The 39th GSA Conference in Washington, D.C. (October 1-4, 2015) will again host a series of seminars in addition to its regular conference sessions and roundtables.

Seminars meet for all three days of the conference during the first morning slot to foster extended discussion, rigorous intellectual exchange, and intensified networking. They are led by 2 to 4 conveners and will consist of either 12 to 15 or 16 to 20 participants, at least some of whom should be graduate students. In order to reach the goal of extended discussion, seminar organizers and participants are expected to participate in all three installments of the seminar.

The following seminars have been selected and approved for enrollment at the 2015 GSA Conference:

1. The Berlin School and Its Global Contexts
2. (Re)tracing Cosmopolitanism: Weltliteratur, Weltbürgertum, Weltgesellschaft in Modern Germanophone Cultures, ca. 1800 to the Global Present
3. Making Democratic Subjectivities
4. East German Cinema and TV in a Global Context: Before and After 1990
5. Imagining Europe: Assessing the “Eastern Turn” in Literature
6. The Epic Side of Truth: Narration and Knowledge-Formation (sponsored by the DAAD)
7. Experience and Cultural Practice: Rewriting the Everyday History of Post-War Germany
8. Figurations of the Fantastic Since 1989
9. GDR Historiography – What’s next?
10. German Risks: Managing Safety and Disaster in 20th Century Europe
11. German Unification as a Catalyst for Change: Linking Political Transformation at the Domestic and International Level
12. Science, Nature, and Art: From the Age of Goethe to the Present
13. Human Rights, Genocide, and Germans’ Moral Campaigns in the World
14. Integrating Language, Culture, and Content Learning Across the Undergraduate German Curriculum
15. Jews and the Study of Popular Culture
16. Towards a Literary Epistemology of Medicine
17. 1781-1806: Twenty-Five Years of Literature and Philosophy
18. Material Ecocriticism and German Culture
19. Between Isolation and Globalization: The Project of a Modern Switzerland
20. The Rise and Fall of Monolingualism
21. New Feminist and Queer Approaches to German Studies
22. Political Activism in the Black European Diaspora: From Theory to Praxis
23. Revisiting the Case of Nathan: Religion and Religious Identity in Nineteenth-Century German Europe (1800-1914)
25. Travel and Geopolitics
26. German Travel Writing From the 18th to the 21st Century
27. Visual Culture Network: The Body

If you wish to participate in a seminar, please visit the GSA Website and enroll electronically under “membership services > conference proposals.”

Participation in a seminar involves intellectual work akin to preparing a paper and will thus count as such. All seminar participants will be listed by name in the program. If you are accepted to be an active participant in a seminar, you are not allowed to give a paper in panel sessions. However, you may moderate or comment on a panel.

Some individuals may choose to be a silent auditor to a seminar. Slots for auditors are limited; the enrollment process for interested auditors will only take place after the entire GSA program is set.

Applications for enrollment are due by January 30, 2015. We will inform applicants by February 5, 2015, whether they have been accepted or not. Please do not send your applications directly to the seminar organizers.

Please direct all inquiries to the GSA Seminar Program Committee:
Elisabeth Herrmann (University of Stockholm) | elisabeth.herrmann@tyska.su.se
Katja Garloff (Reed College) | garloffk@reed.edu
Heikki Lempa (Moravian College) | hlempa@moravian.edu
Seminar 1
The Berlin School and Its Global Contexts

Conveners
● Marco Abel (University of Nebraska-Lincoln)
● Jaimey Fisher (University of California-Davis)

Seminar Description
The filmmakers collectively known as the Berlin School have left an indelible mark on post-unification German history. In the last twelve months alone, four books on these filmmakers were published that, together, irreversibly canonized them within the larger canon of German film history: Jaimey Fisher’s Christian Petzold, the first monograph on any of the Berlin School filmmakers; the co-edited volume, Berlin School Glossary: An ABC of the New Wave in German Cinema; The Berlin School: Films from the Berliner Schule, the catalogue/book published at the Museum of Modern Art’s retrospective of Berlin School films in 2013; and Marco Abel’s The Counter-Cinema of the Berlin School, the first comprehensive study of the movement and winner of the 2014 GSA Book Prize.

What characterizes these approaches – as well as the vast majority of articles published on these films – is their German-centric focus: mostly written by German (film) studies scholars, the publications on the Berlin School have primarily considered these filmmakers and their work in the context of German cinema, culture, history, and politics. This seminar seeks to intervene in the conversation on the most significant filmmaking movement Germany has seen since the heyday of the New German Cinema in the 1970s by reframing the scholarly encounter with these films. Instead of viewing these films primarily as German, we invite our seminar participants to investigate how the work of the Berlin School can be profitably examined in the context of global (art) cinema; that is, instead of seeking to continue to apply to these films what is essentially a national lens, this seminar seeks to situate them in transnational contexts. In so doing, this seminar heeds calls from both the Berlin School filmmaking community itself and German film scholars such as Lutz Koepnick to stop constraining the innovative nature of these films by forcing them into the straitjacket of the national and, conversely, to begin appreciating more carefully how these films are as much outward-looking expressions of global art cinema in the third millennium as they are inward-looking cinematic messages that obsessively turn to the question of the German nation.

By staging an encounter between scholars trained in German (film) studies and those whose background is in other national cinemas, this seminar seeks to question how German these films really are and what we might gain, as well as what might be lost, if analyses of this filmmaking movement were to suspend, if not abandon, the frequently overly narrow purview of German film history/studies. Our hope is that such an intervention will make these exciting filmmakers available both anew to German film studies and newly to the broader community of cinema studies – a community that rarely if ever attends to contemporary German-language films.

Seminar Format
Each participant will be asked to submit their work-in-progress (10-15 pages) ahead of time, which all participants will be required to read as preparation for the seminar. The conveners will also assign one reading on global art cinema as transnational cinema, such as the introduction from Schoonover and Galt’s Global Art Cinema, in order to ensure a common foundation from which to discuss. At our three meetings, each participant will receive substantial feedback on their work-in-progress from the diversity of perspectives deliberately represented in the seminar; as a result, participants will leave the seminar with expertly vetted essays that can be submitted for publication, whether as part of an edited volume that the conveners are now editing or as stand-alone contributions to peer-reviewed journals – the seminar will be open to, and welcome, both.

Proposed Size
● 10-15
Silent Auditors

- 1-5
Seminar 2
(Re)tracing Cosmopolitanism:
Weltliteratur, Weltbürgertum, Weltgesellschaft in Modern Germanophone Cultures, ca. 1800 to the Global Present

Conveners
● Elisabeth Herrmann (Stockholm University)
● James Hodkinson (University of Warwick)
● Stuart Taberner (University of Leeds)

Seminar Description
Building on the success of previous GSA events, including a roundtable discussion on World Literature in 2012, a seminar series on Transnationalism in 2013, and a roundtable discussion on Cosmopolitanism in Contemporary German Culture in 2014, the organizers invite colleagues to take part in a seminar series at the 2015 GSA conference in Washington, D.C. This interdisciplinary seminar will continue and go beyond previous discussions on the above topics by emphasizing the historical dimension of cosmopolitanism – that is, tracing back its origin and traditions while at the same time scrutinizing the repercussions of, as well as the active engagement with cosmopolitan thinking and, most significantly, its impact upon history as well as processes of cultural production and criticism in the present.

From the antiquity of stoic philosophy to the present day, the ideal of cosmopolitanism continues, with its many forms and inflections, to present an arresting challenge to parochial, merely local, nationally or ethnically exclusive paradigms of collective identity, politics and culture. Yet it is not an uncontroversial idea. Much cosmopolitan thinking today draws upon Enlightenment and early-nineteenth-century re-mediations and re-inventions of this ancient idea. However, those modern re-castings of the ideal heralded, coincided with and often helped fuel the nineteenth-century drives towards nationalism, imperialism, and colonialism. In the German context we find theoretical reflections on cosmopolitanism in Kant’s philosophy, Lessing’s literary ideal of a humanity united beyond religious and cultural differences, and Goethe’s ideal of world literature. Such instances, though, overlap problematically with the first stirrings of German nationhood and nationalism, and postcolonial critics have rightly exposed the complicity of cosmopolitan thinking in such power driven, Eurocentric histories.

In the twentieth century, in the aftermath of two world wars and the Holocaust, the so-called new sociological cosmopolitanism, including thinkers as diverse as Hannah Arendt and Ulrich Beck, has sought to revitalize the idea to deal critically with contemporary matters such as the erosion of the nation state and the importance of international human rights. Once again, though, cosmopolitanism is being held to account. The late 20th and 21st centuries bring with them the rise and arguable fall of postmodernism, the advent of global culture, economics and politics, successive waves of postcolonial and feminist thought, and queer thinking and politics, all of which raise critical questions about the idea’s claim to be truly universal and inclusive.

The rich history of the cosmopolitan idea itself continues to be a worthwhile topic for consideration. This history, in turn, informs how we approach the idea today and how we use it as a conceptual lens through which to analyze culture, both contemporary and historical.

It is in this context that the organizers invite contributions from all disciplines which engage closely with the contemporary and historical legacies of cosmopolitan theory and culture across time, and offer close readings of theoretical texts, historical records, and cultural products from the late-eighteenth century to the present. Approaches to investigating ideas of cosmopolitanism within the German and German-speaking cultures as well as
comparative perspectives are welcome. The aim of this seminar is to work towards a quality publication in a special edition of a journal or an edited volume.

Possible themes and foci of research presentations

- cosmopolitanism as utopia: on the trans-epochal resilience of an ideal
- ideas of European and World culture, world communities and universal politics
- tensions within the ideal of cosmopolitanism
- dynamics between the cosmopolitan and vernacular, local or global
- historical forms of cosmopolitanism and their traces within the contemporary
- cosmopolitanism and (trans)nationalism in contemporary German history, culture, and literature
- contemporary challenges to cosmopolitanism: postcolonial, feminist, and queer thought

Contributions are invited that discuss specific German-language literary and filmic works with reference to one or more of these themes or foci, or through the various perspectives implied by the core reading.

Seminar Format

In preparation for the seminar, colleagues will be asked to (re)familiarize themselves with a selection of core theoretical texts that reflect the wide range of thinking on the forms, functions, strengths and ambiguities of the cosmopolitan ideal from the Enlightenment to the present. In addition, participants will be asked to submit abstracts of 500-1000 words of their existing or ongoing research or prospective article/chapter by July 1, in order that these can be circulated and read in advance. At the conference, each abstract will be discussed, but not re-presented, as the starting point of a broader discussion. The conveners will organize the seminar, propose, collect and distribute reading materials, and moderate the discussions. They will be actively involved in the research presentations and ensuing discussions.

Proposed Size

- 10-15

Silent Auditors

- 1-5
Seminar 3
Making Democratic Subjectivities

Conveners
● Kathleen Canning (University of Michigan)
● Jennifer Kapczynski (Washington University in St. Louis)

Seminar Description
This seminar explores how democratic subjectivities are historically, politically, and culturally produced, with an emphasis on their formation at the critical junctures of 1918, 1945, and 1989. It aims to bring together scholars from a range of fields to foster cross-disciplinary dialogue on the critical question of how societies encourage, shape, and sustain a sense of democratic or participatory citizenship. Our exploration takes note of the ways in which political subjectivities have remained elusive in German Studies scholarship, confined to the edges of other conceptual framings. Thus, new engagements with the history of the individual and/or the history of the self open intriguing questions about subjectivities but have granted less consideration to the role of politics in their articulation. At the same time, research in German Studies on political subjectivities has presumed that their formation takes place in relationship to strong states, from the Kaiserrreich through the Nazi period, whereby states figure as critical factors, if not determinants. This seminar extends this work, investigating the emergence of subjectivities in moments of political and cultural rupture and uncertainty – asking how subjects have formed under the messy and often tumultuous conditions of fledgling democracies. Our pursuit of democratic subjectivities underscores the significance of different state forms and invigorated civil societies, along with new institutions of cultural and social life beyond the strict boundaries of the state.

In the course of the seminar, we will explore a range of critical questions both theoretical and historical in nature, including: Where and how are political subjectivities made? What role does medium play in the formation and expression of democratic subjectivities? How are iterations of democratic subjecthood shaped by factors such as gender, race/ethnicity, religion, or immigration, and how does the articulation of the citizen shape these in turn? What methodologies avail themselves to us as scholars in identifying and analyzing these subjectivities, and how do these methods shape our interactions with primary sources, whether in terms of the scholarly selection process or the work of interpretation? How might we compare the interpretive work of ego documents such as diaries, letters, or memoirs with the analysis of visual or other forms of textual evidence, or with the reading of daily practices? How have the historical meanings of democracy changed from the period of their emergence to today, and where might we find continuities across periods? Why did democracy prove so difficult to anchor in the 1920s, why did it take root in West Germany after 1945, and how does unification challenge this paradigm of failure/success? How have defeat, regime change, and the rise of the European Union shaped the capacity for democratic consciousness?

Seminar Format
We plan to communicate with participants via email as soon as they have been admitted to the seminar, outlining the expectations for our sessions. As an initial contribution, we will ask them to propose possible theoretical texts to share with the larger group, which we will then review. From these suggestions and our own lists, we will then create a bibliography of suggested readings and a small set of core texts that all participants will be expected to read, in order to provide us with a shared foundation for discussion. Two months before the start of the conference, we plan to circulate that longer list of recommended readings along with 2-3 PDFs of book chapters or articles on the subject of political subjectivities or surrounding topics, such as the self or the individual. Three weeks in advance of the conference, all participants will be required to submit position papers of 8-10 pages on the topic of the seminar. We will ask participants to attach to their position papers a brief excerpt from a primary source, which will facilitate a more focused discussion of methodology.
We hope that an outcome of this seminar is the establishment of an informal German Studies network of interdisciplinary scholars with overlapping interests in this area. Depending upon the outcome of the seminar, we may explore the possibility of publishing expanded versions of our seminar papers in a special issue of a journal or an edited volume.

