

**JOHANNES WANKHAMMER**  
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#### ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

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**Associate Professor of German, Princeton University**

Department of German, July 2024–present

**Assistant Professor of German, Princeton University**

Department of German, August 2017–July 2024

**Visiting Assistant Professor of German, Reed College**

Department of German, August 2016–July 2017

#### EDUCATION

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**Ph.D., German Studies, Cornell University, 2016**

Dissertation: “Cultures of Sense: Science, Aesthetics, and the Art of Attention in the Eighteenth Century”

Graduate Fellow at the Society for the Humanities, annual focal theme “Sensation” (2014–2015)

**M.A., Comparative Literature, Binghamton University, 2009**

**B.A., German Studies and American Studies, University of Graz, Austria, 2006**

#### RESEARCH AND TEACHING FIELDS

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- Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics
- Attention, Observation, and Notetaking in Literature and Science
- Literature of the Enlightenment and German Romanticism
- German Philosophy from Leibniz to Hegel
- Environmental Humanities

#### PUBLICATIONS

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**Monograph**

*Creatures of Attention: Aesthetics and the Subject before Kant*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2024.

### **Edited Special Issues**

“The Scene of Writing,” ed. with Bryan Klausmeyer and Andrea Krauß, *MLN (Comparative Literature Edition)*, Vol. 136, no. 5, Dec 2021.

### **Articles in Refereed Journals**

“The Nature of Critique: Revisiting Adorno’s ‘Natural History’ amid the Postcritique Debates.” *New German Critique*, vol. 51, no. 3 (153), Nov. 2024, pp. 99–123.

“The Art of Taking Note in G. Ch. Lichtenberg’s *Waste-Books*.” *MLN*, vol. 136, no. 5, 2021, pp. 984–1009.

“Scenes of Writing: An Introduction.” *MLN*, vol. 136, no. 5, 2021, pp. 965–70 (co-authored with Bryan Klausmeyer and Andrea Krauß).

“On Seeing Otherwise: Johann Jakob Breitinger’s Poetics of Attention.” *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory*, vol. 95, no. 3, July 2020, pp. 162–81.

“Anthropomorphism, Trope, and the Hidden Life of Trees: On Peter Wohlleben’s Rhetoric.” *Literatur für Leser* 40, vol. 17, no. 2, 2017, pp. 139–52 (published as 2/2017 in August 2019).

### **Peer-Reviewed Book Chapters**

“Wurzel.” *Pflanzen: Kulturwissenschaftliches Handbuch*. Ed. Joela Jacobs and Isabel Kranz. Stuttgart: Metzler (forthcoming).

“After the Mountain Sublime: Erosion and Catastrophe in Max Frisch’s *Der Mensch erscheint im Holozän*.” *The Draw of the Alps: Alpine Summits and Borderlands in Modern German-Speaking Culture*. Ed. Richard McClelland. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2023. 123–40.

“Poiesis im ‘Gegenhalt’ der anderen Welten: Epistemische und kosmologische Kontingenz bei Breitinger und Brockes.” *Kosmos und Kontingenz*. Ed. Tim Sparenberg, Reto Rösler, and Philipp Weber. München: Fink, 2016. 112–26.

### **Book Reviews**

“German Aesthetics: Fundamental Concepts from Baumgarten to Adorno, ed. by J. D. Mininger and Jason Michael Peck (Review).” *Goethe Yearbook*, vol. 25, May 2018, pp. 325–27.

### **Translations**

Rüdiger Campe. “Writing; The Scene of Writing.” *MLN*, translated by Johannes Wankhammer and Bryan Klausmeyer, vol. 136, no. 5, 2021, pp. 971–83.

Leslie A. Adelson. “Kosmopolitisch und parallel? Unterwegs auf ‘verrosteten Schienen’ mit Yoko Tawada im postnationalen Roman ‘Das nackte Auge’ (2004).” *Kosmopolitische ‘Germanophonie’? Postnationale Perspektiven in der deutschsprachigen Gegenwartsliteratur*. Ed. Christine Meyer. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2012. 273–92.

Leslie A. Adelson. “Experiment Mars: Deutschsprachige Gegenwartsliteratur, imaginierte ethnoscapen und ein neuer Futurismus.” Ed. Alman Dili and Edebiyatı Dergisi. *Studien zur deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2011, pp. 7–36.

