

# German Studies

Fall 2021, Volume 15, Number 1



## Dear Friends of German Studies,

While it has become customary for the annual newsletter—published for the first time in 2006—to afford a panoramic look back, I want to take this time the opportunity to take an even larger bird-eye’s view since I end

another round of steering the department, eleven in total of my sixteen years with Emory.

There is a saying in German that I believe describes our department and its multiple accomplishments best: we are *klein aber fein*—small but excellent. What this dictum implies is that usually quantity and sheer numbers most likely translate into some quality. Yet, the German Studies Department, which offers only an undergraduate degree, and with just six full-time faculty members counts as the smallest unit within the College of Arts & Sciences, has accomplished so much over the past decade that it can scarcely fit on this one page.

In 2012, our department was one of the first two in the nation to be granted the Award of Excellence by the American Association for Teachers in German (AATG). This recognition was only possible thanks to the expertise of Professor Hiram Maxim in leading all of our colleagues to revise our curriculum so as to break down the ingrained bifurcation of language-learning and content-based courses. This overhaul and continuous investment in our curriculum resulted over the years in robust enrollment numbers, especially when compared nationally.

Our dedication to undergraduate education is also evident in the number of grants available to our students. By now, we have two endowed scholarships—one named after our long-time colleague Viola Westbrook, and a second established by the Honorary Consul of Austria Mr. Ferdinand Seefried—both supporting students to study either in Austria or Germany. In addition, we can count on the Max Kade Foundation who has generously

supported our long-standing summer study abroad program in Vienna, Austria. To these, we are overjoyed to be able to add funding from the Claus M. Halle Foundation to support a one-time trip to Berlin, Germany in compensation for the lost summers in Vienna due to the pandemic, as well as a longer stay at the university town Freiburg, Germany in the foothills of the Black Forest, starting next summer. Alongside these study-abroad opportunities, consider the internship option that our students have with the American Exchange Program, one begins to fathom exactly what the term “*klein aber fein*” entails.

Of course, we as faculty are keenly aware that Emory’s reputation rests heavily on the intersection of research and teaching. In this regard, too, we excel by offering courses that grow out of our research, such as when teaching a side-car course with environmental studies, collaborating on a film production with the Theater Department, engaging with the Linguistics Program, or co-teaching a class with colleagues from African American Studies.

This innovative pedagogy is fueled by a research-active faculty who continue to publish, secure internal and external grants, and gain national and international recognition.

In my role as a chairperson, I would be remiss not to acknowledge the support from the Dean and his team, and from my colleagues. Likewise, it would be negligent of me not to try and build the best team possible, supporting each of them as best I can. In this regard, I am particularly proud that my colleague Professor Caroline Schaumann will serve as our next chairperson, embodying another round of firsts: the first woman as full professor in our department’s history, and the first woman to chair it. As I said: *klein aber fein*.

With deep gratitude,

Peter Höyng  
Chair and Professor of German Studies

Newsletter of the  
Department of  
German Studies at  
Emory University

### IN THIS ISSUE

“*Klein aber fein*”

Teaching during COVID

Halle Grants

Events

Faculty Updates

Editors

Miriam Udel

Terez Whatley-White

Dominique Thiers-Schmidt

Send all inquiries to:

Department of German Studies  
Emory University  
Modern Languages Building  
532 Kilgo Circle  
Atlanta, GA 30322  
T 404.727.6439  
F 404.727.2903

Help sustain  
our Vienna Program by  
giving to the Westbrook  
Scholarship Fund



# Teaching During Covid

## GER 380 – Emory auf Deutsch

Midway through the fall semester 2020 when Zoom fatigue seemed to be peaking, Professors Maxim and Höyng discussed ways to offer a different learning experience and decided on offering a one-credit, in-person course during the spring semester 2021 that would take place solely outdoors and involve weekly walking tours of campus that would focus on Emory's history, architecture, and sustainable practices. Interest in such a course ran so high that it enrolled 15 students. Because of Emory's COVID restrictions, they had to be divided into two groups, meeting alternately each week with either Prof. Höyng or Maxim. The class final project resulted in an online guided walking tour in German that featured many of the highlights from Emory's campus visited and discussed during the semester. The next time you are on campus be sure to try out the tour at <https://opentour.emory.edu/emory-german-tours/emory-auf-deutsch>.





