Department of Germanic Studies

People

Department Chair
• Eric Santner

Director of Undergraduate Studies
• Colin Benert

Director of Graduate Studies
• David Levine and David Wellbery

Professors
• David J. Levin
• Eric L. Santner
• David E. Wellbery

Associate Professors
• Christopher J. Wild

Assistant Professors
• Margareta Ingrid Christian
• Florian Klinger

Senior Lecturers
• Catherine Baumann
• Kimberly Kenny
• Sunny Yudkoff

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

Affiliated Faculty
• 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
  Interests: German-American history and the history of international migration.
• Constantin Fasolt, Ph. D., Karl J. Weintraub Professor of History; Master of the Social Sciences Collegiate Division; Deputy Dean of the Division of the Social Sciences; Associate Dean of the College
  Interests: Early modern German history.
• Michael Forster, Ph. D., Professor of Philosophy
  Interests: Herder, Hegel.
• Michael Geyer, Ph. D., Samuel N. Harper Professor of German and European History
  Interests: German history of the 19th and 20th centuries with special interest in contemporary German and European affairs.
• Andreas Glaeser, Ph. D., Associate Professor of Sociology
Interests: Theories of culture and identity; with reference to Germany mostly post-unification controversies, social memory and architecture, reality construction processes among civil servants in authoritarian regimes.

Gary Herrigel, Ph. D., Associate Professor of Political Science
Interests: Political economy of advanced industrial states (Germany, USA, Japan), German political and industrial history in the 19th and 20th centuries, social and political theory.

Berthold Hoeckner, Ph. D., Associate Professor of Music and the Humanities
Interests: 19th century Austro-German music; Lyrik und Lied; Romantische Musikästhetik; Wagner; Adorno and music.

Loren Kruger, Ph. D., Professor, Department of English; Department of Comparative Literature; Committee on African Studies; Committee on Cinema and Media Studies; Committee on Theatre and Performance Studies
Interests: German literature 18th century to present (esp. drama); GDR and contemporary Germany; Brecht, Heiner Müller, Marxism; the Cold War; Frankfurt School; "Das andere Deutschland."

Jonathan Lear, Ph. D., John U. Nef Distinguished Service Professor at the Committee on Social Thought and in the Department of Philosophy
Interests: Freud, Wittgenstein, Heidegger.

Francoise Meltzer, Ph. D., Mabel Greene Meyers Professor of French, Comparative Literature, and the Divinity School; Acting Director of the Franke Institute for the Humanities
Interests: German romanticism, philosophy.

Paul Mendes-Flohr, Ph. D., Professor of Modern Jewish Thought in the Divinity School, Committee on Jewish Studies; Associate Faculty in the Department of History
Interests: German-Jewish intellectual history.

Glenn W. Most, Ph. D., Visiting Professor in the Committee on Social Thought
Interests: German literature and philosophy since the 18th century.

Robert B. Pippin, Ph. D., Raymond W. and Martha Hilpert Gruner Distinguished Service Professor; Committee on Social Thought and Department of Philosophy
Interests: Kant; German Idealism; Nietzsche; Heidegger; Modernity Theory.

Moishe Postone, Ph. D., Glen A. Lloyd Distinguished Service Professor, Department of Linguistics
Interests: Germanic languages (Scandinavian, Yiddish).

Malyne Sternstein, Ph. D., Associate Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures
Interests: Central European Studies, Literary, Psychoanalytic and Cultural Theory; Art and Media Theory

David Tracy, Ph. D., Andrew Thomas Greeley and Grace McNichols Greeley Distinguished Service Professor of Catholic Studies and Professor of Theology and the Philosophy of Religion in the Divinity School; Committee on Social Thought
Interests: 19th century German philosophy and theology.

Website
https://german.uchicago.edu/

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. Fellowships for a small number of highly qualified students includes full tuition, academic year stipends, summer stipends, and medical insurance. Teaching training is a vital part of the educational experience at the University, so all fellowships include a required teaching component. These awards are renewable for up to five years. 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. Finally, competitive fellowships are available for a final year of writing the dissertation.

