

ALEXANDRA PETRUS

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EDUCATION

PhD	University of Southern California Cinema and Media Studies Digital Media Certificate	Aug 2022–present December 2023
MA	Technische Hochschule Köln Game Development and Research	Sept 2017–Feb 2021
BA	California State University, Long Beach Film and Electronic Arts (Directing), German	Aug 2013–May 2017

AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS & FUNDING

Graduate Fellowship Research and Creative Project Symposium Grant <i>University of Southern California</i> Competitive grant awarded for my proposed project, “Utopia Now: Playing the Good Life as the World Falls Apart,” which was selected for additional funds as one of the top three submissions.	2024
AI for Media and Storytelling Project Grant <i>USC Center for Generative AI and Society</i> Grant awarded for the short-term research project, “The Shallow and Deep” about extractive practices of AI image generation in collaboration with Dr. Professor Priya Jaikumar	2024
Annenberg Graduate Fellowship <i>University of Southern California</i> Guaranteed 5 year fellowship covering all tuition and health costs, plus living expenses toward the completion of my doctorate.	2022
Ubisoft Newcomer Award <i>Deutscher Entwicklerpreis (German Developer Award)</i> Game <i>Maniacs</i> was nominated, winner to be announced December 9th	2021
Prototype Funding <i>Film- und Medienstiftung NRW</i> <i>(Film and Media Fund North Rhein Westphalia)</i> Game <i>Maniacs</i> awarded €80,000 to develop a prototype over six months	2020
Concept Funding <i>Film- und Medienstiftung NRW</i>	2020

Game *Maniacs* awarded €20,000 to develop a game concept over four months

Best Student Film 2017

Hollywood International Moving Pictures Film Festival
For short film *Mourning Dove*

President's Honor List 2013–2017

California State University, Long Beach
Highest GPA-based honor awarded all eight semesters of my undergraduate career

College of Liberal Arts Distinguished Baccalaureate Award 2017

California State University, Long Beach College of Liberal Arts
Granted by both Film and Electronic Arts and Department of Romance, German and Russian for this award granted to only one undergraduate student

Senior Film Funding Selection 2016

Hollywood Foreign Press Association
Short film script *Mourning Dove* won first-place selection for funding

Richard and Johanna Baker Endowed Scholarship 2016

California State University, Long Beach College of the Arts
Highest College of the Arts scholarship awarded only to one student per year

Outstanding Achievement Certificate 2015

The German Summer School of New Mexico
Certificate awarded to the top 10% of students at this intensive immersion language program

French Program Award 2015

California State University, Long Beach
French language award presented to one student per class

German Program Award 2015

California State University, Long Beach
German language award presented to one student per class

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

California State University, Long Beach Jan 2024–present

Lecturer, German Cinema (CINE 457/GERM 480)

- Teaching an upper-division four-unit Cinema and German cross-listed course that explores topics around German Cinema from the end of World War I until the present. Topics introduced with emphasis on their critical histories include modernity, aesthetics of fascism, resistance, memory culture, imperialism,

migration, utopia, reunification, globalization, and cosmopolitanism. See sample syllabus [here](#).

University of Southern California

Teaching Assistant

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|---|-------------|
| CTCS 190 Introduction to Cinema | Fall 2023 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Professor: Dr. George Carstocea ○ Lead two 50-minute discussion sections ○ Grading and administration for 50 students | |
| CTCS 191 Introduction to Television, Lead | Spring 2024 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Professor: Dr. Anikó Imre ○ Lead one 50-minute discussion section ○ Administration for 75 students | |
| CTCS 564: Global Television | Summer 2024 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Professor: Dr. Anikó Imre ○ Lead one 50-minute discussion section ○ Administration for 75 students | |
| CTCS 467 Television Symposium, Lead | Fall 2024 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Professor: Mary McNamara ○ Development of syllabus ○ Administration for 50 students | |
| CTCS 503: Hollywood and Empire | Spring 2025 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Professor: Dr. Thomas Pringle ○ Grading and administrative assistance (25%) | |
| CTCS 505: Survey of Interactive Media | Spring 2025 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Professor: Dr. TreaAndrea Russworm ○ Grading and administrative assistance (25%) | |

Cologne Game Lab (Technische Hochschule Köln) Jan 2021–present

Graduate Program Manager

- Graded undergraduate papers and exams
- Was the lead organizer and administrator of the graduate program, advising M.A. students on their general studies and theses as well as scheduling and arranging lecturer contracts

Close Reading

- Taught regular undergraduate close reading sessions on seminal articles relating to narrative media studies more broadly and digital media more specifically, including:
 - G.W. Hegel *Lectures on Aesthetics*
 - Aristotle *Poetics*
 - Sigmund Freud *The Uncanny* and *Creative Writers and Daydreaming*
 - Walter Benjamin *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*
 - Vannevar Bush *As We May Think*
 - J.C.R. Linklider *Man-Computer Symbiosis*
 - Alan Turing *Computing Machinery and Intelligence*
 - Sherry Turkle *Video Games and Computer Holding Power*.

