

[denny detail](#)

Germanics homepage
Departmental Directory
Events & Lectures
Advisory Board
Germanics in the news
Donating to the Department
<b>Calendar of Events:</b>
<b>Tuesday, May 25, 2010</b>
Delta Phi Alpha Honor Society Initiation and Reception
6:00 p.m., Rey Library (Denny 308)
-----
<b>Wednesday, May 28, 2010</b>
Third Annual Alumni lecture, Associate Professor Andrea Gogrof-Voorhees, Western Washington University, "Surveillance and Voyeurism in Michael Haneke's Films"
1:30 p.m., Rey Library (Denny 308)
-----
<b>Thursday and Friday, June 3-4, 2010</b>
"Kurze Meisterwerke," German 304 Play Performance
7:00 p.m., Ethnic Cultural Center Theater (3940 Brooklyn Ave. NE)
-----
<b>Saturday, June 12, 2010</b>
Convocation Ceremony and Reception with guest speaker Phil Smart
10:00 a.m., Simpson Center for the Humanities (Communications 120 and 202)

Germanics

## Spring 2010 Newsletter

**Letter from the Chair****Summer Seminar at the Frye  
Art Museum****Spring in Vienna****2010 Alumni Lecture Series:  
Dr. Andrea Gogrof-Voorhees****Dissertation Brief: Kevin  
Johnson****Focus on Undergraduates:  
Student Projects and Delta  
Phi Alpha Honorees****Graduate Student  
Conference: "Adaptation"****"Kurze Meisterwerke:"  
German Play Performances****2010 Max Kade Professor  
Claudia Öhlschläger**

## From the Chair

Dear friends,

This newsletter will find you at the end of spring which is just a wonderful season here in Seattle. This quarter was filled with an unusual number of events (even by our standards!). Our annual visitor was Professor Claudia Öhlschläger from the University of Paderborn who taught a course on realism and lectured on narrative framings in our Friday lecture series. You can read more about her in the interview with graduate student Nathan Magnusson. Claudia brought her husband Jörg and two boys, Moritz and Philipp, along; they enjoyed the Science Center, the Burke Museum, and the Seattle beaches while we made her work hard!

For the first time this year we decided to combine a Wine & Wisdom event with our annual celebration of new student inductees into the German honors society, Delta Phi Alpha. We are so proud of our students that we thought it would be time that the community saw what they are doing for us in our undergraduate classes. At the reception, we will showcase three student projects that grew out of undergraduate courses taught by Germanics faculty members: a modern interpretation of the first act of Lessings's "Emilia Galotti" recast as a puppet play, a blog about German Romanticism, and a You-Tube video casting our students in a play entitled "Die Leiden der jungen Helga." These projects are hilarious and really creative. If you have time, go check them out.

Other newsletter features this quarter:

- Our graduate students were involved in planning and organizing the annual interdisciplinary student conference in the humanities.
- We are continuing the tradition established in the last newsletter and feature a dissertation project that will be completed soon. Kevin Johnson, who is teaching at Charles University of Prague as a lecturer in cinema studies, will give you more background on his thesis in

his feature.

- Ph.D. Candidate Tim Coombs will be teaching a summer outreach course on modern German literature at the Frye Museum this summer.
- Former graduate student in Comparative Literature and Germanics and now Associate Professor of Humanities at Western Washington University, Andrea Gogröf-Voorhees, will give the third Alumni Lecture this year.

Our program is currently blessed with an excellent cohort of young scholars who will soon be entering an intensely competitive job market—made all the more challenging by the recent closures of several German programs nationwide. Our graduates have continued to fare well in spite of the challenges thanks to the richness of our tradition, our academic quality, our proven efficiency in delivering content, and our openness for technological innovation in the language classroom. All reasons to move forward with confidence.

Enjoy the summer and we will be back with more news in the fall.

