



HILLSDALE COLLEGE

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Hillsdale College Student Wins Award for Undergraduate German Research

Three Hillsdale students presented papers at a virtual undergraduate research conference.

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Three Hillsdale College students presented papers at the 14th Undergraduate Research Conference in German Studies, and one won an award. The conference was hosted by Lafayette University and Moravian University over Zoom on April 5.

“This is a wonderful way for our German students to experience a research conference and hear from students at other institutions without the cost of travel,” said Jeffrey Hertel, assistant professor of German. “All three of our students delivered excellent papers and did a fine job representing Hillsdale College.”

Rachel Franke '27 delivered a paper titled “The Unity of Innovation and Beauty in Human Reason: Friedrich Georg Jünger, Walter Benjamin, and the Role of Technology in ‘Bildung’ vs. ‘Ausbildung.’” Franke won the Max Kade Prize for the best presentation out of the 24 given at the conference.

“Rachel is the first Hillsdale student to win this award in the three years we have sent participants to this conference,” Hertel said. “She did an excellent job, and it was exciting to see her work recognized.”

Franke said this was her first time presenting a paper at a research conference, so she chose to write about something she is passionate about: education.

“I examined Friedrich Georg Jünger and Walter Benjamin’s 20th-century critiques of technology, arguing that these critiques demonstrate the need to balance ‘Ausbildung,’ or technical training, with ‘Bildung,’ the German idea of a well-rounded education that builds the

whole of a person, including their character and capacity to reason,” Franke said. “I had so much fun writing this paper that winning the best presentation award was just icing on the cake!”

Two other Hillsdale students also delivered papers at the conference. Alexandra Comus '26 delivered a paper titled “Eros and the Garden: Sublimity and Cultivation in ‘Die Wahlverwandtschaften,’” and Zachary Chen '27 delivered a paper titled “Physik und Poesie: Bedenken über menschliche Natur in Novalis und Dürrenmatts ‘Die Physiker.’”

For more information about the conference, click [here](#). For headshots of the students, click [here](#). For more information about the German Department at Hillsdale College, click [here](#). For photos from one of Hertel’s German classes at Hillsdale College, click [here](#). For a high-resolution copy of the Hillsdale College clocktower logo, click [here](#).

About Hillsdale College

Hillsdale College is an independent, nonsectarian, Christian liberal arts college located in southern Michigan. Founded in 1844, the College has built a national reputation through its classical liberal arts core curriculum and its principled refusal to accept federal or state taxpayer subsidies, even indirectly in the form of student grants or loans. It also conducts an outreach effort promoting civil and religious liberty, including a free monthly speech digest, Imprimis, with a circulation of more than 6.8 million. For more information, visit hillsdale.edu.

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