

# GLS

## Newsletter

Letter from the Chair .....2  
 Graduate Focus .....3  
 Honors & Awards .....4-5  
 Undergraduate Focus ..... 6-7  
 Dutch Studies .....8  
 Scandinavian Studies .....9  
 Staying Connected ..... 10-11





# Letter from the Chair

## Dear Friends,



It is a quiet and beautiful time in Ann Arbor, even as Spring courses wrap up and the Summer term is soon to begin. The windows of the German Department look down onto Ingalls Mall and the Grove Stage of the Ann Arbor Summer Festival. For me, it is a time of reflection on my last three years as chair of this great Department. By the time you receive this newsletter, the Department will be headed by Helmut Puff, with the aid of the new associate chair, Andreas Gailus.

Our research faculty continue to publish new work and to receive national and international grants and prizes. Our colleague Andrew Mills was recognized with an Outstanding Concentration Advisor award after just four years here in the Department, a great honor for him and for us. On the graduate student front, Nick Block has won recognitions both for outstanding research (an article prize from the American Association of Teachers of German leading to a publication in the *German Quarterly*) and teaching (the College-wide award for Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor); Hannah McMurray was honored with this year's departmental Frank X. Braun Prize for outstanding teaching. A half dozen of our graduate students participated in the second Transnational German Studies Workshop, which took place this year in Warwick, England and Berlin, Germany (see p. 3). We granted our first, student-nominated prize for best Lecturer teaching German classes, and the honor went to Vicki Dischler, who does so much for the Max Kade house as well as teaching innovative courses such as the popular "German in Song." On all levels, from research professor to undergraduates, members of the German Studies community at Michigan are excelling.

We will welcome two new professors to our Department in September, and that is exciting news for colleagues and students alike. Our search for a new Assistant Professor of German Studies was successful, and Tyler Whitney of Columbia University accepted our invitation to join the faculty. Tyler specializes in the connections between media—especially the medium of sound, and the technologies that produce or that block it—and German literature. We will tell you all more about him when we put him in our "faculty spotlight" in the coming year. Martha Sprigge, a musicologist trained at the University of Chicago, was admitted to the elite Michigan Society of Fellows and will be on our faculty as well as that of the School of Music for the next three years. These inspiring young scholars will bring new energy into the Department as they explore innovative paths of research and teaching in German.

With these great additions comes a departure that I know will be meaningful to many of the readers of this newsletter. After 29 years of teaching in our Department, Jan van Valkenburg has decided to retire this year. Jan is virtually single-handedly responsible for having built up the fabulously successful offerings in Business German, and has taught literally hundreds of students in the past two decades plus; she was for many years the force behind the largest undergraduate outreach event in the College: our annual German Day. Jan's devoted students will miss her, as will we—and I do promise that we will have more words about her contributions to the German Department and the University in the Fall newsletter.

I cannot end this letter with expressing the most heartfelt thanks to my colleagues of all ranks in German, and especially the staff that has made doing this job possible for someone like me, who was trained not as an administrator, but as an academic. Jen White and Kevin Calhoun here in the front office have been a vital element of all of the department's ventures, as was Kevin's predecessor Nancy Blasch, whose friendly presence all who visited the Department will remember. Sheri Sytsema-Geiger has been the kind of business manager who could explain a budget to the most reluctant humanist. Of all the faculty who have helped run the Department in the last years I must particularly thank Kader Konuk and Kerstin Barndt for their service as Associate Chairs, responsible for coordinating so much of both graduate and undergraduate education in our unit. Finally, our great, departing Dean of Literature, Science, and the Arts, Terry McDonald, has never lost his grand vision of liberal arts for Michigan even in the direst of economic circumstances.

  
Scott Spector [spec@umich.edu]

## “Hauntings” Graduate Student Conference

By Emma Thomas

On November 1-2, 2012, the graduate students hosted the Department’s third biennial graduate student conference, “Hauntings.” The conference explored ghostly manifestations in Germanic literature, philosophy, and history, and asked what resources categories derived from the supernatural bring to our understandings of these areas. The conference traversed national borders, with papers exploring the theme of hauntings in the German, Czech, Turkish, and Dutch colonial contexts. The conference also brought together papers across the disciplines of German studies, history, Slavic, and science/technology studies, and explored the conference’s themes in relation to a wide variety of verbal, visual, aural, and architectural texts, showcasing the disciplinary diversity that defines our program. The event was very well attended by faculty and graduate students from across campus.

