Nietzsche’s Will, Luhmann’s Inheritance. On the Physiological and Philosophical Underpinnings of Nietzsche’s and Luhmann’s Posthumanism

(Abstract)

Intended to lay the groundwork for a book-length study, the proposed research revisits “Nietzsche’s Will,” that is, his concept of willpower and his legacy in the twentieth century, including for the works of the German socio-theorist, Niklas Luhmann. Starting point is an examination of Nietzsche’s early study of nineteenth-century neurophysiology (specifically Johannes Peter Müller’s and Helmholtz’s writing), which shape Nietzsche’s epistemology and his understanding of language. In a nutshell, Müller’s “principle of specific nerve energy” leads Nietzsche to recognize a fundamental heterogeneity between nerve stimulus, mental image, and language. His early theories on the metaphoricity of language as much as his later critique of notions of the subject and subjectivity must be understood in this context, as addressing what is perceived as a fundamental discontinuity of cognition and with it of the subject. As regards Nietzsche’s will, my thesis is that while the will might appear to drive cognitive and social processes, the concept must be thought along the lines of an “energy” in Müller’s sense, a force that works as a mere stimulant for processes that evolve around self-organizing dynamics which are beyond the purview of the individual. This reading provides an alternative to the popular image of Nietzsche as a champion of self-creation, suggesting instead that Nietzsche employs the concept of the will not to represent or describe more or less accurately the human condition, but to intervene in and break open established interpretive routines and structures of social interaction.

Methodologically, I will draw on the work of the German sociologist Niklas Luhmann to bring a contemporary (post-humanist) conceptual frame to the difficult question concerning the
relationship between will and society. At the same time, the proposed reading of Nietzsche wants to shed light on the apparent absence of any conceptions of “will” in Luhmann’s work (despite extensive parallels in other areas of their thought), a question that goes to the heart of Luhmann’s controversial exclusion of the individual from the social sphere.
ICS Application for Fall 2013/Spring 2014 Scholars and Artists in Residence

Edgar Landgraf, Dept of GREAL

Title: *Nietzsche's Will, Luhmann's Inheritance. On the Physiological and Philosophical Underpinnings of Nietzsche's and Luhmann's Posthumanism*

Description of Project

Objective

- Complete article on Nietzsche and Luhmann, to be placed in a highly visible journal
  (ideally *Critical Inquiry*)
- Lay groundwork for next book

General Description of Project

In his introduction to the German sociologist Niklas Luhmann (1927-1998), Detlef Horster (Munich 1997) notes in passing the continuity between Luhmann and Friedrich Nietzsche's work, suggesting that Luhmann's social systems theory rationalizes and thereby radicalizes Nietzsche's critique of "old-European thought." Even a cursory comparison will note many affinities between Luhmann and main tenets of Nietzsche's thought. To mention only a few: 1) both are skeptics of the ideals, rationality, and values of the Enlightenment (using Enlightenment rationality for its critique);¹ 2) both are suspicious of morality and its place in modern society; 3) both are critical of base tenets of liberal thought (Luhmann owes much of his initial fame to his dispute with Jürgen Habermas); 4) both reject teleological modes of thinking, 5) find paradox and difference at the bottom of all things, 6) question bivalency in logic, 7) are willing to accept the contingency of their own observations, 8) draw on findings from the natural sciences, in particular

¹ Luhmann published 6 volumes of his essays under the heading "Sociological Enlightenment." Nietzsche's critical position vis-à-vis the Enlightenment is well established.
neurophysiology, for their respective epistemologies, and 9) question the centrality of the subject and subjectivity. In short, both are major proponents of what with Cary Wolfe we might term “posthumanist thought.”

Although Luhmann barely mentions Nietzsche and never discusses his importance for his own work, the similarities between both thinkers are not coincidental. Luhmann’s work is indebted to a sociological tradition (Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, Norbert Elias) that was profoundly influenced by Nietzsche. That (as of 2012) no comprehensive study exists that would examine the “roots of Luhmann’s sociological systems theory in Nietzsche’s philosophy” (Stegmaier, “Luhmann als Philosoph,” 2011, p.16)² points toward some of the apparent disparities between both thinkers, disparities that complicate any comparison or claims of continuity. These differences concern their philosophical ethos, political ambitions, and writing style—the pathos and aphoristic style of Nietzsche’s brilliant prose stands in stark contrast to the technocratic conceptual apparatus and the systematic fervor that defines Luhmann’s writing—as much as their respective fields of inquiry, philosophy vs. sociology. But nowhere are the dissimilarities between both bodies of work more acute—and more interesting—than with regard to Nietzsche’s concepts of the will and the will to power. What forms the undeniable center of the philosopher’s work seems to be completely absent from the work of the socio-theorist. In fact, Luhmann dismisses Nietzsche’s concept of the will as a mere ploy “to retain the ability to attribute behavior to individuals” (Die Wissenschaft der Gesellschaft, 112). This assessment not only oversimplifies Nietzsche’s concept of the will, it ignores, I contend, how the concept in Nietzsche responds to a conceptual problem that is also at the center of Luhmann’s work, namely to the intricate, causality-eluding relationship between what are recognized as social dynamics on the one hand and what both thinkers acknowledge is the simultaneous inclusion and exclusion (even inclusion by exclusion) of the individual from those dynamics on the other hand.

