

GERMAN 280
GERMAN CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION

BULLETIN INFORMATION

GERM 280: German Culture and Civilization (3 credit hours)

Course Description:

Survey of German literature, culture, and heritage from the Middle Ages to the present. Taught in English

SAMPLE COURSE OVERVIEW

What is “German”? Where is “Germany”? Who are the “Germans”? Finding answers to these questions is harder than it may at first appear and involves plumbing the length and breadth of the history of German-speaking central Europe. Using a variety of media (images, film, music, texts) this course will introduce you to that culture, starting with Tacitus’s famous description of the Germanic tribes around 98CE, and ending with the fall of the Berlin Wall and unification of Germany in 1989/90. The focus will be on cultural history in the widest sense, meaning not only attention to the peaks of literature, the visual arts, and music, but also to the development of major trends in thought as formulated by significant philosophers and reflected in political and social shifts. Class readings and discussion will be conducted in English.

ITEMIZED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of German 280, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the principles of historical thinking to understand human societies, specifically through the cultural history of German-speaking central Europe from the medieval era to the present.
2. Define and summarize major events, developments, and themes of German cultural history from the medieval era to the present.
3. Identify on a map of Europe the various regions that have been German-speaking in the past, are currently German-speaking, or were at some point settled by Germanic tribes.
4. Explain how German literary texts, musical compositions, and works of art are often shaped by specific historical contexts.
5. Recognize and comment on specific works of art by significant German-speaking artists (Dürer, Friedrich, Haeckel, etc.); and at least one key theory of such philosophers as Luther, Kant, Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche.
6. Explain how German philosophers, writers, artists, and politicians have engaged with the idea of history, or used a particular interpretation of history in their works.
7. Recognize the differences between original historical source material (primary sources) and later scholarly interpretations of those sources (secondary sources).

8. Develop interpretive historical arguments drawing on primary and/or secondary sources.

SAMPLE REQUIRED TEXTS/SUGGESTED READINGS/MATERIALS

1. Hagen Schulze, *Germany: A New History* (Harvard University Press, 2001).
2. The following items will be available in the Course Reader:
 - a. Tacitus, *Germania*
 - b. Excerpts from *Parzifal*
 - c. Martin Luther, Open Letter on Translating
 - d. Hans Sachs "The Wittenberg Nightingale"
 - e. Anon. The Faust Chapbook (Excerpt)
 - f. Andreas Gryphius, "Tears for the Fatherland"
 - g. Johan Sebastian Bach, "Coffee Cantata"
 - h. Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?"
 - i. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "On German Architecture, 1772"
 - j. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust* (Excerpts)
 - k. Friedrich Schiller, "Ode to Joy"
 - l. Ludwig van Beethoven, "Heiligenstadt Testament"
 - m. Schlegel und Novalis: some quotes on Romanticism
 - n. Rückert, "Barbarossa"
 - o. Ernst Moritz Arndt, "Of the German Fatherland"
 - p. Hoffmann von Fallersleben, "The Song of the Germans"
 - q. Heinrich Heine Germany, A Winter's Tale
 - r. Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Excerpts)
 - s. Otto von Bismarck, Speech, 30.09.1862
 - t. Richard Wagner, *The Meistersingers of Nuremberg* (Excerpt)
 - u. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* (Excerpt)
 - v. Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday* (Excerpt)
 - w. Scheidemann, Phillip "Report on the 9th of November, 1918"
 - x. Excerpts from Mary Fulbrook *A History of Germany 1918-2008: The Divided Nation* (Chicester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008).
 - y. *The Times*, Nov 12 1918, "Scenes In Berlin"; & Nov 13 1918, "All-Socialist Government."
 - z. Adolf Hitler, "Call to the Nation" 1932
 - aa. Thomas Mann, "Germany and the Germans"
 - ab. Bertolt Brecht "The Solution"
 - ac. Günter Eich "Inventory"
 - ad. Volker Braun, Stefan Heym, Christa Wolf, u.a. "For our Country"
 - ae. Christa Wolf „The Language of the *Wende*"
 - af. Martin Walser, "Thoughts Upon the Writing of a Sunday Speech," 1998.

SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS AND/OR EXAMS

1. **Attendance and participation:** Although this is primarily a lecture course, you are encouraged to come to class well-prepared and to participate by asking and/or

answering questions or contributing to class discussion. Your participation will be noted daily and will be graded as either 'excellent', 'above average', 'satisfactory', 'unsatisfactory', or absent each day of class. The average of these assessments will be your participation grade for the course. More than three unexcused absences will result in a grade penalty.

