GERMANIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

W. L. Harkness Hall, 203.432.0788
http://german.yale.edu
M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

Chair
Kirk Wetters

Director of Graduate Studies
Rüdiger Campe

Professors Rüdiger Campe, Carol Jacobs (Emerita), Rainer Nägele (Emeritus), Paul North, Brigitte Peucker, Kirk Wetters

Assistant Professor Katrin Truestedt

Affiliated Faculty Jeffrey Alexander (Sociology), Jennifer Allen (History), Seyla Benhabib (Political Science; Philosophy), Thomas Connolly (French), Paul Franks (Philosophy), Gundula Kreuzer (Music), Patrick McCreless (Music), Steven Smith (Political Science), David Sorkin (History), Nicola Suthor (History of Art), Katie Trumpener (Comparative Literature; English)

FIELDS OF STUDY
German literature and culture from the Middle Ages to the twenty-first century in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland; literary and cultural theory; literature and philosophy; literature and science; media history and theory; visuality and German cinema.

SPECIAL ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENT
All students must provide evidence of mastery of German upon application.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE
Students are required to demonstrate, besides proficiency in German, a reading knowledge of one other foreign language in the third term of study. French is recommended, although occasionally, on consultation with the director of graduate studies (DGS), other relevant languages may be substituted. The faculty in German considers teaching to be essential to the professional preparation of graduate students. Four terms of teaching are required beginning in the third year of study. Students normally teach undergraduate language courses under supervision for at least three terms. Other teaching experiences are available thereafter in literature, theory, film, etc.

In the first two years of study, students take four courses per term. Three of these sixteen courses in the first four terms may be audited.

Oral examinations must be passed in the fifth and sixth terms of study, and a dissertation prospectus should be submitted no later than the end of the sixth term. All students will be asked to defend the prospectus in an informal discussion with the faculty. The defense will take place before the prospectus is officially approved, usually in May of the sixth term. Students are admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D. upon completion of all predissertation requirements, including the prospectus. Candidates who wish to write the dissertation in a language other than English, in this case in German, should notify the DGS at the moment of the prospectus defense.

After the submission of the prospectus, the student’s time is devoted mainly to the preparation of the dissertation. A dissertation committee will be set up for each student at work on the dissertation. It is expected that students will periodically pass their work along to members of their committee, so that faculty members in addition to the dissertation adviser can make suggestions well before the dissertation is submitted. Drafts of each chapter must be submitted in a timely fashion to all members of the student’s committee: the first chapter should be submitted to the committee by February 1 of the fourth year of study; the second chapter should be submitted by January 1 of the fifth year. There will be a formal review of the first chapter. After the dissertation is submitted, the DGS convenes a defense colloquium with the candidate, the committee, and invited guests.

Two concentrations are available to graduate students: Germanic Literature and German Studies. There is a special combined degree with Film and Media Studies; see below.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE GERMANIC LITERATURE CONCENTRATION
During the first two years of study, students are required to take sixteen term courses, four of which may be taken outside the department. Three courses may be audited.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE GERMAN STUDIES CONCENTRATION
During the first two years of study, students are required to take sixteen term courses, seven of which may be taken outside the department. Three of those courses may be audited. Students are asked to define an area of concentration and will meet with appropriate advisers from both within and outside the department.
COMBINED PH.D. PROGRAM WITH FILM AND MEDIA STUDIES

The Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures also offers, in conjunction with the Film and Media Studies Program, a combined Ph.D. in Germanic Languages and Literatures and Film and Media Studies. For further details, see Film and Media Studies. Applicants to the combined program must indicate on their application that they are applying both to Film and Media Studies and to Germanic Languages and Literatures. All documentation within the application should include this information.

MASTER’S DEGREES

M.Phil. See Degree Requirements under Policies and Regulations.

M.A. (en route to the Ph.D.) Students enrolled in the Ph.D. program may qualify for the M.A. degree upon completion of a minimum of eight graduate term courses and the demonstration of reading knowledge in either French or another language chosen in consultation with the DGS.

Further information is available upon request to the Registrar, Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, Yale University, PO Box 208210, New Haven CT 06520-8210; e-mail, german@yale.edu.

COURSES

GMAN 577b / MDVL 578b, The Crusades in Medieval German Literature  Mary Paddock
Introduction to the impact of the Crusades on the courtly literary culture of the German High Middle Ages (twelfth through thirteenth centuries). Study focuses on the evolution of attitudes toward the Crusades and the "enemy" in the works of major artists of the era in epic, romance, and poetry. Attention to the language and formal conventions of these literary genres. All readings in English.

GMAN 592a / FILM 765a, The Films of Fassbinder, Herzog, and Haneke  Brigitte Peucker
Examination of representative films by three major German-language auteurs. Topics include cinema's investment in painting and theatricality; its relation to gendered, imaginary, and abject bodies and to the specificities of time and place; the fictions of the self that these auteurs construct; and how questions of identity intersect with ideology and the political. Films subtitled; all readings and discussion in English.

