

German Studies

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Dear Friends of German Studies,

Engaging with you this year, it is impossible *not* to address the pandemic, the ensuing economic calamities, and continuing racial oppression in form of the most recent anti-Black police brutality; all of these incidents happened simultaneously in spring and summer

of 2020. These different and yet interdependent events have been both humbling and overwhelming for all of us! All the more can and does literature help us to find words that express our anger and offer hope when coping with injustice, danger, or hardship. Hence, we can be proud to turn to Emory's poet Jericho Brown and his *The Tradition*—recently awarded with the Pulitzer Prize—where he powerfully expresses injustices against African-Americans that unfortunately have become conventional. For scholars who interact with German language and culture at large, we also can point to the poet Friedrich Hölderlin who was born 250 years ago, and quote some of his famous lines, which are still fitting: “Wo aber Gefahr ist, wächst das Rettende auch” / Where there is danger, the rescue grows as well (translator Scott Horton).

For as topsy-turvy, difficult, and abhorrent as these past months have been for too many fellow citizens, they created a new experience for many of us. After all, many of us have witnessed a number of paradoxes in the past few months: the physical distancing generated more meetings, the public health challenges prompted politeness, and a readiness to help each other, the disproportionate vulnerabilities of African-Americans created greater sympathies and support for them than before. In short, painful and difficult as these past months have been, they helped to bring out the very best in many of us.

Likewise, our entire department! We felt stirred to take a strong stance when being forced by the police brutalities to reflect on our own work, and documented

our statement on our website: “As a department focused on German- and Yiddish-speaking societies, we are committed to teaching, research and outreach that emphasizes the interwoven histories of anti-Black racism, antisemitism, fascism, genocide, colonialism, xenophobia, misogyny, Islamophobia, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and economic exploitation. We believe it is our duty to critically examine cultural memories of oppression and resistance, and to explore how they have been forgotten and repressed.”

In light of the department's outspoken identity, let me in the end look forward rather than backward, as our annual newsletter typically does. We are lucky to welcome two new colleagues in the fall: Didem Uca as an Assistant Professor and Frank Voigt as our first DAAD lecturer. Both of them are committed to diversify the German curriculum in different ways. Frank comes as an expert on the German-Jewish philosopher Walter Benjamin, whose texts defy a simple denominator precisely due to his eclectic approach to history, aesthetics, and philosophy. With her work on diversity and migration in German-speaking cultures, Didem's arrival will advance our department's commitment to studying an increasingly multi-cultural Germany. She already has been active as a member of the national caucus on Diversity, Decolonization and the German Curriculum.

It is similarly befitting to be able to welcome the Afro-German actress Sheri Hagen in October, albeit only virtually when she will be ready to answer questions after the screening of her movie *Auf den zweiten Blick* or *At Second Glance*. And while the department has recently offered courses on how German-speaking countries had to face their racism and anti-Semitism, we will be offering next spring a newly designed course on German racisms, ranging from German colonialism to anti-Semitism and the Holocaust to today's multicultural Germany.

It is these steps and events that make me proud to be working along with my colleagues towards a world that hopefully will be more just, safe, and peaceful.

Peter Höyng
Chair and Professor of German Studies

Newsletter of the
Department of
German Studies at
Emory University

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Hallo und Auf Wiedersehen



semester course for third-year students); and various courses in the Vienna Program. She also occasionally taught “Reading German for Academic Purposes” as a summer graduate course, a Freshman Seminar, and “Language across the Curriculum” courses in coordination with other departments.

As part of frequent service to broader learning communities, Professor Lancaster gained certification as a tester for the German Business Diploma (WPD) and as an evaluator in the southeastern United States for the Certificate for German Business (ZdFb).

Professor Lancaster received several accolades over her career at Emory: the Foreign Language Teacher of Excellence Award in 2008 from the Emory College Language Center; an ECLC Curriculum Development Fellowship in 2010; and the 2013 Stephen A Freeman Award for “Best Published Article” from the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages for “Overcoming curricular bifurcation: A departmental approach to curriculum reform,” coauthored with four of her departmental colleagues and published in *Die Unterrichtspraxis*. The last of these led, in part, to the Department of German Studies’ receipt of a national award of excellence.

