

Program Goals & Learning Objectives:

The primary goal of the German teaching area at Whitman College is to enable students to understand, interpret and critique the culture of the German-speaking world. Some of the components of this goal would be to help students acquire:

- a) the linguistic skills that they need to read, write, and converse in German (attaining at least an “Advanced Mid Level” on the ACTFL proficiency scale);
- b) a basic understanding of the fundamentals of the culture, literature and history of the German-speaking world;
- c) the conceptual skills necessary to navigate through German culture and engage in research with German-language materials; and
- d) the ability to convey their understanding of German culture in both English and German, relying on good evidence and sound reasoning. (They will be able to demonstrate this ability to analyze and synthesize orally and in writing.)

Senior Assessment:

1. Students prepare a *thesis* or honors thesis paper. This paper is advised and read by the student’s thesis adviser, and read by the secondary reader in the German Studies program and by an outside reader from another department of the college with specialization or interest in the student’s thesis topic. Preparation of this paper requires students to:
 - a) demonstrate their German language proficiency in the areas of reading and writing at an Advanced Mid Level on the ACTFL proficiency scale;
 - b) use their general knowledge of German culture in helping them contextualize their topic and understand their research area of specialization;
 - c) conduct research with German-language materials; and
 - d) synthesize & analyze the research materials in order to form a coherent thesis argument.
2. Students complete a 2-hour *oral comprehensive examination*. Examiners include the student’s thesis adviser, the secondary reader in the German Studies program, and the outside reader. This exam is composed of three parts:
 - a) Students must prepare a reading and analysis of a work of German fiction. This work is chosen by the members of the examining committee in German Studies. Students must complete this portion of their comprehensive exam in German, demonstrating their German language proficiency in the areas of speaking and aural comprehension.

- b) Students must prepare a reading and analysis of a scholarly work of non-fiction on an aspect of German culture. This work is chosen by the members of the examining committee in German Studies. In discussing this work, students must demonstrate their general knowledge of German culture, and their ability to synthesize and analyze the text.
- c) Students defend their thesis paper.