## Manuscripts in Preparation

“Nexus Aesthetics: Ecological Sensibility in A. G. Baumgarten and A. v. Humboldt.” *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory*. (Forthcoming in special issue “Ecology before Nature: From the Nexus of Things to the Web of Life”).

“Ecology before Nature: From the Nexus of Things to the Web of Life.” Introduction to forthcoming special issue of *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory* (co-authored with Alexandra Heimes and Ross Shields).

“*Epimelesthai Sautou*: Exercises in the Middle Voice.” Article forthcoming in special issue of *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft (ZÄK)*, ed. Susan Morrow and Patrick Hohlweck.

*Nexus: An Essay on Ecoaesthetics* (book project in progress).

“Landscape: On the Function of the Aesthetic in Modern Society” (translation of and commentary on Joachim Ritter’s “Landschaft: Zur Funktion des Ästhetischen in der modernen Gesellschaft”).

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## INVITED TALKS

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Keynote lecture at international conference *Johann Jacob Breitingers epistemologische Reformation*, University of Zürich, Switzerland, May 2026 (confirmed).

“Unclenching the Mind: Relaxed Attention in Baumgarten and Freud.” Introductory Lecture for session at the *LMU-Princeton Summer Seminar 2025* on “Reading: Forms of Attention and Distraction,” Munich, Germany, June 2025.

“Attention to the Sublime.” Guest Lecture at *First Friday* colloquium organized by the “Friends of Attention” Collective, New York City, NY, February 2025.

“Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics and Poetics.” Guest Lecture for the *Exam Preparation Colloquium* at the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures at Yale University, New Haven, CT, January 2025.

Respondent and referee for inaugural *Junior Scholars Workshop* at the *Umwelt* Center for Germanic Studies & Environmental Humanities, Ohio State University, April 2024.

“‘Ecoaesthetics’ in the Eighteenth Century (Baumgarten, Meier, Brockes).” International workshop *Ökopoetik: Umwelten der Literatur*, Johns Hopkins University and RWTH Aachen, Baltimore, MD, September 2023.

“The Nature of Critique: Revisiting Adorno’s ‘Natural History’ amid the Postcritique Debates.” *Institute for German Studies Colloquium*, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, May 2023.

“Critique Contra Nature.” Invited to *Binghamton German Studies Colloquium*, Binghamton, NY, May 2018.

“Philosophy’s Magic Lantern: Technologies of Nature in the Early Enlightenment.” Job talk at Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, March 2017.

“After the *Endgame*: Writing in the Time of the Deadline.” Job talk at Yale University, New Haven, CT, February 2017.

“Matters of Perspective: The Poetic Vision of Barthold Heinrich Brockes.” Job talk at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL, January 2017.

- “Philosophy’s Magic Lantern: Technologies of Nature in the Early Enlightenment.” Job talk at Reed College, Portland, OR, April 2016.
- “*Hexis, Haltung, Habitus*: Declinations of Posture.” Invited round-table discussion at Harvard University’s *German Circle* colloquium, Cambridge, MA, November 2015.
- “Aesthetics after Leibniz and the Genesis of Form.” *Society for the Humanities Seminar*, Cornell University, January 2015.
- “Figment, Fiction, Fabrication: Artifice and Evidence in J. J. Breitinger’s Poetics.” *Institute for German Cultural Studies Colloquium Series*, Cornell University, November 2014.

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CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND TALKS

