DEPARTMENT OF GERMAN STUDIES
BROWN UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE HANDBOOK

(LAST REVISED: DEC 2023)

The Department of German Studies at Brown offers a Ph.D. program which both provides a coherent perspective on major developments in German literature, culture, and critical thought in the modern period (1517 to the present) and provides students with the opportunity to develop their own specialized interests in German Studies. The program requires a secondary field of study consisting of a coherent sequence of four courses outside the Department. With guidance from the Director of Graduate Studies, each student plans this sequence in a specialized area of interest. Some examples of possible specialized programs of study are Media Studies, History, Jewish Studies, Visual Arts, Philosophy, Music, or Theater. Drawing on the expertise of eminent scholars in these fields, who are teaching at Brown both in and beyond the German Studies Department, the program thus fosters a transdisciplinary approach in the field of German Studies.

The guiding principle of our curriculum is a conscious exploration of those topics and moments in the history of German culture and critical thought which define its uniqueness, exemplify broader issues in the humanities, or have resonated most strongly in other cultures. Fields which unify these goals – aesthetics and critical theory – are among our strengths.

The program is designed to prepare students for a diverse and ever-changing workplace, within academia and outside. To become first-rate scholars and researchers, students are trained to develop their writing skills and to deliver publishable work in their graduate career. To turn into mature and innovative teachers, they are exposed to a rigorous program of theoretical and practical approaches to teaching. To enable them to become esteemed professionals, students will learn to perform research and to process information effectively and efficiently and to communicate highly complex subjects to a variety of audiences.

ADMISSION

APPLICATION MATERIALS

Applicants should submit a writing sample (in German or English) of approximately 20 pages. The GRE is not required, but foreign students will need to take the TOEFL exam. The letter of application should suggest research interests as well as possible fields of secondary study. Applicants should present evidence of advanced proficiency in German and a solid background in German literature, culture, and critical thought.

For admission forms, please visit the Graduate School's website.

Students whose primary department for graduate work at Brown is not German Studies may earn an M.A. in German Studies by completing 8 courses in the area of German Studies. These shall include at least 6 courses within the Department of German Studies and a maximum of 2 approved courses in a closely related field. None of these may overlap with coursework completed for the student's home department.

Students who obtain a B.A. in German Studies from Brown may integrate their undergraduate studies with work towards an M.A. as part of the 5th-year Masters program. Six additional courses beyond the B.A. are required. Please see the Dean of College's website for more information.

The Department does not accept outside applications for a terminal M.A. degree.

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

The faculty of the Department of German Studies welcomes applications from prospective doctoral students who possess the demonstrated potential to acquire the scholarly expertise; linguistic mastery; and literary, cultural, and theoretical competence to thrive as scholars in the field of German Studies.

Before they can be considered for admission, applicants are expected to provide evidence of advanced proficiency in the German language and the ability to work with literary, cultural, and theoretical texts in the original German. (In cases where applicants seek to enter the program without an undergraduate or previous graduate degree in German Studies, the faculty will look for other evidence of advanced competence, such as relevant coursework in German.) Prospective students also will demonstrate, through documents such as writing samples and personal statements, their facility in English and their readiness and willingness, if English is not their first language, to carry out at least part of their research in the English language.

When considering applicants for admission, the Department will place an emphasis on intellectual fit. It will seek to admit those students whose scholarly profile is an especially appropriate match with the intellectual orientation of the Department, while still being mindful of the desirability of scholarly diversity. The scholarly promise of an applicant to the graduate program in German Studies is measured by such elements as a well-crafted and cogently argued writing sample that is representative of the applicant's current state

of intellectual development; thoughtful and detailed letters of recommendation from former teachers and mentors; a carefully composed personal statement that showcases the applicant's prose and manner of written expositon; as well as transcripts showing excellent performance in previous coursework. The Department is especially interested in receiving applications from potential graduate students whose analytical talents and dedication to scholarship are such that their future dissertations are likely to make an impact on the field of German Studies.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D.

COURSEWORK

A total of 13 courses are required. Among these shall be:

- LANG 2900 (taught by the Director of the Center for Language Studies) – "The Theory and Practice of Foreign Language Learning and Teaching"
- 4 courses in a second field of study, usually consisting of a sequence of courses in another Ph.D. program at Brown, such as Comparative Literature, History, Music, Theater Arts & Performance Studies, Philosophy, MCM, and History of Art & Architecture.

Students may, in consultation with the Director of Graduate Students, count up to 2 courses at the 1000-level towards fulfillment of the coursework requirements.

