

German & German Studies at St. Olaf College

Annual Newsletter

Vol. 4

Fall 2021

Herzlich willkommen (und bis später)!

This fall, the German Department welcomes two new faculty members – Matthew O. Anderson and Andrea Schmidt – to share their talents and specialized knowledge with our students and colleagues. We welcome back Nora Vosburg and department chair Kari Lie Dorer. Amanda Randall, meanwhile, is taking a well-earned year-long sabbatical after being granted tenure and promoted to Associate Professor of German.

Matthew O. Anderson

I received my PhD in Germanic Languages and Literatures from the University of Texas at Austin. My research focuses on 19th-century popular literature and the publishing industry across German-speaking Europe, processes of literary and intermedial adaptation, and translation theory. I have published multiple articles about German youth literature, and my translation of Andreas Steinhöfel's *If My Moon Was Your Sun* won the 2016 German Book Office's Translation Competition. This past year, I worked extensively on two German translations between hiking trips through Colorado, New Mexico, and Vermont. In my spare time, I enjoy baking, hiking, gaming, and listening to German and Swedish music.



Andrea Schmidt

I received my PhD from the University of Washington in Comparative Literature, Cinema and Media Studies. During my time in the program, I did a research year in Berlin, Germany, and taught for two years at a university in Applied Languages and

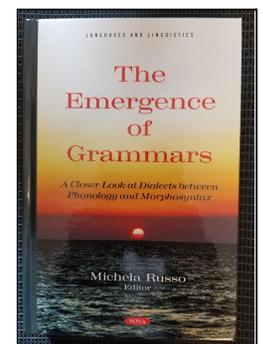


Literatures in Montpellier, France. As evidenced by my degree, I like to research and teach courses on a number of different areas, but the past few years have seen a focus on gender in German language media industries. I have an article on Angela

Merkel and made-for-TV movies coming out this year in the *Journal of Popular Culture*. Meanwhile, my monograph project examines museum and heritage cultures (in and of itself a very problematic term!) as depicted on-screen. In between research and writing on this project, I like partaking in language pedagogy workshops, particularly for beginner levels. I have heard great things about St. Olaf (several of my family members are alumni), and am really looking forward to working with German students!

Faculty Updates

Nora Vosburg is excited to return to St. Olaf's German Department as a Visiting Assistant Professor. As a linguist, her most recent publication, co-authored with a colleague from Oklahoma, presents a comprehensive introduction into language maintenance and shift among Plautdietsch-speaking Mennonites in Kansas. Beyond her own research projects, Dr. Vosburg has been mentoring German major Rachel Burkell '22 to further her undergraduate research on social factors in language shift among Texas



German speakers. For a project for Prof. Vosburg's 2020 Interim course on Germanic linguistics, Rachel conducted her own fieldwork and is now in the process of preparing her data for a national conference presentation. In the spring, Dr. Vosburg is excited to offer a new linguistics course that will look at language and identity among so-called multi-ethnolect speakers in northern and western Europe. Both students and colleagues are excited about Prof. Vosburg's contribution to the growth of the linguistics program at St. Olaf!

Amanda Randall is enjoying the start of a year of rest, research and resetting. Summer and early fall 2021 have been dedicated to spending time with family with activities including bike adventures, home improvements, and practicing ukulele. Prof. Randall is also starting the next phase of her ongoing historiographic and ethnographic research on German *Volkskunde*, now with the assistance of student researchers – Rachel Burkell '22 and Kristian Noll '21 – with the support of a Magnus the Good grant. Together, the three have been transcribing and analyzing archival data used to trace the *Entstehungsgeschichte* (origin history) of the collected volume, *Völkische Wissenschaft* (1994). Prof. Randall is planning two short research trips this academic year and looks forward to rejuvenation in the lovely Schwarzwald.



Faculty Awards

Prof. Randall was recognized with a Cassling Award for her 2020-21 innovations to adapt the second-year German language sequence for pandemic teaching and social conditions. The new project-based curriculum both increased students' critical and creative engagement with cultural materials and created community in virtual and socially distanced classrooms through an emphasis on topic-driven group collaborations to examine globally and locally relevant issues such as identity and agency, inclusion and exclusion, racism and colonialism, gender and sexuality, and anti-racist

and feminist movements in German-speaking areas. In fall 2020, Prof. Randall and former St. Olaf German professor, Seth Peabody, received the award for Best Article in the journal *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German* for their co-authored essay, "Unpacking *Heimat*: A Spiraled Approach to Identity and Belonging for Global German Studies".