**Proposed Size**
- 10-15

**Silent Auditors**
- 0
Seminar 4
East German Cinema and TV in a Global Context: Before and after 1990

Conveners
● Seán Allan (University of Warwick, UK)
● Larson Powell (University of Missouri – Kansas City)
● Mariana Ivanova (Miami University – Ohio)

Seminar Description
Twenty-five years after the reunification of Germany, East German film, TV, and visual media seem conspicuous for their absence from everyday life in the Berlin Republic. At the same time, references in post-Wall cultural production to the GDR’s allegedly totalitarian past, to the Stasi, as well as to numerous subjective memories of life in the former East repeatedly draw audiences to the movie theaters, archive recordings of TV and other visual art forms. The first generation of Germans to grow up free from the shadow of the Berlin wall are now graduating from college, and – like the young post-war generation of the mid 1940s – are confronted with the challenge of remembering, representing, and reevaluating the past. The parallel between the post-war and the post-wall generations raises questions about historical, aesthetic, and political continuities that have informed not only German history but also film and the visual arts generally.

Our seminar will provide a forum to examine and reposition GDR cinema and art in a larger cultural, political historical and social framework and to identify and explore possible blind spots. While much important work has been done in investigating East German film and art as political entities, our seminar proposes to shift the focus to the continuities and connections between the production of East German film and related visual media and cultural production during the interwar period, the Third Reich, and the Cold War, as well as to examine the legacy of DEFA and East German television and media post-1990.

The central question that this seminar seeks to address is the extent to which East German cinema, TV and related visual media can – and should – be conceptualized as national entities. It will consider such questions as: How has the shift in the way we view nations affected the study of DEFA? According to Thomas Elsaesser, “the transformation of the geographic and historical spaces of nationhood and national stereotypes into sign-economies has however in no way diluted the political value and emotional legitimacy of national identity.Paradoxically, “it is the end of the Cold War and the globalization of capital... that has given the idea of the nation new currency and even urgency, while at the same time radically re-defining its referents.” DEFA cinema, once studied together with Eastern European cinema, is now seen as a subfield of German cinema. How has that move altered our understanding of DEFA? What is the place of DEFA in new European cultures of memory?

Our seminar will explore the extent to which East German film and TV propose to see them rather as part of a larger framework beyond post-war cinema and art, embracing aesthetic developments, artistic exchanges, and collaborative networks in Eastern and Western Europe. To date, seminal works such as Daniela Berghahn’s Hollywood Behind the Wall and Sabine Hake’s German National Cinema have challenged an isolationist approach to GDR media and art by placing it in dialogue with other national and transnational traditions. Most recently, edited volumes such as DEFA at the Crossroads of East German and International Culture: A Companion and Re-imagining DEFA: East German Cinema in its National and Transnational Context propose that the GDR media landscape was characterized by constant dialogue as well as competition with both East and West and explore international networks and identify patterns of influence that surpass the temporal and spatial confines.
In line with this recent scholarship, we invite contributions that offer new insights into areas of film, television, and media production, distribution and display, as well as approaches that interrogate the established focus on ideology. For instance, we are interested in studies of the new ways to distribute and display DEFA films on DVD or on East German television, stardom and fan culture, the reception of GDR art in particular regions of Germany and beyond, as well as the intersections between East German media and cybernetics and science fiction. Along these lines, we are interested in the legacy of DEFA and East German television for a new generation of German directors who turn to remember the GDR in their films such as Christian Schwochow’s television productions Der Turm and Bornholmer Straße, Christian Petzold’s Barbara, and Andreas Dresen’s Als wir träumten.

Seminar Format
Each participant will submit a paper of 8-10 double-spaced pages by August 1st, 2015. Two additional readings will be assigned for each day of discussion in order to provide broader framework for the presented papers. These readings will be announced to the participants upon finalizing the list. Participants will receive all abstracts by May 2015, as well as what section of the seminar they will present in, and may communicate with each other on related topics. The conveners will moderate one session each and will respond briefly to each paper that will be discussed on that particular day; conveners may contribute papers for discussion on a day when they do not moderate. During the seminar, participants have 10-20 minutes to contextualize their papers and the forum will be open for discussion of each paper individually. A general discussion will follow at the end.

Proposed Size
- 10-15

Silent Auditors
- 1-5
Seminar 5
Imagining Europe:
Assessing the “Eastern Turn” in Literature

Conveners
● Anke Biendarra (University of California - Irvine)
● Maria Mayr (Memorial University of Newfoundland)

Seminar Description
This seminar focuses on the post-1989 discourse on Eastern and Central Europe, specifically the literary and cultural production of German-language writers. With the collapse of communist regimes and the 1990s wars in the Balkan region, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland experienced an influx of refugees, many of whom eventually settled in the respective countries and changed the demographic realities of immigration. Writers and filmmakers in particular have since opened up German-language culture towards more intercultural, transnational perspectives, leading scholars to speak of an “Eastern Turn” or, focusing more narrowly on the territories of the former Yugoslavia, a “Balkan Turn” with regard to literary production.

Writing about themes and issues related to Eastern and Central Europe also has led to a higher profile of writers in the public sphere and an increasing commercial success. For instance, Melinda Nadj Abonji's Tauben fliegen auf, about a Serbian-Swiss perspective on the 1990s Balkan wars, won the Schweizer and Deutscher Buchpreis in 2010; Terezia Mora's Das Ungeheuer, about a husband trying to come to terms with his Hungarian wife's suicide by traveling throughout Eastern Europe, garnered the Deutscher Buchpreis in 2013; and Marica Bodrožić's Kirschholz und alte Gefühle, about an expat from Sarajevo facing the 1990s wars and its aftermath, was honored with the European Union Prize for Literature in 2013. Shifting our attention further East, Olga Grjasnowa's Der Russe ist einer, der Birken liebt and Die juristische Unschärfe einer Ehe as well as Julya Rabinowich's Spaltkopf and Die Erdfresserin deal with post-Soviet countries such as Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Dagestan.

The critical success of these writers and the intensified scholarly debate about their narratives and aesthetics invite an assessment of German-language literature from and about the East to which the GSA seminar format lends itself perfectly. We propose a seminar on the literature of the Eastern Turn that brings together scholars working on the topic from North America and Europe. The seminar’s goal is to map the field of writing that deals with Eastern and Central Europe in the broadest possible way, including transnational writing by both ethnic and non-ethnic German-language authors.

In order to focus the discussion, we will revisit the observation that the literature from the East contributes “to a post-Cold War remapping of Europe” and re-defines contemporary Europe by shifting attention from the Franco-German heart of the European Union to the Eastern periphery. Over the three days of the seminar, we will investigate how this body of work engages with questions surrounding the current state of Europe and its possibilities and limitations. Areas of inquiry might include Europe’s socialist past, the transnational European memory project, neoliberalism and austerity, periphery and center, and the Europeanization of identity.

The following questions are of particular interest to the area of inquiry and provide the intellectual framework of the seminar:
- What are the central common themes emerging from this rapidly expanding body of work?
- How are these works simultaneously shaped by and shaping contemporary German-language literature and/or European literature?
How do these texts engage with and affect socio-political discourses (migration, integration, Europeanization) in the German-speaking countries?

- How do the Balkans serve as a projection screen for Europe and the European project?
- What theoretical approaches do individual scholars bring to the study of this literature?
- How do we assess this body of writing in the context of transnationalism, cosmopolitanism, and Europeanization?

**Seminar Format**
Participants will be asked to circulate 10-12 page research papers on a topic of their choice that takes into account some of the above detailed questions and makes explicit the research questions and methodology applied. Participants will submit these papers to the conveners six or seven weeks before the convention. The conveners will organize the papers into thematic clusters before sending them to participants, who will be asked to come prepared for a discussion of all papers. In addition, the conveners will provide a short reading list of theoretical writings on the topic of the seminar that participants should read ahead of time as the basis for discussion. On Day 1 and part of Day 2 of the seminar, participants will give a 10-minute summary of their main arguments and then engage in discussion of pertinent themes, topics, and methodologies. Day 3 will be spent on further dialogue and making connections between the works read, including a discussion of theoretical and methodological approaches and a possible publication.

**Proposed Size**
- 16-20

**Silent Auditors**
- 1-5
Seminar 6
The Epic Side of Truth: Narration and Knowledge-Formation (Sponsored by the DAAD)

Conveners
● Paul Fleming (Cornell University)
● Leif Weatherby (New York University)

Seminar Description
This seminar proposes to investigate the unique modes of knowledge produced in various forms of narration – from myth, epic, and the novel to the anecdote, autobiography, and case history. The seminar will explore the ways in which storytelling and its intensive theorization in the German tradition provide a form of knowledge sui generis about experience, temporality, consciousness, subjectivity, sociality, and history. This “epic side of truth” or “non-conceptual thinking” circumscribes epistemic insights that can be obtained neither by strictly conceptual thought nor by the natural sciences’ model of verification and repeatability, while being essential to both.

The gambit of this seminar is that narrative is back – in the popular imagination, in the social and hard sciences, and indeed in literary studies. A long tradition of literary theory has focused on rhetorical tropes, critiques of various ideologies, and the constitution of legibility as such. Narrative’s return presents new problems for this approach, calling for new theoretical frameworks. Since narrative’s proper form of thinking combines image-based content and the distribution of those images through time, the specific logics of narrative form the subject of the seminar. At a time when the Humanities are pressed to justify their relevance, this seminar stakes a claim for the ineluctable function of storytelling and narration with respect to consciousness, politics, history, and knowledge formation in general.

Possible points of inquiry include, but are in no way limited to, the novel and forms-of-life for modern subjectivity; narrative and the hermeneutics of the subject; the talking cure and case histories; storytelling and the wisdom of lived experience; the cartography of storytelling; the novel of consciousness and lifeworlds; evolutionary theory and the literary animal; temporality, historicity, and contingency; anecdotes and New Historicism; as well as the most recent critical work in German Studies on narration and knowledge.

While the seminar takes its cue from canonical work on the novel, autobiography, and storytelling in the German tradition, scholars concentrating on any historical period or cultural medium (e.g. film, oral history, montage arts, serialized TV dramas) are encouraged to apply, as the seminar aims to promote dialogue among various specializations within German Studies. This seminar is sponsored by the DAAD insofar it builds upon the theme from the 2014 DAAD Faculty Summer Seminar held at Cornell University.

Seminar Format
The seminar’s participants will be asked to write 5-page papers and read one another’s pre-circulated papers, which will be designed more as a set of theses, stakes, interventions or questions than a full-blown paper. The goal of the seminar is to promote discussion, with each paper receiving a 5-minute introduction from the presenter and 20 minutes of group discussion. There will be a very small set of touchstone texts as additional reading intended to offer a common set of problems, themes, and methods rather than be the main focus of discussion. Each session will revolve around a set of theoretical issues raised by a single text or two of additional reading. We will split the days according to how people’s papers link up with these. The conveners will be in regular contact with the participants via email in the months leading up to the conference, and all the papers as well as the touchstone texts will be available via Dropbox four weeks in advance of the GSA meeting.
Proposed Size
● 15-20

Silent Auditors
● 1-5
Experience and Cultural Practice: Rewriting the Everyday History of Postwar Germany

Conveners
- Erica Carter (King’s College)
- Jan Palmowski (University of Warwick)
- Katrin Schreiter (King’s College London)

Seminar Description
During four decades of division, the German governments developed policy, customs, and cultural representations that worked towards the creation of two separate national identities in a divided country. These pursuits affected the two populations’ everyday life and shaped the way in which they experienced and navigated Cold War era challenges such as nuclear deterrence and détente or economic boom and crisis. They also shaped how Germans worked, what they ate, and what they saw. But separation was coupled with moments of shared experience. Television brought western mores into GDR living rooms; visits across the border by family members and party functionaries and cross-cultural traffic amongst artists, writers, and sub-cultural youth made life on both sides of the border an experience of simultaneous alienation and proximity.

This seminar explores how German-German lives were lived in a double consciousness of division and mutual belonging. The focus is on everyday experience and its shaping within the two Germanys across a range of sites and cultural forms, including print and literary culture, visual representations, monuments, film, television, and radio, as well as cultural practices and rites of passage that helped define individual and communal modes of belonging. Jacques Rancière’s concept of political aesthetics functions as one starting point for exploring culture’s part in shaping those “self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously disclosed (...) the existence of something in common.” Participants are invited to explore how political community across and within the German-German border was shaped by everyday cultural and aesthetic practice. The aesthetic will be understood not as a domain separate from daily life, but as those modes of sense perception and experience which create “forms of perceptible community (and) unite people within living ties.” Discussion will center on three categories of experience – time, space and the body – and on the intersection between micro-histories of embodied experience and macro-histories of political community within and across the Cold War divide.

With its emphasis on interdisciplinarity, the seminar and the emerging essay anthology seek to make a novel methodological contribution to our understanding of everyday life in divided Germany. While previous studies of everyday life have often focused on the two separate German states, this volume will consider everyday experience as a site of socio-cultural negotiations that may have produced simultaneities as well as dissimultaneities, ambivalent processes of convergence alongside the deep rifts of ideological division and Cold War.

The aim will be to explore a rearticulation of traditional political accounts, and offer responses to the unresolved question of how and why German unification worked on the ground in 1989/90. What was it that Germans retained or developed that allowed them a common language and understanding after 1990 about their everyday realities? What values, beliefs, and aspirations came to the fore during that moment of historical rupture and how do they relate to the subjectivities of Germans before 1989?

Seminar Format
Participants will read and circulate papers of 8,000 words, including footnotes/endnotes, before the conference. For a shared point of departure, participants are asked to read Jacques Rancière’s *The Politics of Aesthetics,*
Raymond Williams’ “Structures of Feeling” and Konrad Jarausch’s “Divided, Yet Reunited.” We will also share the book proposal for the anthology. The deadline for paper submission is 31 August 2015. Communication in the months leading up to the conference will be mostly by email. Paper submissions and accessibility will be facilitated by using shared online folders such as Dropbox.

As the seminar is divided in three morning sessions, we will use each morning to address one of three thematic areas, identified by literature as central experiential realms: time, including memory and utopia, artifacts/ruins, rhythms of every-day life; space, including locality and region, transnational linkages, urban planning; and the body, including gender and sexuality, health and illness, privacy and violence. The three conveners will each serve as respondent for one seminar session and give a 15-minute summary that also raises methodological and theoretical issues in the papers covered in that particular session: time (Jan Palmowski), space (Katrin Schreiter) and body (Erica Carter). The authors will then comment briefly before the floor is opened to discussion. Moderated discussion will explore how a focus on everyday experience can help us unlock subjectivity in recent German history, and with this improve our understanding of both shared and divided values, beliefs and aspirations on both sides of the border. During the last seminar session, time will be set aside to address how the papers can be integrated into the anthology. This format promises targeted feedback on the scholarly work, while simultaneously facilitating the turn-around for the publication.

