

German Studies

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German
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German Studies is an interdisciplinary major that allows students to gain a comprehensive understanding of German culture by examining it from a broad range of academic perspectives. In consultation with their adviser, students design a course of study that may include, in addition to advanced language study, selections from multiple disciplines such as German language and literature, art history and visual culture studies, history, music history, philosophy, religion, or global literature. Coursework may include courses taught in German, courses taught in English, and courses taught in English but cross-listed with German Studies (which require students to complete a portion of the work in German).

Placement in language courses: Students with previous foreign language experience should consult the statement on placement in language courses in the *Foreign Languages and Literatures* section of this catalog.

Distribution: Courses completed in German Studies apply to the humanities or cultural pluralism distribution areas, with the following exceptions:

No distribution: 352, 391, 392

Total credits required to complete a German Studies major: 36

Learning Goals:

The primary goal of the German Studies major at Whitman College is to enable students to understand, interpret and critique the language and culture of the German-speaking world. In order to achieve this goal, students' learning will target the following competencies:

- **Communication:** Through explicit language instruction as well as the study of German-language cultural products, students will gain the linguistic skills needed to read, write, and converse in German in a variety of contexts, attaining at least an "Advanced Mid Level" on the ACTFL proficiency scale. In addition, students will improve their communication, research, and writing skills in English.
- **Culture:** German Studies courses introduce students to the fundamentals of German-speaking cultures through the study of their literature, history, and other cultural contexts. Successful German Studies majors will be open-minded, critical readers, adept at analyzing, synthesizing, and responding to a variety of cultural products.
- **Connections and Comparisons:** Students will gain the conceptual skills necessary to navigate German-speaking cultures, to synthesize and analyze a variety of media, and engage in advanced research with both English and German-language materials. Participating in high-level research will foster connections and comparisons between the student's home culture and those of German-speaking communities. Ultimately, these skills will allow students to analyze, synthesize, and communicate their understanding of the culture, relying on sound evidence, critical thinking, and clear communication skills in both German and English.

The German Studies major: A minimum of 36 credits, including four credits in senior thesis, four credits in a course taught in German at Whitman at the 400 level and another 12 credits (three courses) in German at the 300 level or above. The additional 16 credits of coursework may be in German at the 200 level or above, or may be a combination of German at the 200 level or above and up to (but not more than) 12 credits in the approved German Studies courses. Regularly approved courses in German Studies are available in a variety of departments (see below). Other courses, including those taken abroad, may be accepted as German Studies with consent of the faculty in German Studies. German Studies allows a maximum of eight credits in approved German Studies courses to be counted for both the German Studies major and another major.

Typically, students entering Whitman with little or no German would include in their major: German 205-206, three 300-level courses, one 400-level course, one additional course, and a senior thesis. The student who places into 300-level German as a first-year student would have more flexibility and would typically take four 300- or 400-level German courses, three additional courses either in the German Studies program or other approved courses, and a thesis. The thesis is written in English, but students must work with texts in the original German. Because these theses are so interdisciplinary in nature, we require an outside reader whose area of academic specialization can enhance the development and assessment of the thesis. The outside reader is not necessarily from the affiliated faculty, but rather the person on the Whitman faculty who has the most expertise in the student's subject matter and is willing to serve. The Final Comprehensive Exercise consists of three parts: 1. oral defense of the thesis, 2. a presentation on an assigned significant text in German literature, and 3. discussion of a selection of currently scholarly work in German Studies, chosen by the faculty. In the course of the examination, students will need to demonstrate a broad knowledge of German literature, history, and culture. Honors in the major: Students majoring in German Studies should register for German Studies 492 Senior Thesis for their final semester. If at the Senior Comprehensive Exam, Committee members determine that the thesis written is an honors-level thesis, students will earn Honors in Major Study, if they additionally:

- earn distinction on their Senior Comprehensive Exam;
- attain Cumulative and Major GPAs specified in the faculty code (3.300 and 3.500, respectively); and
- earn a grade of A or A- on the thesis.

The Program Director will notify the Registrar of those students attaining Honors in Major Study no later than the beginning of the third week of April for spring honors thesis candidates, at which time the Registrar will change the thesis course in which they are registered from German Studies 492 to German Studies 498. All successful honors candidates are required to file an acceptable digital copy of their theses or reports of the research projects in the college library no later than Reading Day which precedes the beginning of the final examination period in their last semester.

