Department of Germanic Studies

Department Chair
• David Wellbery

Director of Undergraduate Studies
• Margareta Ingrid Christian

Director of Graduate Studies
• Catriona MacLeod

Professors
• David J. Levin
• Catriona MacLeod
• Eric L. Santner
• David E. Wellbery
• Christopher J. Wild

Associate Professors
• Florian Klinger

Assistant Professors
• Margareta Ingrid Christian
• Sophie Salvo

Senior Lecturers
• Catherine Baumann
• Maeve Hooper
• Kimberly Kenny, Norwegian

Assistant Instructional Professors
• Colin Benert, German
• Jessica Kirzane, Yiddish
• Nicole Burgoyne, German
• Shiva Rahmani, German

Emeritus Faculty
• Reinhold Heller
• Samuel Jaffe
• Kenneth J. Northcott
• Hildegund Ratcliffe

Affiliated Faculty
• Alice Goff, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of German History and the College
  Interests: Cultural and intellectual history 1750-1850, museums and collecting, aesthetics, looting, historical reception in the GDR.
• Philip V. Bohlman, Ph. D., Mary Werkman Professor of the Humanities and of Music; Chair of the Committee on Jewish Studies
  Interests: German-Jewish and German-American ethnomusicology; theory and history of folksong.
• John W. Boyer, Ph. D., Martin A. Ryerson Distinguished Service Professor of History; Dean of the College
  Interests: German and Austrian history, 18th century to the present; religion and politics in modern European history; European urban history.
• Daniel Brudney, Ph. D., Associate Professor of Philosophy
  Interests: Marx, German philosophy, Frankfurt School.
• James Conant, Ph. D., Professor of Philosophy
  Interests: Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Wittgenstein.
• Kathleen Conzen, Ph. D., Professor of History
Overview

The graduate program in Germanic Studies at the University of Chicago stresses an interdisciplinary model of study, long an emphasis at this University, which allows students to construct fields of research in fresh ways. In order to draw on the University’s strengths, both inside and outside the department, students are encouraged...
to work not only with departmental and affiliated faculty but with faculty throughout the University whose courses are of relevance to their particular interests.

The University’s Workshops (non-credit, interdepartmental seminars that meet biweekly) offer a further avenue for interdisciplinary work. Students are also encouraged to participate in the department’s colloquia and lecture/discussions.

Language courses taught in the department include German, Norwegian, and Yiddish.

APPLICATION AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Applicants to the Department of Germanic Studies should have a solid background in German language and culture. Students with undergraduate degrees in other fields are encouraged to apply, but must include with their application a list of relevant German/Germanic courses as well as a letter of recommendation from a faculty member able to evaluate their level of German language competency. Such students will be asked to make up deficiencies in their language preparation before entry into the graduate program. All entering students whose native language is not German are required to pass an ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) oral proficiency examination in German during their first quarter in the program.

Admission to the department is competitive.

PhD students who matriculate in Summer 2020 and after will be guaranteed to have funding support from the University of Chicago, external sources, or a combination of the two for the duration of their program to include the following:

- Full tuition coverage
- Annual stipend
- Fully paid individual annual premiums for UChicago’s student health insurance (U-SHIP, the University Student Health Insurance Plan)

The goal of the University’s commitment to ensuring that students are supported is to allow students to prioritize their studies and prepare for rewarding careers. We expect students to remain in good academic standing and to be making progress toward completing degree requirements.

Students in the Division of the Humanities who entered their PhD program in Summer 2016 or later, and who are still enrolled in 2022-2023 will be fully incorporated into this new funding model, and will receive at least the guaranteed stipend level (subject to applicable taxes), full tuition coverage, and fully paid health insurance premiums for the duration of their program. Students are expected to remain in good academic standing.

Students who matriculated before Summer 2016 will receive at least the funding they were offered at the time of admission and may be eligible for additional funding, such as dissertation completion fellowships. Over the past several years, the Division of the Humanities has increased investments in funding to support students in degree completion.

Additional fellowships and awards are available to support language study, conference travel, and research travel.

Pedagogical training is a required component of doctoral education, and University resources can help you acquire the skills and experiences you need to feel at ease in the classroom, whether you are leading a discussion section, lecturing in the Humanities Common Core, or teaching a course of your own design.

The Department of Germanic Studies has some funds to support students in summer projects, travel, and research. In addition, the Norwegian Culture Program Endowment Fund provides some money for research and travel support for students interested in Norwegian language and culture.

