

May Mergenthaler (Ph.D. Princeton University, 2007) is Associate Professor in the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures at Ohio State University. Her research and teaching currently focuses on literature, culture, and thought of Romanticism and the Goethezeit; poetry from the late 18th century to the present; the public sphere as concept and practice; Ecocriticism; and Environmental Humanities. Currently, May Mergenthaler is working a monograph that investigates representations of sunlight in German poetry of the late 18th and early 19th centuries (Goethe, Hölderlin, Novalis, Günderrode), combining literary analysis with historical and philosophical contextualization.

She has published *Zwischen Eros und Mitteilung: Die Frühromantik im Symposium der "Athenaeums-Fragmente"* (Paderborn et al.: Schöningh, 2012), which explores the project of Early Romanticism as a collaborative writing endeavor between members of Jena Romantic circle, modeled on and critically adapting Plato's *Symposium*, as well as articles and reviews in her research areas. Together with Bernd Fischer, she has edited a volume on *Cultural Transformations of the Public Sphere* (Oxford et al.: Lang, 2015) that explores tensions between the perceived need for a public, universally accessible sphere of rational discourse as a means of creating consensus in society and controlling state governments (as conceived by Jürgen Habermas), on the one hand, and individual identities, cultures, or belief systems, on the other. She has a forthcoming article on the Goethe's and Schiller's exclusive concept of the literary public; an article on the figure of sunlight in Goethe's poem "Maifest" is under review. She is currently working on solicited articles on the figures of sunlight in Barthold Heinrich Brockes' and Hölderlin's poetry.