### Sidecar Course IDS 290: Climate Change & COVID-19

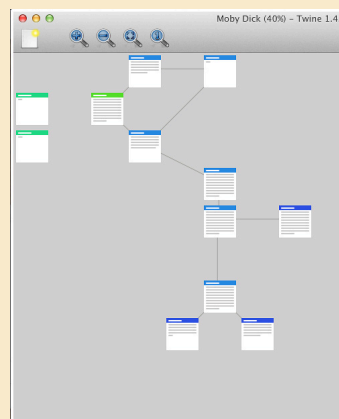
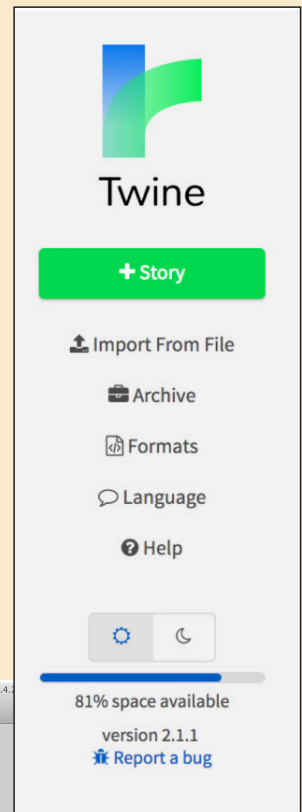
This interdisciplinary sidecar course, IDS 290: “Climate Change & COVID-19,” enrolled 21 students from Professor Eri Saikawa’s course ENVS 326: “Climate Change and Society” and Professor Schaumann’s course GER 316/ ENG 389 / IDS 385: “Representing Climate Change.” Aided by two IDEAS fellows as teaching assistants, the course turned to lively weekly discussions and student projects on urgent contemporary issues.

It quickly became apparent that the most pressing issues of 2020—climate change, COVID-19, and institutional racism—are intertwined in many ways. Both climate change and COVID-19 have accelerated unchecked in a political climate of denial and deflection. Swift and aggressive action are needed, but responsible measures have been lagging. Both also highlight and worsen the entrenched inequalities of our societies: while they can affect anyone, they do so in notably uneven ways, with vulnerable, economically disadvantaged, and racial minority populations bearing the brunt of the onslaught. Thanks to modern science and the efficient development of a vaccine, the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic is currently diminishing in some parts of the world while the threat of climate change continues to grow exponentially, in multiple possible but equally scary trajectories. There is no vaccine for our climate.

As students—most of them bound at home—compared personal stories, consulted research, and analyzed common readings, they finished the class with independently developed group projects on topics ranging from comparative international responses to COVID-19 to the multiple effects of air pollution in Atlanta. What a timely and rewarding course!

### German Studies 190: Games and Literature

The pandemic challenged us all to nurture social connections in virtual spaces—from Zoom rooms to online multiplayer game worlds. In Prof. Paul Buchholz’s Fall 2020 Freshman Seminar “Games and Literature” (conducted in English), students had a chance to explore these timely and highly personal concerns. Focusing on how the concept of “play” is manifested in classic German literature and philosophy, as well as in contemporary videogames, the seminar gave students a space to discuss the new ways in which imaginative play has become an existential need and a unique means of social connection, both in and beyond our own times. As the course was conducted in-person in a socially distanced classroom, the circumstances challenged the classroom community to find new ways of communicating with and connecting to one another. In this spirit, a central component of the homework and assignments involved the writing and sharing of simple computer games, produced with the Twine platform. Twine, which requires no prior programming knowledge, allows for the creation of simple interactive story-games, where the player reads and interacts with individual “passages” (screens containing text and hyperlinks). Through these games, students responded to the course readings and developed their own creative forms of play—often in ways that directly reflected the challenging realities of the present. Inspired by the fiction of Franz Kafka and Stefan Zweig, many students created games about dealing with the problem of social isolation. For the final project, each student created and shared for peer review an ambitious game project that brought together core themes of the course, and callbacks to the texts we read that were most meaningful to them.





