



## Message from the Chair



Peter Höyng

Sharing the finest and latest news from our department comes effortlessly this fall; there is plenty to report. Probably the most exciting item of all is that we were able to

honor our our longtime—and now newly retired—Senior Lecturer Viola Westbrook (or, as we call her affectionately, Tiny) in a very special way. Thanks to her indefatigable dedication to the profession and her true calling for teaching, we decided to try to repay her four decades of service to the department and Emory College by establishing the Westbrook Endowed Scholarship Fund.

Campus colleagues, family and friends, alumni, and members of the Advisory Council generously have contributed to the fund, with the result that we already have collected more than two-thirds of our goal of \$150,000. The Westbrook Endowed Scholarship Fund will be awarded annually at the end of the academic year to the most deserving student in the Department of German Studies who has declared a German major or minor. The award is designated as a stipend to send a student to a German-speaking country in order to pursue studies of German language, literature, and cultural history in either Tiny's native Germany or Austria.

In other words, the Westbrook Endowed Scholarship Fund combines what was front and center of Tiny's long career as a teacher: to give nothing less than the very

best to our students and to demand nothing less than excellence from them. We hope that alumni and friends generously will continue to help us reach our goal by the end of this academic year. To this end, you will find further information in this newsletter on ways to give back and do your part to honor Tiny's fabulous career at Emory.

And it is indeed our remarkable students who are the motivation behind our departmental endeavors during the past years: be it our ongoing overhaul of the curriculum, the continuation of our own successful Summer Study Abroad Program in Vienna, or collaboration with the Advisory Council. We are thankful to Advisory Council Chair Christoph Rückel, who spearheaded the initiative of establishing internships through the American Chamber of Commerce in Germany. The program is now in its second year. This past summer, 11 of our students enjoyed three-month-long paid internships in Germany.

Following, you will find more news and discover why this is a particularly exciting time for our department—especially because we have reached a new record in our student enrollments, both in German as well as Yiddish. This alone is, for all of us, the best incentive to continue striving for excellence in research and teaching.

With best wishes and thanks for your support,

Peter Höyng  
Associate Professor of German  
Chair, Department of German Studies

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# Viola G. Westbrook, Senior Lecturer, Retires

In spite of increasing globalization, very few people are truly at home in two cultures—and fewer still have reflected on that experience and consciously dedicated their lives to transmitting their cross-cultural insights to others. Senior Lecturer Viola Westbrook is one of those rare individuals. What is immediately apparent from her CV is a lifelong commitment to fostering in-depth understanding of German-speaking life, culture, history, and values. She believes strongly that such understanding is best achieved by learning German—that language is not merely a means to achieving some limited practical objective, but rather the primary way of expanding one's horizon to encompass new values, ideas, and a different way of life.

For more than 40 years, Westbrook taught German at Emory with this larger goal in mind.

Students were certainly primary beneficiaries of her seemingly boundless energy and enthusiasm, and of her willingness to spend countless hours with them individually. In her second-year language classes, they were exposed to a text-based introduction to German cultural history that she then pursued in depth, in German, in subsequent upper-level German studies seminars.

*What is immediately apparent . . . is a lifelong commitment to fostering in-depth understanding of German-speaking life, culture, history, and values.*

Westbrook's sense of mission, however, refused to be confined to Emory. Throughout the academic year and during her summer breaks, she organized and led a seemingly endless array of short-term language workshops for high school and college students and teachers in Atlanta and the Southeast. She also founded and guided one of the more important longer-term summer-immersion programs for German teachers in our region. She raised American and German funds for it year after year, thus providing a sought-after resource for frequently under-

served language educators. By way of these activities, she became one of Emory's important liaisons with the diplomatic community of Atlanta as well as with educational institutions in the city, Georgia, and the region at large.

Thankfully, these efforts did not go unrecognized. Accolades for Westbrook include a Teacher of the Year Award from the American Association of Teachers of German and the Goethe Institute in New York, a German-American Friendship Award presented by the ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany and, most important, the Bundesverdienstkreuz, a prestigious medal awarded her by the president of the Federal Republic of Germany for service to the German-American community.



Viola G. Westbrook

If there were an award for collegiality, that would have to be added to her list. Because there isn't, let it be emphatically said that throughout her many years in the Department of German Studies, she has been an exemplary colleague, unfailingly courteous and pleasant, even when disagreeing, as well as utterly loyal and reliable. Although all of us will miss her greatly, we hope and trust that our loss will be somebody else's gain and wish her new, meaningful venues for her talents and aspirations. In parting, we want her to know that her cheerful dedication to her students, her colleagues, and her profession has set the bar in our department for many years to come.