Traditionally, the question of the will has been viewed in the larger context of Nietzsche’s psychology, that is, as part of an interpretive strategy that, as Robert Pippen notes with reference to the will to power, almost amounts to a “psychologizing of being itself” (Pippen, *Nietzsche, Psychology, and First Philosophy* [Chicago 2010], 5). This reading has earned Nietzsche the reputation of being a champion of individualism and “self-creation,” where the (unconscious) “will to power” takes primacy over any subjugation (based on reason or moral imperatives) to social norms or society at large. Based on this understanding of Nietzsche, the American pragmatist Richard Rorty goes as far as treating the demands for self-creation (the private) and human solidarity (the social) as “equally valid, but incommensurable” (Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, xv). Both spheres are incommensurable for Luhmann, too, but for very different reasons. Luhmann’s theory is premised on the radical exclusion of the psychic system from the social sphere. Society is not the sum total of actions expressive of individual wills, thoughts, feelings, or intentions, but—this is the central cut that systems theory makes vis-à-vis the anthropocentrism of the humanist tradition—society ought to be understood as an autopoietic (self-constituting, self-reproducing) system whose elements are communications. Luhmann conceives of communication not as the coded transmission of a message from a receiver to a recipient, but rather as something that takes place between speakers. That is, he understands communication to be a radically social event, one that relies, to use Luhmann’s technical vocabulary, on the processing of three different selections, on the synthesizing of utterance, information, and understanding. Communication is a construction that occurs when communication is processed in this way, and fails, when it is not. Speakers or

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3 The utterance refers to the fact that something was said or signaled and the circumstance that surround this event. The information concerns the content of the utterance, what was said, represented, referred to, etc. Understanding implies that one gauges the relationship between utterance and information in one way rather than another (as factual statement, as critique, expressing (in-)competence, as indicating emotional distress, etc.), not on a proper transfer of “meaning” or “feeling” from one person to another. For a more detailed presentation, see chapter 4 “Communication and Action” in Kommunikation in Luhmann, *Social Systems* and his essay “What is communication.”
writers/readers, of course, are needed for the processing of communication, but can never fully control the process individually, or its dynamics, or the (social) meaning that might emerge.

My article wants to negotiate this crucial conceptual difference. Its goal is to establish how the emphasis Nietzsche puts on the will in fact responds to a conceptual problem that is also at the base of Luhmann’s systems theory; and subsequently explore the philosophical, political, and ethical consequences of their respective responses to the problem. To make the argument, it is necessary to look more closely at Nietzsche’s and Luhmann’s epistemology. In both cases—and this has not received enough attention in the secondary literature so far—it is the inclusion of findings from neurophysiology and cognitive psychology that leads each thinker to develop a constructivist viewpoint. Nietzsche in fact radicalizes Kant’s and Schopenhauer’s distinctions between the phenomenal and the noumenal world, and between the world of representation and the world of the will, through the inclusion of findings from nineteenth-century neurophysiology (which he studied extensively in the 1860s and early 1870s while working on a never completed dissertation on “The Concept of the Organic since Kant”). From his early theories on the metaphoricity of language to his later critique of the seductions of language guiding philosophy and its infatuation with the “subject,” Nietzsche’s epistemology, I contend, is indebted to the physiologist Johannes Peter Müller’s work, in particular to Müller’s principle of specific nerve energy (in a nutshell, Müller, experimenting with nerve cells, found that the same stimulus will produce different output depending on the specific sense that is irritated, i.e. the same energy can produce a sound, a sight, or the sensation of touch). Jonathan Crary pointed out some of the “nihilistic” consequences of Müller’s theorem, that it conceives of the relationship between stimulus and sensation as fundamentally arbitrary, that it drains interiority “of any meaning that it had for a classical observer,” stipulating instead that “all sensory experience occurs on a single immanent plane,” and that it dissolves the unity of the subject into “a composite structure on which a wide range of techniques and forces could produce or stimulate manifold experiences.
that are all equally ‘reality’” (Crary 92). But neither Crary nor Christian Emden, whose 2005 book provides a comprehensive review of the physiological discourse Nietzsche had studied, recognize the centrality of Müller’s principle of specific nerve energy for Nietzsche or discuss its consequences for his philosophy. Its importance for Nietzsche’s epistemology is most apparent in the 1873 essay fragment “On Truth and Lies in the Extra-Moral Sense” where Nietzsche transposes the finding of heterogeneity between senses onto the relationship between nerve stimulus, mental image, and language, conceiving each as highly separate and closed “spheres” that reflects but its own output capabilities (“To begin with, a nerve stimulus is transferred into an image: first metaphor. The image, in turn, is imitated in a sound: second metaphor. And each time there is a complete overleaping of one sphere, right into the middle of an entirely new and different one” [Nietzsche, 82]). Put differently, Nietzsche understands observation no longer along the lines of a subject/object distinction, but as a form of self-observation, where the organ or medium that is stimulated (nerves, mind, or language) reveals but organ-specific truths.

