

Online course title:	Schlüsselwerke der deutschen Literatur von der Klassik bis zur Gegenwart
Instructor:	Dr. Anja Richter
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Track:	B-Track
Language of instruction:	German
Contact hours:	The coursework corresponds to an on-site course amounting to 48 contact hours.
ECTS credits:	5
Prerequisites:	Students should be able to speak and read German at the upper intermediate level (B2)/advanced level (C1) or higher.
General requirements:	Please make sure to be online approximately from 4 pm CEST to 8:30 pm CEST on the respective course days! Therefore, please check the possible time difference between Germany and your country of residence. We also recommend that you make sure to have a quiet and appropriate working space. To ensure a comfortable learning environment for all, please adhere to general netiquette rules.
Technical requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- stable internet connection- fully functional device, such as computer, laptop or tablet (use of smart phones not recommended), headset recommended- recommended operating systems: Windows 7 or higher or Mac OS X 10,13 or higher, avoid using a VPN

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 Ferdinand von Schirach - 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 virtual excursions. For instance, we will obtain deeper insight into the art of the Romantic period with a virtual tour through the Alte Nationalgalerie and will also get a digital impression of the “Topography of Terror” exhibition (documentation and visitor center on the topic of National Socialism in German history).

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.

Course requirements

See Grading.

Required language skills

The language of instruction is German. Language proficiency on an advanced intermediate level B2 (Mittelstufe II)/ advanced level C1 is a prerequisite for participation. For orientation purposes, you can assess your language skills here (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR):

<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168045bb52>

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 6 pages.

Reading

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

Course schedule

Date	Program*
Tuesday, July 20, 2021	<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. However, the struggle with the goals and consequences of the revolution 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: 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> (Dir.: Gustaf Gründgens, 1960)</p>
Friday, July 23, 2021	<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 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): <i>Mondnacht</i> (1837, poem) <i>Wünschelrute</i> (1835, poem) <i>Die blaue Blume</i> (1818, poem)</p> <p>Novalis (1772-1801): <i>Wenn nicht mehr Zahlen und Figuren</i> (1800, poem) <i>Heinrich von Ofterdingen</i> (1802)</p> <p>Ludwig Tieck (1773-1853): <i>Der blonde Eckbert</i> (1797)</p> <p><i>Virtual visit: Alte Nationalgalerie (Paintings of the Romantic period)</i></p>

<p>Tuesday, July 27, 2021</p>	<p><u>Vormarx (Pre-March) and 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 Vormarx and 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, July 30, 2021</p>	<p><u>Literature of the early 20th century (1890-1920):</u></p> <p>In 1890 Bismarck was removed from his office by Kaiser Wilhelm II. The subsequent imperialist power politics of Kaiser Wilhelm II, coupled with international tensions, ultimately triggered World War I (1914-1918).</p> <p>The works of Franz Kafka, living in Prague and writing in German, take a special position here and describe the increasing alienation of the individual from the driving forces of the time. Social reality is depicted as absurd and monstrous in his novels and narratives. The modern individual sees himself 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 3, 2021</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 6, 2021</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 May 10, 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>Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956): <i>Über die Bezeichnung Emigranten</i> (poem, 1937) <i>Gedanken über die Dauer des Exils</i> (poem, around 1937)</p> <p>Klaus Mann (1906-1949): <i>Mephisto</i> (1936)</p> <p>Thomas Mann (1875-1955): <i>Deutsche Hörer!</i> (1943)</p> <p>Film: Clips from <i>Mephisto</i> (Dir.: István Szabó, 1981)</p>

	<p><i>Virtual visit: "Topography of Terror"</i></p>
<p>Tuesday, August 10, 2021</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 August 13, 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. In the GDR on the other hand, criticism of the state and party was forbidden; all publications were subject to censorship. Nevertheless, several authors unwaveringly debated with the situation of the individual within a collectivised society. The longing for freedom found its expression – often 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 13, 2021</p>	<p><u>Literature of the modern day II (since 1989)</u></p> <p>Modern day literature is only slowly beginning to take on current issues such as the financial crisis, religiously motivated wars and the terrorist threat. Which image of humanity and moral concepts are valid in the 21st century?</p> <p>We will raise this question by analyzing a theater play by Ferdinand von Schirach, in which a terrorist kidnaps a commercial airliner and threatens to crash it into a packed stadium. Contrary to orders a fighter pilot shoots down the plane, all passengers die, but the spectators in the stadium are saved. In court a trial is set to determine if the pilot fighter is guilty or not guilty. Schirach is approaching the question of guilt and innocence from a new perspective and includes the readers in reaching a verdict.</p> <p>Reading:</p> <p>Ferdinand von Schirach (b. 1964): <i>Terror</i> (theater play, 2015)</p>

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*Field trips are subject to change depending on the availability of appointments and speakers. On field trip days, class hours may be adjusted.