DEPARTMENT OF GERMANIC STUDIES

Department Chair
• Eric Santner

Director of Undergraduate Studies
• Margareta Ingrid Christian

Director of Graduate Studies
• Florian Klinger

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

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. 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 (humanitiesadmissions@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/maprh/). 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.
DISSEMINATION 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 always 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 departmental 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 32321. Aby Warburg and the Origins of Kulturwissenschaft. 100 Units.
This course explores Aby Warburg as a founder of Kulturwissenschaft in the context of other thinkers of the time such as Sigmund Freud and Walter Benjamin. Trained as an art historian with an expertise in Renaissance art, Warburg morphed into a historian of images (i.e., Bildwissenschaft) and - more broadly - into a historian of culture. We will trace Warburg's cultural historical method as it develops primarily from philology, but also art history, anthropology, the comparative study of religions, and evolutionary biology. How does Warburg read culture? What is his methodological approach for examining a wide variety of cultural artifacts ranging
from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Poliziano’s poetry, and Dürer’s etchings to postal stamps and news photographs? How can these artifacts be vehicles for cultural memory? And how does the transmission of cultural memory in artworks manifest itself in different media such as literary texts, religious processions, astrological treatises, photography, and painting? Moreover, how does Warburg’s work help us contextualize and historicize ‘interdisciplinarity’ today?

**Instructor(s):** Margareta Ingrid Christian  
**Terms Offered:** Autumn  
**Note(s):** Conducted in English.  
**Equivalent Course(s):** GRMN 22321

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**GRMN 35421. Babylon Berlin: Politics and Culture in the Weimar Period. 100 Units.**  
This seminar will focus on the political and cultural turmoil of the Weimar Republic. Course material will include novels, poetry, political essays, philosophy, visual art, and film. Among authors and artists addressed: Ernst Jünger, Walter Benjamin, Alfred Döblin, Fritz Lang, Georg Grosz, Irmsgard Keun, Hannah Höch, Bertold Brecht, Carl Schmitt.  
**Instructor(s):** Eric Santner  
**Terms Offered:** Spring  
**Note(s):** Advanced undergrad by consent only.  
**Equivalent Course(s):** GRMN 25421

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**GRMN 35721. Literature as Self Help: The Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke. 100 Units.**  
Rainer Maria Rilke’s writing is famous for its lyrical intensity. The pathos of his poetic language appears to ‘move’ and ‘touch’ readers in an unparalleled way. Soldiers going to fight in the Second World War carried volumes of Rilke’s poetry in their knapsacks and letters of fallen soldiers contained quotes from his verse (‘Who talks of victory? To endure is all.’). Recent editions of his writings, such as *Rilke on Love and Other Difficulties* (1994), *Rilke for the Stressed* (1998) or *Words of Consolation* (2017), attest to Rilke being viewed as someone from whom readers expect insight into the value or vanity of life. In this course, we will read selections of Rilke’s poetry and correspondence alongside excerpts from his writings on art to critically examine his language’s purported ability to express our innermost feelings and to offer solace. Along the way, we will also pay attention to situating his work in the context of ‘modernism.’ Other readings by: Paul de Man ‘Tropes (Rilke),’ Rita Felski ‘Uses of Literature,’ Beth Blum ‘Self-Help Compulsion: Searching for Advice in Modern Literature,’ among others. Readings and discussions in English. Those who read German will read the texts in the original.  
**Instructor(s):** Margareta Ingrid Christian  
**Terms Offered:** Autumn  
**Equivalent Course(s):** FNDL 25721, GRMN 25721

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**GRMN 34921. Robert Musil: Altered States. 100 Units.**  
This course is an introduction to the work of Robert Musil, one of the major novelists of the twentieth century. We will focus on Musil’s idea of the ‘Other Condition’ [der andere Zustand], which he once described—in contrast to our normal way of life—as ‘a secret rising and ebbing of our being with that of things and other people.’ What is this ‘Other Condition’: what are its ethics and aesthetics, and how can it be expressed in literature? We will begin with readings from Musil’s critical writings and early narrative prose, then devote the majority of the quarter to his unfinished magnum opus, *The Man without Qualities*. Particular attention will be paid to Musil’s experimentations with narrative form and his development of the genre of ‘essayism. Readings and discussion in English.  
**Instructor(s):** Sophie Salvo  
**Terms Offered:** Spring  
**Equivalent Course(s):** GRMN 24921, FNDL 24921

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**GRMN 34321. Literature of the Weimar Republic. 100 Units.**  
In this course, we will turn to the ‘golden twenties’ of the previous century to examine a series of texts from Germany’s first republic, its first democratic period, between 1918 and 1933. The Weimar Republic was a period of political experimentation; of exceptional intellectual and artistic creativity; and of social upheaval. We will close-read texts, alongside a selection of films and artworks, and situate them in their turbulent historical context. Readings include: Walter Benjamin, Anna Seghers, Siegfried Kracauer, Ernst Bloch, Ricarda Huch, Alfred Döblin, Bertolt Brecht, Erich Kästner, Gertrud Kolmar. Readings and discussions in English. Those who read German will read the texts in the original.  
**Instructor(s):** Margareta Ingrid Christian  
**Terms Offered:** Autumn  
**Equivalent Course(s):** GRMN 24321

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**GRMN 42221. The Fragment. 100 Units.**  
A central experimental genre of Early Romanticism, the fragment was defined by Friedrich Schlegel in *Athenäums-Fragment 206* as: ‘entirely isolated from the surrounding world like a little work of art and complete in itself like a hedgehog.’ This seminar will consider fragments both conceptually and as isolated texts that are, however, gathered together materially in medial collections such as encyclopedias and albums. What is the relationship of the fragment to totality or coherence? What kinds of knowledge and reading practices does the fragment presuppose? Readings will include fragments and fragmentary works by, among others, Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel, Novalis, and Heine.  
**Instructor(s):** Catriona MacLeod  
**Terms Offered:** Spring

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**GRMN 42820. Ekphrasis. 100 Units.**  
What happens when a text gives voice to a previously mute art work? Ekphrasis - the verbal representation of visual art - continues to be a central concern of word and image studies today. The understanding of ekphrasis as
an often hostile paragone between word and image exists alongside notions of a more reciprocal model involving a dialogue or ‘encounter’ between visual and verbal cultures. The affective dimension of the relationship -- ekphrastic hope, ekphrastic fear -- has also been prominent in recent scholarship. Drawing on literary works and theories from a range of periods and national traditions, the course will examine the long history of ekphrasis. Why are certain literary genres such as the novel or the sonnet privileged sites for ekphrasis? How can art history inform our understanding of such encounters, and to what extent can we say that it is a discipline based in ekphrasis? What can we learn from current work on description, intermediality, narrative theory, and translation theory? Readings from Homer, Philostratus, Lessing, Goethe, Keats, A.W. Schlegel, Kleist, Sebald, Genette, among others.

Instructor(s): Catriona MacLeod
Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): ARTH 42820