

Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures Newsletter

Summer
2017

Chair's Message



Summertime is the perfect moment for reviewing the highlights of the past academic year. Our past year was full of exciting events and memorable achievements.

To begin with, in 2017 the new German PhD Program, created in 2012, awarded its first Doctor of Philosophy degree in German Studies. Robin Cadow defended her dissertation, "A Complicated Relationship: Refugees and Holocaust Memories in Contemporary Germany" under the directorship of Professor Beverly Weber. Let me quote a passage from Prof. Weber's message about Robin's defense: "Robin was commended for the tremendous work she has done and her creative, interdisciplinary approach to a timely topic. We will look forward to hearing more about her successful

future, which will begin with her work on NATO policy in Europe while stationed by the United States Air Force in Germany."

Academic year 2016-17 was also the first year for the newly-created MA and BA/MA programs in Russian Studies. Not only did we assemble a healthy group of talented students and ran a number of new graduate courses, we also awarded our first Masters of Arts in Russian Studies to Courtney Silver and Katy Baker. It should be noted that Courtney Silver, who has also graduated with a BA degree in German Studies, successfully defended an MA thesis on literary works written by veterans of Russia's war in Chechnya. Both Courtney and Katy will use their expertise in Russian Studies in their assignments with the U.S. Air Force.

Another significant achievement for our German Program is the establishment of the Leonhard E. Baak Memorial scholarship based on a generous gift from the estate of Leonhard Edwin Baak (see more in

the newsletter), which allowed us to significantly increase support to students of German, especially those opting for study abroad.

Some other changes concern our department's faculty. Our own Professor of German and Scandinavian Studies, Ann Schmiesing, has become the Dean of CU Boulder's Graduate School and Vice Provost for graduate studies. We are very proud of Ann and are thankful to her that despite her new broad range of responsibilities, she remains involved in GSLL life and needs.

Our colleagues for four years, Sasha Senderovich, Assistant Professor of Jewish and Russian Studies, and Tom Roberts, Visiting Assistant Professor of Russian Studies, accepted tenure-track appointments at University of Washington-Seattle and Smith College respectively. Although we'll miss them, we wish them success and fulfillment at their new jobs!

We also hired new faculty members. Dr. Jillian Porter, our new Assistant Professor

of Russian Studies, comes to us from the University of Oklahoma, where she held a tenure-track position after completing her PhD dissertation at the University of California-Berkeley. Her research explores intersections between Russian economic history and cultural production from the late 18th century to the present. Her first book, *Economies of Feeling: Russian Literature under Nicholas I*, has just been published by Northwestern University Press.



New GSLL faculty members Jillian Porter and Jackson Crawford

Chair's Message (cont.)

Dr. Jackson Crawford, our new instructor of Nordic Studies, comes to us from California where he taught for UCLA and UC-Berkeley. Dr. Crawford received his PhD in Scandinavian Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Jackson, while being an expert in Scandinavian languages' historical linguistics, is also an accomplished literary translator of Old Norse sagas. His first book, *The Poetic Edda: Stories of the Norse Gods and Heroes* was published by a highly respected press in 2015, and his new work, *The Saga of the Volsungs with the Saga of Ragnar Lothbrok* is expected to appear in September.

We welcome our new faculty members and look forward to working with them! We hope that they will find in Colorado a new home, new friends, helpful and understanding colleagues, as well as talented students! After all, the recent ARPAC report praised our department for "cultivating an atmosphere of respect and appreciation. The staff and faculty work well together. The reviewers also praised junior faculty mentoring and added that department instructors are valued."

We'll keep cultivating this atmosphere!

Certainly, this is just some of our important news from the academic year 2016-17. You may read about the rest in the following newsletter and, of course, on our webpage: <http://www.colorado.edu/gsll/news>.

-Mark Leiderman

Baak Memorial Scholarship

The German Studies program has received a generous gift from the estate of Leonhard Edwin Baak (1909-1998) to establish the Leonhard E. Baak Memorial scholarship. Dr. Baak earned his PhD in German from the University of Colorado Boulder in 1953, and served as a professor of German at St. Olaf College (Northfield, MN), College

of Emporia (Emporia, KS), and Morningside College (Sioux City, IA). The scholarship funds will be awarded yearly to students majoring in German Studies. The first scholarships in the amount of over \$80,000 was awarded in Spring 2017 to ten undergraduate students, mainly in support of their study abroad.