Professor Stephan Andriopoulos (Columbia) gave the keynote address. His talk, “The Marvelous Facts of Animal Magnetism and Clairvoyance: Hauntings of Print Culture,” brought together his interests in literary and media studies. Spanning a range of pseudoscientific, philosophical, and fictional texts, he questioned how print culture functions as a medium of experience.

Four panels were convened, first, “The Classics and their Ghosts” which brought together papers

suggesting that ghosts continue to haunt canonical German texts. Second, “The Presence of Lost Pasts” in German and Czech cultural and political history, while the third explored “Spirits in Historical Transition” in Germany and the Dutch East Indies. The last panel looked at “Ghostly Interventions” in musical and literary texts. Presenters from our department included Sam Heidepriem, Emma Thomas, and Jennie Cain. They were joined by graduate students from York University, Yale, the Goethe Universität, Washington University, Johns Hopkins, Stanford, and Michigan’s history and Slavic departments. Hannah McMurray, Kathryn Sederberg, Sara Jackson, and Spencer Hawkins moderated panels.

The conference organizers, Hannah McMurray, Emma Thomas, and Sam Heidepriem would like to thank Julia Hell, whose graduate seminar in the Fall of 2012 inspired the theme for the conference, and whose input, together with Kerstin Barndt’s, helped us to further develop that initial idea into the conference it became. We would also like to thank Scott Spector, who as chair of the department lent the necessary support for the conference’s realization. Finally, we would like to thank all of our colleagues for their intellectual and logistical support, without which the “Hauntings” conference would not have been the success it was.

## Global Engagement in Doctoral Education (GEDE) By Scott Spector

A half dozen of our graduate students participated in the second Transnational German Studies Workshop, which took place this year in Warwick, England and Berlin, Germany. This was an opportunity to think deeply about the many ways in which our discipline has gone beyond the borders of traditional Germanic language and literature studies, and to do so with an international group of students and professors. Michigan German Studies was the driving force behind this international graduate education initiative, which was funded in part by a three-year grant we received from Rackham Graduate School. At the University of Warwick, UK, students and professors

from the UK, Ireland, Germany, Israel, Turkey, and the U.S. engaged in four days of presentations of their own work, discussions, and training sessions. Roundtable discussions on “archives and power,” “memory and remembrance,” and finally German “identities and minorities.” The group then flew to Berlin for three days of lectures and discussions, including interfacing with award-winning German authors Zafer Senocak and Esther Dischereit and touring German museum projects relating to society and history. The contributions to the workshop will be the basis of a special issue of a journal published at Warwick, a project led completely by the students themselves.



# Congratulations Graduates



## Concentrators

Steven Wayne Bareis  
 Brandon Pierce Beaupre  
 Hannah Claire Bloom  
 Michael Alexander Budros\*\*  
 Sean Matthew Churchill  
 Courtney Joan Clancy  
 Erika Rena Davis  
 Jonathon Albert Dizer  
 Amanda Elizabeth Do  
 Annika Kaitlin Doner  
 Samuel Anderson Fossum  
 Carrie Allison Funk  
 Rebecca Ann Gentner\*\*  
 Nadine Andrea Gilmer

Andrew Miles Ginnard  
 Tonia Ann Gooden\*\*  
 Samuel Douglass Hatt  
 Lindsey Nicole Hilton  
 Lori Jamil Ismail  
 Evan William Killeen  
 Teresa Ann Kilmer  
 Mike Eldon Kohagen  
 Kirsten Marie Kortebein\*  
 Kathleen Marie Koviak  
 Rachel Elizabeth Laplena  
 Cassandra Lynn Lauer\*\*  
 Christina Lee  
 Sarah Rothley Lucas

Danielle May Lumetta  
 Colleen Antoinette Macke  
 Lauren Ann Marcath  
 Emily Clare Meier  
 Elaine Kay Meinzer\*  
 Brandon Michael Mulcrone  
 Alexander Anthony O'Dell  
 Isaac Michael Peruski  
 Ryan Joseph Purcell  
 Angelo Joseph Quail\*\*  
 Maggie Louise Reil  
 Paul David Roberts  
 Jennifer Rebecca Romberg  
 Mark Alan Rozny

