

A warm
welcome to
all new HGGS
members!

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Kanya Viljoen



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Hello everyone! My name is Kanya Viljoen and I'm from Cape Town, in sunny South Africa. I am both an academic and an artist. I work as a writer, director and designer in both film and theatre, whilst lecturing in performance studies at the University of Cape Town. I completed both my BA and MA studies at the University of Cape Town in Theatre and Performance. My MA was completed as a Andrew W. Mellon scholar, specialising in Re-Imagining the Tragedy from Africa and the Global South.

My PhD proposes to investigate Gender Based Violence Protests and the way in which it exists as narrative, translation and embodied performance. The project seeks to build on my skills and experiences as a scholar, artist and film-maker from the Global South, seeking to not only understand, but contribute to a larger transnational body of work that contests socio-political realities through 'acts of activism' and the application of the performance analytic.

I look forward to learning and experiencing Heidelberg and Germany and the many beautiful sites and histories it has to offer. As well as all the enriching exchanges and connections to be made with fellow scholars during my time at Heidelberg University.

Marian Orjuela

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Hello everyone! My name is Marian Orjuela from the Colombian Amazon. I am a doctoral researcher in Sociology at the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, and a member of the interdisciplinary doctoral research group “Communication and Society in Ibero-America” at the Heidelberg Center for Ibero-American Studies (HCIAS). My research focuses on the analysis of women's leadership and protection strategies developed in contexts of conflict and violence in the Colombian Amazon region.

Currently, I am a research associate and editor on the board of Research Committee 48 (RC48) “Social Movements, Collective Action and Social Change” at the International Sociological Association (ISA). I have also been involved in international projects on human rights advocacy, public health, and communication for social change with organisations such as UNICEF, Save the Children, UNFPA, APAE Brazil, among others.

I am pleased to join the HGGS, because I believe that interdisciplinary exchange is beneficial for us as academics and researchers from different parts of the world.

Marco Elischer

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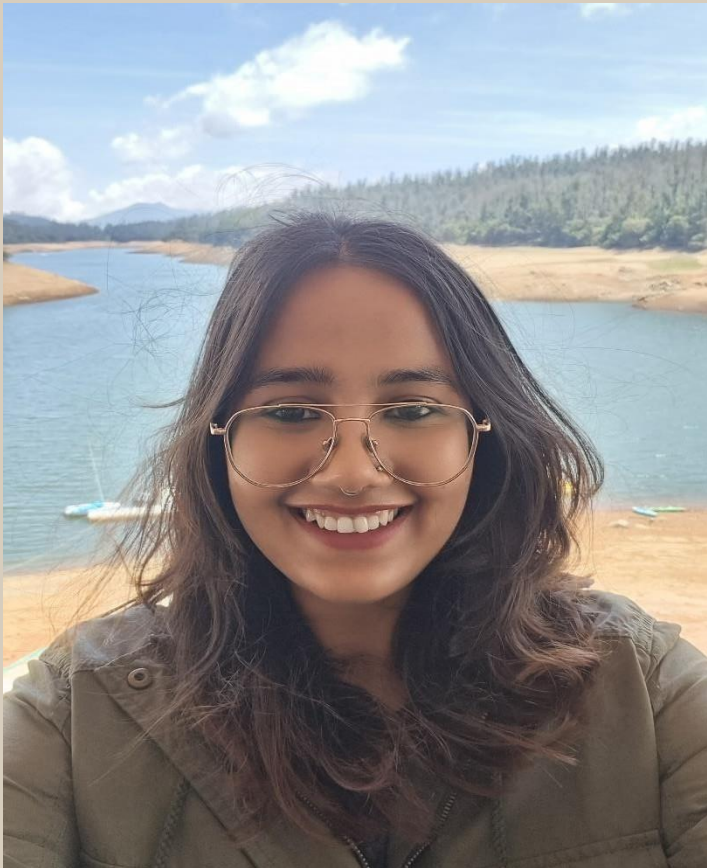
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My name is Marco Elischer and I'm happy to be in Heidelberg since July. Lately I was at Hebrew University Jerusalem as an exchange student and did mostly work on the theoretical framing of my thesis there. Originally I studied Educational science and Philosophy in Tübingen, and Public Policy in Maastricht. My PhD topic focuses on the intersections between both areas, pedagogy and research on sustainability. By investigating two cases of communal living (eco-projects and mass-housing) I want to reconstruct the meaning-making about practices of solidarity in these contexts and how they connect with phantasies about the future. Thereby, I hope to be able to formulate some insights how class-focused empowerment on sustainable politics and practice can be facilitated as one enabler of socio-ecological transformation.