The German Studies minor: A minimum of 20 credits: 12 credits in German at the 300 level or above; at least four of which must be from a course taught in German at Whitman at the 400 level; eight additional credits in German at the 200 level or above or in an approved course in German studies at the 200 level or above; no independent studies count toward the minor. Courses that count for other majors may be used for the minor. Note: Courses taken P-D-F prior to the declaration of a language major or minor will satisfy course and credit requirements for the major or minor. Courses taken P-D-F may not be used to satisfy course and credit requirements for the major or minor after the major or minor has been declared.

The following courses are approved for German Studies major and minor credit.

Environmental Studies 308 *(Re)Thinking Environment*

Environmental Studies 335 *Romantic Nature*

Environmental Studies 339 *Writing Environmental Disaster*

Film and Media Studies 367: *ST: Paneled Pasts: The Representation of History in Comics*

Gender Studies 300 *ST: Gender, Nature, and the Animal in Literature, Film and Art from the 19th Century to*

Today

History 150 *Comrades come rally! Socialism and European Society*

History 277 *Revolutionary Europe: Democracy Rising*

History 278 *Twentieth Century Europe*

History 339 *Modern Germany: Imagining a Nation?*

Music 298 *Music History II: Classical and Romantic Periods*

Music 326 *Form and Analysis*

Philosophy 215 *Ethics after Auschwitz*

Philosophy 318 *Hannah Arendt as Political Thinker*

Philosophy 322 *Kant's Moral Philosophy*

Philosophy 329 *Wittgenstein*

300-301 Topics in Applied German Studies

1-4 credits

Any current offerings follow.

302 Murder, Mayhem, Madness: Crime and Justice in the German-Speaking World

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

What drives a person to murder? How does society assign guilt and (hopefully) achieve justice? How do historical circumstances and changes in society influence our thinking about crime and punishment? This course explores these and other questions through a study of the rich tradition of crime literature in the German speaking world from the nineteenth century to today. Students will read prose and drama texts as well as view film and theatrical productions that deal with crime, detection, and punishment, both by official and unofficial means. Students continue their linguistic and communicative development in this course with instruction in speaking, listening, and cultural competency with a focus on the development of advanced reading and writing skills. Language skills will be developed through regular readings, writing assignments, grammar exercises, student presentations, and discussion. Course taught in German. Offered every three years. Distribution area: humanities or cultural pluralism.

Prerequisite: German 206 or any 300-level German course, placement exam, or consent of instructor.

303 German Drama: From the Bourgeois Tragedy to Bertolt Brecht

Fall

Hoffmann

4 credits

What can the stage do that the page cannot? What are the fundamental flaws of a tragic hero? What are the differences between a tragedy and a comedy? What is an epic drama? This course introduces students to German drama from the nineteenth century to today, including bourgeois tragedy and expressionist drama. Students will read plays and theoretical essays by playwrights such as Johann Wilhelm von Goethe, Bertolt Brecht, and Elfriede Jelinek, and continue their linguistic and communicative development with a focus on advanced reading and analytical writing skills. The language skills will be obtained through regular readings, writing assignments, grammar exercises, student presentations, and discussion. Course taught in German. Offered every three years.

Prerequisite: German 206 or any 300-level German course, placement exam, or consent of instructor. *Prerequisite:* German 206 or any 300-level German course, placement exam or consent of instructor.

304 The German Fairy Tale: From World-Building to Nation-Building

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

Fairy tales are not just for children. They show us how daily life becomes magical, how national changes effect fantastical ones, and they allow us to observe literature's transformations through the ages. This course explores German folk and fairy tales from the Grimms through the art fairy tales of the Romantics and up to modern day interpretations. We study the fairy tales in the historical context of the long nineteenth century as well as from a variety of academic perspectives. Students continue their linguistic and communicative development in this course with instruction in speaking, listening, and cultural competency with a focus on the development of advanced reading and writing skills. The language skills will be developed through regular readings, writing assignments, grammar exercises, student presentations, and discussion. Course taught in German. Offered every three years.

Prerequisite: German 206 or any 300-level German course, placement exam, or consent of instructor.

309 Crisis and Continuity: The German Novel in the Twentieth Century

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

The modern German novel has played a key role in articulating German as well as Austrian and Swiss-German experiences in the twentieth century. From the collapse of the German Empire in 1918 to the 'Golden' Twenties, the Third Reich, and the Postwar Era of the two Germanys, the novel is a witness of its turbulent times, and expresses them in often innovative literary forms. This course explores the modern German novel in its socio-cultural and political context, and gives an overview of the cultural and literary developments in the twentieth century. Students continue their linguistic and communicative development in this course with instruction in speaking, listening, and cultural competency with a focus on the development of critical reading and writing skills. Language skills will be developed through regular readings, targeted writing assignments, grammar exercises, student presentations, and

discussion. This course is designed to accommodate students coming from German Studies 206, as well as more advanced students. Courses taught in German. Offered every three years. *Prerequisite:* German Studies 206 or any 300-level German course, placement exam, or consent of instructor.

