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 571a / CPLT 788a, Robert Musil’s Man without Qualities: The End of the Novel Rüdiger Campe

Musil's unfinished, gigantic novel Man without Qualities (published 1930–33) is one of the quintessential modernist (interwar) European novels. Close (i.e., selective) reading of the novel is introduced by examples from Musil's earlier highly experimental narratives (Unions; The Blackbird), and it is accompanied by looking into Musil’s widespread scientific and sociolegal interests, which are relevant for the novel (statistics and probability; the Vienna Circle and the modern science of philosophy; theories of accountability and the case study; Wagner and Romantic music; the theory of the image in the age of cinema). Taking as its point of departure the intertwining of essayistic writing and narration that characterizes Man without Qualities, the reading centers on the self-theorization of the novel and, even more fundamental, the question of prose as literary form and method of notation. Readings in English or German. Discussions in English.

GMAN 592a / CPLT 954a, Reading Theory Katrin Truestedt

From the new form of literary theory taking shape in romanticism to recent German media studies, this course examines the relation of close readings of singular texts to larger theoretical claims. We reflect on the eminent status that literary readings have attained for broader theoretical and philosophical projects. We specifically focus on a certain theoretical milieu in which far-reaching theoretical claims were not merely exemplified or illustrated by, but in fact developed from distinct practices of (close) reading of particular literary texts. The aim is to analyze this distinct type of theory by investigating the scenes of reading that major theoretical endeavors depended upon, in order to trace the trajectory of theory and turn to more recent theoretical endeavors, to discuss the changed status that reading has for them. Among the authors we read are Schlegel, Benjamin, Barthes, Derrida, Felman, Kittler, Butler, Latour.

GMAN 651a / PHIL 734a / PLSC 583a, Contemporary Critical Theory Seyla Benhabib

An examination of the themes of statelessness, migration, and exile in the works of Arendt, Benjamin, Adorno, Shklar, and Berlin.

GMAN 654b / CPLT 562b, Living Form: Organicism in Society and Aesthetics Kirk Wetters

Starting with Kant, the organic is defined as a processual relation of the part and the whole, thereby providing a new model of the individual as a self-contained totality. We explore the implications of this conception in Goethe's writings on morphology (The Metamorphosis of Plants, “Orphic Primal Words”), the Romantics' Athenaeum, Hanslick's On the Beautiful in Music, Oswald Spengler's cultural morphology, the concept of autopoiesis in Maturana and Varela, Luhmann's systems theory, and Canguilhem's critique of the analogy of organic life and society.

GMAN 682a / CPLT 704a, Antigone after Hegel: The Ambiguities of Ethical Life and Action Dirk Setton

The course is dedicated to three interrelated interpretations of Sophocles Antigone, which present divergent accounts of the central conflict of the tragedy and of the ethical character of its heroine’s act of burying her brother Polyniceis, against the edict of the ruler of Thebes, her uncle Creon. In the Phenomenology of Spirit, Hegel conceives of Antigone as embodying the natural (or “divine”) law of the family that opposes the instituted (or “human”) law of the polis. According to Hegel, both laws represent legitimate ethical claims, which is why their violent confrontation marks the demise of the very concept and reality of (ancient) ethical life. Both Jacques Lacan (in Seminar on the Ethics of Psychoanalysis) and Judith Butler (in Antigone’s Claim) develop their readings of Sophocles’ tragedy in critical debate with Hegel’s influential interpretation. While Lacan holds that Antigone does not represent first and foremost the unwritten laws of kinship relations but rather an ethical subject whose action reveals the essential connection between desire and death, Butler insists against Hegel and Lacan that Antigone should be understood neither as an embodiment of the “divine laws” of the family nor of the “symbolical” law of desire. To the contrary, Antigone’s own troubled family history suggests that she is the very figure of a critical destituation of the normativity of kinship relations. The course aims at both understanding and discussing the controversial constellation of these three approaches to Sophocles’ tragedy. Three questions are at the center of the debate: What does Antigone stand for? How should we conceive of the central conflict of the tragedy? And how should we conceptualize the ethical character of Antigone’s act to bury her brother? Particular emphasis is put on three insights that Antigone articulates: the tragic irony of ethical life; the deep ambiguity of individual autonomy; and the paradoxes of the normativity of kinship relations and the gender identities that lie within it.

GMAN 686a, Kant’s Critique of Judgment Thomas Khurana

In-depth study of Kant’s third and final critique, one of the major works of modern philosophy, containing both the foundation of modern aesthetics and a critical reformulation of natural teleology. Discussions address both parts and their enigmatic unity; highlight
the relation of nature and freedom, mechanism and teleology, theoretical and practical cognition at the heart of the book; and include post-Kantian thought (German Idealism, twentieth-century continental philosophy) that only became possible through Kant’s third critique. Prerequisite: some familiarity with Kant’s critical project.

**GMAN 742b / CPLT 782b, Being a Person**  Rüdiger Campe and Katrin Truestedt

In Western experience, the social and legal notion of a “person” has been deeply informed by how “persons” are formed and performed onstage and in narration, and vice versa. Readings focus on three areas: (1) basic texts on the history of the notion of “person” and “character” in legal, poetical, and philosophical contexts from Aristotle to modernity; (2) the performance of personhood in the rebirth of modern theater in early modern times; and (3) the narrative evocation of a new modern character in the rise of the modern novel. In order to bring into view the performative and aesthetic dimensions of personhood we discuss questions such as: What does it mean to appear as a person on a stage? What does it take to appear as a certain character (e.g., as reflected in commedia dell’arte, Shakespeare, Racine, Lessing)? What is a main and what is a supporting character (e.g., as reflected in Defoe, Richardson, Goethe, Kleist, Mary Shelley)? How can a protagonist of a novel be constituted, and how is the protagonist’s identity defined and secured? Gender, race, and social class are of relevance throughout, as well as the question of being a nonperson (a madman, an animal, a monster, an outcast). None

**GMAN 760b / CPLT 905b / FILM 760b, Intermediality in Film**  Brigitte Peucker

Film is a hybrid medium, the meeting point of several others. This course focuses on the relationship of film to theater and painting, suggesting that where two media are in evidence, there is usually a third. Topics include space, motion, color, theatricality, tableau vivant, ekphrasis, spectatorship, and new media. Readings feature art historical and film theoretical texts as well as essays pertinent to specific films. Films by Fassbinder, Bergman, Murnau, von Trier, Rohmer, Godard, Kiarostami, and others, concluding with three films by Peter Greenaway.

**GMAN 900a or b, Directed Reading**  Staff

By arrangement with the faculty.