Dear FIG Student,

Willkommen an the University of Oregon!

I am Shireen Farahani, and I’m going to be your Freshman Interest Group Assistant (FA) for “Breaking the Wall”! In this FIG, you will be introduced to the dynamic fields of German culture and psychology.

I am a senior from Lake Oswego, Oregon, and I am studying linguistics at the University of Oregon. I love hiking, cooking, and literature, and I spend hours on end looking up things about language. On campus you’ll usually find me at a talk or department colloquium of sorts.

Your College Connections instructor and professor of your German class is Professor Susan Anderson. As someone who has travelled to Germany numerous times, she is eager to teach you about how Germans think about themselves and their society. She is also looking forward to connecting some of the ideas from her class to issues you will discuss in your psychology class, such as how memory works or what makes people do things they would not do under normal circumstances.

“Breaking the Wall,” like all FIGs, incorporates two classes, as well as a once-weekly College Connections class. Professor Sara Hodges is teaching Psychology 202: Mind and Society, and Susan Anderson will be teaching German 221: Postwar Germany: A Nation Divided. Every week, we’ll be meeting for our College Connections class.

In College Connections, we’ll be working to explore the interface between the two subjects. Using examples from German literature and film, we’ll delve into the reconstruction after WWII, the creation of two different and competing Germanys, and the effects of unification. When we think of the culture of the fifties, sixties and seventies, we tend to think of movements in the United States and the UK—Elvis, the Beatles and the Korean and Vietnam wars. In this FIG, we will look at this time period through an entirely different lens, and we are excited to work with you this fall and to explore how psychology and culture work in tandem with one another. To get you started thinking about these connections; we have included links to three short articles at the end of this letter. Please read/listen to them by our first College Connections class.

Breaking the Wall is a residential FIG, so everyone in the FIG will be living in the same residence hall, where you will have a chance to establish connections with other students who have similar interests as you. I will also be living with you all.

Events to keep in mind the week you arrive in Eugene: We’ll have our first meeting for Breaking the Wall on Friday, September 21st at 10:00 AM in Columbia 150. Make sure you arrive on time, because we aren’t staying at that location. On Sunday, September 23rd, we’ll be going to University Convocation as a group, where the President of the University of Oregon, Michael Gottfredson, will be speaking. Be sure to keep both events on your calendar, and to bring your Student Handbook to class, as you’ll need it throughout the year.
Meanwhile, if you need to reach me, you can email me at shireenf@uoregon.edu. Please send me your email address so we can reach you for more news about this coming fall, and feel free to email me with any questions you might have regarding me, Professor Anderson, Breaking the Wall or the University of Oregon in general.

We hope you are enjoying your summer, and we are looking forward to getting to know you this fall!

Cheers,

Shireen Farahani  shireenf@uoregon.edu
Susan Anderson  susana@uoregon.edu

**Assigned Summer Reading:**

*NYT article 7 June 1959. "What German Youth Knows about Hitler":*

[http://tiny.cc/germanyouth](http://tiny.cc/germanyouth)

*NYT article 1 May 1995. "Confronting the Past, Germans Now Don't Flinch":*

[http://tiny.cc/conpast](http://tiny.cc/conpast)

*NPR article. "Fake TV Game Show 'Tortures' Man, Shocks France":*

[http://tiny.cc/fakety](http://tiny.cc/fakety)

Also, you can listen to the feature that was on NPR via this link:

[http://tiny.cc/faketylisten](http://tiny.cc/faketylisten)