



Germanic Studies

Fall 2020

Alumni Newsletter

Letter from the Chair

Covid snuck up on us early this calendar year and after the initial disorientation and a fast pivot to online, we spent a remarkable and unsettling spring glued to our screens, whether teaching or—in our “free” time—scrolling through new kinds of numbers (positivity, incidence, prevalence), trying to divine some more general meaning for what was happening. As I write this, I’m trying to remember and differentiate the welter of things that underwent a sea-change during the pandemic summer. We cancelled overseas programs to prevent the transmission of the virus across borders and invented new summer courses, we closed the campus, we conferred constantly on Zoom, and got to know each other’s WFH backgrounds, we shared memes and videos, learned protocols and wrote up some of protocols of our own, came up with policies for reopening safely, for contingencies in case things weren’t as safe as we hoped, and plans for teaching, orienting, and recruiting. We learned about webinars and podcasts and padlets and how to use screenshare and waiting rooms and avoid zoombombing. It’s been a welter of adjustments

and, though I hope no one is ultimately reconciled to them, we’ve willy-nilly found ourselves caught up in a host of new routines we could scarcely have imagined a year ago.

After a summer of improvising and provisioning, Germanic Studies this fall has been teaching all of our basic language courses remotely, though mostly in real time. Courses above the fourth semester largely have at least one component that meets in person. It’s this in-person teaching in Ballantine—which might have represented a familiar remnant of our old IU routine—that I’ve found the most uncanny. Hallways that would normally be packed between classes are eerily quiet. Classrooms have been assigned to have a capacity three times greater than enrollments. But enrollments do not reflect the number who actually show up in person. In one of my classes, in which I have 21 students in a classroom that holds 64, I’ve had as few as 3 show up in person, with everyone else—isolating or quarantining or enrolled from another state or city or country—

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Germanic Studies

This newsletter is published by the Department of Germanic Studies, with support from the College of Arts and Sciences, to encourage alumni interest in and support for Indiana University.

For activities and membership information, call 800-824-3044 or visit alumni.iu.edu

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Grüße aus Bloomington!

Hello and warmest greetings from Bloomington!

We are coming to you this year in our usual way but in a very unusual year. Like the rest of the world, we are doing the best we can under the strange new circumstances of COVID-19. You will read about how things in Germanic Studies have been both remarkably the same and remarkably different. We thought people would have a lot to say about the difficult tasks encountered in adapting teaching to virtual or hybrid. But I think you will agree that the message comes across loud and clear is that our academic and professional activities, whether real or virtual, are as productive and engaging as ever.

When we retreated to the safety of online teaching after spring break, we – faculty, students and staff alike – struggled a bit to adapt our teaching and our jobs quickly to this new mode. This fall at least we had time to learn more effective ways of operating online – and learn we did. All summer long the university showered its community with information and resources. Our fearless leader **Ben Robinson** kept us abreast of important developments and protocols, and in August, thanks to the organizational, pedagogical and technical prowess of current grad student **Nina Morais** and alumna **Silja Weber** (Ph.D. 2018 – now doing her fine work as Lecturer in the Columbia University Department of Germanic Languages) a series of “in-house” nuts and bolts meetings and workshops were held. These were a part of the usual week of orientation for new AI’s, but special invitations were extended to all the faculty to join sessions devoted to learning how best to use – and survive -- Canvas and Zoom. Many, many thanks to Nina and Silja and to **Susanne Even** for the enormous effort behind and the effectiveness of these sessions. And so we carry on.

And as for me, I can say I’m happy in my adjunct status and am enjoying another semester of teaching German for musicians. I miss live concerts and performances terribly, but I am forever grateful that friends and family are healthy and looking forward to better days.

