

German & German Studies at St. Olaf College

Annual Newsletter

Vol. 5

Fall 2022

Herzlich willkommen!

This fall, all of the German Department faculty are returnees: Department Chair Amanda Randall, Nora Vosburg, Matthew O. Anderson and Andrea Schmidt! Wir freuen uns sehr!

Faculty Updates

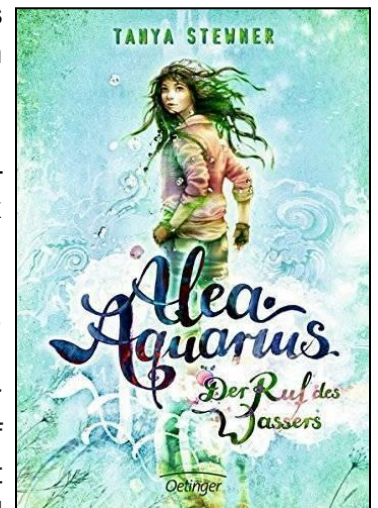
Matthew O. Anderson

In many respects, Dr. Anderson's first year at St. Olaf has been a fairy tale experience. Between teaching German and First-Year Writing Seminars, collaborating with colleagues across campus, and developing and publishing his research on historical youth and children's stories, he has been hustling from one magical moment to the next! Dr. Anderson has also had the unique opportunity to work with the same core group of intermediate language students over three semesters, from third-semester level Fall 2022 to fifth-semester level in Spring

2022. At the 2022 St. Olaf Teaching and Learning Showcase, he featured student work from his Fall 2021 Germanic Fairy Tales course. On the same day, he discussed the structure and scaffolding of those creative assignments with fellow fairy tale instructors at the virtual Kentucky Foreign Language Conference. Over the summer, Dr. Anderson explored contemporary illustrated editions of Grimm's fairy tales, a topic that he presented on at both the annual German Studies Association Conference and at Montclair State University. In July, he published an article with the German Historical Institute (GHI) entitled "Organizing Impulses: Reframing Adventure as Global Knowledge for Young Readers in Precolonial Germany (1841–1862)." The full piece can be read at the [GHI's History of Knowledge Blog](#). Large-scale translation and editing projects loom large on the horizon. He is currently wrapping up the first draft of a two-volume artist catalog of Albrecht Dürer's collected works. In partnership with Arctis Books USA, Dr. Anderson will translate Tanya Stewner's series *Alea Aquarius* from German to English. Look for his translation of the first two novels – and a possible Netflix adaptation – in 2024!

Andrea Schmidt is very excited to begin her second year teaching at St. Olaf College. She taught primarily upper-level

German language courses for the Department last year, including the History and Memory course, Contemporary German-speaking world course, and an upper-level course on Frauenliteratur. She was



Garish, Gruesome, Grimm: Subversive Sights in Contemporary Editions of Grimm's Fairy Tales

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY
GERMAN PROGRAM PRESENTS

A LECTURE BY
DR. MATTHEW
ANDERSON
ST. OLAF COLLEGE

THURS, NOV. 3
9:45-11 AM |
BRANTL LECTURE HALL
IN DICKSON HALL

really impressed with the language abilities of the German students, as well as their curiosity about the world. In addition to German language courses, she also taught Introduction to Gender and Sexuality Studies, and an Interim course on Gender and German Cinema. She spent the summer participating in the German Literary Institutions Seminar in Berlin, as well as conducting research for her monograph. She attended the Coalition of Women in German Conference for the first time in Portland this November, and looks forward to the Diversity, Decolonization and the German Curriculum conference in spring 2023.

She is completing her book manuscript, *“My Life’s Work”: Gender and Alternative Histories in German Film and Media*. *Life’s Work* focuses on the interplay of gender, media, and the political aesthetic in post-#metoo Germany and Austria. It argues that gendered memory in German film and culture resists the drive toward historical forgetting or misremembering otherwise pervasive in German media. It focuses primarily on the intersections of gender, media cultures, and political tensions in the contemporary German-speaking world.

Nora Vosburg engaged with students across the language levels teaching introductory, intermediate and upper level German courses. Her upper-division course on Germany and migration approached the topic from both a historic perspective through German-American immigrant literature from the 19th century, and a contemporary look at migration from Syria due to war displacement.

Dr. Vosburg steered research projects with several students: Within an independent research, **Bekki Antonelli ’22** explored the topic “Living in a divided Germany” by conducting interviews with people who grew up in the former GDR. These personal narratives on how that everyday life looked like are part of Bekki’s website on her research project: <https://pages.stolaf.edu/living-in-a-divided-germany/> With Dr. Vosburg as the project advisor, **Helen White ’23** was awarded the Rand Scholar Award of \$5,000. Using both public corpus data and her own transcriptions of recordings from the



[Photo: Helen White (left) and Mackenzie Johnson (right) during archival work at the Stearns Historical Museum in St. Cloud, MN]

Norwegian American Historical Association at St. Olaf’s campus, Helen employs a comparative linguistic analysis on change and maintenance in dialectal features between Norwegians and American Norwegian immigrants.

