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Course title:	Deutsche Kultur – 100 Jahre Literatur, Film und Kunst
Track:	B-Track
Language of instruction:	German
Contact hours:	48 (6 per day)
ECTS-Credits:	4

Course description

This seminar will examine the changes Germany has undergone from the foundation of the German Empire in 1871 up to the present day: Empire, World War I, the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich, the division of Germany after World War II, reunification in 1989. The course will focus primarily on the perceptions of political, cultural, and social processes, as formulated by the writers, filmmakers, and artists of the respective periods. This will be illustrated using, among others, the example of Berlin, which is without a doubt the focal point of historical events in Germany.

Through selected texts, films, and works of art, we will examine, for example, the following questions: what possibilities of self-assertion did the individual have in a world characterized by the patriotic frenzy of empire? How did technological progress and urbanization influence culture in the 1920s? How did literature and film react to the Nazi's rise to power and subsequent dictatorship? How did Germany's situation in the Cold War impact its artistic production? How was literature and art affected by the reunification?

In addition, excursions to museums and historical locations will give students the opportunity to discover the current and historical development of the country firsthand, in order to strengthen and deepen their understanding and knowledge thereof.

Student profile

The seminar is aimed at students from different disciplines who are interested in literature, film, art, and the history of Germany. Apart from the language requirements below, participants are not required to have any special knowledge.

Prerequisites

Language ability: at least intermediate German (level B2); Short description of B2-level language ability: Can understand the main ideas of complex texts on both concrete and abstract topics; in your own field also including more technical topics; should be able to spontaneously interact with native speakers fluently and without stress; can produce a clear, detailed text on a wide range of topics, and explain a position in a topical discussion, giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

Course requirements

See Grading.

Grading

Regular and active participation: 30%
 Two short essays (500 words = approx. 2 pages): 25%
 Presentation (about 15 minutes: 20% (the presentations are intended to provide an introduction to a seminar's topic, an opportunity to ask questions, formulate arguments, and stimulate discussion about it. Presentation topics will be assigned in the first week.)
 Term paper (5-6 pages): 25%

Reading

A course reader will be provided at the orientation meeting.

Course schedule*

<p>ON THE PATH TO MODERNITY</p> <p>Dramatic breaks and upheavals shaped the course of the late 19th and early 20th centuries in Europe. As in other countries, in Germany the progressive enthusiasm for modernity stood at odds with pessimistic conservatism. By way of introduction, the following issues will be discussed: what is modernity? How did technological and industrial progress affect life in large German cities? What effects did the social changes have on the individual? How important was art's social impact?</p>	
<p>Tuesday, July 24, 2018</p>	<p><u>Literature:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Franz Hessel: "Spazieren in Berlin" (1929) - Georg Heym: "Der Gott der Stadt" (Poem, 1910) - Georg Simmel: "Die Großstadt und das Geistesleben" (1903) <p><u>Film:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Excerpts from "Berlin, Sinfonie der Großstadt" (Directed by Walter Ruttmann, 1927) <p><u>Art:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ernst Ludwig Kirchner: "Potsdamerplatz" (1912)
<p>FROM THE FOUNDING OF THE GERMAN EMPIRE IN 1871 TO THE CATASTROPHE OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR</p> <p>After the founding of the German empire in 1871 and the Bismarck-led alliance policy to promote peaceful coexistence with other European powers, the accession of Kaiser Wilhelm II represented a sea change: by 1914, his undiplomatic policies had led Germany into the catastrophe of World War I. This section will address the following questions: what could one expect to experience on a stroll through Wilhelmine Berlin? How did artists depict the spirit of the German Empire's subjects? And: what traces of the experience and trauma of war can be seen in the period's art?</p>	
<p>Friday, July 27, 2018</p>	<p><u>Literature:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jakob van Hoddis: "Weltende" (Poem, 1911) - Heinrich Mann: "Der Untertan" (1918) - Georg Trakl: "Grodek" (Poem, 1914) - Erich Maria Remarque: "Im Westen nichts Neues" (1929)

	<p><u>Film:</u> - Excerpts from "Der Untertan" (Directed by Wolfgang Staudte, 1951)</p> <p><u>Art:</u> - Max Liebermann: "Die Gänserupferinnen" (1872) - Otto Dix: "Kriegstriptychon" (1929/32)</p>
<p>LIFE IN THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC</p> <p>During the Weimar Republic (1918-1933), a culturally vibrant and exceptionally influential period, many avant-garde trends established themselves. After a quick look at the political, social, and economic problems of the time, the following questions will be debated: how did people deal with their new form of government, democracy? How did the challenges of a complex urban environment and the proliferation of new media technologies (e.g. film, radio, and advertising) affect the daily life of the German people? What social and political roles were played by artists during this time?</p>	
<p>Tuesday, July 31, 2018</p>	<p><u>Literature:</u> - Alfred Döblin: "Berlin Alexanderplatz" (1929) - Kurt Tucholsky: "Augen in der Großstadt" (Poem, 1930)</p> <p><u>Film:</u> - Excerpts from "Berlin Alexanderplatz" (Directed by Phil Jutzi, 1931; and Rainer Werner Fassbinder, 1980)</p> <p><u>Art:</u> - George Grosz: "Die Stützen der Gesellschaft" (1926)</p>
<p>THE NATIONAL SOCIALISTS</p> <p>With the appointment of Hitler as Chancellor, the fate of the Weimar Republic was sealed. The Nazi rise to power led to the Second World War and the Holocaust. In this session dealing with the period 1933-1945, the following questions will be discussed: How was life orchestrated under the Nazi dictatorship? How did the artists react to the officially propagated cultural policy? Was resistance possible? And if so, how did it manifest? And: what were the consequences of exile and "inner emigration" for the literary and artistic self understanding of individual authors? How did they resist and express their aversion to the Nazi regime?</p>	
<p>Friday, August 3, 2018</p>	<p><u>Literature:</u> - Bertolt Brecht: "Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches" (written between 1935 and 1943) - Victor Klemperer: "Ich will Zeugnis ablegen bis zum letzten. Das Tagebuch 1933-1945" (1995) - Walter Benjamin: "Berliner Kindheit um neunzehnhundert" (written between 1933 and 1938, published 1950)</p> <p><u>Film:</u> - Excerpts from "Die Erika und Klaus Mann Story: Escape to Life" (Directed by Andrea Weiss, Wieland Speck, 2001)</p>