Gender and Sexuality Studies Course

This Interim, Prof. Schmidt will offer a course on Gender and Genre in Germanophone film in collaboration with the Gender and Sexuality Studies program. The course builds on a previous course she taught on German language genre cinema, and features all female and/or queer identifying filmmakers. She chose genre as a way of approaching this survey course, as genre films are often seen as "lesser" cinema and relegated to non-canon. The issue with this viewpoint, of course, is that genre cinema can be very rich and features many fantastic artists. With her expertise in Germanophone media, Prof. Schmidt finds films that will challenge and intrigue students, as well as connect them with industry professionals and experts. She had quite a bit of success last year with filmmakers and media scholars answering student questions via Zoom, so she is hoping that the trend continues this January!



Still from *Cocoon* (2020)

Adventures in Translation

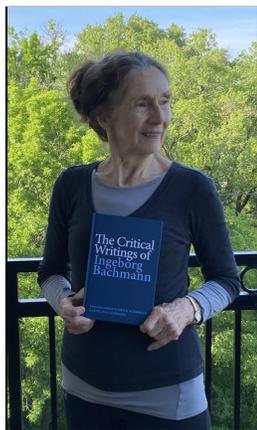
This past year, Prof. Anderson has worked extensively on two book-length translation projects related to his scholarly interests in art, visual culture, and travel literature. In collaboration with

the antiquarian Alan Wofsy, he edited a two-volume edition of Albrecht Dürer's collected prints. When published, this *catalogue raisonné* will be the first English-language edition of Joseph Meder's authoritative 1931 German collection. At the same time, Prof. Anderson translated a series of articles by and about the Viennese author Felix Salten. Salten, best known for writing *Bambi*, toured the United States as a journalist in the early 1930s and penned a series of travel reports under the title *Fünf Minuten Amerika*. Prof. Anderson created a working translation of those reports this past summer, and is currently translating a collection of essays that appeared this year in conjunction with an exhibit on Salten at the MUSA museum in Vienna. For him, the most challenging—but ultimately most rewarding—part of the translation process is finding antiquated English idioms to capture the author's wry sentimentality. He looks forward to diving back into Salten's Vienna over the January interim term.



Emerita Book Publication

Prof. em. Karen Achberger's third book, an annotated translation of *The Critical Writings of Ingeborg Bachmann*, appeared at Camden House in 2021. The 358-page volume, edited and translated together with Karl Solibakke, is the only English translation of Bachmann's essays, lectures, speeches and theoretical texts to date. Two St. Olaf alumnae, Amber Grifioen '02 and Nancy Simpson-Younger '06, offered tireless and meticulous research assistance on the volume. While Bachmann the Austrian poet and novelist is widely read and translated,



Bachmann the critic, philosopher, and public intellectual, is hardly known outside the German-speaking world. Prof. Achberger's book aims to change that.

Safety, Creativity, and Fun!

St. Olaf students never cease to amaze. During the pandemic, German students continue to collaborate to build community by organizing fun social events that adhere to the heightened safety requirements for on-campus gathering. Last year, the Deutsches Haus organized a yoga class in German on the Old Main lawn, played online games with Carleton German-learners over Zoom, and created an outdoor, socially distanced game of CodeWord by chalking a life-sized game board in the 1st street cul-du-sac. Delta Phi Alpha members hosted a picnic with tasty snacks, crafting, and corn hole. And, the German department held a cheerful senior tent reception with a real German *Frühstück*. To kick off this Fall semester, Deutsches Haus invited students to celebrate the new school year with Oktoberfest foods and yard games and also to help German learners get to know their new residence in Johnson House.



Student Research

In spring semester 2021, four St. Olaf students presented their original research on German topics at undergraduate conferences. Jane Boyd '22, Sophia Waters '23, and Rachel Burkell '23, presented at the 10th Undergraduate Research Conference in German Studies hosted by Moravian College. Rachel's paper was entitled, "Was ist ein Mensch?: Morality and Reparations in *In jenen Tagen* and *Der Vorleser*." Jane and Sophia's co-presented paper, "An Inescapable Relationship: Antisemitism and Christianity in the Rubble Film *In jenen Tagen*", was recognized with an Honorable Mention. Anna Weisenburger '21 presented a paper on "Combating Misinformation during the COVID-19 Pandemic: General Strategies and Learning from American and German Contexts" at the Conference of the National Council on Undergraduate Research (NCUR). Zofie Basta '21, completed an internship with the German Protestant Institute of Archaeology in the Holy Land, Jerusalem, where she researched how the German Empire's strategic construction of a rail line connecting Berlin to the Persian Gulf played a role in the Armenian Genocide during World War I. In 2016, the [German Bundestag](#) recognized the genocide and Germany's role in aiding its perpetuation.