Applications to the program must include a writing sample of not more than twenty pages, in German or English; Graduate Record Exam scores from the general examination; TOEFL (Test Of English as a Foreign Language) scores, if applicable; and three letters of recommendation.

The application process for admission and financial aid for all graduate students is administered through the divisional office of the Dean of Students (http://humanities.uchicago.edu/about/leadership/dean-of-students/). The Application for Admission and Financial Aid, with instructions, deadlines and department-specific information is available on the Graduate Student Online Application page. Please note that the application and all supporting materials are to be submitted online. Questions pertaining to admissions and aid should be directed to: humanitiesadmissions@uchicago.edu (%20humanitiesadmissions@uchicago.edu) or (773) 702-1552.

International students must provide evidence of English proficiency by submitting scores from either the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). (Current minimum scores, etc., are provided with the application.) For more information, please see the Office of International Affairs website at https://internationalaffairs.uchicago.edu/, or call them at (773) 702-7752.
DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The following is an outline of the main features of the graduate program. If you need additional information, please write directly to the Department of Germanic Studies (http://german.uchicago.edu/graduate/).

Students in the Department of Germanic Studies are admitted into the Ph.D. program of study. Students interested in a one-year interdisciplinary Master’s program in Germanic Studies should contact the Master of Arts Program in the Humanities (http://humanities.uchicago.edu/depts/maph/). Study towards the M.A. degree, normally completed after the first year, is intended as an introductory period, a time for both faculty and students to decide on the suitability of an extended graduate program. All students entering the Ph.D. program with a master’s degree from another institution will undergo an informal evaluation at the end of their first year in the department to assess their progress and to plan their further course of study.

DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

COURSE WORK

Three quarters of course work and a total of eight courses are required during the first year of study. These include the mandatory pedagogy course (“Acquisition and Teaching of Foreign Languages”). A completed M.A., which includes the pedagogy courses and a “superior” rating on the German oral proficiency test, are prerequisites for teaching appointments. Besides the pedagogy course, students must take at least one course each quarter from departmental faculty, and at least two additional courses from departmental faculty during the year. The remaining courses could contain little or no Germanic material and may be taken primarily for methodological, theoretical, or historical interest. Course selections must receive the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies (http://german.uchicago.edu/graduate/). All courses must be taken for a letter grade. We expect students to develop a broad historical sense of German culture through coursework as well as their own background reading. The primary aim of the master’s year is for students to explore a variety of materials, approaches and problems.

LANGUAGE EXAMINATION

Students who do not achieve a “superior” rating on the oral proficiency examination in German (to be taken early in their first quarter) will be advised to undertake further language training or to take other steps to improve their skills; they will be re-tested during the second quarter.

M.A. EXAM

The purpose of the M.A. exam is to test students’ ability to work with concepts central to the discipline, to articulate literary-historical arguments, to discuss significant patterns that extend beyond individual texts, and to articulate how such concepts relate to the interpretation of individual works. In addition, the exam establishes a useful foundation of knowledge upon which the student can build in later studies.

The examination takes place in the eighth week of Spring Quarter of the student’s first year of graduate study. Its basis is a list of some twenty to twenty-five texts selected by the student in consultation with the two members of the student’s M.A. exam committee. (The committee—consisting of two members of the department’s core faculty—is to be designated by the Director of Graduate Studies (http://german.uchicago.edu/graduate/) in consultation with the student.) This list reflects a category of literary research such as a genre, a period, or a general concept bearing on a mode of writing. Examples of the former might be “The Bourgeois Tragedy” or “Modern Urban Short Prose” or “The Elegy.” Periods can be variously conceived: Enlightenment, Realism, Weimar Republic. General concepts are more abstract categories such as “narrative” or “performance” or “argumentative writing.” Lists could also be organized along thematic lines or in terms of a traditional narrative subject. The point is that the list be designed so as to sustain a process of coherent intellectual inquiry. In addition to the 20-25 primary texts, the list includes a representative cross-section of secondary literature addressing the topic under study.

The examination itself has two components:

a) a take-home written examination, and
b) an oral examination approximately one hour in length.

The take-home component consists of three essays (of two and one half, never more than three double-spaced pages) written in answer to questions devised by the faculty. These questions offer the student an opportunity to demonstrate her/his ability to explore various intellectual issues raised by the list as a whole as well as by specific works on the list. Students will receive these questions on Friday morning of the eighth week of classes and hand in their completed essays by 5:00 p.m. the following Monday. The oral examination is devoted to a critical discussion of the students’ three essays as well as to works included on the list but not addressed in the written part of the examination. It will take place one week after the written exam. Following a forty-minute discussion of the essays, the student and the faculty examination committee will assess the student’s overall progress, including course work.