After the conference, selected authors will be contacted to confirm their interest in publishing their paper in the anthology, followed by an editing process that includes editor comments and multiple revision rounds. This publication project has been growing over the past year. Planning began after a symposium at King’s College London titled “Capturing Aesthetics in Everyday Life: Towards a Historiography of Cultural Sensibility in Divided Germany, 1949-1990,” which the three conveners co-organized in June 2014. The scholarly rationale has been developed further in the book proposal and we are inviting contributions that respond to it.

**Proposed Size**
- 10-15

**Silent Auditors**
- 6-10
Seminar 8
Figurations of the Fantastic since 1989

Conveners
● Stefan Höppner (University of Calgary/University of Freiburg)
● Gerrit K. Roessler (Independent Scholar)

Seminar Description
While German Studies has often addressed literature and film as spaces for the negotiation of issues in contemporary society, most of it has focused on these aspects in canonical texts written within a realist paradigm. At the same time, utopian literature, science fiction, and fantasy, among others, have been used for centuries to question the status quo by discussing the problems of German society in the guise of distant planets and futures or remote islands. The fantastic elements in Grimmelshausen’s *Simplicius Simplicissimus* and the island utopias of Johann Valentin Andreae’s *Christianopolis* and Johann Gottfried Schnabel’s highly influential *Insel Felsenburg* are early examples of this tradition.

Our seminar aims to prolong this trajectory all the way to the present and to take stock of the role of the fantastic in a post-1989 society. Besides the international success of popular authors such as Frank Schätzing, Wolfgang Hohlbein, and Ulrike Nolte, as well as film directors such as Wolfgang Petersen – not to mention the surprise success of the 2012 Finnish-Australian-German satire-spectacle *Iron Sky*, about Nazi-alien invaders – German authors, filmmakers, and thinkers have had significant impact on world fantasy and science fiction. Furthermore, the works of Dietmar Dath, Juli Zeh, Lars Kraume, and others have found great acclaim amongst critics and scholars as well as SF and fantasy audiences.

By focusing on works from the last 25 years we intend to explore how the fantastic, in its various figurations – including, but not limited to science fiction, fantasy, horror, disaster narrative, and utopian literature – continues to have a direct and tangible relationship to and effect on the world we have come to understand as reality and its representation. We are particularly interested in how literature and film use the fantastic as a mode to explore issues like the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall, gender roles, class structure, and cultural hybridity in the wake of globalization. We hope to go beyond the standard definitions, which tend to frame the fantastic by merely pointing at varying degrees of opposition to realism. Instead, we would like to complement investigations of texts, films, or sounds, which should take up two of the three sessions, by encouraging contributions that would focus on theories of the fantastic for our third session. We are particularly interested in perspectives involving emerging cross-disciplinary fields, such as cognitive studies and digital humanities, as well as identity and migration studies.

Seminar Format
Participants will be asked to provide a text on their subject of 5 to 7 pages in form of a traditional conference paper. Rather than read the papers out loud during the sessions, they will be circulated approximately four to five weeks before the GSA. This text should contain the main points of a specific argument, which can, however be part of a larger one. The presenters should also bring a one-page summary of the paper to the conference to refresh the participants’ memories. As to additional readings, we intend to assign 6 to 8 book chapters and articles that address the fantastic as a mode of reflecting contemporary political and social issues, the function of specific genres, and the specifics of the fantastic in post-1989 German-speaking countries. We will converse by email in the weeks and months leading up to the seminar.

Proposed Size
● 16-20
Silent Auditors

- 6-10
Seminar 9
GDR Historiography – What’s Next?

Conveners
● Konrad H. Jarausch (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)
● Martin Sabrow (ZZF Potsdam and Humboldt University, Berlin)
● Jens Schöne (Deputy State Commissioner for the Records of the State Security Service of the former GDR)
● Stefanie Eisenhuth (ZZF Potsdam and Humboldt University, Berlin)

Seminar Description
Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the June uprising in 1953, German historians were in all seriousness debating if the GDR had already been studied in its entirety and if it was time to move on. In consequence, experts such as Jürgen Kocka, Thomas Lindenberger und Martin Sabrow from the Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschungen as well as a team of authors from the Institut für Zeitgeschichte published programmatic articles to demonstrate that this had been a rather hasty judgment. At the same time, everyday life in the GDR became a popular topic of German TV shows. While some professional observers noted with a certain helplessness a gap between their historiographical master narrative of the GDR and the memories of its former citizens, others pointed out that in this very gap one could actually locate the many academic voids. However, when a commission of experts underlined this assumption three years later by pointing out that historians have so far mostly been studying mechanisms of suppression and forms of resistance but not the everyday experiences of average people, a heated debate began. It reached its climax with the public demand to only focus on topics that clearly demonstrate the GDR’s dictatorial nature, because every other historiographical approach would be tantamount to “state-sponsored ostalgie.” While in the wake of this debate several studies on memorizing the GDR were being published, the experts’ demands concerning necessary new approaches were almost overlooked. Now, almost a decade later, Lindenberger has again written an article underlining the still existing academic voids. Additionally, Andrew Port has recently outlined “the banalities of East German historiography” in an inspiring introduction.

Besides these obvious voids, the overall character of the SED regime is still up to debate. Many scholars meanwhile agree that the opening of the Stasi-archives has not only led to a continuous public scandalization, but also to a temporary “revival of totalitarianism theory” and “the conflation of the SED regime with its state security service.” Meanwhile, many attempts have been made to explain the interplay between the government and the people in a more nuanced way. The GDR has been characterized as a participatory dictatorship, a welfare dictatorship, a dictatorship of consensus, a modern dictatorship, and a dictatorship of love or a parenting dictatorship. All these labels refuse a simple “top-down perspective” that dominated many historiographical approaches, especially during the 1990s. While historians still do not agree if there was actually an autonomous realm of society, they mostly acknowledge nowadays that the relationship between state and society was far more dynamic than previously assumed. What has mostly been left out of the debate so far is the general place of the GDR within the history of the 20th century. First attempts have been made by comparing it with other dictatorships such as the Third Reich. Although these attempts have often resulted in normative statements and moral judgments, a comparative approach – both time- as well as space-wise – could indeed lead to a better understanding of the GDR. For example, analyzing the GDR as an “alternate modern” would enable historians to locate the GDR within broader developments of the 20th century – such as industrialization, mechanization, rationalization or bureaucratization – and to discuss it as one of the many different European encounters with modernity.

The seminar wants to take up the thoughts of the above mentioned scholars and discuss new ideas and approaches to a multifaceted history of the GDR, synchronously as well as diachronically. Each day, we will be focusing on one out of the three bigger questions these historians have marked as most promising and important:
(I) the alleged stability of the GDR, (II) the GDR and its global entanglements, (III) the GDR’s place within the history of the 20th century.

Seminar Format
The conveners’ goal is to initiate a debate among the participants long before the GSA conference. During the preparation stage, we will use the online platform Iversity. According to their research interests, the participants will be divided into three different groups, each guided by one of the conveners. Every group focuses on one of the three broader topics mentioned above. Each group will decide on three texts that will become part of the required reading in preparation for the seminar. In addition, every participant will be asked to prepare a short statement about their own research with regard to the topic of their group. During the conference, each day will be dedicated to one of the three main topics. The respective group will be hosting the session. We will start with a few introductory remarks by one convener followed by the group member’s statements. Every session ends with a short wrap-up by the convener in charge.

The themes are:
- (DAY I) Suppression vs. Normalization – the alleged stability of the GDR (moderated by Jens Schöne)
- (DAY II) Transnational Approaches (moderated by Konrad Jarausch)
- (DAY III) The GDR’s place within the History of the 20th Century (moderated by Martin Sabrow)

Proposed Size
- 16-20

Silent Auditors
- 1-5
Seminar 10
German Risks:
Managing Safety and Disaster in Twentieth-Century Europe

Conveners
● Thomas Lindenberger (Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung, Potsdam)
● Dolores Augustine (St. John’s University, New York)

Seminar Description
Germans have a reputation for being particularly safety-conscious. They seek security, not only in political life, but also in technology. While English distinguishes between safety and security, there is only one word for the two concepts in German: Sicherheit. Though not unrelated to security, safety and its collapse – either in daily life or in spectacular breakdowns – will be the focus of this seminar. How was technological risk handled in Germany in the long 20th century? What impact did experiences with the dangers of technological modernity have on German society and culture? How did Germany evolve into the self-reflexive “risk society” described by Ulrich Beck, a society in which ecological and hygiene standards had a higher priority than social justice? How was the evolution of German “risk society” connected with the continuities and discontinuities of the 20th century? How did totalitarian dictatorships deal with risks, and how did the experience of dictatorship contribute to safety regimes in German societies? And finally: Were German concepts of safety “peculiar” in comparison with those in neighboring countries?

Some aspects of this topic have been intensively researched by historians, but this seminar seeks a higher level of synthesis. Ecological history and energy history have become well established, while studies of other risks and technological catastrophes, particularly in industry and transportation, have remained relatively obscure niches in the fields of economic history and the history of technology. There has not been a critical survey of the evolution of what Ulrich Beck, in the year of the Chernobyl disaster, called the “risk society.”

This seminar seeks to promote reflection on the longue durée perspective of this neglected theme. We hope to include non-German, transnational, and comparative perspectives. Topics might include:

- Concepts and methods of historicizing safety, risk and society
- Ecological destruction, environmentalist policies, societal attitudes towards the environment
- Damaged bodies/damaged psyches: catastrophes, large and small, in industry and mass transportation
- Prevention is better than healing: safety and risk in confrontations between political authority, civil society and the prospect of the worst-case scenario
- Risk and entertainment: Safety and risk in popular culture

Seminar Format
Participants in our seminar would be asked to write and read pre-circulated papers of about 10-15 pages each. Each of the three days would be devoted to a general topic, to be determined after we issue a call for papers and receive further applications from prospective participants. At the beginning of the first day, all participants will introduce themselves and briefly explain how their work fits in with the themes of the seminar. There will be no additional readings. The two co-conveners, Thomas Lindenberger and Dolores Augustine, will frame each session with introductory remarks. During discussions, we will throw out questions and guide the conversation. During the months leading up to the conference, we will distribute readings through Dropbox, providing instructions to participants on how to use it. We will also communicate from time to time, providing reminders and guidance.
We hope that this seminar will bring together scholars from both sides of the Atlantic and bring about a deeper and broader discussion of risk, safety, and accidents as significant cultural constructs in German and European history. We are hoping to combine the best of these papers with the best papers from a conference on a similar topic that is to take place in Potsdam, Germany at the Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung in July 2015 and publish them in a volume to be financed through sources available to ZZF. This seminar will play a crucial role in this project because it will encourage North American participation, as well as the participation of graduate students.

**Proposed Size**
- 16-20

**Silent Auditors**
- 1-10
Seminar 11
German Unification as a Catalyst for Change: Linking Political Transformation at the Domestic and International Level

Conveners
● Sabine Lang (University of Washington)
● Joyce Mushaben (University of Missouri—St. Louis)
● Frank Wendler (University of Washington)

Seminar Description
After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the master narrative of German unification was centered on the idea of political unity and homogeneity. The prevalent vision of reunified Germany assumed a quick approximation of living conditions, a sense of shared cultural heritage and a fast and natural recreation of social and familiar bonds between Germans of East and West. This vision became the main political promise of unification, as epitomized in Kohl’s statements about “blossoming landscapes” in the East, and Brandt’s vision that Germans would now see “growing together what belongs together.”

Twenty-five years after the fall of the wall, unification appears less as a path to unity than a trigger of far-reaching social and political change in the new Germany, as explored in numerous volumes on the process of German unification. The fusion of the two German states increased the heterogeneity of German society, increased pressures on the welfare state and established new questions about Germany’s social and economic model. It also brought increased variation and volatility to the party political landscape and, last but not least, fundamentally changed Germany's position on the international scene. Going beyond existing research, the proposed seminar will focus on the question of how internal changes of German politics and society, and its external role towards European neighbors and the wider global context, have been linked. A few examples of these connections are the links between the politicization of Germany’s European and foreign policy on the one hand, and changes in domestic party politics on the other; the connection between pressures on the German welfare state and advances in European integration; and links between changes in collective identity and citizenship and the ‘normalization’ of Germany’s role on the international stage. Exploring these links, the seminar seeks to combine inputs from studies of public discourse, comparative institutionalism, international relations research, and the literature on party politics and voter behavior. The seminar will be organized in three thematic sessions along the following themes:

1) Changes in the German social model: Welfare, gender, and citizenship
This session explores how unification has worked as a catalyst to alter Germany’s welfare state and labor relations, influenced attitudes towards migrants, and changed the perception of national identity and citizenship, both through the initial rise of xenophobic aggression and through subsequent developments towards a more assertive and normalized sense of national identity. A question that cuts across these topics is how unification has ignited changes in gender relations in German society and at the political level.

2) Politics of German unification
Following unification, the German party system has become more fragmented and volatile. Aspects of this development are a diminished role and more neutral ideological profile of the major parties including a transformative change of the dominant governing party CDU, the questioning of established party political alliances, and the rise of new political coalitions and majorities. Related to this is a change and increased diversity in political culture that continues to mirror East-West differences. Does the Ossi-Wessi contrast still exist in German politics?
3) Germany in its international environment:
Finally, Germany finds itself in a political leadership role in a European Union that has both greatly advanced in political integration and has become significantly more diverse through its enlargement to currently 28 Member States. Germany seeks increased leadership in international institutions and in situations of crisis management but continues to be a reluctant European leader, as highlighted by recent developments such as the Arab Spring, civil war in Syria and Iraq, and the Eurozone crisis.

Seminar Format
The seminar will primarily convene scholars with a sociological or political science background working in the field of German studies. The main goal of the seminar is to collect a set of contributions for an edited volume on the 25th anniversary of German unification, edited by conveners Sabine Lang and Frank Wendler. Therefore, participants will be required to submit to the seminar full draft papers in book chapter length, around 15-20 pages.

