

PT320 Discussing Deutschland: What Germans Are Talking about Today (in German)

Dr. Michael Thomas Taylor

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Location: XXXX

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Office hours: after class on Tuesday and by appointment

Fall Term 2019

Tuesday: 15:45–17:15

Thursday: 15:45–17:15

Course Description

This course engages pressing debates in German media today, asking about the issues and forms of discourse that shape German politics and social life. It is structured around six key topics: media, politics, Germany and Europe, Germany and the world, diversity, and language. Each topic will be introduced with a reading providing theoretical and/or historical background or context, followed by specific topics chosen and lead by students. The course will also combine these seminar discussions with visits to cultural sites, events, and organizations and through guest speakers. In addition to the study of current public debates and forms of civic engagement, the purpose of this course is to refine and advance your ability to articulate yourself verbally and in writing through constant vocabulary building. Students taking the class should have a C1 proficiency level.

Course Goals

- You will get to know **key themes dominating current public debates** in German media and **visit Berlin-based cultural sites, events, and organizations, generating ideas for social and political change.**
- By working with partners, in groups, through class **discussions**, by **writing assignments** in and outside of class, and by building up your **vocabulary**, you will refine and advance your ability to articulate your verbal and written contributions to current debates more confidently and concisely. You will improve your general German language abilities in the areas of writing, reading, listening, and speaking.
- Working closely with the instructor, you will **choose and present a discussion topic** including texts or other material for the class to discuss, improving your ability to **critically engage and evaluate German public discourse** and to **develop your own point of view in dialogue with that of others.**
- **Class discussion will generally be in German, except on days noted as “discussion in English.”**

Required Texts

All texts are on **Google Team Drive**. Please note that you **must** have a hard copy of the text with you in every class meeting. Much of our work will be collaborative and based on texts

or materials that we will select and provide for each other in the course of the semester.
These texts or materials are due a week before the day of discussion.

Participation

Your active and prepared participation is absolutely crucial and constitutes one quarter of your grade. You are expected to contribute actively in class discussions and group work, and you need to be prepared to answer and turn in small assignments or short reading comprehension quizzes. The purpose of these smaller assignments is to help you test your reading, speaking and listening comprehension skills on a regular basis.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory for all seminars. Please note the following regulations: You will be allowed no more than two absences during the semester. Repeated lateness also counts as an absence. Each additional absence will lower your final grade by half a point (i.e. if your final grade is a B, and you have missed three classes and/or been late repeatedly you will be downgraded to a B-).

In case you have any medical issues or other concerns that could impact your compliance with the regulations above, please make sure to inform your instructor during the first week of the semester.

Please be punctual and considerate. Also, please keep bathroom breaks to a minimum. Interruptions are bad for everybody's concentration and impolite.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, iPhones

Recent research has conclusively shown that use of laptops, tablets, and iPhones during class negatively effects learning, both for those using them and those sitting near those using them (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/22/business/laptops-not-during-lecture-or-meeting.html? r=0>)

So no electronic devices are allowed during class time, for any reason.

Vocabulary Diary

To further develop and refine your language skills at this level, it is very important that you work on constantly building up your vocabulary. You will therefore keep a vocabulary diary.

Resources

In preparing for class, you are strongly encouraged to make use of the different German dictionaries listed on the Bard College Foreign Languages, Cultures, and Literatures website: <http://flcl.bard.edu/resources/german/>

Writing

You will be asked to explore the ideas and texts discussed in class in several writing assignments in and outside of class (see syllabus for dates). For writing assignments outside of class, please bring a hard-copy of your double-spaced text with margins of ca. 3cm to

class on the assignments' due dates. Essays that are up to 24 hours late can be lowered one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). I am not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late.

For all essay assignments to be complete, you must hand in **two versions**. Based on the comments you receive on your first version, you will need to revise and resubmit your correction along with the first version. You will receive a grade for the corrected second version of your essay, based on its content, grammar, and structure. You can receive a maximum of 12 points for your essay (4 points for each category).

