

NEWS FROM THE
DEPARTMENT OF GERMAN
 AT GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Department Hosts International Conference
**Auditory Knowledge in
 Transition**

An Epistemic History of Listening in Modernity
By Forrest Finch



From left: Dr. Rebecca Wolf (MPIWG), Dr. Mary Helen Dupree (GU), Carlene Stephens (Smithsonian), Dr. Brian Hochman (GU), Dr. Kathryn Olesko (GU) Dr. Daniel Morat (FUB)

WILLKOMMEN!

Es ist schon wieder Dezember und das bedeutet, dass eine neue Ausgabe des „Departmental Newsletter“ zur Verfügung steht. Auch dieses Mal wollen wir Ihnen einen kleinen Überblick über die jüngsten Aktivitäten der Deutschabteilung bieten, einschließlich einiger Kurzporträts von Studierenden.

Wir wünschen viel Spaß beim Lesen und freuen uns auf Ihre Kommentare und Anregungen.

Im Namen der gesamten Abteilung,

Dr. Astrid Weigert, Teaching Professor
 Newsletter Editor

Forrest Finch, Graduate Student
 Assistant Newsletter Editor

Georgetown German Professor Mary Helen Dupree, in cooperation with Dr. Viktoria Tkaczyk (University of Amsterdam) and Dr. Rebecca Wolf (Max-Planck-Institut für Wissenschaftsgeschichte, Berlin), hosted an international and interdisciplinary conference titled “**Auditory Knowledge in Transition: An Epistemic History of Listening in Modernity**” from the 24th to the 26th of September, 2015. Bringing together scholars from both sides of the Atlantic, the workshop was a unique interdisciplinary collaboration between the Georgetown German Department and the international research network “Auditory Knowledge in Transition” (“Hör-Wissen im Wandel”), which is sponsored by the German Research Council (DFG). The international media scholars gathered not only to share recent findings, seek suggestions, and field critique, but at the same time afforded our graduate students the opportunity to participate in an international conference. One of our department’s PhD candidates, Noelle Rettig, moderated a panel discussion. An alumna of our department, Dr. Deva Kemmis, presented on the “Poetics of the Auditory” in German literary works about sirens and water nixies.

Auditory Knowledge continued...

The participants began the conference weekend with an excursion to the Volta Bureau, the site of Alexander Graham Bell's laboratory, before they spent the late afternoon and evening expounding upon their recent projects, such as the establishment of the world's first archive of voice-mail records or new insights into the early discourse of the science of recording. Later in the evening, after an engaging keynote presentation from Thomas Levine (Princeton University) on his groundbreaking research into personal gramophonic recordings as a narrative device in the twentieth century, the group enjoyed lighthearted conversation over delicious hors d'oeuvres and libations provided by Georgetown Catering.

The second day of the conference kicked off with another round of presentations, among them by Dr. Patrick Feaster of Indiana University on "The Phonograph, the Arts, and the Tympanic Principle," followed by lunch, and an afternoon of further presentations and a concluding roundtable discussion in Healy Hall. After a productive day of sharing and public discussion, the GU German Department held a dinner in the participants' honor in Copley Formal Lounge during which the international guests were able to relax and socialize before another day of rigorous discussion.

In an internal workshop on Sunday, Dr. Mary Helen Dupree, whose research interests include late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century German literature and theories of sound and the voice, discussed her current project on the theory and practice of literary declamation in Germany together with Drs. Takczyk and Wolf. Dr. Dupree was enthusiastic about the outcome of the scholarly gathering: "The conference was a fantastic success and a great opportunity to engage with some of the cutting-edge interdisciplinary research on sound that is happening on both sides of the Atlantic. There were lots of wonderfully productive conversations between German department students and faculty and the network members, scholars from the U.S., and faculty from other departments at Georgetown."



Professor Adrian Daub of Stanford University who presented on his research into piano culture in the 19th century (left), Noelle Rettig, moderator and PhD student (right)



From left: Dr. Manuela Schwartz (Hochschule Magdeburg), Dr. Thomas Levine (Princeton), Dr. Nicola Gess (Univ. Basel)



Reading by Author Michael Götting

By Forrest Finch

On Monday, October 26, 2015, German author Michael Götting read for the department from his recent novel *Contrapunctus* (2015). The event was organized by Prof. Katrin Sieg.

