

L, NUMBER 3
WINTER 2025

**GERMAN STUDIES
ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER**

2025

WELCOME TO THE WINTER 2025 EDITION OF THE GSA NEWSLETTER!

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear GSA Members,

I am writing to both thank and congratulate you on such a great conference. Thanks, also, to the program committee, our new operations director and the executive director. The conference was both vibrant and beautiful.

Arts night was fabulous, the book displays were amazing, and the intellectual exchange was rich, deep, and enlightening.

It was nice to see friends and to make new acquaintances, and to experience the reshaping of the field as it extends into new directions led by younger generations, now coming from all over the world.

I appreciated the opportunity to a film screening in an actual cinema and to hear from a director and actor who were at first afraid to come from Berlin to the United States, but who found solace in our community.

Thanks also to the guest speakers representing the diplomatic missions from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Lichtenstein. In spite of threats to our disciplines and persistent department closures, there continues to be a strong future in German Studies. We need to continue to promote exchange, even at the high school level. We also need to think more about connections and opportunities for collaborations that more systematically link German Studies in the Global North to German Studies in the Global South.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT (CONT.)

At the meetings I met graduate students and young scholars from places like Nigeria, the Ivory Coast, and Ghana. Let's continue, in that spirit, to think of and connect to German Studies also in Brazil, India, and China.

Needless to say, I look forward to seeing you at our 50th Anniversary conference in Phoenix, and then back in Arlington in 2027, and a year later at our joint conference with the AATG (American Association of Teachers of German) in Indianapolis in 2028.

Please remember to donate!

My best,
Damani

Damani Partridge
President
German Studies Association
president@thegsa.org



CFA: 2026 EMERGING SCHOLARS WORKSHOP FACILITATORS

Emerging Scholars Workshop (ESW) Facilitators: Apply by November 15

We invite full-time faculty members to apply to serve as facilitators for the 2026 Emerging Scholars Workshop (ESW). Workshops may be led by one or two facilitators (from different institutions if paired). One or two ESW workshops will be selected for 2026. Application Deadline: **November 15, 2025**

👉 [Submit your application here.](#)

CFA: GSA-DE GRUYTER DISSERTATION PRIZE

Announcing New GSA/De Gruyter Dissertation Prize: Apply by December 31

We are delighted to launch the first-ever GSA-De Gruyter Dissertation Prize, created to support early-career scholars in German Studies. The prize recognizes the best unpublished doctoral dissertation completed within the past two calendar years and includes a \$1,000 award. The winning manuscript may also be considered for publication in a De Gruyter series, with the option of waived open-access fees. For the prize's inaugural year, the 2025 submission deadline has been extended to **December 31, 2025.**

👉 [Learn more and submit your materials here.](#)

GSA WEBSITE UPDATES: CALL FOR PHOTOS

We are currently refreshing the website and we would love to have images of members to include to show everyone "who" the GSA is! We would greatly appreciate any contributions--whether recent or more historical images!

👉 Please submit your images [via the following form.](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

KINO! Film Salon Discussion Group on November 16 (Virtual)

Love German film? Join the next KINO! Film Salon, a free monthly online discussion hosted by Telescope Film and the German Film Office!

This November the spotlight is on: *Pina*, a documentary by Wim Wenders.

 More information about the film [here](#).

 Sunday, November 16, 2025 | 11am PST / 2pm EST / 8pm CET

 Watch on your own, then join the conversation with fellow fans of German cinema.

 RSVP to join the group discussion [here](#).

GSA Distinguished Lecture at the Berlin Program on November 18 (In-Person)

For members in Berlin: Join B. Venkat Mani (University of Wisconsin–Madison) for his talk “Colonialism, Racism, and Human Dignity: On the Global Novel in an Age of Refugees.”

 Tuesday, November 18, 2025 | 16:00–18:00

 Freie Universität Berlin, Ehrenbergstr. 26/28, Room 009

 Moderated by Paul Nolte (FU Berlin)

 Reception to follow (18:00–19:00)

 Register by **November 16**:  bprogram@zedat.fu-berlin.de

 [More information here](#)

Meet a Bundestag Member: Elisabeth Kaiser on November 20 (Virtual)

Join us for our next installment of the “Meet a Bundestag Member: German Politics Today” series, presented in partnership with AATG and the American Council on Germany (ACG).