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- “*Epimelesthai Sautou*: Exercises in the Middle Voice.” Presentation for workshop on “Exercise: Forming Bodies, Selves, Disciplines,” Princeton German Department, April 2025.
- “Visualizing the Plurality of Worlds: Cosmographic Frontispieces in the Eighteenth Century.” Contribution to seminar on “Interplanetary Perspectives,” *German Studies Association Annual Convention*, Atlanta, GA, October 2024.
- “Nexus rerum: Anmerkungen zu A. G. Baumgartens Ästhetik des Zusammenhangs.” Response paper for workshop “Ecological Perspectives on the Nexus Rerum” at the *Institute for Cultural Inquiry*, Berlin, Germany, June 2024.
- “The Speculative Force of Art in Baumgarten’s Aesthetics.” Invited to panel on “Speculation” at *German Studies Association Annual Convention*, Montreal, CA, October 2023.
- “*Nexus rerum*: Speculative Facts in Eighteenth-Century Cosmology.” Contribution to seminar on “Reality Simulations,” *German Studies Association Annual Convention*, Houston, TX, September 2022.
- “Alexander Baumgarten’s Aesthetics of Connectivity.” Peer-refereed *Annual Conference of Society for German Idealism and Romanticism on Aesthetics and Idealism in the Age of Goethe*, Stockholm, Sweden, June 2022 (rescheduled because of pandemic).
- “A. G. Baumgarten’s Aesthetics of Resonance.” Position paper for seminar on “Resonance in Art, Film, Literature, Music, and Theory,” *German Studies Association Annual Convention*, Indianapolis, IN, October 2021 (rescheduled and moved online because of pandemic).
- “Natur als Gelände: Vorübungen zu einer Ästhetik des Anthropozäns in Frischs *Der Mensch erscheint im Holozän*.” *Alptraum(a): Alps, Summits and Borderlands in German-speaking Culture*, Institute of Modern Languages Research, London, UK, April 2021 (rescheduled and moved online because of pandemic).
- “The Senses Do Judge: A. G. Baumgarten’s Theory of Aesthetic Judgment.” *American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Annual Meeting*, St. Louis, MO, March 2021 (rescheduled and moved online because of pandemic).
- “Aesthetic Habitus: Baumgarten as a Theorist of Techniques of the Body.” Contribution to seminar on “Kulturtechnik,” *German Studies Association Annual Convention*, Portland, OR, October 2019.
- “Working on Oneself: Enlightenment Disciplines of Attention.” Paper in co-organized panel series “Work.Ethics,” *German Studies Association Annual Convention*, Pittsburgh, PA, September 2018.
- “Romantic Lyric and the Drama of the Self.” Concert lecture at *An Evening of Kammermusik*, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, March 2018.

- “Kosmos, Logos, Medium: The Artifice of Nature in the Early Enlightenment.” Paper in co-organized panel series “Cosmology and Cosmopoetics,” *German Studies Association Annual Convention*, Atlanta, GA, October 2017.
- “Anthropomorphism, Trope, and the Hidden Life of Trees.” Paper for seminar on “The Literary Life of Plants: Agency, Languages, and Poetics of the Vegetal,” *German Studies Association Annual Convention*, San Diego, CA, October 2016.
- “Techniques of Attention in Literature and Science: On the Genealogy of Alexander Baumgarten’s Aesthetics.” *American Comparative Literature Association Convention*, Cambridge, MA, March 2016.
- “Possibility, Potentiality, and Formative Drive in Goethe’s Scientific Writings.” Contribution to seminar “Science, Nature, and Art: From the Age of Goethe to the Present,” *German Studies Association Annual Convention*, Washington, D.C., October 2015.
- “Senses in the Making: Art and Perception in Alexander Baumgarten’s *Aesthetica*.” Presentation at *Critical Sensations*, Society for the Humanities Fellows’ Workshop, Cornell University, April 2015.
- “Contingency, Arbitrariness, and the Fate of Critique.” Paper for seminar “After Critique: Models of Thinking and Writing Beyond the School of Suspicion,” *German Studies Association Annual Convention*, Kansas City, MI, September 2014.
- “Epistemische und kosmologische Kontingenz bei Breitinger und Brockes.” *Kosmos und Kontingenz, conference of the PhD-Net “Das Wissen der Literatur*,” Humboldt University, Berlin, July 2014.
- “Philosophy’s Magic Lantern: Gottsched, Wolff, and the Geometrical Construction of Nature.” *Cornell-Colorado University-Colloquium in German Studies*, Boulder, CO, May 2014.
- “The Given and the Made: Configurations of Art and Nature in J. J. Breitinger’s Poetics.” Paper for seminar “For a New Enlightenment,” *German Studies Association Annual Convention*, Denver, CO, October 2013.
- “Concealed Behind a Transparent Mask: The Paradoxical Knowledge of Literature in J.J. Breitinger’s Theory of the Marvelous.” *American Comparative Literature Association Convention*, Toronto, April 2013.
- “‘Eine Historie aus einer anderen Welt’: Possible Worlds and the Erosion of Cosmological Order in Breitinger’s Poetics.” *Literature & Cosmology. Biannual German Graduate Student Conference*, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, February 2013.
- “Uses and Abuses of Aesthetics Today.” Introductory remarks to the eponymous Cornell German Studies graduate student conference, February 2011.
- “Conflicting Epistemologies in E.T.A. Hoffmann’s ‘Der Sandmann.’” *Annual Conference of the Department of Comparative Literature*, Binghamton University, NY, April 2009.