A crucial aspect of the M.A. examination is planning and advising. Students should choose their examiners and have one planning meeting with each examiner by the eighth week of Autumn Quarter. Students should choose examiners and design the lists with a view to the seminars they plan to attend throughout the year.
Students must submit their lists for approval at the end of the fourth week of Winter Quarter. Two weeks after submission, they should meet with their examiners to discuss preparation for the exams. During Spring Quarter, students should meet with their examiners twice prior to the exam in order to discuss questions arising from their readings. Of course, throughout the process students are encouraged to discuss questions arising from their readings with other faculty members, both inside and outside the Department of Germanic Studies.

**First Year: Time Schedule for M.A. Exam**

- Fall, Week 8 - Choose examiners
- Winter, Week 4 - Submit exam list for approval
- Winter, Week 7 - Arrange to meet with examiners to discuss exam preparation
- Spring, Week 8 - Written exam
- Spring, Week 9 - Oral exam

The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The Ph.D. phase of study will be self-designed to a greater extent than the M.A. phase. Students who enter with an M.A. from another university will be required to take one pedagogy course in their first year (“Acquisition and Teaching of Foreign Languages”). This requirement may be waived by the department if a student can demonstrate that equivalent work was successfully completed at another institution. Completion of the course (or a departmental waiver), together with a “superior” rating on the oral proficiency interview in German taken early in the first quarter (or re-taken later if necessary), are prerequisites for teaching appointments.

**COURSE WORK:** Students will establish that balance of course work and individual preparation that best suits their intellectual agenda. Course selections, however, must be approved by the director of graduate studies. A minimum number of eight courses over two years, not including the pedagogy course, is required. All of these courses must be taken for credit. Six must be taken for a letter grade. The remaining two may be taken Pass/Fail. Typically, the two post-M.A. years (during which students will also be teaching) will look as follows: two seminars each quarter the first year; at least one seminar each quarter for the fall and winter quarters of the second year; exams in the spring quarter of the second year. In this way students will have ample time during the second Ph.D. year to prepare for the exams.

**LANGUAGE EXAMINATION:** All students are required to pass one university foreign language reading examination before taking their Ph.D. oral exams. The choice of language should be made in consultation with the director of graduate studies. Exams are administered by the Chicago Language Center.

**Ph.D. EXAMINATIONS:** The exam focuses on a small archive of literary, philosophical, and literary critical works (approximately 50 works) established by the student. This “major field list” should be organized around a broad topic that will in many cases anticipate the larger field within which the dissertation project will be situated. Some examples from previous exams: “Discourses of Madness from Kant to Musil,” “Worldly Provincialism: German Realism 1850-1900,” and “The Aesthetics of Sacrifice in Postwar German Literature and Art.” Works on the list should be grouped into clusters according to categories and questions relevant to the topic. These criteria should be expressly formulated in the list. Students are encouraged to meet with as many faculty members as possible as they work on these materials. In consultation with the director of graduate studies, they should arrange for an exam committee of three faculty members: two faculty members (normally both members of the department) to compose and evaluate the written examination questions, and a third faculty member (from either departmental or resource faculty) to serve as an additional examiner for the oral exam. At the beginning of the fall quarter of the second Ph.D. year, students will submit a preliminary exam list to the faculty committee they have chosen and to the director of graduate studies.

The four-hour, open-book, written exam will normally be taken around the seventh week of spring quarter. Five weeks prior to the exam, each student will submit to the exam committee and to the director of graduate studies a final draft of the list. As noted, the list should be organized by way of the categories and questions that indicate what the students considers to be the salient issues animating the different clusters of texts. Faculty will use this list as a guide in preparing the exam. Within two weeks of the exam, the full committee will meet with the student for an hour-long discussion that will encompass the exam and plans for the dissertation. Students should work on their dissertation proposals over the summer and schedule the formal proposal defense at the beginning of the fall quarter of the third Ph.D. year. For further details regarding the Ph.D. exams, students are encouraged to consult with the director of graduate studies.

