

GERMAN STUDIES

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The major in German Studies covers a broad tradition of more than five centuries in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and neighboring lands. Students gain deep competence in the German language while also reading celebrated literature, analyzing distinctive artworks in many media, deducing intensive theories, and exploring political, linguistic, and cultural histories. The German faculty works closely with undergraduates to develop their special areas of interest within the rich currents of German culture.

German language courses emphasize listening, speaking, reading, and writing in interaction with authentic cultural materials. The curriculum also introduces students to the basic questions and methods of literary criticism, with a focus on rigorous reading practices for a wide range of works from different genres, disciplines, and historical moments.

German Studies courses are diverse in their topics and highly relevant to other fields of study today. Pioneers in philosophy, political theory, sociology, psychology, history, classical philology, the visual arts, architecture, and music wrote and thought in German, as did founders of the modern natural and practical sciences. Majors discover Kant, Goethe, Beethoven, Einstein, Freud, Kafka, Arendt, and many other thinkers and writers who laid the groundwork for modernity and still hold keys to understanding it.

Germany is the fourth-largest economy in the world, and German is the first language of over 95 million people worldwide. Students with a foundation in the language, literature, history, and intellectual revolutions of Germany are prepared to enter a wide variety of vocations. Majors have gone on to postgraduate study in Germany and the United States, and many have entered top-tier law schools and graduate programs. Recent graduates work in fields as diverse as environmental policy, journalism, arts management, consulting, and engineering, as well as in governmental and nongovernmental organizations and businesses.

PREREQUISITES

Prerequisite to the major are first- and second-year German or the equivalent.

COURSE NUMBER

Group A courses Courses in Group A (GMAN 110–159) correspond to Yale's L1 to L5 designation of elementary, intermediate, and advanced language courses.

Group B courses Courses in Group B (GMAN 160-level and 170-level) are advanced L5 courses. Readings are in German, and the language of instruction is German. There is no restriction on the number of Group B courses that may count toward the major, provided all requirements are met.

Group C courses Courses in Group C (above GMAN 200) are all other courses. The language of instruction is typically English, but readings may be in German and/or English. Course level and prerequisites vary according to the expectations of the instructors.

PLACEMENT PROCEDURES

An online placement examination is accessible all year. See the department website for details. Students may also consult with the director of undergraduate studies (DUS) or the language program director for advice about placement and about language study. Regardless of previous German study, students without a score of 5 on the German Advanced Placement test must take the departmental placement exam in order to enroll in any course above GMAN 110 or 125.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

Students are held to the requirements that were in place when they declared their major. However, with approval from the director of undergraduate studies, the following requirements, updated for the academic year 2024-2025, may be fulfilled by students who declared the major in a prior term.

The requirements of the major in German Studies consist of ten term courses, including the senior essay. All majors must complete at least one GMAN course numbered in the 150s, one in the 160s, and one in the 170s, plus six additional courses numbered GMAN 160 and above.

Areas of interest The Yale German Studies program offers a variety of courses. Covered fields include (1) literature, (2) media and media theory, (3) history and politics, (4) critical thought, and (5) aesthetics and the arts. Students are encouraged to select courses based on their preference and may find it rewarding to focus on one or more of these fields. *Literature* courses give students access to worlds of thought and action. Students learn to read critically poetry, novels, plays, short stories, aphorisms, songs, and other genres. *Media and media theory* courses explore a vibrant tradition of experimentation in new cultural forms and media in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Students investigate photography, radio, film, television, and computer media alongside landmark works in media theory. Courses in *History and politics* focus on world-altering historical events and thought-altering theories of history from the Germanic tradition. Students become familiar with explosive political and social events, including the emancipation of the Jews and the Holocaust, the world wars, unification and reunification, and concepts and models for development in economy, social welfare, law, and environmental policies. *Critical thought* focuses on traditions of theoretical reflection on society, history, art, and language. Students become familiar with authors such as Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Benjamin, and Habermas. *Aesthetics and the arts* courses survey the rich Germanic traditions in the visual and musical arts, as well as the philosophical study of art beginning in eighteenth-century Germany.

