

## ALEXANDER SORENSON, Ph.D.

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### EMPLOYMENT

- 2025- **Binghamton University.** Assistant Professor of German Studies.
- 2022-2025 **Binghamton University.** Lecturer of Comparative Literature.
- 2021-2022 **St. Norbert College.** Visiting Assistant Professor of German.
- 2020-2021 **University of California, Santa Barbara.** Postdoctoral Scholar, Humanities & Social Change Center.
- 2019-2020 **University of Chicago.** Mellon Teaching Fellow in Germanic Studies and the College.

### EDUCATION

- 2019 **University of Chicago.** Ph.D., Germanic Studies.
- 2014 **University of Chicago.** M.A., Germanic Studies.
- 2012 **Portland State University, Honors College.** B.A. (*summa cum laude*), German Studies.

### PUBLICATIONS

#### **Books**

- 2024 [\*The Waiting Water: Order, Sacrifice and Submergence in German Realism.\*](#) (Cornell University Press, 2024.)
- *Rilke's Poetry and Phenomenology's Horizons.* Co-edited with Bradley Harmon. (Collected volume under advance contract with De Gruyter; *Paradigms: Literature & the Human Sciences* series, ed. by Rüdiger Campe and Karen S. Feldman.)

#### **Peer-Reviewed Articles**

- 2026\* "The Eyes of the Law: Theorizing Visibility and Legality in Poetic Realism." *The Germanic Review* 100.4 (Special Issue on "Realism as Theory"), \*forthcoming.
- "Introduction," co-written with Bradley Harmon. In *Rilke's Poetry and Phenomenology's Horizons*. Edited by Bradley Harmon and Alexander Sorenson. (Under advance contract with De Gruyter.)
- "Leaving the Heart's Frame: On Ecstasy and Present Absence in Rilke's Middle Period." In *Rilke's Poetry and Phenomenology's Horizons*. Edited by Bradley Harmon and Alexander Sorenson. (Under advance contract with De Gruyter.)
- 2023 "Amor mundi: The Ecology and Praise of Transience in Rilke's *Duino Elegies*." *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 59.4 (2023): 636-656.
- 2022 "A Sigh After Sleep: *Poiesis* and the Sacramentality of Nature in Annette von Droste-Hülshoff's Late Lyric." *Literature & Theology* 36.3 (2022): 252-272.

- 2019 “The Bride by the Water: Duty, Procession, and Sacrifice in Theodor Fontane’s *Unwiederbringlich*.” *German Life and Letters* 72.2 (2019): 151-167.
- 2015 “‘Mit trauervollem Blick’: The Time of Seeing and Lyric Subjectivity in Rainer Maria Rilke’s ‘Orpheus. Eurydike. Hermes’ and ‘Pietà.’” *The German Quarterly* 88.4 (2015): 451-472.

### Book Reviews

- 2025 *Romanticism, Realism and the Lines of Mimesis*, by Polly Dickson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2024), *Modern Language Review* 120.3 (2025): 430-431.

### Public Writing

- 2024 [“Considering Nature as a ‘Legal Subject’ and Force.”](#) Cornell University Press Authors’ Blogs (August 28).
- 2023 [“Lines and Circles: On Marlen Haushofer’s \*The Wall\* and Esther Kinsky’s \*Grove\*.”](#) *Los Angeles Review of Books* (June 27).
- 2022 [“‘Like Fences in a Flat Land’: On Recent Returns to German Expressionist Lyric.”](#) *Los Angeles Review of Books* (August 20).

## **PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH**

### Interviews

- 2024 [On Rainer Maria Rilke](#). *Entitled Opinions* podcast, hosted by Robert Pogue Harrison (October 17).
- 2024 [On Law, Sacrifice, and Submergence in Poetic Realism](#). *1869* podcast, hosted by Jonathan Hall (September 9).