Transposing Müller’s principle of specific nerve energy in this way creates a paradox of recursion. Nietzsche addresses this paradox already in the early essay fragment with regard to language, when he remarks that this finding, too, is but a linguistic truth, one that cannot decide if it corresponds or does not correspond to the non-linguistic world. The problem stays on Nietzsche’s mind. As much as 15 years later, Nietzsche still raises the problem prominently and specifically with reference to physiology, as a “causa sui” paradox (“What? And others even say that the external world is the work of our organs? .... But then our organs themselves would be—the work of our organs!” [Beyond Good and Evil #15]). For Nietzsche (as for Luhmann) recognizing such a paradox does not signal a misapplication of reason, though, but rather

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4 See Jonathan Crary, Techniques of the Observer. On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century. Cambridge, MA / London: MIT Press, 1990, esp. 88-96. In Crary’s assessment, Müller’s principle of specific nerve energies is one of the most influential and controversial ways in which the observer was figured in the nineteenth century.

5 We know for certain that Nietzsche read Helmholtz’s Doctrine of the Sensation of Sound from 1863, which summarizes Müller’s principle in the very first paragraph (Helmholz was Müller’s most famous student).
indicates fundamental limits of reasonability (where “logic coils up and bites its own tail,” as he describes the tragic insight of his time in the Birth of Tragedy). In the article I am proposing to write, I do not want to question the premises that lead to this paradox, but suggest that we need to understand Nietzsche’s concept of the will and even of the will to power in this epistemological context, as addressing said heterogeneity and the paradox of recursion it implies (incidentally, this is also the point where Nietzsche’s concept of the will differs from Schopenhauer’s). My thesis, in a nutshell, is that while Nietzsche’s concept of the will might appear to drive and determine cognitive and social processes, it must be thought along the lines of an “energy” in Müller’s sense, a force that works as a mere stimulant for processes that are recognized as evolving around self-organizing dynamics that are beyond the purview of the individual.

My reading of Nietzsche’s epistemology draws to some extent on Luhmann’s work which provides a more formalized account (and acceptance) of the described heterogeneity between what Luhmann conceives as independently operating, closed systems (the nervous system, the psychic system or consciousness, and communication). More important, though, is that Luhmann’s operational constructivism also draws on neurophysiology, in particular on the (compared to Müller more advanced) studies of the Chilean biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela. This allows him to develop a theory that is more apt to address some of the problems Nietzsche inherits from post-Kantian physiology, yet leads Luhmann to let fall to the wayside almost completely any conceptions of will, of human desiring, wanting, and so on. Drawing on Nietzsche, I hope to explore how the absence of even a weak concept of the will constitutes a blind spot of Luhmann’s theory, one that both enables and limits (especially with regard to his cultural and political analyses) crucial tenets of his argument.
With Luhmann receiving increased attention in the U.S. (in part, because more and more of his works are available in English translation now\textsuperscript{6}), the absence of a concept that would account for the human dimension—a person’s rational and irrational desires, drives, beliefs, (mis-)conceptions, power assertions, and so on—has remained a sticking point for many scholars in the humanities who recognize the importance of Luhmann’s work, but regret the apparent exclusion of what in the humanities has remained a central point of interest. My article hopes to provide a better understanding on how to account for the exclusion of the “will” and similar concepts in Luhmann. With specific reference to Nietzsche’s will, I wish to establish how it is precisely the recognition of social structures that supersede the individual’s sphere of determinability which gave rise to modern conceptions of the psyche (as a conglomerate of conscious and unconscious wills and desires) in Nietzsche and beyond. This is in line with the lessons Nietzsche draws from physiology in particular with regard to the function of language—in a nutshell, language is not about representation, but about establishing and maintaining social orders and hierarchies—a lesson that also needs to be applied to his concept of the will. Doing so suggests a reading of the will that can serve as a corrective to the popular image of Nietzsche as a champion of self-creation. Interestingly, Nietzsche understands the structure of the will and the will to power itself in sociological terms. In section 19 of \textit{Beyond Good and Evil}, for example, Nietzsche deconstructs the concept of the will (its unity, its directionality, its authority, its primacy), recognizing that the will is constituted by internalized social interactions (“we are at the same time the commanding \textit{and} the obeying parties”) and by an act of (belated) misattribution (“the governing class identifies itself with the success of the commonwealth”). Section 36 of the same book suggests that the will to power is but an explanatory principle, a heuristic device that can be applied as much to the physical as to the social world (“The world seen from within, the world defined and designated according to its ‘intelligible character’—it would simply be ‘Will to