To summarize, the second Ph.D. year will normally flow in the following way. In the fall quarter, the student establishes the exam committee in consultation with the director of graduate studies. A preliminary list is submitted by fifth week of the quarter. The winter quarter is dedicated to reading and exam preparation. By the second week of spring quarter, the final list (articulated into clusters of texts) is submitted to the committee. The written exam is taken in the second half of the quarter, typically around the seventh week. Within two weeks of the written exam, the student meets with the committee for an hour-long discussion of the exam and dissertation plans. The summer after the exam is dedicated to elaborating the dissertation proposal. The final proposal is due no later than one quarter (not including summer) after passing the Ph.D. exam.
DISSEETATION PROPOSAL: Within three weeks of the Ph.D. exam, a student must identify a primary dissertation advisor (in some cases there will be two co-advisors). A full dissertation committee of three members will be established in consultation with the advisor. The committee need not be identical with the exam committee and there is already the possibility that the dissertation committee and primary advisor(s) will change over the course of the project (it may turn out, for example, that another faculty member proves to be more engaged with the primary materials of the dissertation). The proposal itself ought not attempt to predict the final conclusions of the project before the research is fully under way. Instead, it should seek to divide the project into subordinate questions and to rank the parts of the project in terms of priority. It should include a preliminary bibliography and a potential chapter structure, and also indicate a rough timetable for the research and writing of the dissertation. The proposal of approximately 20-25 pages should be problem-driven and question-oriented, and should contextualize the project within relevant scholarly debates. The student will discuss the project in a proposal defense with the dissertation committee, to be scheduled in consultation with the primary advisor and the departmental administrator. This will typically be done one quarter (not including summer) after the Ph.D. examination. Students must file copies of their exam lists and proposal with the department administrator.

SYLLABI PROPOSALS: During the third summer of the Ph.D. program, students will compose two syllabi, one for an upper-division undergraduate class and one for a graduate seminar (consultations with faculty about the syllabi should already have begun in the spring quarter). These syllabi may overlap to some extent with the dissertation project but should ideally represent other areas of interest and developing expertise. They may be designed as courses in translation, courses taught in German, or courses requiring reading knowledge of German. In many cases students will wish to submit one of these syllabi for the annual Tave competition in the winter quarter. (The Stuart Tave Teaching Fellowship allows graduate students to teach a free-standing, self-designed undergraduate class.) The primary advisor(s) of the dissertation will meet with the student in the course of the fall quarter to discuss and evaluate the syllabi.

WRITING THE DISSERTATION: After the proposal has been approved by the readers, the student should plan on spending the remainder of that year researching and reading. Some students may spend this time away from campus; others may choose to remain in Chicago to work closely with their committee. Students are strongly encouraged to try to complete the dissertation during the sixth year. All students should complete the dissertation by the end of the fall quarter of their seventh year.

TEACHING IN THE COLLEGE

Graduate students in the Department of Germanic Studies at the University of Chicago will enter the job market with a solid basis in current pedagogical theory and practice as well as a range of teaching experiences in a variety of classroom settings. Teaching in the undergraduate language program is an integral part of the graduate program. Before they begin teaching, graduate students must participate in a graduate seminar on pedagogy ("Acquisition and Teaching of Foreign Languages"). This course is an introduction to foreign language acquisition and to the theoretical models underlying current methods, approaches and classroom practices. Syllabus and test design and lesson planning are also treated. All participants do two days of observation and two days of supervised teaching in a first-year class.

Graduate students have the opportunity to teach in the beginning and intermediate German language program (http://german.uchicago.edu/graduate/). They have full responsibility for the courses they teach, including syllabus design, day-to-day instruction, test design, grading and all other record keeping. Input from the graduate students is also critical in the ongoing implementation and revision of the curriculum. Internal grant monies have been made available to support the development of an on-line writing project designed by graduate students, as well as other curricular innovations.

Graduate students also have the opportunity to work as on-site coordinators and/or instructors in study-abroad programs in Vienna and Freiburg (http://german.uchicago.edu/graduate/). The preparation of students for study-abroad and their reintegration into the curriculum is an ongoing process in which graduate students, in their roles as instructors, are deeply involved.

Each fall there is an orientation for all graduate students who will teach that year. It is held in conjunction with the Center for Teaching and Learning (http://teaching.uchicago.edu/) and deals with general procedural and pedagogical issues as well as specific course objectives and practices. This inter-departmental cooperation also includes jointly held workshops and seminars on different topics in the field of second language teaching, offered by University of Chicago faculty and experts from other institutions.