Julie Ellyn Ruppe\*  
 Emily Nicole Schapka  
 Matthew John Schuler  
 Jenna Simard  
 Janet Lynn Skrbina  
 Amanda Christine Stacer  
 Holly Marie Stehlin  
 Elinor McCarthy Stone  
 Jessica Lanora Summersett\*  
 Jared Martin Groh Szuba  
 Hannah Jane Tenison  
 Katherine Anne Tomchuck  
 Emma Ruth Zinn

\* Denotes December 2012 Graduates

\*\* Honors Program Students



## Minors

Eric Nicholas Anderle\*  
 Rachel Bayer  
 Suzanne Clarise Beaudry  
 Ethan Stewart Burgard  
 Kenyon Stephen Burke  
 Emily Catherine Carroll  
 Thomas Ronald Casey\*  
 Michael Jay Cope\*  
 Yichen Cui  
 David Richmond Dale  
 Kathryn Elaine Endahl  
 Johnathan George Eyer  
 Callie Grace Flack\*

Andrew Austin Flemming  
 Gregory John Foakes\*  
 Benjamin David Forster\*  
 Shane Robert Freeman  
 Anna Rose Frick  
 Alexandra Louise Garant  
 Gaurang Krishan Garg\*  
 George Kwame Goddard  
 Madison Lee Goforth  
 Christian Tyler Green  
 Trevor Joseph Grieb  
 Chen He  
 Jennifer Lynn Hogg

Natania Hortsch  
 Nathan Zachary Hrivnak  
 Ronald Phillip Klein  
 Gregory Bernhard John Kohler  
 Megan Elizabeth Lang  
 Timothy Clarke Lang  
 Kristen Elizabeth Mayer  
 Daniel Patrick O'Donnell  
 Akshay Mukesh Patel  
 Allison Margaret Pittel  
 Erika Marie Price  
 Kelsey Alyse Reynolds  
 Paul Jakob Schroeder

James Joseph Sharp  
 Elyssa Stewart Shea\*  
 Nils Daniel Stannik  
 Sarah Elizabeth Steffens  
 Kyle Edward Thiel  
 Ethan Paul Wampler\*  
 Laura Jeanette Washington  
 Lindsey Philippa Webster  
 Steven James Wilson\*  
 Cailyn Rene Wolford  
 You Rui Yeo  
 Catherine Choly Zettner  
 Jeffrey Drew Zuschlag



**Congratulations to our Graduate Students**

**Tomasz Kurianowicz, M.A.** (left)  
**Future plan:** pursue PhD at Columbia University

**Sara Jackson, Ph.D** (middle)  
"Staging the Deadlier Sex: Dangerous Women in German Text and Performance at the Fin de Siècle"  
**Future plan:** Visiting Assistant Professor of German, The College of Wooster

**Nick Block** (right)  
"In the Eyes of Others: The Dialectics"  
**Future plan:** Visiting Assistant Professor of German, Emory University

**Congratulations to our Scandinavian Minors**

Nikole Hampton  
Andrew Peter Marcelle

Alexander William Redman  
Scott Douglas Robbins

Daniel Gregory Vargo  
Meredith Kay Westerlund

**Awards**

**Frank X. Braun Award -  
Department's Outstanding  
Graduate Student Instructor  
Award**

Hannah McMurray

**Rackham's Outstanding Graduate  
Student Instructor Award**

Nick Block

**ProQuest Dissertation Honorable  
Mention**

Seth Howes, PhD

**Martin Haller Prize -  
Department's Honors Thesis**

Angelo Quail

**Department's Lecturer of the  
Year Award**

Vicki Dischler

**AATG Best Graduate Essay  
Award:**

"Ex-Libris and Exchange:  
Immigrant Interventions in the  
German-Jewish Renaissance"  
Nick Block

## German Cartoons, Comics and Graphic Literature By Mary Gell

It may at first seem that a course on German comics might not be feasible. In fact, while comics in France have long enjoyed their privileged status as the “ninth art” form, comics in Germany have often been dismissed as “Schundliteratur.” However, if we set this bias aside, we find in German comics not only some of the most notable achievements in the history of graphic literature but also an exciting means of deepening students’ understanding of the German language and culture. In this course, I wanted students to discover this for themselves, to learn how to read comics critically and ideally, to fall in love with German comics, just as I have.