 Thursday, November 20, 2025 | 11:00 AM-12:00 PM (EST)

 Join us virtually: [Register here](#)

 Missed the last one? View the September session [here](#).

CFP: GSA REGIONAL & VIRTUAL MEETINGS (2026–2027)

The German Studies Association is piloting regional and virtual scholarly gatherings outside of the annual conference to foster community and exchange ideas across German studies.

Opportunities:

- Regional Meetings: \$1,500 funding | In-person gatherings for scholars in the same region.
- Virtual Meetings: \$500 funding | Online gatherings with flexible formats.

Key Dates:

- Proposal Deadline: March 1, 2026
- Notification: May 1, 2026
- Event Window: August 1, 2026 – July 31, 2027

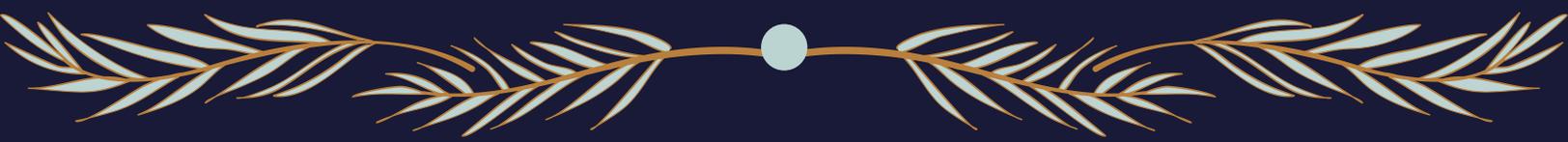
Who Can Apply:

- Organizers must be GSA members.
- Teams must include at least one graduate/contingent faculty and one tenure-track/tenured faculty.

More Information and Application:

- Contact Committee Chair Erin Hochman, at ehochman@smu.edu and see our website [here](#).

GSA CONFERENCE COMMUNITY FUND



FUNDRAISING CALL

Help Support our GSA Community through the GSA Conference Community Fund. The Conference Community Fund is the GSA's only funding source for North American travel.



These grants are funded by you,
our members.



The GSA Conference Community Fund seeks to support precariously employed and contingent faculty – including lecturers, adjuncts, non tenure-track colleagues, tenured faculty without research funding, and visiting faculty – as well as recent PhDs who are presenting at the annual GSA conference.

**PLEASE SUPPORT THE GSA CONFERENCE COMMUNITY
FUND AND OUR GSA COLLEAGUES TODAY!**

<https://www.thegsa.org/donate>

CFA: GERMAN STUDIES REVIEW EDITOR

The GSA invites applications for the next editor (or co-editors) of its flagship journal, German Studies Review. The new editor(s) will succeed Katharina Gerstenberger on June 1, 2026, and will help shape the journal's scholarly direction. Applications, including a letter of institutional support, are due **February 6, 2026**.

Institutional Support:

Like past editors, the the incoming editor(s) will be expected to negotiate teaching and service release time with their home institution(s) and secure additional support, such as an editorial assistant. Applicants and nominees must provide a letter of institutional support as part of their application.

Application Materials:

To be considered for this position, please submit the following materials to the chair of the search committee, Tiffany N. Florvil (tflorvil@unm.edu) by February 6, 2026:

- Cover letter
- Curriculum Vitae
- Overview of publishing record and previous editorships (journals, anthologies, book series, etc.), if applicable
- Letter of institutional support from the home institution

👉 Read the full call for applications [on our website here](#).

GSA 2026 CONFERENCE

The Fiftieth Conference of the German Studies Association September 24–27, 2026 | Phoenix, AZ

The German Studies Association's annual conference brings together over a thousand scholars to engage with research, teaching and public scholarship on German-speaking countries' diverse histories, cultures, languages, and politics in global contexts. We look forward to welcoming you in Phoenix next September!

We invite proposals for seminars, roundtables, (series of) panels, and individual papers. *Please note that seminar submissions run on a different deadlines schedule than other presentation formats.*

For information on submitting a proposal for a seminar, please consult our [call for seminar proposals](#). For information on submitting a proposal for a roundtable, panel (series), or an individual paper, please consult our [call for non-seminar proposals](#).