GMAN 602a / CPLT 621a, Books, Displays, and Systems Theory  Henry Sussman
A status report on the book as a medium in an age of cybernetic technology and virtual reality. The contentious no-man’s-land between books and contemporary systems.

GMAN 603a / CPLT 699a / PHIL 602a, Heidegger’s Being and Time  Martin Hägglund
A systematic, chapter-by-chapter study of Heidegger’s Being and Time, arguably the most important work of philosophy of the twentieth century. All the major themes of the book are addressed in detail, with a particular emphasis on care, time, death, and the meaning of being.

GMAN 617a, Psychoanalysis: Key Concepts and Their Circulation among the Disciplines  Moira Fradinger
Working with primary sources mainly from the Freudian and Lacanian corpuses, this seminar is an introduction to key concepts of psychoanalytic theory, ending with an exploration of the afterlife of these concepts in other disciplines, focusing on one or two concrete examples. Students gain proficiency in what has been called “the language of psychoanalysis,” as well as the tools to assess how these concepts have been translated into the language of disciplines such as political theory, film studies, gender studies, sociology, etc. Concepts to be studied include the unconscious, the ego, identification, the drive, the death drive, repetition, the imaginary, the symbolic, the real, and jouissance. Depending on the interests of the group, others can be added (such as the difference between neurosis, perversion, and psychosis). Main examples from other disciplines are the theory of ideology and theories of sexual difference and gender. Commentators and readers of Freud and Lacan are consulted as secondary sources (Michel Arrivé, Guy Le Gaufey, Jean Laplanche, André Green, Markos Zafiropoulos, and others).

GMAN 620b / CPLT 868b, Speaking for Others: Advocacy and Representation in Law and Literature  Rüdiger Campe
Speaking for others (representing others) before a third party (judge or audience) is a basic constellation in Western literature rooted in legal, political, and religious practices. Speaking for others has been an alternative to and can function as reinterpretation of our usual dual idea of communication (Me speaking to You about Something in the world, G.H. Mead). Readings address the history and structure of speaking for others in three major sections: (1) ancient rhetoric and the Christian figure of speaking-for (Christ, the "paraclete"); Aristotelian and Quintilian on rhetoric; Aeschylus, Eumenides; the Gospel of St. John; (2) political representation and speaking for others in (early) modern times: Hobbes and Rousseau on representation; Schiller, Don Carlos; Hölderlin, Empedocles; and (3) the critique of speaking for others in contemporary theory and literature: the Deleuze-Foucault debate on advocacy in the public space; Kafka, The Trial and related texts; Celan, The Meridian and related poems; Canetti on literature as art of becoming-the-other.

GMAN 649a / CPLT 589a, Walter Benjamin and the Modernization of Nineteenth-Century Paris  Henry Sussman
The radical modernization of Paris under the Second Empire (1851–70) as seen through the eyes of Walter Benjamin. Focus on Benjamin’s Arcades Project, a compendium that charted developments such as Parisian mass transit and streamlined traffic, the construction of apartment houses, and the dissemination of mass media. Readings from other literary texts on the same events include works by Balzac, Zola, and Aragon.
GMAN 649a / JDST 651a, Critical Theory and the Frankfurt School  Asaf Angermann
This course is an introduction to the thought and writings of the philosophers known as the Frankfurt School, who founded and developed the idea of Critical Theory. Taken in its original meaning as a method or even a practice, rather than a systematic theory, Critical Theory suggests a way of thinking about the interrelations between philosophy and society, culture and politics, and on the complex relation between philosophical concepts and social reality. By reading key texts of Frankfurt School authors such as Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Benjamin, Krakauer, and Fromm, the course inquires into the meaning of concepts such as critique, history, freedom, individuality, emancipation, and aesthetic experience.

GMAN 653b / CPLT 923b / FILM 839b, Scandinavian Cinema and Television  Katie Trumpener
Contemporary Scandinavian film and television examined in relation to earlier cinematic highpoints. Europe’s first art cinema, early Scandinavian film was catalyzed and sustained by modernist breakthroughs in theater, literature, and painting. Contemporary cinema and television (Dogma films; Nordic Noir television; experimental music and genre film) continue to develop innovative aesthetic, funding, and exhibition models. The course explores regionally specific ideas about acting, visual culture, and the role of art; feminism and the social contract; historical forces and social change. Films by Bergman, Dreyer, Sjöström, Sjöberg, Vinterberg, von Trier, Östlund, Kaurismäki, Jørgensen; as well as contemporary television series selected by students.