Example:

Content: 4

Structure of Argument: 3.5

Grammar: 2

Overall: 9.5 Points (B-)

Presentations

On the first day of class, we will distribute discussion topics among the students. Working closely with the instructor, you are responsible for preparing one day of discussion on your assigned topic. This will include two to three source texts or videos and a list of discussion questions. These must be ready for distribution at least one week before the assigned date. The purpose of your questions is to steer your *Kommilitonen* to what you consider important in the assigned readings and to help animate and direct our discussion in class. Your presentation will be evaluated on the quality of your questions, your ability to communicate and your skills to engage the class in a conversation about your topic.

The discussion on these days will be a collaborative effort between you, the instructor, and the class. You are responsible for choosing the topic and materials and making an opening presentation with guiding questions. The instructor is responsible for offering support and guidance in making these choices and for structuring class discussion after the opening presentation and discussion. The class is responsible for actively supporting each student by bringing their own ideas and questions to the discussion.

During the final week of class, we will together decide on two new topics to discuss that we feel intensify, deepen, extend, or complement the discussions we have had in class so far. The topics should also engage with issues that arise during the semester in the German media.

Academic Honesty

In the written work you do for this course, you are expected to adhere to the rules of academic honesty stated under the paragraph on **plagiarism** in the Student Handbook: The most serious violation of academic integrity is the attempt to pass off the work of others as one's own. Plagiarism means presenting the exact words of others as one's own, or seeking to disguise borrowings from other sources through paraphrase and/or through the failure to

use appropriate means of attribution and citation. Plagiarism also includes the re-use of one's own work for another assignment, whether in the same course or in a different course. If a student is in any uncertainty about what constitutes plagiarism, he or she should consult academic advisors or course instructors.

<http://www.berlin.bard.edu/for-students/student-handbook/academics/#c2599>

Grade Breakdown:

Participation:	25%
Presentation/discussions:	25%
Homework/Quizzes:	25%
Written assignments/projects:	25%

SYLLABUS

Media

Tuesday, 3 September	<p>Case: Study – State Elections in Brandenburg and Sachsen</p> <p>To read: a selection of current articles on Sunday's German state elections, from a range of media. I will post these online by Monday noon following the elections. The aim of our first discussion is to get an overview of what is being said about the elections and to compare various voices, points of view, and media.</p>
Thursday, 5 September	<p>The German Media Landscape: Theories and Facts (discussion in English)</p> <p>Hans J. Kleinstuber, "Germany." In <i>The Media in Europe</i>, edited by Mary Kelly, Gianpetro Mazzoleni, and Denis McQuail, 78–90. London: Sage, 2008.</p> <p>"Mass Media, Culture and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany: An Introduction." Karl Christian Führer and Corey Ross. In <i>Mass Media, Culture and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany</i>, 1–22. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.</p>
Tuesday, 10 September	<p>Tageszeitungen/Zeitschriften: <i>Die Zeit, SZ, FAZ, Der Spiegel, Bild</i></p> <p>Publishing houses: major print works in German in 2019</p> <p>We will discuss current German print publications to get an overview of the German media landscape. Each student will pick one newspaper and be prepared to contribute to a discussion on the various points of focus and styles of these publications.</p>
Thursday, 12 September	<p>Rundfunk: die regionalen Sender, Deutsche Welle, Deutschlandradio</p> <p>We will look at what the regional and national radio stations are focusing on this week, comparing the topics and intended audience of radio broadcast to print media. Here again, we will divide up the stations among ourselves and everyone should come prepared to present for five minutes on one station,</p>

