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Course title:	Schlüsselwerke der deutschen Literatur von der Klassik bis zur Gegenwart
Track:	B-Track
Language of instruction:	German
Contact hours:	48 (6 per day)
ECTS-Credits:	4

Course description

This course provides an overview of the history of German literature from the 18th to the 21st century.

Starting from the knowledge that the psychological sensitivities of an age are reflected in literature, and supported by reading and discussing representative texts - e.g. from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Heinrich Heine, Franz Kafka, Bertolt Brecht or Bernhard Schlink - the focus of the seminar is based on the following questions: What desires, demands and utopias can be found in the literature? How influential are the developments of the history of thought, social upheavals and technological innovations on literary expression? What interplay exists between art, music and literature? Can fiction also be seen as inspiration for social changes? And: how do the respective authors incorporate literary legacies into their own works?

A valid and living impression of literary development from the classical period to the present will not only be provided through texts, but also through film clips and field trips. For instance, we will visit the Deutsches Historisches Museum and obtain deeper insight into the art of the Romantic period with a tour through the Alte Nationalgalerie.

Student profile

Aside from the language requirements, participants must not exhibit any special knowledge of German literature or history. The seminar is directed toward students of various majors who are interested in German literature and its historical connections from the classic period to the modern day.

Prerequisites

Language skills: Intermediate German B2/advanced level C1

Brief description of the B2 language level:

Able to understand the core content of complex texts on concrete and abstract themes; understands technical discussions in their own field. Able to spontaneously and fluently comprehend that a normal conversation with native speakers is easily possible with no great strain on either party. Able to clearly and precisely express themselves on a broad spectrum

of subjects, express a standpoint on a topical question and provide the advantages and disadvantages of various possibilities.

Course Requirements

See Grading.

Grading

30% regular and active participation. Due to the seminar format, regular participation in the discussions is expected.

25% two brief essays (approx. 500 words = approx. 2 pages) on the various core themes of the subject.

20% an oral presentation (approx. 15 minutes). The oral presentation should provide initial insight into the text in question, ask questions and formulate arguments, and stimulate discussion. The subjects will be assigned during the first week.

25% a seminar paper of 5 pages.

Literature

Reader (will be made available at the beginning of the program).

Course schedule

Date	Program*
<p>Tuesday, July 25, 2017</p>	<p>Introduction to the seminar curriculum</p> <p><u>Classical period (1786-1805):</u></p> <p>The French Revolution of 1789 was the predominant event of the period. The struggle with the goals and consequences of the revolution, however, was less political and far more philosophical among German intellectuals and artists.</p> <p>Johann Wolfgang von Goethe sought the harmonisation of all human strength in his poetry. He merged a clear, rational conscience with an anthemic, emotionally oriented world view. A new ideal for poetry and humanity thus arose from the return to antiquity - for in that period, as he and some of his contemporaries believed, the harmony of reason and emotion had already been achieved.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832): <i>Die Leiden des jungen Werther</i> (1774) <i>Faust I</i> (1808)</p> <p>Film: Clips from <i>Faust</i> (Gustaf Gründgens, 1960)</p>
<p>Friday, July 28, 2017</p>	<p><u>Romantic period (1797-1830):</u></p> <p>Napoleon's rise and fall and the resulting restructuring of Europe at the 1815 Congress of Vienna shaped this age. At the same time, the looming industrialisation posed great challenges to the individual with increasing social injustice, unemployment and famine.</p> <p>The authors of the Romantic period no longer found their source of inspiration in antiquity, but rather in the Christian Middle Ages. Seeking</p>

	<p>to surmount the contradictions created by social and political life, the magical wonderworld of literary fairy tales, or <i>Kunstmärchen</i>, drew back on themes and figures from German folktales. For the Romantics, poetry is the manifestation of the absolute.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>Joseph von Eichendorff (1788-1857): „Mondnacht“ (1837, Gedicht) „Wünschelrute“ (1835, Gedicht) „Die blaue Blume“ (1818, Gedicht)</p> <p>Novalis (1772-1801): „Wenn nicht mehr Zahlen und Figuren“ (1800, poem) „Heinrich von Ofterdingen“ (1802) „Die Lehrlinge zu Sais“ (1802)</p> <p>Ludwig Tieck (1773-1853): „Der blonde Eckbert“ (1797)</p> <p><i>Field trip: Alte Nationalgalerie (Paintings of the Romantic period)</i></p>
<p>Tuesday, August 1, 2017</p>	<p><u>Young Germany (1830-1850):</u></p> <p>A phase of disenchantment ensued in the period following the Congress of Vienna. Old balances of power re-established and the desire of many people for more democracy and liberality was disappointed. This ultimately led to the Revolution of 1848/49.</p> <p>In their writings the authors of Young Germany demanded the dismantlement of feudalism and a free and republican social order. This came with a new literary mindset: The idealistic world view of the classical and Romantic periods should be replaced by fiction with the goal to grant the citizen a living connection with the political, ideological and social present.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>Heinrich Heine (1797-1856): <i>Deutschland. Ein Wintermärchen</i> (1843)</p> <p>Georg Büchner (1813-1837): <i>Woyzeck</i> (1837)</p> <p>Film: Clips from <i>Woyzeck</i> (Dir.: Werner Herzog, 1979)</p>
<p>Friday, August 4, 2017</p>	<p><u>Literature of the early 20th century (1890-1920)</u></p> <p>Otto von Bismarck had expanded the supremacy of conservative Prussia in Germany. In 1871 the victorious war against France led to the founding of the German Empire. The subsequent imperialist power politics of Kaiser Wilhelm II, coupled with international tensions, ultimately triggered World War I (1914-1918).</p> <p>Around the turn of the century various literary movements existed (e.g. Realism, Naturalism, Expressionism). The works of Franz Kafka, living in Prague and writing in German, take a special position here. Social reality is depicted as absurd and monstrous in his novels and narratives.</p>