### Invited Talks

- 2025 “Hidden Hearts: On Selfhood and the (Un)sayable in Rilke’s Poetry.” September 24. Leonardo Art Science Evening Rendezvous, Stanford University, CA.
- 2025 “Environmentally Conscious: Thinking and Being Through Nature.” January 31. University College London, U.K.
- 2025 “Eco-Poetics and the German Tradition.” January 24. Binghamton University, NY.
- 2024 “‘To Inhabit the Earth No Longer’: *Oikos* – *Logos* – Elegy.” October 3. Center for Humanities & Social Change, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA.
- 2024 [“For Love of the World: Rilke’s Ecology of Praise and Transience.”](#) German Studies: New Perspectives Lecture Series. February 29. Mahindra Humanities Center, Harvard University, MA.
- 2024 “The Heart Left Behind: On Ecstasy and Present Absence in Rilke’s Middle Period.” February 9. Institute for German Cultural Studies, Cornell University, NY.
- 2022 “‘Being Here is Glorious’: On the Eco-Poetics of Rilke’s *Duino Elegies*.” March 1. California State University, Sacramento, CA.
- 2021 “Awaking on Earth: Oikos and Sacramental Ecology.” February 9. St. Norbert College, WI.

- 2020 “‘Writ in Water’: Atonement and Afterwards in German Realism’s Narrative Landscape.” March 5. Durham University, U.K.
- 2019 “Oikology: Reading the Environment in the German Tradition.” July 10. Trinity College Dublin, Ireland.

### Panels Organized

- 2025 “Apocalypse: Endings and Beginnings” (seminar). 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the German Studies Association. September 25-28. Arlington, VA.
- 2025 “Ecology, Ecstasy, Mysticism.” Annual Conference of the American Comparative Literature Association. May 29-June 1. Virtual.
- 2023 “Revolutionary Ecologies: Literature, Theory, Praxis.” Annual Conference of the American Comparative Literature Association. March 16-19. Chicago, IL.
- 2023 “The Nature of Things: Ecology, Philosophy and Poetics.” 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Northeast Modern Language Association. March 23-26. Niagara Falls, NY.
- 2020 “Sacrifice, Myth, and Ritual in German Arts and Letters, 1800-Present” (seminar). 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the German Studies Association. October 1-4. Washington, D.C.
- 2020 “Nature and Reality in the German 19<sup>th</sup> Century.” 135<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Modern Language Association. January 9-12. Seattle, WA.
- 2017 “Visions of Realism: Politics, Poetics, Aesthetics.” 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference of the German Studies Association. October 5-8. Atlanta, GA.

### Conference Talks

- 2026 “Eloquent Surfaces: Mediality and Liquidity in Goethe, Hegel, and Stifter.” Annual Convention of the Modern Language Association. January 8-11. Toronto, Canada.
- 2025 “Unveiled Voices: Apocalypse, Song, and Silence in Trakl’s Expressionism.” Annual Conference of the German Studies Association. September 25-28. Arlington, VA.
- 2025 “All (or, Nothing): Reading Haushofer’s *The Wall* with Meister Eckhart.” Annual Conference of the American Comparative Literature Association. May 29-June 1. Virtual.
- 2023 “*Poiesis*, *Oikos* and Praise in Hannah Arendt and Rainer Maria Rilke.” Annual Conference of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment. July 9-12. Portland, OR.
- 2023 “Plant Life, Plant Death, and Eco-Ethics in Annette von Droste-Hülshoff and Hannah Arendt.” Annual Conference of the American Comparative Literature Association. March 16-19. Chicago, IL.
- 2023 “On Heidegger’s Ecological Hermeneutics” (Roundtable). 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Northeast Modern Language Association. March 23-26. Niagara Falls, NY.
- 2022 “‘Hiersein ist herrlich’: The Ontology and Ecology of Praise in Rilke’s Ninth Elegy.” Annual Conference of the German Studies Association. September 15-18. Houston, TX.
- 2022 “Being-at-home: Ontology, Ecopoetics and Sophocles’ *Antigone*.” 53<sup>rd</sup> Convention of the Northeast Modern Language Association. March 10-13. The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD.
- 2021 “‘Spätes Erwachen’: Waking Sleep and Acting into Nature in Annette von Droste-Hülshoff’s Poetics.” Annual Conference of the German Studies Association. September 30-October 3. Indianapolis, IN.

