In the Department of German and Russian

Chair, Associate Professor Arne Koch (German)
Associate Professor Arne Koch; Assistant Professors Alicia Ellis and Cyrus Shahan; Language Assistant Charlotte Klemp

The German program emphasizes the acquisition of superior skills in the German language as the basis for the study of the literatures and cultures of the German-speaking world. Unless otherwise noted, all courses are taught in German as students continue to hone their skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Upper-level courses provide training in close reading and analysis of literary and cultural texts in order to further students’ understanding of a culture different from their own. Students at all levels explore literature and film alongside culture and politics as well as history and contemporary affairs.

Majors in German studies are encouraged to study their entire junior year in a German-speaking country; majors and minors are expected to spend at least one semester abroad. Study-abroad options include approved programs in Berlin, Munich, Freiburg, Regensburg, Tübingen, Salzburg, and Vienna. The German faculty welcomes inquiries from students regarding the different programs and the one-semester and full-year options.

The major in German studies and the German minor provide excellent preparation for students who wish to pursue German-related grant opportunities, employment in international companies and organizations, or careers in government or academics.

Requirements for the Major in German Studies

The major in German studies requires 10 semester courses: six courses taught in German numbered above 127 including a 200-, a 300-, and a 400-level course and four additional courses chosen from the German curriculum, taken abroad, or chosen from courses with a substantial German component in departments such as Art, Government, History, Music, and Philosophy. Once declared, all majors must take at least one course in the German program each semester they are on campus until graduation.

Requirements for the German Minor

The minor in German requires five courses in the German program numbered above 126 including a 200- and a 300-level course. Students who enter the program at the intermediate or advanced level should consult with their advisor in German regarding course selection.

The following statements also apply:

- The point scale for retention of the major and the minor is based on all required and approved courses numbered above German 127 for the major and German 126 for the minor.
- No major requirement may be taken satisfactory/unsatisfactory.
- Transfer of credits for courses from other institutions, including study abroad, will be evaluated by the advisor in German on an individual basis.
- Teacher certification: Students desiring certification for teaching German should consult the faculty in German and in the Education Program.

Courses Approved for the Major in German Studies

Anthropology

- 252 Language in Culture and Society

Art

- 278 European Art, 1789-1900
- 331 Art of the Renaissance in Northern Europe

Cinema Studies

- 142 Introduction to Cinema Studies

Education

- 376 Teaching Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

English

- 200 Foundations of Literary Studies
- 271 Critical Theory

Global Studies
Course Offerings

[GM120]  Gaga and Kafka: Writing the Self (in English)  Why does Lady Gaga have a tattoo of a letter written by German modernist author Rainer Maria Rilke? Why is a letter that Franz Kafka wrote to his father published as a piece of literature? Through stories, pamphlets, music, and philosophical texts we investigate voices, forms, and content as the means through which authors make public their political, religious, or gendered identity. We uncover the continuities between writing the self today—via 140-character tweets or the choicest picture on Facebook—and the writings that have made literary stars or political martyrs of authors past. Conducted in English.  Four credit hours.  L, W1.

GM125f  Elementary German I  Introductory course for students with little or no previous knowledge of German. Development of all four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Communicative and interactive acquisition of grammar and vocabulary via study of contemporary life in the German-speaking countries. Audiovisual materials and integrated multimedia accompany textbook instruction.  Four credit hours.  A. KOCH

GM126s  Elementary German II  Continuation of Elementary German I to further develop the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Communicative and interactive acquisition of grammar and vocabulary via study of contemporary life in the German-speaking countries. Audiovisual materials accompany textbook instruction and integrated multimedia.  Prerequisite:  German 125 or appropriate score on the German placement exam.  Four credit hours.  A. KOCH

GM127f  Intermediate German I: Structures in Cultural Contexts  Grammar review at the intermediate level with continued practice of speaking and listening skills, readings and interactive communication based on topics from German culture and literature, emphasis on practical uses of the language. First introduction to extended readings and writings in German via cultural contexts.  Prerequisite:  German 126 or appropriate score on the German placement exam.  Four credit hours.  A. KOCH

GM128s  Intermediate German II: Readings in Cultural Contexts  Continuation of Intermediate German I. Practice and review of written and oral communication skills emphasizing formation of correct, idiomatic structures. Strives to build reading skills and to introduce a variety of cultural ideas and contexts through selection of literary and cultural readings/viewings in German. Preparation for transition to in-depth study in a variety of areas of German studies.  Prerequisite:  German 127 or appropriate score on the German placement exam.  Four credit hours.  ELLIS

GM129f  Conversation Group  Review and practice for students at the intermediate level. A selection of written, visual, and audio German language and culture sources will provide the basis for discussion and conversation. Conducted in German. Does not count toward the language requirement or the German major and minor. May be repeated for credit. Nongraded.  Prerequisite:  German 126.  One
GM130s Conversation Group Review and practice for students at the intermediate level. A selection of written, visual, and audio German language and culture sources will provide the basis for discussion and conversation. Conducted in German. Does not count toward the language requirement or the German major and minor. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: German 127 or, with permission, concurrent enrollment in German 126. Nongraded. One credit hour.