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#### CONFERENCE AND EVENT ORGANIZATION

- Co-organizer of workshop “Ecological Perspectives on the Nexus Rerum” at the *Institute for Cultural Inquiry*, Berlin Germany (with Alexandra Heimes and Ross Shields) (June 2024)
- Co-organizer of international workshop “Nexus rerum: Rethinking Interconnectivity with Leibniz,” *Princeton University* (with Alexandra Heimes and Ross Shields) (April 2023)
- Co-organizer of panel series “Work.Ethics” at the *German Studies Association Annual Convention* (with Paul Fleming and Nathan Taylor) (September 2018)

- Co-organizer of panel series “Cosmology and Cosmopoetics” at the *German Studies Association Annual Convention* (with Bryan Klausmeyer and Florian Fuchs) (October 2017)
- Co-organizer of Dada Soirée, undergraduate outreach event at Cornell University (with Jette Gindner) (2016)
- Co-organizer of Cornell German Studies graduate student conference on “Uses and Abuses of Aesthetics Today” (with Anna-Maria Andrei) (2011)
- Co-organizer of literary reading series “Die Angst vor der Axt” at Roter Salon, Volksbühne, Berlin, Germany (2007)
- Co-organizer of transnational literary reading series “Grenzübergriffe” at Forum Stadtpark, Graz, Austria (2006)
- Co-organizer of digital writing project and performance series “randlagig,” Graz, Austria (2006)

#### FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS, GRANTS

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- 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fund for Innovation in Undergraduate Education for project “Origins of German Critical Thought” (\$61,000), multi-year revision of the intellectual history curriculum in the Department of German, Princeton University (with Joel Lande and Susan Morrow) (2024)
- Grant from Princeton University Center for Human Values (\$5,000) for “Nexus rerum” workshop (2023)
- Grant from Princeton University Humanities Council (\$4,000) for “Nexus rerum” workshop (2023)
- Michael Curschmann Memorial Preceptorship (2021)
- Princeton University Committee on Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences grant for archival research on 18<sup>th</sup>-century notebooks (2019)
- Graduate Fellowship with the University of Cologne's *a.r.t.e.s.* program (2016–2017; declined)
- Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Graduate Fellowship at the Society for the Humanities, Cornell University (annual focal theme “Sensation”) (2014–2015)
- Summer Research Grant awarded by the Cornell Graduate School for project “Writing Nature in the Early Enlightenment: Imitation, Observation, Classification” (summer 2014)
- Peter Uwe Hohendahl Graduate Essay Prize in Critical Theory, Second Place, Cornell University, for “After Cosmos and Chaos: Reason in an Age of Contingency” (2013)
- Cornell University Brett de Bary Interdisciplinary Mellon Writing Group Grant on “*Besetzung*: Logics of Occupation (History, Psychoanalysis, Rhetoric)” (with Bruno Bosteels, Paul Fleming, Amanda Goldstein, Antoine Traisnel, and Nathan Taylor) (2013–2014)
- Peer Collaboration Teaching Stipend awarded by the Knight Institute for Writing in the Disciplines, Cornell University (2013)
- Honorable Mention for AATG-German Quarterly Graduate Student Paper Award (2011)
- Goethe Essay Prize, Cornell University, for “Toward a Concept of Historical Truth Content in Literary Texts: Rereading Adorno’s ‘Rede über Lyrik und Gesellschaft’” (2011)

COURSES TAUGHT

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**Department of German, Princeton University**

