

**GM 362 Discussing Deutschland: What Germans Are Talking About Today (in German)**  
**Version: January 1, 2023**

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Spring Term 2023  
Fridays 9:00 am to 12:15 pm  
Location: TBD

Office hours: by appointment

**Dropbox link for reader:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/q64uc7c03uyxwol/AACxqHxzQJAs8coqKRRqjepma?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

- German media including print publications and their online presence; established news shows from German public broadcasters; social media platforms; and new, comedy-based news reporting and commentary
- Germany's *Zeitenwende*: the war in Ukraine, energy security, and the *Energiewende*
- Germany's remembrance culture and fascism today
- A nighttime walking history of Yiddish Berlin
- Gerhard Richter's 2014 cycle *Birkenau* in the Neue Nationalgalerie
- Current topics chosen together as a class

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:

- A notebook for a weekly writing assignment.
- A weekly newspaper (to be assigned), starting week 4. 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.

### 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/>. *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:	40%
Papers:	20%
Final project	20%

## SYLLABUS

## Semester overview

## Week

1	Feb. 3	German public media: <i>Tagesschau/Magazine royale</i>
2	Feb. 10	<i>Tagesschau</i> + newspaper overviews
3	Feb. 17	<i>Heute Journal</i> + <i>Magazine royale</i>
4	Feb. 24	The war in Ukraine in German media + <i>Zeitenwende</i> , energy security, <i>Energiewende</i>
5	Mar. 3	No class: rescheduled as excursion in April
6	Mar. 10	Susan Neiman, <i>Learning from the Germans</i> + Timothy Snyder, <i>Bloodlands</i>
7	Mar. 17	EXCURSION: Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas, Ort der Information
	Mar. 24	FALL BREAK
8	Mar. 31	Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas + Jennifer Jordan + current events
9	April 7	Easter holiday: no class
10	April 14	EXCURSION: Neue National Galerie—Gerhard Richter
11	April 21	Neue National Galerie—Gerhard Richter + Yiddish Berlin
	April 27	EVENING EXCURSION 7 p.m. Prenzlauer Berg Yiddish walking tour
12	April 28	Yiddish Berlin
13	May 5	Final projects
14	May 12	Final projects

Feb. 3	<p><b>Public sphere/public space: an introduction</b></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>• Buy a copy of the <i>Bild Zeitung</i> from February 2 and bring it to class.</li> </ul> <p>During class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of public sphere, <i>Bild Zeitung</i></li> <li>• First discussion of <i>Tagesschau</i> and <i>Magazine royale</i></li> </ul> <p>Assignments for next week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch the German nightly <i>Tagesschau</i> every night. Fill out the logbook assignment and prepare one clip of five minutes that you’d like us to discuss together with the class (this may be assigned in groups).</li> <li>• We will draw straws to assign one German news publication to each of you. Over the course of the semester, you will follow this publication for four weeks, then another publication for another four weeks, based on a logbook we will discuss today.</li> <li>• A five-minute presentation in German on the paper you have been assigned.</li> </ul>
Feb. 10	<p><b><i>Tagesschau</i> Themen + Newspaper overviews</b></p> <p>To prepare for class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Tagesschau</i> clip/logbook</li> <li>• 5-minute presentation on your assigned paper</li> </ul> <p>During class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of <i>Tagesschau</i> and newspaper profiles</li> </ul>

	<p>Assignments for next week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1-paragraph essay on either the <i>Tagesschau</i> or <i>Magazine royal</i></li> </ul>
Feb. 17	<p><b>Heute Journal + Magazine royale</b></p> <p>To do before coming to class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch two segments of Magazine royal – one we picked last week, and one that you pick</li> </ul> <p>During class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of <i>Magazine royale</i> + <i>Heute Journal</i></li> </ul> <p>Assignments for next week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare a 5-minute presentation on how your newspaper is covering the war in Ukraine</li> </ul>
Feb. 24	<p><b>The war in Ukraine in German media + <i>Zeitenwende</i>, energy security, <i>Energiewende</i></b></p> <p>To do before coming to class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare a 5-minute presentation on how your newspaper is covering the war in Ukraine</li> </ul> <p>During class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations + online news workshop</li> </ul> <p>Assignments for next week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Neiman and Snyder</li> </ul>
March 3	<b>No class this week – rescheduled as an evening excursion in April</b>
March 10	<p><b>Susan Neiman, <i>Learning from the Germans</i> + Timothy Snyder, <i>Bloodlands</i></b></p> <p>To read for class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Susan Neiman, chapters 1 and 2, in <i>Learning from the Germans</i> (New York: Farrar, Straus and Girous, 2019).</li> <li>• Read Timothy Snyder, “Preface” and “Conclusion: Humanity,” in <i>Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin</i> (New York: Basic Books, 2010).</li> </ul> <p>To prepare for class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pick one passage from Susan Neiman and one passage from Snyder and come prepared with one discussion question for everyone</li> <li>• 2-page essay: how your paper is covering the war in Ukraine</li> </ul>
March 17	<p><b>Excursion: Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas, Ort der Information</b></p> <p>Due at the beginning of class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2-page essay: how your paper is covering the war in Ukraine</li> </ul> <p>Assignments for next week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare a 10-minute presentation (in German) about your visit to the memorial and information center – you should include one idea (each) from Neiman, Snyder, and Jordan</li> <li>• Read Jennifer A. Jordan, chapter 4, “Changing Places: New Memorials Since 1989,” in <i>Structures of Memory: Understanding Urban Change in Berlin and Beyond</i>, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 92–133.</li> </ul>
March 24	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>

March 31	<p><b>Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas + Jennifer Jordan + current events</b></p> <p>During class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of visit to Holocaust Memorial – you should include one idea (each) from Nieman, Snyder, and Jordan</li> <li>• Discussion of Jordan</li> <li>• Overview of current events in German media</li> </ul> <p>Assignments for next week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find one article online (in German) about Gerhard Richter’s gift of paintings to the Neue Nationalgalerie</li> </ul>
April 7	<b>Easter holiday—no class</b>
April 14	<p><b>Excursion: Neue Nationalgalerie</b></p> <p>Assignments for next week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare a 10-min presentation on one painting, including references to at least two articles online (articles should be in German)</li> </ul>
April 21	<p><b>Neue National Galerie—Gerhard Richter + Yiddish Berlin</b></p> <p>To prepare for class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation</li> </ul> <p>During class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of exhibition</li> <li>• Introductory discussion for walking tour</li> </ul> <p>Assignments for next week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare your student project workshops</li> <li>• 2-page paper comparing your newspapers from the semester</li> </ul>
April 27 THURSDAY EVENING	<b>Excursion: Walking Tour of Yiddish Berlin</b>
April 28	<p><b>Yiddish Berlin</b></p> <p>Readings and assignments TBD</p>
May 5	Student projects
May 12	<p>Student projects</p> <p>Assignments due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your final project first draft is due May 22</li> <li>• Your revised final project for uploading is due May 29; graduating seniors must turn in their final projects earlier</li> </ul>