GM135f Seeing Berlin (in English) What do the radical transformations and upheavals tell us about the lived experience of Berlin? An engagement with the visual representation of Berlin through the 20th and 21st centuries, using film and texts from German intellectual history to uncover its aesthetic, social, and political transformation. Traces the ways in which Berlin is made and unmade into its current imaginary Disney theme park: Berlin. In this discussion-based course, students will develop skills in critical film viewing and analysis, historical analysis, and critical writing. Conducted in English. Four credit hours.

GM151j Dungeons and Dragons: The Middle Ages in German Literature (in English) A selection of readings from the Middle Ages to the present. Particular focus on representations of medieval popular topics such as knightly adventures, magic, and voyaging, as well as changing cultural notions of class, gender, and love. Poetry and prose readings, alongside selections of popular operatic and filmic adaptations. Conducted in English. Three credit hours.

[GM231] Introduction to German Studies This first course beyond the language sequence continues the emphasis on composition and conversation, as well as on oral presentations of research. Introduction to German studies through examination of social and historical developments from the age of Luther to Germany's unification in 1990 as reflected in literature, art, politics, and philosophy. Emphasis on analysis of aesthetic and intellectual accomplishments representative of major periods in German, Austrian, and Swiss history. May be repeated once for additional credit. Prerequisite: German 128. Four credit hours.

[GM234] German Culture through Film An introduction and exploration of German culture through analysis of German-language cinema from its inception in the 1890s through the post-unified cinema of the present. Focus of popular and avant-garde films and notions of mass culture, education, propaganda, entertainment, and identity formation. Conducted in German. Prerequisite: German 128. Four credit hours.

[GM237] The German Fairy Tale in Popular Culture (in English) Fairy tales permeate our culture on every level. Examines the role of the fairy tale (folktales, romantic variations, and Disney versions alike) in the construction of culture along with their adaptations in the media, comics, literature, art, and film. In analyzing the historical and social development of fairy tales as a genre, students are introduced to methods of literary analysis and cultural criticism. This humanities lab requires students to work with fourth grade students at Mount Merici Academy. Counts toward the German major or minor. Open to first-year students. Conducted in English. Four credit hours.

[GM242] CELLuloid Fantasies While "film" is becoming more of a misnomer when one speaks of cinema, CELLuloid Fantasies considers, through the past and present of film's smallest component—the film cell—the critique and hope cinema has offered and asks if, in light of technological transformations, it still holds that critical purchase. Introduces students to major directors and periods of German cinema while parsing the aesthetic and political consequences of the medium and the message. CELLuloid Fantasies frames, through one of Germany's most prominent and celebrated philosophers and filmmakers—Alexander Kluge—film's many interventions into Germany's history. Prerequisite: German 128. Four credit hours.

[GM252] Mission Impossible: Multicultural German Literature and Film (in English) Introduction to German-speaking literature and film by writers and filmmakers of African (Ayim, Oguntoyé), Japanese (Tawada), Jewish (Celan, Honigmann), Romanian (Müller, Wagner), Russian (Kaminer), and Turkish (Özdamar, Zaimoglu, Akin) backgrounds. Emphasis on contemporary literature, with background readings from the Enlightenment through the present. Examination of creative approaches to issues of migration, exile, and globalization, with focus on language politics, identity formation, gender, history and memory, and the multicultural city. Counts toward the German major or minor. Open to first-year students. Conducted in English. Four credit hours.

GM297Af Readings in 19th-Century Drama A survey of canonical texts from 19th-century German literature and an introduction to literary history and critical reading strategies. Students learn to think about how traditions and cultures change and develop through literary practice. They are introduced to a range of historical and dramatic texts to learn about major artists and their contribution to dramatic forms and to develop the skills necessary for critical thinking, writing, and speaking. Defying easy categorization, the dramas serve as a springboard to understanding the distinctions between literary movements, including Weimar Classicism, Romanticism, Realism, and Naturalism. Prerequisite: German 128 or equivalent. Four credit hours.