SUBMISSION SCHEDULE

19 December 2025 (11:59pm PST)

conference submission portal opens for seminar topic proposals

5 January 2026 (11:59pm PST)

conference submission portal opens for panels, papers, and roundtables

11 January 2026 (11:59pm PST)

seminar topic proposals due

27 January 2026 (11:59pm PST)

approved seminars announced on GSA website

18 February (11:59pm PST)

seminar participation applications due

18 March (11:59pm PDT)

all paper, panel, and roundtable proposals due

GSA 2026 CONFERENCE

Find your
people!



#thegsa2026
Phoenix

FIND PARTICIPANTS FOR YOUR PANEL OR ROUNDTABLE!

Looking for participants to complete a roundtable or panel that you'd like to organize for GSA 2026? Hoping to find a roundtable or panel in need of your expertise?

Submit your information on [this form!](#)

(Note: If you don't want to share your name and email on a public form, please consider an alternate method for finding collaborators.)

See who is currently seeking participants for a session, or looking to join a panel or roundtable, [here](#).

Want to amplify your search? Post on Bluesky, Facebook or Twitter and tag [@thegsa.bsky.social](#), [@thegsa](#), or [#thegsa2026!](#)

Don't forget that you'll need to be a current (for 2026) GSA member to be part of a submitted session. You can join/renew [here](#).

2026 PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Program Director: Lisa Haegele, *Texas State University*

Pre-1800, all fields: Tamar Menashe, *Emory University*

19th Century, all fields: Alicia Ellis, *Colby College*

20th/21st-Century History:

- Karrin Hanshew, *Michigan State University*
- Sara Pugach, *California State University, Los Angeles*

20th/21st-Century Germanistik:

- Brett Sterling, *University of Arkansas*
- Holly Yanacek, *James Madison University*
- June J. Hwang, *University of Rochester*

Contemporary Politics, Economics, Society:

- Brian Van Wyck, *University of Maryland, Baltimore County*

Interdisciplinary/Diachronic:

- Sam Keeley, *Friedrich-Alexander Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg*
- Kate Zambon, *University of New Hampshire*

Single Papers, all fields:

- Bradley Boovey, *Oregon State University*
- Nisrine Rahal, *Wake Forest University*
- Maximilian Scholz, *Florida State University*

Commentator/Moderator Coordinators:

- Christopher Hutchinson, *University of Mississippi*
- Sarah Panzer, *Missouri State University*

Seminar Coordinators:

- Colleen Anderson, *National Air and Space Museum*
- Nicole Coleman, *Wayne State University (chair)*
- Kristin Poling, *University of Michigan-Dearborn*

2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE BOARD MEETING REPORT

GSA Annual Board Meeting Action Items Summary

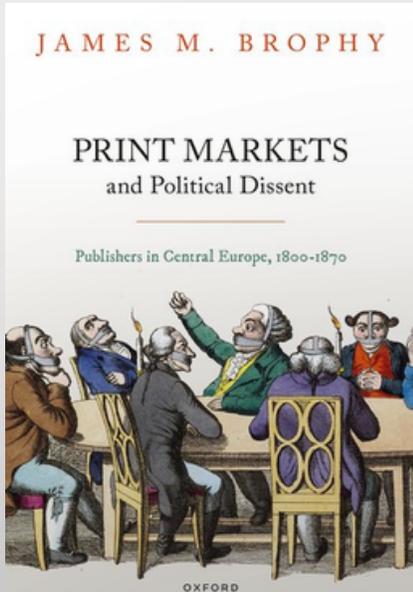
49th GSA Annual Conference, Crystal Gateway Marriott, Arlington, VA
Thursday, September 25, 2025

Present: Vance Byrd, Astrid M. Eckert (new, non-voting member), Alicia Ellis, Tiffany Florvil, Katharina Gerstenberger (ex officio), Sara Hall, Todd Herzog, David Imhoof, Lorna McCarron, David Meola (ex officio), Margaret Menninger (ex officio), Heather Morrison, Jonathan Olson, Damani Partridge, Denise Phillips, Christine Rinne, Qinna Shen (new, non-voting member), Faye Stewart, Kira Thurman (new, non-voting member).

