

**GM 362 The German Public Sphere (in German)****Version: December 19, 2021**

Plans may change based on circumstances as the semester progresses

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Spring Term 2022  
Thursdays 9:00 am to 12:15 pm  
Location: tbd

Office hours: by appointment

**Dropbox link for reader:**<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ywmig1hxcqh75gi/AABcGQxKT5GYcBjzr2LliNpSa?dl=0>**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

- Topographie des Terrors and Germany's remembrance culture
- The notion of *Heimat* and immigrant perspectives on Germany
- The role of climate change in German public discourse
- How the pandemic is changing the shape of public space and the public sphere

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. Several discussions may be conducted in English.**

### Required Texts

Over the course of the semester, you will be asked to read a newspaper every week each Friday. I will assign which papers you should read. Please purchase the physical copy of this paper, rather than reading it online. You should also buy:

- *Eure Heimat ist unser Albtraum*. Edited by Fatma Aydemir and Hengameh Yaghoobifarah. Berlin: Ullstein, 2019.
- Susan Neiman. *Learning from the Germans*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Girous, 2019.
- Luisa Neubauer and Alexander Repenning, *Vom Ende der Klimakrise: Eine Geschichte unserer Zukunft*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2019.
- A notebook for a weekly writing assignment.
- A weekly newspaper (to be assigned). You should purchase this on Fridays.

All other readings will be available via a Dropbox link. 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.

### Participation

Your active and prepared participation is crucial and constitutes a significant part 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: 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 5 percent. 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.

**SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SPRING 2022:** Some students may 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.

### 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://flcl.bard.edu/resources/german/>. *Do not use DeepL or Google translate etc. for your writing; also, do not ask native speakers to correct or help you correct your essays. Your corrections should reflect your own work*

## Writing

For writing assignments outside of class, 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 may 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 both essays based on grammar, content, and structure and the thoroughness/accuracy of your corrections.

*Your work on your essays, including your corrections, should be yours alone.*

## Final Projects

The last two weeks 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 for the public.

## 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, they should consult academic advisors or course instructors.

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

## Grade Breakdown:

Participation:	20%
Presentations/discussions:	20%
Papers:	40%
Final project	20%

## SYLLABUS

Depending on the number of students, we may add additional topics chosen by class participants.

Feb. 3	<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>• Read Wikipedia article on “Public Sphere.”</li> <li>• Read Thomas Meaney, “Bild, Merkel and the Culture Wars: The Inside Story of Germany’s Biggest Tabloid,” <i>The Guardian</i>, July 16, 2020.</li> <li>• Buy a copy of the <i>Bild Zeitung</i> from January 28, 2022 and bring it to class.</li> </ul> <p>Assignments for next week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will draw straws to assign one German news publication to each student. Over the course of the semester, you will follow this publication for six weeks, then another publication for another six weeks, based on a report log we will discuss today.</li> <li>• Watch the German <i>Tagesschau</i> every night for one week and fill out the nightly viewing journal.</li> </ul>
Feb. 10	<p>Traditional Print and Broadcast Media in Germany</p> <p>To prepare for class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be ready to give a short presentation on your newspaper to the class—no more than five minutes. We will focus topics beforehand. Assume no one else has seen the paper.</li> <li>• Bring your completed <i>Tagesschau</i> diary to class.</li> </ul> <p>During class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of newspapers</li> <li>• Discuss <i>Tagesschau</i></li> <li>• Discuss upcoming election of Bundespräsident</li> </ul> <p>Assignments for next week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch <i>Tatort</i> on Sunday night or before class</li> </ul>
Feb. 17	<p><i>Tatort</i>: The Place Where Germans Come Together</p> <p>To prepare for class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find and read one review of the <i>Tatort</i> episode. Bring it to class.</li> </ul> <p>During class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss <i>Tatort</i></li> <li>• Discuss Election of Bundespräsident</li> </ul> <p>Assignment due at the beginning of class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-page analysis about an article from your newspaper</li> </ul>

Feb. 24	<p><i>Eure Heimat ist unser Alptraum</i></p> <p>To prepare for class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Eure Heimat ist unser Alptraum</i>, ed. Fatma Aydemir and Hengameh Yaghoobifarah (Berlin: Ullstein, 2019), “Vorwort” and essays “Arbeit” and “Zuhause.”</li> </ul> <p>During class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anna Prizkau, “‘Eure Heimat ist unser Alptraum’: Nervt, bitte!,” <i>FAZ</i>, March 1, 2019.</li> <li>• Find and read another review of <i>Eure Heimat ist unser Alptraum</i>.</li> </ul> <p>Assignments for next week: Second draft of essay.</p>
March 3	<p>Germany’s Remembrance Culture</p> <p>To prepare for class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Susan Neiman, <i>Learning from the Germans</i> (New York: Farrar, Straus and Girous, 2019), chapters 1 and 2.</li> <li>• Brian Ladd, “The Old Berlin,” in <i>The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape</i> (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), pages on Topographie des Terrors.</li> </ul> <p>During class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss Neiman and Ladd.</li> <li>• Prepare visit to Topographie des Terrors</li> </ul> <p>Assignment due at the beginning of class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second draft of essay.</li> </ul>
<b>Excursion: Visit Topographie des Terrors between March 3 and 10</b>	
March 10	<p>Topographie des Terrors</p> <p>To prepare for class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between March 3 and March 10, visit Topographie des Terrors</li> </ul> <p>During class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss Topographie des Terrors</li> </ul> <p>Assignment due at the beginning of class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1-page perspective on your visit to Topographie des Terrors; the essay should reference ideas from both Neiman and Ladd</li> </ul>
March 17	<p><b>Excursion: Public Space in the Pandemic</b></p> <p>To prepare for class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pick one public place in Berlin that you personally feel has been changed by the pandemic</li> </ul>

March 24	<p>Public Space in the Pandemic</p> <p>To prepare for class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be prepared to give a 5 to 10-minute presentation on your chosen public place. Let us see it and visit it through your eyes. This should include images.</li> </ul> <p>During class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of public places</li> <li>• Discussion of <i>Querdenker</i> in the German media</li> <li>• New assignments of newspapers to read for the second half of the semester</li> </ul> <p>Assignment due at the beginning of class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newspaper journals for the first half of the semester</li> </ul>
March 31	<p><b>Online Exploration: Climate Change in the German Media</b> <b>This week is devoted group work, with time for discussions with me.</b></p> <p>In class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In groups, you will pick and explore websites/reports (print and video) on climate change in German media</li> <li>• We will schedule individual discussion sessions with me to check in about what you find</li> </ul>
April 7	<p>Climate Change in the German Media</p> <p>To prepare for class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop format from each group for looking at online discussion of climate change</li> <li>• Read Neubauer and Repenning, <i>Vom Ende der Klimakrise</i>, "Einleitung."</li> </ul> <p>During class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss websites you have explored</li> <li>• Discuss <i>Vom Ende der Klimakrise</i></li> </ul>
April 14	Spring break
April 21	<b>Zoom Class: discuss and prepare final projects</b>
April 28	<p>No class</p> <p>Assignments due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second essay comparing your first newspaper to your second</li> <li>• Newspaper journals for second assigned paper</li> </ul>
May 5	Final projects
May 12	<p>Final projects</p> <p>Assignment due at the beginning of class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised second essay</li> </ul> <p>Final projects due for uploading to the course website by May 19</p>