	focusing on coverage for this week.
Tuesday, 17 September	<p>Internet/social media/AI We will broaden our discussion to look at new media: the Internet, social media, and AI.</p> <p>Zizi Papaccharissa. "The Virtual Sphere: The Internet as Public Sphere." <i>New Media & Society</i>, no. 4, vol. 1 (2002): 9–27. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F14614440222226244</p> <p>Ulrike Klinger and Jakob Svensson. "The Emergence of Network Media Logic in Political Communication: A Theoretical Approach." <i>New Media Society</i>, no. 17, vol. 8 (2015): 1241–1257.</p> <p>David Beer. "The Social Power of Algorithms." <i>Information, Communication & Society</i>, no. 20, vol. 1: 1–13. DOI: 10.1080/1369118X.2016.1216147</p>
Thursday, 19 September	<p>Entertainment and culture Focusing on Berlin, we will look at the city's major cultural institutions and independent cultural scene, as well as popular entertainment media such as movies.</p> <p>Essay #1 is due: pick one of the issues we have examined during the previous weeks discuss how it is presented in different media.</p>

Politics

Tuesday, 24 September	<p>New Parties, New Politics? AfD + die Grünen Two articles from a major print publication to be chosen closer to date – perhaps also relating to the Austrian elections (which will take place on 29 September) as a point of comparison.</p>
Thursday, 26 September	In class writing assignment: Essay #1 peer feedback.
Tuesday, 1 October	No class (museum visit scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 27 in lieu of this day)
Thursday, 3 October	No class: Day of German Unity
Tuesday, 8 October	<p>Student discussion(s): politics, topic(s) chosen by one or more students</p> <p>Essay #1 final draft due</p>

Germany and Europe

Thursday, 10	European Public Sphere(s)?
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October	<p>(discussion in English)</p> <p>Lewis A. Friedland, Thomas Hove, and Hernando Rojas. "The Networked Public Sphere." <i>Javnost – The Public</i>, vol. 13, no. 4 (2006): 5–26.</p> <p><i>European Public Spheres: Politics Is Back</i>, edited by Thomas Risse. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2015:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas Risse, "1. Introduction," 1–25. • Ruud Koopmans, "3. How Advanced is the Europeanization of Public Spheres? Comparing German and European Structures of Political Communication," 53–83. <p>Timothy Garton Ash, "Why We Must Not Let Europe Break Apart," <i>Guardian</i>, Thursday, May 9, 2019.</p>
Tuesday, 15 October	<p>Die Bundesregierung, webpage, "Themen: Europa" (pages on EU institutions, how the EU works, Germany's place in the EU, the Erasmus exchange program, "Why We Need Europe," Brexit, etc.): https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/themen/europa</p> <p>Tony Judt, "Europe: The Grand Illusion," reprinted in <i>When the Facts Change: Essays 1995–2010</i>, 30–41. London: Penguin House, 2015.</p> <p>"Demystifying the European Union," video, https://youtu.be/idlCpZl9hQ4</p>
Thursday, 17 October	<p>Student discussion(s): Germany and Europe, topic(s) chosen by one or more students</p>

Germany and the World

Tuesday, 22 October	<p>Das Humboldtforum</p> <p>Jens Bisky, "Flächenrochade," <i>SZ</i>, 4 July 2019.</p> <p>Andreas Kilb, "Gewurstel im Barock," <i>FAZ</i>, 26 June 2019.</p> <p>Jörg Häntzschel, "Gebremst engagiert," <i>SZ</i>, 11 February 2019.</p> <p>Kia Vahland, "Geister der Ahnen," <i>SZ</i>, 13 August 2018.</p> <p>Brian Ladd. "The Old Berlin." In <i>The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape</i>, 41–82. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.</p> <p>You should start thinking now about your topic for essay 2 and discuss this with me. The essay is due Tuesday, Nov. 5.</p>
Thursday, 24 October	<p>Discussion in English</p> <p>Websites</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lawrence Abu Hamdan, http://lawrenceabuhamdan.com • DAAD artist program profile, http://www.berliner-kuenstlerprogramm.de/en/gast.php?id=1310&p=1 <p><i>Lawrence Abu Hamdan: (inaudible): A Politics of Listening in 4 Acts</i>, edited by Lawrence Abu Hamdan and Fabian Schöneich; texts by Lawrence Abu Hamdan [and four others]. Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016.</p> <p>Emily Apter. "Shibboleth: Policing by Ear and Forensic Listening in Projects by Lawrence Abu Hamdan." <i>October</i>, vol. 156, no. 1 (2016): 100–115.</p> <p>Alex Marshall. "Turner Prize Shortlist Promotes Political Artists." <i>New York Times</i>, May 1, 2019.</p>
Sunday, 27 October	Visit to Hamburger Bahnhof to see "Lawrence Abu Hamdan: The Voice Before the Law"; if you cannot join us on this Sunday, you are welcome to visit the exhibition at any time of your choosing.
Tuesday, 5 November	Student discussion(s): Germany and the world, topic(s) chosen by one or more students
Thursday, 7 November	No class (SAND Journal reading and launch scheduled Nov. 22 in lieu of this day)

