

William G. and Elke Durden Dickinson Program in Bremen, est. 1985

Annual Report 2017-18

Dickinson



This year, our program welcomed ten students. They arrived in Bremen at the end of September, after taking a four-week summer language course in another German-speaking city. We started the semester with two weeks of orientation, thoroughly introducing the University of Bremen and the program. The students also had enough time to attend the *Orientation week* organized by the University of Bremen, some student-organized first-semester events like the *ERASMUS Movie Night*, a *city tour* and a *pub-crawl*, which helped them find friends. We counseled them extensively on their selection of courses and made sure beforehand that they would receive credit for them by their respective home departments.

Academics

Our students were majoring and/or minoring in German, International Studies, INBM, Russian, and English. Aside from advanced language courses and sports courses, they took the following classes:

- ❖ *Cultural Studies*: Cinema is Dead – Long live Cinema? The Future of Bremen’s Local Cinema City 46; Screen Realities: From the Hollywood Western to the Native American Film; Experimental Examination of Pictures in a Museum; World Cinema, Migration Cinema, Transgressive Cinema; Culture and Religion of Oceania; Researching and Writing for the “Newspaper of the Street”; Campus TV News; Living in Conflict. Art, Architecture, and Visual Culture at Times of Crisis in Everyday Life
- ❖ *Economics*: Supply Chain Operations Management; International Business Environment; Economic and Social Policy; International Management
- ❖ *Literature*: Dream and Literature. Romantics to Postmodernism; Introduction to Newer German Literature Studies I; Man-Made Creatures in Child and Youth Literature; The Postcolonial World in Literature and Film: USA; Late Victorian Novelists – George Eliot, Wilkie Collins and Thomas Hardy; The American Novel Today; Key Topics in Cultural History: Critical Approaches to Race and Racism
- ❖ *Philosophy*: Climate Ethics
- ❖ *Politics*: Official Media in the Eastern Bloc; Migration Policy; Social Injustice in Germany and the USA; Introduction to the Political System of the FRG; Citizens to Power? Political Participation in Germany; War and Displacement in South Caucasus; Political Protests in Russia and the Ukraine; Political Parties and the Party System in Germany; Introduction to European Integration; EU Foreign Policy
- ❖ *History*: Revolution 1918/19 – How Did Bremen Change?; Nationalism and Religion in the USSR from the Second World War to the Collapse of the Country; Introduction to Intelligence Studies: The History of German Intelligence Services in the 19th and 20th Centuries
- ❖ *German 340 – Comparative Cultures: USA – Germany*: Every Fall, all program students take this seminar together with German students. In this course, we reconstruct and evaluate important stages in the more than 300-year-old history of German-American relations. Then we ask in which way both

cultures have mutually influenced each other. This year's edition featured: German emigration to America, the ambivalent image of America as a motor of modernity and a symbol of capitalism, US pop culture transfer to the BRD after 1945, and analysis of up-to-date resentments, recent events, alienations, and stereotypes. Students' comments: "One topic of the seminar that I enjoyed was the Americanization of Germany. While living in Germany, I have noticed an American influence here. It was interesting to learn about the details of Americanization, such as how different groups have reacted to it, what aspects in particular have taken hold in Germany, and why young people have gravitated towards American culture. I enjoyed building off of what we learned in class, while researching for the paper. Because the topic of Americanization is so big, it was nice to be able to focus on what interested me. At the beginning of the semester we did a lesson on German immigration to the U.S. and how Germans have impacted American culture. I liked learning about the exchange between the two countries and how over the past hundreds of years both have played a role in shaping the other's culture." >Molly Burger<

In addition to intensive counseling during the whole semester, we also organized a one-day workshop in which our students were introduced to the specifications of the German academic system by a professional, who also explained how to prepare, research, and write a paper (called "Hausarbeit"), including correct citation styles. Some of our students had a so-called "study buddy" in one of their courses; others had tandem partners focusing on German language acquisition.

Excursions

Like every year, the group went on trips to Berlin and Vienna, exploring the historical, political, and cultural dimensions of those places. We visited various museums, historical buildings, castles, the Stasi archives, libraries, and political institutions plus, in addition, the Slovak capital Bratislava. We met politicians and attended local events as well as theater and opera productions. On top of the rich academic program, however, the group also indulged in regional cuisine and went on sightseeing trips. A more detailed list of annual Berlin/Vienna activities can be found in previous reports and on our Blog.



"Schloss Schönbrunn"



Students at the Stasi Archives



"State Department"

The William '71 and Elke Durden Literary Series at Bremen # 3

For the third William '71 and Elke Durden Literary Series at Bremen on November 9, 2017, we cooperated with the Institute for Cultural German Studies (IfkuD) at the University of Bremen. The student workshop, organized by Dr. Janine Ludwig, was the opener of a three-day conference on German-language literature written by migrant writers from Eastern Europe and Russia, which was titled: *Migration Foreground, Province Background. German Speaking (World) Literature from Eastern Europe*.