If you wish to donate to the Westbrook Endowed Scholarship fund, please send a check to:

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Or visit our website at [www.german.emory.edu](http://www.german.emory.edu).

## Starr Fellow at Harvard

Assistant Professor Miriam Udel spent the 2010–2011 academic year as a Starr Fellow in Judaica at Harvard University's Center for Jewish Studies. As such, she participated in a seminar on Modern Jewish Literature that met throughout the spring term. Udel used the year to advance her book project, a monograph about Yiddish and American-Jewish literature to be called *Never Better! The Modern Jewish Picaresque*. Spanning 20th-century Yiddish literature from Sholem Aleichem to Isaac Bashevis Singer, the book examines how several authors drew on the antic energy of the picaresque form to navigate a path between the antipodes of hope and despair. In addition to working on her own book, Udel recently reviewed Mikhail Krutikov's new intellectual biography of the towering Soviet-Yiddish critic Meir Wiener for *Comparative Literature Studies*.



Miriam Udel

## Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellow

Associate Professor Caroline Schaumann received the prestigious Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellowship for Experienced Researchers. As part of her fellowship, she spent the fall 2010 semester at the Peter Szondi-Institut für Allgemeine und Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft at the Freie Universität in Berlin. Hosted by Oliver Lubrich, one of the foremost Humboldt scholars in Germany, she used this time to work on her new book, *The Scientific Sublime: The Birth of Mountaineering in the 19th Century*, and specifically to write a chapter on von Humboldt's mountain ascents.

Once feared as dreadful and dangerous places, mountains increasingly became environments of interest and beauty in the late 18th century due to the burgeoning sciences of geology, meteorology, and geography, the philosophical paradigm of Romanticism, and European industrialization. On his five-year expedition to the New World (1799–1804), von Humboldt ascended several volcanoes in Venezuela, Ecuador, and Mexico as part of his research on vegetation zones and volcanism, including Chimborazo, a mountain that was—at the time—thought to be the highest in the world. Von Humboldt's detailed travel descriptions illustrate the intersections of science and art, yet Schaumann suggests that he not only aesthetically defined the Andean volcanoes and conducted measurements on their slopes, but was likewise silenced and stunned by the climbing experience.

While at the university, she began coediting the 15 chapters of the forthcoming volume *Heights of Reflection: Mountains in the German Imagination from the Middle Ages to the Present* and completed the article "German

Mountain Films after the *Bergfilm: Nordwand* (2008) and *Nanga Parbat* (2010)." She also had the opportunity to do research at the Alpine Museum in Munich in its extensive archives and attend a film festival devoted to mountain culture and sports in Dresden. A short train ride to the east leads to the birthplace of rock climbing as we know it, Elbsandstein. There, among the impressive and scary sandstone crags that Casper David Friedrich romanticized on oil and canvas, the pioneers of climbing developed the sport into what it is today.



Caroline Schaumann

## Stimulating Guest Lectures

During the academic year 2010–2011, we were able to offer three presentations targeted at different audiences. Diverse as these lectures were, they all were well attended and received.

For the fourth time, the German Studies Advisory Council made it possible to invite and host a guest speaker. Godel Rosenberg, a citizen of Germany and Israel, opened last year's lecture series when he spoke to the larger Emory community in the attractive new Oxford Road Building on October 18, 2010. As a journalist, Rosenberg had a successful career as a spokesperson of the ruling party in Bavaria before he moved to Israel in 1999, where he eventually became the senior adviser for Daimler in 2008.



Godel Rosenberg

In his lecture, Rosenberg presented his passion for volunteer work in a talk titled “Bridging the Divide between Israelis and Arabs: Experiences and Observations from a German Perspective.” Among other projects, Rosenberg founded Save a Child's Heart in 2001—a program that provides medical care in Israel to young Palestinians with heart disease. In addition, he has been working on the Alexander River Environmental Peace Project, an initia-

tive aiming to restore the natural habitat of the Alexander River—a cross-border river that flows from Palestinian-held territory to the Mediterranean Sea in Israel. As in all his volunteer work, Rosenberg demonstrated his compassion and *chutzpah* for overcoming political barriers to better humanity and nature.

The second lecture—on November 16, 2010—was unusual in that we not only had the prominent theologian Margot Käßmann on campus, but she gave her first lecture in the US in her native tongue. Cosponsored by the Goethe Center, the lecture was attended by the larger German-speaking community and our own students, who listened to her captivating perspective on how to infuse new life into religious practices in Germany today, which is more secular when compared to the United States. Käßmann had been invited by Candler School of Theology as a visiting scholar during fall semester 2010, and she published her impressions of her stay in Atlanta and the United States, *Zu Gast in Amerika* . . .