Marianne K. Lancaster

Senior Lecturer in German Studies

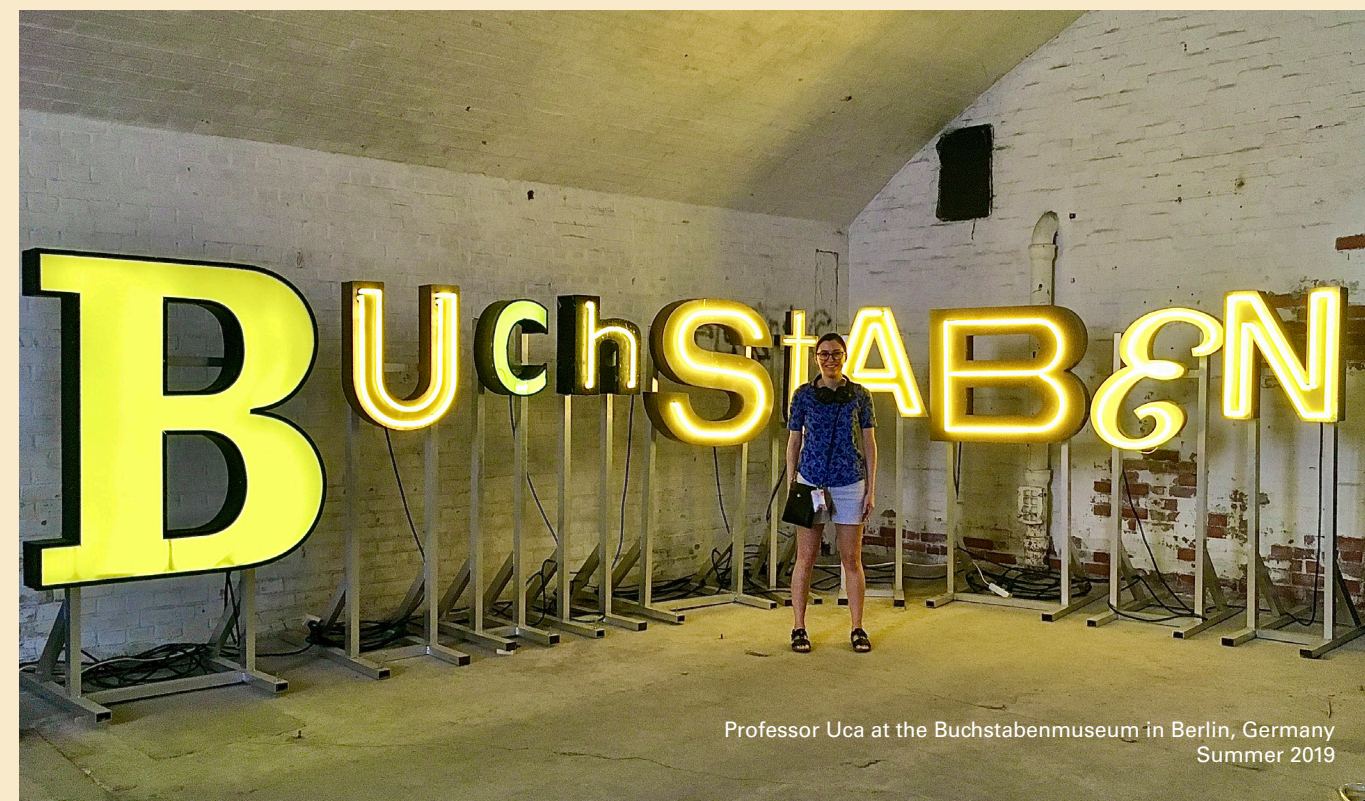
Professor Lancaster joined Emory University in 1991 as a part-time lecturer in the Department of German Studies. Prior to this, she received an MA from Friedrich Alexander University in Erlangen-Nuremberg in 1984, followed by two additional years of pedagogical training in Germany; she was granted tenure by the state of Bavaria in 1991. After moving to the United States, she taught courses at Agnes Scott College and Oglethorpe University in addition to those at Emory.

Hired full-time on Emory’s lecture track in 2000 and promoted to Senior Lecturer in 2007, she served for 19 years as the Department of German Studies’ First-Year Coordinator and frequently directed its Summer Study Abroad Program in Vienna. Throughout her career at Emory, Professor Lancaster regularly taught first- and second-year German classes (being one of the first of Emory’s foreign language instructors to design her own interactive website for Beginning German); “Business German” (having developed this offering as a two-

“Since joining Emory in 1991, I have witnessed Emory go through many “ups and downs.” Besides all the many good moments, the singular worst experience for me personally was on September 11, 2001. As disaster struck, I was in the classroom teaching. What I remember the most is that this left me with the task of announcing to my students, some of whom were from New York, what had just transpired. I tried to help my students and advisees—then and later—as best I could. Our confidence and sense of security were shaken fundamentally but, over time, we learned to adapt to this new world.