\textsuperscript{6} See the translation of Luhmann’s seminal work, \textit{Theory of Society} (Stanford UP, 2012). One of his most accessible works, the lecture series \textit{Introduction to Systems Theory} will be available in English December 16, 2012.
Power,' and nothing else.'

The ramifications of this moment of reflection about what arguably is the key concept of Nietzsche's later writings have, to my knowledge, never been fully explored. It suggests that Nietzsche's psychology is a veiled cultural sociology where concepts are employed not to represent or describe more or less accurately the human condition, but to intervene in and break open established interpretive routines and structures of social interaction.

I believe such a reading of Nietzsche's will can open many new vistas on key concepts of his philosophy, such as his concept of the soul, of sovereignty, of morality, and so on, topics I hope to explore in more detail in the larger book project. Furthermore, by drawing on Niklas Luhmann's work, we can bring a contemporary (posthumanist) conceptual frame to approach the difficult question of the relationship between individual or will and society. Finally, I hope to expand the discussion to include Luhmann's writings on politics and power, which focus extensively on the historical differentiation between the private and the public sphere (the very distinction for which Rorty assumed incommensurability). In Luhmann's social systems theory, the perceived incommensurability between private and public is neither an opportunity for "self-creation" nor is it the sign of a fall or of political failure; rather, Luhmann takes a broader socio-historical perspective that links these categories to comprehensive structural changes within Western society. That is, the perceived incommensurability between private and public sphere is seen as an evolutionary achievement with which modern society—for better or worse—copes with its increased complexity.

**Background**

The proposed research represents a new and, no doubt, ambitious project, which I am approaching, however, not without some prior expertise. I have taught a number of Honors courses on Nietzsche at BGSU and also published an article on Nietzsche's concept of culture that drew on Luhmann (but focused on different questions than the ones proposed here) and which I was able to place in the highly regarded journal *Comparative Literature* (goes to all
members of the ACLA). I also established a reputation in the field for my expertise in Luhmann and contemporary systems theory. Over the last year, I have started/continued work in two areas relevant for the proposed article and the book project. One concerns Luhmann’s political writings, in particular his understanding of the public sphere (I presented on the topic again in April 2012 at an interdisciplinary conference on the public sphere at OSU; the conference organizers are putting together a volume on the topic which will include an extended version of the paper I presented). In addition, the paper I gave at the GSA conference earlier this month looked at Nietzsche’s use of nineteenth-century neurophysiology in the development of his early epistemology and the conceptual problem he encountered in the process (though, I was not able to include his concept of the will in the discussion yet). The paper also starts addressing some of the parallels between Nietzsche and Luhmann, including a brief discussion of the neurophysiological studies Luhmann draws on in his work.

**Larger Project**

During my ICS semester 2005, I wrote an article on Karl Philipp Moritz that came to form the basis of chapter 2 of my book on *Improvisation as Art. Conceptual Challenges, Historical Perspectives* (Continuum 2011). Once again I hope to get the opportunity to advance my research as an ICS resident scholar to lay the groundwork for a new book whose completion during my next sabbatical (2015-6) would be a realistic goal. The book will expand on the implications of Nietzsche’s adaption of the neurophysiological in the various directions indicated above. Focusing on the physiological premises of Nietzsche’s early work (which, unlike the physiology of his later work, has garnered relatively little attention) opens Nietzsche up to the intersections of science and literature (in the broader sense that would include Nietzsche’s philosophy), that is, to an area of research that currently enjoys renewed interest in German studies and the humanities at large. This intersection is also central to Luhmann whose theory—Habermas calls it meta-biological—endeavors to bridge the gap between the humanities, the
social sciences, and to some extend even the natural sciences. At the center of the book project, however, will be "Nietzsche’s Will," will, both in the sense of willpower and with regard to Nietzsche’s legacy in particular for the various late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century psychological discourses (e.g. Friedrich Theodor Vischer, Theodor Lipps, Johannes Volkelt) to the cognitive psychology that comes to inform Luhmann’s systems theory and sometimes shows up in rather surprising places, as when Luhmann draws on “schemata” and “scripts” in his discussion of public opinion (in an essay on “Freedom of Press, Public Opinion, and Democracy” from 1998).