Diversity (focus on gender/lgbtqi+)

Tuesday, 12 November	<p>Articles on recent controversies in the Schwules Museum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nikolaus Bernau. "Queer gegen schwul in Berlin? Das sagt das Schwule Museum zur hitzigen Debatte." <i>Berliner Zeitung</i>, 27.07.19 • Viktoria Morasch. "Homokomplexe Gemengelage." <i>taz</i>, 28.06.2019 • Dirk Ludigs. "Wie in einer zerrütteten Ehe." <i>taz</i>, 11.11.2018 • Dirk Ludigs. "Konflikte um Ausrichtung des Schwulen Museums: 'Der Feminismus hat gesiegt.'" <i>Siegessäule</i>, 22.10.2018 <p>Essay #2 first draft due: topic to be chosen by each student, based on our discussions "politics," "Germany and Europe," "Germany and the World."</p>
Thursday, 14 November	<p>Visit to <i>TransTrans</i>, Schwules Museum, Berlin</p> <p>"Preface on Terminology" and "Introduction" in volume accompanying <i>TransTrans</i> exhibition in Schwules Museum. (Provided only as hard paper copy, as the book may still be in press.)</p>
Tuesday, 19 November	In class writing assignment: Essay #2 peer feedback.
Thursday, 21 November	<p>Student discussion(s): Diversity, topic(s) chosen by one or more students</p> <p>This week, we will pick the final discussion topics for our last week. You</p>

	should also be thinking about what your final project will focus on. Your final project should focus on either the topic you chose during the semester or one of the topics we choose for the final week. It can be an essay or it can take a different form: it's up to you!
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Language

Friday, 22 November	Reading and launch party for <i>SAND Journal</i> (Berlin-based literary journal)
Tuesday, 26 November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philippe Van Paris. "Gebt uns unsere Sprache zurück!" <i>Die Zeit</i>. 11 May 2019. • "Gendersternchen ist Anglizismus des Jahres 2018." <i>Die Zeit</i>. 29 January 2019. • Anatol Stefanowitsch. "Geschlechtslos in Hannover." <i>Die Zeit</i>. 26. January 2019. • Robert Habeck. "Was will Jens Spahn?" <i>Die Zeit</i>. 30 August 2017. • Uwe Hinrichs. "Die deutsche Sprache," <i>Die Zeit</i>. 7 April 2016. • Ulrich Greiner. "Ist Deutsch noch zu retten?" <i>Die Zeit</i>. 1 July 2010.
Thursday, 28 November	<p>Guest speaker: Jake Schneider, translator and editor of <i>SAND Journal</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at the VIDA Count re: Women in Publishing, found at https://www.vidaweb.org/the-2017-vida-count/ • Arifa Akbar. "Diversity in Publishing – Still Hideously Middle-Class and White?" <i>The Guardian</i>. 9 December 2017
Tuesday, 3 December	Student discussion(s): Language, topic(s) chosen by one or more students
Thursday, 5 December	Student discussion(s): Language, topic(s) chosen by one or more students

Final discussions/open topics

Tuesday, 10 December	Discussion topic chosen by class
Thursday, 12 December	<p>Discussion topic chosen by class</p> <p>Final projects due</p>