GERMAN STUDIES (GMAN)

* GMAN 100a, German for Reading  Staff  
Students learn the skills with which to read German-language texts of any difficulty with some fluency. Study of syntax and grammar; practice in close reading and translation of fiction and expository prose in the humanities and sciences. Conducted in English. Does not satisfy the language distributional requirement.

* GMAN 110a, Elementary German I  Staff  
A beginning content- and task-based course that focuses on the acquisition of spoken and written communication skills, as well as on the development of cultural awareness and of foundations in grammar and vocabulary. Topics such as school, family life, and housing. Course materials include a variety of authentic readings, a feature film, and shorter video clips. Tutors are available for extra help. To be followed by GMAN 120. Enrollment limited to 14 per section. Students must preregister through Preference Selection during the online preregistration period. Details and a link to Preference Selection are provided on the German department Web site at http://german.yale.edu. L1 1½ Course cr

GMAN 120a, Elementary German II  Marion Gehlker  
Continuation of GMAN 110. A content- and task-based course that focuses on the acquisition of communicative competence in speaking and writing and on the development of strong cultural awareness. Topics such as multiculturalism, food, childhood, and travel; units on Switzerland and Austria. Course materials include a variety of authentic readings, a feature film, and shorter video clips. Tutors are available for extra help. To be followed by GMAN 130. Enrollment limited to 14 per section. Students must preregister through Preference Selection during the online preregistration period. Details and a link to Preference Selection are provided on the German department Web site at http://german.yale.edu. L2 1½ Course cr

GMAN 125a, Intensive German I  Lieselotte Sippel  
Intensive training in speaking, reading, writing, and comprehending the language. Focus on the mastery of formal grammar. For beginning students of superior linguistic ability. L1, L2 2 Course cr

GMAN 130a, Intermediate German I  Staff  
Builds on and expands knowledge acquired in GMAN 120. A content- and task-based course that helps students improve their oral and written linguistic skills and their cultural awareness through a variety of materials related to German literature, culture, history, and politics. Course materials include authentic readings, a feature film, and shorter video clips. Tutors are available for extra help. After GMAN 120 or according to placement examination. Followed by GMAN 140. Enrollment limited to 14 per section. Students must preregister through Preference Selection during the online preregistration period. Details and a link to Preference Selection are provided on the German department Web site at http://german.yale.edu. L3 1½ Course cr

* GMAN 152a, Advanced German, Contemporary Germany  Staff  
An advanced language and culture course focusing on contemporary Germany. Analysis and discussion of current events in Germany and Europe through the lens of German media, including newspapers, books, TV, film radio, and modern electronic media formats. Focus on oral and written production to achieve advanced linguistic skills. After GMAN 140 or 145. For entering students with a score of 5 on the German Advanced Placement test, or according to results of the placement examination. Students must preregister through Preference Selection during the online preregistration period. Details and a link to Preference Selection are provided on the German department Web site at http://german.yale.edu. L5, HU

* GMAN 162a, Pre-1945 German Culture and History  Marion Gehlker  
An advanced language course focusing on improving upper-level written and oral language skills through the discussion of selected aspects of pre-1945 German culture, politics, and history in literary and nonliterary texts, films, and the arts. Topics include the Kaiserrreich, the Weimar Republic, Expressionist art and film, youth movements, social democracy, and Nazi Germany. Emphasis on vocabulary building through frequent oral and written assignments. After GMAN 140, 145, or 150, or with permission of instructor. L5, HU

* GMAN 177a, Introduction to German Literature and Film  Paul North  
Study of key films and works of the twentieth-century around problems of the state, with focus on development of advanced reading comprehension, writing, and speaking skills. Films from the Weimar period to recent Berlin School realism by directors Wiene, Lang, Kluge, Haneke, Pezold, and Farocki. Readings from short stories, novellas, and essays by Kafka, Kraus, Arendt, Böll, Wolf, Schlögel, and Passig. Prerequisite: GMAN 150 or L5 placement. L5

GMAN 208b / HIST 254b, Germany from Unification to Refugee Crisis  Staff  
The history of Germany from its unification in 1871 through the present. Topics include German nationalism and national unification; the culture and politics of the Weimar Republic; National Socialism and the Holocaust; the division of Germany and the Cold War; the Student Movement and New Social Movements; reunification; and Germany's place in contemporary Europe.  HU

