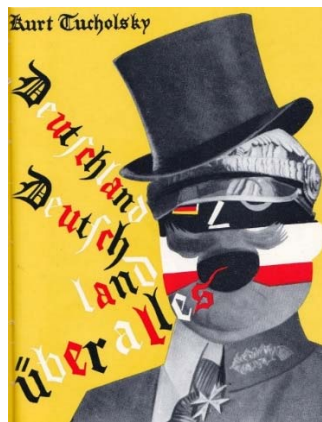


The University of Toronto
WEIMAR CULTURE AND BEYOND
German GER323 / Fall 2015

Instructor: **ALEXANDRA GERSTNER** Dept: Germanic Languages and Literatures
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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 10-12 a.m. Tel.: 416 926 - 2327

Class meets on **Wednesday 2-4 pm** at **TBA**



DESCRIPTION

“Weimar” stands for the fascinating period between the end of the First World War and the transfer of power to Hitler. It created a wide variety of cultural expressions in literature, visual arts, film and photography. Bauhaus, Neue Sachlichkeit, Dada and other extraordinary cultural movements belong to the legacy of Weimar. In a time of political and social uncertainty, after the defeat in the First World War and the political revolution, many authors, artists and political theorists articulated visions for a new society. Cultural production thus embraced political utopias and its creators were often closely linked to political milieus.

At the heart of the course will be an examination of a number of cultural products from the era including works by Ernst Jünger, Erich Remarque, Kurt Tucholsky, Irmgard Keun, Erich Kästner, Bertolt Brecht, Käthe Kollwitz, George Grosz and Christian Schad.

Sessions will involve class discussions, group work, readings, and occasional lectures. The course is also designed to improve German language skills in reading, writing, and speaking with assignments, as well as class discussions, taking place in German. English will only be for purposes of clarification.

COURSE GOALS

The primary objectives of this course are to introduce students to major cultural works of the Weimar Republic, to familiarize students with that era’s political and social developments, to enhance students’ ability to analyze and interpret texts, and to improve students’ written and spoken German.

REQUIREMENTS / EVALUATION

Attendance and Participation (in class and online)	30 %
Oral Presentation / Referat	20 %
2 Short Response Papers	20%
Final Paper / Essay	30 %

Attendance and participation (30%): Regular attendance is mandatory. Absences will only be excused according to University regulations: for example, religious holidays, serious accidents or illness (medical note required), and serious family circumstances (written documentation required). Please notify me at least a week in advance in case you know you need to miss class. In addition to excused absences each student may have two (2) unexcused absences of 50 minutes each. Each unexcused absence after the second will result in a reduction of the final grade. Besides regular attendance, your participation represents a substantial part of your final grade. I expect you to come to class in time, having completed all the readings and assignments. You must bring to class a copy of the assigned text. You are responsible for contributing to a meaningful exchange of ideas. You will be graded according to quality and frequency of your participation.

Online participation consists of blackboard contributions. You will need to read the assigned texts to contribute on Blackboard's "Discussion Board" in preparation for class (please make yourself familiar with Blackboard, if you do not know the portal yet: <https://portal.utoronto.ca>). Unless otherwise indicated, you can write on any aspect or question of the text which seems interesting to you. You are expected to read your classmates' contributions. Your work on Blackboard will help you to practice your written German and to participate in class. Blackboard contributions are due Tuesdays, 12 PM. No late work will be accepted.

A short note: as mentioned above, the class will be conducted in German. However, don't be shy because you think your German is not perfect. It's much better to make mistakes than to say nothing. We will help each other to find the right words and structures!

Oral Presentation/Referat (20%): Each student will need to give a presentation on a topic related to the readings for a particular week. The topic of your presentation should be discussed with me at least one week in advance. The presentation will be graded for content as well as presentation skills (detailed criteria will follow).

2 Short Response Papers (20%): You will write a response to two texts we have read in class (detailed criteria will follow). See due dates in the course program.

Final Paper/Essay (30%): Students will have to prepare one essay of 1,000 words. The essay will be an analytical paper focusing on one or several passages of a text that we have read together. Topics for papers will be suggested, but you can also develop your own topic after consultation with the instructor. If this kind of writing is new to you or if you need help with any aspect of your paper, please do not hesitate to see me during my office hours. See due dates in the course program.

A note on missed or late work: you can only obtain credit for your work if the absence or delay is related to reasons for excused absences as defined above. Except for emergencies, all excuses for missing an exam or for late assignments must be discussed with me before the exam or due

date. I will NOT accept excuses given after the exam or due date. An unexcused late assignment or missed exam will result in a zero.

MATERIALS

Detailed information will follow.