the same field at each session, along with a common reading to narrow the gap between presenters and participants. While celebrating our initial successes, we also hope that this article will serve as an invitation to graduate students from other universities to present their work in this format. Those interested in an intellectual exchange with students from our department are very welcome to contact us.

Gernot Waldner
(gernotwaldner@fas.harvard.edu)
Steven Lydon (lydon@fas.harvard.edu)

Kaffeestunde

Twice a month, the German Department hosts Kaffeestunde, a casual coffee hour for members of the Harvard community to come together and speak German. Whether you are eager to practice ein kleines bisschen Deutsch or whether you are simply looking for good company and caffeine, join us in the department every second Tuesday at four o’clock for coffee, tea and cake. The German Department would be happy to have you! For additional information or to add your name to the department’s invitations list, contact Lisa Parkes at lparkes@fas.harvard.edu.

Aleks Kudryashova
Alex Lambrow
**Seth Peabody**

During the 2013-14 academic year, Seth is studying on a Fulbright in Munich and is affiliated with the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, a research institute at the LMU. Last August, he presented a paper at an interdisciplinary summer school on mountains in Lavin, Switzerland organized jointly by the Carson Center and the European Society for Environmental History. In early March, he will be giving an invited lecture at the Carson Center entitled “Urban Heimat: Environmental Fantasies in Weimar Cinema.” In July, Seth will travel to Portugal for the World Conference on Environmental History to present a paper on the Weimar-era Bergfilm and early 20th Century Ski Tourism. At the end of August, he will return to Harvard to work toward completion of his dissertation, an ecocritical study of mountains, cities, and notions of Heimat in Weimar cinema.

**Steven Lydon**

While in Paris on a pre-dissertation research fellowship, Steven published an article in the Irish Times advocating the introduction of philosophy into secondary schools. This subsequently developed into a full-fledged media campaign that reinitiated talks between the government and education officials.

**Miriam Wray**

During summer 2013, second-year graduate student Miriam Wray did archival work for her potential dissertation in the German Literature Archive at Marbach, where she discovered additional material for her project on Hermann Broch, from “text to textile.” While at the archives, she enjoyed learning about archival practices, exploring among the vast amount of material available, and hearing talks on projects and seminars being undertaken by other scholars there. She is currently writing a scholarly article on Broch that includes material from the Marbach archives. In addition, she is preparing for her general examinations in April.

**Steven Press**

Steven Press is finishing up a manuscript on the ethics, law, and diplomacy surrounding the Berlin Conference in 1884. The manuscript is written as a narrative with colorful characters: Bismarck, Leopold II, and even such less-known rogues as Adolf Luderitz. Above all, however, it attempts to demystify the Berlin Conference -- a key moment in world history -- by revealing the Conference’s connection to European adventurers in Southeast Asia. Steven also recently published an article in the Journal of Modern History exploring the German origins of the lease for the US Naval Station at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.
David Pister

David Pister has recently published two articles: the first, which appeared in LiLi 171 (2013), is concerned with Heinrich von Morungen's "Mir ist geschehen als einem kindelne" from the perspective of modern pathology. The second, published in Arcadia 48.1 (2013), offers a reading of Euripides' Medea. In 2014, David is preparing an article on the mythic figure of Narcissus and his impact on both literature and psychoanalysis.

Anne Roehrborn

Anne Roehrborn received her M.A. in German Philology and Ancient History from the Technical University of Berlin. Before coming to Harvard, she spent a year studying abroad in Madrid and another year working as a Language Associate at Carleton College in Minnesota. In addition, she gathered work experience in the German book publishing industry and as a translator. Her current research interests include contemporary fiction, language skepticism, philosophy of language, multilingual literature and orientalism. She is currently putting together an informal language table during lunch hours at Dudley house, at which graduate students can converse in German and practice their language skills. If you are interested in receiving information about meeting times of the language table, please email her at: roehrborn@fas.harvard.edu.

Gernot Waldner

Gernot Waldner participated in a conference on "The Grotesque, the Absurd, and the Deviant" at the Washington University in St. Louis. His paper examined the relationship between grotesque humour and ariosophic race theories (ideologies based on the notion of the Aryan) in the writings of Fritz von Herzmanovsky-Orlando. His thesis was that the comic perception of Austrian culture around 1920 depended on a strong sense of a pure origin of this culture, and that this origin can be discerned in ariosophic ideas. Gernot was gratified by the positive reception of his attempt to bridge aesthetic interpretation and political context. He found the presence of inspiring scholars and an exciting intellectual community very stimulating.