The novel is set in Berlin in 2002 and depicts the lives of four Afro-German protagonists in the early years of the Berlin Republic. It shows the effects of resurging nationalism and racism on their relationships, their struggle to maintain their bonds, and a pervasive sense of disconnectedness. It is “a polyphonic, wild journey through the life of its Afro-German protagonists and the collective consciousness of the Berlin Republic.”

Michael Götting is an author, journalist and curator. He writes for *ZEIT ONLINE*, *Deutschlandfunk* and the *Tagesspiegel*. At the Theater Ballhaus Naunynstraße in Berlin he curated an events series around the anniversary of the so-called Congo Conference of 1884, as well as the symposium *Decolonize Bodies! Minds! Perceptions!* As a docent, he teaches writing workshops for “Schools without Racism – Schools with Courage,” the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation, and the Archive of Youth Cultures.



Announcing Our New Max-Kade Writer-in-Residence Dr. Maxi Obexer



»Manchmal gibt es Wunder in der Theaterwelt. Es erscheinen junge Menschen, zugleich bescheiden und furchtlos, die sich an die großen Themen der Theatergeschichte heranwagen. (...) Mit ihren Stücken zwingt Margareth Obexer die Tragödie auf die Bühne zurück und hebt dadurch deren Unmöglichkeit in der heutigen Welt auf.«

(Jean Baptiste Joly, Direktor der Akademie Solitude, Stuttgart)

Georgetown's German Department looks forward to Dr. Obexer's residency in spring 2016!

Maxi Obexer will teach a level V course for undergraduates: *Dramatic Voices: Myth and Conflict in German Drama* (GERM-325). She will also lead a discussion group for faculty and students, and read from her dramatic work at a public reading.

Since becoming a fellow of the *Literarisches Colloquium Berlin* (LCB) at the age of 23, Maxi Obexer has been living in Berlin. In addition to her creative work, she regularly writes reviews and essays for newspapers and anthologies and was responsible for the literature section of the weekly magazine *Freitag* for several years. In 2014, she founded the *Neues Institut für Dramatisches Schreiben*. Currently, she is a guest professor at *Deutsches Literaturinstitut Leipzig*.

Obexer is known for her political plays, audio plays, and essays. A main focus of her work is the condition of migrants and refugees, e.g. in her play *Geisterschiff* (Ghostship), which deals with a refugee catastrophe in the Mediterranean Sea. In her work *Illegale Helfer* (Illegal Aides), she addresses Europeans who move in the grey zone of legality, supporting refugees, asylum seekers, and other persons without a legal status. Obexer studied comparative literature, philosophy and theater studies in Vienna, Austria and Berlin. She received numerous fellowships and awards and was previously a Max-Kade guest lecturer at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire.

Interview with Exchange Student Lisa Ecker

Finch: What do you think about GU and the German Department so far? What were your first impressions on campus and in the Department?

Ecker: From the very beginning, I felt welcomed in the Department. During the challenging organization of my stay abroad, everybody in the Department was very friendly and willing to help. The small size of the program allows a very familial and cooperative study and working environment. I was therefore not only impressed by the high educational standards of each class, but also the communication-based and learner-centered teaching approach in the graduate courses made possible by the small class sizes.



What are the biggest differences between your home university in Trier and GU?

I would consider the biggest difference between Trier and Georgetown the size of the departments and classes. Thus, the seminars mainly resemble an open discussion, instead of a lecture where the instructor is responsible for most of the talking. That requires more active participation from the students and I needed some time to accustom myself to the unfamiliar procedure. Furthermore, the total number of classes during one semester is lower in the US; however the contact hours per week and workload per class are considerably higher. Although the content is very similar, the organization of the studies is different in the US and Germany. Moreover, the students at Georgetown are more involved in department activities such as conferences or guest lectures that go beyond the curricular routine. (Continued on next page)



Profile: Courtney Feldman

Welcome to our new departmental administrative officer Courtney Feldman! Courtney received her B.A. in German and International Studies from Wayne State University in Detroit, MI, and she worked for Landmark Theatres for 14 years before joining the Department. We're happy to have her on board!

