

Dear Friends of UMass German & Scandinavian Studies,

So much has happened since our last newsletter. Our big news: After thirty-three years of service, Barton Byg retired from teaching at UMass and directing the DEFA Film Library. Barton started at UMass Amherst in 1985, with a background in Comparative Literature, German and film studies, and an emphasis on GDR literature. His book, *Landscapes of Resistance*, focused on the German films of Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub. Barton's interest in GDR cinema intensified dramatically during a Fulbright year in East Berlin in 1988-89. He arranged to have filmmakers Helke Misselwitz, Gudrun Steinbrück and Thomas Plenert tour the U.S. with their film *Winter Adé* in fall 1989; ironically, they spent the evening the Berlin Wall fell celebrating with students in UMass' Herter Hall! These events became the roots of the DEFA Film Library—formally established on 9/23/93—which has since grown and reached more people than anyone ever imagined.

Over the years, Barton taught a wide range of graduate and undergraduate courses on German and film studies at UMass Amherst and the Four Colleges. He directed two NEH Summer Institutes for High School Teachers in the 1990s; in 2005 he directed and in 2018 co-directed NEH Summer Institutes for College and University Teachers. He organized the first major US conference on DEFA in 1997 and, as of 2001, biennial Summer Film Institutes through the DEFA Film Library. In 2011, Barton was awarded the Reinhold Schünzel Award by CineFest Hamburg and, in 2017, the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany for his service to German culture.



Barton's perspective, grace and experience will be missed by all of us in German and Scandinavian Studies. We are pleased and grateful that he has decided to continue developing our archival holdings and focus on long-term fundraising after retirement.



From the exhibition *East Germany in Mozambique: Private Photographs of a Forgotten Time*

In other news, we are delighted that our new major track in STEM-German is moving forward. The track allows students to double major or complete a dual degree in German and a STEM field. They also take part in iSTEP, the new international Science Technology & Engineering Programs. Based on the successful programs at the University of Connecticut and the University of Rhode Island, iSTEP will offer classes in technical and scientific German. The program is structured so that students can study abroad and fulfill their STEM major requirements. Most students will complete an internship at a company or lab in Germany. Sara Jackson won a Five-College Mellon Grant for Innovative Language Teaching in the amount of \$250,000 to pilot the program. With the grant, we were delighted able to hire Professor Julia Feldhaus as the new iSTEP director.

One of the most enjoyable events of the year was the the opening of the exhibition *East Germany in Mozambique: Private Photographs of a Forgotten Time* at the August Savage Gallery, curated by PhD candidate Katrin Bahr. The photographs depicted some of the thousands of East German teachers, engineers, doctors, consultants, and others who moved to Mozambique with their families as part of the Friendship Treaty with the German Democratic Republic between 1979 and 1990.

In 2018 the DEFA Film Library again hosted a four-week, interdisciplinary NEH Summer Institute. The topic this year was *Cold War Culture: East German Art, Music, and Film*. In addition to a spectacular film and lecture series, the Institute exhibited graphic works of the German artist Anke Feuchtenberger at the Oliver Design building at UMass.



Ela Gezen, our undergraduate program director, is promoting German-language instruction in Massachusetts by connecting with high schools. We hosted visits by students from five high schools, and Ela and Robert Sullivan visited many high schools,

Mit herzlichen Grüßen aus Amherst,

Andy Donson

Program Director for German & Scandinavian Studies

**We hope to see you at the GSA in 2019!**  
**Send us an email if you have news to share!**  
[gssnews@german.umass.edu](mailto:gssnews@german.umass.edu)

# Faculty News

**Skyler Arndt-Briggs** not only designed and co-directed the NEH Summer Institute but continued to edit the DEFA Film Library's new book series—Film and the Global Cold War—with Berghahn Books. The first volume, *Screened Encounters: The Leipzig Documentary Film Festival, 1955-1990*, by Caroline Moine, has just come out.

**Kerstin Mueller Dembling** has coordinated our elementary and intermediate language courses. She adopted a new German textbook (Netzwerk A1 and A2), and, together with graduate students Karolina Hicke and Victoria Rhizo-Lenshyn and our lecturer Anca Luca Holden, she developed a Supplemental Online Grammar to be used in our German language classes. The project was funded by the Five-Colleges Mellon Grant for Innovative Language Teaching. Kerstin also started a Tandem Program that has facilitated interaction and friendships between our German language students and exchange students from Baden-Württemberg. Kerstin was recently promoted to Senior Lecturer.

**Andy Donson** has completed a draft of his book manuscript with the working title “Food and Freedom in the November Revolution: A Social and Cultural History of Germany, 1918-1919.” Among its many topics are food, women, youth, farming, laziness, dancing, gambling, pornography, crime, disability, religion, sadness, hope, and rich people who became poor. He presented material from the book in a paper he gave at the German Historical Institute in London, “Arbeitsunlust: A Social and Economic Analysis of ‘No Desire to Work’ in Germany, 1918/19.” Andrew continues to teach courses on the modern German history, the Holocaust, and Nineteenth-Century German Thought.

