GERMAN STUDIES (GMAN)

* GMAN 110a or b, 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 or b, Elementary German II  Staff
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 130a or b, 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 140a or b, Intermediate German II  Staff
Builds on and expands knowledge acquired in GMAN 130. 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 130 or according to placement examination. Normally followed by GMAN 150 or, with permission of the director of undergraduate studies, by GMAN 171. 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.  L4  1½ Course cr

* GMAN 152b, 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. 15, HU

* GMAN 158a, Contemporary German Culture through Sports  Theresa Schenker
This course is about sports in German-speaking countries. It consists of several units, each of them addressing a different type of sport such as soccer, handball, basketball, tennis, "winter sports" (alpine skiing, ski jumping, and cross-country skiing), track and field or swimming. Topics include different sports histories, famous athletes, homophobia and racism in sports, inclusivity and gender equality, and differences in recreational sports culture in the German-speaking countries and the United States. Prerequisite: GMAN 140 or equivalent. 15, HU

* GMAN 162a, German History & Culture in the 19th Century and the Weimar Republic  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 Kaiserreich, 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. 15, HU

* GMAN 171a, Introduction to German Prose Narrative  Austen Hinkley
Study of key authors and works of the German narrative tradition, with a focus on the development of advanced reading comprehension, writing, and speaking skills. Readings from short stories, novellas, and at least one novel. Writings by exemplary storytellers of the German tradition, such as Goethe, Kleist, Hebel, Hoffmann, Stifter, Keller, Kafka, Mann, Musil, Bachmann, and Bernhard. 15, HU

* GMAN 205a / FILM 205a / HUMS 160a / LITR 244a, The Question of Technology in Continental Theory  Staff
In Greek mythology, Niobe is the queen of Thebes and mother of six daughters and six sons. She rebelled against the gods and was severely punished for it: her children were killed and she herself was petrified in eternal mourning. In Walter Benjamin's much-discussed essay "On the Critique of Violence", Niobe's fate is a memorial to a mythical violence that has never been overcome. According to Benjamin, this violence today is linked to an instrumental approach to technology. In the seminar, we discuss media and technology philosophical approaches by Benjamin, Heidegger, Simondon, Haraway, Chude-Sokei, among others, but also texts by Kant, in order to explore the question of how we should understand the entanglement of melancholy, violence and an instrumental understanding of technology. Furthermore, we discuss how this link between violence, technology and melancholy can be resolved from the perspective of Benjamin's critique of violence.  HU
Austen Hinkley

The course is designed as an introduction to the thought of these three towering figures in the German-language intellectual tradition and to their contributions to our attempts to understand the human mind and society. We read seminal essays as well as (excerpts from) longer works, including Marx's Capital, Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morality and Thus Spake Zarathustra, and Freud's Interpretation of Dreams. But we also look at what came before and after these thinkers, considering—among others—Kant, Ludwig Feuerbach, Melanie Klein, Adorno, and Foucault; and we think about the relevance of Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud for the understanding of our own times.  

Gabrielle Reid and Kirk Weters

Everyone will fail someday, even Yale students. In this course, we read and critically analyze literature and film that exemplify failure. In today's culture of positive thinking, dwelling on failure is considered unproductive or even harmful. But particularly in young adulthood, anything from writing a final paper to getting out of bed in the morning can feel Sisyphean. So why aren't we talking about it? Instead of shying away from defeat, this course argues for the value of facing failure head-on. We ask questions like: What aspects of failure are inevitable parts of the human condition? What kinds of narrative arcs, vocabularies, tones, and other aesthetic choices characterize how we tell stories of failure? We begin to answer these questions with reference to exemplary failures, historical and fictional alike, and their retellings in the works they inspired. From Sisyphus’ endless struggle with the boulder to those cast as failures by society in Linklater’s film Slacker, our sources show that failure is not a mere necessary step on the road to success, nor a mistake to be avoided. Rather, it occasions the production and consumption of great art.  

Jan Hagens

The development of the Faust motif through time, from the period of the Renaissance and the Reformation to the twentieth century. Readings from the English adaptation of the original German chapbook and from works by Marlowe, Ben Johnson, Goethe, Wilde, Bulgakov, and Thomas Mann. Screenings of films with a Faustian theme.  