Sabine  
Professor of German and Chair

[top](#)

## Another Great Spring in Vienna:

### Lead TA Eric Scheufler Leads 14 Students in Study Abroad

The tradition continues! This April, fourteen UW students took off to participate in Germanics' "Spring in Vienna" program. With something to offer for everyone, this year's program has a diverse group of students at all stages of their college careers with majors as varied as history, chemical engineering, business, psychology and of course, German. Over the winter, lead TA Eric Scheufler prepared students for their time abroad with German 299 – a course designed as an introduction to the 2000+ years of rich Austrian history and cultural production. The course also familiarizes students with current events and hot topics in Viennese city life.

Students arrived in Vienna by April 6 and immediately began coursework, with three hours of intense language instruction every morning and an art history course in the museums and palaces of Vienna twice a week. Eric will join the group in June with a course on the construction of Austrian national identity since 1955 through literature, film, art, sociology and political affairs. Weekend trips are also planned to Graz and Budapest for students to see more of the Austrian countryside and the "other half" of the former monarchy.

(Pictured above: Students at a bust of Beethoven in Nußdorf on their way up the Kahlenberg. From left to right, students are: Rachael Strom, Kyle Flotlin, Robert Hampton, Amanda Sloan, Linnea Bickeboeller, Bradley Day-Bazhaw, Cassie Kincaid, Mariella Cohen, Renata Cummings, Nancy Peng, Matthew Spencer, Alana Zimmerman, Spencer Rothwell and Travin Dy.)

[top](#)

## Dissertation Brief

*Kevin Johnson:  
"Annexation Effects:  
Cultural  
Appropriation and the  
Politics of Place in  
Czech-German  
Films, 1930-1945"*

The dissertation maps various points of cultural transfer in Czech-German films of the 1930s and 1940s. Specifically, it examines the representation and performance of ethnicity and the layered connections between geographic space, national identity, and mass culture. My work

illustrates that Nazi cinema's appropriation of Czech culture was informed and, more importantly, legitimated by the Austro-Hungarian legacy. This analysis provides a framework for understanding the German film industry's stake in the Czech lands and its people. The dissertation further demonstrates the peculiar position within the German cinematic imagination occupied by Prague and the Czech territories. At once "familiar" and "foreign," these cinematic spaces become settings for ethnic confrontation and for the negotiation of German identity.

Each chapter examines the intersection of German and Czech cinema from a different thematic or historical perspective. Chapter One deals with questions of authorship and transnationalism in films by Czech-German directors. Chapter Two looks at the staging of female bodies and the performance of "ethnic drag" by Czech actors in German films. Chapter Three explores the affinities between genre, geography, and concepts of *Heimat* in the context of German, Austrian, and "Bohemian" cinema. Chapter Four investigates the politics of place and identity in Czech-German multiple language version films (or MLVs) of the 1930s. Chapter Five examines the special role of "Prague" as an uncanny site in the German cinematic imagination. Chapter Six analyzes films produced in occupied Prague within the larger context of Third Reich cinema.

The study offers detailed analyses of various discourses relevant to German-Czech cultural transfer and appropriation in Third Reich cinema. It employs a broad base of resources including newspapers, film journals, unpublished correspondence, as well as films and advertising materials. My research combines close readings of films with background information (biographies, production notes, distribution and reception history, etc.) relevant for their cinematic and cultural contextualization. The dissertation integrates individual film analyses into larger discourses on popular film, genre, authorship, and national cinema. I examine a number of lesser-known films in the context of existing analytical frameworks and thereby shed new light on such canonical films as Veit Harlan's *Die goldene Stadt* (1942) and Max Ophüls's *Die verkaufte Braut* (1932). My theoretical approach is informed by recent work on popular cinema in Nazi Germany and also engages current scholarship on national/transnational cinema, ethnic performance, and genre theory, particularly with regard to operettas, musicals, and *Heimat* films. By addressing various sites of intercultural confrontation, the project contributes to the understanding of Third Reich cinema's national and transnational imagination.

top

## Graduate Student Conference: "Adaptations"

On Thursday and Friday, May 20-21, graduate students from

the departments of Germanics, Comparative Literature, French, CHID and English collaborated on an interdisciplinary conference addressing notions of "Adaptation."