310 Migration and Identity in Contemporary Germany

Spring

Jones

4 credits

The question of whether Germany is an “Einwanderungsland” or not is one defining political questions of the twenty-first century. The arrival of large numbers of refugees in Germany and other central European countries since the early 2000s has made this debate more urgent. This course asks what it means to be German in the globalizing world through the in-depth study of German-language texts primarily by authors with an immigration background. Authors studied may include Yoko Tawada, Abbas Khider, Zafer Senocak, Emine Özdamar, and others. In this course, literary inquiry is accompanied by the further development of high-level language skills with a focus on discussion skills, presentational language, advanced grammar, and regular writing assignments. Students will gain additional conversation practice through required weekly conversation groups with the language assistant. Course taught in German. *Prerequisite:* German Studies 206 or any 300-level German course, placement exam, or consent of instructor.

318 Hannah Arendt as Political Thinker

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

Hannah Arendt disavowed the title of philosopher, instead describing herself as a “political thinker.” This seminar will investigate what Arendt means by this description, focusing in particular on the notions of “world,” “natality,” and what she calls the *vita activa*. Texts will include *Between Past and Future*, *The Human Condition*, and *Eichmann in Jerusalem* as well as selections from Arendt’s work on Kant and aesthetics and cultural theory. Biweekly seminar papers and a final research paper will be required. May be elected as Philosophy 318. Students enrolled in German 318 must meet the German prerequisites and will be expected to complete some reading and writing assignments in German. *Prerequisite:* one course in Philosophy 300-level or higher and any 300-level German course or placement exam. Open only to senior Philosophy majors, German Studies majors, or by consent of instructor.

335 Romantic Nature

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

Why does nature inspire us? Where did our understanding of nature come from? We have inherited our interactions with nature from a variety of sources: The Enlightenment was marked by political, intellectual, and scientific revolution and attempted to explain the world through science. The Romantics, on the other hand, reacted by trying to restore some mystery to Nature and to acknowledge its sublime power. This Nature ideal spread throughout Europe and then on to America, where European Romanticism inspired writers like Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, and their contemporaries’ nature writing, which continues to exert influence on the American understanding of the natural world. This course will look at where American Transcendentalists and Romantics found inspiration. Students will read key literary and philosophical texts of the Romantic period, focusing on Germany, England, and America and explore echoes of these movements in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries: How do the Romantics continue to influence the discourse of environmentalism in America and around the world? Is the Romantic impulse at work in the establishment of the national parks system? Can we see echoes of the Romantic Nature ideal in narratives of toxic, post-industrial landscapes? Course taught in English. Some discussion, reading and writing assignments will be completed in German. *Prerequisite:* any 300-level German Studies class or consent of instructor. May be elected as Environmental Studies 335.

339 Writing Environmental Disaster

Spring

Jones

4 credits

From natural disasters (earthquakes, floods, storms) to man-made ecological catastrophe (nuclear accidents, oil spills, the thinning ozone layer), environmental disaster inspires fear, rage, and action. This course will focus on

fiction and non-fiction that meditates on these events and our reactions to them. We will examine the ways in which literature and the other arts depict disaster, how natural disaster descriptions differ from those of man-made environmental crisis, whether humans can coexist peacefully with nature or are continually pitted against it, and how literature's depiction of nature changes with the advent of the toxic, post-industrial environment. Authors discussed may include Kleist, Goethe, Atwood, Ozeki, Carson, Sebald, and others. Course taught in English. Some discussion, reading and writing assignments will be completed in German. *Prerequisite:* any 300-level German Studies class or consent of instructor. May be elected as Environmental Studies 339.

352 Cracking the Code: German Studies Research Methods

Fall **Ireland** **1 credit**

Academic research projects require planning and specialized skills. This course introduces advanced German Studies students to the research process including instruction on how to design interesting research projects, find and use a variety of materials from the library and relevant databases both in English and German, organize their research, cite properly, and plan for writing. Students will practice reading and using the specific grammatical forms used in academic language in order to gain proficiency working with research materials in German. This course is recommended for German Studies majors as preparation for the thesis project. *Prerequisite:* any 300-level German Studies course or consent of instructor.