Staff

A careful reading of Karl Marx's classic critique of capitalism, Capital volume 1, a work of philosophy, political economy, and critical social theory that has had a significant global readership for over 150 years. Selected readings also from Capital volumes 2 and 3.  

Katie Trumpener

The German Democratic Republic (1949-1989) was a political and aesthetic experiment that failed, buffeted by external pressures, and eroded by internal contradictions. For forty years, in fact, its most ambitious literary texts and films (some suppressed, others widely popular) explored such contradictions, often in a vigilant, Brechtian spirit of irony and dialectics. This course examines key texts both as aesthetic experiments and as critiques of the country's emerging cultural institutions and state censorship, recurrent political debates and pressing social issues. Texts by Brecht, Uwe Johnson, Heiner Müller, Christa Wolf, Johannes Bobrowski, Franz Fühmann, Wolf Biermann,
Thomas Brasch, Christoph Hein; films by Slatan Dudow, Kurt Maetzig, Konrad Wolf, Heiner Carow, Frank Beyer, Jürgen Böttcher, Volker Köpp. Knowledge of German desirable but not crucial; all texts available in English. WR, HU TR

* 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.

HU

* GMAN 290a / HUMS 171a / THST 293a, Politics of Performance  Sophie Schweiger
The stage is, and always has been, a political space. Ever since its beginnings, theatre has offered ways to rethink and criticize political systems, with the stage serving as a “moral institution” (Schiller) but also as a laboratory for models of representation. The stage also delineates the limits of representation for democratic societies (Rousseau), as it offers the space for experimentation and new modes of being together, being *ensemble*. The stage also raises the question of its own condition of possibility and the networks it depends on (Jackson). This course revisits the history of German and German speaking theatre since the Enlightenment, and discusses the stage in its relationship to war, the nation state, the social question, femicide and gender politics, the Holocaust, globalization, and 21st century migration. Readings include works by G.E. Lessing, Friedrich Schiller, Hugo v. Hofmannstahl, Georg Büchner, Peter Weiss, Ida Fink, Dea Lohar, Elfriede Jelinek, Christoph Schlingensief, Heiner Müller, and Elsa Bernstein.

HU TR

* GMAN 301a / FREN 241a / LITR 397a, After the War, Novels after 1945, French and German  Rudiger Campe
How to write, how to narrate after war? In this course we read alternatingly some of the greatest novels and novellas after 1945 (until ca. 1968) from German speaking countries and from France. This can but does not necessarily mean novels about fascism and democracy, aggression and resistance (Sartre, Grass). It also means negotiating radical break and reorientation, politically and ideologically (German “Zero Hour”, the absurd, existentialism in France); and the attempt to reinvent literary writing in general (‘nouveau roman’ in France, Handke and Bernard in Austria). Further authors include Camus, Duras, Robbe-Grillet, Le Clezio, Koeppen, Wolf, Handke, Bachmann.

HU

* GMAN 331a / FILM 310a / HUMS 281a / LITR 416a, Paper: Material and Medium  Austen Hinkley
Paper is one of the most ubiquitous and indispensable media of the modern era. Although we are (still) surrounded by it, paper tends to recede into the background, working best when we do not notice it at all. This course sets out to challenge our understanding of paper as a neutral or passive bearer of inscriptions by foregrounding its material quality. Our focus rests in equal parts on the media history of paper and paper works of art—among them many literary texts—that reflect or take advantage
of their medium. Studying materials and histories from the early modern period to the present, we uncover paper’s status as a commodity bound up in a complex web of economic processes, as an instrument of political power, as a gendered and racialized object, and as a material that can be cut, shuffled, and even eaten. Ultimately, we investigate how paper is still central to our lives, even in the age of tablets and PDFs. Readings include Emily Dickinson’s envelope poems, Robert Walser’s “Microscripts,” and M. NourbeSe Philip’s “Zong!” The class makes several visits to the Beinecke Library for hands-on work with paper materials. WR, HU

* GMAN 344a / FILM 344a, Landscape, Film, Architecture  Fatima Naqvi
   Movement through post-1945 landscapes and cityscapes as a key to understanding them. The use of cameras and other visual-verbal means as a way to expand historical, aesthetic, and sociological inquiries into how these places are inhabited and experienced. Exploration of both real and imaginary spaces in works by filmmakers (Wenders, Herzog, Ottinger, Geyrhalter, Seidl, Ade, Grisebach), architects and sculptors (e.g. Rudofsky, Neutra, Abraham, Hollein, Pichler, Smithson, Wurm, Kienast), photographers (Sander, B. and H. Becher, Gursky, Höfer), and writers (Bachmann, Handke, Bernhard, Jelinek). Additional readings by Certeau, Freytag, J.B. Jackson, L. Burckhardt. HU