The theme follows a recent upsurge in scholarship on the concept, evidenced by the appearance of two journals dedicated to "adaptation studies" along with the proliferation of texts exploring the theory of adaptation. Organizers hoped that the conference would help lead adaptation studies away from what Thomas Leicht called the "book-into-film" model and toward broader and more inclusive discourses. The continued turn to the digital in particular challenges both the medial and disciplinary specificity of "adaptation." Graduate students from all disciplines were therefore invited to submit proposals for papers exploring the farthest reaches of adaption studies: Do we need to rethink notions of adaptation? What does it mean to adapt to new technologies? And how might these changes influence disciplines beyond the humanities and social sciences? Do new technologies affect categories of the natural in the sciences? Or does it mean that the cyborgs of science fiction are the new domain of the history of science? And how might these technologies translate into issues of scale and creativity in our built environment, where the program and not the architect, or so it has been argued, is itself the source of creativity? Specific topics ranged from the aesthetics of adaptation to genre adaptation in the arts, literature at a digital crossroads, film/new media, adaptive interfaces, post-colonial/traumatic-war adaptations, translations, and bio-molecular adaptations.

The keynote speaker for the conference was Paul A. Harris, Associate Professor of English at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. Professor Harris is the co-editor of the journal *SubStance: A Journal of Theory and Criticism*, president of the International Society for the Study of Time and director of SynThink, a forum for Meta-Physical Pragmatics at Loyola Marymount.

Conference support came from many sources across UW Arts and Humanities, including the Simpson Center for the Humanities. All sessions took place in the Simpson Center and in the Department of Germanics Rey Library (Denny 308).

[top](#)

## **Modernity and its Discontents: German Literary and Visual Culture 1890-1933**

### *Summer Seminar at the Frye Art Museum*

The Frye Art Museum has invited Germanics' Ph.D. candidate Tim Coombs to teach a course on German Modernism as part of its summer educational outreach programming.

One of three art history courses offered by the Frye in July and August, Tim's course will explore the profound sense of foreboding and uncertainty that resonates throughout various works of German-language literature (as well as painting and film) in the early twentieth century. It will consider pivotal figures such as Franz Kafka, Thomas Mann, and Fritz Lang, focusing also on the intellectual forces that influenced their work (for example, Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud).

It will also examine how various historical conditions—rapid urbanization, the traumas of World War I, the political instability of the Weimar Republic—contributed to the cultural innovations of several artistic movements, including Expressionism and New Objectivity (*Neue Sachlichkeit*).

Participants will be exposed to a variety of literary and visual material from the early twentieth century, gaining a basic familiarity with the so-called "Zeitgeist" (the spirit of the times) that circulates throughout. They will also become acquainted

with various interpretive strategies (i.e. Freudian analysis) appropriate to this period, optimally fostering new approaches to discussing literature and art beyond the course.

Tim has taught German language, literature, philosophy, and film at the University of Washington, as well as English language in Germany, Chile, and Peru. He is currently writing his dissertation on Franz Kafka, Martin Heidegger, and Paul Celan.

All Frye courses are developed for students, educators, and lifelong learners; they are also available as professional development for educators. (Teachers can gain continuing-education graduate-level credits or clock hours for recertification in collaboration with Seattle Pacific University.) The courses also provide an introduction to upcoming Frye exhibitions. For more information, please visit [http://fryemuseum.org/program/summer\\_art\\_history\\_courses/](http://fryemuseum.org/program/summer_art_history_courses/).

Image: Max Klinger. *The Abduction*, from the cycle "A Glove," 1881. Etching and aquatint.

top

### Third Annual Alumni Lecture

UW Germanics is pleased to host its third annual alumni lecture on Friday, May 28, at 1:30 in the Rey Library (Denny Hall 308).