Our history of German comic art began with Swiss schoolmaster and author, Rodolphe Töpffer, the father of the modern comic strip. He first published his illustrated stories thanks to Goethe’s enthusiastic reception of his work. From there we proceeded to comics pioneer, Wilhelm Busch and read *Max und Moritz* and the *Tobias Knopp Trilogy*. Students also became familiar with *Simplicissimus* as we read excerpts from the magazine and a dynamic new graphic novel in German about a key contributor to the magazine, Olaf Gulbransson. From the socially critical drawings in *Simplicissimus*, we then directed our attention to the wordless books of the 1920s and 1930s, particularly Otto Nückel’s *Schicksal*. Since many of these early graphic novels were made from woodcut or other techniques, we ventured to the UMMA Paper Study Room for a brief history of graphic art in Germany. Seeing 500-year old Dürer prints and some of the museum’s stunning Expressionist pieces in this private setting was enthralling and helped bring our texts to life. We concluded our survey of German comics prior to 1945 with the illustrations and animation by e.o. plauen.

By reading McCloud’s classic *Understanding Comics / Comics richtig lesen* students acquired the basic

analytical tools and terminology for critically reading comics. On daily worksheets, I asked for a mix of written answers and simple drawings to illustrate the concepts in question. Judging from the students’ answers and often elaborate drawings, I could see that they were not only taking the subject seriously but appeared genuinely to love it.

With a command of basic theory, the students then researched and presented on popular comics in and from East and West Germany since the 1950s. These included *Micky Maus / Donald Duck*, *Fix und Foxi*, *Fix und Fax*, *Digedags*, *Nick Knatterton*, *Tim und Struppi*, *Asterix* and comics by Lorient, Seyfried, Marcks, Brösel, König and Moers.

I reserved the remainder of the term for graphic novels, specifically (auto)biographical texts. As an introduction, we read excerpts from Spiegelman’s *Maus* and Satrapi’s *Persepolis*. We subsequently devoted our final discussions to Kleist’s *Der Boxer*, the true story of a Holocaust survivor, Hoven’s *Liebe schaut weg*, a scratchboard story about three generations of Hoven’s family in Michigan and Bonn, and Mawil’s *Wir können ja Freunde bleiben*, a charmingly funny series of four autobiographical episodes of unrequited love, a class favorite.

Exploiting many of the components from our readings, students then created their own autobiographical comics by hand or with Pixton software from the Language Resource Center. As fun as this activity was, it drove home to students the effort needed for a good comic.

I would have gladly included more material this term had there been time. I am nevertheless pleased that students left the class noting the comic texts and authors they were eager to read on their own over the summer.

## Max Kade Study Tour 2013

By Kevin Durand & Jeremy Ross

While there are many different ways to spend a week's vacation, most students would likely prefer to escape the frigid weather which often grips Michigan during the "spring" month of March. However, students living in the Max Kade Haus were given the special opportunity of participating in the annual Study Abroad Tour. Twenty-one students with various backgrounds and academic interests spent a week demonstrating their language skills and exploring German culture in Berlin.

As a capital city of such historical significance and international prominence, Berlin provides millions of tourists each year the chance to visit many iconic landmarks and architectural marvels. Members of the Max Kade Haus participated in a handful of group activities, but also had the freedom to explore their individual interests. For some, this involved viewing exceptional artwork in world-class galleries, while others preferred to experience the local culture through concert and film. In addition to sight-seeing, sampling local cuisine often provided another look at German culture. Everything from traditional German pretzels and chocolate to the contemporary, Turkish-influenced Döners allowed the group a glimpse into a different, and delectable, side of Germany.

Such cultural exploration was not limited to Berlin: students also had the pleasure of traveling to the picturesque city of Dresden. Located in southern Saxony, Dresden provided a completely different depiction of German culture than Berlin, which has a large international influence. Upon arrival, many conversations between students centering on the sheer beauty of the buildings and the landscape could be overheard. From the Elbe River flowing through the heart of the city to the dozens of structures restored after near complete destruction

during World War II, Dresden evoked a plethora of emotions throughout the group. By stepping back from the multi-national setting of Berlin, students spent a day surrounded by a vivid representation of greater Germany. Despite the varied interests of the group, the experience of walking through history firsthand will not soon be forgotten.