Now, during the current pandemic, we are confronted with a new enemy, one invisibly endangering even more people. Unfortunately, we are again struggling to adjust emotionally, to hold on to our traditions and way of life, and to move forward. My greatest hope is that we, again, adapt well to these new necessities and grow even stronger—personally and as a community—despite and because of them.”

—Marianne K. Lancaster



Professor Uca at the Buchstabenmuseum in Berlin, Germany
Summer 2019

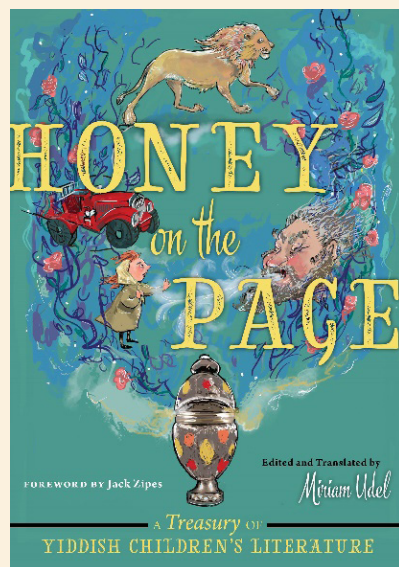
Didem Uca

I am absolutely thrilled to be joining the Department of German Studies this fall as Assistant Professor! I had the pleasure of meeting many of you during my visit to campus and was inspired by your passion for German and Yiddish languages and cultures. Here’s a little about me: I am a second-generation American of Turkish-Arab heritage who was born and raised on Long Island, NY. Like many of you, I began learning German in college, eventually deciding to double major in German and Comparative Literature at Bryn Mawr. After spending a year as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant at Gaziantep University in Turkey, I began my Ph.D. in Germanic Languages and Literatures at the University of Pennsylvania. During graduate school, I completed graduate certificates in pedagogy and gender, sexuality, and women’s studies and spent a year at the Humboldt University of Berlin on a Fulbright fellowship.

My research focuses on intersectional approaches to German-language post/migrant cultural production, multilingual aesthetics, coming of age, popular culture, and inclusive and anti-racist teaching methods. I am co-editor of the trilingual journal *Jahrbuch Türkisch-Deutsche Studien*, serve on the steering committees of the Coalition of Women in German and the Diversity, Decolonization, and the German Curriculum Collective, and am co-chair of the Modern Language Association’s Committee on the Status of Graduate Students in the Humanities. I am coming to Emory from Colgate University, where I served for one year as Visiting Assistant Professor of German. I’ll be joined in Atlanta by my husband, Matt, our cat, London, and our dog, Bruno.

Faculty Publications

Honey on the Page: A Treasury of Yiddish Children's Literature



Edited and Translated
by Miriam Udel
Foreword by Jack Zipes

The first comprehensive anthology of Yiddish children's literature in English

Honey on the Page (NYU Press, Oct. 6, 2020) lays out a feast of nearly 50 stories and poems for children, translated from the original Yiddish by the author, Miriam Udel, associate professor of German and Jewish Studies at Emory University.

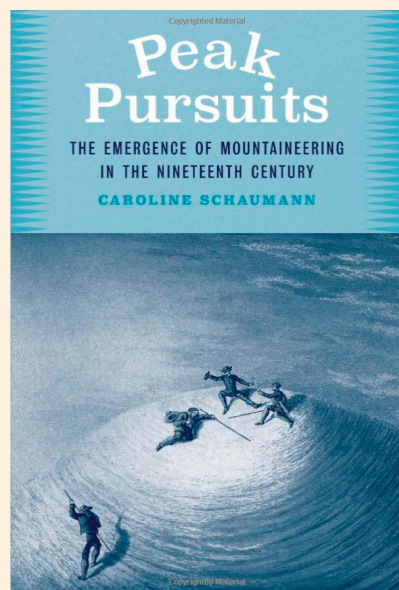
Arranged by theme, the book takes readers from Jewish holidays and history, to folktales and fairy tales, to stories of humanistic ethics, wisdom and foolishness, class consciousness, and family. Most of the works included have never before appeared in English.

