GERMANIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

Humanities Quadrangle, 203.432.0788
http://german.yale.edu
M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

Chair
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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.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE
The faculty in German considers teaching to be essential to the professional preparation of graduate students. Four terms of teaching are required, usually 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.

Students are required to demonstrate, besides proficiency in German, a reading knowledge of one other foreign language in the third term of study.

In the first two years of study, students take four courses per term. Of these sixteen courses, one must be GMAN 501, Methods of Teaching German as a World Language; and at least one must be taken in pre-nineteenth-century topics. Three of the sixteen courses in the first four terms may be audited.

A written examination must be taken at the end of the fifth term of study, followed by an oral discussion approximately a week after the written exam. 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 a discussion with the faculty. The defense will take place before the prospectus is officially approved, usually in late April or 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 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, the department, 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 of another foreign 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; email, german@yale.edu.

COURSES

GMAN 501b, Methods of Teaching German as a World Language  Theresa Schenker
This course introduces a variety of language teaching principles and methods and discusses best practices in language teaching. Students get to know the most important second-language acquisition theories as background to our discussions on effective language teaching. We combine the principles of language teaching with observed classroom techniques as we discuss and prepare lesson plans for language-learning classrooms.

GMAN 604a / CPLT 510a, The Mortality of the Soul: From Aristotle to Heidegger  Martin Hagglund
This course explores fundamental philosophical questions of the relation between matter and form, life and spirit, necessity and freedom, by proceeding from Aristotle’s analysis of the soul in De Anima and his notion of practical agency in the Nicomachean Ethics. We study Aristotle in conjunction with seminal works by contemporary neo-Aristotelian philosophers (Korsgaard, Nussbaum, Brague, and McDowell). We in turn pursue the implications of Aristotle’s notion of life by engaging with contemporary philosophical discussions of death that take their point of departure in Epicurus (Nagel, Williams, Scheffler). We conclude by analyzing Heidegger’s notion of constitutive mortality, in order to make explicit what is implicit in the form of the soul in Aristotle.

GMAN 607a, Goethe’s Faust  Kirk Wetters and Jan Hagens
Goethe’s Faust, with special attention to Faust II and to the genesis of Faust in its various versions throughout Goethe’s lifetime; emphasis on the work in context of Goethe’s time and in the later reception and criticism.

GMAN 643a / CPLT 656a, Georg Büchner’s Revolutions  Rudiger Campe
Georg Büchner’s (1813–1837) work is a work across times and places. In Danton’s Death he reenacts the French Revolution, in the pamphlet Hessian Messenger he calls for revolution in German lands. Büchner’s other, simultaneous, revolution is one of language and literature. In the narrative Lenz and the theater play Woyzeck, Büchner turns the Romanticism of his own time upside down, and the two works resurface only ca. 1900 as trailblazers of social naturalism and modernist (postdramatic) theater. Celan, in The Meridian, gives an idiosyncratic account of Büchner’s travel across times and places. This course contextualizes the close reading of Büchner’s work with materials from the French Revolution, early socialists, and Marx; French, German, and British Romanticism; prose and theater ca. 1900 when Büchner is rediscovered; and Celan.

GMAN 650a / CPLT 524a, Critique and Crisis  Kirk Wetters
In our time, when everyone is suspected of being hypercritical, it is not surprising that the limits of critique, its function, and institutional location are called to question. The idea of “post-critique” has been much discussed in recent years. This course develops critical models, primarily from the German tradition, in order to show the great variety of options available beyond the “hermeneutics of suspicion.” Topics include post-critique, the history of critique/criticism, the Romantic concept of critique, traditional vs. critical theory, historicism, philology vs. hermeneutics, science (Wissenschaft) vs. the critique of positivism. Main protagonists include Kant, Schiller, Schlegel, Nietzsche, Dilthey, Max Weber, Lukács, Husserl, Benjamin, Adorno, Koselleck, Szondi, Gadamer, Gumbrecht, Latour, Felski.

