

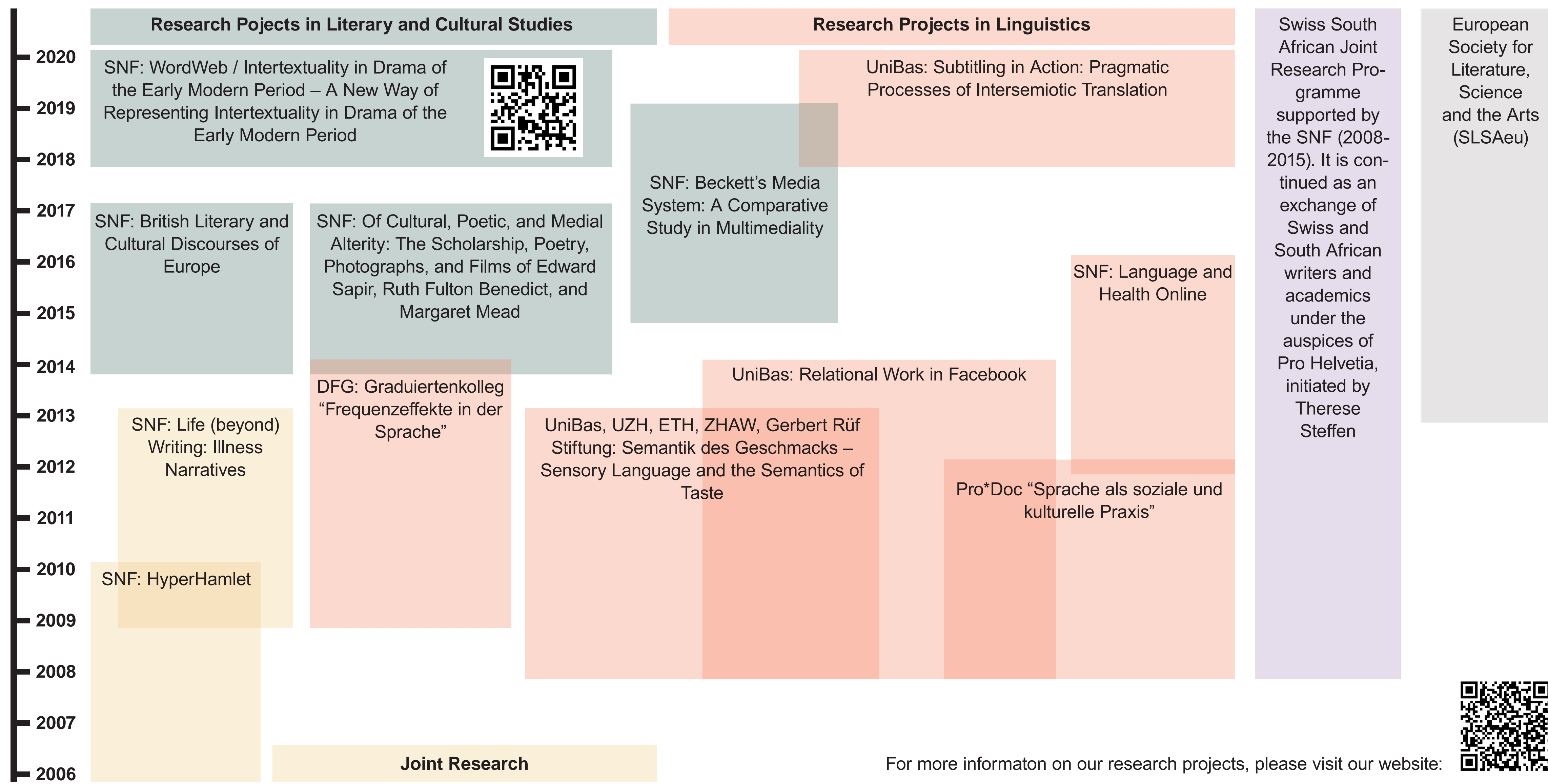
# English at Basel Today: Teaching, Research and Outreach

## Research

Our research interests cover a wide range of aspects of Anglophone literatures, linguistic varieties and cultures. In linguistics, we analyse the structure and uses of the English language as well as language acquisition. In literary and cultural studies, we explore the negotiation of cultural discourses in Anglophone literatures, both in the past and the present.



## Research Projects



## Outreach

The Department of English remains a lively and thriving department today and continues to maintain its relationships beyond the walls of the 'Schönes Haus'. Here are just four examples that illustrate the geographic extent and quality of these exchanges as well as the innovative forms of interaction that our professors have applied.



**Prof. Dr. Ina Habermann**  
Professor of English Literature since the Renaissance

Ina Habermann's main fields of interest include Shakespeare and the early modern period, literature and film in the interwar period and the Second World War, cultural and literary history and theory as well as gender studies, spatial studies and critical humanisms.

She is committed to the integration of teaching and research, and her current research projects deal with British literary and cultural discourses of Europe and the literary exploration of otherworldly spaces.

## 2009-2017: Centre of Competence Cultural Topographies

The Centre of Competence Cultural Topographies was an interdisciplinary network at the University of Basel coordinating and promoting research, teaching and graduate studies on space and place. The centre was initiated and chaired by Ina Habermann and included members from most of the departments of the Humanities, as well as the Faculty of Theology and the Faculty of Science (Environmental Studies).