Beside my empirical work for the PhD project I work in two NGOs as an educator. Here in Heidelberg in the "Collegium Academicum" on the start-up phase of a gap year for young people finishing school and for the biodiversity preservation NGO "proBiene" in the organization and fundraising for educational programmes about bees. Therefore, I would be especially interested to get into a conversation with some of you on good practices of transdisciplinary research (e.g. ethics and impact) and about your projects related to interdisciplinary sustainability research. I would be happy to start an conversation!

Rishika Rai



Hello Everyone, My Name is Rishika and I am from India. I have enrolled as a PhD scholar at the Karl Jaspers Centre for Transcultural Studies in the Graduate Programme for Transcultural Studies.

My Research focuses on the rise of Alt-Right in India and effect that digital cultural products like 'memes' have in accelerating the reproduction of cultural and social capital of the Hindu Right or Hindutva in India. It studies how various alt-right groups across the globe effect the aesthetics and the content shared by the Hindu right online. My research aims to look into how memes, a type of digital content that thrives on existing cultural codes and the meta practice of 'fun' impact the way people form relations online and how they interact in and with contemporary Indian society, culture and its existing cultural codes. It also aims to analyse how members of this type of content can be used to motivated people to harass and incite violence.

Prior to my current pursuit, I have completed my Bachelors in Political Science from Delhi University and my Masters in Development Studies from Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati

Yesum Chon



I am Yesum Chon from South Korea, a PhD student at the English Department under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Vera Nünning. I have a Bachelor degree in German and English literature from Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, and hold a Master's degree in English literature from Seoul National University. I arrived in Germany in January 2023, and started my PhD project.

Victorian novels have always been my area of interest, and reading some of Charles Dickens's novels made me fall in love with the coming-of-age story, or Bildungsroman. As I began to read some of George Eliot's novels, I became also engrossed by them, and decided to study them as a Bildungsroman. My research is titled "Re-conceptualizing Bildung: George Eliot's English Contextualization of the German Tradition of Bildung". In my research, I intend to revisit most of George Eliot's novels, asking how far they initiate a new form of the Bildungsroman. The main goal of my research is to demonstrate the hypotheses that Eliot's novels are based on Friedrich Schiller's concept of Bildung, and that this concept anticipates Eliot's concept of Bildung and the idea of aesthetic teaching presented in her novels. I will explore how Eliot contextualizes and synthesizes Schillerian concept of Bildung with Herderian and Feuerbachian concept of sympathy in the English context, thereby presenting an alternative concept of Bildung. Thereby, I will examine how Eliot's narrative rhetoric reflects her views on aesthetic teaching and the value of literature, as an extension of reader's sympathy. Outside of my research work, I particularly enjoy visiting various art museums. Also, I love travelling a lot. I look forward to participating in the various events provided by HGGS. And I hope to expand my experience and knowledge by learning from fellow members.

Matias Lennart Castrén



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My name is Matias, and I have been a PhD student in the Political Science department at the South Asia Institute since November 2021.

My research focuses on the origins of power in global society, specifically examining the global economic power structures and analysing India's strategies in navigating these structures. I aim to understand the possibilities of state agency in a world where transnational actors such as corporations, financial institutions, and cosmopolitan business classes are increasingly asserting control over resources and the organisation of production.

Prior to my current pursuit, I completed my bachelor's degree in political history at the University of Helsinki. Subsequently, I conducted master's studies in global politics at Malmö University.

During the PhD studies, it is often challenging to distinguish between work and free time. Nevertheless, when I am not engrossed in my research, I find solace in skateboarding, rock'n'roll dancing and listening to Taylor Swift's Red (Taylor's Version) -album.

Karla Alvarado

Hello, everybody! My name is Karla Alvarado from beautiful Mexico City. I love chocolate, ice cream, watching movies and traveling. I hold bachelor's and master's degrees in International Relations from the National Autonomous University of México (UNAM). I am currently a member of the Doctoral Research Group "Communication and Society in Ibero-America" at the Heidelberg Center for Ibero-American Studies (HCIAS). I am affiliated to the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences and I am a scholarship holder of the *Landesgraduiertenförderungsprogramm* of the state of Baden-Württemberg. My doctoral research project is entitled (for the moment) "Latin America, China and the Challenges for Digital Trade Governance: Social Commerce and the Proliferation of Cross-Border Data Flows", supervised by HCIAS Jun.-Prof. Dr. Alejandro Ecker.