GMAN 675b / CPLT 790b, Writing Scenes: Toward a Theory of the Literary Act  Rudiger Campe
For a long time, thinking about producing literature has been dominated by the legalism of authorship. The notion of the “writing scene” allows us to rethink the production of literature in broader ways: technologies of writing, the writing body, systems of writing, etc. This course looks at investigations into the act of writing by Benjamin, Blanchot, Foucault, Barthes, Flusser, Latour; theories of cultural production by Cassirer, Jameson, Goody, Kittler, Bolte, Rheinberger; and vignettes of writing scenes in Quintilian, Christine de Pisan, Dante, Descartes, Goethe, Blake, Hegel, Flaubert, F. Douglass, V. Woolf, Kafka, Proust, Cixous.

GMAN 687b / CPLT 522b, Heimito von Doderer’s The Strudlhof Steps  Kirk Wetters
Spanning the fin-de-siècle to the postwar, high modernism and popular fiction, Heimito von Doderer’s classic 1951 novel of the city of Vienna was published in English only recently, in 2021. Unclassifiable in its combination of romanticism, realism, and modernism, The Strudlhof Steps has won over many generations of readers, critics, scholars, and other novelists (including recently Daniel Kehlmann, for whom Doderer’s novel is “the best German language novel of the 20th century”). This course undertakes a slow reading of Doderer’s 900-page bestseller, with attention to many relevant contexts, including: the theory and history of the novel, modernism in art and...
architecture, the complex genesis of The Strudlhof Steps, selections of Doderer’s other writings, the historical context (especially the interwar period, the rise of fascism, and the question of Habsburg nostalgia). Strongly recommended to avid readers of fiction. Knowledge of German is helpful.

GMAN 689b / CPLT 624b, Alienation, Reconciliation: From Hegel to the Ecological Rift  Rudiger Campe
Alienation has been explored in social, economic, or environmental respects, and thinkers differ widely according to how, where, and when to identify the other of alienation, a non-alienated way of life or reconciliation. This course discusses alienation and reconciliation along these lines in Rousseau, Hegel, Marx; Simmel, Lukács, Sartre; Lefebvre, J.B. Foster, J.W. Moore; and others.

GMAN 715a, Trajectories in Contemporary German Literature  Staff
This course introduces students to the fast-shifting terrain and political stakes of contemporary German literature. The program is updated every year. Topics may include: new realisms versus alternative history writing and post-apocalyptic fiction; Black German Afrofuturisms; multilingual transmigrant literatures; #ClimateClassQueerness and other digital media writing; theater as the new public sphere; political poetry now. We also discuss authors’ published poetologies, such as literary award acceptance speeches. Seminar includes opportunities to draft a journal article, learn to write about literature beyond academia, and/or practice creative writing. Conducted in German.

GMAN 730a / CPLT 716a / FILM 729a, German New Waves in Cold War Europe  Katie Trumpener
Before 1961, Berlin was the best place in Europe to follow both Eastern and Western Europe's emerging cinematic New Waves. And first in East, then in West Germany, young filmmakers developed distinctive approaches to political and documentary filmmaking, to the Nazi past and the Cold War, to class, gender, and social transformation. This course juxtaposes the two German New Waves, focusing on aesthetic ferment, institutional barriers, and transformation. Features, documentaries, and experimental films by Gerhard Klein, Konrad Wolf, Alexander Kluge, Herbert Vesely, Edgar Reitz, Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, Jürgen Böttcher, Heiner Carow, Frank Beyer, Wim Wenders, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Helke Sander, Helke Misselwitz, read against other Eastern and Western New Wave films (i.e., by Lindsay Anderson, Karel Reisz, Andrzej Munk, Alain Resnais, Mikhail Kalatozov, Milos Forman).

GMAN 777b / CPLT 777b / ENGL 777b, Poems and Their Theories  Paul North
A task lies before us: to go back and understand the importance that critical theory, in its inception and throughout its life, gave to poems. Poems and theories shared ideals from the turn of the nineteenth century to at least the end of the twentieth, at a minimum in German, French, and English. They dreamed of taking a vacation from language, of returning to the sensible, of imagining communities, of revising the model of Bildung and culture, of rethinking history, of critiquing the nation-state and capitalism, among other dreams. Why this shared project between poetry and theory? What did theory find in the resources of literature, the genius idea, the past, and other foreignnesses that seemed so vital to critiquing the perceived present? Readings include Hölderlin, Schlegel, Novalis, Wordsworth, Shelley, Baudelaire, Celan, Benjamin, Heidegger, Arendt, de Man, Lacoue-Labarthe, Sedgwick, Kristeva, Jacobs.

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