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Senior Lecturer in Cultural Theory and German Studies

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About

I am based in GermanStudies and also teach media and cultural studies. I have been at the University of Birmingham since 2004.

Biography

I studied for a degree in Law and German at Cardiff University before going on to do an MA in Literature in European Cultures. I completed my PhD in 2002 and held my first academic post at the University of Bath before coming to Birmingham.

Teaching

I teach undergraduate history, politics, literature and language classes within German Studies and contribute to European Studies courses on media and cultural studies. I also offer a final year German option module on 'The Politics of Remembering: Germany and the Nazi Past'.

Postgraduate supervision

MPhil

- Robert Dennes, Representations of Wehrmacht Experience in GDR War Literature, 1950-1957 (co-supervision, completed 2007).
- Sebastian J. Martin, The Hitler Humour Movement : a Study of Contemporary German Hitler Humour and the Deconstruction of the Hitler Myth (completed 2008).
- Hannah Rachel Simpson, Cinematic Representations of Women in France and Germany, 1918-1933 (completed 2009).
- Katharina Boehmker, The Army as a National Institution and the Concept of National Identity: the Rhetoric and Effect of Army Recruitment Campaigns in Germany and Britain (completed 2010).
- Jun Gao, Structuralism and Poststructuralism in the Work of Roland Barthes (co-supervision, completed 2010).
- John Francis, Intersections of Memory Studies and Cultural Theory (co-supervision, completed 2013).
- Samina Amin, Gendered Memories of the Spanish Civil War in the Writings of María Teresa and León Silvia Mistral (co-supervision, completed 2013).

PhD

- Olgaokan Okan, Representations of Female Suicide (co-supervision, PT, due to complete 2016).
- David Zell, Major Cultural Commemorations and the Construction of Cultural & Political Identity in the GDR, 1967-1987 (due 2016).
- Dietlinde Schmucker, Travelling Childhood Memories of the Second World War: German-American Women's Participation in the US-American Contemporary Memoir Boom (due 2016). Distance learning.
- John Francis, Spectres of the Crisis: Where did they come from? Where are we going? (due 2018).

Research

My research interests focus on memory studies, literary history and the politics of remembering. My particular areas of interest are gendered memories of Nazism and the GDR and how debates about the past inform contemporary German society. Focusing on questions of autobiography and identity, my research combines literary historical and cultural studies approaches.

- I run the University of Birmingham Memory Group
- I lead a steering committee which runs the AHRC-funded network on **Silence, Memory and Empathy (http://silencememoryempathy.wordpress.com/)** in Museums and at Historic Sites.
- I am a member of a team which runs the DAAD-funded project '**Zeitgeist: What does it mean to be German in the twenty-first century?' (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/institute-german-studies/research/projects/zeitgeist.aspx)**
- I am a member of the AHRC-funded **Genre Studies network (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/lcahm/departments/russian/research/genre-studies-network.aspx)** at the University of Birmingham.
- I am a member of the **Sexuality and Gender Studies network (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/sex-gender)** at the University of Birmingham.
- I participated in the AHRC-funded network **'After the Wall: Representing the GDR' (http://afterthewall.bangor.ac.uk/)** .

Other activities

Invited papers

- Forthcoming: 'Memory, Gender and Genre', Aberystwyth University July 2014.
- 'Memories of Germany and German Memories', HEA workshop 'Commemoration and Conflict: Challenges for HE Practitioners in History, Area Studies and Philosophical and Religious Studies', University of Birmingham, 19 February 2014.