## Halle Grants

As disruptive as the pandemic was—the word “unprecedented” has frequently been invoked—the German Studies Department received an unprecedented boon during this challenging time: the generous support of the Claus M. Halle Foundation. Halle’s legacy befits the extraordinary life of this benefactor.

Born in Germany in 1927, Claus M. Halle began a remarkable career with The Coca-Cola Company as a truck deliveryman in Essen, Germany after World War II. Over the next 45 years, he rose to the most senior ranks of the company, including service as President of Coca-Cola Germany, President of Coca-Cola Europe and, ultimately, Senior Executive Vice President of The Coca-Cola Company and President of Coca-Cola International, and lived most of his adult life in Atlanta, Georgia. Informed by the vicissitudes of his life and career, his philanthropic passion focused on the transatlantic relationship between Germany and the United States, viewing their mutual friendship as a guarantor “for peace and prosperity.” Therefore, the Halle Foundation’s core mission is maintaining and building cultural ties between Germany and the US in Georgia.

For the first time, the Halle Foundation is offering committed students in Emory’s German Studies Department the following scholarship opportunities: support for residency in the German House, a one-time study trip to Berlin, Germany during spring break of 2022, and support for studying in Freiburg, Germany, starting in summer of 2022. We are deeply grateful to the Halle Foundation for these three grants and thrilled to offer these three enriching opportunities to our most dedicated students.

### German House

The German Language Apartment at Emory University, commonly referred to as the German House, is a four-bedroom, two-bathroom, two-kitchen apartment within the themed housing section of the Clairmont campus student residences. One of the bedrooms and kitchens is reserved each year for the Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA). The German House has become a wonderful location where the Fulbright Teaching Assistant and the students work together to organize a series of events ranging from film screenings to German-themed meals, to seasonal events, to informal conversation hours. Over the next three years, starting this Fall, the Halle Foundation has committed to fund three annual scholarships of \$2,000 each for student residents with a priority given to those who declared their major in German Studies at Emory.

### One-Time Study Trip to Berlin

As with so many events and programs, the pandemic interrupted the department’s successful run of forty-six consecutive summers in Vienna, thereby preventing a significant number of our students from experiencing an immersive education abroad. This has been particularly challenging for our majors since they are required to complete a study abroad experience for their degree. To address these lost opportunities for study abroad, the Halle Foundation agreed to fund a one-time spring break study trip to Berlin, Germany, in March of 2022, assuming that the public health situation once again allows such international travel. It will fund the airfare, lodging, public transportation, and cultural events for twelve



Claus M. Halle

students and two faculty. To qualify, students must take one of the two courses on Berlin’s rich cultural history, either during summer or this fall and declare their major or minor in German.

### Moving on from Vienna, Austria to Freiburg, Germany

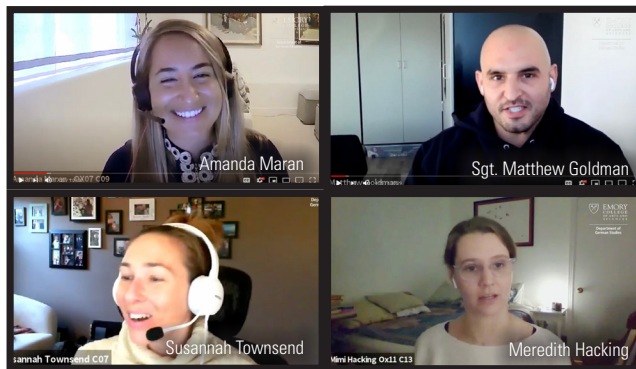
Starting in summer of 2022 and continuing over a period of three years, the Halle Foundation will offer scholarships for a three-week stay in Freiburg, Germany to complement the four-week stay in Vienna. The faculty opted for the charming university town of Freiburg in the foothills of the Black Forest for a number of reasons, chief among them, that the smaller Freiburg presents itself as a logical complement to the Vienna metropolis. After having experienced a large city in central Europe, students would be able to juxtapose that experience with a regional city that also, due to its proximity to Switzerland and France, offers a different perspective on life in the European Union. Faculty also embraced Freiburg as a study site in Germany due to its leadership position in Germany for its environmentally sustainable practices, and the program would look to leverage this aspect of the city for instructional and cultural purposes.