**Julia Feldhaus** joined our faculty in the fall 2018 as a lecturer. She teaches STEM German and directs the new international Science Technology & Engineering Programs (iSTEP). She also has expertise

She also has expertise in pedagogy, psychology, and fine arts. The main focus of her research is images of the New Woman during the Weimar Republic.

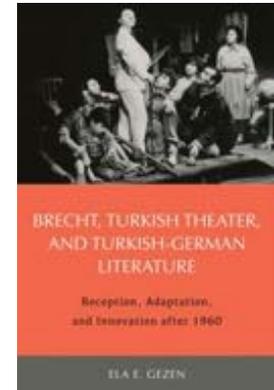
**Ela Gezen** enjoyed working closely with our undergraduate students in her new role as Undergraduate Program Director. Since January 2018 she has been serving as AATG Massachusetts Chapter Vice President and has been working closely with colleagues in AATG and at the Goethe Institut Boston. Together with Prof. Sullivan she has visited a number of high schools throughout Massachusetts and co-organized a teacher workshop, Berlin Berlin, which took place at UMass in March 2018 (in collaboration with the AATG MA and the Goethe Institut). Her first book, *Brecht, Turkish Theater, and Turkish-German Literature: Reception, Adaptation and Innovation after 1960* was published with Camden House in late March 2018. She is excited to have been appointed to the editorial board of the *Brecht Yearbook*. We congratulate her on her promotion to Associate Professor with tenure.



*Andy Donson outside the Preussisches Geheimes Staatsarchiv, in Berlin Dablen.*

**Frank Hugus** continues teaching his Scandinavian courses, most recently “Scandinavian Mythology,” “Old Norse,” and “Hans Christian Andersen.” Next up are “The Dramas of Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg” and “The Icelandic Saga.” This past spring he gave a presentation at the 39th Annual Medieval and Renaissance Forum entitled “How to Make a Viking Laugh: Humor in the Icelandic Sagas of Ancient Times.” In May he spent several weeks conducting research in the saga archives in Reykjavík,

Iceland. His annotated translation of Hans Christian Andersen's debut novel, *The Improvisatore*, was published by the University of Minnesota Press in May.



**Sara E. Jackson** Sara E. Jackson is completing her first book on “The Problem of the Actress” in modern German theater and thought. She has presented her research at conferences in the US and Germany, and has articles in progress related to her next book project, “Rethinking Genres of German Theater.” Sara teaches interdisciplinary courses on German culture and thought from the 18th- to 20th century. She also continues her work as the grant and project supervisor for iSTEP: international Science Technology & Engineering Programs.

**Jonathan Skolnik** published a chapter “Memory Without Borders?” in *German Jewish Literature After 1990*, Ed. Garloff and Mueller. He spoke at a music festival at University of Maryland in October, introducing a rare performance of Kurt Weill's 1934 oratorio, “The Road of Promise” (text by Franz Werfel). He spoke at the Association for Jewish Studies on “Teaching about the Holocaust in the Age of Trump.” In November, he spoke about antisemitism at a UMass memorial for the victims of the Pittsburgh synagogue massacre.

**Robert Sullivan** continued to serve as Executive Director of the Keene Medieval and Renaissance Forum, a position that includes overseeing a two-day conference with 70 scholars from North America, Europe, and Israel. In September he became chair of the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

## Graduate Students and Alumni

**Tiarra Cooper, Ester Gonzalez, Karolina Hicke, Kevin Holm, and Evgeniia Trufanova**, our students completing their MA and doing their coursework for their PhD, took a wide variety of courses: nineteenth-century German thought; modern German history; refugees in literature, film, and drama; Jews and German culture; and bodies and law in German literature and thought.

In August 2018, **Victoria Rizo Lenshyn** successfully defended her dissertation "Bridging Contradictions: Socialist Actresses and Star Culture in East Germany (1960-1980)." The same month **Rachel Salyer** also defended her dissertation "Epic and Identity: Exploring Genre and Understanding the Self in the Middle-High German 'Spielmannsepen.'" In addition to organizing the photography exhibition, **Katrin Bahr** went to Maputo, Mozambique, to complete research for her dissertation. At the 2018 German Studies Association, **Karolina Hicke** took part in seminar at on Critical European Culture Studies, and Katrin Bahr presented a paper on amateur photographs of East German men in Mozambique in the 1980s. **Tiarra Cooper** made a presentation at Women in German, attended workshops at the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association, and received a fellowship to learn the German script at the Moravian Archives. Through an exchange with the Program in Comparative Literature, Tiarra and Karolina Hicke were able to teach the courses "Good and Evil:

East-West," and Katrin Bahr was able to teach a course on the international short story. **Konstanze Schiller** and **Roslin Happe** completed their MA degrees.