Academic Writing

- Taught regular academic writing workshops for first, third, and sixth-semester undergraduate students

MA Students Advised

- Nitish Misra, “How does video game level pacing affect player experience”: 04/25/2022.
- Thai Binh Minh Do, “Learning Through Gaming: The Efficacy of Visuals and Storytelling and the Game Concept Creation for a Journey through Vietnamese Mythology”: 09/05/2021
- Ke Zhang, “Analytics- and Data-driven Development of Mobile Games: A Critical Reflection”: 05/28/2021

BA Students Advised

- Menzel Ruben, “Design of a Strategy Game Faction for the Modding Project Sins of the Prophets & an Analysis of How a Visual Identity can be Adapted into a Foreign Genre”: 07/14/2021

Cologne Game Lab (Technische Hochschule Köln)

March to Dec 2019

Undergraduate Program Manager, Lecturer

- Graded undergraduate papers and exams
- Provided organizational support to the undergraduate program

Close Reading

- Taught three close reading seminars examining seminal games studies texts
 - Roger Caillois *Man, Play, and Games*
 - Sherry Turkle *Aspects of the Self*
 - Jesper Juul *Half Real: Videogames Between Real Rules and Fictional Worlds*

Camp Reel Stories

June to July 2017

Volunteer

- Acted as mentor to a team of high-school girls in creating a short-form documentary, *The Price of Pink*, about gendered medical and household products
- Taught the basics of production pipelines, from developing their ideas to editing

California State University, Long Beach

Aug 2014 to Dec 2015

Teaching Assistant, Film and Electronic Arts

FEA 299 Media Aesthetics

- Professor: Tom Blomquist
- Organizational support and paper grading

FEA 331 Production Design Practicum

- Professor: John Muto
- Organizational support and exam grading

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Achtung Autobahn Studios

Co-founder

May 2020–present

- Art director on first project *Maniacs*, an action-adventure game about the 1968 student protest movement in West Berlin
- Established the art style and crafted the game’s story and conducted historical research
- *Maniacs* was twice awarded funding from the *Film- und Medienstiftung NRW* for concept (€20,000) and prototype (€80,000)

Sneaky Little Sister

Oct 2017 to Dec 2020

Motion Graphics Artist

- Created motion graphics content and animations for documentaries and social media campaigns
- Guided by Emmy-winning documentarian Kia Simon
- Content revolved around socially pressing issues, from gun policies to rights for the incarcerated
- Clients included the ACLU, the Brady Campaign, and PBS
- Worked on documentary features *The Worlds of Ursula K. Le Guin*, *The Unforgettable Augustus Post*, *Before You Were Born*, among others

Revelations Entertainment

Aug to Dec 2015

Office Assistant

- Assisted producers of various Morgan Freeman-backed projects
- Conducted research for the National Geographic documentary *The Story of God*

PUBLICATIONS

Brandis, Rüdiger / Petrus, Alexandra. “Geschichte als Prozess: Digitale Spiele und die Deskonstruktion von historischem Wissen,” in *Geschichte als Kritik*, ed. Philipp McLean and Jörg van Norden (Bielefeld: Universität Bielefeld, 2023). [under review]

Petrus, Alexandra. “I Started a Garden and Ended Up with a Global Industry: The Neoliberal Ethos of Cozy Games.” *Spectator* 44.1 (2023).

EVENTS AND CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

The Narrative Environments of Los Angeles*University of Southern California*

“Progress in Decay: Revolutionary Prospective in Oceanwide’s Apocalyptic Facade,” April 19, 2024.

Culture and Conflict: Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Conference*University of Washington*

“To Build a Homestead: New Cruel Optimisms for the Crisis-Fatigued Middle Class Millennial?” Panel: Mediating Media in Cultural Spheres, March 29–30, 2024.

Society of Cinema and Media Studies

“Cozy Games as Artifact of Precarious Labor and Unwellness.” Panel chair: New Topics in Video Game Studies. March 14–17, 2024.

Motherhood to Motherhoods: Ideologies of ‘The Feminine’

Chapman University

“A (False) Biography of an Unknown Mother,” April 29, 2023.

