

The University of Toronto

**MONEY AND ECONOMY
IN GERMAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE**

German 270H / Fall 2019

Instructor:	JOHN NOYES	Dept:	German
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Hours:	Tuesdays 4-5 Or appointment	Tel.:	416-926-2344

Class meets on Thursdays **from 10:10 to 11:50** in **VC102**

DESCRIPTION

Can money buy you love? Can it buy you justice? Is money a crime? Is everything for sale? What do we owe when we are in debt? Is there a philosophy of money? These are some of the questions we will be examining in this course, with the help of select works of German literature and philosophy. In a world where every aspect of life is constantly converted into money, or at least into the potential to create money – up to the point where it becomes difficult to speak of anything divorced from its finance value – these are clearly not trivial matters. This course will provide historical and cultural depth to the problem of money, exchange and debt in everyday life.

REQUIREMENTS / EVALUATION

Attendance and Participation	20%
Summary Paper	20%
Literary Analysis	20%
Class Presentation	20%
Oral Examination	20%

GOALS OF COURSE

- Gain insight into the cultural interpretation of money, finance and exchange in the German context.
- Understand key moments in the interpretation of money.
- Understand the difference between literary and theoretical discourses of money

MATERIALS

Students are required to purchase the following books, to be ordered online:

- Yanis Varoufakis, *Talking to my Daughter about the Economy or, How Capitalism Works – and How it Fails* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux 2017).
- Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *The Visit* (New York: Grove 1994).

DETAILS

Attendance and Participation

This course is evaluated according to your readings, written papers, and classroom activities. There will also be an oral examination at the end of the course. You are expected to attend class regularly, and to come punctually and well-prepared. That means having completed the week's reading and being prepared to discuss it. Discussing does not mean always having deep insight or profound things to say. It means being able to formulate what you like and don't like about the reading, what you don't understand, and the questions that arise in your mind when you read. If you know in advance that you will not be able to attend class, please let me know. If you miss more than two classes, you are required to bring a medical report.

Summary Paper

Identify an article or a chapter in a book dealing with the topic of this course, but NOT on the reading list. You have as much freedom as you want in choosing the article or chapter, as long as you can make the connection to the course clear. Write a three page paper explaining the main ideas.

Submit by e-mail by midnight **Thursday 10 October**.

Literary Analysis

Choose TWO of the literary texts on the reading list, and compare the way they treat the topic of money, debt, finance, exchange etc.

Submit by e-mail by midnight **Thursday 7 November**.

Class Presentation

Select a date for your class presentation. You will be responsible for presenting the prescribed text for that week to the class. Begin by briefly giving some background information: When was it written? What do we need to know about the author? Then present what you consider to be the main ideas. After that, mention anything you would like the class to discuss. This could be sections in the text that need clarification, anything you didn't understand, some interesting questions arising from the reading that you'd like to put to the class, and do on. Your presentation will be about 15 to 20 minutes long, but not longer than 20 minutes. You will be asked to sign up for your presentation using the link on the module for that week. On weeks where more than one text is prescribed, there can be more than one presentation.

Oral Examination

I will be meeting with you in the days immediately following the completion of classes in December. We will set aside a 20-minute period. I will ask you which ideas you found most interesting in the course, which texts spoke to you and why. Then I will give you a passage from a text we read during the course and ask you to explain it.

Schedule of Classes:

Sept 5	<p>Introduction – what is money?</p> <p>Instruction to students: bring your favourite money-song!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yanis Varoufakis, <i>Talking to my Daughter about the Economy, or, How Capitalism Works – and How it Fails</i> (2017), ch. 1: “Why so much inequality?”; ch. 2: “The Birth of the Market Society”; 7-49.
Sept 12	<p>Financialization and the Crash</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joseph Vogl, “Idyll of the Market II,” <i>The Specter of Capital</i> (2008); Yanis Varoufakis, <i>Talking to my Daughter about the Economy</i>, ch. 7: “The Dangerous Fantasy of Apolitical Money,” 135-163.
Sept 19	<p>Debt, part 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thomas Piketty, <i>Capital in the 21st century</i> (2013), 103-109, The question of public debt, 540-570; Yanis Varoufakis, <i>Talking to my Daughter about the Economy</i>, ch. 4: “The Black Magic of Banking,” 65-89.
Sept 26	<p>Debt, part 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jennifer Baichwal, <i>Payback</i> (2012)
Oct 3	No Class – Professor at Conference
Oct 10	<p>Money and Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, <i>Faust II</i>, Act 1 (1828) Richard Condie, John Law and the Mississippi Bubble (National Film Board of Canada 1979) Edward Chancellor, “The Man Who Invented Money,” <i>New York Review of Books</i> (April 18, 2019).
Oct 17	<p>Money and Commodities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marx, <i>Capital</i> (1867), vol. 1, part 1, ch 3: Money, or the circulation of commodities
Oct 24	<p>Faith, Labour and Money</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Max Weber, <i>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i> (1905), Chapter II, The Spirit of Capitalism
Oct 31	<p>Büchner. Money, Love and Murder</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Georg Büchner, <i>The Hessian Courier</i> (1834)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Georg Büchner, <i>Woyzeck</i> (1836)
Nov 7	No Class – Reading Week
Nov 14	The Philosophy of Money <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Georg Simmel, <i>The Philosophy of Money</i> (1900), Chapter 1: Value and Money, Part 1, p. 56-76• Theodor Adorno, “Olet,” <i>Minima Moralia</i> (1951)
Nov 21	The Nature of Debt <ul style="list-style-type: none">• E. T. A. Hoffmann, “The Forest Warden” (1816)
Nov 28	Money and Justice <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Friedrich Dürrenmatt, <i>The Visit</i> (1956)