Dr. Ilinca Iurascu
“Wirklich gelesen: Re-reading Nineteenth-Century Course Catalogues”

“The course catalogue (index lectionum/Lektionskatalog/Vorlesungsverzeichnis), a textual category that gained increasing visibility on the German academic landscape after 1700, has been productively discussed in terms of the systematic restructuring of the modern university, and the introduction of the “rationalized order of academic labor” (Clark 2006) with its strategies of policing, publicity and (self)promotion. Yet in the German-speaking context course catalogues were at the same time also surfacing in and intersecting with a range of other non- and para-academic tactics and discourses. Focusing on several early-nineteenth century texts that directly engage with university catalogues (journalistic reviews, critical pamphlets and travel guides) I will explore some of the shifting meanings of the Vorlesungsverzeichnis around 1800, from contested regulatory practice and index of academic cultural capital to ‘leaky’ paperwork channel and medium for critical publicity.

Dr. Ervin Malakaj
“Wilhelm Dilthey’s Rhetoric of Concern”

Wilhelm Dilthey’s influential essay “Archive für Literatur” (1889) has been an integral text for scholarship on late-19th-century German literary culture. Most recently, scholars working at the intersection of book history and literary analysis have used the essay’s main thrust—a call for the establishment of public institutions in charge of cultivating, protecting, and preserving a German literary heritage—as a premise to theorize and historicize how authors came to think about their estate and the role of paraliterary institutions in shaping this discourse. Next to such “productive” effects, Dilthey’s essay also indexes the negative. In particular, as this presentation will argue and illustrate, it provides a rhetoric of concern frequently glossed over in discussions about his work. Brittle manuscripts, diffuse literary estates in both private and public hands, and untrained professionals feature prominently in his account. Drawing on approaches to book history and emotion studies, I will expound the rhetorical deployment of descriptions about a fragile literary enterprise at the core of the text. My goal is to outline what Dilthey sees as a culture of precarity inscribed in the fabric of the literary economy of his time. In this reading, his essay emerges less as a forceful call for reform—as current scholarship has read it—than a dire plea for change.