Timeline
I will have completed the article on Luhmann’s notion of public sphere by the end of the year, which will allow me to continue researching Nietzsche’s inclusion of the neurophysiological discourse until I begin my ICS residency—should I be awarded the fellowship. This will allow me to use the ICS time to complete the article while also focusing more on Nietzsche’s legacy on early twentieth-century psychology and on some of the sources Luhmann uses from cognitive psychology (such as Fritz Heider’s work). Having an extended period where I can fully dedicated my time and effort to this project would be of crucial, giving me the ability to complete the book manuscript during my next sabbatical in 2015-6. While I would prefer taking advantage of an ICS residency during the spring semester 2014, giving me one semester plus a full summer to focus on this research project (summer 2013, I am directing our summer program in Salzburg), I am also open for a fall residency should that better accommodate the plans of my peers.
EDGAR LANDGRAF
Curriculum Vitae
October 2012

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Bowling Green, OH 43403
Tel. : (419) 372-9517     FAX: (419) 372 2571
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Education
Ph.D.            German, The Johns Hopkins University, 1998
M.A.             German, University of Illinois at Chicago, 1992
B.A. equivalent  German Studies, Philosophy, and Psychology, Universität Zürich, 1990

Academic Positions
2006 to present  Associate Professor of German, Department of German, Russian, and East Asian Languages, Bowling Green State University
2011 to 2012     Director of BGSU Study Abroad program in Salzburg, Austria
2007 to 2008     Director of BGSU Study Abroad program in Salzburg, Austria
1998 to 2006     Assistant Professor of German, Department of German, Russian, and East Asian Languages, Bowling Green State University
2003 to 2004     Director of BGSU Study Abroad program in Salzburg, Austria
2001 to 2002     Director of BGSU Study Abroad program in Salzburg, Austria
1992 to 1998     Graduate Teaching Assistant, Department of German, Johns Hopkins University
1995 to 1997     Assistant Language Coordinator, Department of German, Johns Hopkins University
1990 to 1992     Graduate Teaching Assistant, Department of German, U. of Illinois at Chicago
1988 to 1989     Teaching Assistant, Department of German, Universität Zürich

Teaching Experience
Undergraduate Courses Taught at Bowling Green State University

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<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>GERM 480</td>
<td>Automations: Man and Machine</td>
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<td>GERM 4170</td>
<td>Professional German (online course)</td>
<td>(Fall 2010)</td>
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<td>GERM 417</td>
<td>Advanced Composition and Conversation</td>
<td>(Fall 1999 &amp; 2002)</td>
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<td>GERM 416</td>
<td>Contemporary Austrian Life</td>
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<td>GERM 413</td>
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HNRS 300, PHIL 340h Nietzsche (Spring 2000 & 2001 & 2003 &
Graduate Courses Taught at Bowling Green State University

GERM 6950 Workshop in German (Spring 2011, Fall 2012)
GERM 6800 Romantic Love (Fall 2010)
GERM 680 Lessing, Goethe, Kleist (Fall 2006)
GERM 680 Heinrich von Kleist (Spring 2006, Fall 2009)
GERM 680 The Ideology of 18th Century Aesthetics (Fall 2000)
GERM 680 Romantic Love (Fall 1998)
GERM 582 Young Goethe (Spring 2005)
GERM 517 Advanced Composition and Conversation (Fall 1999 & 2002)

Other Teaching
Summer workshop 2000 and 2005: Focus on Switzerland, Swiss-German and Swiss humor (for high school teachers)
Maifest (high school day) presentations on Switzerland (1999 and 2000)

Thesis Students

April Reiter | MA | Summer 2011 | BGSU
Jessica Strains | MA | Spring 2011 | BGSU
Andrea Weatherman | MA | Spring 2011 | BGSU
Tim Cabe | MA | Spring 2010 | BGSU
Kathy Defever | MA | Spring 2001 | BGSU
Rebecca Merfeld | MA | Summer 2000 | BGSU
Kate O'Leary (co-advisor) | MA | Summer 2000 | BGSU
Renate Gebhardt | MA | Spring 2000 | BGSJ
Anita McChesney | MA | Spring 1999 | BGSJ
Silvia Müller | MA | Spring 1999 | BGSJ