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/prospective). 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.

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,
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.

DISSERTATION 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 - German Courses

GRMN 31002. Improvisation in Theory & Literature. 100 Units.
The practice of improvisation is not limited to rare moments of extraordinary Jazz solos. It finds itself at the heart of every creative process. As such it penetrates human life in all its instances. The seminar will read and discuss recent theory on improvisation and search it at work within literary texts from Heinrich von Kleist to Franz Kafka, from postwar German literature like Thomas Bernhard to current projects of digital poetics like Florian Meimberg’s “Tiny Tales” or Christiane Frohmann’s “Tausend Tode schreiben”. On this basis a new conceptualization of knowledge, communication, and aesthetic experience may become possible. Instructor(s): Fabian Goppelsroeder Terms Offered: Winter

GRMN 32110. Kafka and Performance. 100 Units.
This laboratory seminar is devoted to exploring the texts of Franz Kafka through the lens of performance. In addition to weekly scenic experiments and extensive critical readings (on Kafka as well as performance theory) we will explore the rich history of adapting Kafka in film, theater, puppetry, opera, and performance. Instructor(s): D. Levin, S. Bockley Terms Offered: Spring Equivalent Course(s): TAPS 22110; TAPS 32110; FNDL 22115

GRMN 32305. Creaturely Modernism: Freud, Kafka, Benjamin, Beckett. 100 Units.
The course will be dedicated to close readings of texts by all four writers in the hopes that the encounter between them will generate new interpretations of each. We will focus on texts that attend to the “creaturely” aspect of human life: Kafka’s animal stories along with The Castle; Freud’s “animal” case studies (Wolfman, Ratman, Little Hans); Benjamin’s Berlin Childhood along with selected essays; Beckett’s novel, The Unnameable. Instructor(s): Eric Santner, Mladen Dolar Terms Offered: Autumn

GRMN 32310. Rilke’s Modernity. 100 Units.
The course will read a selection of Rainer Maria Rilke’s poetry (including the Daino Elegies and Sonnets to Orpheus) along with his novel, The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge. We will accompany the readings with texts about urban modernity by Walter Benjamin, Sigfried Krakauer, and Georg Simmel. Instructor(s): Eric Santner Terms Offered: Spring, TBD Equivalent Course(s): GRMN 22310

GRMN 32314. Prosody and Poetic Form: An Introduction to Comparative Metrics. 100 Units.
This class offers (i) an overview of major European systems of versification, with particular attention to their historical development, and (ii) an introduction to the theory of meter. In addition to analyzing the formal properties of verse, we will inquire into their relevance for the articulation of poetic genres and, more broadly, the history of literary (and sub-literary) systems. There will be some emphasis on Graeco-Roman quantitative metrics, its afterlife, and the evolution of Germanic and Slavic syllabo-tonic verse. No prerequisites, but a working knowledge of one European language besides English is strongly recommended. Instructor(s): Boris Maslov Terms Offered: Winter Equivalent Course(s): CMLT 32303; CLCV 21313; CLAS 31313; SLAV 22303; SLAV 32303; ENGL 22310; ENGL 32303; GRMN 22314; CMLT 22303

GRMN 33300. Reading German for Research Purposes. 100 Units.
Reading German for Research Purposes prepares students to read and do research using scholarly texts in German. Students will gain a fundamental knowledge of German grammar and the most common vocabulary terms used in scholarly writing, while developing reading comprehension skills and working intensively with academic texts in their areas of research specialty. Graduate students who take this course perform well will be able to comprehend difficult scholarly texts and begin using them in their own research. The course also includes practice of the skills necessary to pass the Graduate Reading Comprehension Exam in German. No previous experience with German is required. NOTE: This course may fulfill the graduate language requirement in some departments. Instructor(s): Staff Terms Offered: Autumn, Summer, Winter. Summer 2017 dates: 6/20/17-7/27/17 Note(s): Check the time schedules for quarterly offerings. Also offered through the Summer Language Institute.