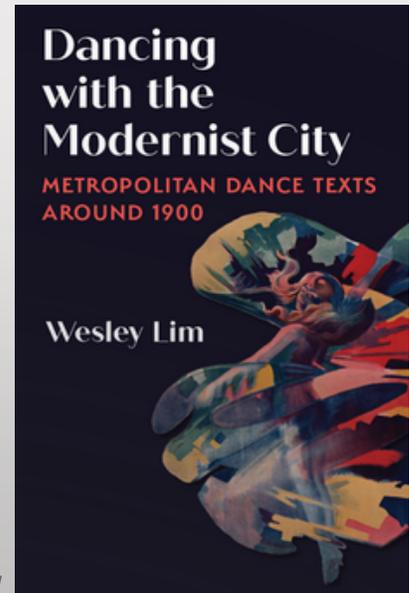
1. The Board approved the Minutes from the September 2024 Board meeting.
2. The Board approved membership rate increases to improve to help cover the GSA's budgetary deficit:
 - a. Increase of \$25 for members earning less than \$50,000 per year
 - b. Increase of \$40 for members earning between \$50,000 and \$90,000
 - c. Increase of \$60 for members earning \$90,000 and above
3. The Board approved the proposal to reappoint Menninger as Executive Director.
4. The Board voted to recommend that the Accessibility Task Force become a standing committee, a move that will be considered as part of an ongoing overhaul of the bylaws.
5. The Board approved conference registration increases, also to help the deficit.

2025 PRIZE WINNERS

Barclay Book Prize

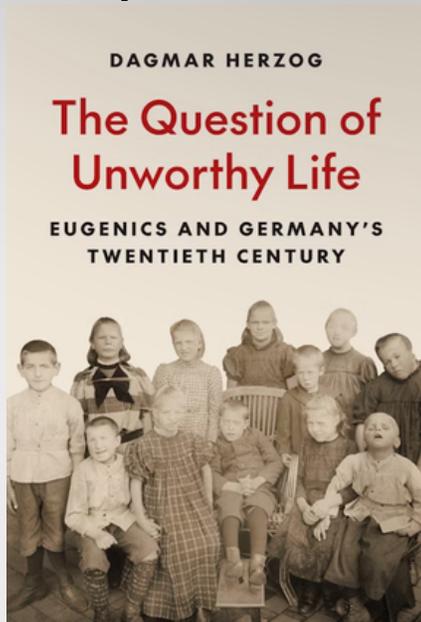


DAAD/GSA Book Prize: Literature/Culture

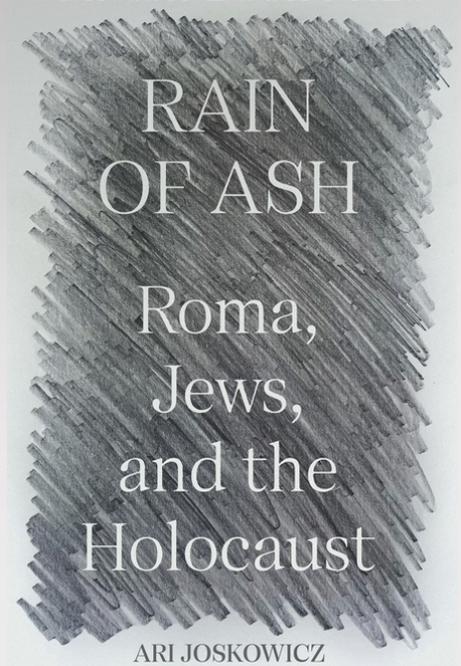


Click on the cover images for prize information and winner laudationes!

DAAD/GSA Book Prize: History/Social Science



Milton Book Prize



2025 PRIZE WINNERS (CONT.)

GSA/DAAD Article Prize Winner

Später: Objectless Eschatology and
Radical Hope in the Poetry of Paul Celan

Asif Rahamim

ABSTRACT

In this article, I examine Paul Celan's career-long preoccupation with the notion of a new beginning and the eschatological possibility of bringing about a hoped-for better future through the artistic act. Drawing on three major reference points in Celan's conceptualization of this struggle—Heideggerian eschatological thought, Jewish messianism, and the utopian tendencies of the early 20th century European avant-garde—I suggest another theoretical framework through which to understand Celan's divergence from these approaches: Jonathan Lear's theory of "radical hope." Although not a literary concept, I argue that Lear's "radical hope" offers a unique vantage point from which to consider what I call Celan's "objectless hope," shedding new light on its peculiarities and on the poetic techniques with which it is made manifest.

