

## GM362 The German Public Sphere

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Office hours: after class and by appointment

Spring Term 2020

15:45 – 19:00

### 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 visits to cultural sites, events, and organizations in Berlin, with additional topics chosen by the participants in cooperation with the instructor. These will include

- The 2020 opening of the Humboldt Forum in Berlin and the site history of the Berlin Stadtschloss
- A queer look at the classical collection of the Bode Museum, “Spielarten der Liebe”
- Berliner Mauer, Bernauer Straße
- Transgender history at the Schwules Museum
- A German media company
- A German political party

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 B2 proficiency level in German or higher.

### 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.**

**Excursions**

We will be taking approximately 7 excursions into Berlin to meet at cultural sites. Your attendance for these visits is mandatory. If there is an approved reason you cannot attend, let me know and we will talk about an alternate assignment.

**Required Texts**

All texts will be available via a Dropbox link. 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**

Electronic devices are allowed during class time, for any reason.

**Writing Journal**

One central aspect of our course will be a writing journal you keep in German. Please purchase a simple writing notebook for this purpose.

**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://fcl.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. three cm 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-)

## Final Projects

The last week of class will be reserved for final project presentations. The form of these projects is open—they can be something written, a video, or something else you design; they can be completed individually or in groups. They will be posted to the course website.

## 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: | 15% |
| Papers:                   | 40% |
| Final project             | 20% |

## SYLLABUS

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| Jan. 29 | <p>Introduction</p> <p>What is a public sphere or a public? Who has a voice, who is heard and seen, and how and via what media? What are the topics being discussed in public in Germany today? What media do you read, in German and in English, or in another language? What is more important for the public sphere, images or text?</p> <p>To do before coming to class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look through a major German print publication online (FAZ, SZ, Die Zeit, Spiegel, TAZ) and pick one current topic of discussion that you would like to focus on in this class. Bring the print publication including that article to class.</li> <li>• Read Wikipedia article on "Public Sphere."</li> </ul>   |
| Feb. 5  | <p><b>IN CLASS</b></p> <p><i>TransTrans</i></p> <p><u>Readings</u></p> <p>Articles on recent controversies in the Schwules Museum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nikolaus Bernau. "Queer gegen schwul in Berlin? Das sagt das Schwule Museum zur hitzigen Debatte." <i>Berliner Zeitung</i>, 27.07.19.</li> <li>• Viktoria Morasch. "Homokomplexe Gemengelage." <i>taz</i>, 28.06.2019.</li> <li>• Dirk Ludigs. "Wie in einer zerrütteten Ehe." <i>taz</i>, 11.11.2018.</li> <li>• Dirk Ludigs. "Konflikte um Ausrichtung des Schwulen Museums: 'Der Feminismus hat gesiegt.'" <i>Siegessäule</i>, 22.10.2018.</li> </ul> <p>Sophie Madeleine Garbe and Lukas Waschbüsch. "Transfrau Tessa Ganserer im bayerischen Landtag: 'Ich verlange, dass dieser Staat mich akzeptiert.'" <i>Spiegel Online</i>, 21 December 2019, <a href="https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/tessa-ganserer-transfrau-im-landtag-ich-verlange-dass-dieser-staat-mich-akzeptiert-a-1302193-druck.html">https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/tessa-ganserer-transfrau-im-landtag-ich-verlange-dass-dieser-staat-mich-akzeptiert-a-1302193-druck.html</a>.</p> <p>Articles about the <i>Gendersternchen</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christophe F. Schuetze. "'Gender Star' Stirs Linguistic Conservatives to Battle in Germany." <i>New York Times</i>. 7 March 2019.</li> <li>• "Gendersternchen ist Anglizismus des Jahres 2018." <i>Die Zeit</i>. 29 January 2019.</li> <li>• Anatol Stefanowitsch. "Geschlechtslos in Hannover." <i>Die Zeit</i>. 26. January 2019.</li> </ul> |
| Feb. 12 | <b>CITY VISIT</b>  |

