

The University of Toronto
INTRODUCTION TO GERMAN CULTURE
German 150H / Winter 2019

Instructor: Rachel Seelig
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Office: Odette Hall 309
Office hours: Monday 1-3pm

Class meets **Mondays 3-5** at **VC 215**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Soccer? Fast cars? Beer? Sausage? What do we think of when we think of German culture? This course moves beyond well-worn stereotypes to consider key themes in German culture over the past one hundred years. From the birth of Germany's first democracy, the Weimar Republic, in 1919, through the darkest hour of the Third Reich, to Germany's transformation into a land of immigrants and a leading European economic power today, the last century of German history can be viewed in terms of the power and precariousness of democracy in the modern era. Through literary texts and films we will explore two main questions: 1) How has the perceived tension between insiders and outsiders shaped German culture? 2) What are the myths and collective memories that have contributed Germans' understanding of their history? No knowledge of German required; all materials provided in English translation.



OBJECTIVES

This course is geared toward students with no prior knowledge of German culture. It highlights key moments in German history over the past century and focuses on the prevailing themes and questions that have shaped German culture during this period. Students will gain familiarity with important literary works and films, and will learn to examine them critically by writing response papers and in-class assignments, in addition to attending lectures and engaging in discussion.

COURSE MATERIALS

Günter Grass's *Crabwalk* is available for purchase at the UofT bookstore. All remaining texts will be posted on Quercus. You are encouraged but not required to print them out. Whether you read a digital or hard copy, you must have the assigned texts readily accessible during class and be prepared to refer to specific passages.

Films have been placed on reserve in the Media Commons at Robarts Library and can also be viewed on iTunes or Netflix.

REQUIREMENTS & EVALUATION

ATTENDANCE / PREPARATION

20%

You are expected to attend all classes having read/viewed the assigned materials thoroughly. This means taking notes on key themes and motifs, looking up unfamiliar concepts and/or terms, and preparing questions to raise in class. Attendance policy: You may miss one session without a valid excuse; after that 10% will be deducted from your final mark for each unexcused absence.

IN-CLASS TEXT ANALYSIS (GROUP WORK)

20%

Four times during the semester you will form groups of three to discuss and write a brief analysis of a specific passage from the assigned reading. Each of these assignments is worth 5% of the final grade. The best way to prepare is to come to class having read the assigned texts thoroughly. You are required to work with different students each time so that you have the opportunity to discuss the materials with as many of your fellow students as possible.

RESPONSE PAPERS

30%

You will write two response papers, each 500 words (2 pages double-spaced) in length, based on close reading of the assigned texts. Response papers must be turned in on time (assignments turned in late will receive a 10% grade reduction for each day past the deadline) and fulfil the following criteria:

- Clear argument supported by logical structure
- Effective use of textual support
- Precise word-choice, grammar and punctuation; evidence of careful editing
- Adherence to formatting guidelines: double-spaced, 12-point font, one-inch margins, name and title on first page, word count listed at end of paper.

FINAL EXAM

30%

The final exam is intended to evaluate your familiarity with the materials and critical engagement with key themes discussed. This is not an exam for which you can “cram” a few days beforehand; it is the culmination of your work over the entire semester. As long as you have kept up with the readings and attended lectures, you will succeed on the exam. Date TBA.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is defined as the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. This includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others and submitting work of another person or work previously used. For more information check the website on academic integrity

DISABILITY ACCESS

If you require special accommodations or have accessibility concerns, please visit the Accessibility Services website: <https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1 (Jan 7)	Who Is German? What Is German Culture? Anna Sauerbrey, “What is German?” (2016); Georg Simmel, “The Stranger” (1908)	
Week 2 (Jan 14)	Identity and Belonging in the Weimar Republic Franz Kafka, “Report to an Academy” (1917) / Friedrich Meineke, “The Old and the New Germany” (1918) / Martin Buber, “Nationalism” (1922) / Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, “Architecture and the Will of the Age” (1924) / Hannes Meyer, “The New World” (1926); Eric Weitz, “Walking the City” (2007)	
Week 3 (Jan 21)	Strangers at Home: The Third Reich Gertrud Kolmar, “The Jewess”; “The Toad” (1938) / Bertolt Brecht, <i>Fear and Misery of the Third Reich</i> (1938) (excerpt)	In-class: text analysis #1
Week 4 (Jan 28)	Victims and Perpetrators: The Postwar Years Hannah Arendt, <i>Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil</i> (1963) (excerpt) / Gershom Scholem, “Against the Myth of the German-Jewish Dialogue” (1964) / Film: <i>Labyrinth of Lies</i> (2014)	
Week 5 (Feb 4)	Life in Exile W.G. Sebald, <i>The Emigrants</i> (excerpt) (1992)	Due: response Paper #1
Week 6 (Feb 11)	Newcomers to the “New” Germany Emine Sevgi Özdamar, “On the Train” (2008) / “My Berlin” (1976) / <i>The Bridge of the Golden Horn</i> (1998) (excerpt) / Film: <i>Almanya: Welcome to Germany</i> (2011)	In class: text analysis #2
Reading Week: February 18-22		
Week 7 (Feb 25)	Divisions and Reunions Barbara Honigmann, <i>A Love Made out of Nothing</i> (1991)	In class: text analysis #3
Week 8 (Mar 4)	Nostalgia or Nightmare? Film: <i>Goodbye Lenin</i> (2003)	
Week 9 (Mar 11)	Memory as Cultural Capital Zafer Senoçak, “Capital of the Fragment” / “Can We Compare Turks and Jews?” / “Germany: Home for Turks?” (1990)	Due: response paper #2
Week 10 (Mar 18)	Competing Versions Günter Grass, <i>Crabwalk</i> (Part I) (2002); Film: <i>We Are Young. We Are Strong</i> (2014)	
Week 11 (Mar 25)	Memory in the Digital Age Günter Grass, <i>Crabwalk</i> (Part II)	In class: text analysis #4
Week 12 (Apr 1)	Who is German Now? Yoko Tawada, “Where Europe Begins” (1991) / Film: <i>Watani: My Homeland</i> (2016)	