

LT257 Goethe as Educator

Seminar Leader: Jeffrey Champlin

Course Times: Tue & Fri 10:45-12:15

Location:

Email: j.champlin@berlin.bard.edu

Office Hours: and by appointment

Course Description

This course examines the range of Goethe's work from the early *Sturm und Drang* period, through Wilhelm Meister, to German Classicism, Faust, and later writing including the West-Eastern Divan. Nietzsche praised Goethe for holding that "in the totality everything redeems itself." Yet even when Goethe is most explicit about the importance of education, he leaves his readers uneasy about one's ultimate relation to traditions of the past or institutions that steward social value. Readers have long embraced his diagnosis of a pathological subjectivity at the heart of the modern individual, but to what extent can one hope to be cured of this affliction? Some of the stops on our itinerary include: the depths of internal feeling, the art of ancient Rome, a deal with the devil, and the poetry of Hafez. Along the way we trace the challenges of education as a thread through Goethe's work as a mode of creative, if often also self-defeating, subjective transformation in confrontation with larger truths.

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Requirements

We will make the most of the liberal arts seminar format by developing ideas and analysis through a process of discussion and writing. Toward that end, each student will contribute a short presentation and write a midterm and final paper. Overall class participation is also essential, and will be evaluated based on consistently preparing the readings and class engagement.

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, two absences from twice-per-week courses or the equivalent (e.g. one absence from a once-per-week course) should not affect the participation grade or require documentation.

Bard College Berlin does not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences, whether excused or unexcused.

The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SPRING 2021: Some students might need to begin the semester remotely due to travel restrictions caused by the pandemic. In addition, all students and instructors must refrain from in-person attendance if they are feeling ill. Instructors should make efforts to offer alternatives to in-person attendance where needed, including remote participation or asynchronous options.

Assessment

Class presentations: Students will present on one text as per a sign-up sheet. Each presentation of about 15 minutes will examine key passages of your choice as guided by a commentary handout that I will provide. In turn, you will provide your own handout for the class that focuses your reading of the text. You are encouraged to write your **midterm or final papers** on the text that you present on. In this manner, your essay can expand on the insights and questions that arose from your class contribution and the discussion that follows your readings.

Writing Assignments: Students will write two papers. The first will be focused on one text and the second will develop a longer comparative analysis of two texts we have studied in the class. The midterm paper will be 2,000 words, the final will be 3,000 words.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Essays that are up to 24 hours late can be downgraded up to one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss essay assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours.

Students receive mid- and end-of-semester grades for their seminar work. Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

Grade Breakdown

Class participation (quality and quantity): 25%

Presentation: 20%

Midterm essay (2000 words): 25%

Final essay (3000 words): 30%

Course Materials

The course will have a reader with secondary sources that all students should purchase. In addition, you will need **the following books by Goethe**. The texts marked with an (*) are available at the library for students on financial aid and then on a first come, first served basis. You are also encouraged to read the German editions and bring them to class.

The Sorrows of Young Werther (London: Penguin, 1989) 014044503X; 9780140445039) (*)

Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995) 9780691043449
Faust I (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014). 0691162298
The Italian Journey [edition to be specified by the start of the semester]
Iphigenia in Tauris [edition to be specified by the start of the semester]
West-East Divan [edition to be specified by the start of the semester]

In the Reader:

Goethe, "Prometheus" and other poems
"On Shakespeare's Day"
"On German Architecture"

Schiller, *Letters on Aesthetic Education* (selections)
Günderrode, Karoline von, selections from the collection *Bitter Healing*
Paul de Man, "Aesthetic Formalization"
Hafez, selected poems

Schedule

February 2 Introduction.

February 5 Goethe, Selected Poems

February 9 Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*

February 11 Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*

February 16 Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*

February 19 Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*

February 23 Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*

February 25 Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*

March 2 Schiller, *Letters on Aesthetic Education* (selections)

March 5 Schiller, *Letters on Aesthetic Education* (selections)

March 9 Goethe, *The Italian Journey*. Writing workshop in class.

March 12 Goethe, *The Italian Journey*

Midterm Paper Due

March 16 Goethe, *The Italian Journey*

March 19 Goethe, *Iphigenia in Tauris*

March 23 Goethe, *Iphigenia in Tauris*

March 26 Günderrode, selections from the collection *Bitter Healing*.

March 29 – April 5 spring break.

March 22 Goethe, *Roman Elegies*

March 29 Goethe, *Roman Elegies*

April 6 Kleist, “On the Marionette Theater”

April 9 Kleist, “On the Marionette Theater” (Continued)

April 13 Schiller, “The Dance”; Paul de Man, “Aesthetic Formalization”

April 16 Goethe, *Faust I*

April 20 Goethe, *Faust I*

April 23 Goethe, *Faust I*

April 27 Goethe, *Faust I*

April 30 *West-East Divan*

May 4 Hafez, selected poems.

May 7 *West-East Divan*

Final papers due for graduating students

May 11 *West-East Divan*

May 15 Concluding discussion and writing workshop

May 21 **Final papers due for non-graduating students**