Before joining the HCIAS, I pursued a research stay at the Center for China-Mexico Studies (CECHIMEX) at the Faculty of Economics of UNAM as part of the China Research Fellowship Program 2022. In 2019, I performed a research stay at Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy US-Mexico Center holding a scholarship for Graduate Studies from the Mexican Council of Science and Technology. In 2021, I received the Best Master's Thesis Award from the Center for Research on North America (CISAN-UNAM) and I positioned publications in a journal, two book chapters and several blogs.

Previously, I worked for the Mexican government, the Organization of the American States (OAS) in Panama and Rice University in Houston. Also, I worked voluntarily in the International Association for Political Science Students (IAPSS) as Latin America and the Caribbean Chair and I was the founder and president of IAPSS Mexico. I also collaborate with other NGOs. Recently, I became an associate of the Heidelberg Center for Digital Humanities (HCDH), since I look for bringing a new perspective for thinking and researching in the social sciences and humanities in the digital era.



Carlos Fabris

Hello everyone,

I am Carlos Fabris and I am from the south of Brazil. After completing my bachelor's and master's degrees in Brazil, I am currently a Ph.D. student at the Max Weber Institute for Sociology under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Thomas Schwinn. I am very excited to join the HGGS, as I find the exchange with researchers from different fields very helpful and interesting.

Following one of the traditions of my institute, my research focuses on classical authors of social theory, especially Max Weber, Talcott Parsons and Jürgen Habermas. My goal is to understand the possibilities and limitations of these authors in current debates about the concept of value - in its many forms, such as political, religious, and aesthetic values. Interdisciplinarity is a fundamental aspect of my work, and the HGGS is an important space for this.



Ye Xie



Dear all,

My name is Ye Xie and I am a PhD candidate in English linguistics. I come from Chengdu, a city in the middle of China known for its rich history and delicious food. Since last winter, I have been studying the pragmatics of television discourse under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Daniela Landert at Heidelberg University.

My current research delves into the significance of nonverbal expressions, including silence, gestures, gaze and facial expressions, in communication. I find these nonverbal expressions both complex and fascinating, and their impact on communication often exceeds my expectation. On the other hand, my personal interest in talk shows and sitcoms played a role in my decision to study their dialogues. To me, television discourse is a valuable form of language that deserves more attention.

Additionally, I am interested in neologisms, cognitive linguistics and cultural studies. I look forward to the sparks of thinking that we can create together.

Sara Ibáñez-O'Donnell

Hi everyone!

My name is Sara and I'm from Spain. I recently started my PhD in Transcultural Studies at the Faculty of Philosophy. I have a Bachelor degree in Humanities and one in Journalism, both from Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona. After a decade of professional development I decided to go back to academia and study a masters in Transcultural Studies, also here in Heidelberg University.

My research deals with questions around diasporic experience, violence and women-led activism. Using visual, embodied and collaborative ethnographic methods, I aim to better understand transcultural knowledge production on gender violence and femi(ni)cide through Mexican, Latinx and Spanish-speaking performative activist practices in Berlin.

Prior to returning to research I worked for various London-based think tanks and cultural projects. During that time I expanded both my urban activism networks and life experience that forms the basis of my project. I was thrilled to find out that there would be a new cohort of Latin American members at the HGGS and I am looking forward to enriching transdisciplinary exchange.



Alessia Colonnelli

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Hello everyone!

My name is Alessia Colonnelli and I started a PhD at the University of Heidelberg under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Johannes Becke. My doctoral research is part of the larger research project “Gathering the Dispersed: State Evasion and State-Making in Modern Jewish, Kurdish and Berber History”, which is based at the Karl Jaspers Centre for Advanced Transcultural Studies. Following the aims and objectives of the broad research project, my personal project investigates the modern phenomenon of Amazigh nationalism by considering the context from which it emerged, the actors involved and the discursive nation-building strategies adopted. Considering Amazigh nationalism as a case study, the project aims to enrich scholarship/academic research on stateless ethnic nationalisms and shed light on the power hierarchies that marked the development of the ideology(s) of Amazigh nationalism in confrontation with other ideologies or ideological movements.

My research partly corresponds to my passions outside the academic environment. Thanks to my studies, I often find myself travelling. I am passionate about languages (besides Italian, which is my mother tongue, I speak a little French, English, Arabic, Spanish and I am learning Amazigh), and I like to confront and enrich myself with cultural diversity. I also work in the field of information, editing a weekly radio programme of political press reviews of Arabic newspapers.

Milena Dietz

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Hello everyone!

