GERMANIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

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M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

Chair
Kirk Wetters

Directors of Graduate Studies
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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.

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. 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. 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 in two parts must be taken during the reading period of the fifth term of study, followed by an oral discussion approximately a week later. 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 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; e-mail, 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 571a / CPLT 785a, Robert Musil’s Man without Qualities: The End of the Novel  Rudiger Campe
Musil’s gigantic Man without Qualities (published 1930–33, 1943) is one of the quintessential modernist (interwar) European novels. After looking into Musil’s earlier narrative experiments, the course begins with the close reading of part I of the novel and then focuses on the main strands of its narrative network: modernization and mysticism; the end of old Europe and the rise of fascism; the Vienna Circle’s epistemology and the legal doctrine of accountability; love and violence. The intertwining of essay and narration in the novel, the theory of the novel in the novel, and the question of prose as form are at the core of the course. Readings in English or German. Discussions in English.

GMAN 578a, German Fiction around 1800  Kirk Wetters
The literary forms of novel, the novella, the short story, and the fairy tale were fundamentally reconfigured in Germany around 1800. In the decades 1790–1820, narrative forms begin to take on the importance and enduring shape that will extend through the nineteenth century and beyond. Techniques such as frame narration (stories in stories), unreliable narrators, gothic and supernatural elements, the Bildungsroman, the novel of the artist, take shape in the context of a highly experimental literary culture. Works covered include Goethe, Conversations of German Refugees and Wilhelm Meister’s Journeyman Years; Schiller, The Ghost-Seer; Tieck, Blond Eckbert; Novalis, Heinrich of Ofterdingen; E.T.A. Hoffmann, The Sandman and Kreisleriana. Readings are available in German and English.

GMAN 592a / FILM 761a, German Film from 1945 to the Present  Fatima Naqvi
We look at a variety of German-language feature films from 1945 to the present in order to focus on issues of trauma, guilt, remembrance (and its counterpart: amnesia), gender, Heimat or “homeland,” national and transnational self-fashioning, terrorism, and ethics. How do the Second World War and its legacy inflect these films? What sociopolitical and economic factors influence the individual and collective identities that these films articulate? How do the predominant concerns shift with the passage of time and with changing media? How is the category of nation constructed and contested within the narratives themselves? Close attention is paid to the aesthetic issues and the concept of authorship. Films by Staudte, Wolf, Kluge, Radax, Wenders, Fassbinder, Schroeter, Farocki, Hancke, Petzold, Schanelec, Seidl, Hausner, and Geyrhalter, among others.

GMAN 610a / HIST 664a, Historiography of Modern Germany  Jennifer Allen
This reading seminar surveys major themes in German history since unification. Through readings of both classic and recent research, students familiarize themselves with key debates that have shaped historical understanding of modern Germany.

GMAN 617a / CPLT 904a / FILM 617a / FREN 875a / SPAN 901a, Key Concepts in Psychoanalysis: Tools for the Critical Humanities  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 aesthetic criticism, political theory, film studies, gender studies, theory of ideology, 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 neurosis, perversion, fetishism, psychosis, anti-psychiatry, etc.). Commentators, readers, and critics of Freud and Lacan are also consulted (Michel Arrivé, Guy Le Gaufey, Jean Laplanche, André Green, Markos Zafiropoulos, and others). Taught in-person, with a hybrid synchronous Zoom link for those joining remotely.
GMAN 656b, Performance and Theater  Katrin Truestedt
The course combines an introduction to major plays with a historical overview of theatrical forms and a theoretical exploration of performance studies. The course thus studies “literature in context.” One crucial goal is to teach critical reading skills that especially attend to essential characteristics of theatrical settings and performances: How do characters enter the stage? How do they come to inhabit a specific role? How is a scene created? What are the architectural, cultural, and social conditions of a particular type of theater in its larger contexts? And how are paradigmatic types of theater connected to social and cultural categories like person, race, class, and gender? The course addresses such crucial categories in the practice of close readings of major plays. 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 theater, drama, and play from Greek tragedy to Shakespeare, Brecht, and contemporary performances; conceptions of performance, performativity, theatricality, and antitheatricality; speech act theory; subjectivity and authority; performance in the context of race, class, and gender; and the reentry of the body within the theatrical play.

GMAN 734b / CPLT 564b, Rethinking Representation  Katrin Truestedt
How can we speak for others? What does it mean to be spoken for? And what type of agency is evoked by this constellation? The course explores the implications, both productive and problematic, of representation—for agency and subjectivity, for recognition and acknowledgment, for political action, and for the conception of literature and art. Close readings of major literary works, from Greek tragedy and Shakespeare to Kleist and Kafka, is accompanied by theoretical texts, from Arendt’s notion of the Greek polis to the critique of representation by Foucault, Spivak, and others, and debates about the legal representation of nature in the climate crisis.

GMAN 743a, Karl Marx’s Critiques of Capitalism  Paul North
A careful analysis of volume 1 of Capital, with reference to earlier and later works, including volumes 2 and 3, and the Grundrisse.

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