The seminar is planned as the second stage of an outreach effort to collect authors for the edited volume. A first stage will begin with a series of invited lectures about the 25th anniversary of German unification hosted by UW outside of the GSA framework. In this series, a group of 4-5 scholars will be invited to Seattle between March and May 2015 to speak about some of the topics discussed in the above outline. Funds to finance this lecture series have been obtained through a Title VI grant by the Center for West European Studies, and invitations will go out for this series in December 2014. Following this lecture series and the final selection of participants of the GSA seminar, an outline for a book publication will be drafted in June/July 2015. This outline will explain the rationale of the book and identify authors and titles for the four planned thematic sections: welfare/gender, immigration/citizenship, party politics, and Germany’s international role. At this stage, a firm commitment to contribute to the edited volume and to submit abstracts will be requested from all authors. A proposal for the book publication will be sent out just prior to the meeting of the GSA seminar to a major international publisher such as Ashgate, Routledge, or Berghahn.

Proposed Size
- 10-15

Silent Auditors
- 1-5
Seminar 12
Science, Nature, and Art:
From the Age of Goethe to the Present

Conveners
● Frederick Amrine (University of Michigan)
● John H. Smith (University of California)
● Astrida Orle Tantillo (University of Illinois)

Seminar Description
The guiding thoughts of this seminar on the profound rethinking of the intersection of science, nature, and art around 1800 are contained in the following lines taken from the so-called “älteste Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus” of 1797:

● “Ich möchte unserer langsamen, an Experimenten mühsam schreitenden Physik einmal wieder Flügel geben.”
● “Ich bin nun überzeugt, daß der höchste Akt der Vernunft ... ein ästhetischer Akt ist...”
● “Die Philosophie des Geistes ist eine ästhetische Philosophie.”

While it is still debated to this day who the author of this powerful text was – Hegel, Schelling, or Hölderlin – the ideas that it contains were the immediate product of a creative circle in Weimar and Jena, and at the center of that circle stood Johann Wolfgang Goethe. Goethe not only brought together many other thinkers in the fields of natural science, philosophy, and art, but, almost more importantly, he brought these fields together in both his person and his practice. He embodied for many around him the key notion behind the “Oldest Systematic Program,” namely the fundamental unity/identity of diverse phenomena that had come to be disconnected in the modern world.

Thus, the seminar will take an interdisciplinary approach to a period and thinkers that sought not so much to bridge areas that are essentially different but, instead, to explore the common sources and conditions of possibility behind or internal to those differences. Goethe’s scientific and poetic writings are central to this project. Goethe, especially in the years around 1800, spent his days – literally – philosophizing in the morning with the likes of Schiller or Fichte, performing experiments on plants or light in the afternoon with Schelling, and then writing literature in the evening. It was possible for him to do so because he, like Idealists coming of age in the 1790s, recognized that what Kant saw as different cognitive faculties (sense, intuition, imagination, understanding, reason) have a single form-giving wellspring in human creative activity, an activity that they also found omnipresent in organic and inorganic nature. Our seminar will explore the way this idea not only bore fruit in the Goethezeit but also has been rediscovered by many in our own time in such diverse fields as phenomenology, cognitive science, and ecology – for example, the work of contemporary Goethean scientist Theodor Schwenk.

The seminar builds on work that has over the past decades recognized the period around 1800 as a time when the differentiation of knowledge into strictly guarded disciplines – philosophy, natural science, medicine, the arts – had not fully taken place. We refer to books and essays by the conveners, Robert Richards’s studies of “Romantic science,” Dalia Nassar’s book on Early Romanticism and her collection on The Relevance of Romanticism, and special issues of the Goethe Yearbook on “Goethe and Idealism” as well as “Goethe and Environmentalism.” The Call for Papers of the latter states: “The aim of this special section of the Goethe Yearbook is to bring together various perspectives on Goethe’s relevance for environmental thought and, more specifically, to shed light on the environmental significance of Goethe’s legacy and on the potential of his ideas to contribute to contemporary
debates in the environmental humanities.” Our seminar pursues a similar aim with a somewhat wider horizon than environmentalism.

**Seminar Format**
The seminar will be structured around primary readings that will be distributed in summer of 2015 and introduced at each of the three sessions by one of the conveners:

1. A selection of Goethe’s scientific and poetic writings on morphology (Tantillo)
2. A selection from Schelling’s 1797 work on Naturphilosophie, the Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature, and Goethe’s “The Experiment as Mediator between Subject and Object” (Smith)
3. A selection from Theodor Schwenk’s 1965 ecological study, Sensitive Chaos: The Creation of Flowing Forms in Water and Air (Amrine)

At each of the three meetings, one of the assigned readings will be discussed to give the meetings specific focus. The conveners responsible for the text will distribute questions and topics for the discussion along with the readings in advance. Each participant will also be required to submit three short responses of no more than 500 words, one to the conveners of each session, no later than September 10th, 2015. These position papers should indicate how the session’s reading intersects with the participant’s research and/or teaching focus. The conveners will distribute these position papers to all participants by September 20th, 2015. The role of the conveners’ introduction is to organize the approaches of the participants to make for a fruitful and engaging conversation that highlights common interests and productive tensions. Time will be set aside at the end of the third session to discuss possible publication of a volume of essays or a special section of a journal/yearbook on the issues raised during the seminar.

This proposal grows out of parallel and collaborative work that members of the Goethe Society of North America have been pursing for years. Ever since the first of the (now three) tri-annual conferences of the GSNNa convened in Pittsburgh in 2008, many of us have recognized the large and growing number of scholars interested in the intersection of science, philosophy, and art in the Age of Goethe, and the profound influence that Goethe himself had on those around him as well as on generations that followed down to the present day. Two special issues of the Goethe Yearbook, one on “Goethe and Idealism” and one on “Goethe and Environmentalism,” have already appeared. The GSA seminar provides an ideal situation to continue such interdisciplinary and collaborative research. The GSNA, as an affiliate organization of the GSA, fosters focused work on the Goethezeit, but is also eager to draw on the broader interdisciplinary resources of the GSA. The discussions growing out of the GSA seminar will undoubtedly continue at the 2017 Atkins Conference of the GSNA and in the pages of the Goethe Yearbook.

**Proposed Size**
- 15-20

**Silent Auditors**
- 1-4
Seminar 13
Human Rights, Genocide, and Germans’ Moral Campaigns in the World

Conveners
● Andrew Port (Wayne State University)
● Thomas Pegelow Kaplan (Davidson College)

Seminar Description
The dark side of modern German history – the Nazi period, the Berlin Wall, the Stasi – continues to occupy the scholarly and especially the popular imagination, whereas the more positive aspects of that history tend to be neglected or, worse, taken for granted. The breathtaking transformation of Germany and the Germans after 1945 is, in many respects, a success story that is equally worthy of attention and explanation – and one that went far beyond the economic miracle of the postwar period. Just as important was the ultimately successful “struggle to create a new society with a sincere and deep commitment to human rights,” both at home and abroad – but with varying success in the two postwar German states.

The proposed seminar’s broad theme centers on that transformation, looking at how it came about and, more specifically, at how Germans dealt with the issues of human rights and genocide in the context of the Cold War. Following the recent work by Sam Moyn, Stefan Hoffmann, and Lora Wildenthal, the seminar explores the ways in which the concepts of and discourses about human rights and genocide were shaped and reshaped by Cold War developments – within the special context, of course, of prewar German history, particularly the Nazi period and the First World War. The notions of Moralpolitik and the global moral campaigns developed in these scholars’ work present a first step toward bringing the broader political, cultural, and socio-economic processes we wish to evaluate into sharper focus.

For our discussions prior to and during the GSA, we are especially interested in looking at the role that language and visual imagery played in all this: how East and West Germans talked about and depicted state mass murder and genocide, how that changed over time, to what extent that shaped official policies and domestic debates concerning humanitarian intervention, and what all of this says about the ways in which Germans on both sides of the Wall have striven to come to terms with their tarnished past. Widening the scope, the seminar will also examine the interactions among German political and cultural elites, NGOs, and a wide array of other activists with their counterparts in other countries in Europe and elsewhere in the world. Seminar participants will explore these extensive trans-European and global collaborations, as well as their impact on the perception and use of human rights rhetoric and language, humanitarianism, and visual cultures in Central Europe. At the same time, we would like to analyze the ways in which all of this was embedded in the language and imagery of the Cold War, while taking into account linguistic and pictorial continuities across the 1945 divide. Beginning our discussions with Anson Rabinbach’s 2009 book Begriffe aus dem Kalten Krieg, the seminar will chart and explain how Germans, and other Europeans, came to rely on the language and imagery of genocide once the U.N. had elevated the term to international law in their 1948 Genocide Convention, which committed signatories to prevent and take action against this crime. In so doing, we will examine the evolution of German foreign policy and above all its increasing interventionist role abroad, ostensibly for humanitarian reasons.

Seminar Format
The conveners will ask every seminar participant to write and submit a paper that directly addresses one or more of the seminar’s themes. The papers should not exceed twelve double-spaced pages, or 3,600 words, to ensure that all participants will carefully read these texts. We will ask the seminar members to submit their work by August 15, 2015. The papers will immediately be made accessible via GoogleDocs. Everyone will be required to
read everyone else’s work before the conference. The GoogleDocs platform also enables participants to post comments and/or questions and begin our discussions before the conference, a practice that the conveners will encourage.

In addition to these papers written by the seminar’s participants, we will also ask everyone to read, in full or excerpts, a number of key publications that helped shape the emerging field and that provide a greater foundation for our discussions. These texts include: Stefan Hoffmann, ed., Human Rights in the Twentieth Century; Samuel Moyn, Human Rights and the Uses of History; Anson Rabinbach, Begriffe aus dem Kalten Krieg; and Lora Wildenthal, The Language of Human Rights in West Germany. In the hope of making this a distinctly democratic endeavor and avoiding a top-down approach, we will encourage the participants to add their own suggestions for readings.

- **Day 1:** Introductions and a first round of discussions based on the foundational texts by Hoffmann, Moyn, Rabinbach, and Wildenthal. The first session will also focus on the work of the seminar participants. Like the subsequent sessions, this one will consist of short introductions and then a discussion of three to four contributions connected by a distinct theme. This format ensures that all papers receive substantial attention.
- **Day 2:** We will continue with two additional sessions that each center on three to four different contributions.
- **Day 3:** We will discuss the three to four remaining contributions by seminar participants. We will then convene a final discussion of all of the texts and themes, examine common theoretical, methodological, and thematic issues, and map further research and potential group endeavors, such as a publication.

**Proposed Size**
- 10-15

**Silent Auditors**
- 1-5
Seminar 14

Integrating Language, Culture, and Content Learning across the Undergraduate German Curriculum

Conveners
● Hiram Maxim (Emory University)
● Marianna Ryshina-Pankova (Georgetown University)
● Susanne M. Wagner (University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, MN)

Seminar Description
Several years have passed since two MLA publications, “Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World” in 2007 and “Report to the Teagle Foundation” in 2009, provided mandates for reforming collegiate language departments and positioning them more firmly within the humanities. The recommended development of coherent language studies programs toward the attainment of multiple literacies over the four years of undergraduate study would eliminate the existing division between skills and higher-order analytical thinking. Despite generating considerable interest, the two-tiered language-literature configuration remains essentially intact and is sustained through curricular structures, institutional culture, and hiring practices. Faculty members seem at a loss at how they might reform their curriculum. In order to provide guidance, the AATG funded two curriculum development seminars at Georgetown University in 2013 and 2014, but the overwhelming number of applications from all types of institutions indicates that the need has not been met.

This seminar is intended to respond to this demand by offering German faculty another opportunity to examine and understand frameworks to effect changes in their curriculum by linking content and language learning in a principled fashion. Participants will discuss the overall shift in thinking and the types of changes needed that enable faculty members to create a well-articulated, literacy-oriented German language and literature curriculum that could address the mandates that were so eloquently stated in the MLA reports. Faculty will gain the tools to develop curricular frameworks and methodologies that integrate language and content learning and enhance educational opportunities for their students, position the study of German at the forefront of innovative teaching, learning and assessment practices, and enable them to contribute to the educational mission of their institutions.

The seminar will focus on establishing learning goals, examining approaches to selecting topics and texts for an articulated collegiate German curriculum that bridges the gap between the lower-level language courses and upper-level content courses, and designing pedagogic tasks and assessment practices that facilitate and support German literacy development from the beginning to the most advanced levels of the curriculum. To that end, the construct genre will be presented as a particularly effective means for approaching coherent curriculum construction. Consisting of identifiable stages and conventions and realized through specific linguistic features, genres can serve as the basis for several key elements of an integrated, coherent four-year undergraduate curriculum: an articulated curricular trajectory, a curriculum-wide text-based pedagogy, writing and speaking tasks that link language and content learning, and meaning-based curriculum-embedded assessment tools. Participants will consider these curricular and pedagogical principles in terms of their own institutional contexts and student learning outcomes. Attention will also be placed on how such an approach can allow for linkages to other disciplinary areas and enable German programs to reach across the campus in order to attract diverse student populations and make strategic alliances with other programs.

Seminar Format
To prepare for this seminar and to help the seminar conveners create effective working groups beforehand, participants will be asked during summer 2015 to think programmatically and in terms of curriculum about their own German program in terms of its goals and student learning outcomes and to post their thoughts on an online
discussion forum open only to seminar participants. Participants will also be asked to identify and describe perceived gaps within their own program and formulate 1-2 major questions about their curriculum they hope to address during the seminar. The seminar conveners will monitor the discussion form, looking to facilitate and guide discussions in preparation for the seminar. To provide a basis for their online posts and the seminar, participants will be asked to read four articles on program articulation and curriculum development beforehand:


**Proposed Size**

- 16-20

**Silent Auditors**

- 6-10
Seminar 15
Jews and the Study of Popular Culture

Conveners
● Sharon Gillerman (Hebrew Union College, Los Angeles)
● Jonathan Hess (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)
● Kerry Wallach (Gettysburg College)

Seminar Description
The last two decades have witnessed a paradigm shift in the study of German-Jewish history, culture, and literature. The progenitors of the field of German-Jewish Studies typically stressed the relationship between German Jews and high culture, highlighting the contribution of Jews to German culture as they studied how German-Jewish culture was shaped by a process of embourgeoisement (Verbürgerlichung) that unfolded under the banner of Bildung. Recent work in the field has built on the work of cultural theorists such as Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, and Pierre Bourdieu to break with this model in significant ways. It has questioned the universality of embourgeoisement, stressing that a significant proportion of Jews who lived in the German-speaking world in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were not bourgeois.

