

Arne Höcker, Associate Professor of German Studies

Statement on Graduate Student Advising

Doing research in the humanities can be a rewarding experience, and yet, it can be quite daunting. There is no straight path to success, it is usually a rather solitary activity, and much too often it is not given immediate recognition. I know what I am talking about because I have experienced and mastered the highs and lows of academic scholarship repeatedly myself. As a graduate student advisor, I want to support you through the process of successful scholarship and help you to accomplish your short as well as long term goals.

Scholarship begins with an idea, with curiosity and with a desire to know more. And it is important to keep this passion and fascination alive as it is met with more rigorous demands later in the process. As an advisor, I offer you guidance every step of the way: starting from your own ideas, I help you to develop a guiding research question and direct you in exploring the field of your interest; I encourage you to start writing rather sooner than later; I offer you regular advice and critique on your writing and actively support you in creating a critical framework for your thesis.

I cannot overemphasize that it is your scholarly interest and ideas that count. I do not require you to work on the same questions, with the same theoretical models or on the same authors that my own scholarship focuses on, although it is certainly helpful if you consider some of my scholarly expertise relevant for your own research endeavors. I am always happy to talk to you about your ideas, your plans and goals, and I may recommend colleagues to you if I believe that they are better suited to be your academic advisor.

There is not one style of advising that fits everyone's needs. I work with each of my students individually, discuss their specific needs and goals, and adjust my advising accordingly. I know that some students work better on their own schedule, while others call deadlines their friends. I keep an eye on the timeline while I encourage you to develop your own work and writing regime. But if we agree on deadlines, I expect them to be met. Similarly, I do not require a specific frequency of meetings. I have had students with whom I met every week, and then I have had those who came in now and then. It is up to your particular needs, and they might also vary with the phase your research is in. Generally, my advising is in keeping with what Kafka wrote in his novel *The Trial* to characterize the legal court: "It welcomes you when you come and dismisses you when you go."

In addition to working with you on your research, I see myself as a facilitator of professional information and opportunities. I am informed about trends and developments in the field, I follow news about conferences, call for papers, stipends and fellowships, and I will share opportunities with you that are relevant to your particular field of interest and your professional goals. I will support you and work with you on application materials and will provide you with a letter of recommendation. I encourage my students to actively participate in the profession early on, be it to present work at graduate student conferences, or to participate

in an annual meeting of learned societies. As a frequent participant and organizer of panels and seminars at the GSA, MLA, and ACLA, I am well suited to guide you through the process. In the past, I have organized panels and a panel series together with advisees on their particular field of study, and I often participate in annual meetings to offer additional support to my students.

Given the current state of the humanities and the growing insecurities that graduate students face in our academic disciplines, it seems important to address how this unfortunate development affects academic advising. If you want to approach an academic career despite all its insecurities, you will certainly have my full support. But I will also be happy to support you in keeping doors open for non-academic careers. This can mean that you want to pursue a project with a more practical component, for which a traditional written thesis might not be the most appropriate form. I have previously been on committees for dissertations that included a film or a curated exhibition, and I have previously worked with students whose academic experience included internships and cultural activism.

In the past five years, I have served as Director of Graduate Studies for our program, and I have worked closely with our graduate students to create scholarly opportunities. Together we have established, among other things, a speaker series and a student colloquium. For the past six years, I have organized an annual summer colloquium for graduate studies on the Boulder Campus that brings together faculty and graduate students from Cornell, Berkeley, NYU and our own program. My work as Director of Graduate Studies and as graduate student advisor will keep focusing on creating an inclusive environment and building community that is based on intellectual curiosity and common values of collegiality, mutual respect, and equity.

To give you an additional sense of my advising, I am attaching a list of theses and dissertations that I have recently advised. Recent MA students of mine were admitted to PhD programs at Northwestern, Cornell, and the University of Michigan. I am also proud to say that my first PhD student has accepted a tenure track position as Assistant Professor at Hamilton College.

I encourage you to speak with me about your professional goals, your scholarly interest, and how I can help you to accomplish them.

Recently advised theses:

- Fabricated Worlds: Crafting the Text of Modernity in the Modernist Novel (PhD Thesis)
- Waiting Works: Reading Walser's Writing as an Ethics of Autonomous Life (MA Thesis)
- Menschheitsdämmerung: The Optimistic Side of Expressionism (MA Thesis)
- The Beneficial Institution in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* and Moritz's *Anton Reiser* (MA Thesis)
- Foundations of Gewalt: Dominance, Conquest, and Terror in the Works of Heinrich von Kleist (MA Thesis)
- Madness and Science in Georg Büchner's *Lenz* (BA Honor Thesis)
- Adorno and Augustine: Parallel Conceptions of Alienation and the Self (BA Honor Thesis)