Dr. Andrea Gogróf-Voorhees received her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the UW in 1995 and is now an associate professor in the Department of Liberal Studies at Western Washington University. Her 1999 book, entitled *Defining Modernism: Baudelaire and Nietzsche on Romanticism, Modernity, Decadence and Wagner*, appeared in Peter Lang Publishing's Studies in Literary Criticism and Theory series. She continues to write on topics related to modernity, for instance literary representations of public and private hygiene as forms of control in the wake of 19th Century urban renewal. At present she is working on surveillance and voyeurism in contemporary literature and film. She has published articles on Nietzsche, Baudelaire, and Handke; her most recent article on Michael Haneke's films is forthcoming this spring in *Fascinatingly Disturbing: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Michael Haneke's Cinema*.

Andrea's alumni lecture topic is "Surveillance and Voyeurism in Michael Haneke's Films." A reception will follow the lecture. All are welcome!

top

### Claudia Öhlschläger visits UW as 2010 Kade Distinguished Professor

Dr. Claudia Öhlschläger is a professor of Germanics and Comparative Literature at the University of Paderborn. This quarter she is teaching a graduate seminar on nineteenth-century realist literature. She recently spoke with Germanics graduate student Nathan Magnusson.

---

**NM: Prof. Öhlschläger, we are happy to welcome you to the Germanics Department in Seattle. How did you arrive**

**at the decision to visit us as this year's Kade professor?**

CÖ: I was at the GSA conference in 2006, where I met Heidi Tilghman and Brigitte Prutti. We discussed our research interests, and they said they would recommend me to Sabine Wilke as a candidate for the Max Kade Professorship.

**NM: This quarter you are leading a graduate seminar on nineteenth-century realism. Please describe the problem you would like to explore.**

CÖ: The seminar is an attempt to take a fresh look at nineteenth-century realist literature. The primary categories are images, frames, and rooms, which are structurally connected with each other. The overarching question addresses the way in which concepts of realism manifest themselves—that is, how do the authors of the texts we're reading attempt to develop their conception of realism. We can already hypothesize that it is not a paradigm of imitation, not a mimetic reproduction of reality, but rather that the realists were well aware of the constructed nature of reality, and that frames, rooms, and images draw attention to reality's construction.

**NM: How does the problem of representing reality in narrative relate to your own research interests?**

CÖ: I've been particularly interested in Adalbert Stifter since the beginning of my studies, and I've published quite a lot on him, Flaubert, and Fontane. Also, in the course of my intensive research on W.G. Sebald's literary works, which I see as realist literature of the twentieth century, I've rediscovered the realists of the nineteenth century, especially because Sebald consistently invokes these authors. I believe it's no coincidence that twentieth century literature develops out of literary tradition of realism, and this relationship, it seems to me, has not been sufficiently addressed in the scholarship.

**NM: On April 16 you are giving a lecture on the problem of realism in Storm, Stifter, and Fontane. How have the discussions in the seminar influenced your understanding of this problem?**

CÖ: I already prepared the lecture in Germany, and it's ready to be published. However, the discussions of the last three weeks have given me many important insights into smaller details and also confirmed my suspicions that the problem of framing represents one of the most important phenomena of realist literature. One has to explain the function of frames, this dialectic, this interplay between inside and outside, and the discussions with the graduate students have been very insightful in this regard.

**NM: Why did you choose these particular authors for the focus of the seminar and your lecture?**

CÖ: These texts deal primarily with visual art and the issue of framing, not only as narrative frames, that is, as narrative constructions, but also the materiality of frames. This additional aspect of framing prompted my selection of these particular literary texts.