* GMAN 248a / HUMS 236a / LITR 240a / THST 248a, 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. Reading knowledge of German beneficial but not required.  HU
* GMAN 273a / FILM 319a / LITR 568a, The Third Reich in Postwar German Film, 1945 to Present

Jan Hagens

Close study of the intersection of aesthetics and ethics with regard to how German films, since 1945, have dealt with Nazi history. Through the study of German-language films (with subtitles), produced in postwar East, West, and unified Germany, students consider and challenge perspectives on the Third Reich and postwar Germany, while learning basic categories of film studies. 

* GMAN 288a / HUMS 480a / LITR 482a / PHIL 469a, 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 304b / HUMS 367b / LITR 486b, Heimito von Doderer’s The Strudlhof Steps

Kirk Weters

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 307a / HUMS 374a / LITR 464a, Greed and Its Discontents: From Aristotle to the Present

Paul North

Money matters, whether we like it or not. Besides being an economic means, it plays a pervasive role in the lives of individuals and the social fabric at large. A role scrutinized by writers, philosophers, and cultural theorists. By opening up a vast horizon of possibilities, money represents power and desire. It is regarded as an enabler of freedom by some, and as a source of alienation by others. Money is said to be detrimental to social cooperation, as it fuels the “frenzy to achieve distinction” (Jean-Jacques Rousseau). When it comes to greed and its discontents, issues of status, recognition, and contempt come into play. Money, which has been called an “abstract” form of happiness (Arthur Schopenhauer), permeates the debates on the intricate relation between well-being, welfare, and wealth. On a macro level, the standings of different social spheres, including the economy, politics, and the realm of intimate relationships, depend on the question of whether “everything is for sale” or not (Debra Satz). In this course, we explore the meaning of money by tracing the arc from Aristotle to the present.

* GMAN 312a / ENGL 257a / HUMS 208a / LITR 485a, Poe and Kafka

Caleb Smith and Paul North

Some mysteries seem unsolvable by science or religion. For instance, there is the mystery of how people remain hidden from themselves of repressed impulses and buried truths that find expression in fantasies, dreams, and other strange visions. A word for this mystery is the unconscious. Some terms for its literature include the gothic and the grotesque. Our experimental course pursues this mystery by studying two writers working in different languages, in different centuries, in a variety of minor, unprestigious genres: Edgar Allan Poe and Franz Kafka. We use tales and other short texts by each writer to illuminate the other’s techniques for examining the psychological and political unconscious.

* GMAN 343b / HUMS 364b / LITR 479b, Writing Scenes: 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 to rethink the production of literature in broader ways: technologies of writing, the writing body, systems of writing etc. The 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, Bolter, Rheinberger; vignettes of writing scenes in Quintilian, Christine de Pisan, Dante, Descartes, Goethe, Blake, Hegel, Flaubert, Fr. Douglas, V. Wolfe, Kafka, Proust, Cixous. 

* GMAN 362a / HUMS 372a / LITR 490a, Critique and Crisis

Kirk Weters

In our time, when everyone is suspected of being hyper-critical, 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. In order to gain orientation with respect to such concerns, 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 368a / FILM 419a / LITR 382a, German New Waves in Cold War Europe

Katie Trumpener

Comparative study of New Wave cinema in East and West Germany, with a focus on aesthetic ferment, institutional barriers, and transformation. Berlin as the best place to follow Europe’s emerging cinematic New Waves before 1961. Distinctive approaches developed by young filmmakers in East and West Germany to political and documentary filmmaking, to the Nazi past and the Cold War, and to class, gender, and social transformation. Knowledge of German helpful but not necessary.
Preparation of an original essay under the direction of a faculty adviser.

* GMAN 492a and GMAN 493b, The Senior Essay Tutorial

An examination of the metaphorical and epistemological doctrines of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason. Prerequisite: PHIL 126 or DRST 004.

* GMAN 381b / PHIL 204b, Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason

An examination of the metaphorical and epistemological doctrines of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason. Prerequisite: PHIL 126 or DRST 004.

