

Department of German Studies

Courses - Spring 2026

GRMNO110 Intensive Beginning German

An intensive, double-credit language course that meets five days a week for 9 hours and focuses on speaking, listening, reading and writing skills and the cultures of the German-speaking countries. At the end of the semester, students will be able to communicate successfully about everyday topics relating to the university, jobs, daily life and traveling. Ideal for undergraduate students interested in learning German for study abroad or for concentration requirements and for graduate students interested in starting their foreign language requirements. The course is designed for new students of German, regardless of any previous experience with German.

Jane Sokolosky S01 MWF 1-1:50; MWF 2-2:50

Ethan Lussky C01 TuTh 9-10:20

TA/TBD C02 TuTh 1-2:20

GRMNO200 Beginning German

A course in the language and cultures of German-speaking countries. Four hours per week plus regular computer and listening comprehension work. At the end of the year, students will be able to communicate about everyday topics and participate in the annual film festival. This is the second half of a year-long course. Students must have taken GRMN0100 to receive credit for this course. The final grade for this course will become the final grade for GRMN0100.

Jonathan Fine S01 MWF 9-9:50, Tu 12-12:50

Melanie Unger S02 MWF 12-12:50, Tu 12-12:50

GRMNO400 Intermediate German II

An intermediate German course that stresses improvement of the four language skills. Students read short stories and a novel; screen one film; maintain a blog in German. Topics include German art, history, and literature. Frequent writing assignments. Grammar review as needed. Four hours per week. Recommended prerequisite: GRMN0300. WRIT

Jonathan Fine S01 MWF 10-10:50, Th 12-12:50

Ioannis Dimopoulos S02 MWF 1-1:50, Th 12-12:50

GRMNO600B Was ist Deutsch?

In this course we will examine some of the ideas and myths that became entangled with the emerging notion of a "German" identity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Some of the terms that we will discuss include 'Kultur,' 'Bildung,' 'Freiheit' and 'Gesellschaft,' all of which have rich semantic histories. **Conducted in German.** WRIT.

Thomas Kniesche S01 MWF 11-11:50

GRMN1330C German Romanticism: Texts, Contexts, and Legacies

The Romantic Age in German literature, art, and philosophy is widely acknowledged as pivotal, not just for the development of German modernity, but for the entire history of European literature and art in the transition from the post-Enlightenment period to the modern one. Many topics of discussion today, in the field of aesthetics, literary criticism, and philosophy, continue to be indebted to the work of German Romantic writers. But the corpus of Romantic writing is itself a heterogeneous, complex one that defies easy characterization, because these texts are radical and trenchant in their criticism of traditional categories of form, genre, and style. The goal of this seminar is to explore together this diverse body of writing in order to trace its nuances and complexities, with the aim of connecting it not just to its historical moment but also to ours.

Zachary Sng 501 TuTh 1-2:20

GRMN1441Q Fragen und Antworten

Questions and answers haunt our everyday life. Rarely their co-appearance, when visiting us; rarely our co-habitation with them; is put—into question. And no answer responding to why the entire life, at times, seems to be a continuous Q&A-session, that wouldn't, immediately, provoke more questions. Questions and answers oscillate between violence and innocence, between mimesis and mockery, rhetorical, didactic and epistemological approaches. This seminar will pursue questions and answers in philosophical, literary and psychoanalytical texts (by Nietzsche, Frege, Wittgenstein; Hebel, Kafka; Freud), in fairy-tales ("Rumpelstilzchen") and poems (by Goethe and Rolf Dieter Brinkmann), in Plato's early dialogue Protagoras, in Bertolt Brecht's interrogation by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) on October 30 1947, in a scene from Robert de Niro's movie *The Good Shepherd* (2006), and in Jean Genet's last interview (BBC, summer 1985). — Class Taught in German

Thomas Schestag 501 TuTh 10:30-11:50

GRMN1703 Anti/formalisms Then and Now

This seminar examines the aesthetic and political stakes of form from German idealism to the present, in film and visual arts. Beginning with Kant's transcendental aesthetic and Hegel's dialectic of form and matter, we will consider how Marx's analysis of the value-form radicalizes formal thinking by linking aesthetics and critique. The course traces how twentieth-century figures such as Warburg, Benjamin, Adorno, and Bataille reconfigured form as a historical, affective, and political process—or rather, project—before turning to contemporary theorists—including Bradley, Brinkema, Jackson, and Halberstam—who revisit aesthetic form and formalism through antiracist, feminist, queer, and materialist lenses. Readings and screenings will situate "anti/formalism" as a critical practice that both inherits and subverts formalist traditions, asking what it means to think with and against form across media. Students will develop analytical and methodological tools to read aesthetic form as a site of tension between structure and excess, order and undoing—an in/determination that is fundamental to our understanding of the interplay of aesthetics and politics, then and now. Films and art include works by American Artist, Hito Steyerl, Hans Richter, Wu Tsang, Jacolby Satterwhite, Rosa von Praunheim, and others. In English.