Just as importantly, scholars have begun to explore both the role that popular culture played in German-Jewish encounters with modernity and the role that Jews themselves played as producers and consumers of popular culture. Whether focusing on revue theatre, multigenerational German-Jewish dynasties in the circus business, Viennese street theatre, serialized fiction, performance culture, or new media, recent work in German-Jewish Studies has unearthed arenas in which popular culture proved decisive for the way Jews navigated challenges of acculturation, urban migration, and integration. In this context, recent scholarship has exposed complex models of interactions between Jews and non-Jews in the realm of popular culture that explode the paradigm of a Jewish minority adapting to the demands of a majority culture; these continue to determine the way German-Jewish history and culture are studied and taught today. Indeed, scholars often have come to see Jewishness itself as constituted through precisely such interactions between Jews and non-Jews in the realm of popular culture.

The proliferation of new approaches has set the stage for the reflections on the study of Jews and popular culture in the German-speaking world that form the subject of this GSA seminar. Much of the best work in German-Jewish Studies today is interdisciplinary, forging connections to media studies, gender studies, visual culture, performance studies, and other fields. What recent scholarship in the field lacks, nevertheless, is a dynamic dialogue about the theoretical stakes of studying Jews and popular culture. The question of how this scholarly endeavor draws from and contributes to more general scholarship on popular culture is all the more urgent given the broad participation of Jews – whether as co-producers or co-consumers – in a variety of forms of popular culture in the German-speaking world. We are currently beginning work on an edited volume on Jews and the Study of Popular Culture and are eager to use this year’s GSA conference to bring together a diverse group of scholars to brainstorm about theoretical and methodological issues and reflect on the content of potential submissions to the volume.

Seminar Format
The seminar will meet three times, once a day on all three days of the conference. Seminar participants will be asked to write a short, two-part paper for pre-circulation and read papers by all other seminar participants prior to the GSA conference. Papers will be distributed one month in advance of the conference by way of a shared Dropbox folder.

Each seminar participant, including the three conveners, will submit one short paper with two distinct parts; this paper must be uploaded to a shared Dropbox folder by no later than 1 September 2015.
Part 1: Consideration of Methodological and Theoretical Approaches (approx. 500 words) in response to some or all of the following questions: How should we (re)define popular culture? How is Jewishness constituted in popular culture, and how can we reconceive of the relations between Jews and non-Jews in this context? What does the field of German-Jewish Studies stand to gain by foregrounding the study of popular culture? What (new) methodological, theoretical, and historiographical perspectives need to be considered, and how can they move our work forward? Participants are encouraged to reference theoretical frameworks or models from other disciplines that are relevant for German-Jewish Studies (for example: visual culture, consumer culture, film studies, music, etc.).

Part 2: Abstract of a Current Article-length Project (no more than 1000 words) that deals with one aspect of popular culture and potentially maps out the application or relevance of the methods/theories discussed in part 1. This abstract should be very focused and refrain from summarizing a larger project.

Participants will devote the first day of the seminar to an in-depth discussion of the methods and theories outlined in part 1 of the pre-circulated papers. This first session aims to establish a set of common terms and theoretical perspectives for use in the two subsequent sessions.

On the second day, participants will be divided into three groups of 4-5 people each. Within these groups, roughly 30 minutes will be allotted to discussion of part 2 of the pre-circulated papers. Each participant will begin by highlighting key aspects of their project in a short statement of no more than 3-5 minutes. The rest of each discussion slot will be used for a group think brainstorming session in which members of the group take turns responding to the project under consideration.

The third day will open with time for each group to discuss how its projects contribute to the larger conversation about popular culture. The final hour will be used for a general concluding discussion.

Proposed Size

- 10-15

Silent Auditors

- 1-5
Seminar 16
Towards a Literary Epistemology of Medicine

Conveners
● Christiane Arndt (Queen’s University, Kingston)
● Karin Krauthausen (Humboldt University, Berlin)

Seminar Description
During the 19th century, medicine emerges from a nosology of cataloguing diseases to a science that focuses on the human body and mind. Physiology and experimental psychology are the most prominent examples for novel methods, research objectives, and institutions. Claude Bernard and Ludwik Fleck have prominently marked historic methodological shifts toward experimental medicine and the development of scientific facts respectively. These debates, which continue into recent epistemology, phrase the changing perspective of medicine.

This development is not exclusive to the sciences; it also includes literature and the arts in general, since it not only documents the pathologies of body and mind, but also decidedly addresses the principles of human life. New questions with respect to normality and the norm are put forward, and new institutions, like the clinic and the laboratory, establish an altered understanding of patient and disease. The idea of the body changes with the shift in medical technologies towards abstraction, invisibility (cell pathology during the 19th and the decoding of DNA during the 20th century), and relativity (the human being in the perspective of the life sciences).

The arts and the sciences coincide in their focus on the human body and human life, and literature has continuously complemented and augmented human science. An engagement with the human body, psychological phenomena, normality and anomaly, life and death, generates and configures artifacts of knowledge. Thus the shifts in medical science can be described as literary shifts, including scientific forms of documentation, for example the case study, since these are based on narrative forms. Medicine itself also contains a number of technologies of writing and describing, such as the autopsy report, and strategies of representation in word and image – including the anatomic atlas and Charcot’s photographs of hysterics – that coincide with artistic production. Artifacts of knowledge can be literary texts, films, images and weblogs that support, accompany or counter historic epistemology through, for example, reflecting on the relationship of patient and institutionalized medicine or medical statistics, on an engagement with death as the non-representable, or on aspects of transplantation, genetic engineering, aging and health care, in-vitro fertilization, and self-optimization.

The wide scope of the seminar with respect to its material aims at encouraging a holistic discussion on the topic and finding a dialogue between epistemological approaches and literary texts.

Seminar Format
The seminar is dedicated to discussing the examples of a literary epistemology suggested in the participants’ projects. Participants will be asked to write and read pre-circulated project descriptions of up to 10 pages, due August 1st. These pre-circulated documents should outline an envisioned or ongoing project. The conveners assign additional theoretical readings, and we are asking for a relatively early submission of papers in order to promptly issue a supplementary reading list. This reading list, at most six titles, will be determined during the review of the individual projects – with the prerogative that any additional literature associated with a discussion of several projects will be disseminated by August 4th at the latest. Since we expect that a portion of the aforementioned theoretical texts will be familiar to many of the participants, two months of preparation time should be realistic. During the sessions, short introductions of 5 minutes will be given in a pre-determined sequence, which place the individual topics in the context both of the approach and on the context of the seminar.

Possible literary texts for the papers could be:
The three days are structured according to the possible topics, which will be fine-tuned in accordance with the proposals. We suggest the following working structure:

- **Day 1: The Relationship of Individual and Disease.** The function of institution (clinics, clinical staff, laboratory, medical laws) and representation (the reflection of the individual with respect to medical statistics, representations of disease in word and image, recording practices with respect to for example hysteria, HIV/AIDS or cancer).
- **Day 2: The Definition of Life.** Phenomena like growing, aging, and death, but also questions concerning the relation of nature and art, as well as optimization and substitution (transplantation, genetic engineering, in-vitro fertilization, self-optimization, health apps).
- **Day 3: Epistemology and Form, Conclusion and How to go on.** Literary form as informative towards epistemology. Conclusion and summary of seminar. And: Founding a theme-based network, in which the exploration of the topic can continue, for example in future events and possible publications (such as a special issue of *Configurations, MLN, Seminar*, or *Science in Context*).

**Proposed Size**
- 10-15

**Silent Auditors**
- 1-5
Seminar 17

1781-1806: Twenty-Five Years of Literature and Philosophy

Conveners
● Jan Mieszkowski (Reed College)
● Zachary Sng (Brown University)

Seminar Description
In the first edition of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* published in 1781, Kant declared that there had been no philosophy at all prior to his critical project. In an 1806 lecture, Hegel declared that the history of philosophy had come to an end. For the twenty-five years bookended by these two proclamations, German literature saw extraordinary innovation and productivity. Numerous authors tested the potentially unstable borders between literature and philosophy, raising the possibility that these discourses could offer unique insights into one another, perhaps even producing a heretofore unrealized hybrid for which no name yet existed. The reconceptualizations of imagination, genius, and judgment in this quarter century would prove to be foundational for the modern category of literature, forever haunted by its perpetually troubled, ambivalent relationship with philosophy.

The goal of this seminar will be to explore the texts and arguments that made these twenty-five years such an exceptional period for the interplay between German literature and philosophy. While some philosophers have recently sought to rewrite the standard account of the profound transformations that took place from Kant to Hegel (see, for instance, Eckart Förster’s 2011 monograph *Die 25 Jahre der Philosophie: Eine systematische Rekonstruktion*), there has yet to be a correspondingly systematic investigation of the implications of these changes for the contemporaneous aesthetic practices. Perhaps even more significantly, there has been no comprehensive study of the extent to which these philosophical developments were to some degree predicated on the changes taking place in literary culture.

We welcome papers that address this period’s better-known reflections on this topic, such as the fragments of the Athenäum, the poetological writings of Novalis or Hölderlin, the novels and essays of Goethe, or the aesthetic texts of Schiller. At the same time, we are equally interested in contributions that consider literary works whose philosophical interventions have been less well documented, or philosophical works whose literary structure or influence on literary history has yet to be recognized. Alternatively, papers may draw on philosophy or literature from a different era in order to shed new light on the legacy of the literature-philosophy relationship at the turn of the nineteenth century. In this context, it may be especially instructive to see how recent scholarship on political theory, affect theory, or media studies relies on particular understandings of the intellectual events of 1781–1806.

Our goal will not be to construct a monolithic account of the intellectual history of these twenty-five years, as if one could speak of a central developmental arc with a precise origin and telos. Instead, we hope to bring together an array of scholars with different approaches to literary and philosophical questions, facilitating a broad conversation that will open up new avenues of research.

Seminar Format
Each participant will pre-circulate a 10-page paper; there will be no additional readings. Given the anticipated size of the seminar, ideally around 12, we will have ample time to discuss each contribution over the course of three days. Each discussion will begin with a 5-minute set of remarks by an assigned respondent. We will ask that responses open up the paper to a variety of different perspectives and questions rather than merely summarizing it or presenting a rebuttal. We will be in contact with the participants starting in spring to make sure that their papers are ready for pre-circulation by late summer, consulting with the authors and reading drafts if necessary so that the texts are of the appropriate length and conducive to discussion.
As co-conveners, Jan Mieszkowski and Zachary Sng will moderate the discussions each day, as well as prepare a brief opening and closing statement. They will also be contributing papers.

**Proposed Size**
- 10-15

**Silent Auditors**
- 1-5
Seminar 18
Material Ecocriticism and German Culture

Conveners
● Emily E. Jones (Whitman College)
● Seth Peabody (Harvard University)

Seminar Description
How can scholars engage with the materiality and agency of the physical world through the study of literature and culture? This is a driving question behind material ecocriticism, a major trend of recent scholarship on literature and the environment. Drawing on the material turn in the humanities at large, and on discussion of “new materialisms” in recent debates of the social sciences and feminist studies, material ecocritics seek theoretical and methodological avenues for studying the ways in which the other-than-human world can exercise agency. This “reconsideration of materiality,” according to Serenella Iovino, “is associated not much with Marxism or existential phenomenology, but rather with the twentieth-century developments in the natural sciences and with the radical changes that have affected our material environments in the last decades [...]. One of the key points of the ‘material turn’ is in fact its reaction against some radical trends of postmodern and poststructuralist thinking, which it regards as ‘dematerializing’ the world into linguistic and social constructions.”

Our seminar seeks to engage this reevaluation of the material on a theoretical level while exploring its usefulness for new approaches to the study of German culture. Our seminar will be based around the 2014 volume Material Ecocriticism, edited by Serenella Iovino and Serpil Oppermann, and the presentation of pre-circulated papers exploring and critiquing the ideas of material ecocriticism with regards to topics in German studies.

Germanists are already significantly engaged in this evolving discussion. Oppermann and Iovino cite the 2011 volume Ecocritical Theory: New European Approaches, edited by Kate Rigby and Alex Goodbody, as a precursor to their project, specifically mentioning Rigby’s analysis of German Romanticism and Heather Sullivan’s work on Goethe’s Faust. The 2014 volume also includes a new study by Sullivan of Goethe’s Farbenlehre. In addition to all of these, the prominence of the physical world in German culture, from the violent passions imputed to Sturm und Drang landscapes to the socio-spatial concerns of post-wall fiction, argues for the importance of material ecocriticism to our study of German culture.

Yet the history of Germany’s relationship to the physical world brings up a number of specific challenges to the pursuit of material ecocriticism. With such a troubled political history, does a focus on the materiality of German culture risk ignoring the political ends served by discourses of nature? While material ecocriticism thoughtfully inquires into the storied matter that makes up the physical world, is it equipped to adequately consider the material consequences of seemingly immaterial phenomena such as discourse, hidden power structures, and socio-political patterns of exclusion?

Building on the network of scholars already doing environmental criticism within the GSA, and using the volume Material Ecocriticism as a common text to supplement our individual contributions, this seminar will probe these questions and work to strengthen the usefulness of material ecocriticism as a tool for German cultural analysis.

Seminar Format
Our seminar will be made up of 10-15 participants, with an ideal goal of 13 individual or joint presentations. This smaller number will allow for individual engagement with each participant’s ongoing research. The smaller number will also allow for the development of a core group of contributors to a potential edited collection of essays, while
allowing for the inclusion at a later date of others who were not able to participate. Joint projects would be encouraged in order to maximize the time available for discussion. Six to ten silent auditors would be welcome.

This seminar will be focused around selected readings from the recent volume *Material Ecocriticism*, edited by Serenella Iovino and Serpil Oppermann, a collection of essays by many of the leading figures in the study of literature and the environment. Participants will be asked to write and pre-circulate papers of 8-10 pages that engage with the ideas of material ecocriticism and topics from German culture. Each participant will give a 10-minute presentation to situate their work with regard to the broader concerns of the seminar, to briefly introduce the salient points of their papers, and to solicit specific feedback on their work. Since papers will have been pre-circulated, presentations will be strictly limited to 10 minutes in order to allow time for discussion.