Uni-Konstanz Exchange



The German Department welcomes this year's exchange student from the Universität Konstanz, Franziska Seidel! She shares: "After my exchange year got postponed for one academic year due to the pandemic, I was finally able to come to St. Olaf

this summer. Even after just a couple of weeks, it already felt like home and I could not be any happier. I am so thankful for being here! Being able to live at the German House has been a great experience that made my first weeks very special and unforgettable. Even though we barely knew

each other when we first moved into the German House, it feels like we have known each other for years now. There is nothing comparable to walking back to the German House after a long day of classes and spending a wonderful time together! Taking classes at St. Olaf has been a blast, too, as they are smaller and follow a more interactive, personal approach. In addition, I prefer to hand in assignments on a regular basis instead of worrying about one final exam at the end of the semester determining your final grade. Thanks to the lower student-to-faculty ratio at St. Olaf, professors also get to know students very well and are therefore able to support us in the best way possible. I especially appreciate the fact that each professor encourages us to reach out to them if questions arise because I never really had enough courage to do so in Germany. I am really looking forward to the following months at St. Olaf, as it is an honor to be here. I cannot wait for more house events, great conversations, and wonderful moments on the Hill! Thank you for having me!" Franziska leads discussion groups for the History and Memory course, and also helps Dr. Schmidt this semester with grading and research/pedagogy projects.

MLS-Rimbach Guest Teachers

After a year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the guest teacher program at the Martin Luther Schule in Rimbach, Germany is back on! This year, we were able to award positions to two alumnae, [Hanna Elstad](#) '20 (German major, Linguistics and Education/TEFL concentrations) and [Ingrid Nelson](#) '21 (German and Exercise Science majors). While at St. Olaf, Hanna lived in German House for two years and studied abroad in Flensburg, which she recalls as the highlight of her German studies. Hanna began discerning a career in teaching during her second year at St. Olaf, and shaped her study path to prepare her to teach English and German. Between graduation and departing for Rimbach, Hanna worked as a teacher at a German immersion preschool (Kinderstube) through the Germanic-American Institute in St. Paul. Ingrid Nelson looked forward to applying to the Rimbach Guest Teacher program ever since she'd heard about it because it would be, as she says, "a great

opportunity to experience the world, improve my German language skills, and be fully immersed in the German culture. It would also allow me time to figure out which field I wanted to go into for work with my Exercise Science degree.” Hanna and Ingrid are now applying their respective skills at the Martin Luther Schule doing substitute English



lessons, leading discussion tables, and helping with after-school activities. In their free time, they enjoy exploring nearby Odenwald, traveling with school classes,

family and solo around other Germany, and immersing themselves in the simple pleasures of everyday life. To students thinking about becoming a German major, Hanna advises, “Take the chance, you never know where your path may take you. You may end up somewhere you never ever would've thought, but it will be somewhere amazing!”

Featured Alumni

Will Seaton '20

[Will Seaton](#) graduated with German and Math majors and a Data Science concentration. German was always one of his favorite high school subjects, so he knew from the beginning that he wanted to continue learning German at St.



Olaf. He recalls, “My early German courses facilitated many great discussions regarding influences and interpretations of media and history which encouraged me to continue with the program.” Will found connections between German and Math and Statistics through the history of German-speaking contributions of concepts and theories. When he took a proof-writing course during study abroad in Flensburg, he noted that “It was exciting to see how an already direct and

logical language could bring it up a notch.” Will currently works as a catastrophe modeler at Guy Carpenter in the Cities. He stays connected with German through a local Stammtisch and hopes to return to volunteer at Waldsee, Concordia Language Villages soon. Otherwise, he says, “you can catch me hunting for Reinheitsgebot beer and authentic Döner around the metro area.” To students considering studying German at St. Olaf, he says, “The German Department has a great variety of courses that allow students to study German and German-speaking culture through a multitude of lenses. The faculty are all wonderful so don't hesitate to get to know them!”

Mariah Stember '02

At St. Olaf College, [Mariah Stember](#) was a German major with a Management Studies concentration. She received her PhD in women, gender and sexuality studies in 2021 from the University of Kansas, and is presently a Visiting Assistant Professor at [Hamilton College](#). As a gender scholar focused on southern Africa – in particular Namibia, which was once a German colony – Dr. Stember investigates how war transforms gender roles and how a country's gender regime affects the nature of conflict. Her research examines women and the Namibian liberation struggle, and finds that Namibian women furthered the movement in vital ways, as combatants, caregivers, and leaders. Dr. Stember has taught in Germany, Namibia, and the US. She received a Fulbright grant to study in Germany in 2002; studied health, human rights, and social transformation in Kenya in 2010; served in the US Peace Corps in Namibia from 2012–2014; and received a second Fulbright grant to support her doctoral research in Namibia in 2019. Dr. Stember continues to use her German language skills to conduct primary research, which she discussed with Prof. Schmidt's Introduction to Gender and Sexuality Studies course this fall.



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