Sadly, one of the characteristics that irreparably links Dresden and Berlin is their fate during the Second World War. Iconic locations such as the Frauenkirche in Dresden as well as the Brandenburg Gate and Reichstag in Berlin suffered almost complete destruction. To this day, evidence of the damage is still apparent as one traverses the city streets. For our group, the tangible affirmation of the events brought realism to that which would otherwise only be experienced in the pages of a textbook. Though this is a dark period in German history, the understanding of these events is paramount to furthering our German cultural understanding. In the end, the trip this spring break has undoubtedly expanded our language skills and cultural appreciation, and the numerous experiences and memories have made it an unforgettable experience for all.



## Amsterdam: Negotiating Tolerance

By Annemarie Toebosch

In Fall 2013, Dutch and Flemish Studies will start offering a First Year Seminar course on the Dutch capital (Dutch 160: Amsterdam – Tolerance in the



Triple X City). Students can take Dutch 160 to fulfill the College's Race and Ethnicity requirement. With a special focus on the city's perceived culture of tolerance, the course examines issues of assimilation of immigrants in modern-day Amsterdam (and Dutch culture as a

whole), and places these issues in a cultural-historic context.

Students taking Dutch 160 consider how a city founded in an impossible bog, in defiance of feudal systems and regional trade pacts, home to the first world bank and international corporation, safe haven to people fleeing Inquisition and pogroms, center of expansive social housing initiatives and a progressive sex and drug culture, becomes the



scene of the 2004 high-profile murder of controversial filmmaker Theo van Gogh. Students look to the city's cultural history to better understand the culture clashes in which the van Gogh murder was conceived.

They first discover that Amstelredamme was founded on the low-lying banks of the Amstel

river, where early survival of the hostile water-landscape was highly dependent on collaboration and negotiation. This resulted in a culture of pragmatism that is still referred to as the polder-model, which is fully embedded within the culture's political and social fabric. Like its management of the surrounding water, the city's diversity was carefully and pragmatically "managed" and negotiated around a set of shared majority values and well-defined political and religious categories (known as the zuilen, or "pillars" on which the society rested).

Parallel to the post-reformation era when minority churches were tolerated yet segregated by the Dutch Reformed majority, Muslim immigrants are openly condemned today for "wearing their culture" in public (for example in the form of headscarves). Leading scholars discuss how these immigrants are seen as threatening the current majority culture of sexual tolerance, gender equity, and secularization.

As a main course objective, students build awareness of the paradoxical nature of tolerance in a city where immigrant populations benefit from unparalleled social welfare programs, yet where their assimilation outcomes are poor as compared to those of similar populations in for example New York City. Students are also asked to examine their own cultural understandings of tolerance, race, ethnicity, gender, and religion by looking at these concepts through another society's experience.

Future plans for the course include an optional one-week study abroad component in the city for additional credit. Please contact the Dutch program for a reading list ([toebosch@umich.edu](mailto:toebosch@umich.edu)).

## Scandinavian Studies

## A Year in Review

By Johanna Eriksson

On January 30th, over 600 people attended the opening of the Raoul Wallenberg exhibition "To Me There's No Other Choice," was held at the Michigan Union. It was organized by the U-M Raoul Wallenberg Committee in collaboration with the Honorary Swedish Consulate and the Scandinavian Program, sponsored among others by all local Swedish organizations and the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation. The list of speakers included President Mary Sue Coleman, Swedish Ambassador Jonas Hafström, Professor Emeritus Irene Butter, and the Swedish writer and journalist Ingrid Carlberg, who received the 2012 August Prize for her biography on Raoul Wallenberg, "There is a room here waiting for you..." The Swedish students met with Ingrid Carlberg during the first day of the exhibition.

Nina Lagergren, Raoul's half-sister, joined the event through a special video greeting. Nina was interviewed by Assistant Dean for International Education, John Godfrey, at her home in Stockholm, earlier in January. She generously shared her memories of her brother. The interview, as well as the opening speeches and Ingrid Carlberg's lecture (Taubman College Wallenberg Lecture,) are available for viewing at the UM Raoul Wallenberg website, [http://taubmancollege.umich.edu/news\\_and\\_events/lecture\\_series/wallenberg\\_lectures](http://taubmancollege.umich.edu/news_and_events/lecture_series/wallenberg_lectures).

The travelling exhibition, which was produced by the Swedish Institute, was enhanced by UM's collection of translated letters from Raoul to his mother written in Ann Arbor, his architectural drawings as well as photos, maps, newspapers and posters from Ann Arbor and the university in the 1930s.