GM297Bf Modern Short Prose (in English) A survey of modern readings (in English) by authors including Hoffmann, Kafka, Seghers, and Mann. Short stories are difficult, consuming, and complex. Designed to facilitate close and attentive readings, emphasizing textual...
interpretation and concise writing. Concerns will be how to read and then write about short stories, and how to discuss multiple viewpoints as we examine themes, narratives, and style. Students are asked to think about story elements, including plot, setting, and character, and the way that grammatical features and figurative language shape the analysis of the text. Conducted in English. Four credit hours. L. ELLIS

GM298As Kleist and Kafka (in English) This seminar focuses on the writings of Heinrich von Kleist (1777-1811) and Franz Kafka (1883-1924) as representatives of a new critical idiom that emerged in German literature at the turn of each of their centuries. Close attention is paid to the style of the authors' prose including generic conventions, figurative language, delineation of character, and narrative ambiguity. Possible themes for exploration are the function of the juridical; the importance of dreams and memory; representations of the social world, urban space and the "modern" man; the search, often futile and absurd, for truth and knowledge; and the construction of power, epistemic dread, and alienation. Conducted in English. Four credit hours. L. ELLIS

GM298Bs Weird Fictions (in English) This reading- and writing-intensive seminar considers the construction of the genre of science fiction (broadly defined). We will read short prose and novels from the 19th century to the present by authors such as ETA Hoffmann, Patrick Süskind, and Franz Kafka, and we will view films of Fritz Lang, F.W. Murnau, and others. In addition we will read texts that function as hybrid and complementary permutations of science fiction such as magical realism, speculative fiction, and utopian/dystopian fictions. Conducted in English. Four credit hours. L. ELLIS

[GM298C] Lady GaGa and Environmental Violence (in English) Lady GaGa's chimeric qualities and performances unmask the currents of violence that underwrite daily life. In GaGa's music, videos, and televusual moments, violence has become a vast, interconnected environment. In this discussion-based course, we will test the surface of GaGa's pop (e.g., that meat dress) for a critique of the normalization and experience of violence. Moving beyond GaGa, we will look for moments of escape from the manufactured aesthetic environment—by way of shock—to expose the structuring role violence plays in our lived landscapes. Students will develop skills of critical media reading and analysis, German intellectual history, and critical writing. Conducted in English. Four credit hours.

GM329f Current Topics An informal weekly meeting for students at the advanced level for conversation practice. Source materials include newspaper and magazine articles, contemporary German film, television broadcasts, and podcasts, along with other media. Conducted in German. Does not count toward the language requirement or the German major or minor. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: German 128. Nongraded. One credit hour. KLEMP

GM330s Current Topics An informal weekly meeting for students at the advanced level for conversation practice. Source materials include newspaper and magazine articles, contemporary German film, television broadcasts and podcasts, along with other media. Conducted in German. Does not count toward the language requirement or the German major or minor. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: A 200-level German course. Nongraded. One credit hour. KLEMP

GM358f Radio to Rave What does a text sound like? How and why do texts repeatedly turn to songs, volume, tempo, remixing, and sampling? This survey of 20th-century literature examines the echoes of acoustic influence in German-language literature from Walter Benjamin and Bertolt Brecht's writings on radio over sociopolitical inflections of music in/as literature and on to musical-literary moments in Rainald Goetz's Rave. Prerequisite: 200-level German course. Four credit hours. L. SHAHAN

[GM368] Sex, Madness, and Transgression A selection of texts from the Age of Goethe through the present, each prominently featuring the representation of acts of transgression: social, mental, or sexual. One of our guiding questions will therefore be how and for what purpose literature deals with cultural, political, and sexual norms and deviations. Texts include Büchner's Woyzeck, Schnitzler's Reigen, Dürrenmatt's Das Versprechen, Böll's Katharina Blum, and Jelinek's Die Klavierspieler, as well as a number of theoretical sources. Conducted in German. Prerequisite: A 200-level German course. Four credit hours. L.

GM491f, 492s Independent Study Individual projects in areas where the student has demonstrated the interest and competence necessary for independent work. Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor. Two to four credit hours. FACULTY

GM493s Seminar: Ideologies and Identities Critically assesses ways German art and culture engage with ideologies and questions of personal, cultural, and political concepts of identity. Among key ideas, the persistent "German question," along with notions of Heimat, regional and transnational belonging, gender, language politics, class, race, Discussions based on representative readings (poetry, prose, and drama), forms of artistic expression (music, visual art, and film), theory and secondary literature from the Enlightenment through the present-day Berlin Republic. Students write weekly response papers and short critical essays, participate in a writing workshop, complete a final research paper in German, and present research findings in a public symposium. Prerequisite: A 300-level German course and senior standing. Four credit hours. L. SHAHAN