Conversations in the Mountains



Conversations participants Fatima El-Tayeb and Beverly Weber.

In February 2017, GSLL held the third Conversations in the Mountains. This year's program focused on the topic "Just Futures" and brought together German Studies scholars from Germany, Canada, and the U.S. as well as CU Boulder scholars from German Studies, Ethnic Studies, and Women and Gender Studies.

During the public program, attended by scholars from colleges and universities along the Front Range, speakers explored literature, film, art and activism that seek transformations of the present through imaginations of more just futures.

Exploring topics as wide-ranging as contemporary refugee migration, Afrofuturism, indigenous futurisms, and futures in the face of occupation, the speakers sought to think through points of connection and tension in these imaginations of future. On the second day, the participants met in workshop format to discuss their papers and establish the "Just Futures" working group.

Conversations in the Mountains is a biennial event in the German Studies program sponsored by the Max Kade Foundation.

Swedish Ambassador to the U.S. Visits CU-Boulder



The Swedish Ambassador to the U.S., Björn Lyrvall, visited GSLL on

March 10, 2017. The department hosted a reception for the Ambassador. Accompanying the ambassador were Andreas Ershammar, Embassy Counselor of Trade and Commercial Affairs, and Honorary Counsel Don Pedersen of the Swedish Consulate in Denver. In his remarks, the ambassador spoke of the importance of the relationship between Sweden and U.S., alluding to the challenges of the recent changes in the U.S. administration, while emphasizing the strength of this long-standing

relationship. He commented on collaborative initiatives in the areas of security in Northern Europe, climate control, migration, and infrastructure development in Africa. At the ensuing Q&A session, the ambassador addressed such issues as Sweden's relationship with president Trump, trade issues and Sami rights. Guests were treated to music on the nyckelharpa, a traditional Swedish instrument, played by Benjamin Teitelbaum, CU College of Music. (Photo Credit: Kelsey Fuller)

GSLL Talks with Learners of German at Fort Collins High Schools

On March 8, 2017, the German program launched a new outreach initiative to connect with high school students in Colorado. During school visits in the Fort Collins area, German language teaching assistants Rohini Chandra, Justin Harris, and Helena Wagenhoefer shared their enthusiasm about the German language and its culture and enriched the German learning experience of high school students

at Fossil Ridge HS, Rocky Mountain HS, and Fort Collins HS. The graduate students and coordinator Dr. Berit Jany involved students in discussing current issues in German-speaking countries and gave information regarding internship/employment opportunities in these countries. High school students were encouraged to reflect on their future goals and possible career paths, and identify



Dr. Berit Jany with TAs Justin Harris, Helena Wagenhoefer and Rohini Chandra.

German language skills and knowledge about the culture of German-speaking countries as an important tool for becoming successful in these careers.

German Studies Alumna Awarded Fellowship



Heidi Obermeyer, who graduated with a degree in German Studies in 2012 (with additional majors in International Affairs and Anthropology) has been awarded the prestigious German Chancellor Fellowship from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. As a year-long Humboldt Fellow, Obermeyer will conduct research on German foreign and security policy at the German Council on Foreign Relations. In addition to her BA from the University of Colorado Boulder, Obermeyer holds an MA in Political

Science with a concentration in European Governance from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she wrote her thesis on the potential for radicalization among Somali migrants in the United Kingdom by Al-Shabaab. She also completed coursework at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich; Humboldt Universität in Berlin; Freie Universität in Berlin; and at the University of Bath, England. She speaks German and some French, Spanish and Russian.

Russian M.A. Student Receives Scholarship to Study Abroad



Alicia Baca has received a Title VIII Fellowship worth \$10,000 from the U.S. Department of State. In addition to that she has received two American Councils scholarships and the Russian Study Abroad Scholarship from the GSLL department at CU Boulder. She will be

studying Russian language and culture at the Herzen State Pedagogical University in St. Petersburg, Russia during the Fall 2017 semester.