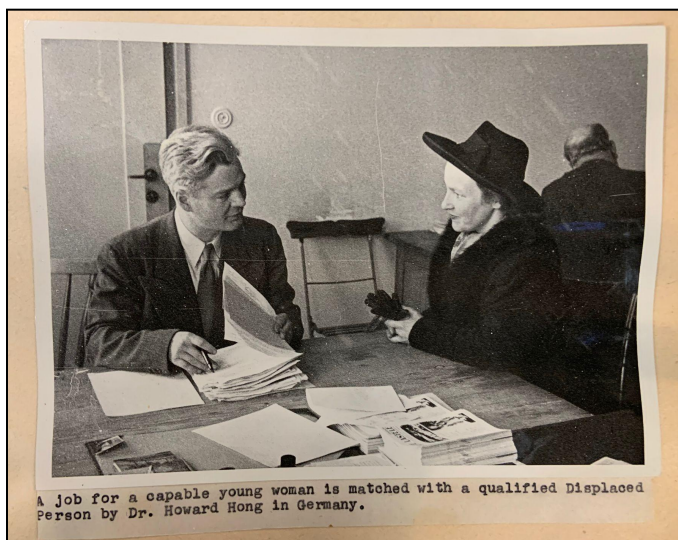
Finally, **Helen White ’23**, **Mackenzie Johnson ’24**, and Dr. Vosburg successfully applied for a Magnus the Good Collaborative Fellowship and explored German identity and education in Stearns County through archival work during the summer. The results from this ongoing project will be presented during a formal event in April 2023.

Aside from research within St. Olaf, Prof. Vosburg is working on how intercultural communicative competence contributes to the UN-defined Sustainable Development Goals (as presented with a colleague from Georgia Tech at the 2022 German Studies Association) and - together with a colleague from Penn State and from the University of Oslo - Prof. Vosburg is under contract with Routledge to write a book on the phenomenon of language attrition, i.e., the ‘forgetting’ of language in contact situations, to appear in August of 2023.

[Photo: Prof. Randall and Prof. Vosburg at the 2022 German Studies Association conference]

Amanda Randall returned from her year-long sabbatical to take up chairing the German Department and serving as Acting Chair of the Norwegian Department. During her sabbatical, she

continued work on her study of Hannjost Lixfeld's historiography of German *Volkskunde*, about which she presented at the 2022 German Studies Association meeting. Prof. Randall contributed to the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG) "Creating a Safe Space" initiative, which brings together K-16 German instructors to create teaching materials focused on diversity and inclusion of People of Color and LGBTQAI+ communities. She will present her work on this and similar initiatives at the Minnesota Council on the Teaching of Languages and Cultures (MCTLC) conference and the American Council on the Teaching for Foreign Languages (ACTFL) convention. Finally, at the tail end of her sabbatical, Prof. Randall embarked on a new research endeavor exploring the story of St. Olaf Philosophy Professor **Howard Hong's '34** (d. 2010) leadership of the Lutheran World Federation Service to Refugees in Germany at the end of World War II with assistance from alumnus **James Anderson '51** (d. 2020). At the invitation of St. Olaf alumnus **Pr. Patrick H. Shebeck '99**, Prof. Randall will present preliminary findings, including a close look at photographic documentation of the initiative, on February 19, 2023 at St. Paul-Reformation Lutheran Church (<https://www.stpaulref.org/>). Prof. Randall looks forward to collaborating with students, staff, faculty and alumni to uncover and share this fascinating story in St. Olaf's history.



[Photo: Lutheran World Federation Service to Refugees 1947-1949 Photographic Section]

In Memoriam: LaVern Rippley

The St. Olaf German Department remembers Professor emeritus LaVern Rippley, who died on January 6, 2022. Prof. Rippley taught at St. Olaf from 1967 to 2017, with research and courses reflecting an emphasis on German-American history. Prof. Randall remembers of her colleague: "Though I met LaVern Rippley toward the end of his



50 years teaching at St. Olaf, when I listened to his detailed, exciting stories of his visits to Germany made over the course of a half century, told in his signature style, I

was struck by how much of the modern German history that I teach today, he saw with his own eyes. Those first-hand accounts are irreplaceable."

[Photo: Prof. Rippley with students on an Interim course in Berlin, 2017]

Teaching Across Campus

Professors Randall, Vosburg, Anderson, and Schmidt all bring an interdisciplinary skill set that enables them to teach courses across the campus. Andrea Schmidt has taught two sections of Introduction to Gender and Sexuality Studies in both Fall 2021 and 2022. Her interest/knowledge of the topic stems from her own research in media gender representation. Feminist theory and cultures have been favorite reading interests of her since her undergraduate years. She especially enjoys incorporating recent films, as well as how much she learns from her own students' knowledge and experiences.