Nicole Burgoyne

This semester Nicole is developing her dissertation in Berlin with the support of a DAAD research grant. She is currently focusing on the publication history of Christa Wolf's GDR novels and the underground literature of the late sixties. She will continue her work at the Stasi Archives and the Memorial Library to the Victims of Communism and Socialism. She will explore the archive of the Mitteldeutscher publishing house in Halle and a collection of self-published literature at an archive devoted to popular protests in Leipzig. As a participant in PhD-Netz, she will also attend the colloquium "Das Wissen der Literatur" at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

POSTDOC NEWS:

Jillian DeMair

Alongside teaching at Harvard and MIT this semester, Jillian DeMair is exploring intersections between geology and German literature in the nineteenth century. She aims to show how authors like Raabe and Droste-Hülshoff not only portray the earth as an archive of history's secrets but also evoke parallels between storytelling and geological excavations. Her presentation at the 2014 MLA convention on a 19th-century railway guidebook written by Levin Schücking permitted a fresh approach to the topic of experiencing and portraying the changing landscape.

Erik Schilling

A postdoctoral research fellow from LMU Munich, Erik Schilling has joined the department as a visitor this semester. His current project focuses on German hymnic poetry. The aim is to describe these hymns as 'liminal' poetry, showing how threshold situations – in an anthropological, poetological, or epistemological sense – are key dimensions of poems by Goethe, Hölderlin, Novalis, Nietzsche, George, and Rilke.
Maria Tatar

Maria Tatar will participate in the 2014 Lowell Lecture Series at the Boston Public Library and give a talk on May 1. She will also give lectures this spring at the Penn Humanities Forum and at Cumberland Lodge in the UK. She has just completed editing The Cambridge Companion to the Fairy Tale, and her translations of Schönwerth's folktales will appear in the fall with Penguin. "Large As Life and Twice As Natural," a tribute to Maurice Sendak, appeared in the January edition of PMLA. Currently she is teaching a new course on African American Folktale and their function as repositories of local knowledge.

Lisa Parkes

Lisa Parkes is currently working on a special volume entitled Integrating the Arts: Creative Thinking about Foreign Language Teaching and Language Program Direction, which will appear in the AAUSC series, Issues in Language Program Direction (Cengage, 2015). Having been granted a Provostial fund for course-related theater productions, she plans to return with her students to the Deutsches Theaterfest at Mt. Holyoke College in April. Over the past year, she has given a guest lecture and workshop on "The Theater as Classroom/The Classroom as Theater" at the University of Chicago, as well as presentations on drama and music at NeMLA, MLA, ACTFL, and MaFIA. As the new President of the Massachusetts Chapter, AATG, she organizes professional development workshops with the Goethe Institute Boston, high-school outreach programs, and an awards ceremony for school pupils with exceptional performances in the National German Exam.

Eric Rentschler

Eric Rentschler received a Honorary Doctoral Degree at the University of Waterloo in October and delivered the fall commencement address; he will be a guest speaker at the international conference, "After Capitalism," to be held in late April at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He recently finished a book manuscript, German Courses in Time: From Weimar Film Culture to Postmillennial Cinema (under contract with Columbia University Press); he also co-edited Neuer deutscher Film (Reclam, 2013) and the forthcoming special issue of New German Critique, "Miriam Hansen: Cinema, Experience, and the Public Sphere." In June he will once again direct the Harvard Summer School Berlin Program in cooperation with the Film and Television Academy Berlin (dffb).

Markus Wilczek

Supported by a fellowship from the Alexander von Humboldt-Foundation as well as grants from the German Academic Exchange Service and the Harvard University Center for the Environment, Markus Wilczek spent the fall semester 2013 conducting research in Germany. During his stay in Germany, he also gave a lecture at the Peter-Szondi-Institut for Comparative Literature at the Freie Universität Berlin. In the summer of 2014, he will be a fellow at the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society in Munich, where he will give a lecture on "The Poetics of Radioactivity." Currently, he is teaching a survey course on twentieth-century German literature and culture as well as a course on the voice in literary, cultural, and theoretical discourses.

Peter Burgard

Peter Burgard, following a fall term in which he taught a new seminar on Thomas Mann as well as his Advanced German Grammar and Reading course, is teaching one new course this spring — a Freshman Seminar on "Literal Looking: What We See in Art" — and one revised course, "The Ethics of Atheism: Marx, Nietzsche, Freud," which has been transformed from a lecture into a large seminar employing his hybrid course structure of discussion sections preceding seminar meetings. He continues to speak to Harvard Clubs about "HarvardX or Ex-Harvard? MOOCs and the Future of the University," with a March lecture at the Harvard Club of West Florida, and he will round out the spring with a May lecture, from his current scholarship, at Cambridge University.