- ‘Life Writing: Genres of Memory’, Cardiff University, March 2013.
- Institute for Germanic Studies, University of Birmingham, Memory Workshop. Discussant, 16th December 2009
- ‘Erinnerung an den Widerstand, Erinnerung an den Holocaust: Greta Kuckhoff und die Rote Kapelle. "Geerbte Geschichte? Faschismus und Krieg in Literatur und Film um 1969", University of Postdam, Germany, 21-23 November 2008.
- ‘Inge Scholls *Die Weiße Rose*’, Potsdam Memory Colloquium, University of Postdam, Germany, May 2008.
- ‘Ein Stoff wie der unseres Buches stößt jetzt auf Widerstand. Hilde Hupperts und Arnold Zweigs Fahrt zum Acheron’. Geteilte Erinnerung? Faschismus und Krieg im europäischen Kontext 1950, University of Potsdam, Germany, 24-26 November 2006.
- ‘Ich hatte ein Ziel. Ich widerstand: Greta Kuckhoff's Autobiographical Memories of Antifascist Resistance!’. University of Nottingham German Department, 21 October 2005.
- ‘Memories of Student Resistance to Nazism: Rethinking Inge Scholl’s Canonical West German Text *The White Rose’*. Bath University: Women’s Studies Centre. 7 May 2003.

Conference papers

- ‘Preparing to Commemorate’, Centenary network, Cardiff University, October 2013.
- 'Greta Kuckhoff and Anna Seghers: Antifascist Exchanges', Association for German Studies, Edinburgh, 2-4 April 2012.
- ‘Reframing Antifascism: Memory, Genre and the Life Writings of Greta Kuckhoff’, After the Wall Conference, University of Bangor, 8-10 September 2011.
- ‘Communicating History: The Archived Letter and Memories of "The Red Orchestra"’, German Studies Association Conference, California, 7-10 October 2010.
- ‘Reframing Antifascism: Memory, Genre and the Life Writings of Greta Kuckhoff’, After the Wall Conference, University of Bangor, 8-10 September 2010.
- 'The Politics of Pedagogy: Educating the Educators of Memory', Transcultural Memory, University of London, 4-6 February 2010.
- ‘Wir werden ihr Andenken stets in Ehren halten’: Antifascism, Greta Kuckhoff and Memories of Resistance. ‘GDR 20 Years on’, University of Bath, 14-16September 2009.
- ‘A Cult of Dead Male Heroes? Remembering the "Red Orchestra" since 1989’. ‘Identity and Landscape after Communism’. Dept of Geography, University of Birmingham, 7-9 September 2009.
- ‘“Sie gehörte zu den Aktivisten der ersten Stunde”: Greta Kuckhoff’s political engagement in the immediate post war period’. Impact: German-Language Culture and its Reception. University of Liverpool, 23-25 July 2008.
- ‘Building the Mosaic: A Contribution to the Cultural History of Antifascism’. Cultural Memory: Forgetting to Remember/Remembering to Forget. University of Kent, 10-13 September 2008.
- 'Living Antifascism: Greta Kuckhoff’s writings in *Die Weltbühne*.’ Writing under Socialism. University of Nottingham, 11-12 July 2008.
- ‘In twenty years we will all be victims: Memories of Nazism and the Challenge of the Autobiographical’. Re-Calling the Past, University of Tampere, Finland, 1-2 December 2006.
- ‘The Wrong Germans: Gender and Generation in Rachel Seiffert’s *The Dark Room*’. International Conference on Contemporary European Writers: Gender and Generation, University of Bath, April 2005.
- ‘Remembering Resistance: Greta Kuckhoff and ‘The Red Orchestra’ in German Cultural Memories’. The Politics of Cultural Memory, Manchester Metropolitan University, 4-6 November 2004.
- ‘Ich lebe nicht wirklich in dieser Zeit’: Negotiations of Local and National Identities in Elfriede Brüning’s Jeder lebt für sich allein.’ Bath University: Women in German Studies Conference: Local and Global Identities.1-3 September 2003.
- ‘Bekenntnisse einer Zeitzeugin: Elfriede Brüning’s Und außerdem war es mein Leben (1994)’. Nottingham Trent University: Ich will anders sein: Difference in Contemporary Germany. 4-6 July 2002.
- ‘Depictions of Fascism in Women’s Autobiographies in German’. London: British Federation of Women Graduates Annual Conference. 20 April 2002.
- ‘Memories of a survivor – the Publishing History of an Autobiography’. Leeds University: Women in German Studies Conference.10 November 2001.
- ‘An Autobiography of Avoidance. The Construction of Memories about Fascism in Melita Maschmann’s Autobiography: Taking Stock. My Journey within the Hitler Youth (1963)’. History Department, Cardiff University: Women, Gender and the Extreme Right in Europe 1919-1945. 4-6 July 2001.
- ‘For Whom Does One Remember? Autobiographical Perspectives on Fascism’. Rutgers University (NY): Imagining the Future – Remembering the Past. 22-23 February 2001