Highlighting material from the first decades of the 20th century and stretching into the 1970s, Honey on the Page begins the work of restoring a neglected body of work that helps to tell the story of the Jewish 20th century.

Featuring material by more than 25 prominent and lesser-known authors published in Eastern Europe, New York, and Latin America, this anthology spans the Yiddish-speaking globe. Udel includes a brief historical biography before each entry of writers such as, Sholem Asch, Kadya Molodowsky, Moyshe Kulbak, and Zina Rabinowitz.

This volume offers a rich resource to students of Jewish history and literary culture, as well as to families and educators seeking literature that speaks to Jewish children about their religious, cultural, and ethical heritage.

Peak Pursuits: The Emergence of Mountaineering in the Nineteenth Century



Caroline Schaumann

(Yale University Press, 2020) An interdisciplinary cultural history of exploration and mountaineering in the nineteenth century

European forays to mountain summits began in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with the search for plants and minerals and the study of geology and glaciers. Yet scientists were soon captivated by the enterprise of climbing itself, enthralled with the views and the prospect of "conquering" alpine summits. Inspired by Romantic notions of

nature, early mountaineers idealized their endeavors as sublime experiences, all the while deliberately measuring what they saw. As increased leisure time and advances in infrastructure and equipment opened up

once formidable mountain regions to those seeking adventure and sport, new models of masculinity emerged that were fraught with tensions. In the name of science, these men fashioned the mountains into a refuge from an increasingly industrialized Western Europe while their expeditions relied much on the advancements of modern society. Yet the early mountaineers remained caught in an unresolved tension between the struggle for emancipation from nature and precisely the desire to be at nature's whim.

My book examines how written and artistic depictions of nineteenth-century exploration and mountaineering in the Andes, the Alps, and the Sierra Nevada by Alexander von Humboldt, Leslie Stephen, and John Muir, among others, shaped cultural understandings of nature and wilderness in the Anthropocene. Their inherent tensions reveal much about Victorian values, leisure, sport, and the middle class, affirming and questioning the drive to conquer nature. They uphold hegemonic masculinity but also include (self) mockery and failure. They celebrate science in passionate, sometimes exalted language. They draw attention to the occasional pain and inherent pleasure that arrives from experiencing our corporeal connection with the world. In the Anthropocene, when mountain glaciers are shrinking by the year, when the human imprint is destroying the Earth as we know it, and when even the very facts of environmental destruction are under threat, we need reminders of mountain pleasures, wonder, and passion more than ever.

Reflections on the Pandemic from German Studies

Chooseday — Marlene Danner

I must have been in one of the cozy rail wagons of Amtrak, when the notification of the sudden transition into remote learning for the remaining of spring semester reached me, along with the announcement from housing to move out within two weeks. The train was heading to one of the corona "hot-spots" in the USA. Rather than focusing on how I would teach remotely and move from campus housing, I decided to enjoy the rest of my first spring-break.

Once back home on campus, I packed, waited, and discussed the — for a follower of news — not so new development of the global virus-pandemic. In addition to the suspension of residential learning notification, I had to consider Emory policies and scientific approaches, opinions from my home country, family in Austria, the policies Austria would implement, and visa status questions. The possibility of an exception made to foreign nationals at the university to remain on campus also swirled in my head full of things to consider. Finally, the decision was made through individual advice from my supervisor and sister. My supervisor after directly communicating my situation to the administration, and my sister, a direct connection to Austria's ministry of Foreign Affairs both recommended returning back as soon as possible — the next day.

A Tuesday, or "Chooseday" as my favorite shuttle driver would call it, I woke up knowing that if I missed that plane, by will or by accident, I would be staying for an unknown amount of time. But two premises accompany me everywhere I go: "Seize this day; it may also be your last" and "Take it as it comes; there is no sense in thinking in the hypothetical mode." Back in Austria the semester kept going and so the transition was a soft one, especially since there were some Germknödel to catch. Living in Austria, one eye is still directed across the Atlantic, so much going on that is of importance to me. Even if this year was shorter than expected, the Fulbright experience at the German Department at Emory established deep and personal connections.