The conveners will be in contact with seminar participants prior to the conference in order to coordinate the circulation of papers, encourage early discussion of the Iovino/Oppermann text, and facilitate communication among seminar participants. The conveners will also establish a private blog on Wordpress.com in order to facilitate discussion, the sharing of sources, and the development of collaborative projects. This will ensure that we can begin immediately with relevant discussion at the outset of the conference. During the seminar itself, the conveners will function primarily as moderators, but, depending on the number of participants, may also present their own work. In addition, the moderators will facilitate discussion of shared goals, questions and themes at the beginning of the seminar, at the end of day two, and at the close of day three.

**Proposed schedule:**

**Friday morning session:**
8-9:15 AM: Welcome, introductions, brief review of assigned readings, group development of key terms, themes and discussion questions. Moderated by conveners
9:15-10:15 AM: Presentation and discussion of three pre-circulated papers. Discussion to be moderated by conveners.

**Saturday morning session:**
8-9 AM: Presentation and discussion of three pre-circulated papers. Discussion to be moderated by conveners.
9-10 AM: Presentation and discussion of three pre-circulated papers. Discussion to be moderated by conveners.
10-10:15: Mid-Seminar assessment/revision of key terms, themes and questions. Introduced and moderated by conveners.

**Sunday morning session:**
8-9:30 AM: Presentation and discussion of four participants’ pre-circulated papers. Discussion to be moderated by conveners.
9:30-10:15 AM: Concluding discussion, focusing on the possibility of an anthology, ideally including collaborative projects between participants. Discussion to be moderated by conveners.

**Proposed Size**
- 10-15

**Silent Auditors**
- 6-10
Seminar 19
Between Isolation and Globalization:
The Project of a Modern Switzerland

Conveners
● Peter Meilaender (Houghton College)
● Hans Rindisbacher (Pomona College)

Seminar Description
The task of relating its historic past to its present has been an almost constant preoccupation in Switzerland over the past several decades. A range of issues – Switzerland’s actions during WWII, especially with respect to Jewish refugees; the Bankgeheimnis; Swiss traditions of neutrality and a citizen militia; the role of women; large waves of immigration; the reluctance of a country in the heart of Europe, whose population shares its languages with 200 million Europeans and whose economy is tightly interwoven with that of its neighbors, to join the European Union – all of these have prompted intense and continuing engagement with the country's past.

Few contemporary Swiss historians have devoted as much attention to exploring the linkages between their country's past and its identity in the contemporary world as has Georg Kreis. Both as an academic notable for his considerable scholarly output and also as a public figure and frequent commentator on current affairs, Kreis has striven to explore the myths of Switzerland’s origins, to interpret the founding of the modern Swiss state, to understand the country's role in both world wars, and to help his fellow citizens apply the lessons of their past to ongoing political disputes. Most recently, these efforts resulted in his editorship of a new, multi-author volume, Die Geschichte der Schweiz, an ambitious effort to produce a comprehensive and authoritative account of Swiss history.

Our seminar proposes to use the new Geschichte der Schweiz as a jumping-off point for considering the question explored in such exemplary fashion in the work of Georg Kreis: how should we understand the key moments, problems, and themes of Swiss history, and how does such historical understanding speak to the issues that Switzerland faces today? How do we understand important Swiss traditions – such as neutrality, asylum, humanitarianism, or direct democracy – in a way that is both historically accurate and that also supplies today’s Swiss citizens with a historical inheritance capable of supplying continuing inspiration? We invite scholars from various disciplines – history, obviously, but also political science, literature, and others – to join us in exploring these questions.

We are pleased to announce that, thanks to the generous support of the Swiss Embassy, Georg Kreis will attend the seminar and participate in our discussions personally.

Seminar Format
All participants will be asked to read Die Geschichte der Schweiz in advance of the seminar. They will also contribute essays of 3000-3500 words for dissemination to all participants in advance of the seminar. In their essays, participants are requested to bring their own disciplinary perspectives, research interests, and current projects into conversation with some relevant period, topic, or theme discussed in Die Geschichte der Schweiz. Giving the broad nature of this text, opportunities for doing so will be diverse; possible topics might include (but are not limited to) the following:

● specific historical periods or events treated in the text
● other texts by Georg Kreis or particular themes in his work, such as his treatment of Swiss national myths
• comparison of *Die Geschichte der Schweiz* with other presentations of Swiss history, such as the 3-volume *Geschichte der Schweiz und der Schweizer* (1983) that it proposes to supersede, or recent single-author histories such as those by Volker Reinhardt or Thomas Maissen
• the authors' treatment of particular themes or topics that play a special role in Swiss self-understanding (Neutralität, direkte Demokratie)
• literary or artistic portrayals of events, periods, or topics discussed in the text
• the uses (and misuses) to which history is and can be put in contemporary Swiss political life
• perspectives from various disciplines on the continued relevance of Nationalgeschichte in a globalized world.

Participants' essays will be distributed by the seminar co-conveners roughly 3-4 weeks ahead of the seminar. They will not be presented as papers at the seminar; rather, participants will have read the papers in advance, so that we can devote our daily sessions to an intense discussion of their topics. Depending upon the specific papers received, the conveners – who will be responsible for collecting and distributing the essays – will divide them into thematic groups to ensure that all papers receive discussion over the course of the seminar. The conveners will also be responsible for moderating the daily discussions.

The conveners intend to pursue possible opportunities for publication of revised papers following the conference.

**Proposed Size**
• 10-15

**Silent Auditors**
• 6-10
Seminar 20
The Rise and Fall of Monolingualism

Conveners
● David Gramling (University of Arizona)
● Bethany Wiggin (University of Pennsylvania)

Seminar Description
At this global moment, nation and language can hardly be presumed to coincide – if, indeed, they ever did. Yet this Herderian, and also deeply Romantic, conception of language as a prepossession of the nation would appear to have a long afterlife in research methodology and disciplinary reconstitution. It continues to provide the ballast for a range of institutional structures: from the primacy of the native speaker in language instruction to the study of nation-based literatures. Monolingualism thus remains, in Elizabeth Ellis’s often-cited phrase, “the unmarked case.”

In an era when English has become a dominant world language of commerce and scholarship, we are perhaps more easily able to recognize monolingualism in all its contingency and historical contours. In his magisterial survey of another world language, Latin, Jürgen Leonhardt for instance suggested that modern monolingualism may be regarded as a historical aberration. It is the contention of this seminar’s conveners that monolingualism urgently needs marking through historical, textual and theoretical interrogation. Does monolingualism even hold up as an (onto)logical category? What are its histories and its local ecologies? Does monolingualism embolden some forms of cultural practice (perhaps those of the nation and literature), while generating resistance to / within others (perhaps empire and network culture)? Is monolingualism indeed a bygone paradigm, and are our contemporary experiences therefore indelibly imprinted with a post-monolingual condition as Yasemin Yildiz has stated? Or are certain structures and intensities of monolingualism actually on the rise in the twenty-first century?

Confronted with complex global flows and processes, humanities and social sciences scholarship today is increasingly divesting from the explanatory chronotope of the nation, turning its attention to longue durée and deep-time phenomena. German Studies in North America, however, often maintains an exclusive procedural allegiance to German-language frames of reference – often, paradoxically, in order to promote a progressive and pan-ethnic politics of recognition toward multicultural literature in German among immigrants and post-migrants. Here too this seminar is poised to propose methodological recalibrations.

The seminar’s focus on this single keyword “monolingualism” requires a spectrum of participants whose work spans a wide historical and disciplinary range. We invite proposals from scholars at all career stages and in all disciplines whose work considers any of these questions:

● Was the medieval always already multilingual? How might we best understand the coinage of the term “Muttersprache” in 1522, in relation to modernist and poststructural preconceptions about monolingualism and nativism?
● To what ends might we analyze monolingualism alongside other such unmarked positionalities as whiteness, the natural, the metropole, the global North, class and gender hierarchies, and other identitarian norms?
● How can scholarship go beyond merely dismissing monolingualism as benighted or reactionary, and instead offer accounts that carefully enumerate its forms, intensions, and implications?
● How has monolingualism—as an organizing logic and historical development—facilitated other heuristic and disciplinary categories, such as multilingualism, translation, comparative literature, linguistic purism, linguistic nationalism, World Literature, civil rights, and citizenship?
● How do encounters with these (and other) historical moments and questions help us think language ecology differently in the present?
If we consider ecology without nature, might we also think about language without nature or nativeness? Are there ever natural languages, and what is at stake in disarticulating language from embodiment? What work has the term *Natursprache* accomplished, and in what contexts? What is its relationship to *Muttersprache*?

The questions this seminar poses also have significant bearing on neighboring conversations, for instance on the theory and practice of translation, including the translator's invisibility, the status of untranslatability, the politics and ideologies of World Literature, the aesthetics of multilingualism, and the language of nature / nature of language. Scholars working in various spheres of German, Austrian, Swiss, Germanophone, and multilingual contexts, from the medieval to the posthumanist, are welcome to join this conversation. Historians, anthropologists, political scientists, literature and film scholars, music and art historians, applied linguists, pedagogy / SLA / DaF scholars, translators and translation studies scholars, and representatives of other disciplines are equally encouraged to contribute. Empirical and theoretical explorations, as well as reflections on methodology, are welcome.

**Seminar Format**

All participants will prepare a 10-page paper, to be circulated in advance. Our meetings each day will offer a workshop setting for the papers, as well as a broad, participatory, and substantive discussion. Publication of select papers is planned. There will be no silent auditors for this seminar.

As it revolve around the single keyword, monolingualism, the seminar format allows for a more precise conceptual focus than previous GSA seminars that considered large thematic domains or subfields. Monolingualism has no specific field and no home discipline, so the participants will first spend a seminar session collaboratively building an inventory of potential approaches.

Day one will be devoted to an opening round of conceptual defining, 5 minutes per participant, so as to establish the spectrum of possible approaches to monolingualism among the group. We will host a dinner on the evening of the first day to debrief. These opening discussions will of course be implicitly related to the pre-circulated case studies of 10 pages each, submitted by August 1.

On days two and three, each participant will be asked to present their own essay and to provide a formal response to one other essay. Each participant will have 10 minutes to present their exploratory reflections on where their project might go next, and they will have the opportunity to hear collegial feedback from the assigned responder as well as from all other seminar members. Papers will be grouped thematically by the conveners so as to maximize overlap productively. Participants will not be expected to provide formal feedback on each other’s written contributions before the seminar, but they will be expected to read all essays and provide oral commentary in our meetings. Silent auditors will not be permitted, as auditors’ presence without access to the papers can create a disparity in knowledge-access that may negatively impact the conversations.

The conveners will act as co-editors for longer-format contributions based on selected seminar papers, to be published in a refereed co-edited collection.

**Proposed Size**

- 10-15

**Silent Auditors**

- 0
Seminar 21
New Feminist and Queer Approaches to German Studies

Conveners
● Hester Baer (University of Maryland)
● Mareike Herrmann (College of Wooster)

Seminar Description
This seminar aims to invigorate research on gender and sexuality in German Studies by facilitating intensive conversations about recent feminist and queer theory. Through a collective engagement with key theoretical texts from the last ten years, participants will intensify their critical knowledge and make connections to their own research on a diverse range of topics within German Studies. Because the feminist and queer work we propose to study and discuss comes from a variety of disciplines, we also hope to stimulate richly interdisciplinary conversations.

For both socioeconomic and theoretical reasons, feminism has disappeared from the agenda in humanities fields in recent years. The mainstreaming of feminism in neoliberal societies, sometimes referred to as postfeminism, means that feminist politics have been taken into account, making new approaches appear redundant. At the same time, academic feminism has encountered both theoretical and institutional stumbling blocks. In response to widespread debates about essentialism, universalism, and representational claims, feminist theory in many ways dismantled itself over the last two decades. The downsizing of the humanities during the same period has contributed to a re-centering of disciplines that has at times marginalized feminist and queer studies. The decline of feminist and queer approaches is evident in some of the top German Studies journals; since the inception of GSA seminars two years ago, none has yet focused on a feminist or queer topic. To be sure, individual scholars have continued to pursue feminist research, and work in feminist geography, queer affect theory, transnational feminism, and feminist media studies has trickled into German Studies. However, a sustained, collective engagement with new theoretical developments is lacking. This seminar aims to redress this absence by foregrounding discussions and practical applications of important current publications in feminist and queer theory.

A theoretical engagement with feminist and queer studies is especially timely in 2015. Germany has witnessed a resurgence of feminism over the past decade that has brought renewed attention to feminist and queer politics and aesthetics in German Studies. The so-called demography debates of the mid-2000s blamed women and feminism for the declining birthrate in Germany. In response, a specific, transnationally inflected German popfeminism emerged, engaging both digital formats and conventional publishing platforms to renew conversations about feminism in the German mainstream. Since 2013, transnational and local protest movements inspired by the Russian feminist art collective Pussy Riot have kept feminism on the public agenda in Germany. While these developments have captured the attention of feminist researchers, new theoretical models for considering them have been slow to emerge.

To lay the groundwork for developing such models, our seminar will emphasize three key areas of reading and discussion: 1) Aesthetics and Politics; 2) Affects; 3) Intersections of Race, Class, Gender, Sexuality, Religion, and Citizenship. Each day of the seminar will be devoted to one of these topics. Participants will read and discuss texts selected from the following: Ahmed, Athanasiou/Butler, Berlant, Braidotti, Cvetkovich, Edelman, Ferguson, Halberstam, Hemmings, Holland, Massey, Muñoz, Ngai, Puar, Rose, among others.

As the current and former presidents of the Coalition of Women in German, we have presided over intensive discussions at recent WiG conferences about feminist theory, aesthetics, and politics, and about the place of
feminist and queer studies in the neoliberal academy. Originally conceived as a result of these discussions, this seminar ultimately aims to broaden and deepen critical engagements with gender and sexuality at the GSA.

Seminar Format
In line with our aim to map out new directions for research on gender and sexuality in German Studies, this seminar will promote a wide-ranging conversation about contemporary feminist and queer theory and its transnational connections and implications. The main structure of the seminar will consist of reading and discussion of selected contemporary theoretical texts. In consultation with seminar participants, we will compile a reader of approximately twelve texts to be read in advance of the seminar. We will post this reader to a shared Dropbox accessible to all seminar participants.