Research grants

- 2014, AHRC WWI Collaborative Centre Award: ‘Voices of War and Peace’. Co-Investigator and Convenor of Commemoration strand (£500,000).
- 2013, AHRC Exploratory Award, Care for the Future: ‘The Significance of the Centenary’. Principal Investigator. Steering Group: University of Birmingham, Cardiff University, Sheffield University, Historic Royal Palaces, National Library of Wales (£27,671).
- 2011, AHRC Networking Grant: ‘Silence, Memory and Empathy in Museums and at Historic Sites’. Principal Investigator. Steering Group: University of Birmingham, Cardiff University, Imperial War Museum, Historic Royal Palaces (£33,345).
- 2011, DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) Research Grant: ‘Zeitgeist: What does it Mean to be German in the Twenty-first Century?’ Co-investigator and Convener of History and Memory strand (£64,000).
- 2011, AHRC Early Career Fellowship: September-December, Principal Investigator (£26,842).

Conference/workshop organisation

- **Forthcoming:** ‘The Journal as an Agent of Socio-Political Change: Publishing and Intellectual Networks 1960-65 and 1986-91 in the German Democratic Republic (GDR)’, Workshop to prepare AHRC Large Grant. June 2014, Co-Organiser with Universities of Manchester and Reading. Funded by College of Arts and Law Research and Knowledge Transfer Fund.
- ‘Happy Anniversary? Measuring the Impact, Legacy and Success of Anniversary Events’. May 2014, Hampton Court, Co-organiser. Funded by AHRC.
- ‘The GDR Today’, Postgraduate Symposium, University of Birmingham, 13 January 2014, Co-organiser with Universities of Bristol and Bangor.
- ‘Memory and Genre’, University of Birmingham in collaboration with University of Nottingham. September 2013, Co-organiser.
- AHRC network, ‘The Significance of the Centenary’:
- 1 day conference, ‘The Success of Centenaries’, University of Cardiff, October 2013, Co-organiser.
- 1 day conference, ‘Centenaries in Practice’, Tower of London, July 2013, Co-organiser.
- 1 day conference, ‘Comparative Centenaries’, University of Sheffield, May 2013. Co-organiser.
- 1 day conference, ‘Contextualising Centenaries’, University of Birmingham, April 2013. Co-organiser.
- DAAD project: ‘Zeitgeist: What does it mean to be German in the twenty-first century?’

- 2 day Conference, ‘Cultural Politics/Politics of Culture’, University of Birmingham, December 2013, Co-organiser.
- AHRC network, ‘Silence, Memory and Empathy in Museums and at Historic Sites’.
- 3 day Conference, 'Challenging Memories: Silence and Empathy in Heritage Interpretation', July 2013, Co-organiser.
- 1 day workshop, 'Negotiating Spaces for Silence', April 2013, Co-organiser.
- 1 day workshop, 'Negotiating Empathy as Learning', June 2012, Co-organiser.
- 1 day workshop, 'Negotiating Silence', March 2012, Sole organiser.
- Institute for Advanced Studies (UoB): 'Languages of Memory', June 2012, Sole organiser.
- DAAD Postgraduate Summer School, June 2012, Team leader.
- Women in German Studies Annual Conference, November 2009, Sole organiser.