Nobel Prize in Literature: A New Series in the Boulder Bookstore

It all began in October 2015 when Svetlana Alexievich, the Belorussian author writing in Russian, received the Nobel Prize in Literature. For the introduction of our students and community members to this writer, Senior Instructor of Russian Studies Tatiana Mikhailova organized an event. She and Mark Leiderman introduced Alexievich, and Tom Roberts and his students read selected fragments from Alexievich's books. In early Spring 2016, Tatiana transferred this event to the Boulder Book Store with the same crew, enhanced by Professor Laura Osterman's emotional reading of Alexievich. De facto, the Alexievich event has started a new series in Boulder Book Store dedicated to winners of the Nobel Prize in Literature. In Spring 2016, there was one more presentation in the Boulder Book Store - on the Chinese writer Mo Yan, winner of the 2012 Nobel Prize in Literature by his prominent translator, Howard Goldblatt, who discovered this writer to the Anglophonic world. In academic year 2016-17, in collaboration with Stephanie Schindhelm, Boulder Book Store's organizer of events, and with the support of the Arts and Humanities Outreach grant, the series continued on a monthly basis. In Fall 2016, David Atherton (professor of EALC)



Beverly Weber and Ross Etherton presenting on Herta Mueller.

presented on Kenzaburo Oe (prize of 1994), Warren Motte (professor of FRIT) on Albert Camus (prize of 1957), and Peter Elmore (professor and chair of Spanish and Portuguese) on Mario Vargas Llosa (prize of 2010). In October 2017 a new winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature was announced - many were surprised to learn that this was Bob Dylan. Simultaneously, a new tradition was born. We decided to begin each new calendar year with the presentation on the most recent winner of the Prize. Thus, Adam Bradley (professor of English) began 2017 with his most exciting presen-

tation on Bob Dylan. Also, in 2017 the series presented Valerio Ferme (professor of FRIT and divisional dean in Humanities and Arts) with the talk on Dario Fo (prize of 1997), Beverly Weber (professor of GSLL) with the lecture on Herta Mueller (prize of 2009), and Mark Leiderman (professor and chair of GSLL) on Joseph Brodsky (prize of 1987). The series effectively established a steady channel of communication between CU professors of literature and Boulder community interested in world literature. The series will continue next year.

Prominent Slavists Visit GSLL for the Russian Series



Andrew Jenks (California State University).

Thanks to a generous grant from the Center for Western Civilizations, support from the Arts and Sciences Fund for Excellence and our own budget, GSLL hosted in 2016-17 a large-scale series of lectures by prominent Russian Studies scholars. The Russian Series was attached to two significant events – centennial of the Russian Revolution in 2017 and the

launch of the Russian graduate program at CU. The series included seven lectures and represented Russian culture from folklore to the space program and current politics. Prominent scholars visited CU with lectures for The Russian Series: in September Andrew Kahn (Oxford University) gave an exciting talk on Pushkin's interpretations of history; in November Elena Minyonok (Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of World Literature) spoke about the present-day's (re) inventions of Russian folklore, and Nadezhda Azhgikhina (a prominent Russian journalist) discussed the new meaning of journalism and hardships of journalists under Putin's political regime. A new year began with Oleg Proskurin's (Emory University) festive lecture on prototypes of Gogol's *Nozdrev*. In early March, Sergei Oushakine (Princeton University) delivered a theoretically dazzling presentation on Shklovsky's "discovery" of

things behind words and how this affected all Russian avant-garde and resonates with contemporary theory. In mid-March Eric Naiman (University of California-Berkeley) in his intellectually provocative lecture focused on sexual subtexts of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. The series concluded with Andrew Jenks (California State University, Long Beach) opening the hidden utopian potential of the U.S.-USSR space collaboration in the 1970s. All lectures were well attended not only by Russian faculty and graduate students, but also by guests from other departments and even other universities. It was a true intellectual marathon, which displayed novel theoretical, historical and analytical approaches and canon-breaking interpretations of Russian literature and culture, and introduced brilliant representatives of the Russian Studies in the U.S., Europe and Russia.

Nordic Club Events

The Nordic Club and its president Chris Bittel were busy this semester. Apart from the monthly screenings of popular Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Finnish, and Icelandic movies, we had several singular events, which proved quite popular among CU students. In late February, the Nordic Club hosted the traditional Danish Fat Tuesday celebration called *Fastelavn*. This is the Danish version of the old Catholic carnival, which is commonly known in North America as Mardi Gras. In early April, the Nordic Club celebrat-

ed another important Nordic holiday, Swedish Waffle Day, traditionally the Nordic version of St. Mary's Annunciation. At both events, we of course enjoyed the much-celebrated Nordic tradition of bakery goods; waffles on Swedish Waffle Day, and delicious Danishes on Fastelavn.