2. **Essays:** There will be two written assignments given during the semester. These will be 3 pages long, and will be graded using a rubric that will be distributed in advance. One essay will highlight the differences between primary and secondary historical documents; the other will allow you to compare and contrast the culture and values of the past with our contemporary culture and norms. Topics will be generated from course content.
3. **Quizzes:** The first 5 minutes of every Tuesday class will be dedicated to a short written quiz on the topics covered in the previous week. You will be expected to prepare for the quiz by reviewing the Powerpoints online. You must also be able to answer questions on the readings for the previous week! Each student's worst quiz score will be dropped.
4. **Exams:** The midterm and final exams will consist mainly of short answer keyword identifications and essay questions. The final exam will cover mainly the second part of the course, but will also include some overview questions about German cultural history.
5. **Beyond the Classroom:** *"German" History and Culture on Campus:* On campus and around Columbia we can find performances or exhibitions of works that originate in the German-speaking world (Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg) or that seek to portray some aspect of the history of that region. This semester, for instance, the SC Philharmonic will perform Mahler, Mozart, and Bach; German movies will be shown regularly on campus and at the Nickelodeon; and a guest speaker will give a talk on how the Austrian composer Arnold Schoenberg composed music about the Holocaust. Many other similar opportunities will arise over the course of the semester. You must attend ONE such event and write a 3-page review of it/response to it/paper about it sometime during the semester. The assignment must be completed by the last day of classes. Your paper should not just discuss the event itself, but its cultural-historical context. How does the movie/play/artwork/lecture/opera/concert fit into the story that we have explored in class?

SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE WITH TIMELINE OF TOPICS, READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS, EXAMS/PROJECTS

- Class 1:** Introduction to the Course
- a. How the past matters to the present and what problems presentism plays for the study of the past.
 - b. How we find history: an introduction to historical methods and research, selecting and interpreting evidence and sources.

- c. How historical understanding means seeing the past less as an unchanging recitation of names and dates and more as a constantly evolving, complex set of processes and forces that requires the ethical use of evidence.
- d. How these questions apply in particular to *German cultural* history
- e. Key concepts: Chronologies, evidence, documents, culture, material culture, German, Germany, teleology, Sonderweg, BCE and CE *versus* BC and AD.

Assignment

- a. Read Schulze's Preface, vii-ix
Read Text 1: Tacitus

Class 2:

Before the German Medieval Period...

- a. Events, works, movements, and concepts:
Rome and the Germanic Tribes / The Battle of Teutoburg Forest / Tacitus' *Germania* / The Great Migrations
- b. People:
Arminius / Varus / Tacitus

Assignment

- a. Read Schulze 1-29

Class 3:

The Early German Middle Ages

- a. Events, works, movements, and concepts:
The Rise of the Frankish Empire / The Carolingian Dynasty / The Emergence of the Holy Roman Empire
- b. People:
Clovis / Charlemagne / Louis the Pious

Discussion:

Periodization: How and why do we break the past up into periods, epochs, movements? What do we gain and what do we lose by doing this?

Assignment

- a. Read Schulze 30-50
Read Text 2: Excerpts from Wolfram

Class 4:

The High Middle Ages

- a. Events, works, movements, and concepts:
Middle High German Literature / The Rise of Cities & Trade / The Hanseatic League
- b. People:
The Emperor Friedrich Barbarossa / Wolfram von Eschenbach

Discussion:

The idea of a national "Pantheon": Why is it that some figures become mythologized in popular culture and others are all but forgotten? Are there icons like Barbarossa in American history?

Assignment

Read Schulze 30-50

Class 5:

Transitions from the Late Medieval Period to the Early Modern Period

- a. Events, works, movements, and concepts:
The Late Middle Ages / The Printing Press / The Early Modern Era (The “Renaissance”)
- b. People:
Johannes Gutenberg / Albrecht Dürer

Assignment

- a. Read Text 3: Luther’s “Letter”
Read Text 4: Sachs

Class 6:

The Protestant Reformation

- a. Events, works, movements, and concepts:
The Protestant Reformation / The 95 theses / The Diet and Edict of Worms / Luther’s Bible translation / Luther’s Influence on Modern Standard German
- b. People:
Martin Luther / Hans Sachs / Lucas Cranach

Assignment

- a. Read Schulze 50-67
Read Text 5: Anon. *Faust*

Class 7:

The Counterreformation

- a. Events, works, movements, and concepts:
The Legend of Faust / The Counterreformation / The 30 Years War
- b. People:
John Calvin / Loyola / Gustav Adolf

Assignment

- a. Read Schulze 69-86
Read Text 6: Andreas Gryphius
Read Text 7: Bach

Class 8:

The Baroque Period

- a. Events, works, movements, and concepts:
Baroque Culture / The Birth of “German” Music
- b. People:
Johann Sebastian Bach

Assignment

- a. Read Text 8: Kant

Class 9:

The Enlightenment

- a. Events, works, movements, and concepts:
The Rise of Prussia / The Age of Absolutism / The Enlightenment / Kant's Modern Philosophy
- b. People:
Frederick the Great of Prussia / Emmanuel Kant

Discussion:

How might Immanuel Kant's arguments in "What is Enlightenment?" be applied to the present era? Have they lost their relevance? Would he say we lived in an Enlightened age? Is it presentist of us to ask such questions?

Assignment

- a. Read Text 9: Goethe
Read Schulze 86-99
Prepare discussion topic

Class 10:

The Rise of "German" Culture

- a. Events, works, movements, and concepts:
"German" Architecture / "German" Literature / The *Sturm und Drang* movement
- b. People:
Johann Gottfried Herder / G.E. Lessing

Discussion:

As you prepare to tackle Essay 1, what are some of the resources you can use to find primary and secondary sources on German cultural history? How can you be sure of the accuracy of a primary source? How can you evaluate the quality of a secondary source? How can you tell whether an online source can be trusted?

Assignment

- a. Read Text 10: Excerpts from Goethe
As a follow-up on today's discussion, locate 1 primary source of Goethe's famous play and 1 secondary source that discusses it. Be prepared to share in class how you located these sources, and what measures you used to evaluate them.

Class 11:

The "Age of Goethe"

- a. Events, works, movements, and concepts:
Weimar Classicism / Goethe's *Faust*
- b. People:
J.J. Winckelmann / Friedrich Schiller / Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Assignment

- a. Start working on Essay 1.

ESSAY ONE TOPIC

- a. Any representation of the past is of necessity selective, pulling some occurrences, movements, or individuals to the fore and placing less or

no emphasis on others. Some of the figures we have discussed were even mythologized after their death--Friedrich Barbarossa, Charlemagne, or Frederick the Great for instance. Choose one of these three figures and discuss the ways in which he was represented by later generations. Speculate as to why the individual you have chosen became so significant. Consider, too, what such mythologization indicates about how history is used by succeeding generations. Finally, discuss whether/how this phenomenon can be seen in contemporary representations of historical figures from the United States.

Class 12:

The Habsburg Empire in the Late 18th Century

- a. Events, works, movements, and concepts: The Habsburg Empire / Viennese Musical Classicism
- b. People:
Maria Theresia / Josef Haydn / Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Assignment

- a. Read Text 11: Schiller
Read Text 12: Beethoven
Read Text 13: Schlegel & Novalis

Class 13:

The Romantic Movement

- a. Events, works, movements, and concepts:
Romanticism in Music, Literature, and Art
- b. People:
Ludwig van Beethoven / Caspar David Friedrich / The Brothers Grimm

Assignment

- a. Read Text 14: Rückert
Read Text 15: Arndt
Read Text 16: Fallersleben

Class 14:

The Napoleonic Era

- a. Events, works, movements, and concepts:
The French Revolution / The Napoleonic Era / The Birth of German Nationalism
- b. People:
Napoleon / Turnvater Jahn

Discussion:

History emerged as an academic discipline in nineteenth-century Germany. This was also the century when German nationalism was on the rise. What are the implications of this simultaneity for a course in German cultural history?

Assignment

- a. Essay 1 due next class period!

Read Schulze 101-106
Read Text 17: Heine

- Class 15:** The Europe of Metternich
- a. Events, works, movements, and concepts:
The Congress of Vienna / The Biedermeier Era
 - b. People:
Metternich / Heinrich Heine / Carl von Spitzweg
- Assignment
- a. Prepare for the Midterm

- Class 16:** Midterm Exam
- Assignment
- a. Read Schulze 106-121
Read Text 18: Marx & Engels

- Class 17:** The Industrialization of Germany
- a. Events, works, movements, and concepts:
Hegel's Philosophy of History / Dialectical Thinking / Industrialization / 1848, The Year of Revolutions
 - b. People:
G.W.F. Hegel / Karl Marx
- Assignment
- a. Read Schulze 123-145
Read Text 19: Bismarck