Margot Käßmann

Whereas the first two lectures were tailored toward students and the general public, the third lecture—by Christian Kohlross, DAAD Walter Benjamin Chair at Hebrew University, Jerusalem—addressed advanced students and scholars with an interest in German literature. On April 5, 2011, Kohlross, an avid reader of the Swiss author Max Frisch—who was born 100 years ago—tackled the seeming paradox of “How to be Jewish without Being a Jew” by analyzing Frisch's still-provocative play from 50 years ago, *Andorra*.

## Curriculum Update

In my role as chair of the department's Curriculum Committee, I am happy to report on the latest developments in our effort to revise the undergraduate curriculum. The primary goal of this effort has been to integrate the study of language and content across all levels of instruction. The first step in the process was the revision of the first-year course (101–102) around the theme of self-identity. Students in that course engage with a range of texts that focus on different societal roles that young adults play (e.g., family member, student, consumer, and tourist) and use those texts as the basis for their language learning.



Hiram Maxim

The second-year course (201–202) moves beyond the focus on personal identity to explore the topic “coming of age.” Piloted in the last academic year, the course examines how different societal factors (e.g., family, education, and travel) have affected German-speaking youths’ coming of age through generations and draws comparisons with the students’ own experiences in coming of age. As in the first-year course, students are exposed to these topics through

their engagement with texts, all of which have a strong narrative component that serves to support the course’s emphasis on developing students’ ability to tell stories in German.

The new third-year course (301–302) that was also piloted last year explores how love and hate manifest themselves in German cultural production through the ages. Following a reverse chronological approach, the first semester of the course investigates the 20th and 21st centuries, while the second semester examines works from the Middle Ages up through the 19th century.

The final pieces of the curricular puzzle are to continue the trajectory already established in the first three years of the curriculum through the upper-level courses. This academic year, the faculty will work together on specifying both content areas and language features that will be targeted in the department’s most advanced courses. The faculty has been encouraged by the initial feedback about the new curriculum both from students and colleagues in other departments across the country who have learned about our work through presentations and lectures at national and international conferences. For more detailed information and the latest updates about this exciting, ground-breaking curriculum and its ongoing reform, please be sure to visit our website <<http://german.emory.edu/home/>> regularly.

## Alumni News

What students who majored or minored with us in the past few years are doing now:

**Luka Anic 11C** is working as an operations analyst at Cardlytics, Atlanta.

**Zabih Aria 10C** is working for Porsche at the North American headquarters, Atlanta.

**Sarah Brandt 08C** taught English in Tunisia the past two years and is now a graduate student at Columbia University in the MA program on international educational development.

**Andrew Breidenbach 10C** is in graduate school in sociology at the University of New Mexico.

**Dan Brunner** is in graduate school at George Washington University.

**Amrit Dhir 06C**, after two years of teaching in India, is in his second year at Harvard Law School.

**Vlad Golgotiu 09C** is in medical school at the University of Michigan.

**Jonathan Jackson 09C**, Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Germany for 2009–2010, is in the PhD program in sociology at University of Maryland.

**Abigail Kahn 10C** just completed her first year as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Vienna and will remain for a second year. Kahn also is enrolled in the MA program in applied linguistics at the University Wien.

**Matthew Kirk 10C** finished a summer internship at a law firm in Bratislava, Slovakia, and now is continuing his law degree at University of Georgia.

**Dan McGrath 09C** completed a certification course to teach English as a second language.

**Caroline Maness 11C** wrote an honors thesis in German and is now teaching biology in the Atlanta Public School System as a member of Teach for America.

**Amanda Maran (Sengpiel) 09C** completed her MA (LLM at Wirtschaftsuniversität in Wien, international tax law) and is working for John Deere in Mannheim, Germany.

**Rebecca Perch 09C** is a student in Emory’s medical school.



Vienna Reunion Summer 2011 <l to r> Hiram Maxim, Andy Shoenig, Alex Vinson, Daniel McGrath, Amanda Maran, Callie Jordan, Nicolas Maisel, and Peter Höyng

**Ryan Plocher 08C**, a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Germany in 2008–2009, works in Berlin as a translator. **Sarah Richards 09C** completed her second year as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Austria and now

is enrolled in Emory's MA program in film studies.