GRMN 33333. Reading German for Research Purposes. 100 Units.
Reading German for Research Purposes prepares students to read and do research using scholarly texts in German. Students will gain a fundamental knowledge of German grammar and the most common vocabulary terms used in scholarly writing, while developing reading comprehension skills and working intensively with academic texts in their areas of research specialty. Graduate students who take this course perform well will be able to comprehend difficult scholarly texts and begin using them in their own research. The course also includes practice of the skills necessary to pass the Graduate Reading Comprehension Exam in German. No previous experience with German is required. NOTE: This course may fulfill the graduate language requirement in some departments. Check the course search for quarterly offerings. Also offered through the Summer Language Institute. Instructor(s): Staff Terms Offered: Autumn
GRMN 35817. W. G. Sebald: On The Natural History of Destruction. 100 Units.
The difficulty of categorizing the sort of literary practice Sebald engaged in is notorious. The genres and hybrid styles with which his “novels” have been identified include: travel writing, memoir, photo essay, documentary fiction, magical realism, postmodern pastiche, cultural-historical fantasy, among others. And given the fact that his work so often deals, if only indirectly, with the Holocaust and its aftershocks, his work has furthermore been associated with that highly problematic generic and historical constellation, “Holocaust literature.” The seminar will address all of Sebald’s major works in the hope of elucidating this singular intersection of historical and literary complexity.
Instructor(s): E. Santner Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): Texts will be available in English and German, discussion will be held in English. We will “accompany” our reading of Sebald with a reading of Lucretius’s poem, On Nature.
Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 25817, GRMN 25817

GRMN 36117. Contemporary German Literature. 100 Units.
In this course, we will get acquainted with prominent figures of contemporary German literature. The following questions, among others, will guide our readings: How do recent literary texts reflect on their historical status in view of the end of “Nachkriegsliteratur”? How do they engage with the present as a thematic and narrative category? How can we explain the propensity of so many texts to depict the present time by mythologizing it? How do they represent crises and events as they unfold in the now? How do they relate to new media? We will read texts by Alexander Kluge, Jonas Lüscher, Thomas Kling, Kathrin Röggl, Peter Handke, Herta Müller, etc. in conjunction with films of the “Berliner Schule.”
Instructor(s): I. Christian Terms Offered: Winter

GRMN 36401. Post-Dramatic Theater. 100 Units.
This class sets out to explore the gamut of contemporary experimental theater, encompassing its varied theories and practices. Using Hans-Thies Lehmann’s path-breaking study Postdramatic Theatre as an ongoing point of reference, we consider a diverse array of practices from an eclectic group of artists spanning a broad range of eras and theatrical cultures (e.g., Elevator Repair Service, Forced Entertainment, Richard Foreman, Heiner Müller, Theater Oobleck, SheShePop, Robert Wilson) in a format that encompasses seminar-style discussion and laboratory-style practical experimentation. Team-taught by Seth Bockley (Chicago-based director) and David Levin (Chair of TAPS), Attendance at first class meeting is mandatory.
Instructor(s): David J. Levin, Seth Bockley
Note(s): Attendance at first class meeting is mandatory.
Equivalent Course(s): TAPS 36400

GRMN 36417. Improvisation in Theory and Literature. 100 Units.
The practice of improvisation is not limited to rare moments of extraordinary Jazz solos. It finds itself at the heart of every creative process. As such, it penetrates human life in all its aspects. The seminar will read and discuss recent theory on improvisation and locate it within literary texts from Heinrich von Kleist to Franz Kafka, from postwar German literature like Thomas Bernhard to current projects of digital poetics like Florian Meimberg’s “Tiny Tales” or Christiane Frohmann’s “Tausend Tode schreiben.” On this basis, a new conceptualization of knowledge, communication, and aesthetic experience may become possible.
Instructor(s): F. Goppelsroeder Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): GRMN 26417