- 2021 “The Real in Reflection: Waterways and *Theoria* in Poetic Realism.” Annual Conference of the American Comparative Literature Association. April 8-11. (Virtual).
- 2020 “Chains of Flowers and Submerged Youth in German Realism.” Annual Conference of the American Comparative Literature Association. March 19-22. Chicago, IL.
- 2020 “Water from the Well: Memory, Truth, and Image in Theodor Storm’s *Ein Doppelgänger*.” Annual Convention of the Modern Language Association. January 9-12. Seattle, WA.
- 2019 “Otilie’s *Augenblick*: Drowning, Diegesis, and Goethe’s Poetic Realism.” 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference of the German Studies Association. October 3-6. Portland, OR.
- 2018 “Economies of Offering: on the River in German Realism.” Trilateral Colloquium (Chicago – FU Berlin – Cambridge): *Economic Subjects*. July 9-11. University of Cambridge, United Kingdom.
- 2018 “Trials by Water: Law, Sacrifice, and Ethics in the Drowning Scene.” Annual Conference of the American Comparative Literature Association. March 29-April 1. Los Angeles, CA.
- 2017 “‘Dies Bild ist mir immer von neuem nachgegangen’: Penitence, Portraiture, and Sacrifice in Theodor Storm’s *Aquis Submersus*.” 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference of the German Studies Association. October 5-8. Atlanta, GA.
- 2017 “‘Im tieferen Wasser’: Imitation, Recognition and Rite in Gottfried Keller’s *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe*.” 132<sup>nd</sup> Annual Convention of the Modern Language Association. January 5-8. Philadelphia, PA.
- 2016 “The Drowning Scene: Polis, Paralipsis, and Sacrifice in Theodor Fontane’s *Unwiederbringlich*.” 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the German Studies Association. September 29-October 2. San Diego, CA.
- 2015 “The Eye of the Beholder: Ekphrasis and the Longing Subject in Rainer Maria Rilke’s ‘Pietà’ Poems.” 6<sup>th</sup> Biennial Congress of the European Network of Comparative Literary Studies. August 24-28. Dublin City University and National University of Galway, Ireland.
- 2015 “‘...in vocem flentium’: Prosopopoeia and Diegetics of Abeyance in Two Poems of Eduard Mörike and Georg Heym.” 130<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Modern Language Association. January 8-11. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.
- 2014 “Hearing *das Unerhörte*: Sense and the Space of Haunting in Gottfried August Bürger’s *Lenore* and Heinrich von Kleist’s *Das Bettelweib von Locarno*.” 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the German Studies Association. September 18-21. Kansas City, MO.
- 2014 “The Moving Curtain: Apparition and Staged Temporalities in the *Trauerspiele* of Andreas Gryphius.” Trilateral Colloquium (Chicago – FU Berlin – Cambridge): *Death and the Afterlife*. June 20-22. University of Chicago, IL.
- 2014 “Sag ihm die Dinge’: Transience, Transformation, and Paean in Rilke’s Ninth Elegy.” University of Oregon Graduate and Faculty Conference *What is a Thing?: Key Responses in Modern German Literature and Thought*. February 20-21, Eugene, OR.
- 2013 “Recognition, Remembrance, and the Presence of Loss in Christoph Meckel’s *Licht*.” 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the German Studies Association. October 3-6, Denver, CO.

### **GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS**

- 2024 Visiting Fellow, Research Center of the Slovenian Academy of Arts and Sciences (University of Ljubljana).

- 2022 SPARK-German Learning Lab development grant (Goethe-Institut, American Association of Teachers of German; <http://sparkforgerman.org/college-educators/>).
- 2022 Faculty Scholars Program award for Structured Program of German Acquisition and Regional High School Partnership (St. Norbert College).
- 2021-2022 Honors Program Faculty Fellow (St. Norbert College).
- 2020-21 Teaching Fellowship in the Division of the Humanities, University of Chicago.
- 2018-19 Franke Institute for the Humanities: Dissertation Fellowship, University of Chicago.
- 2016 Netzwerk Transatlantische Kooperation: Dissertation Research Grant, University of Konstanz.
- 2010-11 DAAD: Undergraduate Research Scholarship, University of Heidelberg.

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

### **Instructor of Record (Binghamton University)**

#### **Comparative Literature**

- 2025 “Water in World Literature” (interdisciplinary discussion course, Spring semester)
- 2024 “Nature, Aesthetics, Imagination” (interdisciplinary discussion course, Fall semester)
- 2024 “To See the World in a Grain of Sand: Introduction to the Humanities” (methods course in the Humanities, Spring semester)
- 2024 “Landscapes & Literature” (cross-disciplinary seminar, Spring semester)
- 2023 “Rivers: A Cultural History” (advanced interdisciplinary seminar; Spring semester)
- 2022-23 “Songs of the Earth: Culture – Writing – Nature” (Fall/Spring semesters)
- 2022-2025 “Literature & Society” (Writing Composition Gen Ed course, Fall/Spring semester)

#### **German**

- 2022 “Elementary German II” (Fall semester)

### **Instructor of Record (St. Norbert College)**

#### **Humanities Core:**

- 2022 “*Communio* and the Norbertines” (Spring semester).
- 2021 “Introduction to the Humanities through the Fine Arts” (Fall semester).