Christian Ackermann

Visiting medievalist Christiane Ackermann will participate in the 2014 Medieval Studies Lecture Series "Names, Dates and Signatures" at Princeton. She will also run a graduate workshop on "Literary and Cultural Theory in Medieval Studies" at Princeton and give lectures at Harvard, Iowa and
Medieval Studies" at Princeton and give lectures at Harvard, Iowa and at the German Literature Archive Marbach. She is currently teaching a course on “Encounters with ‘the Orient’ in premodern German Literature.” Together with her students she is preparing an online exhibition on Houghton’s collection of German Turcica.

Judith Ryan

Judith Ryan has just completed two articles: one on Rilke’s Duineser Elegien and Sonette an Orpheus, to appear in a volume on the year 1922, and the other on Durs Grünbein and classical antiquity, for publication in a volume titled Archivexpedition. On March 5, she gave a talk at Smith College on the topic "Must Poems Be Puzzles?" and on June 24, she will be a keynote speaker at a conference on nineteenth-century narrative at the University of Kent, Canterbury, U.K. With Eric Rentschler, she has convened a colloquium on German Studies for April 25.

John Hamilton

John Hamilton recently published Security: Politics, Humanity, and the Philology of Care, in addition to a number of articles. This academic year, he has or will lecture in Munich, New Haven, Providence, Rennes, Leiden, New York, Santa Barbara, and Berlin. At the University of Chicago, he gave the annual Sigmund H. Danziger Lecture in Classics; and at Princeton, he is presenting new work as a Whitney J. Oates fellow in Classics and German. In April, he will give the keynote lecture for the graduate student conference in Yale’s German Department, "Conditions of Precarity: Life, Work, Literature."

Maja Bäckvall

A specialist in Viking and medieval runestones, Maja Bäckvall, a specialist in Viking and medieval runestones, hosted an all-day meeting of Runrød, a symposium consisting of papers by on runic inscriptions, on March 12. This spring, she also introduced a new course on “The Afterlife of Runes.”

The course focuses on the ways in which this ancient writing system has been used in more recent times to establish national and personal identity in propaganda, fantasy literature, and contemporary culture in the Nordic countries and beyond.

Ian Fleishman

Ian Fleishman has been pleased to offer a brand new course this spring, called "From Metropolis to The Matrix: The Dystopian in German Film and Fiction." Tracing the anxieties of Weimar-era cinema and literature throughout the 20th century, the course reveals their legacy in contemporary films. Engaged students from a variety of backgrounds and interests—ranging from cinematography and architecture to social theory and the physical sciences—have made for lively discussion in this new seminar.

Stephen Mitchell

With Pernille Hermann and Agnes S. Arnórsdóttir, Stephen Mitchell has just published a collection of essays, Minni and Muninn: Memory in Medieval Nordic Culture. Drawing on emerging theoretical tools for studying and conceptualizing memory, the book looks at transmission and media, preservation and storage, forgetting and erasure, and authenticity and falsity in medieval Norse texts. This spring he will participate in conferences and research workshops at Yale University, Aarhus University (Denmark) and Vestfold University College (Norway).
Undergraduate Journal

Simplicissimus: The Harvard College Journal of Germanic Studies publishes an issue of essays, poetry, prose, and art from Harvard College on Germanic topics twice a year, both digitally and in print. Founded in the spring of 2013, Simplicissimus currently consists of a team of fifteen Harvard undergraduates covering seven Germanic languages. Simplicissimus is distributed among Harvard students and faculty, and has already achieved resonance beyond the Harvard campus. The third issue of Simplicissimus will have a focus on Dutch, Flemish, and Afrikaner language and culture at Harvard.

Advising Fortnight Event

The department will hold its Spring Open House on Thursday, April 10 from 4-6pm. Faculty and current students will meet in the lobby of the department (Barker Center third floor) to help inform undergraduates about the possibility of concentrating in German Literature of German Cultural Studies, taking a secondary field in German, or working toward a language citation in German. Faculty members will give brief presentations of their teaching interests and course offerings. We welcome all undergraduates who are curious about the field.

Internships Abroad

Our department offers an exciting range of internships in Germany. By working in a German company, a German subsidiary of an American/International Company, a German institute or not-for-profit, students can explore a career, gain valuable work experience in their chosen field, and learn about the German way of life – in addition to improving upon their German language skills. For more information, contact Ruth Sondermann at wkabrd@fas.harvard.edu.

Summer Abroad

The department offers a selection of exciting opportunities for summer study abroad, including a course on intensive intermediate German and the history and culture of Munich, with a 10-day trip to Berlin and Vienna, offered by Professor Peter Burgard and a one-month course in Scandinavia on the archeological, cultural, and literary heritage of Northern Europe in the Middle Ages offered by Professor Stephen Mitchell. An innovative 8-week course in Berlin, directed by Professor Rentschler, gives students an opportunity to explore the city, study films about it, and create their own short films, drawing on the resources of the German Film and Television Academy.

For more information on these programs see:
http://german.fas.harvard.edu/study-abroad