GERMANIC STUDIES GRADUATE COURSES

GRMN 35322. New German Cinema. 100 Units.
This class will offer an intense exploration of the classical New German Cinema and some of the issues in its aesthetics, history and theory. Thus, we will see a broad variety of films (some familiar, some not so familiar; including work by R.W. Fassbinder, A. Kluge, W. Herzog, W. Wenders, H. Sanders-Brahms, U. Ottinger, J-M Straub/D Huillet, et al.) and read a broad range of material-incorporating, among others, questions of genre, auteur theory, psychoanalysis, history, politics, and film style. Proficiency in German language, culture, or history is welcome but not required (all films have subtitles); a serious commitment to thinking about the logic, rhetoric,
history, and textuality of film is essential. The pace and conceptual level of the readings make this course most appropriate for graduate students.
Instructor(s): David Levin Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): undergrads by consent only
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 42027, GRMN 25322

GRMN 37621. Philosophical Aesthetics: Heidegger and Adorno. 100 Units.
Two major positions in German philosophical aesthetics of the 20th century will be considered in detail: 1) the ontological-hermeneutic theory advanced by Martin Heidegger; 2) the dialectical-critical theory developed by Theodor W. Adorno. Primary readings will be Heidegger’s Origin of the Work of Art and selections from Adorno’s Aesthetic Theory. In addition, selected shorter pieces by the two authors will be studied, with a special emphasis on their work on lyric poetry. The seminar will also consider contributions by Georg Simmel, Walter Benjamin, Helmut Flessner, Arnold Gehlen, Georg Lukács. The course seeks to develop an understanding of the conceptual foundation of each of the two philosophical positions. Particular topics to be considered: a) the nature of artistic presentation (Darstellung); b) the nature of artistic truth; c) the historical character of art; d) the political significance of art; e) the relation of art to philosophy.
Instructor(s): David Wellbery Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): Undergrads must receive consent.
Equivalent Course(s): GRMN 27621, CMLT 27621, SCTH 27621, CMLT 37621

GRMN 34819. Maniacs, Specters, Automata: The Tales of E.T.A. Hoffmann. 100 Units.
In this course we will read stories by one of the most prominent representatives of Romanticism, the German writer, composer, and painter E.T.A. Hoffmann who wrote “The Nutcracker and the Mouse King” on which Tchaikovsky would later base his ballet. His stories of bizarre yet psychologically compelling characters will introduce us to the “dark side” of Romanticism as well as to its fantastical aspects. Students will read Hoffmann’s extraordinary stories, develop skills of literary analysis, and engage in historical inquiry by tracing the way in which Hoffmann’s texts engage with the context of their time, in particular with the history of medicine (mesmerism, early psychiatry) and law (Hoffmann worked as a legal official). Those with reading knowledge of German can read the texts in the original, otherwise readings and discussions will be in English.
Instructor(s): Margareta Ingrid Christian Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): GRMN 24819

GRMN 39821. Goethe’s Faust: Myth and Modernity. 100 Units.
In this seminar we shall undertake an intensive study of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s Faust, with close textual study of the entirety of Part I and Act 5 of Part II. We will begin by casting a brief look at the earliest versions of the Faust myth, the so-called Faust Chapbook of 1587 and Christopher Marlowe’s Dr. Faustus composed 1589-92, premiered 1592), and we will have an eye on later versions such as those of Paul Valéry and Thomas Mann. Some consideration will be devoted to the question of modern “myth” and the Faust myth will be compared to that of Don Juan in particular. Our major task, however, will be to develop a close reading and interpretation of Goethe’s text, which ranks as one of the supreme achievements of the European literary tradition. The interpretative issues at the center of our inquiry will include: a) the theory of (modern) tragedy; b) desire and subjectivity; c) Faust in relation to post-Kantian philosophy; d) the theme of time and the "moment." In addition to major works of scholarship, we shall touch on interpretations of the play by Schelling and Kierkegaard. Command of German will be helpful, but students may also refer to an English translation. (Recommended English version: Faust I & II, translated by Stuart Atkins, introduction by David E. Wellbery, Princeton Classics, 2014. Recommended German version: Faust I und II, hrsg. Albrecht Schöne, 2 vols. Text + commentary. Deutscher Klassiker Verlag 2017.)
Instructor(s): David Wellbery Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CMLT 39821, SCTH 39821

GRMN 48421. Stifter’s Modernity. 100 Units.
Probably no other author has been written off as boring as frequently as Adalbert Stifter (1805-68); yet Thomas Mann recognized in this boredom a compelling “sensationalism” and Stifter was admired by writers as diverse as Nietzsche, Benjamin, Handke, and Sebald. His work rewards closer attention today for readers interested in his extreme description, but also for its treatment of ecocritical themes and diagnosis of violence and modernity. In this seminar we will focus on reading his monumental Bildungsroman Der Nachsommer (1857). We will also consider shorter prose works ranging from his Viennese feuilleton essays to later stories from the collection Bunte Steine, as well as his output as a painter.
Instructor(s): Catriona MacLeod Terms Offered: Winter