- “Vienna and the Avant-Gardes: Innovation and Crisis” (undergraduate seminar for Princeton-in-Vienna program, summer 2025)
- “Attention as a Technology of the Self” (advanced undergraduate seminar, cross-listed with Program in Humanistic Studies, Spring 2025)
- “Thinking with Plants” (graduate seminar, Spring 2025)
- “Origins of Critical Thought: What Can I Know?” (undergraduate lecture course, Fall 2024)
- “Ecological Marxisms” (graduate seminar, cross-listed with Comparative Literature and the Program in Environmental Studies, Spring 2024)
- “Aesthetics & Ecology” (graduate seminar, cross-listed with Comparative Literature and the Program in Environmental Studies, Spring 2023)
- “Junior Seminar: Research in German Studies” (methods course for German majors, Fall 2022)
- “Critical Race Theory and German Thought” (co-taught with Barbara Nagel, graduate seminar, cross-listed with African American Studies, Spring 2022)
- “What Is Critique?” (first-year seminar, Spring 2022)
- “What Is Critique?” (advanced undergraduate seminar, Spring 2021)
- “Hegel’s Logic in Context” (independent undergraduate reading course, Fall 2021)
- “Aesthetics and (Un)Freedom” (graduate seminar, cross-listed with Comparative Literature, Fall 2020)
- “Magic Mountains: Transformations of the Alpine Imaginary in German Culture” (undergraduate seminar for Princeton-in-Munich program, summer 2019)
- “Introduction to German Philosophy” (undergraduate lecture course, Spring 2019, 2021, and 2023)
- “Cosmology and Cosmopoetics” (graduate seminar, cross-listed with Comparative Literature, Fall 2018)
- “Literary Austria after 1945” (advanced undergraduate seminar, Fall 2018)
- “German Aesthetic Theory” (advanced undergraduate seminar, Spring 2018)
- “Literature and Science from Kepler to Goethe” (advanced undergraduate seminar, cross-listed with European Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature, Spring 2018)
- “Introduction to German Literature after 1700” (undergraduate seminar, Fall 2017, 2022, and 2023)
- “Margins of Enlightenment” (advanced undergraduate seminar, cross-listed with Comparative Literature and European Cultural Studies, Fall 2017 and Spring 2019)

**Department of German, Reed College**

- “Marx, Nietzsche, Freud” (advanced undergraduate seminar, spring 2017)
- “German Aesthetic Theory” (advanced undergraduate seminar, fall 2016)
- “Advanced German: Twentieth-Century Art and Politics (Berlin)” (3<sup>rd</sup>-year German, 2016)
- “Second-Year German: Cultural and Literary Perspectives” (2016/2017)

**Department of German Studies, Cornell University**

- “Genius and Madness in Literature” (TA at Cornell Summer College, 2015)
- “Marx, Nietzsche, Freud” (first-year writing seminar, fall 2012, spring 2014)
- “Dreams of Reason: Exploring the Enlightenment” (first-year writing seminar, spring/fall 2013)
- “Reading Academic German I/II” (German translation course for graduate students, 2011–2012)
- “Exploring German Contexts I/II” (first-year German language, 2010–2011)

**Department of German and Russian Studies, Binghamton University**

- “Elementary German I/II” (first-year German language, two course sequences, 2007–2009)

PROFESSIONAL AND DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE

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Referee work (2018–present): *German Studies Review*; *Modern Language Notes*; *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory*; *Estetika: The European Journal of Aesthetics*; *Monatshefte*; *Green Letters: Studies in Ecocriticism*; *New German Critique*; *Signale* (Cornell University Press); *European Research Council Advanced Grants*

Department of German, Princeton University:

- Director of Undergraduate Studies (2024–2025)
- Convener of Works-in-Progress Series (2023–2024)
- Campus advisor for undergraduate DAAD scholarships (2021–2025)
- Member of the Committee for Curriculum Innovation (2021–present)
- Director of Undergraduate Studies (2020–2021)
- Coordinating faculty for Princeton-in-Munich program (summer 2019)
- German Department Lecture Committee (2017–2019)
- Committee for the revision of the Generals reading list (2017–2018)
- Faculty Web Coordinator (2017–2018)

Organizer of Philosophical Soirées at Reed’s German House, Reed College (2016–2017)

Organizer of Cornell University’s Theory Reading Group (2013–2016)

LANGUAGES

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- German (native)
- English (near-native)
- French (advanced reading)
- Latin (advanced reading)
- Classical Greek (intermediate reading)
- Spanish (basic)