Lisa Ecker Continued...

What do you look forward to doing while in America this year?

Besides focusing on my studies, I also look forward to gaining a deeper insight into the American culture. I am very interested in Cultural Studies and gaining new perspectives on the world. I am therefore very glad for all the new experiences I make during my stay here and always excited to learn about new typically American things and habits. Furthermore, Washington DC is a wonderful city that offers endless cultural facilities and possibilities and I want to explore as many as possible.

What are your academic/career goals and how does your time at GUGD factor into those?

I want to become a teacher of German and English in the future. Moreover, I recently started my studies in the field of teaching German as a foreign language. Thus, my stay at Georgetown benefits all fields of my study interest. Not only do I appreciate the chance to increase my knowledge in German literature and linguistics, but I also appreciate gaining practical experience in second language acquisition as well as practice my English skills and gain an insight in the American culture. I, therefore, regard my stay in Georgetown as an important step of my studies and great preparation for my future career.

What types of literature interest you? What are you reading at the moment? Have you read anything this semester at GU in particular that has struck your interest?

I am generally very interest in German postwar literature, including short stories by Wolfgang Borchert and Heinrich Böll. However, I took a class on Heinrich von Kleist this semester with Dr. Dupree that made me reconsider my main literary interests. Besides being fascinated by Kleist's unique style of writing, I was impressed by how modern and ahead of his time he was. I am glad for the substantial view on Kleist and his works this class provided and could imagine doing further research into Kleist and his writings.

Lisa Ecker is from Cologne. She is the 2015-16 exchange student from the University of Trier and will be with us through May 2016.

Georgetown's Summer Program in Trier

- Interview with Junior Tyler Bridge -

Finch: I heard you had a municipal internship while studying in Trier this summer— could you tell me more about it?

Bridge: When I arrived in Trier, I began an internship with the local government, more specifically with the *Presseamt der Regierung* in Trier. This department is responsible for getting the city's message out to its citizens and, of course, dealing with any crisis that may blow up with regards to the government. More than simply sitting at a desk and answering phone calls as one may in an internship in the US, the director of the *Amt*, Dr. Hans Lanfer, expected me to do more, so German. Every week, the department publishes a newspaper called the *Rathaus Zeitung*, of which nearly 50,000 copies are delivered to homes in Trier. Every week, I wrote a column for the paper and in so doing, for the people of Trier! The column was intended to present Trier from the perspective of an American; what I liked, what I didn't like, what I found interesting or in common about our two nations.

How did you like your classes in Trier and why did you choose them?

My classes were hard, there's no doubt about that. I went on the Trier program because I want to double-major in German and Government. During my time there, I took "Text in Context" as well as "Business in Germany." I am particularly interested in business issues because I come from the "Rust Belt," a place often forgotten, specifically from Hamilton, Ohio. Though many of the factories in my town, once employing thousands have shuttered, a German company, ThyssenKrupp-Bilstein is currently the largest manufacturer in my region. I hope to one day go home to the Rust Belt, and help rebuild the hundreds of communities wrought with despair from the decline in manufacturing.



"Germany is the world's third largest manufacturer, and one of America's closest trading partners, I feel there is much to learn from our relatives across the pond."

- Tyler Bridge



Tyler in Trier Continued...

What was your favorite thing about Trier? Was this your first time in Germany?

This was my first time in Germany. I think one of the best things about Trier was how close it was to Dortmund. At the end of the 19th century, my family immigrated to America from Germany. While four out of the five Leipzig brothers decided to make the journey, one brother stayed behind. As a result, my family still lives in Dortmund and I am so happy that I was able to connect with them and explore my German heritage with them.

I think one of the greatest parts about Trier was how humble and helpful all of the people seem to be. Though I would wander the streets and cafes by myself, I truly never felt alone in Trier or in the whole of Germany as well. After the program I was fortunate enough to do a giant circle in Germany, traveling from Trier, Köln, Dortmund, Hamburg, Berlin, München, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, usw. Though I was alone technically, I never felt alone even once. Germans were so willing to talk to me, connect with me, take me out to dinner, buy me drinks, and offer me a place to stay when I had nowhere else! On so many occasions, Germans gave me their business cards saying, "Call us when you're in town, we have a bed for you!"