Graduate Student Advisors

Mark Heckerman | MA | Spring 2011 | BGSJ
Ben Netz | MA | Spring 2011 | BGSJ
Yana Belan | MA | Spring 2007 | BGSU
Adam Dutson | MA | Spring 2007 | BGSU
Beth Wysocki | MA | Spring 2007 | BGSU
Melanie Bersaaas | MA | Spring 2006 | BGSU
Julie Langan | MA | Spring 2006 | BGSU
Alexandra Penn | MA | Spring 2005 | BGSU
Vlad Marinescu | MA | Summer 2003 | BGSU
Eric Richards | MA | Spring 2003 | BGSU
Biba Hadziavidic (co-advisor) | MA | Spring 2000 | BGSU
Katrin Callsen | MA | Spring 1999 | BGSU
Karen Gedeon | MA | Spring 1999 | BGSU
Paul Knaus (co-advisor) | MA | Spring 1999 | BGSU

Membership on Thesis Committees

Ken Fritjofson (dual) | MA | Summer 2011 | BGSU
Andrew Thompson (dual) | MA | Spring 2010 | BGSU
Joanne Joys (ACS) | Ph.D. | Fall 2010 | BGSU
Don Eberle (History) | Ph.D. | 2007- | BGSU
Bobby Blankenship | MA | Spring 2005 | BGSU
Sandra Marcu | MA | Spring 2005 | BGSU
Renee Hill | MA | Spring 2003 | BGSU
Marshelle Machtan | MA | Summer 2002 | BGSU

2007, 2010 and Fall 2004 & 2012)
Michelle Braken  MA  Summer 2001  BGSU
Kirk Ross  MA  Summer 2001  BGSU

Membership on Honors Student Thesis Committee
John Zackel  BA  Spring 2005  BGSU

Undergraduate Courses taught at Johns Hopkins University
GERM 302  German Identity in the 19th Cent.: Culture and Politics  (Spring 1995 & 1998)
GERM 301  Media and Politics in Contemporary Germany  (Fall 1994 & 1997)
GERM 202  Berlin: Intermediate German 2  (Spring 1997)
GERM 202  Intermediate German 2  (Spring 1994)
GERM 201  Intermediate German 1  (Fall 1993)
GERM 104  Elementary Conversation 2  (Spring 1996 & 1997)
GERM 105  Elementary Conversation 1  (Fall 1995 & 1996)
GERM 102  Elementary German 2  (Spring 1993)
GERM 101  Elementary German 1  (Fall 1992)

Undergraduate Courses taught at the University of Illinois at Chicago
GERM 213  Intensive Intermediate German  (Spring 1992)
GERM 211  Intensive Intermediate German  (Fall 1991)
GERM 203  Intermediate German 3  (Spring 1991)
GERM 202  Intermediate German 2  (Winter 1991)
GERM 201  Intermediate German 1  (Fall 1990)
GERM 117  Intensive Elementary German  (Summer 1992)
GERM 103  Elementary German 3  (Spring 1990)
GERM 102  Elementary German 2  (Winter 1991)
GERM 101  Elementary German 1  (Fall 1990)

Undergraduate Courses taught at Universität Zürich
Tutorium to Intro. to Linguistics Course  (Fall 1988 & Spring 1989)

Curriculum Development
Bowling Green State University
GERM 6950 Workshop in German (colloquium, organized around graduate students presenting on and reviewing their research projects, including online collaborative efforts with the use of google/documents)

GERM 680 Lessing, Goethe, Kleist (new course on the literary and aesthetic writings of Lessing, Goethe and Kleist, focusing on the socio-historical and philosophical context of Enlightenment as well as Storm and Stress writing).

GERM 680 Heinrich von Kleist (new course on the literary and aesthetic writings of Heinrich von Kleist, focusing on the socio-historical context of his writings and their challenge to 18th century ideology)

GERM 680 The Ideology of 18th Century Aesthetics (new course on the ideological bias of 18th cent. German literary, aesthetic, and philosophical texts, focusing on Lessing, Schiller, Kant, and Kleist)

GERM 680 Romantic Love (new course on the emergence of the modern concept of love in the literatures of the late 18th and early 19th centuries)

GERM 601 Intro. to Graduate Studies (redesigned course)

GERM 480 Automata: Man and Machine (interdisciplinary course on changing concepts of man and machine from Descartes to Blade Runner)

GERM 582 & 400: Young Goethe. Senior seminar on the works of young Goethe and their historical,
social, political, cultural, and aesthetic implications

GERM 413 and GERM 313 Crime and Lit. in the 18th & 19th Centuries (new courses on German crime literature in the late 18th and early 19th centuries)