Graduate Student Essay Prize Winner:

Lilú Kruspe, "Auf der Suche: Deutsche
Fremdenlegionäre als
Forschungsreisende im Spiegel
zeitgenössischer Kolonialimagination"

Honorable Mentions

David Barclay Book Prize:

Katya Motyl, Embodied Histories: New Womanhood in Vienna, 1894-1934

DAAD/GSA Book Prize for the Best Book in Literature/Cultural Studies:

Elizabeth J. Petcu, The Architectural Image and Early Modern Science: Wendel Dietterlin and the Rise of Empirical Investigation

DAAD/GSA Book Prize for the Best Book in History / Social Sciences:

Johanna Schuster-Craig, One Word Shapes a Nation: Integration Politics in Germany

DAAD/GSA Article Prize:

J. Andie Speed, "On Sunlit Fields: The Swabian Children, Legal Personhood, and the Tyrolean Statthalterei's Edict of 1867"

2025 PRIZE WINNERS (CONT.)

Shortlist

David Barclay Book Prize:

- Alice Goff, *The God behind the Marble: The Fate of Art in the German Aesthetic State*
- Michelle Lynn Kahn, *Foreign in Two Homelands: Racism, Return Migration, and Turkish-German History*
- David Livingstone, *Militarization and Democracy in West Germany's Border Police, 1951-2005*
- Todd Weir, *Red Secularism: Socialism and Secularist Culture in Germany, 1890-1933*

DAAD/GSA Book Prize for the Best Book in Literature/Cultural Studies:

- André Fischer, *The Aesthetics of Mythmaking in German Postwar Culture*
- Carl Niekerk, *Enlightenment Anthropology: Defining Humanity in an Era of Colonialism*
- Sophie Salvo, *Articulating Difference: Sex and Language in the German Nineteenth Century*

DAAD/GSA Book Prize for the Best Book in History / Social Sciences:

- Michelle Lynn Kahn, *Foreign in Two Homelands: Racism, Return Migration, and Turkish-German History*
- Katya Motyl, *Embodied Histories: New Womanhood in Vienna, 1894-1934*

Sybil Halpern Milton Memorial Book Prize:

- Jacob Flaws, *Spaces of Treblinka: Retracing a Death Camp*
- Julie R. Keresztes, *Photography and the Making of the Nazi Racial Community*
- Helene J. Sinnreich, *The Atrocity of Hunger: Starvation in the Warsaw, Łódź, and Kraków Ghettos during World War II*
- Andrew Wisely, *The Trial of a Nazi Doctor: Franz Lucas as Defendant, Opportunist, and Deceiver*

GSA 2025 PRIZE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The GSA thanks the 2025 prize committee members!

David Barclay Book Prize

Heidi Tworek (Chair), University of British Columbia
Samuel Clowes Huneke, George Mason University
Celia Applegate, Vanderbilt University

DAAD/GSA Prize for the Best Book in Literature and Cultural Studies

Olivia Landry (Chair), Virginia Commonwealth University
Benita Blessing, American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies
Sara Jackson, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

DAAD/GSA Prize for the Best Book in History and Social Sciences

Kira Thurman (Chair), University of Michigan
Christopher Ewing, Purdue University
Margaret B. Lewis, University of Tennessee at Martin

GSA/DAAD Best Article Prize

Frank Biess (Chair), University of California, San Diego
Chunjie Zhang, University of California, Davis
Jonas Rosenbrueck, Amherst College

GSA Prize for the Best Essay in German Studies by a Graduate Student

Claudia Kreklau (Chair), University of St. Andrews
Bodie Alexander Ashton, Leibniz-Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung Potsdam
Dominique Kirchner Reill, University of Alberta

Sybil Halpern Milton Memorial Book Prize

Erin McGlothlin (Chair), Washington University in St. Louis
Waitman Wade Boern, Newcastle University
Brad Prager, University of Missouri