On Digital Pasts and Futures

California State University, Long Beach

“Critical Engagement with Violent Histories in Digital Games,” Panel: Quandaries of Participation: Literary Exploration and Criticism in Digital Games, April 20, 2023.

A Republican Tragedy: The Imperiled Rule of the People in German Art and Thought

California State University, Long Beach

Moderator: Regina Range (University of Alabama) “On Signe Astrup’s *Die Vergessene Arme*,” November 18–19, 2020.

Global Game Jam 2019

Participant; created game prototype “Zuflucht,” about a mother rabbit trying to feed her babies during a blizzard based on the theme “home,” January 25–27, 2019.

Global Game Jam 2018

Participant; created game prototype “Lost in Transmission,” about the spread of fake news based on the theme “transmission,” January 26–28, 2018.

Games and Literature: A Short History

California State University, Long Beach

Moderator: lecture by Gundolf S. Freyermuth, September 5, 2017.

“Almost Everything, Very Fast” Reading

California State University, Long Beach

Moderator: literature reading by Christopher Kloeble, April 6, 2017.

CSULB Comparative Literature Conference

California State University, Long Beach

Moderator: Dr. Robert Blankenship (CSULB), Carrie Collenberg Gonzalez (Portland State University), and Jill E. Twark (East Carolina University) “Shifting Identities in Contemporary German Cinema,” April 12, 2017.

“Flake” and “Fassbinder” Screenings

California State University, Long Beach

Coordinator, moderator: screening with director Annekatriin Hendel, November 15, 2016.

Drive-by Theatre: Double Feature Brecht+60/Kleist+205

California State University, Long Beach

Coordinator, moderator: Dr. Rick McCormick (University of Minnesota) “On *Hangmen also Die!*” September 29, 2016.**“Mein Leben als Apfelbaum” Screening**

University of New Mexico

Moderator: screening with director Harald Friedl, July 17, 2015.

CREATIVE WORK

- San Balthazar* 2023
- Transmedia worldbuilding project as part of Alex McDowell’s World Building Institute
 - Development of a factionary society 300 years after a total collapse of modern infrastructure involved experimentation with AI image generation toward the development of an immersive visual- and soundscape in tandem with a boardgame
- A False Biography of an Unknown Mother* 2023
- Text-based interactive story that complicates binaries of mother/daughter relationships through dialoguing stories of postpartum depression and end-of-life care
- Maniacs* 2020–present
- Art director, narrative writer
 - Action-adventure game about the 1968 student protest movement of West Berlin
 - Twice won funding from the *Film- und Medienstiftung NRW* for the development of a concept and prototype amounting to €100,000
 - First endeavor of the co-founded games studio Achtung Autobahn Studios
- On and On: We Ran Away* 2019
- Artist, narrative designer
 - Adventure game about a pregnant woman returning home to post-war Kosovo from Italy
- Apollo 18* 2018
- Animator, narrative designer
 - Click-and-point adventure game commissioned by the Wallraf Richartz Museum in Cologne about lost characters in paintings trying to find their way back to their rightful place
- Lost in Transmission* 2018
- Adventure game about the transmission of false information
 - Created within 48 hours at the Global Game Jam

- Dark Circus* 2018
- A platformer exploring the worlds of Paul Klee’s paintings
- Mourning Dove* 2017
- Wrote and directed this senior film highlighting the emotional impact of the civil war in Syria on its child victims in an effort to energize against western apathy toward tragedies occurring in the Middle East
 - Script won first-place selection for funding by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association
 - Indiegogo campaign was featured on *Women & Hollywood*
 - Selected, nominated, and won many festival awards
- Olivia’s* 2016
- Co-directed this experimental animation about Hamburg’s infamous red-light district
- Sogni Intorno alla Città Ideale* 2016
- Co-directed this experimental documentary about the internal monologues of early-morning train passengers—those going to work and returning from parties—in Hamburg, Germany
- Friederike* 2016
- Wrote and directed this short film at a 24-hour filmmaking workshop at the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences
- Rosemary with Ginger* 2015
- Directed this dramatic One-Act written by Edward Allen Baker about the strife of two young mothers with strong ideological differences, performed live for a directing class at CSULB

LANGUAGES

English: Native Language

German: C1

French: B2

REFERENCES

Dr. Prof. Anikó Imre

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 Media Arts + Practice Division
 900 W 34th St, Los Angeles, CA 90007
 imre@usc.edu

Dr. Prof. Robert Blankenship

Department of Romance, German, Russian Languages and Literature
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Dr. Prof. Jeffrey L. High

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Dr. Prof. Gundolf S. Freyermuth

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Dr. Prof. André Czauderna

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