	<p><u>Art:</u> - The Nazi Exhibition “Entartete Kunst” (1937-41) und “Große Deutsche Kunstausstellung“ (1937-44)</p> <p><i>Excursion: House of the Wannsee Conference</i></p>
<p>GERMANY IN RUINS</p> <p>1945: Germany has been reduced to rubble; the cities have become ghostly ruins. Somewhere between despair and determination, reconstruction begins: the focus of this session is the artistic assimilation of the mental and emotional anguish of war. We will consider the following questions: how is cultural and political life structured under Allied administration? How do the so-called “Rubble Films” and “Rubble Literature” thematically address the experience of war?</p>	
<p>Tuesday, August 7, 2018</p>	<p><u>Literature:</u> - Günter Eich: “Inventur” (Poem, 1947) - Wolfgang Borchert: “Das Brot,” “Nachts schlafen die Ratten doch” (1947) - Paul Celan: “Todesfuge” (Poem, 1947) - Heinrich Böll: “Bekenntnis zur Trümmerliteratur” (1952)</p> <p><u>Film:</u> - Excerpts from “Deutschland im Jahre Null” (Directed by Roberto Rossellini, 1948)</p> <p><u>Art:</u> - Gerhard Richter: “Onkel Rudi“ (1965) und “Tante Marianne” (1965)</p>
<p>GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (GDR)</p> <p>East and West, usually simple points on a compass, become, in the new political atmosphere, shorthand for the socialist and capitalist ideologies. While propaganda polishes East Berlin into the capital of the GDR, the country itself is sinking into a deepening gloom, caused by dictatorial constraints and a lack of individual freedoms. To make matters worse, a frightening atmosphere of surveillance and suspicion is propagated by the omnipresence of the secret police (Stasi), prompting many to leave the country. How can it be explained, then, that many artists remain true to the state? And how do these artists cope with those who would restrict free speech?</p>	
<p>Friday, August 10, 2018</p>	<p><u>Literature:</u> - Bertolt Brecht: “Die Lösung“ (Poem, 1953) - Christa Wolf: “Der geteilte Himmel“ (1963) - Wolf Biermann: “Ermutigung“ (Song, 1968) - Sarah Kirsch: “Naturschutzgebiet,” “Katzenleben“ (Poems, 1982, 1984)</p> <p><u>Film:</u> - Excerpts from “Der geteilte Himmel“ (Directed: Konrad Wolf, 1964)</p>

	<p><u>Art:</u> - Willi Sitte: "Chemiearbeiter am Schaltpult" (1968) - A. R. Penck: "Der Übergang" (1963)</p> <p><i>Excursion: Stasi-Museum Berlin</i></p>
<p>FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY</p> <p>In the 1960s, an important phase of confronting the past took place. We will deal with the following questions: How does the West deal with the burden of its National Socialist past?</p> <p>At this meeting, however, we also want to focus on Berlin because the history of postwar Germany is illustrated most vividly by the example of Berlin: the city is divided into two divergent political systems by the construction of the wall in 1961. We will ask how the former metropolis has developed and what life in West Berlin, an exotic zone in the middle of the GDR, looks like.</p>	
<p>Tuesday, August 14, 2018</p>	<p><u>Literature:</u> - Hannah Arendt: "Eichmann in Jerusalem: Ein Bericht von der Banalität des Bösen" (1963) - Peter Schneider: "Der Mauerspringer" (1982)</p> <p><u>Film:</u> - Excerpts from "Hannah Arendt" (Directed: Margarete von Trotta, 2012)</p> <p><u>Art:</u> - Rainer Fetting: "Erstes Mauerbild" (1977)</p>
<p>THE NEW REPUBLIC</p> <p>Germany has been reunited since the fall of the wall, but is only slowly discovering itself. How is this complicated and tedious process reflected in literature? How is the persistent tension between East and West expressed in images, writing, and film? And despite all this: what makes the new/old German capital an attractive place to live?</p>	
<p>Friday, August 17, 2018</p>	<p><u>Literature:</u> - Hans-Ulrich Treichel: "Zu spät" (2009) - Jana Hensel: "Zonenkinder" (2002) - Ralf Rothmann: "Stolz des Ostens" (2006)</p> <p><u>Film:</u> - Ausschnitte aus "Alemania" (Directed: Yasemin Şamdereli, 2011)</p> <p><u>Art:</u> - Neo Rauch: "Die Fuge" (2007)</p>

* Excursions may be subject to change depending on the availability of speakers. Class hours may be irregular on field trip days.