Within the new First Year Experience, Nora Vosburg has taught a First Year Seminar on the topic "Heritage and Identity". She enjoyed being part of the new initiative to transition first year students into academics, campus resources, and student life. Prof. Vosburg also taught an upper level linguistics course on the topic of "Germanic multiethnolects", a label for language contact varieties that arise out of multilingual contact in

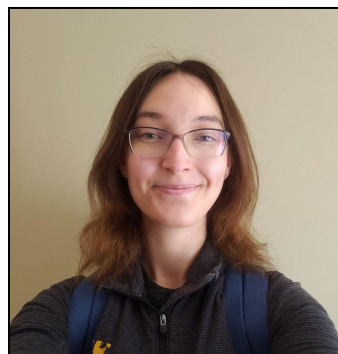
urban centers. In this course, she could engage more with juniors and seniors pursuing the Linguistic Studies concentration.

Matthew Anderson has also gotten involved in St. Olaf's new First-Year Experience this year. His first-year writing seminar "Bodies in Motion: Sports, Politics, and Physical Culture" introduces students to writing, rhetoric, and the analysis of international sport. In Fall 2022, the course has focused on the upcoming FIFA World Cup in Qatar - in Spring 2023, the same course will center around the 1936 Olympic Games. This semester, he is also teaching the intermediate and advanced German courses, and is especially excited to see how his students' advanced research projects develop in the advanced-level course "Green Germany."

We hope that these cross-disciplinary courses continue to draw students to our programs, and enrich our connections across campus!

Student Research

In spring semester 2022, two St. Olaf German majors, **Abigail Trutwin '22** and **Mackenzie Johnson '24**, presented their original research on German topics at the 11th Undergraduate Research Conference in German Studies, and Mackenzie's presentation was even recognized with an Honorable Mention! Here are the students' impressions of the experience:



Abigail Trutwin: "My conference paper focused on the usage of English loan words in the memoirs of Julie Hanke, a German woman who immigrated to the United States in 1848. Hanke's usage of English loan words fell into three

categories: forms of address, foreign foods, and idiomatic expressions. Ultimately, these categories revealed the cultural divide between Hanke's native German heritage and the culture of the foreign new world. Inspiration for this topic mainly came from my interest in linguistics, and focusing on loan words was only the natural conclusion. At first,

reshaping my paper from a class paper into a conference paper seemed a tad daunting due to the need to expand the project way beyond its original size. I worried a lot about the organization and overall flow of the paper. That being said, I did enjoy discussing with professors how to make my paper even better. My absolute favorite part of the process, however, was the random research tidbits I picked up along the way.

Overall, the conference presentation itself was surprisingly laid-back for what I had anticipated. It was still rather nerve-wracking, but practice really did pay off. Further research for me would include a dive into the writings of other German immigrants during the same time period in order to analyze their usage of loan words. Researching cultural practices during that time period would also be beneficial. My plans for the future include continuing to work and making those all-important decisions about grad school."

Mackenzie Johnson: "My project was called 'An Identity Between Homes: Idealization of Home as a Consequence of Loss in Al-Sayed's *Geflüchtet*.' In



the paper, I depict how the bleak descriptions of Germany and the knowledge of the author's non-existent homeland in Syria give the reader an intimate look into the renegotiation of identity as it is connected to place and as a consequence of forced

migration. We read the book *Geflüchtet* by Abdullah Al-Sayed during the 2021 fall semester of Dr. Vosburg's advanced-level course 'History of Migration.' I thought it would be fascinating to take it a step further and see how the renegotiation of identity as being connected to place and as a consequence of forced migration aligned with other research and discussions on the topic. It was a really wonderful and challenging experience working to prepare the paper and presentation. There were a lot of specific formalities to the paper

and presentation to which I had no previous experience with. However, Dr. Vosburg helped and guided me a lot throughout this process for which I am very grateful. The conference took place on Zoom, but despite being virtual it was a very pleasant experience and a nice introduction to academic presentations in German Studies. I would like to explore further areas of research surrounding this topic in the future and continue my studies in German. I'm currently considering graduate programs in Linguistics, but have recently taken an interest in perhaps getting a teaching license. Next semester I'll be studying abroad at the University of Konstanz, Germany and am hoping that it'll be a guiding factor in my future plans."