The Halle Foundation will limit its generous support to a maximum of fourteen students, including accommodation, public transportation, and excursions. On top of this, the Halle Foundation provides for six students a per diem stipend which will be reserved to those who have declared German as their major, and/or demonstrate the need for additional financial support going abroad.

The faculty anticipate that these forms of support, taken together, will transform the opportunities open to our majors and minors and enrich the study of German at Emory in ways that would have made Claus M. Halle proud.

# Alumni Speaker Series

For the first time, the German Studies Department held two Alumni Speaker Panels, one in the fall and one in the spring. In cooperation with Emory's Office for Advancement and Alumni Engagement, we invited seven of our alumni: Sgt. Matthew Goldman (030x, 05C), Joshua Guggenheim (13C), Meredith Hacking (13C), Amanda Maran (09C), Sarah Richards (09C, 14C), Susannah Townsend (07C) and Alex Vinson (050x, 07C). In each of the hour-long conversations these alumni shared with us the skills and knowledge they had cultivated by either majoring or minoring in German, and how they could apply them for their professional pathways after graduation. The seven speakers demonstrated, among other aspects, how much their study of German as a foreign language, literature, and cultural history opened professional conduits one might not necessarily associate with German studies at first since some of them ended up in medical fields, financing, accounting and tax law, or business (such as the founder of a delivery company). The guests reassured our current students that there is not a single or linear pathway toward satisfying professional positions later in life. Rather the alumni eloquently attested that each of their individual stories differ quite dramatically, and yet, in retrospect, all enthusiastically endorsed having chosen German as their major or minor. All of the



various stakeholders —alumni, current students, and faculty—felt reinvigorated by these conversations. Alumni and students bonded over the value of learning German and studying of German-speaking culture as a rich fountain for personal growth.

The two events emerged out of the Mellon Humanities Pathways program, which is a faculty-focused initiative between Emory College of Arts and Sciences and Oxford College designed to change the conversation about the value of a humanities education. The recordings of the both events are archived on our newly designed website under lectures and events.

# Events



This year we had the pleasure of hosting many incredible scholars and artists in an exciting line-up of events that allowed our students to draw connections to diverse facets of German- and Yiddish-speaking cultures.



In the fall, we began by welcoming esteemed fairy tale scholar Prof. Jack Zipes (University of Minnesota) in celebration of the release of Prof. Miriam Udel's book *Honey on the Page: A Treasury of Yiddish Children's Literature*. Celebrated filmmaker, writer, and actor Sheri Hagen shared insights on her film *Auf den zweiten Blick* (2012) and the German entertainment industry more broadly in conversation with Prof. Didem Uca. The Department hosted two class visits and one public event with the contributors to the bilingual poetry and translation project

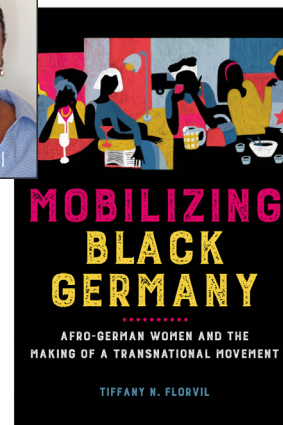
VERSschmuggel. Poesie aus den USA und Deutschland. / reVERSible: Poetry from Germany and the USA. Led by Prof. Jericho Brown, Director of Emory's Creative Writing Program and Winship Distinguished Research Professor, students had the unprecedented opportunity to speak with renowned poets Yevgeniy Breyger, Mario Chard, Karolina Golimowska, Linda Gregerson, Ilya Kaminsky, Anja Kampmann, Dagmara Kraus, Georg Less, Sandra



Meek, Ronya Othmann, and Brenda Shaughnessy about their creative practice.



In the spring, we co-sponsored two highly successful events. The first, presented by the Department of History, was a discussion with Prof. Tiffany N. Florvil (University of New Mexico) on her important new book, *Mobilizing Black Germany: Afro-German Women and the Making of a Transnational Movement*. The second, presented by the Institute for African Studies, was a probing talk by Prof. Michelle R. Moyd (Indiana University, Bloomington) titled "The Uses of Sovereignty: Examples from the History of German East Africa, 1890-1907." We were delighted to welcome back Prof. Anna Horakova (Lafayette College), who gave the 7th Annual Maximilian Aue Memorial Lecture, "Back to the Future: East German Avant-garde from 1949-1989," with a discussion moderated by Prof. Paul Buchholz. Profs. Hiram Maxim and Frank Voigt



held a well-attended information session on funding opportunities to study, research, and intern in German-speaking countries. Finally,



we hosted writer, theater practitioner, and educator Kyra Mevert for two class visits and a bilingual public reading and discussion of her work with Prof. Uca.