How did you first hear about the opportunity to study in Trier?

I first heard about the opportunity when I was in Introductory German with Dr. Weigert. I would like to tell all students, that I would not have gone on the trip without the support of the German Department and its various scholarship opportunities. Students really need to know that these scholarships exist!

What are you doing now - what are your future plans and do they involve German?

Now I am a junior at Georgetown with plans to graduate in the fall of 2016 with a double major in Government and German. For the spring semester of this year, I will study in Berlin through the Office of Global Education, which I am so excited about as another chance to exponentially increase my ability to speak! In the future, I hope to run for public office to serve communities in Ohio, and advocate in particular for Rust Belt communities. In the interim, I would love to find a job working between America and Germany, but who knows. I also plan on attending law school, with dreams to attend the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

A Graduate Student Abroad: Lauren Thomas' Summer Semester in Dresden

This past summer I had the invaluable opportunity to study at the *Technische Universität* Dresden, which proved to be a formative experience for developing my German language ability, and provided me with a nuanced understanding of German culture.

One aspect of my exchange at the TU Dresden that I found to be invaluable was the wide array of courses available to me. Between the *Germanistik*, *Deutsch als Fremdsprache*, and *Geschichte* departments, there were hundreds of interesting and relevant courses to choose from. Although I have had the opportunity to study much of German literature and culture through a rather specific lens, I had not previously taken an overarching course to cultivate an idea of general literary or cultural trends over a broad period of time. The lecture and tutorial for the course *Grundlagen der neueren deutschen Literaturwissenschaft* greatly deepened my knowledge of literary eras and trends, while the lecture *Medien im kulturellen Feld* provided me with an overview of German media from the 17th to the 20th century. Both of these courses contributed to my nuanced understanding of German culture and its development over a wider time frame. Furthermore, I feel now as if I am better able to identify general literary characteristics in various time periods. Coupled with Georgetown's emphasis on genre within its curriculum, I found both of these courses to be enlightening, as they drew my attention to the development and prevalence of different genres (for example *Briefromane* or *Hörspiele*) over time.



Lauren Thomas is an MA student in the German Department. She is seen here riding her bike on the outskirts of Dresden.

Lauren Thomas continued...

Furthermore, it facilitated a deeper understanding of the medium and its production. My *Kinder- und Jugendliteratur* class also exposed me to new literature, which I hope to incorporate when teaching my future students. Additionally, I learned a great deal about cultural values, which are often imparted in children's literature. I have already had the opportunity to put my newly learned skills from my *Spiele im "Deutsch als Fremdsprache"- Unterricht* to use while teaching at Concordia Language Villages this past summer as well as in my Level I course at Georgetown this semester.

The summer of 2015 was really one of the most formative and productive summers in increasing my understanding of the German language and culture. I would consider this past summer, however, to be one of the best ones so far, and I cannot begin to express my gratitude for having had this opportunity. I hope that students continue to have this opportunity, as this has been one of the highlights of my time as a learner and speaker of German.

Recent Faculty Publications

Heidi Byrnes



2015. Linking 'task' and curricular thinking: An affirmation of the TBLT educational agenda. In Martin Bygate, ed., *Domains and Directions in the Development of TBLT: A Decade of Plenaries from the International Conference* (pp. 193–224). Philadelphia/Amsterdam:John Benjamins.

2015. Re-envisioning L2 curriculum development: Affirming our core professional values. *Proceedings of the 25th International Conference on Korean Language Education*, Kyung Hee University, Seoul, Republic of Korea, ed. Dong-Eun Lee, pp. 1–20. August 8–9, 2015. <http://www.iakle.com>

2015. Invited colloquium – on publishing in applied linguistics: A forum on innovation and challenges in a changing world. AAAL Conference 201. *Language Teaching*, 48,3: 415– 417. http://journals.cambridge.org/repo_A970J3XrQX9Z7Q

Dr. Joe Cunningham

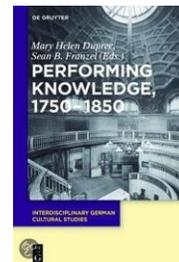


Vyatkina, N., & Cunningham, D. J. (2015). Learner corpora and pragmatics. In S. Granger, F. Meunier, & G. Gilquin (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Learner Corpus Research* (pp. 281-305). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dr. Mary Helen Dupree



Mary Helen Dupree, and Sean Franzel, eds. *Performing Knowledge, 1750-1850*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015.