Graduate students entering the Ph.D. program at Brown with a prior M.A. in hand may petition to be allowed to take up to 2 of their 13 required course credits on an "Audit" basis.

Students are required to take 8 graduate seminars in the Department of German Studies, 2 per semester during the first 4 semesters.

At the beginning of each academic term, graduate students will meet with the Director of Graduate Studies in order to discuss their progress and to have their proposed coursework for the respective semester approved.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

Graduate students in the Department of German Studies must demonstrate proficiency in at least one language other than German and English that is germane to their research interests. Students demonstrate proficiency by taking a translation exam or its equivalent. The language requirement should be satisfied before the qualifying examination.

QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

The qualifying examination consists of two parts: 1) a general examination and 2) a specialized fields examination based on two reading lists prepared by the candidate.

The first part of the examination, the general exam, takes place at the end of the first semester in the student's third year. It is a 90-minute oral examination based on a standing departmental list of 30 items drawn from the tradition of German literary writing and critical thought. Students will add 3 more items of their choice. This standing list will be made available to the student by the Director of Graduate Studies upon entry into the program. The student will work with a committee of 3 faculty members (chosen by the student) to select the texts, and the departmental faculty as a whole will administer this portion of the examination.

The second part of the examination takes place at the end of the second semester of the student's third year. It is a 2-part written exam, each part based on a reading list compiled in consultation with the student's chosen committee, including the dissertation advisor. One list will address the student's dissertation topic; the second list will represent another field of interest. The lists must reflect a theoretical engagement with their respective topics. Each list will be accompanied by a statement outlining the student's main ideas, theses and questions represented in the list. Based on these lists and statements, the committee will prepare a question in relation to the 2 areas the lists address. The student will receive the question for the first list on a Friday by noon; he or she will then have until 5:00 p.m. the following Monday to prepare and submit a written answer, which will normally be between 10

and 15 pages. The following Friday, the student will receive the question for the second list, again by noon; the student will then have once again until 5:00 p.m. the following Monday to prepare and submit a written answer, which will normally be between 10 and 15 pages.

By the first Friday after the second part of the written examination, a two-hour oral examination based on the written responses will be held.

Students will be assigned either "Pass with Honors," "Pass," or "Fail" for the qualifyingexamination.

Upon successful completion of the qualifying examination, graduate students are eligible to be awarded the M.A. in German Studies.

Should a candidate fail to pass the qualifying examination or a portion thereof, he or she will be allowed to take the examination (or the portion that was failed) one more time during the following semester. If a candidate fails a second time, the result is termination.

DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

After successfully completing the qualifying examination, the student shall, in consultation with his or her primary dissertation advisor, nominate two other dissertation readers. By the end of the first week of the fall semester in the fourth year of study, the student shall present a substantive written dissertation proposal.

The exact format of the proposal will be determined by the primary advisor, but it will generally be between 15 and 20 pages in length, and include a tentative chapter outline and preliminary bibliography. The proposal will be examined orally by the three members of the dissertation committee by the end of that semester. The committee will either approve the proposal or recommend revisions. Once the proposal is approved, the student will be advanced to Ph.D. candidacy.

DISSERTATION DEFENSE

After the dissertation has been completed and accepted by all three members of the dissertation committee, a dissertation defense takes place, consisting of a public presentation and discussion of the thesis. The date of the defense is selected in consultation with the dissertation committee. The defense will begin with an oral presentation by the candidate, offering a brief overview of the main theses and structure of the dissertation (usually 15-30 minutes). This presentation will be followed by a 60– to 90– minute discussion in which the candidate responds to questions posed by the committee, and, if present, other faculty. At the end of the defense, members of the committee consult and vote on whether to pass the dissertation. The Graduate School requires that the dissertation be accepted by all three readers before the doctoral degree can be awarded.

TEACHING

Students are required to teach for at least two years, though the norm will be higher.

Graduate student teaching is an important component of our doctoral program. As teaching assistants, graduate students work with the Language Program Director to teach beginning and intermediate German. Graduate students are required to take a seminar on language pedagogy and to participate in annual teaching workshops held in August. As graduate students progress in their program, they will assist faculty in undergraduate courses in the German Studies Department. Advanced students may be offered the opportunity to work with professors to design their own upper-level courses or to teach such a course with a professor. Faculty mentoring of teaching assistants throughout their course of study is an integral part of our program. Students will be prepared to present a comprehensive teaching portfolio when they enter the job market.

In addition to the language-specific training administered by the German Studies Department, all graduate students are encouraged to participate in the seminars and workshops offered by Brown's *Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning*. The Center offers a teaching certificate program through which graduate students may be awarded Certificate I, II, and III.