Credit/D/Fail A maximum of two courses taken Credit/D/Fail may count toward the major, with permission of the DUS.

SENIOR REQUIREMENT

Seniors in the standard German Studies major enroll in GMAN 492, a guided senior essay tutorial course. Students meet biweekly with the DUS and staff, and work under the direction of a faculty adviser. The culmination of the tutorial is an essay of approximately thirty pages that gives evidence of careful reading and substantial independent thought. The essay may be written in either English or German, although only native speakers are encouraged to write an essay in German. Seniors typically write the essay during the fall term. A preliminary statement indicating the general

area to be addressed and the choice of adviser should be submitted to the DUS by early September; the final essay is judged by the faculty adviser and a second reader. See Senior Essay Deadlines on the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures website for more information.

Intensive major Requirements for the intensive major are the same as for the standard major, except that the intensive major replaces one advanced seminar with a second term of the senior essay. In the fall term seniors in the intensive major enroll in GMAN 492 and begin work on their project under the guidance and supervision of a faculty adviser. A significant portion of the research for the essay should involve materials in German. The essay may be written in either English or German, although only native speakers are encouraged to write an essay in German. A detailed prospectus, no longer than three pages, and a bibliography must be submitted to the DUS by October 18, 2024. The student must submit a draft of at least fifteen pages of the essay by November 29, 2024, to receive credit for the first term of the course. The second term, GMAN 493, is devoted to completing the essay, which should be substantial (between fifty and sixty pages); the completed essay must be submitted by April 10, 2025. The senior essay is judged by the faculty adviser and a second reader. See the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures website for more information.

ADVISING

Candidates for the major in German Studies should consult the DUS.

Graduate courses Courses in the Graduate School are open to undergraduates with permission of the instructor and of the directors of undergraduate and graduate studies. Course descriptions may be obtained on the German department website or from the office of the director of graduate studies.

STUDY ABROAD

Students are strongly encouraged to study in Germany for a summer, or for one or two terms on the Year or Term Abroad program. Appropriate course credit toward the major is granted for work in approved programs in Germany. Study abroad is valuable not only for achieving comfortable fluency in German, but also for gaining firsthand knowledge of the German cultural context. The department offers diverse opportunities for study abroad and a scholarship program for summer courses at German universities. Members of the faculty advise and consult with any students wishing to plan study in Germany. Students who have been approved to study abroad and who receive financial aid from Yale are eligible for aid while abroad. For information about the Year or Term Abroad program, see Academic Regulations, section K, Special Academic Programs, "Year or Term Abroad." Students who study abroad for one term may count up to two courses toward the major, with approval of the DUS. Students who study abroad for an academic year may count up to four courses toward the major, with approval of the DUS.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Prerequisites First- and second-year German or equivalent

Number of courses 10 courses (incl senior req)

Distribution of courses At least 1 GMAN course in the 150s, at least 1 in the 160s, and at least 1 in the 170s; 6 courses (numbered GMAN 160 and above) from Groups B and C

Substitution permitted With DUS approval, some substitutions and exceptions may be possible

Senior requirement Senior essay tutorial (GMAN 492)

Intensive major Two-term senior essay (GMAN 492 and 493)

Prerequisite

First- and second-year German or the equivalent

Requirements

10 courses (for 10 credits), including the senior requirement, but not the prerequisite

- 1 GMAN course in the 150s
- 1 GMAN course in the 160s
- 1 GMAN course in the 170s
- 6 electives (numbered GMAN 160 and above) from Groups B and C
- GMAN 492
 - senior requirement for the intensive major, students replace one advanced seminar with GMAN 493, in addition to GMAN 492

The major in German Studies provides students the opportunity to gain deep competence in the German language while learning to read celebrated literature; to analyze distinctive artworks in a variety of media; to understand key thinkers and writers who laid the groundwork for modernity; and to explore the political, linguistic, and cultural history of Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and neighboring lands. Each student's program is shaped by one of five areas of concentration: literature, media and media theory, history and politics, critical thought, or aesthetics and the arts.