GERM 311 Intro into German Lit. of the 20th Century (completely redesigned course focusing on a variety of 20th-century German and Austrian literary movements)

HNRS 300 / PHIL 340h Nietzsche (new honors course on Nietzsche's philosophy and its relevance for 20th-century critical thought)

GERM 201 & 202 (introduced new book, developed new accompanying materials, lesson plans, and web components for future use by graduate students who often teach this course)

The Johns Hopkins University
GERM 302 German Identity in the 19th Cent.: Culture and Politics (new course on German identity quarrels in the 19th century)

GERM 301 Media and Politics in Contemporary Germany (new course on post WWII German media and politics)

Professional Development
Bowling Green State University
Online Contract Writing Workshop (April 2011)
COBL Online Course Course (March 2011)
ICS book publishing workshop (October 2009)
CTLC workshop on “iMovie” and “iDVD” (March 2007)
CTLC workshop on “Podcasting” (June 2006)
CTLC workshop on “GarageBand” (June 2006)
CTLC workshop on “Audacity” (June 2006)
Distance Learning Workshop (January 2006)
Blackboard Workshop (December 2004)
LLC workshop (September 2004)
Apple Computers (invited by GREAL): iMovie Workshop on digital video editing (3/1/2001)
Tenure & Promotion Workshop (11/18/99; 11/19/04; 4/22/08)
“Chrysler, Daimler, Euro & Your German Program” Workshop organized by Michigan State University
and the Goethe-Institute in East Lansing (2/6/1999)
Sexual Harassment Training (B.G.S.U., Spring 1999)
ITS: Technology Forum (2/8/1999)
ITS: Workshops on Claris Homepage (Fall 1998)
ITS: Computer Workshop on Web-CT (Fall 1998)
New Faculty Conference (August 1998)

The Johns Hopkins University
Language Teaching Seminar (Spring 1997)

Research Interests
Improvisation, Performance Studies
German Romanticism
Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German literature, aesthetics, and philosophy
Anthropological and sociological approaches to literature
Systems theory, neo-cybernetics, theories of modernity
Nietzsche
Publications

Books


Articles


Editing
Reviewer for PMLA (2011)
Reviewer for Fordham University Press
Reviewer for The European Romantic Review (2007)
Reviewer for Comparative Literature Studies (2006)
Reviewer for German Quarterly (2003, 2004)
Editorial Assistant, MLN 109/3 (1994)

Book Reviews


"Simulating Mimesis” MLN 115/3 (April 2000): 554-560. (review)


Conference Papers Read to Professional Societies
Invited Papers
”Kleist’s Politicization of the Public. A Luhmanian Perspective.” German Studies and Department of Philosophy, Swarthmore College, PA. April 16, 2012.

“The Politicization of the Public in the Context of Niklas Luhmann’s Political Theory.” Ohio State University, “Transformations of the Public Sphere,” Columbus, Ohio, April 12-14, 2012.

”Staged Improvisation. The Generative Principles of Romantic Irony.” A bilingual workshop entitled "Das Theater der Information / The Play of Print and Performance, 1820–1850" at Villa Garbald, Castasegna (Switzerland), organized Angela Esterhammer, University of Zurich, September 1-4, 2011.

”Unpredictability and the Public Sphere. Heinrich von Kleist’s Politicization of the Public in the Context of Niklas Luhmann’s Theory of Modernity.” Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, Part of Speaker Series on Permanent Sphere and Imagery, May 10, 2011.

”Systems Theory and Early German Romanticism. Conceptual Challenges, Historical Perspectives.” Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, April 30, 2010.


”Unvorhersehbarkeit, Kreativität, Individualität. Beobachtungen zur poetischen und gesellschaftlichen Reflexion improvisierten Handelns in der Romantik.” Tagung: Improvisieren – Das Unvorhersehbare...


“The Value(s) of the Humanities Today,” BGSU’s First Russian Undergraduate Research Conference, 4/21/2005.


Refered Papers


"The Disintegrating Effects of Modern Culture. Nietzsche and the Information Age." Kentucky Foreign Language Conference (KFLC); Lexington, KY, April 2003.


