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March 27, 2012

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## IWU to host first German Undergraduate Research Conference

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.-- On Friday and Saturday, April 6–7, the German Section of the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures (MCLL) will hold the first Illinois Wesleyan German Undergraduate Research Conference. The conference will take place in a number of rooms of the Memorial Center (104 University St., Bloomington).

The keynote address, “On Witches and Terrorists: Juli Zeh’s Science-fiction Novel *Corpus Delicti*” (“Von Hexen und Terroristen. Juli Zehs’ science-fiction Roman *Corpus Delicti*”), will be delivered by Sonja Klocke, assistant professor of German at Knox College (Ill.)

The conference will be held in German and will begin with a poster session on Friday afternoon at 5:30 p.m. in the Turfler Room, followed by an authentic German dinner. The panels on Friday and Saturday evening will touch on a number of diverse topics. “The conference has attracted students wanting to present papers and posters on myriad literary, cultural, and scientific topics—everything from the Brothers Grimm to the regulation of GMO foods in Germany,” said conference co-organizer Adam Woodis, visiting assistant professor of German. The German dinner is partially sponsored by a chapter grant to IWU’s Lambda Psi chapter from the Delta Phi Alpha German National Honorary Society. The dinner is also sponsored by the Provost’s Office, and the conference itself is funded by the MCLL department’s funds associated with the Isaac Funk Endowed Professorship held by Marina Balina, professor of Russian Studies.

IWU German majors and minors have been helping to organize the event as well and will be providing much of the housing and general hospitality for out-of-town participants.

According to Sonja Fritzsche, associate professor of German and Eastern European Studies, the event is one of very few like it in the United States where students of German studies have a chance to present their research in the German language. “We looked around to find a place for our undergraduate German majors to present their research papers in the language in which they had written them. We could not find one in the Midwest. So we decided to organize our own.”

The conference has attracted much attention from universities and colleges throughout the Midwest and the eastern United States. Participants from IWU will be joined by students from Grinnell College (Iowa), Hamilton College (New York), Kenyon College (Ohio), Knox College, Macalester College (Minn.), North Central College (Ill.), the University of West Georgia and the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Senior German Studies major Sarah Moir finds the prospect of participating in the conference very rewarding. “I was saddened by the fact that a paper I had spent the entire semester working on, might not see recognition beyond my campus, or even beyond the German Section of MCLL. Now by way of this conference, I have an additional means of gaining connections with other researching students like myself, as well as other perspectives into what is happening research-wise in the field of German Studies.”

For more information about the conference, including specific rooms and times, go to the IWU German Studies website: <http://www.iwu.edu/german/conference/>

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