

GERMAN STUDIES

GER 110Y Elementary German (5 Credits)

An introduction to spoken and written German, and to the culture and history of German-speaking peoples and countries. Emphasis on grammar and practical vocabulary for use in conversational practice, written exercises, and listening and reading comprehension. By the end of the year, students are able to read short, edited literary and journalistic texts as a basis for classroom discussion and to compose short written assignments. Yearlong courses cannot be divided at midyear with credit for the first semester.

Fall, Spring

GER 189/ ITL 189 Thinking Transnationally: European Culture Across Borders (2 Credits)

Offered as ITL 189 and GER 189. This series of interdepartmental lectures by a selection of Smith faculty examines the myth of cultural homogeneity perpetuated by the ideal of “native” linguistic competency. These lectures explore hybridity and interaction between cultures and languages as the rule, not the exception. The goal is to help students comprehend the transnational, multilingual web into which they are woven, and to appreciate how they contribute to that web, to appreciate their own position as transnational subjects. By adopting a transnational perspective, students learn to question the primacy of the “native,” whether as non-native speakers in the US or as language-learners looking abroad. S/U only. {H}{L}

Fall, Spring, Annually

GER 200 Intermediate German: The German Environment (4 Credits)

An exploration of contemporary German culture through literary and journalistic texts, with regular practice in written and oral expression. A review of basic grammatical concepts and the study of new ones, with emphasis on vocabulary building. Prerequisite: GER 110Y or equivalent, or by placement. Enrollment limited to 20. {F}

Fall

GER 231wc Topics in German Cinema-Weimar Cinema (4 Credits)

During the brief period between the fall of the Kaiser and the rise of the Nazis, Germany was a hotbed of artistic and intellectual innovation, giving rise to an internationally celebrated film industry. With an eye to industrial, political, and cultural forces, this course explores the aesthetic experience of modernity and modernization through formal, narrative, and stylistic analyses of feature films from the “Golden Age” of German cinema. Films by Wiene, Lange, Murnau, Pabst, Ruttman, Sternberg, Sagan and Riefenstahl. Restrictions: GER 231 may be repeated once with a different topic. Conducted in English. {A}{H}

Fall, Spring, Variable

GER 250 Advanced Intermediate German: Environmental Culture (4 Credits)

Discussion of modern German culture, society and technology, with an emphasis on environmental issues. Introduction and practice of more advanced elements of grammar, work on expanding vocabulary specific for academic fields, and weekly writing and oral assignments. Students who successfully complete GER 250 are eligible for the year-long Study Abroad Program in Hamburg. Prerequisite: GER 200 or equivalent, or by placement. {F}

Fall, Spring, Variable

GER 260 German All Over Campus (4 Credits)

This course emphasizes a “hands on” approach to language acquisition. It will be conducted at various academic locations around campus in collaboration with colleagues of the respective departments and facilities. (Physics, Astronomy, Chemistry, Biology, Studio Art, Landscape studies, Museum, etc.). Students will engage in experiments and other activities at these various locations through which they will learn to express themselves in written and oral German in a variety of disciplines and situations. The practical activities will be accompanied by new grammar topics appropriate for an advanced intermediate course as well as literary and journalistic texts that complement the topics. Prerequisite: GER 200 or placement. Enrollment limited to 18. {F}

Spring

GER 269tf Colloquium: Topics in Transnational German Studies-The Forest (4 Credits)

This course studies the forest as a literary construct, cultural asset, economic resource and key ecological player. German social movements in the 19th century were conspicuously invested in the forest as a national symbol. This obsession with the “German forest” serves as a starting point to explore the significance of the forest on both sides of the Atlantic. Cultural artifacts like the Grimm’s fairy tales and German Romantic poetry influence American literature and art; mechanisms of exclusion and belonging, destruction and profiteering shape discourses on the natural world across the globe. A recent rise in narratives of interconnectedness may herald a paradigm shift in how both the US and German-speaking world thinks about the forest. Enrollment limited to 18. (E) {H}{L}

Fall, Spring, Annually

GER 271/ ENG 271 Imagining Evil (4 Credits)

Offered as GER 271 and ENG 271. This course explores how artists and thinkers over the centuries have grappled with the presence of evil—how to account for its perpetual recurrence, its ominous power, its mysterious allure. Standing at the junction of literature, philosophy, and religion, the notion of evil reveals much about the development of the autonomous individual, the intersection of morality, freedom and identity, and the confrontation of literary and historical evil. Readings include literary works from Milton, Goethe, Blake, Kleist, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Tolkien, Le Guin; theoretical texts from Augustine, Luther, Nietzsche, Freud, Arendt. Conducted in English. {L}