	<p>The modern individual, increasingly alienated, sees themselves at the mercy of imposing powers such as authority, bureaucracy and technology, viewing their own lived reality as a nightmare.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>Franz Kafka (1883-1924): <i>Die Verwandlung</i> (1915)</p>
<p>Tuesday, August 8, 2017</p>	<p><u>Literature of the Weimar Republic (1918-1933)</u></p> <p>The Weimar Republic formed after World War I with one of the most modern constitutions in Europe. However, it was often referred to as a "democracy without democrats", as the retrogressive powers still held influence and fomented dissatisfaction among the citizenry, who were already suffering from the high reparation payments resulting from the Treaty of Versailles. Regardless, between 1923 and 1929, during the so-called "Golden Twenties", there was a political and economic calm and Berlin experienced a cultural bloom.</p> <p>Bertolt Brecht revolutionised the German theater during this era: The "alienation effect" is the major trademark of his "epic theater" - the spectator shall no longer identify with the occurrences on stage, but rather become a critical viewer. His teaching-plays, or <i>Lehrstücke</i>, attack bourgeois-capitalist society.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956): <i>Die Dreigroschenoper</i> (1928)</p> <p>Film: Clips from <i>Die Dreigroschenoper</i> (Dir.: Georg Wilhelm Pabst, 1931)</p>
<p>Friday, August 11, 2017</p>	<p><u>Exile literature (1933-1945)</u></p> <p>The economic crisis of 1929 led to mass unemployment, which benefited the rise of the "Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei" (NSDAP). With its seizure of power on 30 January, 1933 Adolf Hitler established himself as <i>Führer</i> of a repressive and antisemitic policy that led to World War II and the Holocaust.</p> <p>On 10 May, 1933 books that were obligated to the spirit of humanity were burned in German university towns. Thousands of people fled the country to escape persecution by the Nazis - among them many authors. Exile was initially provided by neighboring countries in Europe, and later North and South America. The uncompromising rejection of Hitler and National Socialism is the binding characteristic of these authors.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>Klaus Mann (1906-1949): <i>Mephisto</i> (1936)</p> <p>Film: Clips from <i>Die Manns</i> (Dir.: Heinrich Breloer, 2001)</p> <p><i>Field trip: Deutsches Historisches Museum</i></p>

<p>Tuesday, August 15, 2017</p>	<p><u>Literature of the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic after 1945</u></p> <p>After the end of the war in 1945, the defeated Germany was divided into four occupation zones. The Federal Republic of Germany was created from the three western sectors, and the German Democratic Republic grew from the eastern sector. Berlin itself was divided accordingly. The economy flourished in free West Germany ("economic miracle"), while the GDR government could offer its citizens neither freedom nor satisfactory living conditions. In order to prevent the resulting abscondence of its citizens, the regime constructed the Berlin Wall on 13 August, 1961 and fortified the country's borders ("Iron Curtain").</p> <p>Post-war literature in the Federal Republic of Germany and the GDR arose under many portents: restorative tendencies in the Federal Republic prevented discussing the past, which in the '60s led to increasing politicisation of literature.</p> <p>In the GDR on the other hand, criticism of the state and party was forbidden; all publications were subject to censorship. However, several authors unwaveringly debated with the situation of the individual within a collectivised society. The longing for freedom found its expression - often, however, with West German publishers.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>Heinrich Böll (1917-1985): <i>Ansichten eines Clowns</i> (1963)</p> <p>Ulrich Plenzdorf (1934-2007): <i>Die neuen Leiden des jungen W.</i> (1972)</p>
<p>Friday, August 18, 2017</p>	<p><u>Literature of the modern day</u></p> <p>The Wall fell on 9 November, 1989. German literature after this change is now once again devoted to the innermost motivation of fiction: It gives the memory of pain and hardship a voice. The challenges of German-German integration on both sides of the not yet entirely processed era of the Third Reich continue to be crucial topics. - The subject of our last session is the novel <i>Der Vorleser</i> by the lawyer Bernhard Schlink. He confronts his young hero with the Nazi past of his older lover, and at the same time places the conscience-forming power of literature before our eyes.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>Bernhard Schlink (b.1944): <i>Der Vorleser</i> (1995)</p> <p>Film: Clips from <i>Der Vorleser</i> (Dir.: Stephen Daldry, 2008)</p>

*Field trips may be subject to change depending on the availability of appointments and speakers. On field trip days adaptation of class times is possible.