

ALEXANDRA PETRUS

Phone: (510) 517-9540

Alexandra.s.petrus@gmail.com

<http://www.alexandrapetrus.com>**EDUCATION**

- PhD University of Southern California** from 2022
 Cinema and Media Studies
 Digital Media Certificate
 Committee: Dr. Anikó Imre (Chair), Dr. Nitin Govil,
 Dr. Thomas Pringle, Dr. Vicki Callahan, Dr. Kiki Benzon
- MA Technische Hochschule Köln, Cologne Game Lab** 2021
 Game Development and Research
 Committee: Dr. Gundolf S. Freyermuth,
 Dr. Jeffrey L. High
- BA California State University, Long Beach** 2017
 Film and Electronic Arts (Directing), German
 President's Honor List, Distinguished Baccalaureate

GRANTS & FUNDING

- Graduate Fellowship Research and Creative Project Symposium Grant** 2024
University of Southern California
 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.
- AI for Media and Storytelling Project Grant** 2024
USC Center for Generative AI and Society
 Grant awarded for the short-term research project, "The Shallow and Deep" about extractive practices of AI image generation in collaboration with Dr. Priya Jaikumar
- Annenberg Graduate Fellowship** 2022
University of Southern California
 Guaranteed 5 year fellowship covering all tuition and health costs, plus living expenses toward the completion of my doctorate.
- Prototype Funding** 2020
Film- und Medienstiftung NRW
(Film and Media Fund North Rhein Westphalia)
 Game *Berlin Maniacs* awarded €80,000 to develop a prototype over six months

Concept Funding <i>Film- und Medienstiftung NRW</i> Game <i>Berlin Maniacs</i> awarded €20,000 to develop a game concept over four months	2020
Senior Film Funding Selection <i>Hollywood Foreign Press Association</i> Short film script <i>Mourning Dove</i> won first-place selection for funding	2016
Richard and Johanna Baker Endowed Scholarship <i>California State University, Long Beach College of the Arts</i> Highest College of the Arts scholarship awarded only to one student per year	2016

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?" March 29–30, 2024.

Society of Cinema and Media Studies

Boston, Massachusetts

"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 Armee*,” November 18–19, 2020.

Women’s Cinematography Intensive

American Film Institute

Participant in the first highly selective Women’s Cinematography Intensive workshop at the American Film Institute, organized by Stephen Lighthill ASC. July, 2018.

Games and Literature: A Short History

California State University, Long Beach

Moderator: Gundolf S. Freyeremuth (Technische Hochschule Köln), “Games and Literature: A Short History,” September 5, 2017.

“Almost Everything, Very Fast” Reading

California State University, Long Beach

Moderator: Book 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 and Q&A with director Annkatrin Hendel, November 15, 2016.

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

California State University, Long Beach

Moderator: Dr. Richard McCormick (University of Minnesota) “On *Hangmen also Die!*” September 29, 2016.

“Mein Leben als Apfelbaum” Screening

Taos German Summer School

Moderator: Screening and Q&A with director Harald Friedl, July 17, 2015.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

California State University, Long Beach

Lecturer, German Cinema (CINE 457/GERM 480)

Jan 2024–present

- 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

- CTCS 190 Introduction to Cinema Fall 2023
- Professor: Dr. George Carstocea
 - Lead two 50-minute discussion sections
 - Grading and administration for 50 students
- CTCS 191 Introduction to Television, Lead Spring 2024
- Professor: Dr. Anikó Imre
 - Lead one 50-minute discussion section
 - Administration for 75 students
- CTCS 564: Global Television Summer 2024
- Professor: Dr. Anikó Imre
 - Lead one 50-minute discussion section
 - Administration for 75 students
- CTCS 467 Television Symposium, Lead Fall 2024
- Professor: Mary McNamara
 - Development of syllabus
 - Administration for 50 students
- CTCS 503: Hollywood and Empire Spring 2025
- Professor: Dr. Thomas Pringle
 - Grading and administrative assistance (25%)
- CTCS 505: Survey of Interactive Media Spring 2025
- 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

AWARDS

<p>Ubisoft Newcomer Award <i>Deutscher Entwicklerpreis (German Developer Award)</i> Game <i>Berlin Maniacs</i> was nominated, winner to be announced December 9th</p>	2021
<p>Best Student Film <i>Hollywood International Moving Pictures Film Festival</i> For short film <i>Mourning Dove</i></p>	2017
<p>President's Honor List <i>California State University, Long Beach</i> Highest GPA-based honor awarded all eight semesters of my undergraduate career</p>	2013–2017
<p>Distinguished Baccalaureate Award <i>California State University, Long Beach College of Liberal Arts</i> Granted by both Film and Electronic Arts and Department of Romance, German and Russian for this award limited to one undergraduate student</p>	2017
<p>Outstanding Achievement Certificate <i>The German Summer School of New Mexico</i> Certificate awarded to the top 10% of students at this intensive immersion language program</p>	2015
<p>French Program Award <i>California State University, Long Beach</i> French language award presented to one student per class</p>	2015
<p>German Program Award <i>California State University, Long Beach</i> German language award presented to one student per class</p>	2015

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Achtung Autobahn Studios	
Co-founder	May 2020–present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Art director on first project <i>Berlin Maniacs</i>, 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 ○ <i>Berlin Maniacs</i> was twice awarded funding from the <i>Film- und Medienstiftung NRW</i> 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*

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

Berlin 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
- Script won first-place selection for funding by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association
- Indiegogo campaign was featured on *Women & Hollywood*

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

SKILLS

Languages: English (Native Language), Fluent in German and French

Programs (Advanced): Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, Illustrator, Premiere, After Effects, Lightroom, InDesign), Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Powerpoint), Avid, ToonBoom Animation, Avid, Twine

Programs (Intermediate): Unity and Unreal Game Engines, C#, C++, JavaScript

REFERENCES

Dr. Prof. Anikó Imre

Division of Cinema & Media Studies

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

Dr. Prof. Nitin Govil

Division of Cinema & Media Studies
Media Arts + Practice Division
900 W 34th St, Los Angeles, CA 90007
ngovil@usc.edu

Dr. Prof. Vicki Callahan

Division of Cinema & Media Studies
Media Arts + Practice Division
900 W 34th St, Los Angeles, CA 90007
vcallahan@cinema.usc.edu

Dr. Prof. Jeffrey L. High

Department of Romance, German, Russian Languages and Literature
California State University Long Beach
1250 Bellflower Blvd, Long Beach CA 90840
Jeffrey.high@csulb.edu

Dr. Prof. André Czauderna

Cologne Game Lab
Faculty of Cultural Sciences
Technische Hochschule Köln
Schanzenstraße 28, 51063, Cologne Germany
ac@colognegamelab.de