For everyone else, please have a happy New Year, do good work, and let us hear from you!
Mit herzlichen Grüßen,

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Letter from the Chair, (cont.)

appearing on a Zoom screen projected on either end of the classroom (where does one even point one's eyes?). What really makes it uncanny, though, isn't the mixture of presence and pixels, but something more subtle. What's strangest is how largely normal it is to walk into a de-densified classroom, fasten on a lapel mike, adjust the mobile ceiling camera, turn on projectors and monitors, and once we're all communicating across platforms and over empty desks, to proceed to share our screens with each other, or to pass around a hand-held mike so those of us speaking in the room are also audible miles away in zoom-land. My students certainly haven't missed a beat—I don't know if they are especially more digitally native than the faculty, I think it's rather just that everyone is simply game for making a virtue of necessity. And while it would be a shame if we adjusted too completely to this technical virtuosity, everything so far has fallen more or less neatly into place in a new world that turns out to be a surprisingly reasonable facsimile of the old world. Who knew we could just switch things around like that? Still, as much as I'm astonished by our adaptability, it feels less like we've taken one giant leap for humankind, than we've skewed the world a few degrees off its initial coordinates, and now only occasionally notice with a shudder that everything isn't quite where it used to be.

Philosophical *Befindlichkeiten* aside, for those of you not here in the hybrid world of IU Bloomington Germanic Studies, let me emphasize that despite the strange torsion of a campus in Covid, our department is thriving in all the ways it needs to thrive. Of course, it's not always easy, especially for our many new-comers in this time of transition. **Irit Dekel, Chris Sapp, and Lane Sorensen** have had to adjust to being new faculty members without the benefit of having been able to gather in person at GISB or at all the other places we'd normally be formally or informally gathering. But from the force of their presence in our virtual life, you'd



hardly know anything was amiss. And our new graduate students and Kade fellows—**Brian Hensley, Elaine Dalida, Jacob Hoffman, David Garner, Ivette Dreyer**—have likewise hit the ground running, despite having to negotiate all the directives about testing and distancing and to find new channels of communication to replace the rich interactions that otherwise would be happening on campus and in town. If, on the one hand, there's surely something uncanny about the brave-new world of Covid, on the other hand, uncanny is not the right word for the wonderful resourcefulness, kindness, creativity and persistence of the faculty, staff, and students in Germanic Studies. There's nothing calculated and dialed-in about how we've regrouped to continue our common mission of teaching and learning, posing big and persistent questions, hosting imaginative and challenging voices, collecting and writing up research, and analyzing, parsing, interpreting, and arguing the meaning of what we find. In that fundamental project, I'm happy to report, IU Germanic Studies remains patiently undeterred.



Ben Robinson
Chair



Faculty + Emeriti News



We begin with Prof. **Michel Chaoli**, who's taken advantage of the Covid-induced down time: What a gift it was to be released from busyness and have time again to read! Three books had the urgency that I wanted to recommend them to

everyone I met. Gregor von Rezzori's novel *Memoiren eines Antisemiten* gives astonishing insight into the manners and mores of the Großbürgertum and of those who aspire to belong to this class. *Der Finger im Buch* is a beautiful study by the librarian Ulrich Johannes Schneider of some thirty paintings showing people holding a book, a finger holding their place. And just now, I am deep into Elias Canetti's *Die Fackel im Ohr*, his memoirs of the 1920s, mainly in Vienna. If you haven't read them, drop everything else. Thank you, Corona!



Irit Dekel joined the Department of Germanic Studies and the Jewish Studies Program in the Spring of 2020. She recently published a chapter in *Rebuilding Jewish Life in Germany* (Rutgers University Press) entitled "You are

My Liberty: On the Negotiation of Holocaust and Other Memories for Israelis in Berlin." This year also saw her co-

authored article "Circumcising the Body: Negotiating Difference and Belonging in Germany" published in *National Identities*. Her article, written with Esra Özyürek, "Perfides Ablenkungsmanöver" [Perfidious Subversion Tactics"] appeared in *Die Zeit Online* on July 10, 2020. Dekel researches Holocaust memory and the presentation and experience of Jews in Germany. She co-edits and contribute an article to *The Handbook on Memory Activism*, the first such work on this topic. For her next book, as well as in articles, she studies the inter-relations between witnessing and subject positions for Jews and other minorities in the German society.