My name is Milena Dietz and I'm from the south of Germany, not that far away from Heidelberg. I started my PhD project at the Faculty of Law in April 2022 under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Ekkehart Reimer. My research is about the centralization of taxes: I am comparing the history of the centralization of taxes in Germany, Switzerland, the U.S. and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and on that basis I will try to draw conclusions for a future EU tax.

I studied law at Heidelberg University until the beginning of this year. Now I am very excited to get in touch with researchers from other disciplines and from all over the world through the HGGS. Since I would like to include the historic, political, economic and fiscal-sociological impacts on the centralization of taxes in my PhD project, I am also very interested in learning about interdisciplinary research.

In my free time, I am a voluntary firefighter at the fire department of Heidelberg. Apart from that, I love to learn new things, especially foreign languages, to read, to swim and to meet friends.

Rodrigo Agustin Lana



Hello all,

My name is Rodrigo Agustin Lana and I am a researcher in English Linguistics at the Anglistisches Seminar at the University of Heidelberg. Although I am now based in Germany, I have quite an international background, having pursued postgraduate studies in both my native Spain and the UK. In my current doctoral research, I combine methods from various disciplines of linguistics, including pragmatics and sociolinguistics, to investigate how impoliteness is conveyed by speakers across different languages.

I am looking forward to participating in the events offered by HGGS. I am sure it will be tremendously helpful for my own research to find out more about how the rest of the members are approaching their projects and to share discussions and receive feedback when it comes to my own doctoral dissertation.

Julia van Duijvenvoorde



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My name is Julia van Duijvenvoorde and in the spring I started a PhD under the joint supervision of Prof. Dr. Thomas Meier from Heidelberg University and Dr. Linde Egberts from the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. The doctoral research I am conducting is part of a greater DFG-AHRC-funded research project about “Devastation, dislocation and (re-) settlement: Breaking/replacing the people-place connection in landscape”. With the 1709-1710 migration waves from the Palatinate to Ireland and North America as my starting point, I study how pre- and post-migration landscapes intervened in the reconstruction of the sense of home by communities within the Palatine diaspora.

My research is just as multi-disciplinary as the driving concept of landscape, involving theories, methodologies and literature from cultural geography, environmental history, heritage & memory studies to name a few. This stands in continuity with the rest of my academic trajectory which, until now, has been just as varied: After graduating from with a BA in International Relations & German from the University of Exeter (UK), I went on to study Heritage & Memory Studies at the University of Amsterdam (Netherlands). There, a passion for the complexity and beauty of human-nature relationships was ignited – a boundless and timeless topic that has occupied many a mind and now occupies mine.

Christian Bot

My name is Christian Bot and I'm a doctoral candidate in the Seminar für alte Geschichte und Epigraphik. I'm originally from Canada where I received a bachelor's degree in history and classical studies from the University of Western Ontario in 2017 and a master's degree in classical studies, also at Western, in 2021. I came to Heidelberg in September 2021 to begin my doctoral studies under the supervision of Dr. Kai Trampedach and hope to be able to complete my work in late 2024.

My interests lie in the field of ancient Greek history and specifically in Greek political history and foreign relations in the 5th and 4th centuries BC. The doctoral dissertation that I'm working on examines the evolution of peace treaties in the Greek world during this period and explores how they gradually became more ambitious and comprehensive over time. I argue that this is evidence that the Greek political class was becoming increasingly uncomfortable, at least in theory, with the constant warfare that permeated Greek society and responded by attempting to create a more stable framework for peaceful foreign relations, albeit unsuccessfully.

Outside of my academic work, learning languages is one of my abiding passions. Aside from German, I enjoy spending my spare time improving my skills in French and Italian, and I've studied several other languages to varying degrees.



Cristina-Ruxandra Burghilea



Dear all, I am Cristina-Ruxandra Burghilea, a PhD candidate in the English Department and representative of doctoral students in the Doctoral Convention of the University of Heidelberg. I come from Romania, having arrived in Heidelberg in 2017 at the start of the Master program.

My life at the moment is divided into two major fields of interest. On the one hand, my doctoral project on the ecocritical reading of the English novel from the late 19th century to the early 21st century, with a focus on the narratological evolution of the relationship between characters and the natural environment. Ecocriticism has lately gained much traction within literary studies as it allows for a multidisciplinary approach to literature, adding thus a dialogic touch to my entire research and writing process.

On the other hand, I am actively involved in representational activities as part of University committees and voluntary projects, always happy to collaborate with young scholars and fellow academics, expand my knowledge and improve skills. I believe that time is a privilege and thus making the most out of it, ready to meet opportunities and learn from others is what the PhD years are there for.