The Germanic Languages and Literatures department encourages students to study abroad during junior year (a year or spring term in Hamburg, Berlin, or in the state of Baden-Württemberg) or to take advantage of specially funded summer exchange fellowships in Baden-Württemberg. Students competent in German should consider summer internships with German companies. Selected German language courses can also be taken through Yale's New Haven/Berlin Program.

LANGUAGE PLACEMENT

An online placement examination is accessible all year. See the department website for details. Students may also consult with the director of undergraduate studies (DUS) or the language program director for advice about placement and about language study. Regardless of previous German study, students without a score of 5 on the German Advanced Placement test must take the departmental placement exam in order to enroll in any course above GMAN 110 or 125.

GMAN 110 and 120 comprise the first year of German language study. Beginning students with high aptitude and motivation may elect GMAN 125, a double-credit course that covers GMAN 110 and 120 in one term.

GMAN 130 and 140 usually follow GMAN 120. They can be taken during the academic year or during the summer in an eight-week study abroad program. GMAN 145, a double-credit, one-term course, is the equivalent of GMAN 130 and 140. Courses in the GMAN 150s focus on contemporary German culture and the development of conversation and writing skills. Students entering Yale with advanced language skills may be eligible for these courses, which emphasize written and spoken language skills.

For additional information, visit the department website.

CERTIFICATE OF ADVANCED LANGUAGE STUDY

The Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures offers a Certificate of Advanced Language Study in German. A certificate adviser, typically the director of undergraduate studies (DUS), advises students on the certification process. The Certificate of Advanced Language Study, once certified, is listed on the student transcript.

REQUIREMENTS

Students seeking to earn the certificate are required to take four courses beyond the L4 level in their chosen language, at least two of which must be Yale courses designated as L5. All courses must be taken for a letter grade, and students must achieve a grade of B or above. With the approval of the certificate adviser, one advanced non-L5 course, conducted in the target language, such as an independent study course, a graduate seminar, or an advanced seminar may count toward certification requirements.

The certificate adviser may allow one “language across the curriculum” (LxC) course taught in English to count toward the certification requirements provided the course includes at minimum a weekly discussion section conducted entirely in German. The discussion section must enroll a minimum of three students and the course must be designated as LxC in the course description.

The adviser may also approve the substitution of up to two credits earned during study abroad and taught in German to count toward the certificate requirements. If the adviser approves courses taken outside of Yale for inclusion in the certificate requirements, students must take the necessary steps to ensure those courses appear on their transcripts.

Credit/D/Fail No courses taken Credit/D/Fail may be counted toward the requirements of the certificate.

Declaration of Candidacy

Students must submit a Declaration of Candidacy for a Certificate form, as early as possible, but at the very latest, before the start of the student’s last semester at Yale. The form can be found on the University Registrar’s Office website. Once declared, Degree Audit tracks students’ progress toward completion of the certificate.

FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF GERMANIC LANGUAGES AND
LITERATURES

Professors Rüdiger Campe, Astrid Dueber-Mankowsky (*Visiting Fall 2024*), Fatima Naqvi, Paul North, Brigitte Peucker, Kirk Wetters (*Chair*)

Assistant Professor Sophie Schweiger

Senior Lectors II Marion Gehlker, Theresa Schenker

Lectors Austen Hinkley, Joshua Price

Affiliated Faculty Jeffrey Alexander (*Sociology*), Jennifer Allen (*History*), Seyla Benhabib (*Political Science*), David Cameron (*Political Science*), Paul Franks (*Philosophy, Judaic Studies*), Gundula Kreuzer (*Music*), Patrick McCreless (*Music*), Steven Smith (*Political Science*), David Sorkin (*History*), Nicola Suthor (*History of Art*), Katie Trumpener (*Comparative Literature, English*), Jay Winter (*History*)

See visual roadmap of the requirements.

[View Courses](#) [View Yiddish Courses](#)