Our exchange with Sweden was, as always, one of the highlights of the year. Fifteen second-year students travelled with me to Helsingborg and we enjoyed an unusually sunny March

week in Scandinavia. In Lund, we met with former UM Scandinavian student Sofia Murad. At Lund University, she is studying International Development and Management. We also reconnected with Alexander Barais, who is now a professor of literature at Lund University, as well as Sebastian Andersson, one of the students who came to Ann Arbor on our exchange in 2007. A few days after our return from Sweden, eleven of our new friends from ProCivitas Privata Gymnasium in Helsingborg came to experience a week as college students in Ann Arbor.

A few of our current Scandinavian studies students are successfully broadening their exposure to Swedish. In Winter 2013, Caroline Erickson studied biology at Uppsala University. Two students are planning to spend the academic year of 2013-14 at Uppsala: Sara Ann Knutson and Chelsea Cole. Sara Ann will write her honor's thesis on women and rune stones while in Sweden. Chelsea is looking for an opportunity to stay at an archeological dig after the academic year. Hannah Byl is at UISS, for the intensive language course at Uppsala this summer. Mackenzie Bissett secured a summer internship at Esri, a GPS company based in Gävle, Sweden.

Congratulations to the six students who are graduating with a minor in Scandinavian Studies this semester (see page 5)!

It is always inspiring to hear that Scandinavia continues to be important to our former students. This year, Aaron Kahn was awarded the Aurora Borealis Prize, the top SASS graduate student prize for his paper "A Strange New World: Folkhemmet in Per Anders Fogelström's Stockholm Series." (University of Wisconsin, Madison). Andrew Gomes has been accepted to the Masters program in Linguistics at Stockholm University. Congratulations!

# Staying Connected

## Seth Howes, PhD ('12): The Oakland Experience

I came to Oakland University as a visiting assistant professor of German in August of 2012, after having defended my dissertation that February.

Situated within a modern languages department, Oakland's German program has several different areas of emphasis. It features both an established background in language pedagogy and textbook design (the popular textbooks *Deutsch heute* and *Kaleidoskop* are edited by Oakland faculty) and a full range of language and literature courses offered to upper-level students. We offer both a major and a minor in German, with further concentrations in German Studies available within each.



As one of only two full-time faculty currently teaching German at Oakland, I teach primarily in those upper levels of German. This past fall,

I taught advanced grammar and structure, an introduction to literary studies, and advanced German conversation; this winter, I'm teaching 20th century literature and history. Transitioning from a dissertation fellowship to teaching three courses per semester has been quite an adjustment, but my colleagues here have helped me navigate the challenges at every turn.

Working with literature students on the genre of the aphorism at noon, and then listening to students debate the economics of the Bundesliga in the evening, can sometimes seem a bit surreal -- especially since I'm less than a year out from the monk-like existence of the advanced graduate student, for whom the dissertation overwhelms all else. However, my first year at Oakland has certainly been as fun and personally enriching as it has been busy.

## Daniel Hefflebower, BBA ('10): Germany Adventures

Greetings all!

Has it really already been three years since graduation? It never ceases to amaze me how fast time seems to fly by.



Last you heard from me I was finishing up my Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in Cottbus and I had decided to pursue a degree in Education in Germany. You can imagine it was quite the welcome-home present when on the very day after I arrived back in Michigan that I received my acceptance letter from Albert-Ludwigs-University in Freiburg. After spending some much-needed time with my family that summer, on October 5, 2011, I packed up most of my belongings and moved back to Germany for the third time.

My time here has definitely put my maturity to the test. In working two jobs to support myself here, navigating the notorious German bureaucracy

and taking on a full course load every semester it is difficult to find the time for a social life. But I do not regret my decision in the least. Having participated in Academic Year in Freiburg Exchange Program my junior year at Michigan I have been able to reconnect and call on the help of old friends. Through a scholastic program of the German-American Institute in Tübingen I have had the opportunity to visit English classes at Gymnasiums and Realschulen in and around Freiburg several times over the past year to talk about life in the US. In fact, through this program I have come in contact with a Gymnasium that would like me to put on a weekly baseball workshop starting in May. The 9th graders enjoyed learning how to play catch so much that they begged me to organize a team. I can't begin to tell you how much I'm looking forward to this.

So life is good my friends. Thanks for checking in.