2025 ARCHIVES REPORT

Rainer Hering, Landesarchiv Schleswig-Holstein

Aktuelles aus deutschen Archiven

Gliederung:

- 0.) Grundsätzliches
- 1.) Bundesarchiv
- 2.) Brandenburgisches Landeshauptarchiv
- 3.) Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv
- 4.) Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg
- 5.) Luxemburger Nationalarchiv
- 6.) GSA Archives Committee

0.) Grundsätzliches: Im Bereich der nicht nur für die historische Forschung wichtigen Überlieferungssicherung von Quellen bereiten gegenwärtig vor allem zwei Entwicklungen Sorge. Erstens: An die Stelle klassischer Akten ist in Regierung und Verwaltung eine Vielzahl digitaler Kommunikationsformen getreten, die wesentlich flüchtiger sind. Aktuelle Diskussionen zeigen: Wichtige Entscheidungen werden zunehmend in Emails, SMS oder Chatgruppen getroffen, ohne anschließend angemessen dokumentiert zu werden. Texte entstehen in Sharepoints, ohne dass die individuelle Beteiligung und damit die Verantwortung nachvollziehbar sind. So entstehen große Wissenslücken – und oft unnötiger Raum für Spekulationen.

[\(click here to continue reading the full report\)](#)

2025 "FOOD FOR THOUGHT"

We extend our sincere thanks to **Zach Ramon Fitzpatrick** (University of Wisconsin–Madison) for organizing this year’s “Food for Thought” luncheon at the GSA’s 49th Annual Conference in Arlington, VA.

We are also grateful to GSA VP **Todd Herzog** (University of Cincinnati) for his introduction and to our outstanding presenters for sharing their exciting research:

- **Molly Harrabin**, Early Career Fellow, *University of Warwick*
- **Nina Morais**, Assistant Professor of German, *Rhodes College*
- **Paige Newhouse**, Ph.D. Candidate in History, *University of Michigan*
- **Peter Ogunniran**, Assistant Professor of German, *Williams College*
- **Maryann Piel**, Visiting Assistant Professor of German, *College of Charleston*
- **Hazel Rhodes**, Postdoctoral Associate, *University of Minnesota*
- **Erin Ritchie**, Ph.D. Candidate in Germanic Studies, *University of Illinois Chicago*
- **Qingyang Freya Zhou**, Ph.D. Candidate in German and Film Studies, *University of California, Berkeley*

🎥 Missed the luncheon? Watch the presentations on the GSA’s YouTube channel [here](#).

INTERDISCIPLINARY NETWORK COORDINATORS

The GSA extends its sincere thanks to our outgoing Interdisciplinary Network Co-Chairs **Nancy Nenno** (College of Charleston) and **Jeff Hayton** (Wichita State) for their tremendous service over the past three years.

We are also pleased to announce the 2026-2028 Interdisciplinary Network Co-Chairs **Andy Evans** (SUNY New Paltz) and **Lee Roberts** (Purdue University, Fort Wayne). Both have extensive experience as Interdisciplinary Networks Coordinators and we are grateful for their leadership.

BOARD MEMBER TRANSITIONS

The GSA would also like to thank to our outgoing Executive Board Members **Alicia E. Ellis** (Colby College), **Tiffany Florvil** (University of New Mexico), and **Jonathan Olsen** (Texas Woman's University) for their service since 2023.

We are also pleased to announce the incoming Board Members, whose three year terms begin on January 1, 2026: **Astrid M. Eckert** (Emory University), **Qinna Shen** (Bryn Mawr College), and **Kira Thurman** (University of Michigan).

THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 DONORS!

General Fund

Benita Blessing
Roswitha Burwick
Agnes J Cser
Astrid M. Eckert
Jacob Flaws
Franz X. Fromholzer
Rolf J. Goebel
Anna von der Goltz
Thomas Goulding
Patrick Greaney
Oliver Griffin
Friedmann Harzer
Karin Liebhart
David Livingstone
Lorna McCarron
Lea Pao
Damani Partridge
Annie Pfeifer
Denise Phillips
Hans J. Rindisbacher
Christine Rinne
Susanne Rinner
David Warren Sabean
Friederike von Schwerin-High
Brian Vick
David Warren
Jason M. Wolfe
Jonathan Zatlin