Dekel brought her research to important interdisciplinary platforms: she led a masterclass on audience research at the 2019 annual meeting of the Memory Studies Association and delivered an invited lecture to a conference on "The Future of Memory" (Goethe Universität, Frankfurt). She co-organized panels for the annual meetings of both the AJS and the German Studies Association where she will present her work on philosemitism in Germany. In spring 2020, Dekel taught a graduate course on social memory studies and began work with graduate students interested in collective memory in Israel, the US, and Germany. This fall, she is teaching a new course: "Jews in the Media: The Production and Experience of a Minority." She delivered an invited lecture titled "Memory, and the Imperative to Remember the Holocaust in Israel" at the international conference "The Future of Remembrance: Memory Culture and Societal Responsibility,"





jointly organized by the Martin Buber Institute for Jewish Philosophy and Religion; Goethe Universität, Frankfurt; the Central Council of Jews in Germany; the Institute for Christian-Jewish Studies and Relations at the Augustana-Hochschule Neuendettelsau; the Theological Seminary at the Lutheran Church in Neuendettelsau, Bavaria; Fritz-Bauer-Institute; and The Jewish Museum Frankfurt am Main.



Welcome words and a photograph from **Susanne Even**: "This year has been a race against time throughout. Covid-changes and an exponential increase in emails, promotion dossier, language program going online, the German

Instructor Summer Program (GISP), publication deadlines, a new international *SCENARIO research colloquium series*. Plus what I call the Covid Fog (particularly in Spring and Summer): nobody quite knows what's what because everything is somewhat the case (or not), resulting in a combination of perpetual alert and exhaustion, loss of focus and short-term meaning-of-life-crises.

Summer would have passed me by if it hadn't been for the new addition to our family: Oliver came into my life in December 2019: by now a 3 year-old lab/golden retriever mix, trained service dog and constant companion. He picks up things for me, he opens doors and

finds the phone in emergencies, he makes me go outside on a daily basis, he is serious on duty and goofy when released, he makes us laugh and helps me staying in the moment.

GISP went very well this year in its online format. My comrade-in-arms **Ben Swakopf** and I thoroughly enjoyed (and learned a lot in) the two weeks that were devoted to the topic of degenerate art in D-A-CH, and the participants were very happy with the course (even though they missed the companionship and immersion of former years).

This semester I am teaching my 60-student fairy tale class again, this time with the invaluable help of **Tyler Kniess**, who maintains an overview of participation, coordinates the chat and interrupts me when I forget things. The highlight of this class has been a zoom meeting with Cornelia Funke (author of *Reckless*). That session went so well that Cornelia herself suggested to have a follow-up session since she enjoyed herself immensely.

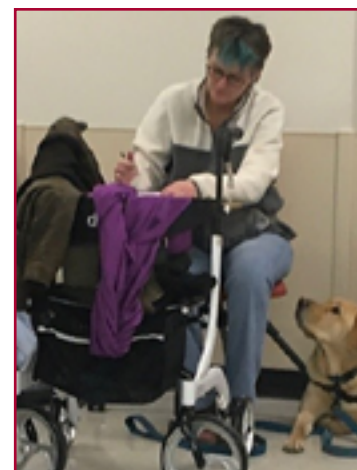


Photo during a lesson observation, taken by Anna Spafford

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Finally, I would like to thank our AIs. You transitioned to online teaching with only a few weeks' notice, you made this year's orientation week a success, and you continue to try out new things online. And nobody whined. You keep doing your jobs so well, which makes me even prouder than I normally am. Kudos to each and every one of you!"



Günther Jekeli asks and answers a question for the times: "What Do Legal Immigrant Professors Do in Summer During a Pandemic If They are Stuck in Bloomington? -- Bloomington is a great place. But it's also a small place. And from time to

time it's just a good place from where to travel elsewhere. Especially in summer when it's hot and humid. However, it quickly became clear to me that I had to scrap all summer 2020 travel plans, firstly because of the pandemic and secondly because of our pending Visa applications (which have been dragging on further because of the pandemic).