387, 388 Special Studies

4 credits

Designed to permit close study of one or more authors, a movement, or a genre in German literature. Conducted in German or English, at the discretion of the instructor. *Prerequisite:* consent of instructor. Any current offerings follow. Distribution area: humanities or cultural pluralism.

391, 392 Independent Study

Fall, Spring **Staff** **1-3 credits**

Directed reading and preparation of a critical paper or papers on a topic suggested by the student. The project must be approved by the staff. The number of students accepted for the course will depend on the availability of the staff. *Prerequisite:* consent of instructor.

400 Advanced Special Studies

4 credits

Designed to permit close study of one or more authors, a movement, or a genre in German literature. Conducted in German. *Prerequisite:* any 300-level German Studies course or consent of instructor. Any current offerings follow. Distribution area: humanities or cultural pluralism.

405 German Cinema Culture

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

How does culture cope with modernity? Do old narrative forms still work in the twentieth century? What are the limits of text and the abilities of film? What does a new medium tell us about a new time? This course grapples with these and other questions in its study of the development of cinema in Germany from early German expressionist films to present day films that grapple with immigration and attempt to process history through comedy. In studying these films, students will discuss propaganda, identity politics, and mass culture in context. Students will be introduced to the study of film while improving and deepening their knowledge of German language, history, and culture. The course is conducted in German, with regular readings in film studies and history in both German and English. Films will be screened weekly at a time to be arranged. *Prerequisite:* any 300-level German Studies course or consent of instructor.

407 Heimat und Heimweh

Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

In this course, we will examine portrayals of the experience of the outsider in German language texts from nineteenth-century travel literature to contemporary transnational literature. Our focus will be on encounters by

German travelers and immigrants with *Amerika*, as well as on more recent discussions by writers of minority and immigrant groups within Germany. We will look at issues of identity and assimilation, as well as the history of immigration policies of the U.S. and Germany. Of particular interest will be questions of how German-language writers examine their identity, their new and old homes, and how they engage those communities as ordinary citizens, but also as writers contributing to the construction of the local culture. We will also examine how issues of the outsider are presented in popular music and film. Class conducted in German, short weekly papers, one presentation and a final research paper. *Prerequisite:* any 300-level German Studies course or consent of instructor. Offered every three years.

408 Berlin: Evolution of a Metropolis
Not offered 2019-20

4 credits

Just as Paris was “the capital of the nineteenth century,” Berlin has emerged as the capital of the twentieth century. Students in this course will study the origins of the great city and discuss essential issues of memory, identity, and history. We will study literature, art and film from the nineteenth century to the present. In addition, special attention will be paid to architectural landmarks (buildings, squares, monuments) that will act as case studies in how the city’s government and people process the past. This course will give students a solid grounding in twentieth century German history and literature while introducing theoretical concepts from Benjamin, Foucault, Kracauer, Simmel, and others. Class discussion, presentations, most readings, and all written work will be done in German. *Prerequisite:* any 300-level German Studies course or consent of instructor. Offered every three years.

409 Rebels with a Cause: Rebels and Revolutionaries in the German Speaking World
Spring

Hoffmann

4 credits

This course introduces unconventional thinkers and political activists of the German-speaking world in the late nineteenth and throughout the twentieth century. From the suffragist movement and communist and anarchist theories in the Weimar Republic to dissent in the GDR and anti-imperialist critique in Western Postwar Germany via antifascist activism in Nazi Germany, students will study German history and culture through the lens of political essays, poetry and short stories. Students will read works by well-known thinkers and activists such as anarchist Rosa Luxemburg, Jewish writer Anne Frank, and RAF activist Ulrike Meinhoff, and explore texts by writers who are now mostly ignored by the literary canon, for example, the early feminist writer Elsa Asenijeff. Students will continue their linguistic and communicative development with a focus on advanced reading and writing skills. The language skills will be obtained through regular readings, writing assignments, grammar exercises, student presentations, and discussion. Course taught in German. *Prerequisite:* any 300-level German course, placement exam, or consent of instructor.

492 Senior Thesis
Fall, Spring

Staff

4 credits

In-depth research concluding in the preparation of an undergraduate senior thesis on a specific topic in German studies. Required of German Studies majors.

498 Honors Thesis
Fall, Spring

Staff

4 credits

Designed to further independent research or project leading to the preparation of an undergraduate thesis or a project report. Required of and limited to senior honors candidates in German. *Prerequisite:* admission to honors candidacy.

The program in German Studies also includes courses in global literature. These classes are listed in the *Global Literatures* section of the catalog.