Fall, Spring, Variable

GER 300aa Topics in German Culture and Society-Anders als die Anderen (4 Credits)

What does it mean to be “different” in the German-speaking countries of Europe? What does it mean to “be” German, Austrian, or Swiss? The course considers the reciprocal relationship between those two positions and examines how marginalized groups have played and continue to play key roles in shaping and (re)defining social norms in central Europe. The course asks how the gay rights movement beginning in the late 19th century influenced definitions of “difference” and traces the intersections of queer identities, Jewish and Black communities, the history of the German Turkish population, and contemporary immigration more broadly. The course focuses on primary sources in German ranging including literature, journalistic texts, visual works, podcasts, interviews, and talks. The course develops reading, comprehension, speaking, and writing skills. Prerequisite: GER 250. (E) {F}{L}

Fall, Spring, Alternate Years

GER 300dg Topics in German Culture and Society-Deutsche Geschichte(n): Personal Stories Amid German History After 1945 (4 Credits)

The end of WWII triggered a set of events that still influence German society to this day. This course is designed to give an overview of historical events after 1945, including the Berlin Wall, Reunification and migration. These topics are approached through personal and public stories, drawing on the double meaning of the German word Geschichte, which translates to both "story" and "history." Through narratives of a broad spectrum of genres (e.g., articles, documentaries, movies), students gain a thorough understanding of historical and contemporary social issues in Germany and improve their proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Prerequisite: GER 250 or GER 260, or equivalent. (E) {F}

Fall, Spring, Variable

GER 300se Topics in German Culture and Society-Growing Up German-Speaking in Europe (4 Credits)

This is an upper-level language course conducted within a cultural-historical framework. Objective: Develop students' ability to express thoughts on more abstract topics in German language by probing the discourse on the role of children and young people in German, Austrian and Swiss culture from the 18th century to the present. Vital component: Acquisition of suitable vocabulary and advances grammatical structures. Discussion: The rhetoric of education and family politics, pedagogical ideas and concepts put forth by famous writers like Kästner, Thoma, Janosch, Ende. {F}

Fall, Spring, Variable

GER 300sh Topics in German Culture and Society-German Songs, Language and History (4 Credits)

Music has always been an integral part of German culture, most famously in operas and symphonies. But songs are the most original and common expression of the time in which they were written and performed. This is an upper-level language course that will look at songs within a cultural historical framework. The objective is to develop students' ability to express thoughts on more abstract and complex topics in German language by probing the symbiosis of music and text in Germany from the Middle Ages to the present. The students will learn, analyze and perform a wide variety of songs. Prerequisites: GER 250 or GER 260 or equivalent. {A}{F}{L}

Fall, Spring, Variable

GER 300vk Topics in German Culture and Society-Vom Krieg Zum Konsens: German Film Since 1945 (4 Credits)

This course investigates German film culture since the fall of the Third Reich. Included are works by Fatih Akin, Michael Haneke, Werner Herzog, Margarethe von Trotta and Wolfgang Staudte. Students learn to analyze film and conduct basic research in German. Discussion addresses aesthetic and technical issues; portrayals of race, gender, class and migration; divided Germany and its reunification; and filmic interventions into the legacy of Nazism. Conducted in German. Prerequisite: GER 250 or equivalent. {A}{F}

Fall, Spring, Variable

GER 350 Seminar: Language and the German Media (4 Credits)

A study of language, culture and politics in the German-language media; supplemental materials reflecting the interests and academic disciplines of students in the seminar. Practice of written and spoken German through compositions, linguistic exercises and oral reports. Conducted in German. Prerequisite: GER 300 or equivalent. Restrictions: Juniors and seniors only. Enrollment limited to 12. Instructor permission required. {F} **Fall**

GER 369wb/ ITL 369wb Seminar: Topics in Transnational Encounters-Nations Without Borders (4 Credits)

Offered as GER 369wb and ITL 369wb. Both Italy and Germany arise from a combination of mobile factors, including people, languages, ideas and ideologies that move across, beyond and before national borders. This course interrogates what it means to study a modern language, specifically German and Italian, by reflecting on this fluidity and mobility of languages and cultures. Areas of inquiry include: the reception of works and authors in translation, the geographic and social mobility of people across multiple borders, the role of memory in connecting the national past with other regions and languages, and the impact of transnational cultures in shaping gender, racial and cultural identities. Cannot be taken S/U. Restrictions: Juniors and seniors only. Enrollment limited to 12. Instructor permission required.

Spring, Variable

GER 400 Special Studies (1-4 Credits)

For junior and senior majors. Instructor permission required.

Fall, Spring

GER 430D Honors Project (4 Credits)

This is a full-year course. Department permission required.

Fall, Spring