

Würzburg, 29 September 2026

Dear students of English and American Studies at JMU Würzburg,

“A word after a word after a word is power,” Margaret Atwood writes in her poetry collection *True Stories* (1981). Over the summer, I enjoyed reading Atwood’s recent memoir *Book of Lives* (2025), which once again reminds us of the importance of thinking, writing and reading about the power of words – including both their aesthetic and creative value, but also the manipulative potential of words. In a world with rising populist parties and generative AI, it is all the more important to commit together to the process of learning, discussing, and critically **engaging with language and words**. Fortunately we all have the chance to do so every day in English and American Studies.

With this in mind, I would like to **warmly welcome you** to the new semester on behalf of all our colleagues – including all first-semester students. We are looking forward to getting to know you in our classes, lectures, seminars, and other activities!

In this letter, I’d like to share some **important information** regarding your studies:

- To those who study towards a teaching degree, PLEASE MAKE SURE you select the required courses for **“Historisch-thematisch”** and **“Theoretisch”** seminars. It is essential that you have completed the required classes BEFORE registering for the state exam. Otherwise, the Prüfungsamt will be unable to confirm that you have completed the necessary courses.
- **Regular attendance** is part of an active learning process. Please attend all classes and, if you are unable to attend, let your lecturers or professors know.
- Use your **university email address** for all university-related communication.
- Remember to **register for exams** if you want to receive credit points.
- Write your term papers, presentations, and all other assignments yourselves! **Plagiarism** and **AI-generated papers** result in ‘deskilling’ and will not prepare you well for your final exams.
- Our **Erasmus programme** offers excellent opportunities to go abroad every year, e.g., to Cambridge, Liverpool or Warwick. Check out: <https://www.neuphil.uni-wuerzburg.de/anglistik/study-programmes/auslandsaufenthalt/>
- For mobility programs with **partner universities in the United States**, check out <https://www.uni-wuerzburg.de/international/studieren-im-ausland/mit-dem-international-office-ins-ausland/weltweite-austauschprogramme/> or contact our American Studies faculty.
- If you would like to get **advice on academic writing**, the **‘Schreibzentrum’** offers courses as well as individual consultations for both English and German writing projects: <https://www.uni-wuerzburg.de/schreibzentrum/>

I wish you – and all of us – a **successful and inspiring start** into the new semester!

Kind regards,



Prof. Dr. Kirsten Sandrock
(Chair of the English Department)