Alles Gute!

## Jack Gray, BBA ('11): Success Within a German Foundation

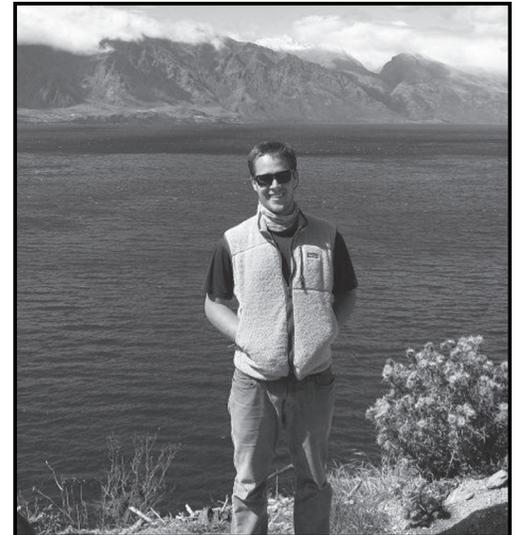
At no point during my time in German 101 did I think that I would find myself spending weeks on end in Germany, in people's homes, apartments, and offices, conducting ethnographic, user research for my career. Somewhere along the line, my ability to speak German and appreciate German culture turned from a casual hobby to a necessary work asset.

I took German 101 on a whim, with zero experience, first semester freshman year because I thought that it might be interesting. I soon discovered that the language was not only interesting, but the culture and history of Germany was one of the most impactful in the world. Within a year, my German classes were my escape from the finance classes in the Business School and I was loving it. I ended up graduating with a minor degree in the language as well as a healthy appreciation for the people from Berlin to Hamburg to München.

After graduation, I started my career with the Global Business Innovations team at Amway and within the first month I heard that our team might be doing some research in Germany. To my dismay, I found out that I was not to be invited on the trip because I had only been employed for 1 month. I immediately dropped some not-so-subtle hints that I actually spoke the language and would be a good asset for the team in the field. Sure enough, I got chosen to go do the field work and set myself apart by really guiding the team through everything from the cultural nuances to menu choices. If it weren't for my German education, I know for a fact that I would not have made that trip and my career path would have taken very different turns.

Following the Amway work, I was able to take off for six months with my best friend from home and volunteer our way around the world. Self organized,

we did everything from teach 'at risk' youth in Peru, to work on a rural dairy farm in New Zealand, to build gardens for Buddhist nuns in Nepal, and run an entrepreneurship workshop in a remote village in Zambia. Although Germany and the rest of Europe was never a destination for our trip, it seemed that we met German speakers everywhere we went. Having the chance to speak with the Germans and Austrians, we were able to really expand our



travel networks and make far more friends. We were even able to pick up a German teenager who was hitch-hiking across New Zealand with whom we talked about Die Bundesliga for 2 hours!

Now that I am back in Michigan, I am again doing research in Germany and using my German language skills often. I am pretty happy that I didn't bail out of 101 after that frightening first day and am always looking forward to my next opportunity to speak the language or explore the German culture. Although I don't know exactly what my future holds for the next year, I do know one thing – I will have my German skills and passion for the culture.



## The Department of Germanic Languages & Literatures

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## 29th Annual German Day: Deutscher Film

By Stacy Swennes

On Friday, March 22nd, the German department hosted its 29th annual German Day. Over 1000 students from 28 schools throughout Michigan came to campus in order to participate in this yearly celebration of German language and culture. This year's theme was German film, which featured prominently in the art displays, video and website submissions as well as the skits and commercials performances. Events took place at various locations on campus. The 3rd floor of the MLB basked in the aroma of delicious German cakes, strudels and savory items for the cooking competition; the basement of North Quad erupted with laughter and applause during the screening of the student-produced videos; Rackham Auditorium saw close to one hundred students

compete in the two spelling bees, and the sounds of German contemporary and classical music filled the Ballroom of the Michigan League. Overall, this year's German Day was a tremendous success; we had a record number of students in attendance, many of whom will likely join us in a few years as German majors or minors. This event continues to be a highlight of our winter semester and showcases our fantastic facilities, faculty, students and staff, who help make this affair possible.



**Stay Connected: We want to hear from you! If you have a submission for the newsletter, please contact [germandept@umich.edu](mailto:germandept@umich.edu)**