The *Goethe Institut Boston* also periodically offers pedagogy workshopsthat graduate students are encouraged to attend.

Advanced students will be offered the opportunity to work with professors to design their own upper-level courses or teach such a course with a professor.

ADVISING

Upon entry into the program, a graduate student's main advisor is the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), who will guide the student with regard to such matters as the logistics of the program, seminar choices during the course-taking stage of the program, exam preparation, and professional development.

During the course-taking stage of the program, graduate students will complete a total of 13 courses. Before the beginning of each semester, students will meet with the DGS to discuss their progress and to have their proposed coursework for that term approved.

While preparing for the "general examination" portion of the qualifying examination, a graduate student will draw on a wide swath of departmental faculty (professors whose primary responsibility currently is teaching and research) for advice and guidance.

For the second part of the qualifying examination, which consists of two separate written exams, a graduate student will choose a three-person committee, including the dissertation advisor, who will serve as chair of the committee, and two additional departmental faculty members whose primary responsibility currently is in teaching and research. The proposed members of this three-person qualifying examination committee must be discussed with, and approved by, the DGS.

At the dissertation stage, the main advising responsibility for a graduate student will lie with the dissertation advisor. In consultation with the dissertation advisor and the DGS, a student will nominate two other faculty readers who, together with the dissertation advisor, will form the dissertation committee.

It is expected that dissertation advisors and readers will maintain regular contact with the dissertator, even during leaves and breaks; that they will respond in a timely manner to professional inquiries from the dissertator; and that they will offer comments and feedback on the dissertator's writing in a timely manner.

It is the responsibility of dissertation advisors in particular to ensure that their advisees make appropriate progress through the program and to intervene when such progress does not occur. It is expected that dissertation advisers will read chapter drafts in a reasonable amount of time and offer critical feedback as needed.

The DGS remains in regular contact with graduate students and communicates with them about the logistics of the program as well as important deadlines. From time to time, the DGS may also pass along information about professional development opportunities to the students (such as pertinent conferences, calls for papers for special journal issues, or job opportunities). For advising and mentoring in the area of pedagogy, graduate students will also draw on the expertise of the departmental Language Program Coordinator.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to organize and participate in student-run colloquia. Graduate students and faculty from other departments working in the areaof German Studies may be invited to participate in these. Students will also have the opportunity to present their own work and invite the occasional Brown or non-Brown speaker.

Unfailing attendance at all academic lectures by guest speakers, symposia,

special seminars, conferences, etc. organized by the Department of German Studies is expected of all graduate students, regardless of their stage in the program. This opportunity for scholarly exchange is an integral part of their graduate education and an important element in the Department's intellectual culture.

RESOURCES

We expect our graduate students to participate in the *Cogut Humanities Institute* at Brown University. The Center organizes events such as lecture series, symposia and conferences and also provides a number of fellowship opportunities to faculty and graduate students.

Students are also encouraged to become engaged in the activities of the *Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning* and to build strong teaching portfolios with the help of the Center and by availing themselves of departmental resources such as supervised teaching.

Graduate students in their third or fourth years have the option to apply for a one-semester stay at the *Humboldt University in Berlin*. In their application, they must state clearly why their research would benefit from spending a semester in Berlin and whom they have chosen as their mentor while at the Humboldt University. A letter in support of the project from the mentor should accompany theapplication.

The John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Library is the primary teaching and research library for the humanities at Brown. It has an excellent collection in German Studies and related fields of interest. Various other specialized collections are located in the John Hay Library, the Orwig Music Library, and the Art Slide Library. Brown University participates in a collaboration with other research

libraries in the New England area so that faculty and students have access to any material they mightneed.

The Department regularly welcomes a *Max Kade Distinguished Visiting Professor of German Studies* who teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in the program. Recent visiting faculty include: Alexander García Düttmann (2015, Berlin), Rembert Hüser (2016, Frankfurt), Christine Ivanovic (2017, Vienna), Edith Anna Kunz (2018, St. Gallen), and Charles de Roche (2019, Zurich).

RECENTLY OFFERED GRADUATE COURSES

IN GERMAN STUDIES

GRMN2660J Late Heidegger: Art, Poetry, Technology (G. Richter)
This seminar will focus on key statements in some of the late Heidegger's most influential essays and lectures, with a focus on the nexus of art, poetry, and technology as it inflects language, dwelling, and Being. While in his thinking of art and poetry his emphasis is on the work of Hölderlin, in his thinking of technology he regards the enframement of technics as both completing and undoing Western metaphysics. For Heidegger, the essence of technology is not technological at all but instead requires a wholly different kind ofquestioning.