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|         | <p>Visit to <i>TransTrans</i>, Schwules Museum, Berlin<br/>Lützowstraße 73<br/>10785 Berlin</p> <p><u>Readings to prepare</u></p> <p>“Preface on Terminology” in volume about the histories of the <i>TransTrans</i> exhibition in Schwules Museum. (Provided only as hard paper copy, as the book is still in press.)</p> <p><u>Assignment for next week</u>: Pick one of the five routes in the museum guide <i>Spielarten der Liebe</i>, pick two of the works, and be prepared to give the class a personal reaction to it—what draws you to the work? what thoughts or feelings does it prompt in you? what questions does it raise?</p> <p><b>Paper 1 first draft due</b></p>  |
| Feb. 19 | <p><b>IN CLASS</b></p> <p><u>Readings</u></p> <p>Museum guide, Bodemuseum: <i>Der zweite Blick, Spielarten der Liebe</i> (2019)</p> <p><u>Assignment for next week</u>: During our visit to the museum next week, you will be our tour guide for the route you have chosen! Also, this tour should be in German 😊 Don’t overthink or overprepare it—think of it more as teamwork with me. We won’t have time to look at everything, so your job: take us to two of the works, give us a BRIEF intro into what this work is and why we are looking at it (three sentences maximum!), and pose one discussion question. Suggestion: use the route theme as a guide! Make your question relate back to that theme. I will let you take the lead and also offer support when it seems helpful to me.</p> |
| Feb. 26 | <p><b>CITY VISIT</b></p> <p>Visit to the Bode Museum – <i>Spielarten der Liebe</i><br/>Am Kupfergraben, Eingang über die Monbijoubrücke<br/>10117 Berlin</p> <p><b>Paper 1 revised draft due</b></p>   |
| March 4 | <p><b>IN CLASS</b></p> <p>Das Humboldtforum</p> <p><u>Readings</u></p> <p>Articles on the Humboldtforum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jens Bisky, “Flächenrochade,” SZ, 4 July 2019.</li> </ul>  |

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|          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andreas Kilb, "Gewurstel im Barock," <i>FAZ</i>, 26 June 2019.</li> <li>• Jörg Häntzschel, "Gebremst engagiert," <i>SZ</i>, 11 February 2019.</li> <li>• Kia Vahland, "Geister der Ahnen," <i>SZ</i>, 13 August 2018.</li> </ul> <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>  |
| March 11 | <p><b>IN CLASS</b><br/>Humboldt – discussion in English</p> <p><u>Readings</u></p> <p>Andrea Wulf. <i>The Invention of Nature: Alexander von Humboldt's New World</i>. New York: Knopf, 2015. Prologue, Chapter 7 "Chimborazo," Chapter 18 "Humboldt's Cosmos."</p> <p>Alexander von Humboldt. <i>Cosmos: A Sketch or a Physical Description of the Universe</i>. Trans. E. C. Otté. New York: Harper &amp; Brothers Publishers, 1860. "Translator's Preface" and "Introduction."</p> <p><b>Paper 2 first draft due</b></p>   |
| March 18 | <p><b>CITY VISIT</b></p> <p>Visit to DEUTSCHES HISTORISCHES MUSEUM<br/>Exhibition <i>Wilhelm und Alexander von Humboldt</i><br/>Zeughaus und PEI-Bau<br/>Unter den Linden 2<br/>10117 Berlin</p> <p><u>To prepare</u></p> <p>Watch video from ZDF Mediathek: "Die Welt der Brüder Humboldt"<br/><a href="https://www.zdf.de/kultur/kulturdoku/welt-der-brueder-humboldt-100.html">https://www.zdf.de/kultur/kulturdoku/welt-der-brueder-humboldt-100.html</a></p> <p>We will also discuss this video after our visit to the museum and in class in the</p> <p><b>Paper 3 final draft due.</b></p> |
| March 25 | <p><b>IN CLASS</b><br/>German Media Today</p> <p><u>Readings</u></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>   |

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|          | <p>“Mass Media, Culture and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany: An Introduction.”<br/>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> <p><u>Assignment to bring to class:</u> Pick one major German newspaper and bring it to class. Be prepared to give us an introduction: what are the main topics being discussed? what is the overall tone? is there a clear political or other perspective?</p> |
| April 1  | <p><b>IN CLASS</b></p> <p>Readings: to be chosen together with students.</p> <p><b>Paper 3 final draft due.</b></p>   |
| April 8  | No class, Spring break  |
| April 15 | <p><b>CITY VISIT</b></p> <p>Bundespressekonferenz</p>   |
| April 22 | <p><b>CITY VISIT</b></p> <p>A German political party – we will decide on which party to visit in class.</p> <p>Readings: to be chosen together with students.</p> <p><b>Final project topics due.</b></p>   |
| April 29 | <p><b>IN CLASS</b></p> <p>Student projects</p>  |
| May 6    | <p><b>IN CLASS</b></p> <p>Student projects</p>  |