

Modern Languages and Literatures
University of Western Ontario

German 2215G Exploring German Cultures

Winter 2017
Tuesdays, 9.30–11.30, UCC-58
Thursdays, 9.30-10.30, UCC-58

Professor David Darby
Office hours: Tuesdays, 1.30–3.00, or by appointment

Office: AHB 3R12C
E-mail: ddarby@uwo.ca
Phone: 519-661-2111 ext. 85857

Course Content and Aims

This course guides students through a first exploration of the cultures of the German-speaking area of Europe. It has three interrelated objectives:

- first, to develop and improve participants' skills in German-language conversation, reading, and writing;
- second, to introduce students to a broad variety of literary texts and other artefacts spanning centuries of German cultural history; and
- third, to introduce students to research skills necessary for the study of the cultural products of the German speaking countries.

The course is designed to open perspectives on German writing, the visual arts, and film. There will be weekly readings in German: predominantly short literary texts (or short excerpts of longer ones).

During the course students will have the opportunity to interact with other specialists in the German program at Western through guest lectures/seminars, in which the guest will introduce an aspect of her or his own particular area of academic interest.

Course Structure and Methodology

This course is student-centred. Guided and supported by the instructor, students will develop a portfolio consisting of a variety of short assignments designed to improve writing and interpretative skills. Students will participate in in-class discussions and will complete two research projects, one of which will be presented in class, with the final project submitted in a written or multi-media format.

The course involves regular readings, and it is essential that students complete the prescribed readings before each week's classes, so that they are able to participate fully in class discussions.

The films will not be viewed during class hours, so students are to make time in their own schedules for viewings.

The language of instruction is German, and all readings and assignments will be in German. That said, students are free to ask questions in English and of course to meet during office hours in English.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, students are expected to have acquired:

- an introductory competence in literary analysis, especially in the interpretation of texts in different genres — including poetry, fiction, and drama and essay — of cultural products representative of different media, such as film and the visual arts;
- a basic ability to evaluate the meaning of cultural products and to present clear, persuasive, original arguments about them in classroom discussions and varying written formats;
- the ability to think critically and synthetically, supported by self-evaluation and peer-review; and
- improved German-language skills in reading comprehension, aural comprehension, oral expression, and written expression.

Assessment

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| • Participation | 10% |
| • Discussion | 10% |
| • Portfolio | 40% |
| • 2 Research Projects | 40% |
- **Participation** refers to active and prepared engagement in class, including group work. The class will be conducted in German, but if you have any questions or problems, please ask as soon as possible in either German or English in class or during the office hours. Make sure you read the material assigned for class carefully (10%).
 - **Discussion:** Teams of two students together will serve as discussion leaders during the first ten minutes of one class period. Your task is to prepare, in German, a short statement summarizing the reading assigned for the day and highlighting what you consider an important aspect of the text, a set of at least three substantive follow-up discussion questions. You must prepare a hand-out (in German) that includes highlights of your presentation and any important vocabulary.
 - **Portfolio:** 4 short assignments (4 x 8%) designed to develop and improve writing and analytical skills, each around 250 words, due in class the following Tuesday. Each assignment can be revised (improvement 2%) or designated completed. Each assignment is worth 10% (40%).
 - **Research Projects:** For the first research project, students will propose and choose their own subject. The research will consist of finding and presenting a summary of the information found, around 500-600 words, and a bibliography of at least 3 entries of peer

reviewed secondary sources (articles, books). (14%)

For the second research project, students will choose one or two texts discussed in the course and referencing at least 3 sources, will create an interpretation of the text(s) of around 750-1000 words. The form of the interpretation is in consultation with the instructor open and can range from an essay, a multi-media presentation to a dramatic performance for example. Students will present their work in the final classes (23%).

All assignments must be written in German and will be graded on content, organization, and grammatical and linguistic accuracy.

Course Materials

The readings in the course will follow a broadly chronological sequence and will be organized accordingly in three sections.

- Eighteenth Century. Readings will include:
 - Philippine Gatterer, “Mädchenklage”
 - Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Faust* (extract)
 - Johann Wolfgang Goethe, poems (“Erlkönig,” “Mignon,” “Prometheus,” “Der Zauberlehrling”)
 - Gottfried Ephraim Lessing, “Die Ringparabel” (from *Nathan der Weise*, 3. Aufzug, 7. Auftritt)
 - Friedrich Schiller, *Kabale und Liebe* (extract: II, 2)
 - Friedrich Schiller, “An die Freude”
- Nineteenth Century. Readings will include such texts as:
 - Georg Büchner, *Der Hessische Landbote* (extract)
 - Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, “Krambambuli”
 - Joseph von Eichendorff, poems
 - Theodor Fontane, *Effi Briest* (extracts)
 - Johann Peter Hebel, “Kannitverstan”
 - Heinrich Heine, poems
 - Heinrich von Kleist, anecdotes
 - Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Manifest der kommunistischen Partei (extracts)
- Twentieth Century and Beyond. Readings will include such texts as:
 - Heinrich Böll, stories
 - Bertolt Brecht, *Die Geschichten vom Herrn Keuner* (extracts)
 - Bertolt Brecht, poems
 - Ernst Jandl, poems
 - Siegfried Lenz, *Deutschstunde* (extract)
 - Franz Kafka, “Vor dem Gesetz“
 - Rainer Maria Rilke, poems
 - Yoko Tawada, poems
 - Christa Wolf, *Der geteilte Himmel* (extract)

The following films will be discussed:

- Walther Ruttmann, *Berlin, die Symphonie der Großstadt* (1927)
- Rainer Werner Fassbinder, *Effi Briest* (1974)
- Fatih Akin, *Im Juli* (2000)

Materials will be available in OWL, online, at the Film Resource Centre (AHB 1G19), or at Weldon Library.

The Department of Modern Languages and Literatures Policies which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Modern Languages and Literatures courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures website at <http://www.uwo.ca/modlang/undergraduate/policies.html>. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.