## Grad Spotlight

We are proud of all of our newly minted graduates who majored or minored in German Studies: Lena Braendle, Meghan Hurley, Jesse Steinman, Alice Yang, Esra Yener, Annabel Zhang, Jessie Zhao and Yuewu Zhou. Below two of our grads share what's in store for them.



### Meghan Hurley

My undergraduate experience at Emory was largely shaped by the German Studies department early on; I not only studied abroad in Vienna, Austria and felt like I found a city fueled by so many of my interests, but I was also encouraged by faculty in the department to interweave German into my other passions as much as possible, leading me to

conduct a directed study during my junior year in which I explored

neurolinguistics. While I intend to utilize German in my future studies, I will be pursuing a master's degree in Bioethics at Emory in the fall and will be continuing to conduct my current research on neuroethics, neurotechnology, and artificial intelligence.



### Jessie Zhao

I am thankful to everyone in the German Studies department for being flexible and supportive throughout the pandemic and making the second half of my degree an insightful experience. After graduation I am planning to get my MPH at the Rollins School of Public Health here in Atlanta, and then working in an NGO or government

agency that deals with health equity and promotion.

## Faculty



### Peter Höyng

Despite pausing for conference activities, Peter Höyng progressed on his book project about Beethoven's readings. In addition, he wrote a review of Atlanta's opera production of Viktor Ullmann's and Peter Kien's *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* for *The Opera Quarterly*, and published a position paper for the *Goethe Yearbook*, entitled "Three Observations and Three Possible Directions: Musical and Eighteenth-

Century Studies." Speaking of Goethe, Höyng worked for the first time on *Faust* by contributing an essay to an anthology entitled *Land in Sicht!*, in which he reads the second part of Goethe's poetic drama in a post-colonial fashion.

### Caroline Schaumann

was thrilled to see the publication of two books in summer 2020: her monograph *Peak Pursuits: The Emergence of Mountaineering in the Nineteenth Century* (Yale University Press), and the anthology *Mountains and the German Mind: Translations from Gessner to Messner 1541-2009* (Camden House), co-edited with Sean Ireton. While the pandemic cancelled planned in-person readings at the Decatur Book Festival to name but one, Schaumann presented her



research in online events such as at the American Goethe Society and Georgetown University. She also published an essay on the history of the barometer in *Alpinist Magazine*, and a co-written article on the literary aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster in *Gegenwartsliteratur*. During her leave in spring 21, Schaumann embarked on two new projects, a planned anthology on Mountain Cinema and a monograph

on the Himalaya expeditions of the Munich Schlagintweit brothers. Her teaching responded to the crises of both COVID-19 and climate change, with GER 380 focusing on representations of illness, pandemics, and death; GER 316/ ENG 389 / IDS 385 discussing novels depicting climate change; and a sidecar course IDS 290 focusing on the connections between COVID-19 and climate change.

### Hiram Maxim

continued his research into the language learning opportunities in the linguistic landscape, which resulted in a published book chapter on his work with Emory students to explore the manifestation of multilingualism in Vienna's linguistic landscape and a co-edited volume on different approaches to language teaching and learning in public spaces. He also published an article on students' longitudinal





writing development in the Emory German Studies Department. In addition to his teaching first-year German and a Linguistics course on Second Language Acquisition, Prof. Maxim worked with students in a one-credit course during the fall semester to examine German-language media portrayals of the 2020 U.S. presidential election. In the spring semester, Prof. Höyng and Maxim co-taught a course that explored Emory's history, architecture, and sustainability practices, which resulted in an online walking tour of campus in German.