Another very successful event held by the Nordic Club was the Poetry Nights at Innisfree Coffee Shop on the Hill. Headed by our adjunct Avedan Raggio, many daring and creative students took the

stage on two separate occasions, and demonstrated their abilities as Old Norse *skálds*, the ancient poets of the Vikings. Our courageous and enthusiastic students composed and read poetry that would have made any old Viking in the deep Norwegian fjords proud. The Nordic Club salutes all students who attended our events, and look forward to the fall where we will be back with more exciting activities – Scandinavian holiday celebrations, kubb-games on CU's quads, and last but not least, more movie nights!

German Club Events

It has been an eventful year for the German Club! At the beginning of fall semester, we explored Boulder's beautiful landscape on an immersion hike looping the Flatirons. In October, we partied to the tunes of *Festzeltmusik* and with delicious Oktoberfest food. We also learned about the history and significance of the potato for German society at the Russian-German-Nordic Potato Festival and we tested several potato and non-potato recipes during German cooking sessions. Throughout the year, the German Club organized film and game nights. We watched the entire season of *Deutschland 83* and a mix of romantic, comedy, and dramatic German productions in spring semester. We have become experts in the German version of *Apples to Apples* and acquired some inter-



esting knowledge while playing German trivia games such as *Klug-scheißer*. In spring semester, the German Club represented Germany at CU International Festival and was invited to network with local businesses and seek advice from

alumni during the annual German Career Event. The year came to an end with a relaxed picnic by Varsity Lake.

Swedish Language Student Awarded SWEA Scholarship

Kelsey Ann Fuller, a second year Swedish language student and doctoral student in music ethnology, received the SWEA MAME (Middle Americas Region) 2017 scholar-

ship. SWEA MAME awarded Kelsey a \$2000 scholarship/travel grant to support her research on Sami music and culture, and her Swedish and Sami language studies. Kelsey will be

working in Sweden with Professor Krister Stoor at University of Umeå this summer.

Russian Club Events



The CU Russian Club had an exciting and successful year of activities and events, facilitated by the club's student director Colin Grushkin, and co-directors Dulguun Baatarkhuyag, Anton Esaulkov and Ty Miller. As always, the club hosted regular planning meetings, in addition to contributing to annual GSLL programs such as the Russian Film Series and Russian Culture Week. The Russian Club also organized several special events over the course of the year, beginning with a collaboration with the German and Nordic clubs in October, celebrating the role of the potato in the cultural

traditions of Germany, Russia and Scandinavia. In February, the club held its annual celebration of the Russian Maslenitsa festival, which included traditional Russian food, and instruction in Maslenitsa-related songs, dances and games by Russian faculty Laura Olson Osterman and Galina Siergiejczyk. Finally, the Russian Club participated in CU's annual International Festival in April, introducing the campus community to aspects of Russian culture, and culminating a busy and exciting year.



Where are our German & Russian Studies Graduates?

We continue to collect data about our former students' graduate school and job placements. Please send the information about yourself and your career to gsll@colorado.edu. Your privacy will be protected: only the names of academic programs and job descriptions will appear on our website. The information about careers for which GSLL prepares its graduates is very important for our current and incoming students.

Donate to GSLL: We would like to thank all our donors for their support. If you would like to donate to one of our programs or scholarships, please visit our website: <http://colorado.edu/gsll> and click on "Donate."

GSLL Facebook Pages: We've set up Facebook pages to help us keep in touch with alumni, and to keep you in touch with each other and our current students. We'd love to hear your news!

Please join us by "liking" the pages at :

German Program: <https://www.facebook.com/CUBoulderGerman/>

German Club: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/158545408175/>

Nordic Club: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/11123544743/>

Russian Club: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/curussianclub/>

Alumni/Alumnae News: We would like to hear from our alums, wherever you may be! Keep us informed about what you are doing, and about developments in your lives and careers. See what other alums are doing on our website: <http://colorado.edu/gsll>, under Newsletter and Alumni News. Please email your updates to gsll@colorado.edu.