**John-Alex Shoaff 11C** is in his first year of law school at Cornell University.

**Andy Shoenig 09C** completed his second year as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Austria and now is an intern working for the Congressional Study Group on Germany, US Association of Former Members of Congress.

**Erin Single 11C** is working in Philadelphia as associate consultant for Campbell Alliance.

**Kevin Soderman 10C** is pursuing a BA in music from Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music.

**Jacqueline Troutman 11C** is currently a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Germany.

**Erica Umpierrez 10C** completed her year as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Austria and now is enrolled in Emory's medical school.

**Alex Vinson 08C** passed her qualifying exam at University of California–San Diego for her PhD in sociology and has been spending her summers in Vienna since 2006.

## Vienna Alumni

What makes Wien so attractive to our students? Here are responses by some of our students who joined our Vienna Summer Study Abroad Program in the past few years and who all returned for one reason or another:

"The rhythm of the city agrees with me. I feel very connected to the culture—both the high culture of opera and theater, as well as the city culture of sitting in cafes and spending long afternoons in Das MuseumsQuartier."

—Alex Vinson 08C, 2006 participant, program assistant 2008–2009

"Beyond the architecture, the central green spaces and surrounding forests, and beyond the history and culture, there is some indescribable quality that makes this city different and that has drawn me to it. Two years after studying here with the department's summer study abroad program in 2007, I returned to Vienna as a Fulbright Austrian-American Educational Commission's Teaching Assistant. When you have the chance to live here, you see the German language in a new light. It is a living language. The years of studying you have done in the United States pale in comparison to the experience of being able to read,

write, and speak German every moment if you take that opportunity."

—Andrew Loeb Shoenig 09C, 2007 participant

"There is an old line from a movie or quote from a thinker that goes something like, 'We all need mirrors to remind ourselves who we are.' It is within the walls of that quote that I derived my greatest pleasure from the Emory Abroad program in Vienna. I did the program in 2008, and while I had been abroad twice before, I had never before been able to immerse myself so well."

—Daniel McGrath 10C, 2008 participant

"Looking back on my Emory years, the single most important experience I had in college was my study abroad experience in Vienna. It is no exaggeration when I say that the program changed my life and laid the fabric for

my postgraduation experience. The courses are unique in that the city becomes your classroom. Everyday class will take place in a coffee house, baroque church, or historical monument. Eventually, you will come to the conclusion that you are in the heart of European culture. Soon your language learning pours out of you from your daily interactions with the city.”

—Amanda Maran 10C, 2008 participant

“Due in large part to my experience studying abroad in Vienna, I moved back to Austria after graduation and taught English in Vienna. That summer has shaped my life in ways I could not have imagined, and I recommend to anyone and everyone that they take a walk around the Schönbrunn gardens, eat a fancy cake at Cafe Central, hang out at MuseumsQuartier, and sip wine at a Heuriger. The only problem is you may never want to leave!”

—Sarah Richards 09C, 2008 participant

## Our Students Intern across Germany

In fall 2007, the department established an Advisory Council with members from the German business community. Under the dynamic leadership of Christoph Rückel, the council was able to create an internship program through the American Chamber of Commerce in Germany in conjunction with five metro Atlanta universities.

The American Chamber of Commerce represents the interests of American and German companies in all economic sectors engaged in transatlantic business. With 3,000 members, it is now the largest bilateral business association in Europe.

Affectionately known by our students as the “AmCham Program,” it has grown in popularity and demand in two short years of existence. In its inaugural year, 2010, six of our students participated in this three-month paid internship. This past summer, the number increased to nine students. They worked at businesses as diverse as Ernst & Young (Frankfurt am Main), Hitachi (Frankfurt am Main), McDonalds (Munich), or the AmCham headquarters office in Berlin.

Overwhelmingly, the response of the students has been positive. Among other things, they appreciate the close mentoring they receive, the meaningful tasks they are assigned, and the experience in German culture they gain.



AmCham interns

They also have made key connections for possible future employment. Best of all for us, they return to campus energized and having made impressive gains in their language abilities and cultural awareness.

We also are very thankful that the Halle Foundation has partnered with the Cultural Vistas Society in New York to create another internship opportunity for our students. This past summer, two students interned in Germany in fields related to their major course of study.

## Join us

German Studies @ Emory University



## German Studies

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## Alumni—Request for Information

Tell us about your recent accomplishments. We would like to share them with other alumni in our next issue.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Check here if new address      Phone number \_\_\_\_\_      Year graduated \_\_\_\_\_

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- German Studies Scholarly Enrichment Fund
- The Westbrook Scholarship Fund

*Thank you for your support!*