"Self-Positing Selves: Genius and Self-Identity in the Aesthetics of Storm and Stress." Canadian Society of Eighteenth Century Studies Association (CSECS); Toronto, ON, October 2000

"Self-Positing Selves. Autonomy and Artistic Creativity in Goethe and Moritz." German Studies Association (GSA); Houston, TX, October 2000

"Docile Daughters. Love and Power in the German Enlightenment." Kentucky Foreign Language Conference (KFLC); Lexington, KY, April 2000

"Inspired Minds. Inspiration and Consciousness in late Eighteenth-Century German Aesthetics." Annual Meeting of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS); Philadelphia, PA, April 2000


"The Inspired Gaze: Inspiration and Spectacle in Eighteenth-Century German Aesthetics." Western
Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies (WSECS); University of Nevada, Las Vegas, February 2000

"The Genealogy of Romantic Love: Gallantry, Authenticity, Play, and Simulation in Pre-Romantic and Romantic German Literature." American Conference of Romanticism (ACR); Bloomington, IN, November 1999

"The Inspiration of Language: German Romanticism and its Simulation of Meaning," American Conference of Romanticism; Santa Barbara, October 1998

"Histories of Venus;" 5th Conference of the International Society for the Study of European Ideas (ISSEI), Utrecht, August 1996

"Body, Mind and Soul in Medieval Literature;" Graduate Student Conference, Chicago, March 1992

Honors and Awards

Master Teacher Award Nomination, BGSU 2010
Authors & Artists Recognition (Friends of the University Library), BGSU 2006
Institute for the Study of Culture and Society Fellowship (Fall 2005)
Roulston Prize for outstanding achievement and excellence in German, Johns Hopkins University (AY 1997-1998)
Humboldt Consortium; Research Stipend at Berlin's Humboldt Universität (Summer 1996)
NEH-sponsored Summer seminar at Johns Hopkins University (Summer 1995)
Robert Kauf Award for Scholarly Excellence, University of Illinois at Chicago (1991 and 1992)

Research Grants

DAAD Summer Seminar, Chicago (Summer 2009)
Fullbright European Union Scholar-in-Residence Grant (Spring 2006).
Institute for the Study of Culture and Society (ICS) (research semester, awarded for fall 2005)
Instructional Improvement Grant for Intermediate German (2003)

Membership in Professional Organizations

Modern Language Association
German Studies Association
North American Goethe Society
American Association of Teachers of German
Society for Literature, Science and the Arts (SLSA)
American Comparative Literature Association

Service

Bowling Green State University
Department

Graduate Coordinator (spring 2006-2007, 2009-11)

AYA Director 2011-2, 2007-8, 2003-2004 and 2001-2003 (activities incl. search for and hire of new professors, undergraduate and graduate advising, managing AYA budget, recruiting Austrian students for BGSU, organizing new field trips, directing communications between BGSU and Mozarteum, creating program webpage, organizing film series, organizing social events promoting cultural exchange between Austrian and American students, etc.)

Incoming AYA Director 2010-11, 2006-7, 2002-2003 and 2000-2001 (activities included revision of graduate brochure – both form and content! – and new layout of undergraduate brochure and poster, organizing and coordinating recruitment efforts, recruitment trips to other universities, organization of several information evenings for students, class presentations in all German classes, consistent communications with prospective students and parents, etc.)

Chair of Chair Succession Committee (2006)


Salzburg Summer Program director (2005), duties included recruitment of within and outside BGSU, soliciting financial support for high school students from Max Kade,

Updating AYA web pages (fall 2004),

Member of AYA Salzburg Committee, 2000 to present

Wrote up general education course approval forms for GERM 201 and GERM 202 (2/2003)

Member of German Search Committee, 2000-2001

German Club Advisor, 2000-2001

Member of Secretary Search Committee, 2000

Assessment of 3rd Year German Literature Track, Spring 2000

Member of Departmental Retreat, 5/9/00

Member of Chinese Search Committee, 1998-1999

Oral Proficiency Exams with Graduate Students, 1998 & 1999

Participation in Study Abroad Fair, 1998 & 1999 & 2003


University
  Arts & Science Council (substitute, 2009-10)
  University Faculty Research Committee, 2005-2008
  AYA Process Team (2006-7)
  Distinguished Thesis Awards Committee 2004
  Faculty Senate, 2002 – 2005 (interrupted because of study abroad directorship)
  Faculty Senate, one year replacement for 2000-2001
  International Programs, 2000-2001; 2002-2003
  Film Studies Committee, one year replacement 1999-2000
  Honors and Awards Committee, 1999-2000

Professional

Committees
MLA Division Executive Committee 18th and Early 19th Century German Lit (2012-16)

Manuscript Evaluations
Stegert, Bernhard. Essays on Cultural Techniques (Fordham Press)

Nominations
MLA, Division Executive Committee 18th and Early 19th Century German Lit (2009, 2011)

Treasurer, Goethe Society North America (2009)
Panels

Guest Contributor: Listserv colloquium --empire--(Australia) topic: Love (October 2008).


The Johns Hopkins University

Department

Graduate Student member of Committee on Undergraduate Language Instruction, 1995-1997.