GRMN2660A On the Sublime (Z. Sng)
Survey of major theories of the sublime from antiquity to modern times, with emphasis on German, British, and French texts from the 18th to 20th centuries. Authors include Longinus, Immanuel Kant, Edmund Burke, Jean-Francois Lyotard, and Neil Hertz.

GRMN 2660L Hölderlin, in Theory (Z. Sng)
We will spend the semester reading the enigmatic writings of Friedrich Hoelderlin, with particular focus on the pivotal role that he has come to play in major philological and philosophical projects of our time. Critical readings include texts by Heidegger, Adorno, Benjamin, de Man, and Lacoue-Labarthe.

GRMN2340D Nietzsche's Philology (T. Schestag)
In September 1869, Friedrich Nietzsche delivers his inaugural lecture as a professor of philology at the University of Basel: *Homer und die klassische Philologie*. Our seminar will reconsider the *Homeric question* as it unfolds in Giambattista Vico (*Scienza nuova*), and Friedrich August Wolff (*Prolegomena ad Homerum*); its transformation in Nietzsche's inaugural lecture; and the continuous *quest for philology* in Nietzsche's later writings. In English.

GRMN2661L Speaking of Appearances: Phenomenology and Its Fictions (K. Mendicino)
How does Husserl's oeuvre open other ways to think through the relation of language and phenomena than those admitted by the traditions of logic he receives? Especially in his late writings, he seeks to retrace the passive preconditions for every thesis on the world. This radical questioning of origins should establish logic more firmly; however, it lies on a fiction— "wir machen eine Fiktion eines Subjektes," Husserl writes in one introduction—rendering phenomenology contingent upon poetics in a fashion that opens other inroads into Husserl's analyses and methods, which we will pursue via close readings of Husserl's writing, among others. In English.

GRMN2661K Thinking Tradition (G. Richter)
Our modes of being in the world, along with our languages, institutions, and most fundamental assumptions and practices, are determined by the dead who preceeded us. Through close readings of key texts that address the rich and vexed concept of "tradition"—Arendt's *Between Past and Future*, relevant passages from Heidegger's *Being and Time*, Adorno's "On Tradition" and pertinent sections from *Negative Dialectics*—we will address issues of fundamental significance to critical thought today. To interrogate the concept of tradition, we also will attempt to understand the stakes of Arendt's and Adorno's fundamentally divergent interpretations of Benjamin's philosophy of history. [Seminar will be taught in English. Graduate Students from diverse fields welcome.]

GRMN2661G Frankfurt School Critical Theory (G. Richter)
Careful readings of key texts by members of the Frankfurt School, including Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Max Horkheimer, Siegfried Kracauer, and others. Examination of the ways in which these writers transformed their conceptual roots (provided by such thinkers as Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud) into a new set of concepts, premises, and strategies that came to be known as "Critical Theory" (a term invented by Horkheimer in 1937). Taught in English; students from a variety of disciplines welcome. (Seminar takes place also in conjunction with an international conference on the Frankfurt School at Brown during Fall 2016.)

GRMN2661H Lenz-Legenden/Lenz-Legends (T. Schestag)
Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz is a forgotten writer, yet a most influential and haunting presence throughout the centuries (since he was found dead, at age 41, in a Moscow street, in 1792). We will re-read Lenz' pieces for theater (*Der Hofmeister*, *Die Soldaten*) as well as on theater (*Anmerkungen übers Theater*), including translations of, and writings on, Shakespeare. Readings will also include political and philosophical essays, linguistic and etymological studies from his Moscow years, and letters. The seminar's second half includes remnants of encounters with Lenz in Goethe's writings, Büchner's novella *Lenz*, Celan's *Der Meridian* and Oswald Egger's *Euer Lenz.*

GRMN2661I German Romanticism (Z. Sng)
An introduction to the key texts of German romanticism, alongside a selection of secondary commentaries. We will focus on the importance of the period for 20th-century developments in literary theory and criticism. Primary readings will include texts by Kleist, Novalis, Schlegel, Tieck, and Hoffmann, and secondary readings will be drawn from authors such as de Man, Jacobs, Hamacher, and Lacoue-Labarthe / Nancy. Reading knowledge of German recommended but not required.