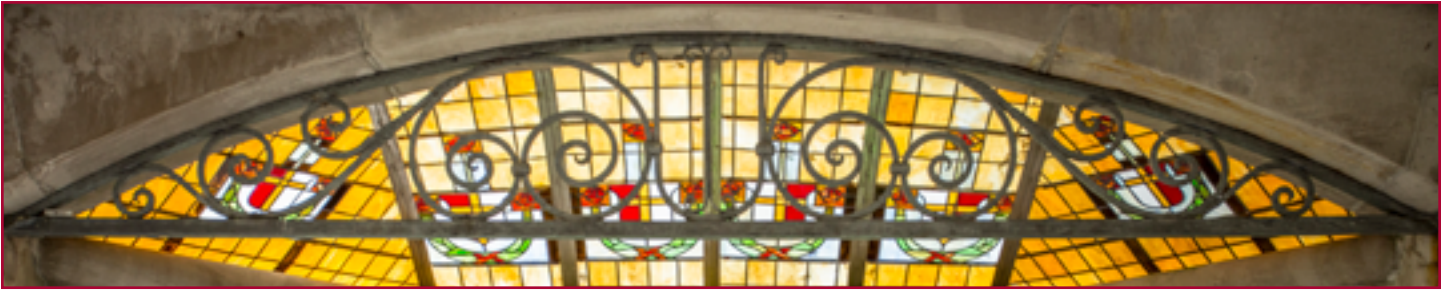
After two months of Zooming, I had accepted the idea that this would become an online summer. If I couldn't travel to seminars in other places as I had planned earlier, perhaps I could bring people together virtually in Bloomington and work on a project that I wanted to do for some time. Together with graduate students from data science, linguistics,

and statistics, as well as professor Damir Cavar from Linguistics, we designed an international datathon and hackathon competition on social media and antisemitism. We received applications from around the world and selected 30 high school and college students from Brazil, Canada, Germany, and the United States. We trained them for a month before they competed in teams for the best data evaluation of thousands of tweets and training algorithms that can identify antisemitic posts.

The three winning teams were announced on July 5 in an awards ceremony with key speakers Lee Feinstein, dean of the Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies, and Elaine Monaghan, an IU journalism professor. The first prize went to a group of students from Potsdam University and Technical University Berlin. However, we are particularly proud of the local team of four high school students from Bloomington who won the third prize. In the process, we learned a lot about hateful content online, like homophobia, sexism, racism, or antisemitism. While we focused on antisemitism in that project, we are now planning a second *datathon and hackathon* for racism and conspiracy theories in the context of the pandemic for summer 2021, hoping, however, that the pandemic (and Visa issues) will then be something of the past.

Nikole Langjahr has been busier than ever: "Since the beginning of the academic year I have been serving as Director of Undergraduate Studies. I enjoy advocating for our students





and advising them regarding degree options, and I am excited to be a part of a collaboration with the Walter Career Center starting in spring 2021. Our ever popular Stammtisch has turned into a "Zoomtisch" (and will remain so until

August 2021), meeting twice a week. One unanticipated advantage has been that we have had visitors zooming in from Georgia (USE), Canada, and Germany! You can imagine how much fun that is! I'm happy to say that I designed and am enthusiastically teaching my first culture course: "Gender and Sexuality in Germany." I delight in the "Aha!" moments of my students ("Oh, that's why Germans do/think/say ...!") It's not been easy adjusting to the new COVID protocols, but there are wonderful things happening in spite of and maybe even because of them."



Gergana May reports on the robust health of the Norwegian program: "The Norwegian Program transitioned successfully to full online instruction after Spring break. At that moment, thanks to a Title VI grant awarded to the Institute for European

Studies and to two dedicated graduate students of Germanic Studies, many of the paper

materials had already been converted to digital format. The process continued throughout the summer with funds from the grant - it allowed additional three graduate students to work on completing the transition of all four semesters of Norwegian to online mode of instruction. The new academic year started strong with an intensive two-week introductory Intersession course on contemporary Scandinavia - it was welcome by 26 enthusiastic undergraduates. The course addressed the factors behind the leadership role of the Nordic states in today's globalized world in terms of social equality and environmental policy. It discussed contemporary phenomena such as Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg and her role in organizing in the fight against climate change, the successes of the Finnish educational system, the unique handling of oil wealth in Norway and the core principles behind Nordic police force and incarceration, to name a few. After the first intensive days, the semester continued with the regular Norwegian language courses which again attracted solid enrollment - 38 students are currently in the first and third semesters of Norwegian. The recently conducted mid-terms demonstrate that students are gaining proficiency on par with the in-person instruction mode of past years. It must be stated, however, that we all truly miss seeing each other, interacting in the class room and engaging face-to-face! Sadly, I also have to report that, as expected, the long anticipated two week Study Abroad trip to Norway in summer 2020 was cancelled. Hopefully we will

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be able to recreate it and carry it out in the near future.”