Each day of the seminar will focus on one of our three themes: Aesthetics and Politics; Affects; and Intersections of Race, Class, Gender, Sexuality, Religion, and Citizenship. In order to facilitate discussion, participants will write 1000-word position papers, in which they draw connections between theoretical readings and their own research programs. Each position paper will be oriented around one of the three seminar themes. These position papers will be circulated in advance of the conference, also via Dropbox. Each session of the seminar will begin with two-minute presentations by participants summarizing their position papers, followed by discussion of a selection of theoretical readings.

Consistent with the feminist and queer orientation of this seminar, we as conveners aim for an open-ended and participatory structure in terms of the form and content of the seminar. We have invited a diverse group of scholars working in feminist and queer studies at all career stages to participate, but we have left open half of the available slots so that further interested participants may respond to an open call. We have already solicited input from invited participants as to the reading list for the seminar, and we plan to finalize this list only after receiving further input from all selected participants. As conveners, our main task will be to facilitate a rigorous discussion, in which all those present participate equally.

Regarding the timeline for the seminar, we plan to make the seminar reader available to participants by mid-March, and we will ask that position papers be posted by mid-August. We will communicate with seminar participants via email and the shared Dropbox.

Proposed Size
- 16-20

Silent Auditors
- 1-5
Seminar 22
Political Activism in the Black European Diaspora: From Theory to Praxis

Conveners
● Tiffany N. Florvil (University of New Mexico Albuquerque)
● Vanessa Plumly (University of Cincinnati)

Seminar Description
Building on the discussions that transpired in 2014’s seminar, “Black German Studies: Then and Now,” this interdisciplinary seminar seeks to trace the political activism of the heterogeneous communities of the Black European Diaspora, with a particular emphasis on German-speaking regions. Following feminist activist Audre Lorde’s call to action that “The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house,” this seminar explores the range of tools and resistance strategies that Black activists developed, utilized, and practiced throughout German history. Accordingly, we will illustrate the ways that Black European Diasporic peoples have employed intellectual, socio-political, artistic/cultural, affective, digital, and pedagogical work to aid their communities, cultivate connections to their allies, and gain recognition in their societies and beyond. For many, these forms of activism helped them to define themselves both individually and collectively. Moreover, these diasporic groups have reimaged the boundaries of activism and resistance in an effort to confront hegemonic structures in urban European spaces and politics.

Topics can include, but are not limited to: Anton Wilhelm Amo’s “Dissertation on the rights of Moors in Europe,” the freemason Angelo Soliman, Pan-Africanist and communist activist George Padmore, the emergence of the Black German movement, the Black European Women’s Council (BEWC), or the Center for Political Beauty’s recent art installation, “Weisse Kreuze.” In particular, this seminar asks, how can one characterize and define Black European Diasporic activism? How have individuals within the Black European Diaspora shaped collective activism? How do Black European Diasporic communities force the re-thinking of institutionally sanctioned actions as well as long-standing cultural traditions in Europe and beyond? Finally, what theoretical underpinnings produce the activist practices employed by these communities? In re-examining the Black European Diaspora and its wide-ranging activist engagement, we want to show how tactics, discourses, and cultural identities shift, often reaffirming, challenging, and complicating notions of Germanness and the Black Diaspora.

Seminar Format
First session: Creating Counterdiscourses/Counterpublics/Counternarratives (Vanessa Plumly)
Taking Victoria Robinson and Sharon Otoo’s work on knowledge production and Black German counter-discourses as well as Nancy Fraser’s theorization of counterpublics as points of departure, this session interrogates counter-hegemonic outlets for resistance via cultural productions and the reclaiming of the public sphere. Several of these resistance actions involve taking back the city or obtaining “the right to the city” and using it as a pedagogical tool. The Lern und Erinnerungsort afrikanisches Viertel project, initiated in 2013, and the renaming of the Groebenufer to May-Ayim Ufer in 2010 are a few of the advancements that Black Germans have made in recent years to gain recognition in German society and the public sphere. Exhibition and performance spaces, such as the establishment of the post-migrant theater Ballhaus Naunynstrasse in Kreuzberg in 2008 under the direction of Shermin Langhoff, who now runs the Maxim Gorki Theater in Berlin, continue to lead the way in creating new and successful counterpublics on stage. Furthermore, publications such as Anne Chebu’s Anleitung zum Schwarz sein, the Afro-Austrian magazine Fresh, and the Afro-German journals afro look, Afrekete, or Strangers all assist in the reclaiming of black agency and represent forms of intellectual activism.
Second session: Community Building and Transnational Networks (Tiffany N. Florvil)
Individuals like Martin Dibobe, May Ayim, and Katharina Oguntoye, cultural watchdog organizations such as der Braune Mob and Bühnenwatch, and Schwarze Filmschaffende in Deutschland, in addition to the Black Women in Europe blog, the anti-racist collectives and music groups Brothers Keepers/Sisters Keepers, the Black German theater ensemble Label Noir, the Initiative Schwarze Deutsche’s Michael Brown movement, and the Cross-Cultural Black Women’s Studies Summer Institute all symbolize diverse efforts at diasporic community building. This session traces the evolution of these forms of diasporic coalitions. Black Germans and other Black Europeans consciously work to alter entrenched and dominant cultural norms in institutional spaces and in the public sphere. Through these wide-ranging efforts, diasporic actors and organizations endeavor to advance social change, create inclusive spaces, and promote the recognition and representation of Black German subjects. Some of these groups and individuals also actively forge transnational alliances, reaching beyond the boundaries of Europe to affirm their “connected differences” (Lorde) and common struggles.

Third session: Protest Actions and Digital Activism (Vanessa Plumly and Tiffany N. Florvil)
With the advent of social media platforms, twenty-first century Black German activism has witnessed a spatial dispersal through the establishment of countless networks in online diasporic communities. But this dispersal also signifies a compression of that same time/space continuum, where news travels faster and responses are instantaneous, quickly becoming world events. Transnational diasporic networks have become increasingly visible, particularly with Black German activist groups responding to the loss of Black lives in the U.S., as evinced in the Trayvon Martin shooting and the more recent episode involving Michael Brown that produced the Ferguson movement. Turkish-German activist Kübra Gümüşay, responsible for initiating the twitter hashtag #schauhin to expose the everyday racism that persists in Germany, has established a forum for all People of Color in the German nation to publish and become empowered through the public exposure of these racist experiences. This affective release in cyberspace counteracts the sense of isolation encountered in such moments and serves as an assertion of agency from the affected person who finds solidarity in their cyber community. As the media continues to play a dominant role in the production and execution of counterpublics, our third session turns to digital activism and revolution.

The seminar format will include preparation of an 8-10 page pre-circulated paper from each participant that will be due to the organizers by August 15. This deadline will allow for timely distribution and reading of the seminar papers. At the GSA seminar, each participant will provide an individual commentary of 5-7 minutes, in which participants will outline points of comparison and tension with other papers and the main points of the individual’s contribution. We envision 10 to 15 participants, not counting the organizers, in order to generate thorough and fruitful discussions. Participants’ individual commentaries will be presented on the assigned day chosen by the section leaders/co-conveners. Furthermore, we will also circulate selected theoretical texts to all participants in preparation for the seminar discussion. We will allow 6-10 auditors per day. For each section, the section leader(s) will provide an overarching 5-minute introductory commentary and summary on the submitted papers, and for the second and third sessions integrate the previous discussions when appropriate. After the presenters/participants have given their reprisal, the leader will open up the floor with certain questions for discussion, drawing connections to what each of the individual participants has introduced. The section leader(s) will be responsible for the pre-circulation of all papers for their assigned days and for all communication regarding seminar layout and preparation prior to the GSA conference. We view our role as conveners of this seminar as the structural, organizational, and intellectual support for the discussion of theoretical approaches and methodologies as well as the fostering of transnational dialogue across the disciplines. We anticipate developing the themes addressed in this GSA seminar into a special issue of a journal over the next two years.

Proposed Size
- 10-15

Silent Auditors
- 6-10
Seminar 23
Revisiting the Case of Nathan: Religion and Religious Identity in Nineteenth-Century German Europe (1800-1914)

Conveners
● Skye Doney (University of Wisconsin)
● Alan Levenson (University of Oklahoma)
● Anthony J Steinhoff (University of Quebec at Montreal)

Seminar Description
Since the 1980s, the study of modern German history has been powerfully reshaped by a surge of interest into the religious dimensions of German-speaking Europe’s post-Napoleonic past. Struggling to comprehend why religion did not simply wither away, as both Marxist- and Weberian-inflected social history foretold, historians not only began to see political conflicts like the Kulturkampf differently, but also revealed that religion and confession were intrinsic to understanding the course of German history since 1800, even in supposedly secular domains as law, economics and science. Some fifteen years ago, Helmut Walser Smith’s edited volume, Protestants, Catholics and Jews in Germany, 1800-1914, helped reinvigorate the field with its reflections on the relationship between religion and modernity, its attention to the centrality of confessional identity to modern German cultural, political and social life, and its call for more cross-confessional approaches to modern German religious history – especially Smith’s introductory essay, written with Christopher Clark, “The Fate of Nathan.”

This seminar seeks to gather scholars to examine the state of research on religion and religious identity in nineteenth-century German-speaking Europe and discuss the central methodological and interpretative questions in the field today. To this end, the seminar will focus on exploring three thematic areas. First, it seeks to revisit the “Fate of Nathan,” more narrowly conceived. That is, to what extent have historians succeeded in bridging the confessional divide(s)? In addition, by bringing together individuals whose research has tended to focus on specific confessional groups, it hopes wish to promote a conversation about the analytic and explanatory objectives as well as potential gains of cross-confessional approaches to the nineteenth century. Indeed, do we even study Catholicism/Catholics, Protestantism/Protestants and Judaism/Jews in the same way?

The seminar’s second theme builds on the last set of questions by interrogating notions of religious and confessional identity over the course of the long nineteenth century. In this context, we are especially interested in discussing how historians have defined religious practice and the methods they have employed to discern and examine it. Among the questions we hope to explore: How helpful are quantitative methods? How might a history of emotions approach help us breach the gap between religious practice and religious mentalité? To what extent are the differences between official and popular religion, between public and private religion salient? Where does gender fit in the picture? Similarly, we wish to examine here how religion informs wider areas of social practice, notably in the construction and maintenance of religious identities.

Third and finally, the seminar will inquire into the relationships among religion, religious identity and German/European modernity. How did religious communities, broadly considered, respond to the cultural, political, social and technological changes that characterized nineteenth-century modernity? Did they engage in a defensive modernization, as Wilfried Loth once opined? Or does it make more sense to highlight the variety of religious responses to modernity, viewing the long nineteenth century as an era of both secularization and sacralization?

In addition to promoting dialogue and exchange among specialists in the field, we hope that this gathering will lay the foundations for a future conference on religion in nineteenth-century German Europe and, in time, a collection
of essays on the topic that would be published in either book form or as a special issue of a journal like Central European History or German History.

Seminar Format
This seminar is focused on fostering a rich discussion of the central questions and methodological approaches for the study of religious communities and mentalities in nineteenth-century German Europe. To promote a dialogue that is truly cross-confessional in nature, in inviting and accepting participants for the seminar, the co-conveners are seeking to bring together scholars of each of the major confessional traditions (Catholic, Protestant and Jewish) as well as individuals whose interests are more multi-confessional or even non-confessional in nature.

Participants will be asked to prepare for the seminar meetings in two primary ways. First, they will be asked to read carefully a set of readings that have been selected to accompany each of the three days of the seminar. Although the co-conveners will decide on the specific list of assigned readings during the spring of 2015, we anticipate that each day’s reading will be roughly equivalent to three journal articles. Examples of possible readings include: Olaf Blaschke, “Das 19. Jahrhundert: Ein zweites konfessionelles Zeitalter?”; Simone Lässig, “Die Erfindung einer bürgerlichen Religion” (in idem, Jüdische Wege ins Bürgertum); Helmut Walser Smith and Christopher Clark, “The Fate of Nathan” (in Smith, Protestants, Catholics and Jews in Germany, 1800-1914); Anthony Steinhoff, “Christianity and the Creation of Germany” (in Sheridan Gilley/Brian Stanley, Cambridge History of Christianity, vol. 8); and Todd Weir, Secularism and Religion in Nineteenth-Century Germany (excerpts). After the readings have been selected, the conveners will develop a list of discussion questions for each of the seminar’s three themes: 1) cross-confessional and modern German religious history; 2) religious practice and religious/confessional identity; and 3) religion and modernity. The papers, discussion questions and contact information for participants will then be made available to all participants in early August 2015 via Dropbox.

Second, each seminar participant will be required to write a position paper of roughly 500 words that addresses one of the seminar’s three themes, with a short bibliography of secondary works that they have found useful in their scholarship, particularly with respect to methodology. We will ask the participants to sign up for a particular theme, to ensure a balance among the three, and then upload their position papers to Dropbox by September 10 so that everyone can read them before we meet in October.

Each seminar meeting will be devoted to one of our three themes. At the beginning of each session, the conveners will give a brief overview of the assigned readings. They will then ask those participants that responded to the question of the day to summarize their position paper in 3-5 minutes. Afterwards the floor will be opened up to a general discussion.

In advance of the 2015 meeting, the conveners will be focused primarily on organizing the seminar and ensuring the timely sharing of information among participants. During the seminar, each of the co-conveners will take a turn as lead moderator for the day, with the other conveners facilitating the broader discussion.

Proposed Size

- 12-17

Silent Auditors

- 1-5
Seminar 24
Religion in Germany during an Era of Extreme Violence:
The Churches, Religious Communities, and Popular Piety, 1900-1960

Conveners
● Thomas Großbölting (Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, Münster)
● Mark Edward Ruff (Saint Louis University)

Seminar Description
To what extent did encounters with extreme violence alter patterns of piety and religiosity in Germany during the era of the world wars and early Cold War? This seminar will concentrate on the extent to which the experience of war and violence transformed theologies, organizational forms, religious practices and belief during this era of conflict. On the one hand, the experience of extreme violence left a powerful imprint. It forced church leaders and ordinary believers to wrestle with how to reconcile just-war teachings and scriptural imperatives with rising nationalist sentiment and the dictates of state authority. It led some to embrace religious faith more fervently, while it led others to lose that same faith; it led to soul-searching in some and to no discernible changes in many others. On the other hand, the changes in religiosity wrought by the world wars, the Cold War and the political violence of the 1920s and 1930s were but pieces of a much larger puzzle. The churches were forced to react to revolutionary changes in the state, the economy, mass society and even to the emergence of a tourist and entertainment industry.