Eunice Chiu

Greetings everyone! Nice to meet you! My name is Eunice Chiu. My first degree is in Cultural Anthropology, during which, I have also spent time in Archaeology. I then proceeded to pursue a Master's degree in Public Policy. I have just started my Ph.D. in Educational Science at the Faculty of Behavioral and Cultural Studies. My thesis is on teachers' emotional engagement and its effects on transformative learning. However, my research interest is broad and also includes green policy and the environment; migrational studies and educational justice.

Apart from academia, I also have quite a lot of hobbies and interests. I do crossfit, Muay Thai and bouldering. I also enjoy diving, it's very relaxing and everything feels very different when I am in the ocean. I am a movie enthusiast, I don't have a favorite one though since there's just too many good movies to choose from. I also love singing and I have sung in the choir for six years in my Secondary school life.

There are many ways for us to experience the world and that is why I enjoy trying new things and always challenge myself to do something new once in a while. I get new insights from these experiences, and the most enjoyable thing about it is to further the inspiration by reading and dwelling into relevant knowledge that already exists in the academic field. And of course, I am always passionate about doing original research when there are questions left unanswered.



Deepa Elizabeth John



Hello everyone,

I am Deepa Elizabeth John, coming from India. I started my Ph.D. in June 2022 at the Anglistisches Seminar under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Vera Nünning. My research addresses the fictional narratives of women from Colonial India, focusing on the narrative construction of womanhood and women's negotiation of power dynamics in relation to colonial social spaces. I have done my previous studies in India and worked in editorial positions for a while before moving to Heidelberg.

The past four months in Heidelberg have been exciting, forcing me to alter my own imagination about the world. Outside of academic work, I enjoy outdoor sports, creative writing, and cooking as my active form of relaxation. I look forward to being a part of HGGs and the opportunities that Heidelberg University brings me.

Ting Wang

Guten Tag, everyone,

My name is Ting Wang, from middle of China, specifically Wuhan, you all must know it. Now, I am a PhD candidate of sociology under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Markus Pohlmann.

My research topic is about corruption and anti-corruption in China and Germany, which is a comparative study. Honestly, the theme is so grand, in more detail, it is about organizational bribery in the two countries. The legal document about the bribery that can be obtained from the court as the starting point, the method of collective mindsets analysis (CMA) is used to analyze the causes and characteristics of bribery as actors. More importantly, the life choices of actors as individuals reflect the structure and history of society in a given environment. Obviously, institutions and laws have become the means of consensus regulation. However, in the process of institutionalization, the influence of culture, ideas and attitudes cannot be ignored. By comparing the differences in corruption status in Germany and China, it is helpful to understand the different types of corruption and to understand the characteristics of culture, history and system in different organizations and societies. Although I am not sure about the outcome of the project now, I still believe it is meaningful for my life.

Outside of my research work, I am interested in hiking, swimming, badminton and other sports. You all know that health is most important part. And I am also keen on learning German because I want to know more about Germany and talk with local people. Germany is new to me, the second year since I came to Germany, but I love Heidelberg and Germany very much.



Jingke Pan



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I am Jingke Pan from China, a PhD candidate at the Alfred-Weber-Institute for Economics, under the supervision of Prof. Axel Dreher. I have an interdisciplinary background and interests. I started with a Bachelor's degree in International Relations and Political Science from Tongji University in China. After I fell in love with development issues and gained some experience with NGOs and development organizations, I went to the London School of Economics (LSE) and received a Master's degree in Development Studies there. In September 2021, I came to Heidelberg and begin my doctoral studies in Development Economics and Political Economics.

My research interest is broad, including international organizations, Chinese aid, conflicts, and education. For now, I have three ongoing research projects. The first project is a joint project with Prof. Christopher Kilby from Economics background and Prof. Ayse Kaya from Political Science. We are trying to figure out whether China, as some news criticized, uses a multilateral economics institution (AIIB) to serve its bilateral strategic initiative - Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) - akin to the way the US has done with the World Bank and IMF, by using a novel dataset that identifies the geographic location of AIIB and BRI projects. My second research project is to ask whether the existence of natural resources increases the possibility of conflicts in Africa, with geo-referenced data on oil resources and conflicts. The third project is still in the initial stage of ideas, in which we would like to explore the relations between weather shocks and children's welfare in India.

I am delighted to join the HGGS, where I will have the opportunity to be inspired by scholars and researchers from various disciplines. Looking forward to meeting everyone.

Welcome to you all!

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