GRMN2661B Hölderlein: *Andenken* (T. Schestag)
"Andenken" is among Hölderlin's most famous and enigmatic poems. The poem not only provides the description of a certain place in time – a souvenir. It also poses the question of what memory is, and what memory has to do with poetry. What happens when remembrance takes place (in a poem)? The seminar will consider the ways in which texts written and read by Hölderlin are layered and folded into the poem. We will also discuss some of the diverse and incompatible readings or remembrances of "Andenken" (including Heidegger and Celan). Taught in English.

GRMN2660U Goethe (Z. Sng & S. Bernstein)
Close readings from Goethe's oeuvre, including poetry, drama, and prose. Text to be discussed will include Die Leiden des jungen Werthers, "Die Wahlverwandschaften," Götz von Berlichingen, Faust, and selected poetry. We will also consider some critical engagements with Goethe's works (e.g. Benjamin, Ronell, Wellbery, Kittler). Some thematic concerns that will be addressed in relation to Goethe's writings are Bildung, myth, Weltliteratur, and the Gothic. Reading knowledge of German recommended but not required.

GRMN2660V Lessing – Legenden/Lessing (T. Schestag)
In a self-portrait Lessing describes himself as neither actor nor poet but as a cripple [Lahmer] to whom critique is like a crutch that allows him (as a reader and writer) to move from text to text.But critique in Lessing's self-portrait is just another name for philology, the Greek word philología pointing towards language in the name of the friend–phílos. Friends and friendship resurface in unexpected ways throughout the body of Lessing's work. The seminar's first part is dedicated to 7 texts by Lessing; the seminar's second part is going to discuss 7 texts on Lessing. In English; texts in German.

GRMN2660W Reading Adorno's Aesthetic Theory (G. Richter)
Theodor W. Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* stands as one of modernity's great reflections on the relationship among art, truth, and the political. Unfinished at the time of his death in 1969, Adorno's opus magnum argues that "only what does not fit into the world is true." In constant critical engagement with writers and thinkers such as Kant and Hegel, Baudelaire, Benjamin, and Beckett, Adorno sees the true artwork as a scar. Through close and careful readings, our seminar investigates how Adorno's concept of the artwork (literary, musical, painterly, photographic, sculptural, etc.) assumes its own singular dignity, insight, and pleasure. [In English.]

GRMN2660S Inheriting (in) Modernity (G. Richter and D. Krell)
This seminar will devote itself to the vexing question of what an intellectual and cultural inheritance is and how one should respond to its demanding complexities. How do we relate to a tradition, a legacy, a canon, an estate, a previous way of thinking and being? The readability of an inheritance and its many ghosts can be confronted in a rigorous fashion only in the moment when this very readability threatens to break down and the idea of a straightforward understanding is suspended. Readings include Nietzsche, Freud, Kafka, Bloch, Benjamin, Heidegger, Adorno, and Derrida. In English.

IN RELATED DEPARTMENTS

COLT2821P Walter Benjamin: Literary Criticism
Kevin McLaughlin
The seminar will trace the emergence of an idea and a practice of literary criticism in Benjamin's writings from his early essay on Friedrich Hölderlin through his essays on Goethe, Proust, the Baroque Trauerspiel, Kafka and Baudelaire. We will pair selections from the literary works with Benjamin's critical writing on them.

HMAN2970V Aesthetics and Architecture
Paul D. Guyer
Is art produced for disinterested contemplation? Then how can architecture, which fundamentally serves one of the most fundamental human interests, that for shelter from an adverse environment, count as art? This question has both motivated philosophical speculation and caused tension in architectural practice for centuries. We will approach it through texts by philosophers such as Kames, Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Wittgenstein; architects such as Vitruvius, Alberti, Loos, Wright, Corbusier, and Venturi; and critics such as Ruskin, Watkins, Vidler, and Leatherbarrow. This course is a seminar requiring oral presentation and a term paper.

COLT 2720D S01: Translation: Theory and Practice
Esther K. Whitfield
This seminar will address the theory and practice of translation, and their place in the Humanities. Essays by translators, authors and scholars will be drawn from a range of languages and contexts, as will literary and historical texts. Each participating student will work on a substantial translation project over the course of the semester. The seminar is open only to graduate students; a strong knowledge of at least one language other than English is required.

HMAN 2970 Art and Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century
Paul Guyer
An excessively cognitivist approach to aesthetics in German Idealism led to Hegel's thesis of the "end of art" (who had himself redefined aesthetics as philosophy of art). During the remainder of the century, philosophers searched for more complex approaches to the experience of art that would not have this consequence. We will explore this narrative. Authors to be studied include Hegel, Schopenhauer, Emerson, Nietzsche, Ruskin, Dilthey, and Santayana.