- Class 18:** A German Empire
- a. Events, works, movements, and concepts:
The Rise of the Iron Chancellor / The Unification of Germany, 1871 / Bismarck's *Realpolitik* & *Kulturkampf* / "Dropping the Pilot"
 - b. People:
Otto von Bismarck / Kaiser Wilhelm I / Kaiser Wilhelm II
- Discussion:
- Otto von Bismarck is depicted in a number of paintings, photographs, and cartoons in our textbook Germany, A New History. How do these depictions differ? What can visual materials add to our understanding of historical events? Why and how does a textbook like Schulze's use images? (Compare with the original unillustrated German edition, Kleine deutsche Geschichte.)*
- Assignment
- a. Read Text 20: Wagner

- Class 19:** German Music, Art, and Literature in the Late 19th Century

- a. Events, works, movements, and concepts:
Late Romanticism / Wagner's Hans Sachs / Realism in the visual arts and literature
- b. People:
Richard Wagner / Adolph von Menzel / Anton von Werner

Assignment

- a. Read Schulze 147-167
Read Text 21: Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*

Class 20:

Fin-de-Siècle Reevaluations of The Western Tradition

- a. Friedrich Nietzsche's radical critique of modernity / The Invention of Psychoanalysis
- b. People:
Friedrich Nietzsche / Sigmund Freud

Assignment

- a. Read Text 22: Zweig

Class 21:

Vienna 1900

- a. Events, works, movements, and concepts:
Vienna, 1900: Johann Strauss, Gustav Klimt, Otto Wagner

Assignment

- a. Read Schulze 169-189

Class 22:

All the *-isms*

- a. Events, works, movements, and concepts:
A Rash of Movements: Naturalism, Expressionism, *Jugendstil*, etc.
- b. People:
Gerhardt Hauptmann / Franz Marc / Emil Nolde

Assignment

- a. Read Schulze 191-213
Read Text 23: Scheidemann

Class 23:

The War to End All Wars

- a. Events, works, movements, and concepts:
World War I and the November Revolution
- b. People:
Hindenburg / Phillip Scheidemann / Karl Liebknecht / Rosa Luxemburg

Assignment

- a. Read Schulze 215-243
Watch *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*
Start preparing Essay Two!

ESSAY TWO TOPIC

- b. Read Phillip Scheidemann's personal account of what took place on November 9th, 1918, the day he declared the Weimar Republic. Now read how that event was reported at the time by the *Times of London*, and finally how it has since been evaluated by the historian

Mary Fulbrook in her *History of Germany 1918-2008*. Write an analysis of the event using (and evaluating) all three sources. You might, for instance, consider what each layer of analysis adds to our understanding of the event: Are there aspects of the personal account that are contradicted by or omitted from the later accounts? How does Scheidemann appear to frame the account, and to what ends? What was the significance of the event at the time, and how has its significance changed over time? To what extent can we say that we “know” what happened in the Reichstag on November 11, 1918?

Class 24:

Weimar Germany

- a. Events, works, movements, and concepts:
The Weimar Republic / Weimar Film / *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*
- b. People:
Friedrich Ebert / Fritz Lang / Otto Dix / Georg Grosz

Assignment

- a. Read Schulze 245-275
Read Text 26: Hitler
Read text 27: Thomas Mann

Class 25:

The Hitler Era

- a. Events, works, movements, and concepts:
The Third Reich / *Triumph des Willens* / KdF / The Nuremberg Laws / The Holocaust
- b. People:
Leni Riefenstahl / Adolf Hitler / Thomas Mann

Assignment

- a. Essay 2 due
Read Schulze 277-297
Read texts 28 and 29: Brecht and Eich

Class 26:

The Two Germanies

- a. Events, works, movements, and concepts:
The Hungry Years / The Economic Miracle / A Divided Germany
- b. People:
Konrad Adenauer / Bertolt Brecht / Conrad Schumann / Willy Brandt

Assignment

- a. Read Schulze 299-331
Read Text 29: Braun, Heym, Wolf
Read Text 30: Wolf

Class 27:

The Fall of the Berlin Wall

- a. Events, works, movements, and concepts:
The Fall of the Wall / German Unification

b. People:

Helmut Kohl / Christian Führer / Kurt Masur / Erich Honeker

Assignment

a. Read Schulze 333-340

Read Text 31: Walser

Find a current event online!

Class 28:

Germany Today

a. Germany since 1989 / What is "German" culture?

Final Exam according to University exam schedule