#### **German:**

- 2022 “Introduction to German Literature & Literary Theory” (Spring semester)
- 2021-22 “Elementary German” (Fall/Spring semesters).
- 2021-22 “Intermediate German” (Fall/Spring semesters).

**Instructor of Record (University of California, Santa Barbara)**

Comparative Literature:

- 2021 “Nature Writing/Writing Nature: from the Sublime to the Anthropocene”  
(interdisciplinary literature seminar, Spring quarter).

**Instructor of Record (University of Chicago)**

Advanced German:

- 2020 “Philosophy and the Poem of Nature” (advanced elective seminar, Fall quarter).  
2018 “Law and Desire in German Thought from Kant to Freud” (3<sup>rd</sup>-year seminar, Spring).  
2016 “The German Ghost Story: the Enlightenment to the Present” (3<sup>rd</sup>-year seminar, Fall).  
2014 “The Uncanny in German Literature and Culture around 1900” (advanced seminar,  
University of Chicago’s *Vienna in Western Civilization* Study-Abroad Program, Fall).

Intermediate German:

- 2018 “Ecology and German Culture: Aesthetics, History, Politics” (2<sup>nd</sup>-year course, Winter).  
2017 “The German Fairy Tale” (2<sup>nd</sup>-year course, Fall).  
2014 “Language and Power: Vienna as Symbol” (intermediate seminar, University of  
Chicago’s *Vienna in Western Civilization* Study-Abroad Program, Fall).

Elementary German:

- 2020 Intensive Elementary German (101-102; Summer).  
2013-14 Beginning German (101, 102, 103; Fall-Spring).

**Teaching Assistant (University of Chicago)**

Literature and Culture:

- 2019 “Human Being and Citizen.” Humanities Core Sequence (Instructor: Mark Berger;  
Spring).  
2017 “Metaphysics, Morbidity, and Modernity: Thomas Mann’s *The Magic Mountain*”  
(Instructor: David Wellbery; Winter).  
2015 “Cultural Encounters in the Age of Enlightenment” (Instructor: Tamar Abramov.  
University of Chicago Collegiate Scholars Program, Summer).  
2015 “Catching Spies: Explorations in Subjectivity” (Instructor: Tamar Abramov; Spring).

Graduate German:

- 2015; 2019 “Reading German for Research Purposes” (Instructor: Frederick Kopp; Summer).

**Pedagogical Training Received (University of Chicago)**

- 2017 “Principles of Teaching Writing” (Lector training sequence). Writing Program, Fall.

- 2012 “Acquisition/Teaching of German” (Fundamentals of Foreign-Language Pedagogy).  
2012 Teaching@Chicago Conference. Chicago Center for Teaching. Fall.

### **ADDITIONAL TRAINING AND SERVICE**

- 2024- Organizer, Environmental Humanities Working Group (Binghamton University).  
2017-2019 Lector (Writing Program, University of Chicago).  
2017-2018 Resident Head, International House (University of Chicago).  
2014 Leader and German Instructor, University of Chicago Study Abroad Program in Vienna.  
2010-2016 Consultant, Translator, Dialect Coach for NBC television series *Grimm*.

### **LANGUAGES**

English (native), German (fluent), French (advanced reading knowledge, intermediate speaking proficiency), Danish (intermediate reading knowledge, elementary speaking proficiency), Latin (intermediate reading knowledge), Ancient Greek (elementary reading knowledge)

### **MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS**

German Studies Association, Modern Language Association, Northeast Modern Language Association  
Goethe Society of North America, Theodor-Storm-Gesellschaft, American Comparative Literature  
Association, Association for the Study of Literature and Environment

### **REFERENCES**

David E. Wellbery (Professor and Chair, Department of Germanic Studies)  
University of Chicago  
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Eric L. Santner (Professor, Department of Germanic Studies)  
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Juliane Vogel (Professor, neuere deutsche Literatur und allgemeine Literaturwissenschaft)  
Universität Konstanz, Fachbereich Literaturwissenschaft (Fach 164)  
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