Important events and achievements include:

- Acquisition of an assistant professorship "Cultural Topographies of Eastern Europe in the 19th and 20th Century" funded by the FAG. The position was filled by Martina Baleva from 2012 to 2017.
- SNF-funded research project "British Literary and Cultural Discourses of Europe" (2014-2017).
- Colloquia and interdisciplinary research meetings "Denkräume" every semester.
- Regular autumn term lecture series, two of which organized by Ina Habermann: Topographies of Literature in 2009; Shakespearean Dimensions in 2012
- Crossroads Summer School in 2010
- Implementation of certificate "Cultural Topographies" for MA students



**Prof. Dr. Philipp Schweighauser**  
Professor of North American and General Literature

Philipp Schweighauser has worked on a wide variety of issues in American Studies, but his main foci are 18th to 21st c. American literature and culture; literary history, literary, cultural, and media theory; literature and science; literature and anthropology; life writing; sound studies; and aesthetics. His current research project deals with Samuel Beckett's media works. He is also working on a book on the poetry of the Boasian anthropologists Margaret Mead, Ruth Fulton Benedict, and Edward Sapir.

## Massive Open Online Course: Literature in the Digital Age: from Close Reading to Distant Reading

Futurelearn.com is a platform that offers online university courses from all over the world. In collaboration with the New Media Center and Educational Technologies at the University of Basel, Philipp Schweighauser rendered the methods of reading graspable in extraordinarily creative ways. In six weeks, the course covered close reading, hyper reading, social reading, distant reading, surface reading, and historical contextualization. The course has taken place three times and reached 5,800 participants the first year in 2016. It has also introduced the history and the beautiful environment of the Department of English to a global audience. All the course contents are now available as 'tales' at <https://tales.nmc.unibas.ch/de/literature-in-the-digital-age-11/>.

Important events and achievements include:

- Greatest student enrolment among the University of Basel's 6 pilot MOOCs: 5,800 learners in the first run (2016), 2,800 in the second run (2017), 2,000 in the third run (2018)
- Exploration of novel forms of combining online and offline class sessions
- Offline components taught at the Universities of Basel and Freiburg i. B.
- Getting Basel's and Freiburg's students in touch with a highly diverse, international group of learners



**Prof. Dr. Miriam Locher**  
Professor of the Linguistics of English

Miriam A. Locher's research is on interpersonal pragmatics, linguistic politeness, relational work, the exercise of power, disagreements, advice-giving (in health contexts) and computer-mediated communication.

Her current research projects deal with English as a lingua franca in fan translations of Korean drama with a special focus on relational work.

## New Research Project: Subtitling in Action: Pragmatic Processes of Intersemiotic Translation

Miriam Locher recently spent her sabbatical as a Visiting Professor at Korea University and has started a new research project on English subtitling in Korean drama. The project offers a new pragmatic perspective onto processes and products of subtitling. Its central foci are the role of English in making televised Korean dramas accessible to a global audience; the changing paradigms of subtitle production and reception towards more participatory and collaborative practices; the dynamic participation structures of translated artefacts and their effects on cross-cultural communication. While the project draws on research in translation, it is grounded in English linguistics, the pragmatics of fiction and computer-mediated communication. Their aim is to bring linguistic questions about language in use to this research interface.



Important events and achievements include:

- Associate editor of the *Journal of Pragmatics* since 2015
- Two SNF projects, two UniBas projects
- Organization of several international conferences and a summer school
- 2016–2019 Dean of studies
- Two research sabbaticals at renowned universities (UBC, Canada; Korea University, South Korea)



**Prof. Dr. Heike Behrens**  
Professor of Cognitive Linguistics and Language Acquisition

Heike Behrens' research focuses on first-language acquisition, especially morphosyntax; second-language acquisition; cognitive linguistics, in particular linguistic theorization and its fields of study; language typology, such as the various conceptualisations and encodings of space, time, colour and taste; and language processing.

## Since 2012: Hermann Paul School of Linguistics (HPSL) – International Doctoral Programme (Basel and Freiburg i. Br.)

Heike Behrens, who is also professor at the German department, has always ensured a close relationship between the languages at Basel. This network was widened beyond national borders and considerably strengthened when she initiated the international doctoral programme between Basel and Freiburg in Germany. The HPSL promotes research in a variety of disciplines, and builds on the expertise of well-established researchers from both universities and their international networks.



Important events and achievements include:

- Editor, *Journal of Child Language*, 2010-2016
- Member Schweizer Wissenschaftsrat 2009-2015
- Member of the Academia Europaea, Section: Linguistics (since 2018)
- Founding Director of the graduate school HPSL Basel – Freiburg i.Br. (with Stefan Pfänder)
- Organizer of several lecture series on overarching linguistic topics which highlight the range of theoretical and methodological approaches pursued at Basel (and Freiburg): Language and Space (2015), Language and Communication (2019), (Quantitative) Digital Linguistics (in preparation for 2020).



## Teaching

Being the *lingua franca* of business and science, English has become the most important global language of today. Apart from their world-wide spread, the English language and its cultures have also shaped various domains in our local everyday lives including media, advertising, tourism, and many others. These developments are of great significance for Switzerland – a multilingual country that is deeply involved in global economic activities. English languages and cultures thus create novel social and political challenges (early English at school, language policy making, intercultural communication, Business English etc.) that must be approached, understood and tackled by experts in the field of English language, literature and culture. At the Department of English we take great care to ensure that our students can train and develop this very expertise.