Emeritus professor **Breon Mitchell** sends us an update and good wishes: “Lynda and I translated a new novel by Sten Nadolny -- *Das Glück des Zauberers* -- *The Joy of Sorcery* -- and it came out this past June. It’s not a Harry Potter novel--covers most of 20th century German history, very much in Nadolny’s past style. I’m working away on Part II (1951-1969) of my multi-volume bibliography of Samuel Beckett. We are enjoying retirement and keeping safe, as we hope all of you are.”



We are delighted to meet – or for some of us, be reunited with **Christopher Sapp**, new to the faculty this year but not new to IUB. Read on: “After years of reading this newsletter as an alumnus, what a privilege to be writing

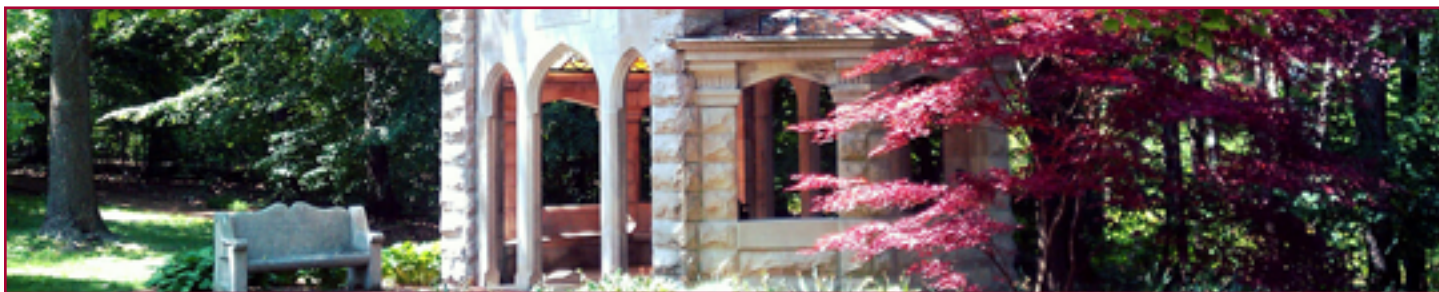
an entry as a faculty member! This has been quite the whirlwind year for me and my family. After 14 years on the faculty at the University of Mississippi, I took a sabbatical in Klagenfurt last Fall. In Austria, I worked on my current book project *Linguistic and Metrical Criteria for Dating Eddic Poetry*, Dinorah taught English at the Alpen-Adria-Universität, and Olivia started 3rd grade in a castle. In the Spring, it was my turn to be the trailing spouse as Dinorah began a fellowship at

the educational outreach division at the U.S. Embassy in Chile. About a week into that, before I could even start a Spanish course, we had to leave Chile and return to Mississippi (with a few stops on the way). Luckily, I soon had a job offer from IU—an excellent consolation prize!

We are delighted to be back in Bloomington, which I have always long my intellectual home. Although some of our old haunts like the Irish Lion are off limits to us for a while, we are spending a lot of time in Bryan Park and the wonderful new walking/biking trails. I am currently teaching a course (online) about Eddic poetry and its reimaginings (think Wagner and Tolkien). Soon I’ll be teaching the same graduate courses that I once took, like *German Syntax* and *Gothic*, bringing my academic career back to where it began 22 years ago.”

Lecturer and Outreach Coordinator **Lane Sorensen** sends news and greetings. We proud to pass along the news that he was recently named “2020 Rising Star Indiana German Teacher of the Year” by the Indiana Foreign Language Teachers Association (IFLTA) based on his “brilliant and inspiring teaching.” He also wants us to know that Not even a pandemic could stop Indiana high school German students from participating in the German Theater Project., which went online this year.