Current Administrative roles

- University Primary Appeals Committee
- School Education Committee
- School Staff-Student Liaison Contact
- Department of Modern Languages Research Working Group
- Department of Modern Languages, Staff-Student Consultative Committee for German Studies

Publications

Single authored monographs:

- *Reframing Antifascism: Memory, Genre and the Life Writings of Greta Kuckhoff*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, 284 pp. ISBN 9780230368750
- Reviewers’ Comments: ‘original, revelatory and challenging, and engaging with debates in a range of fields’; ‘one could not hope for a more comprehensive set of sharply focused and important objectives, which, when realised, may alter the way we imagine the discourse of resistance in East Germany’.
- *Women Without A Past? German Autobiographical Writings and Fascism.* Amsterdam and New York:Rodopi. 2007, 381 pp. ISBN 9042022280
- Reviewed in: *Monatshefte*, *Gender & History*, *German Quarterly*, *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, *Debatte*, H-German. Reviewers’ comments: ‘Sayner writes with ease and confidence’, ‘Sayner’s book impresses with its close textual readings and stringent argumentation’, ‘insightful’, ‘provocative re-readings of known texts’ and ‘painstakingly detailed analysis’, ‘a vital source’.

Edited volume

- ed. with Nigel Harris, *The Text and Its Context. Studies in Modern German Literature and Society Presented to Ronald Speirs on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, Oxford; New York; Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2008, pp. 356.

Journal articles:

- ‘Educating Educators of Memory’, *Journal for Educational Media, Memory and Society*, 2011, 3 (2), 137-154.
- ‘The Personal and the Political: Remembering Adam Kuckhoff, Remembering Resistance’, in *Antifaschismus Revisited: Geschichte – Ideologie – Erinnerung*, Special Issue *Zeitschrift der Auschwitz-Stiftung Brüssel*, Éditions Kimé, Paris, Nr. 104, ed. Carola Hähnel-Mesnard, 2009, 122-36.
- ‘Memories of Victimhood: Nazism and the Challenge of the Autobiographical’, *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 43, 2007, 301-315.
- ‘Ich lebe nicht wirklich in dieser Zeit: Negotiations of Local and National Identities in Elfriede Brüning's *Jeder lebt für sich allein*’, *German Monitor*, 68, 2007, 317-332.
- ‘Man muß die bunten Blüten abreißen…: Memories of Fascism in Melita Maschmann's Fazit’, Forum for Modern Language Studies, Special Issue, Representations of War, 41, 2005, 213-225.

Chapters in edited books:

- ‘Communicating History: The Archived Letter and Memories of “The Red Orchestra”’, in *Becoming East Germans: Socialist Structures and Sensibilities after Hitler*, ed. Mary Fulbrook and Andrew Port, Oxford: Berghahn, 2013, pp. 79-98.
- ‘Verehrter Gen. Ulbricht: Negotiations of Self and Socialist Identity in Greta Kuckhoff's Letters’, in *The Self in Transition: East German Autobiographical Narratives*, ed. David Clarke and Axel Goodbody, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2013, pp. 33-46.
- ‘Reframing Antifascism: Greta Kuckhoff as Author, Commentator and Critic’, in ed. Anna Saunders and Debbie Pinfold, *Remembering and Rethinking the GDR: Multiple Perspectives and Plural Authenticities,* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, pp. 51-66.
- ‘Gendering the Memoirist: Antifascism and The Politics of Life-Writing’, in *Life Writing and Political Memoir – Lebenszeugnisse und Politische Memoiren*, ed. Magnus Brechtken, V & R unipress, 2012, pp. 243-58.
- ‘Between Denigration, Idealization and Historicization: Memories of Nazism and Everyday Antifascism’, in *Remembering the German Democratic Republic: Divided Memory in a* United *Germany*, ed. David Clarke and Ute Wölfel, Basingstoke: Palgrave McMillan, 2011, pp. 237-248.
- ‘Living Antifascism: Greta Kuckhoff’s writings in *Die Weltbühne*’, in *Writing Under Socialism*, ed. Meesha Nehru & Sara Jones, Nottingham: Critical, Cultural and Communications Press, 2011, pp. 75-91.
- ‘The Organic Intellectual: The Public and Political Impact of Greta Kuckhoff 1945-1949’, in *Cultural Impact: Theoretical and Practical Issues of Reception in the German-Speaking World*, ed. Rebecca Braun and Lyn Marvyn, Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2010, pp. 227-242.
- ‘“Ich schäme mich meiner Augen”: Photography and Autobiographical Identities in Grete Weil’s *Leb ich denn, wenn andere leben*’, in *German Life Writing in the Twentieth Century. A Volume of Essays*,ed. Birgit Dahlke, Dennis Tate and Roger Woods, Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2010, pp. 105-120.
- ‘Approaches to the Media’, in *The Media: An Introduction*, ed. Daniele Albertazzi and Paul Cobley, Harlow: Longman, 2009, pp. 13-34.
- ‘Constructing Identities and Remembering Fascism: The Published Letters of Elisabeth Langgässer’, in *Gender, the Letter and Politics*, ed. by Caroline Bland and Maire Cross, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004, pp. 241-252.
- ‘Eine Existenz aus Erinnerung: Grete Weils *Leb ich denn, wenn andere leben*’, in *Zwischen Trivialität und Postmoderne: Literatur von Frauen in den 90er Jahren*, ed. by Ilse Nagelschmidt et al., Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2002, pp. 95-112.

Research reviews

The Year's Work is an annual critical bibliography of work done in Romance and Celtic, Germanic, and Slavonic studies. ‘YWMLS is the single most comprehensive evaluative survey of scholarship on European and Latin American languages and literatures. Taken together, the annual volumes offer an incomparable record of scholarly and critical trends as well as of the fluctuations of academic reputations of literary works and authors.’ James L. Harner, *Literary Research Guide: An Annotated Listing of Reference Sources in English Literary Studies*, 3rd edn (New York: Modern Language Assn of America, 1998), p. 540.

- ‘German Literature 1945-Present’, in *The Year’s Work in Modern Language Studies 2009*, ed. Stephen Parkinson, 2011, pp. 687-685 ISBN 978-1-907322-32-7.
- ‘German Literature 1945-Present’ in *The Year’s Work in Modern Language Studies 2008*, ed. Stephen Parkinson, 2010, pp.685-721 ISBN 978 1 906540 91 3.

- ‘German Literature 1945-Present’ in *The Year’s Work in Modern Language Studies 2007*, ed. Stephen Parkinson, 2009, pp. 783-820 ISBN 978-1-906540-32-6.

Book Reviews

- ‘ “Mastery over the Affects” and the Dangers of Critical Reflection’. H-Net Reviews. **http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showpdf.php?id=25290 (https://owa.bham.ac.uk/owa/redir.aspx?C=e3da5a550883437aa23fa950c4dff634&URL=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.h-net.org%2Freviews%2Fshowpdf.php%3Fid%3D25290)** , October 6,2009.
- ‘The Songs of Horror’. H-Net Reviews. **http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showpdf.php?id=23756 (https://owa.bham.ac.uk/owa/redir.aspx?C=e3da5a550883437aa23fa950c4dff634&URL=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.h-net.org%2Freviews%2Fshowpdf.php%3Fid%3D23756)** , February 1, 2009.
- ‘Literarischer Antisemitismus nach Auschwitz’, *Monatshefte*, 100:4, Winter 2008, pp. 638-640.
- ‘Jüdisch zu schreiben’.H-Net Reviews. http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=14622, June 2008.
- Review of Pascale R. Bos, *German-Jewish Literature in the Wake of the Holocaust: Grete Weil, Ruth Klüger and the Politics of Address* (Palgrave 2005), H-German March 2007.

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