Coronavirus Reflection — Didem Uca

When I was finalizing my syllabus for "Challenges of Modernity," my spring 2020 core humanities seminar at Colgate University, I had no idea how prescient the course would prove to be. As it turned out, the COVID-19 pandemic created a critical testing grounds for exploring the course themes: the ideals of human rights against the realities of conflict and atrocity and amidst developments in industry, science, and technology. Reflecting on key human rights discourses over the past 250 years, ranging from the Declaration of Independence to abolitionist movements to feminist and queer theory, raised important questions about a person's right to basic protections, including healthcare. Discussions of Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Dürrenmatt's *The Physicists*, and Levi's *The Periodic Table* delved into the ethics of scientific inquiry and the scientist's role in protecting human rights. Reading such 'classic' works as Marx and Engels' *The Communist Manifesto* and Darwin's *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*, helped us contextualize present-day inequities in access to healthcare due to economic disparities, racism, sexism, and anti-queer and trans sentiments. Overall, despite the, ahem, challenges of teaching this course in the time of coronavirus, I am grateful to have had this platform to discuss these crucial topics with my students—and help them imagine a world in which their interventions can make a real difference.

Dominique Thiers-Schmidt

During these challenging times of pandemic, strife, and civil unrest, I take a measure of strength in looking back into the sweep of human history. Natural disasters, pestilence, and man-made catastrophes have been far more prevalent than have peace, comfort, and abundance. To be human is to endure. More hopefully, history also shows us that the greatest progress and societal changes have their seeds planted in the hardship and upheavals that come hand in hand with crisis. So I look to the future with optimism and hope for a better, more just world.

Caroline Schaumann

In my classes in early March, we discussed spring break plans in light of the pandemic. Some students were very worried, others not at all. One student skipped class to be healthy for her flight. One parent drove six hours to Atlanta so her daughter could avoid flying. One went on a cruise. One was shopping for an N-95 mask. And off we went. In my case, a tiny town in the Eastern Sierra of California, where my husband has a photography business and my daughter goes to school. I have been here ever since, while the world changed forever. With Matilda out of school, it has been very hard to carve out time for teaching and research, let alone emails. Still we managed, and while my husband was working on an ever-greater vegetable garden, I enjoyed keeping in touch with students, having them relate what was happening to the materials we discussed for class. Now most of my summer has been taken up by preparing for an online fall semester, to better meet the educational needs of students in a virtual environment. I surely miss seeing everyone in person, but will try my best to translate stamp-sized, two-dimensional faces into deep and meaningful teaching.

Hiram Maxim

When I received the email back in March that all classes would be moving online for the remainder of the spring semester, I was naturally very disappointed that I would not meet my classes again in person, but part of me — the geeky language pedagogue part — was actually curious and intrigued by the idea of online teaching. Adding to my interest was the fact that I was fortunate to have two very good and engaged classes (second-semester German and a sociolinguistics class on multilingual Atlanta), in which a very positive classroom dynamic had developed during the first half of the semester. Almost immediately, however, I discovered that online teaching is a very different experience. Whereas in the first half of the semester a question posed to either class would elicit a series of responses, follow-up questions, and

Reflections (cont.)

humorous banter, a similar question posed online typically resulted in silence. 18 squares on Zoom, each filled with a bright, inquisitive student, were simply not engaged in the same way as we had been when teaching and learning in person. Of course, there was more going on in our lives at that moment than just the change in the course delivery format, so I was not about to blame everything on Zoom, but it was clear to me that trying to duplicate the in-person classroom setting on Zoom was not going to be productive. In my sociolinguistics class we quickly shifted to small-group and even individual meetings on Zoom to better facilitate the completion of their final research projects, and in German 102 we made extensive use of the breakout rooms to create smaller groups for discussion. The students themselves, despite their reticence in large Zoom meetings, remained interested and committed to the material. The ingenuity of the sociolinguistics students was particularly noteworthy because originally their final project required them to examine a public space in Atlanta for its multilingualism. Sequestered at home often with limited or no ability to go outside, they turned to online tools (e.g., Google Street View; Yelp reviews; census data; websites of businesses) to access examples of multilingualism in the public sphere