* GMAN 379a / FILM 325a / LITR 374a, German Cinema 1918–1933  Jan Hagens
   The years between 1918 and 1933 are the Golden Age of German film. In its development from Expressionism to Social Realism, this German cinema produced works of great variety, many of them in the international avantgarde. This introductory seminar gives an overview of the silent movies and sound films made during the Weimar Republic and situate them in their artistic, cultural, social, and political context between WWI and WWII, between the Kaiser’s German Empire and the Nazis’ Third Reich. Further objectives include: familiarizing students with basic categories of film studies and film analysis; showing how these films have shaped the history and the language of film; discussing topic-oriented and methodological issues such as: film genres (horror film, film noir, science fiction, street film, documentary film); set design, camera work, acting styles; narration in film; avantgarde cinema; the advent and use of sound in film; Realism versus Expressionism; film and popular mythology; melodrama; representation of women; modern urban life as spectacle; film and politics. Directors studied include: Grune, Lang, Lubitsch, Murnau, Pabst, Richter, Ruttmann, Sagan, von Sternberg, Wiene, et al.
   WR, HU

GMAN 381a / PHIL 204a, Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason  Paul Franks
   An examination of the metaphysical and epistemological doctrines of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason. Prerequisite: PHIL 126 or DRST 004. HU

* GMAN 395b / HUMS 447b / LITR 448b / PHIL 313b, Birth of the Political: Early Modern and 20th century  Rudiger Campe
   Early modern European works on colonial war, sovereignty, and politics, 16th to 17th centuries (by Sepúlveda, Grotius, Machiavelli, Lipsius (Neo-Stoicism), Hobbes) are read in conjunction with 20th c. debates from the inter-war period to ca. 1968 (by Schmitt, Kantorowicz, Benjamin, Oestreich, Foucault, authors who refer back to the modern early works and have importantly shaped our modern understanding of ‘the political’ (and, with it, the notion of the ‘early modern’)). The course is interested in
critically tracing the echoes regarding ‘the political’ between early modernity and our own times. HU

* GMAN 426a / FILM 426a, Cinema of Crisis  Fatima Naqvi
This course looks at European films dealing with various crises since 1945. The legacy of National Socialism, the rise of domestic and international terrorism (both before and after 9/11), the vast migrations of peoples, an increase in precarity, racism, and populism, the critique of capitalism, and the degradation of the environment—we examine these issues in films made after the end of World War II. Some of the questions that guide our inquiry are: When does violence seem like a legitimate answer to political, economic, and social pressures and the legacies of fascism and colonialism? Where and how do environmental issues come to the fore in an increasingly global Europe? How does cinema depict today’s multicultural societies in conflict? And how do gender issues inflect the precarious economic conditions shown in the films? Does the rise of digital technology inflect the way in which films portray history and memory? In directors’ varied aesthetic responses to death, displacement, and destruction, we find a growing consciousness of the social contradictions that lead to violence. This course seeks to define key words of cultural study such as public sphere, populism, precarity, neoliberalism, Anthropocene. It also seeks to give students insight into central concepts of film analysis (genre, spectatorship, point-of-view, audience, slow cinema). We take our case studies largely from Germany, Austria, France, and Italy. Films by Wolfgang Staudte, Alain Resnais, Alexander Kluge, Jean-Marie Straub, Volker Schlöndorff, Chris Marker, Werner Herzog, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Harun Farocki, Michael Haneke, Christian Petzold, Jessica Hausner, Nikolaus Geyrhalter, Julian Radlmaier, Hubert Sauper, Sudabeh Mortezai, Ruth Beckermann, among others. Readings and discussion are in English; all films are with subtitles. Students are encouraged to read the texts in the original where possible. The use of ChatGPT only with explicit instructor permission. HU

* GMAN 489b / CLCV 305b / HSAR 489b, 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. HU
* GMAN 492a, The Senior Essay Tutorial  Theresa Schenker
Preparation of an original essay under the direction of a faculty adviser.