Lou Silhol-Macher 501 Tu 4-6:30

GRMN1900S Money, Murder, Mystery: Contemporary Crime Fiction

In 1803 the German jurist and historian Carl Friedrich von Savigny publishes a civil treatise *Das Recht des Besizes*, dealing with the question of how to describe and justify private property as possession. Almost 50 years later, Jacob Grimm delivers a lecture under a similar yet slightly—and decisively—different title: *Das Wort des Besizes*, dealing not only with the history and semantics of the word *Besitz* but with the word *itself*. His lecture transforms a juridical question into a linguistic one: how is it possible (and is it possible at all) to possess a *word*? In other words: to turn a language into one's own in order to *possess* it? The seminar will discuss aspects of this question in legal, philosophical, political, linguistic, and literary texts by (among others) Rousseau, Kant, Babeuf, Proudhon, Hölderlin, Kleist, Hebel, Marx, and Kafka. Senior seminar. **Taught in German.**

Thomas Kniesche 501 MWF 2-2:50

GRMN2662W On Being with the Dead in Art, Literature, and Philosophy

This seminar will explore the idea that to be alive in an emphatic sense is to live not only with the living but also with the dead. This way of being challenges us continually to reinterpret our relationship with the dead and to engage with them in a spectral dialogue. The dead demand to be treated responsibly in this exchange, even though—or precisely because—they are no longer among the living. But our ways of being with the dead always also pertain to ourselves and our future. After contemplating Heidegger's reflections on being with the dead in *Being and Time*, we will conduct a series of case studies drawn from art and critical thought, including Derrida's "Life-Death" seminar, Barthes' *Mourning Diary*, the prose and poetry of Kafka, Rilke, and Celan, Adorno's reflections on art "after Auschwitz," and other works.

Gerhard Richter 501 M 3-5:30

GRMN2663B Dream-Work or, the Poetics of Thought

In his seminar on the *Formations of the Unconscious*, Jacques Lacan remarks: "If there's anything that the Freudian experience tells us, it is that we are determined by laws in the very depths of ourselves, as we rightly or wrongly say, adopting an image—let's simply say, at the level of what lies within us beyond our conceptual grasp of ourselves, beyond the idea that we have of ourselves and draw upon." Those 'laws' align, before all else, with the functions of condensation and displacement that Freud elaborates in the *Interpretation of Dreams*, and that draw what Freud calls the 'Dream-Work' (*Traumarbeit*) into closest proximity with the work of poetry. Departing from Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*, we will examine the poetics of thought through both psychoanalysis and literary analysis, with readings by writers such as Paul Celan, Sandor Ferenczi, Sigmund Freud, Serge Leclair, Heiner Müller, and Robert Musil.

Kristina Mendicino 501 W 3-5:30

COURSES IN OTHER DEPARTMENTS THAT MAY COUNT TOWARDS CONCENTRATION

COLT 1210 Introduction to the Theory of Literature

An historical introduction to problems of literary theory from the classical to the postmodern. Issues to be examined include mimesis, rhetoric, hermeneutics, history, psychoanalysis, formalisms and ideological criticism (questions of race, gender, sexuality, postcolonialism). Primarily for advanced undergraduates. Lectures, discussions; several short papers.

COLT 1430L Voices of Romanticism

Readings of lyric poetry in the European Romantic tradition. Focus on problems of lyric subjectivity and representation, and the rhetoric of "voice." Emphasis on formal features of poetry. The course will be based on close reading and frequent writing assignments. Readings from Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Goethe, Novalis, Hugo, Nerval, Lamartine, Baudelaire and others.

COLT 1816 Cultures of Fascism

It has often been stated that fascism, as a totalitarian political system, could not produce a culture of its own but only propaganda or at best ideology. In this course we will explore this proposition by exploring some of fascism's products in texts, film, art and architecture through the lens of critics and theorists of fascism such as Arendt, Benjamin, Kracauer, Gramsci, Bataille, Primo Levi (among others). Our focus will be on the Italian and German examples.

JUDS 0902 History of the Holocaust (HIST 0930I)

Explores questions raised by the Holocaust regarding how such barbarism erupted in our so-called civilized and enlightened age. Attempts to analyze the meaning of the Holocaust from three vantage points: that of European, and more particularly, German history; that of Jewish history; and that of those states and religious institutions which shared responsibility. Enrollment limited to 40. If unable to enroll because of closed registration please contact the professor and a wait list will be created.

HIAA 1850H Berlin: Architecture, Politics and Memory

This course deals with the architecture and urbanism of the German capital and the way the city's traditions of commemoration in different phases of its history and under different political regimes. Students will research historic structures and sites of the 19th through 21st Centuries and engage with the intense German debate about historic preservation and commemoration. The course will travel to Berlin during spring break. There we would meet with local architects, politicians and artists to discuss the city's engagement with its dramatic past. Course enrollment by application.

MUSC 1500A The Genius of Bach

An examination of the life and work of Bach, his vocal, orchestral, keyboard music, including its place in German society, views of his contemporaries and explanation of his performance venues, manuscript and publishing history.

MUSC 1610 Beethoven: Work, Biography, and Afterlife

By the 20th century latest, Ludwig van Beethoven became the greatest icon in music history. His presence extends beyond the realm of classical music into history, politics and popular culture, which celebrates him as the embodiment of the humanistic artist figure. This course examines Beethoven in a field of tension between biography, work and contemporary history. The musical work always in focus, it traces his development from a young piano virtuoso writing for his own performances to the creator of late, highly abstract spiritual works that completely leave the realm of "performance music". Alongside a study of his highly dramatic life and spheres of influence, we will examine his early works and trace the development of his musical language within the different Genres.

PHIL 1232 Kant's Critique of Judgment (Aesthetics and Teleology)

A study of Kant's Critique of the Power of Judgment. Topics will include Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment, including his account of the beautiful and the sublime; teleology, organic life, and the limits of mechanical explanation; and the relationship between ethics, aesthetics, and teleology.