Dr. Friederike Eigler



“Educating Scholar-Teachers: Envisioning the PhD of the Future. Response to the Report of the MLA Task Force on Doctoral Study in Modern Language and Literature.” Co-authored with Marianna Ryshina-Pankova. *ADFL Bulletin 44*. Winter 2015.

“‘Könnte nicht alles auch ganz anders sein?’ *Hoppe* zwischen Autofiktion und Metafiktion.” *Felicitas Hoppe: Das Werk*. Ed. Michaela Holdenried, Stefan Hermes. Berlin: Erich Schmidt 2015. 145-159.

Dr. Peter Pfeiffer



[with Theodore J. Cachey, Jr., University of Notre Dame], "The Uses of Use-Focused Assessment: Two Chairs' Perspectives," in *Useful Evaluation*, ed. by John Norris (NFLRC: Honolulu, 2015), 59-78.

«»Jede Schicht ist ein Kunstwerk«: Zwangsarbeit, Arbeit und Wortproduktion in Herta Müllers *Atemschaukel*," *Kritische Ausgabe. Zeitschrift für Germanistik und Literatur* 27 (Oktober 2014): 13-16.

Dr. Marianna Ryshina-Pankova



Mozgalina, A., & Ryshina-Pankova, M. (2015). Meeting the challenges of curriculum construction and change: Revision and validity evaluation of a placement test. *Modern Language Journal*, 99, 346-370.

Ryshina-Pankova, M. (2015). A meaning-based approach to the study of complexity in L2 writing: The case of grammatical metaphor. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 29, 51-63.

Dr. Katrin Sieg



"Towards a Civic Contract of Performance: Pitfalls of Decolonizing the Exhibitionary Complex at Brett Bailey's *Exhibit B*." *Theatre Research International* 40:3 (Fall 2015) 1-22.

"Race, Guilt and *Innocence*: Facing Blackface in Contemporary German Theater." *German Studies Review* 38:1 (2015): 117-134.

"Remediating Fassbinder in Video Installations by Ming Wong and Branwen Okpako." *Transit: A Journal of Travel, Migration, and Multiculturalism in the German-speaking World* 9:2 (2014): 1-29.

Alumnae News

Tessa Wegener (PhD 2012) received the "Best Article Award" at the 2015 Women in German conference in Banff, Canada for: "Blurred Spaces and Belated Shock: The Poetics of Multidirectional Memory in Ingeborg Bachmann's *The Book of Franza*". It appeared in the *Women in German Yearbook*, Vol. 30 (2014), pp. 1-22.

Anna Zimmer (PhD 2013) accepted a position in Fall 2015 as Assistant Professor of German at Northern Michigan University in Marquette, MI.

Susanne Rinner (PhD 2003) was elected to first serve as vice president (2016-17) and then as president (2018-2019) of the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG). She is currently an associate professor of German Studies at UNC-Greensboro.

We encourage all alumni to send us updates for inclusion in future newsletters!

Looking Ahead...

"MEANINGS OF MODERN WORK IN TIMES OF DISRUPTION,

19th AND 21st CENTURIES":

A Multidisciplinary Symposium

April 8-10, 2016, Georgetown University

In the coming spring, Dr. Pfeiffer and Georgetown University's German Department present an international conference to explore how the humanities can contribute to an understanding of meanings of work in an age of disruptive changes brought on by globalization, financial crises, and technological changes.

This symposium will bring together scholars from both sides of the Atlantic to explore how the Humanities and Social Sciences contribute to our understanding of the changing role of work from a historical perspective and how it affects social organization as well as individual identity formation. By concentrating on the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries, the conference aims to shed new light on the two eras when technological changes and their concomitant transformations in social and individual organization brought disruptive change to our notions of 'work.'