How do we sort out the impact of such extreme violence on the German religious landscape, when so many complex factors were already in play? Complicating any answers are comparative challenges. Most of Germany’s neighbors also found themselves at war, sometimes once, sometimes twice. That Germany lost both world wars not only aggrieved nationalist sentiment in many quarters but led to distinct pastoral and spiritual challenges. Was God on one’s side and not on the enemy’s? If so, why did Germany lose? How would one minister to communities that might include perpetrators, victims and bystanders? Were all acts of violence to be condemned or only some? How was one to minister to pacifists or conscientious objectors? The coming to power of the National Socialist regime posed obvious challenges that few of its neighbors had to face until after 1938. Establishing a comparative yardstick becomes all the more difficult in light of the fact that not all forms of religiosity were anchored in mainstream or established churches. Religious communities, sects, revival movements frequently sprung up outside the portals of the dominant church or churches.

In probing the complicated relationship between political, societal and religious change during this era of extreme violence, our goal is not merely to describe these transformations. It is to develop a theory of religious change for this tumultuous era. For that reason, we will include as broad of scholars as possible – those examining Protestants, Catholics and members of the free churches and sects during the final decades of the German Empire, Weimar Era, Nazi Era, Federal Republic and German Democratic Republic.

Seminar Format
This seminar is structured around key questions and seminal texts that will be circulated among the participants in the early summer of 2014, several months before the seminar will be formally convened. These readings will also include short several-paged précis of the key questions written by the seminar conveners. The common readings will also include approximately six more substantial essays and book chapters of approximately twenty-five pages that capture the essence of particular approaches to religious history or methodological challenges. Upon completion of these readings, seminar participants will be expected to reflect upon each of the key questions and the corresponding readings. They will bring their reflections with them to the seminar. They will also be asked to pen a formal statement of 400 to 500 words that sums up their own historical and theoretical methodology to these questions. This statement should ideally reflect not only the thrust of the larger
historiography but insights gained from their own research, past and present. These statements will be distributed approximately two weeks before the start of the seminar in order to facilitate the third day's discussion, which will offer seminar participants the opportunity to chart directions for future inquiry.

The two conveners will be responsible for providing the Leitfragen and circulating the texts beforehand. They envision using an electronic drop box to launch the conversations before Washington. The conveners will also facilitate the discussions in Washington. Both are fluent in both German and English, the two languages of the seminar. On the third day of the seminar, they will also raise the question of how these topics and questions might be pursued further in the form of either a follow-up conference, joint article or edited volume. Both conveners plan to take the lead in pursuing whatever option is decided upon by the participants.

**Proposed Size**
- 16-20

**Silent Auditors**
- 6-10
Seminar 25
Travel and Geopolitics

Conveners
● Kristin Kopp (University of Missouri)
● Siegfried Mattl (Boltzmann Institute, Vienna)

Seminar Description
As the geographer Bernd Wiese argues in *WeltAnsichten: Illustrationen von Forschungsreisen deutscher Geographen im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert*, the turn of the century witnessed the rise of popular forms of the travelogue, which occupied increasing segments of the book market, and steadily displaced the narratives of scientific expeditions that had been popular during the preceding “second age of discovery.” Following this trend, books with a focus on educational and scientific aims that presented the research findings of traveling geographers, biologists, anthropologists, and ethnographers gave way to texts featuring gripping narratives of foreign travel itself.

Current research stresses the role these travelogues played in the construction of a modern worldview in terms of time and space (transportation technology, tourism, the media) and the cultural imaginary, particularly in the juxtaposition of civilization vs. primitivism and of social order vs. adventure. In this seminar, we seek to expand this research to engage the ways in which travel and its representations intersected with geopolitical concerns in the modern era. If, prior to World War I, travel literature and territorial expansionism seemingly went hand in hand – and we welcome challenges to this model – postwar travelogues introduced a new type of global cartography to interwar Germany and Austria – one whose concerns seem to have overlapped significantly with those of the revisionist geography of the period. We therefore see a merger between travelogue and scientific geography in such journals as *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* and *Petermanns geographische Mitteilungen*, not to mention the much more programmatic volumes of *Volk und Reich*, and so on.

These modern travel discourses are also marked by developments in visual media. In Jeffrey Ruoff’s edited volume *Virtual Voyages: Cinema and Travel*, and in Jennifer Peterson’s Education in the School of Dreams: *Travelogues and Early Nonfiction Film*, scholars consider the introduction of the filmic medium to the modern travel narrative, and stress the close transmedial relations that the new filmic travelogue entertained with other, pre- and co-existing representations of travel and faraway places, such as foreign adventure novels, travel literature, postcards, panoramas, world fairs, and live travel lectures. The field of geopolitics meanwhile introduced the graphically pronounced “suggestive map,” which soon found wide dissemination in print media, radically changing the popular cartographic imagination.

In the attempt to reconstruct the discursive intersection of travel and geopolitics, we welcome research that approaches this question from a variety of angles, including but not limited to:

- research on such prominent travelers as Otto C. Artbauer, Ferdinand Emmerich, Kurt Faber, Otfrid von Hanstein, Robert Kraft, Alois Musil, or Colin Ross, who disseminated their work in a wide range of media
- new media and technologies of travel reporting, i.e. Flugfilme
- research on travel as a (geo)political act
- research on the representation of colonization and geopolitics in the popular press and book market
- research on the marketing strategies of film companies, publishing houses, and press agencies that were used to sell travelogues in their respective media formats
Seminar Format
The seminar will take the form of a workshop organized to maximize and facilitate sustained discussion between participants. While conventional conference panels involve the frontal presentation of completed ideas in the form of statements, presentations at this workshop will instead function as questions designed to launch discussions. Intellectually, in other words, we seek an open-ended, discussion-generating, collaborative approach.

With this format in mind, the conveners have developed the following set of structures and procedures:
At the workshop, participants will each have between 20-30 minutes, depending on the final number of participants, allotted to their question. In this time, they will take 5-7 minutes to introduce a conceptual problem or theoretical question they have encountered in their research. This presentation should be designed to elicit collaborative responses from the workshop participants.

In order to prepare for these discussions, participants will pre-circulate a research document of no more than 2,000 words. This document can take any form: it might be a narrative description of your research project, a set of bullet points highlighting central concerns, a collection of annotated excerpts from theoretical sources, etc. The goal in each case should be to provide seminar participants with that material which would be most profitable for them to prepare in advance of the discussion. What do they need to know or have considered in advance in order to best engage the problem or question you will present?

The final 15 minutes of each session will be moderated by the conveners, who will seek to articulate the session’s findings by synthesizing moments of theoretical overlap, and highlighting questions that remain open.

Organizational Timeline:

- March 2015: Once the final list of seminar participants has been determined, conveners will create a conversation platform, including an e-mail list and a shared Dropbox.

- April 2015: Based on feedback received from participants, conveners will draft a prioritized list of suggested readings. Participants will be encouraged to familiarize themselves with the entries on this list.

- August 15: Deadline for submitting papers to Dropbox.

Proposed Size
- 10-15

Silent Auditors
- 6-10
Seminar 26
German Travel Writing from the Eighteenth to the Twenty-First Century

Conveners
- Daniela Richter (The University of Texas at Austin)
- Karin Baumgartner (Washington University)

Seminar Description
The acts of traveling and narrating have been intertwined from the beginning. Travel narratives have ranged from mythical tales going back as far as Homer’s *Odyssey*, to adventure stories, travel memoirs, expedition reports, guidebooks, and travel blogs. These texts have served an equally wide array of purposes, from providing entertainment and inspiring *Abenteuerlust* and *Fernweh* to shaping popular conceptions of far-away regions and civilizations.

Travel narratives thus provide a rich tapestry of exchanges in terms of modalities of travel and sightseeing. As travel texts became a staple on the literary market, travel experiences increasingly built on pre-formed notions of what there is to see and in turn shaped and influenced what others were to see. More than other forms of literature, travel narratives are marked by intertextuality, particularly in the way the experience of the journey is filtered through pre-existing textual traditions. In addition, travel writing, as well as other media forms such as blogs, travel reports in newspapers, the public presentation of pictures, geographic almanacs, and reports to geographic societies allow for an engagement with the travel experience without actually requiring travel.

Even though scholarly interest in travel texts is currently very strong, there is as yet no unified discourse nor are there established theoretical underpinnings to the various discussions. In fact, travel texts are still difficult to classify since they straddle various areas such a geography, history and fiction, as well as a whole host of different textual genres. Issues of gender, colonial power, multiculturalism, but also notions of aesthetics and narratology can be traced through recent scholarly discussions of travel texts.

This seminar therefore situates itself at the nexus of casting a wide and inclusive glance at the topic of travel narratives while at the same time emphasizing commonalities in both the way that scholars go about analyzing these texts and the results which these analyses yield. The central feature of travel narratives is the positioning of the narrator vis-à-vis the country and culture encountered while traveling. Therefore, some of the discussion threads concern the construction of the modern self through travel, especially the various ways in which real and imaginary travel liberate the individual to construct new social conventions. Other questions include the issue of gender and how it impacts the author’s experience and narrative, and the modern construction of nation and national border through travel. Focusing on the particular travel destinations can yield insights into how travel writing traditions get established and also change over time. Another set of questions relates to the influence of technology and social media inventions on the process of traveling as well as the reception of travel. Ultimately the seminar will address the question what German Studies can contribute to the history of travel as a cultural phenomenon in the German-speaking countries.

Seminar Format
The conveners are interested in organizing this seminar in order to bring together a core group of scholars to work collaboratively on the topic. At last year’s GSA we received an overwhelming number of proposals for our call for papers on the topic. We noticed that the topic is of great interest across history, literature, and art history, and that there are many scholars working on travel literature. As a result, the conveners were invited to guest-edit a special issue of the journal *Colloquium Germanicum*. This seminar would be the next step to develop a network among...
scholars to continue the academic exploration of travel literature especially from a theoretical perspective in a second journal issue or edited volume, and to offer younger scholars an academic platform in which to present their ideas.

Participants will have written and submitted short 2500-3000 word essays on a topic related to travel literature. These essays will be distributed in advance and will form the basis of each day’s discussion. Because the essays will have been distributed before the seminar, we will not have formal paper presentations during the seminar itself; rather, the conveners will use the day's essays to structure and moderate each morning’s conversation. Each participant is expected to highlight the main points of their paper, sketch the trajectory of their work, and summarize their theoretical frame.

The three days of the seminar will be structured thematically along lines described above:

- **Day One:** Descriptions of travel taken. These narratives include non-fictional travel essays and travel handbooks, reports to geographic societies, letters home from the foreign destination, etc.

- **Day Two:** Travel in literature. These narratives are imaginary journeys the literary protagonist undertake. This group will include travel memoirs such as Goethe’s *Italienische Reise* where the actual travel is subordinated to the literary goals or eccentric travel narratives, which use textual conventions of travel literature in innovative ways.

- **Day Three:** Theoretical and narrative concerns. How can travel be narrated? What kind of theoretical models are useful? Can literature profit from discourse in geography, history, art history, museum studies etc. to understand travel narratives?

The conveners, Daniela Richter and Karin Baumgartner, will be responsible for collecting essays ahead of the conference and distributing them to participants, and they will share the duties of moderating each day’s discussion. Based on each day’s readings, they will formulate a short set of discussion questions, which they will distribute to participants in advance in order to focus the morning’s conversation.

**Proposed Size**

- 10-15

**Silent Auditors**

- 6-10
Seminar 27
Visual Culture Network: The Body

Conveners
● Deborah Ascher Barnstone (University of Technology, Sydney)
● Thomas O. Haakenson (California College of the Arts)

Seminar Description
The body is one of the most fundamental aspects of being human. It is private, public, political, and personal. It is the physical manifestation of our presence in the world and also the point of interface between us and others, us and the objective world. The body is key to how we understand identity. The body is also visible, even when it, when the bodies, are unseen.

The body has been a subject of interest across the humanities since recorded time. In theological and philosophical circles the question of the split between mind (or soul) and body is a central concern; in art history the status of the body has altered from an idealized subject of painting and sculpture to a site of explorations of gender, race, sexuality, and ethnicity in the 20th and 21st centuries. In architecture, “geometry, or measuring the world,” is inextricably tied to human form. A lengthy discourse beginning with the Roman architect Vitruvius and extending through the present explores the importance of the body to architectural design and to space. Similar theoretical strands exist in theater and opera and performance art. In contemporary theater and performance art, the body has even become the medium through which artists portray their ideas.

Contributions might address the cult of the body in the late 19th and early 20th centuries manifest in the Wandervogel, nudist colonies, and sports associations, new approaches to dance and theatre and opera, the body as a subject of painting and sculpture, or the body in space and architecture. Contributions could examine new attitudes towards the body that emerge over time because of scientific inventions and medical science or ways body image has altered over time in art, film, and advertising. Authors might consider how the body is mediated through visual culture forms, as well as how these forms hid, disrupted, challenged, or subverted an ideal body, a political body, or a body without organs.

Seminar Format
We will ask participants to submit draft essays of between 8,000 and 10,000 words three weeks ahead of the GSA annual conference so that all participants can read the pre-circulated papers. In addition, we will assign a handful of common readings. We will divide up the seminar participants into three smaller groups according to common themes. We will organize each day around a handful of brief presentations of no more than 10 minutes each to recap the material in those essays then conduct a longer discussion about common themes in the papers. In addition, we will devote 20 minutes to half an hour every day to a discussion of one of the required readings, or we might discuss them all together on the first day. We will communicate with participants via email in the months leading up to the GSA. We see our role as that of facilitator – we will organize the sessions, introduce each day, and moderate the discussion. Select essays from the seminar will be included in a volume on The Body to be published as part of the German Visual Culture book series with Peter Lang.

Proposed Size
● 10-15

Silent Auditors
● 6-10