### Frank Voigt

In his first year in the German Department at Emory University, Frank Voigt taught German 101 & 102 and a class on diagnoses of crises by the German-Jewish intellectuals Walter Benjamin, Max Horkheimer, and Siegfried Kracauer, cross-listed with the Tam Institute and the Department of Philosophy. He continued to work on his first book on changes in Walter

Benjamin's concept of criticism and intellectual self-understanding and helped with the work on volume 9/II (entries ranging from 'Mitleid' to 'Nazismus') of the "Historisch-kritische Wörterbuch des Marxismus". He dealt with Antonio Gramsci's literary theory and analysis of fascism and was happy to publish his first article in English on "Walter Benjamin, Antonio Gramsci and the Problem of Elitist Traditions" in the *International Gramsci Journal*.



### Miriam Udel

October 2020 saw the publication of *Honey on the Page: A Treasury of Yiddish Children's Literature*, an anthology of primary sources edited and translated by Udel. She supported the book's release with a virtual tour including approximately thirty-five events at universities, book festivals, Jewish communal institutions, libraries, and religious schools. The book

received the Reference Award from the Association of Jewish Libraries and was named a Finalist for the Georgia Author of the Year Award. In December, Udel completed the translation of *Labzik: Tales of a Clever Pup*, undertaken as a 2019 Translation Fellow at the Yiddish Book Center. During the spring semester, she collaborated with Emory alumnus and Atlanta actor, puppeteer, and director Jake Krakovsky (C'14) on a puppet film of Labzik released by Theater Emory. In conjunction with the film's creation, they pioneered a new course, cross-listed with Theater and Jewish Studies, Yiddish Political Theater. In addition to her teaching at Emory, Udel presented virtual courses for the YIVO Institute and the Yiddish Book Center.



### Paul Buchholz

continued work on his current book project about political community and environmental crisis in West Germany and Austria during the 1970s and 1980s. He published an essay on the politics of deserted landscapes in the writings of Jürgen Becker and Jochen Schimmang in *Gegenwartsliteratur*, and his translation of a narrative essay by the Austrian graphic

artist Max Peintner appeared in the anthology *Mountains and the German Mind* (Camden House). A review essay of Barbara Nagel's monograph *Ambiguous Aggression in German Realism and Beyond* appeared in the online forum *Syndicate*. He also presented his current research at online conferences and symposia hosted by the University of North Carolina, the University of Glasgow (Scotland), and the Modern Language Association. In the Fall semester, he taught the senior seminar "German Socialisms," focusing on the diverse and divergent forms of German-language socialist thought and politics in the last two centuries. Two further courses—the freshman seminar "Games and Literature" and an advanced seminar in German, "Fantasy Literature"—focused on the imagination of and immersion in virtual worlds through literature and other media. These courses gave students a chance to reflect on the meaning of virtual spaces and communities, which have taken on new significance during our pandemic era.



### Didem Uca

Didem Uca enjoyed getting to know fabulous students and colleagues in her first year at Emory! She taught 201, 202, 470, and an independent study on transnational Turkish literatures and was honored to receive a Goethe-Institut/American Association of Teachers of German Certificate of Merit and a Phi Beta Kappa recognition for faculty excellence.

Her publications included contributing to the new intermediate textbook *Impuls Deutsch 2*, two book reviews in *German Studies Review*, and several pieces on academic blogs. Despite the switch to virtual reality, she had many opportunities to present ongoing research projects focusing on contemporary German migration narratives and antiracist teaching and activism: two presentations at Emory, invited talks at Sewanee, KSU, TCU, Middlebury, and Colgate, a keynote address at UMN, and conference presentations at the German Studies Association, AATG, and DDGC. Additionally, she served as co-editor of *Jahrbuch Türkisch-Deutsche Studien* and in leadership roles in the Coalition of Women in German, Diversity, Decolonization, and the German Curriculum Coalition, and Modern Language Association.

Emory University  
Department of German Studies  
Modern Languages Building  
532 Kilgo Circle  
Atlanta GA 30322

EMORY



German Studies

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

## Please make a gift to support German Studies at Emory.

Scan the QR code, or go to: [together.emory.edu/GermanStudies](http://together.emory.edu/GermanStudies)

Please indicate your support for German Studies with your contribution.



### Gifts will be used for:

- Westbrook Endowed Scholarship Fund
- Supporting the Department of German Studies

**Thank you for your support.**