"Oles im Ausland"

This summer, German major **Jack Fochtman '24** had the opportunity to work for the [Heraeus Group](#), which is a broadly diversified and globally leading family-owned technology company headquartered in Hanau, Germany. Jack reports: "During this internship, I worked within the company's mergers and acquisitions (M&A) group to help facilitate growth by purchasing other companies. It was great working with colleges with experience in top investment banks and management consulting firms throughout Germany, who have now transitioned to Heraeus. While most of the technical tasks were in English, as most business transactions are in the United States, all office 'chit-chat', internal meetings, and typical lunches in the canteen were all in German. It was great to practice my conversational German throughout the summer with colleagues willing to push me to get better! I look forward to crossing paths with everyone I worked with this summer sometime down the road."

Sophia Waters '24 wrote about her [study abroad experience](#) in Mainz via the new Middlebury Program: "My semester in Germany, though only five months in total, somehow seemed to compromise an entire lifetime of learning and precious experiences. In getting lost on cobblestone streets and in the middle of tangly, intricate German sentences, I found myself. As a

Chemistry and German double major at St. Olaf College, the School in Germany was my first experience with Middlebury and I was blown away by the program's attention to detail in language acquisition and balance of student support and room for independence.



I was initially a bit intimidated by the program language pledge, but readily accepted the challenge and quickly found that I was not only comfortable speaking German, but loved doing so. One of my main goals for my semester in Mainz was to bolster my German language ability and through this journey, I made some amazing friends, developed

new perspectives, and unlocked the intimate parts of culture and people hidden behind the doors of language.

I spent most of my time enjoying the beautiful city of Mainz, but I also had the opportunity to travel on the weekends or school holidays. My travels included Austria, Switzerland, and other regions of Germany, and found that those were the trips I most cherished because I was still able to communicate with locals and therefore interact more extensively with the culture.

I loved the gemütlich Rhineland and will forever treasure my evenings journaling on the banks of the Rhein, getting ice cream with friends, and feeling myself become more confident in German and in Germany. My semester abroad was certainly not without its challenges, but it is thanks to every single experience, struggle, and breakthrough that I am the person I am today: a more mature and developed student, German speaker, and individual than I was five months ago."

Deutsche Haus

German students are enjoying the new townhomes on-campus, they were gracious enough to give students and faculty tours of their lovely space during an *Einweihungsparty* (open house/housewarming party) at the beginning of the semester (pictured below).



The German House recently celebrated Oktoberfest in conjunction with Delta Phi Alpha. There was a delicious spread, including Brezeln and Gummibärchen. Other highlights from the last year include a Fasching celebration, Ostereierjagd, and a lantern walk.



Uni-Konstanz Exchange

The German Department is pleased to welcome Marie Kammerer (pictured on the right) as this year's exchange student from the Universität Konstanz. After her first couple of months on campus, Marie reflects: "After a lot of preparation and a long time of waiting, I was super excited to finally come on campus. Even though I haven't been here very long, I have settled in well and feel very comfortable. The courses are really interesting

and the community at St Olaf college is great! I like to go to sporting events with friends or take part in other activities and meet new people there. It's great to live in the German House, especially because it's very new and beautiful, and there's nothing better than having game nights or talking about the day with my roommates. Although I have a lot of assignments and am pretty busy all the time, studying is super fun and doesn't feel like work because the topics are very interesting and the professors are willing to help with anything, which I find super nice. In general, you can find help with everything at St Olaf and you never have to deal with anything alone. I'm looking forward to the upcoming events and activities with the German group and the snow in the colder season in the Hill!

I am so glad that I have a few more months to go, but I already know that I will be very sad when I have to leave St. Olaf and all the good friends I have made. Thanks for having me!"



Featured Alumna

St. Olaf seniors continue the tradition of securing a high number of Fulbright postgraduate fellowships abroad. This year, **Josie Gellner '22** is living in Erlangen, Germany to conduct Fulbright-funded research on sustainable food systems and urban gardens. She recounts: "As I arrived in Germany in

mid-September, I spent the last month settling in and learning how to live in a new country! There is a lot to do when moving abroad such as applying for a residence permit and opening up new bank accounts- all of which



has been a painfully slow process. Yet, I have already experienced so many fun moments like meeting new friends and hopping on trains to travel around Germany. While I settle into 'German' life, I plan to continue my research, take a German language course, and enjoy the many *Weihnachtsmärkte* during the holiday season.

St. Olaf prepared me both academically and socially for living overseas. In terms of academics, I would not be able to do my research without the interdisciplinary training and research-focused courses at St. Olaf. I also took two semesters of German language classes to meet the foreign language requirement which has helped me immensely in Germany. Outside of academics, St. Olaf provided me with a supportive environment where I learned how to adapt to living in a new place and how to connect with new people. My St. Olaf experience was an essential stepping stone to now living abroad in Germany.”

*Frohes Fest und
einen guten Rutsch!*



[Photo: Krampus (Prof. Anderson) and Sankt Nikolaus (Prof. Vosburg) pay Prof. Schmidt a visit]

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