Our alumni continue to advance in their careers. **Tommy Dadmun** is teaching German to sixth- and seventh-graders in Dennis and Yarmouth. He writes, "I never would have imagined it, but I really enjoy teaching this age range!" **Maureen Gallagher** was a Berlin Program Fellow in 2017-18 and is now a visiting assistant professor at the University of Pittsburgh. **Jamele Watkins** remains a postdoctoral fellow at the Center for Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity at Stanford University. **Maria Stehle** is chair of the interdisciplinary program in Cinema Studies at the University of Tennessee. She is also book review editor for the German Studies Review. **Evan Torner** was awarded the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Award for Teaching Excellence in 2017 at the University of Cincinnati. He has been publishing on DEFA with respect to musicals, alternative sexualities, and the decadence of the Wende period. His son Tobin turned two in October and likes music and dancing.

*From left to right: Victoria Lenshyn, Barton Byg, Jon Olsen (on Skype), and Sky Arndt-Briggs at Victoria's dissertation defense.*



## Undergraduate Program

We had an enormously productive and exciting year in our undergraduate program. Our students engaged in a variety of extracurricular events as well as academic and outreach activities, including science experiments, collective button-making, Thatcher community night, slam poetry, and research presentations.

In March 2018, with the generous support of Five College Inc., the inaugural Five College German Studies Undergraduate Research Symposium took place at UMass, featuring presentations by German and Accounting double major Rachel MacDermott ('18) and Comparative Literature and German double major Manon Garulay ('18). All participants gave engaging presentations leading to stimulating discussions on topics as varied as (post)colonial pasts and presents, refugees, the Holocaust, expressionism, memory and identity, and GDR Plattenbauten.

We hosted high school students, and their German teachers, from Boston Latin School, Westford Academy, North Andover High, Nashoba Regional High, and Lincoln Sudbury Regional High. These visits provided a wonderful opportunity for students and their teachers to interact with and get to know our current German majors and minors—many former students of these schools and most vital to these visits—and our faculty, the German Program, and the campus as a whole. In addition, two GSS majors hosted a workshop for high school students at the annual Massachusetts German Immersion Day.

For the first time the program awarded an undergraduate essay prize in three categories: intermediate German, advanced German, and English-language. The selection committee was impressed by the creativity, linguistic accuracy and complexity,

originality, and analytical depth of all nominated essays. Warm congratulations to our awardees: Kelly Champine, Manon Garulay, Franziska Bright, Stefan Kussmaul, Lukas Sprenkle, Aliya Mathura, and Alison Arico.

*We would also like to acknowledge our graduates: Alexander Carstensen (Political Science/German), Kelly Champine (German), Emmalie Keenan (English/German), Rachel MacDermott (Accounting/German), Doris Nyamwaya (Public Health/German), and Julius Wannamaker (History/German). Herzlichen Glückwunsch!*



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### Undergraduate Alumni Spotlight

**JKelly Champine** (German major, '18): I transferred to UMass in spring 2015, and found a home in GSS right away. With the support of my professors, IPO, and my parents, I decided in 2016 to study abroad at the University of Tübingen for three semesters, taking courses in German literature, linguistics, intercultural communication, and even theater. Inspired by my experiences both at UMass and abroad, I returned to Amherst with a newfound desire to teach and share my love of German with others. I spent my senior year tutoring in the LRC, promoting the Baden-Württemberg exchange program, and working with incoming international exchange students at IPO. Each of these jobs enabled me to act as a liaison between GSS and other organizations on campus, broadening my perspective on how I could incorporate German into my future. Before studying at UMass, my love of German was narrowly focused on just language itself. Now, I experience German as a much more interdisciplinary and multifaceted field, which enables me to connect with others across a wide variety of of disciplines. After graduating, I am very excited to be teaching high school German in Westford, MA, where I hope to pass on what I have learned at UMass and beyond.



### Graduate Alumni Spotlight

**Florence Feiereisen** received her PhD in 2007. She joined the faculty at Middlebury College in 2007 and is Associate Professor of German currently serving as the chair of the Department of German.

At Middlebury, Florence teaches all levels of German: from Beginning German to upper-level courses on German history, pop literature, linguistics, and sound. She has published various articles in the fields of German contemporary literature and acoustic ecology/ sound studies. Her monograph *Der Text als Soundtrack, der Autor als DJ: Postmoderne und postkoloniale Samples bei Thomas Meinecke* was published in 2011. Together with her friend and grad school buddy Alexandra Merley Hill, Florence has co-edited *Germany in the Long Twentieth Century* (2012), an introduction to the study of sound in the German context. Florence writes that she is grateful for her graduate school experience at UMass: “I was given a lot of space (and funds!) to develop and continue to grow as both a teacher and as a researcher.”