Paul Buchholz

The Fall semester of 2019 was an exciting and, we could say, “normal,” time: I made multiple transcontinental trips for academic conferences, mentored students on their studies and research, co-taught a fascinating new course on pessimism with a colleague in African American Studies, and made various preparations for the future. The big event of my Spring 2020 sabbatical was to be a four-month stay in Vienna, Austria as a Fulbright Scholar, hosted at the International Center for Cultural Studies (Internationales Forschungszentrum Kulturwissenschaften), just across the street from the University of Vienna. In late February, I packed my bags and flew to Europe, thinking the most difficult thing about the next months would be the time

away from my family in Atlanta. During the orientation program at the Fulbright Austria office in Vienna’s Museum Quarter, coronavirus just meant handwashing and the occasional nervous joke about how, possibly, some things could get briefly interrupted sometime in the future. I made new acquaintances and even a new friend among the cohort of Fulbright scholars, I settled into my garret apartment in Margaretenstrasse, and I moved into my office at the IFK, getting to know the institute’s wonderful staff and fellows and enjoying my top-floor office view overlooking the Ringstrasse. Each morning on the radio I would listen to reports of the increasing number of Covid-19 cases in Austria: single-digits, most concentrated in Tirol.

The semester began as planned at the start of March: a large lecture, receptions, dinners at traditional Viennese inns. By day I worked on my upcoming fellow lecture, and at night walked through the city, attending theater and a poetry reading—but this routine only lasted one week. All lectures were canceled; cinemas and theaters were closing; I started stocking up on beans and pasta, anticipating I would work from home for the next few weeks. Within days, I was on a plane back to Atlanta, thinking I might return to Vienna in April or May. Eventually it became clear this wouldn’t happen, as the Fulbright program was shut down for the rest of the academic year for the first time in history. I tried to keep writing, read the books I had bought in a rush on my last day in Vienna, and watched DVDs of a 34-volume documentary series on Austrian history (I’m only 1/3 through now!)

I’ve had the privilege of continuing something like “normal” life as an academic at home under lockdown, but like everyone else am struggling to come to terms with the massive human tragedy and upheaval of this crisis. For now, I find myself rethinking some of the basic things that structure our life in the university: planning the next year, making timelines and setting deadlines, and above all helping prepare our students for the future—which is more important than ever, as we learn to live with the truly unexpected.

Miriam Udel

It’s a special kind of irony when you’re teaching a new first-year seminar on nostalgia, and a pandemic overtakes the globe halfway through the semester. “I’ll give you something to be nostalgic about!” the forces governing the Universe seemed to taunt us. Class about nostalgia, while feeling nostalgic for class, quickly became very meta. We embraced the irony, regrouping for our first meeting after the extended break with a roll-call reaching from London to the California coastline and naming what we longed for nostalgically now that we had lost our campus Eden. The final assignment, which was already going to be about the phenomenon of roots travel, took on new urgency. Students read and analyzed scholarly literature about various destinations for heritage and historical travel, and they wrote creative accounts from the perspectives of both consumers and service workers in the industries that make those travel experiences possible. Beautifully conceived brochures and other digital materials became a virtual escape—to India and Poland, Ireland, Oklahoma, and the Bay Area.

Meanwhile, my Yiddish language students pivoted from reading Sholem Aleichem (“How Tevye Strikes It Rich”) to following coronavirus coverage in *The Yiddish Forverts*. We learned about how the virus was stampeding across insular, tight-knit Hasidic communities in New York and reviewed our first-semester poster about hand-washing, translated into Yiddish and released by the New York Department of Public Health. *Varem vaser, zeyf, roybn di hent tsuzamen*—the vocabulary seemed more relevant than ever before.

Student responses to the question:

“What surprising capacity or resources did you discover, both in yourself and in the Emory community, because of the pandemic?”



I discovered my ability to work productively in spite of gloom and distraction. Dr. Nowicki, my professor, fueled that productivity by teaching me to be positive and proactive in crisis. In the Emory community I saw adaptability. Professors learned to Zoom and made themselves available for matters academic and otherwise.

**Bobby
Robert Wilson**

I was shocked by how Zoom made me feel close to the Emory community. I not only used it to attend lectures but also to chat with my friends and even hold virtual rehearsals with my improv troupe. Despite being so far apart, seeing everyone’s faces made me feel better.

Brooke Daly



The fast-paced nature of modern life affords few moments to pause and reflect, and, for all the pandemic has taken away, it has provided this rarity. Admittedly, my indolence has, aside from the occasional overzealous game of Monopoly with my family, prevented me from doing anything productive with this time, although as of late I am attempting to learn Beethoven’s ‘Appassionata’ Sonata (a particular emphasis here on ‘attempt’, because I quickly discovered that the piece is rather above my pay grade).

On a more serious note, in light of the recent murder of George Floyd, I have been extremely encouraged by the remarkable capacity displayed by the Emory community for compassion and decisive action.

Matthew Takavarasha



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