In this workshop, the Dickinsonians together with students from the University of Bremen talked with author Lana Lux about her debut novel *Kukolka*. The novel tells the story of the orphan child named

Samira, who lives in a protectory in Dnipropetrovsk, Eastern Ukraine. At the age of seven, she loses her best friend Marina, who is adopted by a wealthy German couple. Subsequently, she decides to flee from the orphanage, hoping to make her way to Germany to reunite with Marina.

With Lana Lux, who came to Germany at the age of ten from the same town as her protagonist, we discussed the different images and (mis-)perceptions of Germany as a new dreamland for migrants. Lux read passages from her hyper-realistic novel, which we then analyzed. In this lively talk, our guest answered the students' questions and told memorable stories from her childhood in the Ukraine, her first impressions as a schoolchild in Germany, her experiences of being discriminated against as a Jew, and her yearning for her homeland, which she has not visited for almost twenty years.



Working in Bremen and Internships

Besides studying, the students were also engaged in more practical approaches to living abroad by working or volunteering for local institutions. Two exemplary students' comments from the last two years (an extensive list of exemplary choices of jobs, internships, community engagement, grants, and independent studies can be found online on our Blog – August 1, 2017¹)

❖ *Working for the Language Department* – Katelyn King

During my time in Bremen, I decided to look for a job to help supplement my travel addiction. I asked Dr. Ludwig for some help, and she remembered seeing an email come through her inbox about a student assistant job with Faculty 10, the language departments. I applied by submitting my German resume and cover letter. During the interview, I was offered the job as the student assistant for the ERASMUS office for FB10. My job included answering emails in German or English, filing paperwork, organizing applications for outgoing students, creating transcripts as credit certificates arrived from professors, and helping incoming students to create their class schedules, dealing with altogether 200 students. I worked six hours a week at the times that fit my schedule and that were outside of my boss's schedule (we shared the office and the only computer). I also learned to appreciate all the support that we get from Dickinson, Janine Ludwig, and Verena Mertz, because the ERASMUS students are on their own for a lot of things. I would highly recommend seeking employment in Bremen. It might seem intimidating at first, but it is definitely worth it.

❖ *Internship at BIZME* – Molly Burger

Over this past "Semesterferien," the two-months break from classes in February and March, I interned at the Bremen Information Center for Human Rights and Development (biz). I knew I wanted to have an internship in Bremen even before arriving here and was lucky enough to find out about biz after skyping with Janine Ludwig and telling her about my interests. Biz ended up being a perfect match for me. Everyone

¹ <http://blogs.dickinson.edu/bremen/2017/08/01/summery-of-student-activities-jobs-grants-internships-community-service/>

there was super friendly and willing to explain something if I didn't understand it (usually because of the language barrier). I spent most mornings in the main office area attending meetings, or assisting with various tasks, and most afternoons I was in the information center/biz library where I assisted visitors and worked on small projects. Even though there was a certain pattern that I fell into, there were always events, such as a "Kneipenquiz," the "Messe DRAUSSEN," and the "Weltweit Wissen-Konferenz" taking place. Through my time at biz I was able to learn more about international development and what working for an NGO would be like, as well as improve my German.



In the Office



Pub Quiz



"Messe DRAUSSEN"



Conference

Other Cultural and Social Events

As always, several events were hosted during the year. For example, the group attended soccer games of our team Werder Bremen at the famous Weser Stadion; we held our annual Christmas celebration with current and former Dickinson-in-Bremen students who now live in Germany as well as future and former OSAs (Bremen students who studied at Dickinson). Together we watched *Willkommen bei den Hartmanns* (dir. by Simon Verhoeven) in a local cinema and visited several performances in Bremen's theater. During the year, the Carl Schurz German-American Club in Bremen organized two big events: The students had the opportunity to celebrate both Thanksgiving and Independence Day with the German-American community of Bremen – Thanksgiving being a fancy dinner and the 4th-of-July barbecue a rather casual celebration.



"It is really hard to put into words what this year abroad was for me. I guess I'll start by saying it was real. It was a real experience, it was filled with happiness, laughter, friends and wonder, it was filled with anger, frustration, loneliness and regret. It was everything I needed it to be. ... All of those great things that happened to me felt so much more satisfying because I knew they were not achieved without effort, without difficulty. I love Bremen, without a doubt. That city gave me so much in the ways of opportunities to study and research incredible topics with engaged and passionate professors, to the friends I made in and outside the classroom, I will be forever thankful for the year I spent there." >Lee Mottola<

For much more information, student voices and impressions as well as many pictures of these events and more, please visit our Blog at: <http://blogs.dickinson.edu/bremen/blog/>