GRMN 36816. Authority and Enjoyment. 100 Units.
A far reaching distrust and crisis of authority seems to be coextensive with the European Enlightenment and modernity—but what is authority? At least one thing is certain: our relation to authority is never simple and straightforward, but is the site of intense fantasmatc activity, mixing guilt, defiance, respect, resentment, terror, justice, and love. The word itself is highly evocative, and part of its power lies in the halo of images and meanings it conjures. This seminar will examine a series of questions: Why are we so invested in authority? Can authority be avoided by more inclusive horizontal organizations, or is it inevitably bound up with the social link and even the structure of language itself (the symbolic order)? To what extent is the father the paradigmatic instance of authority, and are we living the end of patriarchy or do we rather witness the return of the father? How has the figure of the master changed under capitalism, and in what new forms does authority appear today? If authority is neither inherently “bad” nor “good,” what use may be made of it for individual and collective emancipation?
Instructor(s): A. Schuster Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): Readings will include: Walter Benjamin on language and judgment; Hannah Arendt on the crisis of authority; Alexandre Kojève’s The Notion of Authority which analyzes its four ideal types (Father, Judge, Leader, Master); Jean Genet’s play The Balcony, dealing with the comedy of modern authority; the fantasatical figure of the father in the work of Franz Kafka; and the vicissitudes of the Oedipus complex in psychoanalytic theory, focusing on Sigmund Freud (Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality) and Jacques Lacan (Seminar VIII Transference). We will also watch Lars Von Trier’s The Boss of It All, Andrey Zvyagintsev’s The Return, and Nicholas Ray’s Rebel Without a Cause.
Equivalent Course(s): GRMN 26816
GRMN 37016. Goethe's Novels II: Die Wahlverwandtschaften. 100 Units.

After considering Goethe's Werther and Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre in the first phase of this three-part seminar, we turn to Goethe's "most beautiful book" (as he put it): Die Wahlverwandtschaften of 1809. The remarkable feature of Goethe's novelistic production is that each of his four novels develops a distinct formal or generic conception. In the case of Elective Affinities, we have what the philosopher-aesthetician Karl Ferdinand Solger referred to as a "tragic novel" and what others have called a "novel of society." Other terms suggest themselves, for example: "experimental novel" (in view of the fact that it is a scientific experiment from which the novel draws its leading metaphorical model). The seminar will consider the question of genre along with other, related issues: the place of science/knowledge in the novel, the novel's mode of citation and signification. Major contributions to the criticism of the novel (from Solger to Kittler) will be discussed as we develop a close reading of the novel across the ten weeks of the quarter. The written requirement for the seminar is a suite of bi-weekly "response papers." The seminar will include a special one-day roundtable on Walter Benjamin's essay on Die Wahlverwandtschaften with the participation of guest scholars.

Instructor(s): D. Wellbery Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): SCTH 37016

GRMN 37717. Opera in the Age of Its Mechanical Reproducibility. 100 Units.


Instructor(s): D. Levin
Equivalent Course(s): TAPS 28422, TAPS 38422, CMST 28301, CMST 38301, GRMN 27717

GRMN 39600. Kafka in Prague. 100 Units.

The goal of this course is a thorough treatment of Kafka's literary work in its Central European, more specifically Czech, context. In critical scholarship, Kafka and his work are often alienated from his Prague milieu. The course revisits the Prague of Kafka's time, with particular reference to Josefow (the Jewish ghetto), Das Prager Deutsch, and Czech/German/Jewish relations of the prewar and interwar years. We discuss most of Kafka's major prose works within this context and beyond (including The Castle, The Trial, and the stories published during his lifetime), as well as selected critical approaches to his work.

Instructor(s): Malyayne Sternstein
Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): CZEC 37700, FNDL 22207, GRMN 29600, CZEC 27700

GRMN 40205. Lyricology: Theories of Poetic Language. 100 Units.