Seven Indiana high schools still managed to finish filming and send in their creative and vastly entertaining drama and comedy videos. Best Comedy went to Fishers High School and Best Drama went to Pike Central High School. Added to that, Fritz Krahll, the German teacher for Pike Central (now retired), won a Lifetime Achievement Award for his dedication and participation in the Theater Project over the years. Thanks also to the GTP team from IU Germanic Studies for supporting German high school programs in the state of Indiana, and to **David Bolter** and **Nina Morais** for helping to craft an unfathomably weird but entertaining awards ceremony video for the high school students and their teachers to enjoy! Most of our outreach efforts have gone online...we're happy with how the GTP went in the Spring, and we had a lot of love from teachers who said we adapted it well. The IFLTA and other conferences are also online this year (I'm organizing a couple grad students to present quick pre-recorded videos about our program there and at the IU World Language webinar).

Rebecca Haley will be the main presenter in the pre-recording for the IFLTA conference and the IU World Language Webinar that discusses our program offerings."



And earlier this year we received greetings and good thoughts from **Johannes Türk**:
 "I am happy to report that the Institute of German Studies has started a

new lecture series entitled New Directions in German Studies that aims to bring us into a conversation with the most promising research in the field. Our inaugural speaker was Andreas Gailus who presented the parts of his forthcoming book on bio-politics in Germany devoted to Kleist. In the meantime, we had to move the lecture series online, where it will continue in a slightly modified format this coming November. The pandemic-related situation of course also presents a challenge to our graduate program. I have been looking forward to a sabbatical in Berlin during the fall of this academic year, where I will advance my research and work towards the completion of a second book affiliated with Humboldt University. These are indeed strange and unpredictable times, and the transition from one part of the world to another highlights this perception while making me aware of how precarious and malleable human affairs are."

P.S. from the editor:

If you are among this year's newsletter contributors, thank you for writing. If you did not send in an item, please consider doing so next year. You don't have to wait until asked (but rest assured, I will ask!). Let me encourage you to write whenever you have something to share. See my contact information on page 2.

Stay in touch with us any time via the [Department of Germanic Studies website](#) and on the Facebook pages of IU Bloomington Germanic Studies and German House Indiana University. There's always something going on - even this year.



Alumni & Current Grads News



Michael Bryant (Ph.D. candidate, B.A. 2000 & M.A. 2015) gives us this update : “Gruß aus Kalamazoo, Michigan where I’m currently living and teaching (remotely) for the Department of Germanic Studies. I recently became certified

as a Level 4 Qualified Bilingual Interpreter of German at Bronson Methodist Hospital. This level of qualification authorizes me to provide translation and interpretive services in all clinical conversations between providers and patients about their diagnoses and treatment plans. I have a background in medical sciences and professional experience doing medical reviews for a health insurance company, so this opportunity bridges the disciplinary gap between my two courses of study.”

Nancy Chadburn (Ph.D., 1981) while still getting used to her relocation from Boston to Bloomington a couple of years ago – and what a year to do that –writes: “I’ve been spending the spring and summer loafing and bird-watching in Bryan Park, pestering Bloomington Transit to make bus travel safer during the pandemic, and reading down the backlog of books - English, German and Dutch - lying around my apartment.”

Maria Fink sends greetings from Berlin: “Hello from Berlin! I was able to extend my stay in Berlin for another year with the OVPIA Graduate Exchange Program. I am continuing my

dissertation work mostly from home with the occasional trip to Staatsbibliothek am Potsdamer Platz. Fortunately, theatres in Berlin were able to re-open after the lockdown earlier this year and I am now able to attend performances again (from a safe distance to other audience members, of course).

In October, I participated in a bilingual reading panel at the annual ALTA (American Literary Translation Association) conference, which was held online this year. I presented my translation of Austrian writer Paula Köhlmeier’s short story “Maramba” and read parts of the German original. My translation of Köhlmeier’s story “Postcard Sea” was published in the spring 2020 issue of The Southern Review.