Sybil Milton Prize

Mary Helen Dupree
Irene Kacandes
Karin Liebhart
Mark Roseman

\$50 for 50

Leslie A Adelson
Kerstin Barndt
Katharina Gerstenberger
Sara Hall
Donna Harsch
Irene Kacandes
Benjamin Korstvedt
Thomas M Lekan
Sara Lennox
Mary Lindemann
Heather C Morrison
Eric R Tooch
Jacqueline Vansant
Brian Vick

Barclay Book Prize

Celia Applegate
Irene Kacandes
Eli Rubin

Radomír Luža Prize

Peter Höyng
Karin Liebhart
Gerald Steinacher
Brett Sterling

Take a Grad Student to Lunch

Leslie A Adelson
Vance Byrd
Tiffany N Florvil
Carl Gelderloos
Katharina Gerstenberger
Sara Hall
Irene Kacandes
Margaret E. Menninger
Susanne Rinner

Conference Community Fund

Leslie A Adelson
David E Barclay
Kathrin Bower
Agnes J Cser
Cheryl Dueck
Astrid M. Eckert
Carl Gelderloos
Patrick Greaney
Jeffrey A Grossman
Jason Groves
Carol Hager
Lisa Hoeller
Irene Kacandes
Robert Kelz
Caroline Kita
Sara Lennox
Paul Lerner
John P Lessard
Karin Liebhart
Mary Lindemann
David Livingstone
Michael Mackenzie
Johannes von Moltke
Leila Mukhida
Troy Paddock
Lea Pao
Joe Perry
Eli Rubin
Willeke Sandler
Anette Schwarz
Paul Steege
Lauren K Stokes
Jennifer M Valko
Jacqueline Vansant



Berlin Program for Advanced German and European Studies

Call for Applications

Application Receipt Deadline: December 1
For more information and an application form,
please visit www.fu-berlin.de/bprogram

German
Studies
Association **GSA**

Photo by jens schwan on Unsplash

CFA: BERLIN PROGRAM FELLOWSHIPS

The Berlin Program for Advanced German and European Studies is soliciting applications for its 2026-2027 fellowship competition. The Berlin Program offers five different fellowships; more information about the differing fellowship types can be found [here](#).

Application Deadline: December 1, 2025.

For more information and application instructions, please visit the Berlin Program's website [here](#).

Thank you to the Max Kade Foundation for their ongoing support of two post-doctoral fellowships for the Berlin Program!

GET INVOLVED

Support the GSA

The Association is grateful for financial support. It relies on member dues and donations to cover its operational costs, Book Prizes, and The Conference Community Fund.

Volunteer with the GSA

Committees, Elected Positions, Conference Moderators/Commentators

SHARE YOUR NEWS

Do you have publication news or event announcements to share?

Let us know!

Please use this form to submit details

Contact: *media@thegsa.org*

CALL FOR RECENT DISSERTATIONS IN GERMAN STUDIES



Help us spread the word about recent dissertations in the field(s) of German studies!

Please submit relevant information on this Google Form, either for your own dissertation or on e.g. an advisee's behalf: <https://forms.gle/g3K4PGZcxiPm55Rw7>

GOETHE FILM ARCHIVE: NEW TITLES ADDED!

GOETHE FILM ARCHIVE

- 600+ culturally relevant feature and documentary films
- All films come with English (and German) subtitles and non-commercial screening rights

To rent a film, please contact
karin.oehlschlaeger@goethe.de

More info:



The Goethe Film Archive features over 600 culturally relevant feature and documentary films available for research and campus/classroom screenings. The collection contains a comprehensive survey of German film history, from expressionist films to the most recent features of contemporary German cinema.

All films are available on digital format (DVD and blue ray). Some are available via a digital link and all have English and almost always German subtitles.

The films are available for rental for non-commercial screenings by all cultural and educational institutions within the United States, **free of charge**.

To order, email:

Karin.oehlschlaeger@goethe.de

New titles are added continuously, such as this recent addition:

Two to One (Zwei zu Eins) about the discovery of a cache of ostmarks, just before German reunification makes them worthless. Crime comedy directed by Natja Brunckhorst.