Several recent theoretical contributions (e.g., Culler, Hempfer) have argued, contrary to a nearly forty-year-old research consensus, that it indeed makes sense to consider lyric poetry a legitimate "mode" of literary making at the same level as epic and dramatic poetry. At the same time, important theoretical advances have been made in the treatment of rhythm and meter, especially as applied to free verse. In this seminar we will take these theoretical advances as a point of departure to consider the possibility of developing a "lyricology" that would stand on an equal footing with the broad-based disciplines of narratology and performance studies. The seminar will operate on two levels: 1) classic texts in the theory of poetic language from the disciplines of linguistics/semiotics, philosophy, anthropology, and literary criticism will be studied; authors studied include: Mukarovsky, Jakobson, Heidegger, Valéry, Sierle, Ruwet, Abraham, Martin; 2) theories will be tested on a range of poems including e.g., Sappho, Shakespeare, Goethe, Hölderlin, Baudelaire, Benn, Bishop, Meister. Thus, the seminar will oscillate between theoretical reflection and the disciplined reading of lyric texts.

Instructor(s): David Wellbery
Terms Offered: Autumn, TBD

GRMN 40210. Kant's Third Critique. 100 Units.

A study of the Critique of the Power of Judgment. The philosophical undertaking of the book seems to have lost nothing of its daringness, and, if anything, only have gained relevance today: To join a theory of spontaneous life and a theory of natural life in a unified account. Please read the book in preparation for the seminar. Use Meiner or Suhrkamp editions, or the Guyer/Matthews translation at Cambridge UP.

Instructor(s): D. Levin
Terms Offered: Winter

GRMN 40305. Oedipus and Hamlet: On the Philosophy of Tragedy. 100 Units.

In this class we will consider closely attempts to understand tragedy philosophically. Sophocles' Oedipus the King and Shakespeare's Hamlet, two texts that have particularly attracted philosophical attention will serve as constant reference points, but other paradigmatic tragedies (Euripides Bacchae, Goethe's Faust, Beckett's Endgame) will also be considered. Among the philosophical contributions to be considered are works by Aristotle, Schiller, Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Scheler, Schmitt, Benjamin, Murdoch, and Menke. Major issues to be dealt with: the structure of tragic plot; the tragic affects; catharsis; ancient and modern tragedy; tragedy and the tragic; the aesthetics of tragedy; tragedy and society; tragedy and the sacred.

Instructor(s): David Wellbery, Robert Pippin
Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): TAPS 40305, SCTH 40305
GRMN 42416. The Debt Drive: Philosophy, Psychoanalysis, Neoliberalism. 100 Units.
Debt has become a paramount topic of discussion and controversy in recent times, fuelled by the financial crisis of 2008 and the different episodes of the sovereign debt crisis in Europe, above all involving Greece. This has produced a great deal of commentaries, economic analyses, and journalistic polemics from all sides of the political spectrum. Despite this profusion of discourse, it still proves difficult to seize the exact contours of the problem. Debt affects both the most isolated individuals and the most powerful states, it is equally a matter of “cold” economic rationality and the “hottest” emotions and moral judgments, it appears at once as the most empirical thing with the hardest material consequences and as a mysterious, ethereal, abstract, and purely speculative entity (the unreal product of financial “speculation”). The concept of indebtedness not only characterizes an increasingly universal economic predicament, but also defines a form of subjectivity central to our present condition. This seminar will examine the problem of debt by first looking at how different approaches to it—economic, anthropological, and psychodynamic—were formed by Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud, and then reading more contemporary authors on the theme, including Deleuze and Guattari, Foucault, Graeber, and Lazzarato.
Instructor(s): E. Santner and A. Schuster Terms Offered: Autumn

GRMN 49100. Acquisition/Teaching of German. 100 Units.
This course is an introduction to foreign language acquisition and to the theoretical models underlying current methods, approaches and classroom practices, as well as their practical applications.
Instructor(s): C. Baumann Terms Offered: Autumn
Font Notice

This document should contain certain fonts with restrictive licenses. For this draft, substitutions were made using less legally restrictive fonts. Specifically:

- Times was used instead of Trajan.
- Times was used instead of Palatino.

The editor may contact Leepfrog for a draft with the correct fonts in place.