* GMAN 382a / JDST 217a / PHIL 424a, Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit

A close reading of sections of one of the major works in post-Kantian philosophy. Themes include varieties of scepticism and responses to scepticism; the relationship of epistemology to questions concerning structures of social practices of reasoning; the historical character of reason; the relationship between natural processes and social developments; the intersubjectivity of consciousness; and the possibility of a philosophical critique of culture. Attention paid both to commentaries that focus on historical development and to approaches that view historical narratives as allegories whose deeper meaning may be formulated as a logical or semantic theory. Two previous philosophy courses, including some exposure to Kant and German Idealism, through either DRST 004 or PHIL 126 or PHIL 214 or PHIL 261. Students are particularly encouraged but not required to take PHIL 261 before taking this course.

* GMAN 390b / HUMS 368b / LITR 481b, 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 408a / AFAM 418a, Marx & Abolition Today

Cecilia Sebastian

W.E.B. du Bois, C.L.R. James, Franz Fanon, Angela Davis, and Ruth Wilson Gilmore are just a few of the radical thinkers for whom Karl Marx’s writings on history, capitalism, and revolution have provided both vehicle and object of critique in their efforts to end systems of racial oppression, including slavery, colonialism, imperialism, incarceration, and policing. This course explores the reception of Marx by abolitionist thinkers in combination with Marx’s own writings on anti-slavery and anti-colonial struggles. We ask: How have abolitionist movements historically informed, expanded, and challenged Marxian theory and its tactical playbook? How, in turn, have anticolonialist, racist, and security-statist ideologies been mobilized to undermine and defeat transformative social movements? Finally, how do contemporary struggles against racial domination within capitalist societies inform our grasp of these archives? While this course focuses on movement-based thinkers, including those mentioned above, we also read critical interventions in the Marxist intellectual tradition by Theodor Adorno, Cedric Robinson, Barbara and Karen Fields, and others.

* GMAN 414a / HUMS 414a / LITR 262a, Georg Büchner’s Revolutions

Rudiger Campe

Georg Büchner’s (1813-1837) 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 trail blazers of social naturalism and modernist (postdramatic) theater. Celan, in the Meridian, gives an idiosyncratic account of Büchner’s travel across times and places. The course contextualizes the close reading of Büchner’s work with materials from the French Revolution, early socialists, Marx; French, German, British Romanticism; prose and theater ca. 1900 when Büchner is rediscovered; Celan.

* GMAN 478a or b, Directed Readings or Individual Research in Germanic Languages and Literatures

Staff

Individual study under faculty supervision. Applicants must submit a prospectus and bibliography approved by the faculty adviser to the director of undergraduate studies. The student meets with the adviser at least one hour each week and takes a final examination or writes a term paper. No credit granted without prior approval of the director of undergraduate studies.

* GMAN 489a / CLCV 309a / HSRAR 489a, Pathos-Figures: Affection-Images in the Visual Arts

Nicola Suthor

Images with high pathos inform our perception of human life and define our stance in the world. The seminar wants to foster a critical awareness of the formative power that pathos figures exert on our moral beliefs concerning human behavior. The course covers the timespan from Antiquity to Modernity in Western culture and deals with historical moments that reflect different attempts to cultivate and temper strong emotions. We discuss the transfer of pathos and how the dissemination of eminent pathos figures of antiquity have shaped the imagery of the Western canon; we tackle with one of the most far-reaching concepts of art history, Aby Warburg’s Pathos formula that encourages us to draw in broad strokes connecting lines of affection over centuries and different cultures; we look into the discourse on human suffering in Medieval times and how it has defined the Christian doctrine of the affective image; we have a close look at treatises of the 17th century that worked on theorizing human passions and discuss the Enlightenment perspective that aimed at interiorizing pathos by dint of the discourse of beauty; we discuss the Modern “close-up” and how it unfolds the moment of pure bodily presence as highly affective entity. We ask if we are in need of new pathos images that reflect our current emotional stakes, and how they might look.

* GMAN 492a and GMAN 493b, The Senior Essay Tutorial

Staff

Preparation of an original essay under the direction of a faculty adviser.