**NM: Finally, what has been the highlight of your stay in Seattle?**

CÖ: There have been many highlights: the city's beauty, of course, its diversity, the interplay between urban and natural landscapes. Most rewarding has been my work with the graduate students, who are very engaged and well informed. Accordingly, the seminar has taken on the character of a research group with a feeling of give and take.

top

## Focus on our Undergraduates: Germanics Honors Outstanding Students

The Department of Germanics will honor the outstanding work of its undergraduate students at a reception in the Rey Library on May 25. The reception, part of the "Wine and Wisdom" series promoted by the Germanics Advisory

Board, will feature particularly noteworthy student projects from the past year. Two such projects stem from Professor Brigitte Prutti's winter quarter 2010 German 312, "Historical Approaches to German Literature," course. Vedran Glisic, Cassie Kincaid, Tyler Leitch collaborated on a silent movie interpretation of a Goethe classic; to view their short film, "Die Leiden der Jungen Helga," see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T4kGeWJGQOI>. Another group, Alex Minami, Matthew Kraus, Elizabeth Korsmo, examined the criteria and challenges associated with literary prizes, with particular emphasis on German woman writers. Additional student projects featured at the reception came from Sabine Wilke's autumn quarter German 311, "Approaches to Literature," course, for which one group of students reinterpreted Lessings Emilia Galotti as a modern puppet show, and from German 307 course (cross-listed with the Center for West European Studies, for which students designed a blog on German Romanticism.

Honored at the reception will be the 2010 inductees to the Delta Phi Alpha National German Honorary Society. The Society began with the founding of the Alpha chapter at Wofford College in 1927, and now has constituent chapters at 236 colleges and universities throughout the United States. The University of Washington chapter (the Iota chapter) was established in 1930 and has since honored hundreds of outstanding undergraduate and graduate students with membership. Delta Phi Alpha's mission is to recognize excellence in the study of German and to provide an incentive for higher scholarship. The Society aims to promote the study of the German language, literature and civilization and endeavors to emphasize those aspects of German life and culture which are of universal value and which contribute to man's eternal search for peace and truth. Congratulations to our newest members:

[list]

top

### "Kurze Meisterwerke:" The German Play 2010

*By Brook Rosini*

This year's German Play course explores two main themes. The first concerns itself with how

meaning is

communicated through sound and intonation. We then build from our linguistic foundation to arrive at our second theme: the fragmentary nature of cultural identity. We have chosen to approach this problem through the lens of *Verfremdung*. To this end, we are presenting a number of scenes and fragments by masters working in the German language.

Our selection includes two experimental “sound plays” by Peter Handke, one of which forces company and audience alike to meditate on what it means to engage in theater, a poignant fragment by Bertolt Brecht concerned with interpersonal insight at the margins of society, and an intensely emotional and inexorably gruesome piece by Heiner Müller, which blends 20th century politics with classical Greek form.

In addition, we will present two scenes originally written in English. One of these—a ten-minute one-act “contentless” soundscape written by important American playwright Alice Gerstenberg—we translated ourselves. This project was meant to empower the students in the German language by giving them full control over every aspect of the play, while at the same time exposing them to the delicate

nuance required in any translation project and the inevitable difficulties encountered by the translator—even when the text at first seems simple and straightforward. Our other English-language scene exists in German translation, but was previously unavailable in written form, requiring our intensive aural concentration to transcribe the speech. All of our pieces reflect on *Verfremdung* as we have defined it for our course.

Our company occupies a playful position regarding the topic, and rather than adhere to a strictly Brechtian interpretation of *Verfremdungseffekt*, we will explore variations on the theme. We therefore take a broader view toward the meaning of “alienation” and what it means to produce its “effect” in the audience through the dialogue we speak and the physical scenes we inhabit.

We have been having a tremendous amount of fun as we focus on our work, and we hope to see all our friends and affiliates at our performances at the Ethnic Cultural Theater on Thursday and Friday, June 3rd and 4th. Come show your support for the Germanics Department and enjoy the production staged by the students of German 304: The German Play!