GMAN 663a, Performance and Postdramatic Theater  Katrin Truestedt
This course explores the “postdramatic theatre” (Hans-Thies Lehmann) of Heiner Müller, Elfriede Jelinek, and René Pollesch against its complex historic background in pre-dramatic, early modern and dramatic theatre from Aeschylus, Shakespeare and Molière to Rousseau and Schiller. In close readings of plays like the Oresteia, Hamlet, Mary Stuart, Hamletmaschine, Die Schutzbefohlenen, and Kill Your Darlings, we trace how the appearance of bodies and media on stage is related to the dramatic plot, and how the emphasis of the theatrical apparatus can question the primacy of dramatis personae and the theatrical illusion. Readings of dramatic texts and analyses of performance videos are accompanied by discussions of theoretical texts on performativity, theatricality, and subjectivation. Topics include the history of theatre, play, and drama; conceptions of performance, theatricality, and anti-theatricality; speech act theory; subjectivity and authority; and the re-entry of the text within the theatrical play.

GMAN 678a / CPLT 907a / FILM 796a, Media Archaeologies: The Visual and the Environmental  Francesco Casetti and Rüdiger Campe
The seminar aims at retracing two divergent cultural processes: how and why, starting from the discovery of artificial perspective, an increasing number of cultural practices were devoted to making the world visible; and correlatively how and why, starting from the first half of the nineteenth century, visuality increasingly met with the resistance of other modes of accessing the world through the human body and the role of the environment? These two trajectories are retraced through a special attention to the media that were on the forefront of these cultural processes: from Brunelleschi’s mirror to Alberti’s window and grid, from camera obscura to Galileo’s telescope, from Panorama to Phantasmagoria, from the optical toys of the nineteenth century to the increasing implication of art into social and political questions. The seminar privileges the cultural practices that underpin both the trust in visuality and the discovery of environmentalty, and it gives due attention to the political questions that the changing fortunes of the optical media imply. The seminar is the first part of a two-year project and will be followed next year by an analysis of the prevalence of the environmental dimension in contemporary media.

GMAN 706b / CPLT 619b / SPAN 505b, Walter Benjamin and Critical Theory in Latin America  Paul North and William Thayer
More European critical theory in a Latin American context, with focus on reception of Walter Benjamin in Chile. Central themes include violence and its relation to the image, the meaning of critique, history, art, and language. Emphasis on twentieth-century Chilean political history and the use of Benjaminian critique by Chilean writers.

GMAN 712b, Graduate Proseminar in German Literature  Kirk Wetters
Field-specific introduction to the history and methods of the field of German in a comparative and interdisciplinary context, with emphasis on project design and professionalization. Specific topic(s) in the form of case studies chosen by proseminar participants and first- and second-year graduate students in German. Focus on cornerstone works of literature and emerging fields in the context of established critical approaches. Proseminar participants and the faculty proseminar leader collaboratively teach and design individual meetings. Strongly encouraged for first- and second-year graduate students in German. Open to advanced auditors and graduate students from adjacent fields with a concentration in German. Open to undergraduates intending to apply to graduate school in German or related fields, with permission of the instructor. May be taken twice for credit. Prerequisite: reading knowledge of German. Graded Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory. The Spring 2018 topic will be: Austrian Literature After Wittgenstein.

GMAN 713a / CPLT 587a / JDST 679a, World Literature  Kirk Wetters and Hannah Hever
The concept of world literature, from its origins in eighteenth-century cosmopolitanism represented by Herder and Goethe up to contemporary critical debates (Apter, Casanova, Cheah, Damrosch, Dharwadker, I. Hesse, Moretti, Muñoz, Pollock, Said, Spivak). World literature in relation to national literature, German-language, and Jewish literature; translation, untranslatability, the effect of markets, diaspora, politics. Literary critical readings supplemented by exemplary literary texts in multiple genres. Student contributions based on individual linguistic backgrounds.

GMAN 732b / JDST 655b, Hermeneutics in Literature and Religion  Daniel Weidner
Hermeneutics, the art of interpretation, emerged in large part from the exegesis of religious texts and is thus strongly influenced by theology. Today, facing a post-secular and post-deconstruction period, this genealogy has to be rewritten for a better understanding of literary as well as religious studies. After looking briefly at the Christian, Jewish, and Islamic traditions, we trace the history of
hermeneutics from Luther and Spinoza through the classical phase from Schleiermacher to Gadamer up to the twenty-first century. We analyze the interplay of biblical and literary hermeneutics; the relation of hermeneutics to other textual practices such as (textual and historical) criticism, formal and structural analysis, philology, commentary, etc.; and the philosophical and political implications. Attention to how Christian and Jewish approaches differ from modern hermeneutics informs the seminar throughout. This intensive seminar begins on February 27 and includes an additional hour each week.

GMAN 900a or b, Directed Reading  Staff
By arrangement with the faculty.