Stay healthy, everyone and we look forward to seeing you back in Indiana, once travelling is safe again. Best wishes from Maria with Mitch Raney and Oskar Fink-Raney”



Current grad **Claire Woodward** has been busy: “Here is something short from me:
Before corona hit, I co-published an article, “Choosing and Enjoying Violence in Narratives,” with Fritz Breithaupt and others in December 2019. Since

then, I’ve been busy with many other projects as I start my fourth year at IU. I got married, adopted a dog, moved into a house, learned Hungarian in a virtual summer language workshop (four hours of online language instruction per day often left me a Zoom-bie), and studied for and took my qualifying exams. I have still really enjoyed teaching German, even without seeing my students in person.
Cheers, Claire”

Juliane Wuensch checks in and lets us know: “I successfully defended my dissertation with the title German-Jewish female identity and the dream of an egalitarian society - A comparative study of Rahel Varnhagen, Rosa Luxemburg, and Hannah Arendt in April 2020. I accepted a renewable position as Visiting Assistant Professor at Skidmore College, NY, where I am is now teaching German and enjoying the (much cooler) weather. In fall 2020, an article with the title “Is a Schtoan a Stein? - How and why to teach dialects

and regional variations in the German language classroom,” which I co-authored together with IU graduate student David Bolter, will be published in the GFL journal (gfl-journal.de). I am very thankful for the seven years that I spent in Bloomington and with the IU Germanic Studies Department and I promise to keep in touch.”



Remembrances

Terence Kelso Thayer passed away in Bloomington, Indiana, on May 2, 2019, at the Hearthstone Health Campus after a long illness. He was 78.

Terence was born in Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 9, 1940, and grew up in North Vernon, Indiana. He graduated from North Vernon High School in 1958. His parents were both Indiana University graduates; his father, Dr. Benet W. Thayer, was a physician, and his mother, Edna Thayer, was a journalist and artist.



Terence received the A. B. degree summa cum laude in German at Oberlin College in 1962. While at Oberlin College, he met Diane Weiss, of Euclid, Ohio, whom he married in 1962 in Highland Heights, Ohio. Together they spent the following year in Germany while he was a Fulbright scholar. A recipient of the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, he earned his Ph.D. at Harvard University in 1967. He joined the Indiana University faculty in 1967 as an assistant professor. With the exception of a visiting appointment at the University of California at San Diego in 1972, a Humboldt research fellowship in Hamburg in 1976, and Fulbright and DAAD summer seminars in Germany in the 1980s, Thayer spent his entire career in Bloomington at Indiana University, and was promoted to associate professor in 1972 and full professor in 1983. He retired in 2004. His colleague William Rasch said of Terence that he was a “good man, a good human being. In truth, more than that can be said of no one.”

Terence was an inveterate traveler who journeyed to all seven continents, more than fifty countries, and to countless islands around the world. He was a lifelong runner who completed the Bloomington Marathon in the late 1970s, with his young son Alex joining him at the end. He also enjoyed handball, art, film, music, reading, and, upon retirement, read the Odyssey in its original Greek.

We learned this year that **Prof. Louis F. Helbig** passed away in Berlin on December 3, 2019. Born in 1935, Prof. Helbig was a well-loved teacher in German Studies. He was at IU from 1969 until 1990 when he went to the University of Arizona for five years but then relocated to Europe. He was the Director of the Office of Overseas Studies from 1979 to 1985. We remember him as a fine teacher.

Ben Robinson remarked upon learning of Prof. Helbig’s passing, that “an interdisciplinary conference Helbig organized here at IU in 1972, on “Teaching Postwar Germany in America,” was decisive for modernizing German instruction in the US. His contribution to the conference volume, “The Concept of a German Studies Program,” had an important influence on opening up such programs more widely to cultural, contemporary, and comparative studies. We in the IU Germanic Studies Department remain his heirs. Helbig also had an extensive scholarly output on topics such as Büchner’s Dantons Tod, the individual and society in Goethe’s Wahlverwandtschaften, the literature of exile, flight and displacement in the immediate postwar period, and a critical edition of Lessing’s Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts, among other themes.”

Among his publications is Teaching Postwar Germany in America: Papers and Discussions coauthored in 1972 with the late emeriti professor **Eberhard Reichmann**.