Trailer: [Two To One - Official Trailer](#)

IN MEMORIAM: JAMIE MELTON (1952-2025)

Some losses are so unexpected that the mind refuses to believe. James “Jamie” Van Horn Melton passed away suddenly and unexpectedly at his Atlanta home on June 28, 2025. He was a pillar of the History Department of Emory University and of the Emory community more broadly. He was a longtime GSA member and served as president of the Central European History Society. Jamie was also a crossroads of cultures. Born and raised in the South, he absorbed Viennese charm by osmosis and combined it with a Salzburg accent through marriage.

Jamie grew up with his parents and two brothers in Chatham, Virginia. His education took him from Vanderbilt University (BA, 1974) to the University of Chicago (PhD, 1982), where he worked with Leonard Krieger. During his doctoral studies, a Fulbright scholarship allowed him to conduct dissertation research in Vienna. After completing the PhD, he spent two years as an assistant professor at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, three years as an assistant professor at Florida International University, and in 1987 he joined the faculty at Emory. Jamie touched the lives of many on Emory campus as a distinguished scholar, generous mentor, inspiring teacher, engaging and supportive colleague, and kind friend. He unfailingly answered every service call that reached him and ended up chairing no fewer than three different Emory departments: History, German Studies, and—wait for it!—Spanish and Portuguese. Without missing a beat, this Germanist turned around and enrolled in Spanish classes.

IN MEMORIAM: JAMIE MELTON (1952-2025), CONT.

We are fortunate to inherit Jamie's scholarship. He left a profound mark as a historian of early modern Europe, Germany, the Enlightenment, and the Atlantic World. He published three single-authored books with Cambridge University Press. His dissertation work turned into *Absolutism and the Eighteenth-Century Origins of Compulsory Schooling in Prussia and Austria* (1988), a book that won the 1990 Hans Rosenberg Prize awarded by the Central European History Society. His second book made good on the promise of the first: *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe* (2001) has been translated into Spanish and Turkish and will posthumously appear in Russian. In his last book, Jamie combined the far and the near: the history of the Atlantic world, Austrian history, and the history of our home state, Georgia. *Religion, Community, and Slavery on the Southern Colonial Frontier* (2015) tells the history of Ebenezer, a frontier settlement in colonial Georgia founded by a Protestant mountain community fleeing religious persecution in its native Salzburg. The book was awarded the Center for Austrian Studies Book Prize in 2016.

His contributions, however, also lie in the numerous edited collections and peer-reviewed articles that he authored. Sometimes Jamie was hiding a bombshell where you wouldn't look for it, like his seminal chapter on the historian Otto Brunner in a collection he co-edited with Hartmut Lehmann. Published in 1994, the piece explored the roots of German social and structural history and found them where they lay: in folk history (*Volksgeschichte*), on the political far right, in the conceptual shift from *Staat to Volk*. As German historians grappled with the role of the profession during National Socialism over the later course of the 1990s, Jamie had already quietly opened that path.

IN MEMORIAM: JAMIE MELTON (1952-2025), CONT.

Jamie retired from teaching at Emory in 2023, but he remained adamant about his research. He was still working on a new book, entitled *The Imperial Lives of Lorenzo Da Ponte* that will forever be missing in the Central European historiography. The project had grown out of Jamie's longstanding interest in Mozart and his cultural world that also infused his teaching, for instance, in the seminar on "Mozart's World, Mozart's Women" that he used to offer. The life of Da Ponte (1749-1838), Mozart's librettist and collaborator, unfolded across the imperial metropolises of Venice, Vienna, London, and New York. In following Da Ponte's cultural odyssey from the Old World to the New, Jamie hoped to explore how this man on the move—and on the make—made sense of his life and of his world through a constant process of cultural adaptation and reinvention.

Most importantly, Jamie was a man of good will, of integrity, courage, and compassion, who sought to do right by those who were in his life or crossed his path. Jamie was a loving husband and father, a devoted son and brother, and a committed friend. He was also a generous colleague, mentor, and teacher, and a respected leader who had the courage to stand up for his values and defend the vulnerable. Though erudite and accomplished, Jamie completely lacked pretentiousness. His wit, charm, and adventurous spirit brought smiles and joy to those who knew him. He is deeply missed.

Astrid M. Eckert
Brian Vick

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