

**Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg –
Skandinavisches Seminar**
Network partner of j o l n e s –
Joint Learning in Northern European Studies



An interview with **Prof. Dr. Joachim Grage** (Albert-Ludwigs Universität Freiburg – Skandinavisches Seminar)

Transcription

Prof. Dr. Joachim Grage

My name is Joachim Grage. I am a professor of Northern Germanic Philology, as it is called here at the University of Freiburg, specialising in Modern Literature and Cultural Studies.

WHAT ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SCANDINAVIAN DEPARTMENT IN FREIBURG?

The highlights of our department are, on the one hand, our Master's programme. We have a Master's programme on Scandinavian literary and cultural history, and this also outlines the research focus of my professorship quite well, i.e. a very strong historical reference to literature and culture. But we also have, and this is a special feature of Freiburg in the pan-German Scandinavian studies, a course in linguistics in the Bachelor's programme, which enables Bachelor's students to specialise in either literature or linguistics. We also integrate medieval studies, especially in the context of literature and cultural studies. And what distinguishes our research, or my research? I am very involved in interdisciplinary collaborative research. At the moment, we have a collaborative research centre here in Freiburg on heroes, heroisations, heroisms, and that is also reflected in my teaching, in that I offer seminars that have to do with this research. And of course, our students also have the opportunity to participate in lecture series and such events from this research area. I'm also interested in the intermediality of literature and music or in German-Scandinavian cultural transfer, and there are regular courses on that, too. Yes, perhaps one more absolute highlight, and then the advertising block is over, our department lives very much from the committed student council and the many activities outside the teaching programme and we have, for example, a Scandinavian choir that is voluntarily directed by our Swedish lecturer Lotta Karlsson and I am proud to have this choir at my department.

WHAT POSITIVE ASPECTS DOES PARTICIPATION IN THE j o l n e s NETWORK HAVE FOR YOUR DEPARTMENT ?

So for us, the network is a very, very big advantage, especially for students in the Master's programme, because it simply expands the range of courses we can offer in the Master's programme and perhaps also in the advanced BA programme. And that's very important for a subject with only one professorship, like Scandinavian Studies in Freiburg, because we only have a limited range of courses. And this term, for example, I'm in a research semester, which means I don't have to teach at all, and we wouldn't

actually have any Master's seminars for our Master's students. And of course the network is great because our Master's students can book courses from j o l n e s during this term and they have just done so. They are now in seminars with other lecturers from Germany, and that of course has immense advantages for the students because they get to know other people and other research approaches than always just me and my research approaches.

WHAT DOES A NETWORK LIKE j o l n e s MEAN FOR A RARE SUBJECT LIKE SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES?

Of course, for small subjects like Scandinavian Studies, the network first of all means an increase in human resources. This means that students have a greater choice of courses. And on the other hand, it also means for us teachers that we have a larger group of students, and I think that's just as important, because especially in the Master's area, the number of Master's students is not so high that good learning groups often come together, and then it's an advantage when students from outside also join. In my opinion, our students also benefit from this. I think this is a specific, structural problem of small subjects that is solved very well with this network, or at least to some extent, namely these low personnel resources. I think that in large subjects, the need for additional courses may not be so great, so there is no need for networking, which is, however, of great importance for small subjects in many areas and at all levels, both at the level of the mid-level faculty and among the professors as well as among the students. You can't start networking early enough, and this teaching network is really great for that.

Credits

The interview was conducted on June 01 2021 via Zoom.

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