

LT333 Introduction to German Literary History

Seminar Leader: Dr. Andreas Martin Widmann
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Course Times: Monday, 9:00-12:15
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

This course is designed to give students a broad and comprehensive understanding of German literary history, from the emergence of German as a written language to the present day. Through readings of representative works from formative periods such as Enlightenment, Romanticism and Modernism, and literary movements such as Naturalism and Expressionism, we will explore the evolution of aesthetic ideas within their historical contexts. We will also consider how the writing of national literary histories establishes and reflects ideas about national identity at a given time. Our survey will pay attention to canonized writers such as Lessing, Goethe, Kleist, Heine, Droste-Hülshoff, Rilke, Thomas Mann, Bachmann or Herta Müller. To complement these readings, we will also consider historically marginalized voices and outsiders, and engage with renegotiations of established narratives through seminal texts of literary theory like Deleuze/Guattari's concept of "minor literature" or Sylvia Bovenschen's *Imaginierte Weiblichkeit*. Conversations with guest speakers from the literary world will offer contemporary perspectives on selected key texts.

Reading material and discussions will be in German and English. Students should have at least German B1 competence. Throughout the course, students will develop specialist vocabulary and skills enabling them to write about and discuss literary works in German.

NB: Reading material and discussions will be both in German and English; students should therefore have B1-B2 level competence of German.

Requirements

Students are required to come to class prepared and with the relevant materials and texts, as well as to take part in field-trips to places off-campus. This may involve allowing for extra-time to get back to BCB during the lunch break; if necessary, a class may be moved to the evening to attend a theatre performance. Students should also be willing to make time for one or two additional film screenings in the evening (e.g. *Der Tod in Venedig* and/or *Berlin, Alexanderplatz* and/or *Die Blechtrommel*)

Participation consists in contributing productively to class discussion in a respectful manner, and in demonstrating a sound knowledge of the texts assigned. Students are also expected to invest time in vocabulary acquisition, if necessary, and/or to look up words to deepen the understanding of original material in German.

Reading materials will be made available via GoogleClassroom prior to classes dedicated to these texts and subjects. Unless stated otherwise, these texts should be printed for use in class. COMPUTERS, TABLETS OR PHONES should usually not be used during in-person classes. Exceptions may be in-class readings where online dictionaries may be useful tools.

All assignment must be completed to pass the course. Assignments and deadlines are specified in the schedule below.

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 (e.g. due to plagiarism) will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section III Academic Misconduct.

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

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 a professor agrees to accept a late assignment, it should be submitted by the new deadline agreed upon by both parties. 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

Participation and Homework: 35%
Midterm Essay (2000 words): 25%
In-Class Presentation: 15%
Final Essay (3000 words): 25%

Schedule

Please note that this syllabus is subject to change. In some cases, I have assigned more works or larger portions of a text than we may have time to discuss in class; when it comes to novels and plays, we will have to confine ourselves to representative excerpts. This practice is meant to give you a broader context into a period, movement or an author, and to offer optional additional reading. As we go along, I will either designate in advance the work or works on which we will focus our collective discussion, or I will ask you to identify the works that you think we should discuss most intensely. If we should find that we would like to devote more time to certain linguistic structures or puzzles, we have the option to do this. We may then adjust the readings or move a text.

Week 1: Introduction / Literary Beginnings	
Monday, January 30	<p>Introduction</p> <p>Hermann Kurzke: "Deutsche Literatur und deutsche Identität", p. 38-43.</p> <p>Christine Meyer: „Theorizing the Canon/The German Canon at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century”, p. 27-34.</p> <p>Minnesang</p> <p>Hildegard von Bingen: „Die heilige Maria“</p> <p>Mechthild von Magdeburg: <i>Das fließende Licht der Gottheit</i></p> <p>Nürnberg, 1400: The Culture of the Book & The Printing Press</p>
Week 2: The Baroque Age	
Monday, February 6	<p>Regelpoetik</p> <p>Breslau 1624: <i>Handbuch von der teutschen Poeterey</i></p> <p>Andreas Gryphius: Sonette</p> <p>Sybilla Schwarz: Sonette</p>
Week 3: Enlightenment of the Mind	
Monday, February 13	<p>Was ist Aufklärung?</p> <p>Hamburg, 1766: Lessing: „Laokoon oder über die Grenzen</p>

	<p><i>der Mahlerey und Poesie“</i></p> <p>Gotthold Ephraim Lessing: <i>Nathan der Weise</i></p>
Week 4: Enlightenment of the Heart	
Monday, February 20	<p>Sturm und Drang</p> <p>Straßburg, 1771: Goethe: „Rede zum Shakespeare Tag“</p> <p>Goethe: <i>Die Leiden des jungen Werther</i> (Auszüge)</p> <p>Heinrich von Kleist: „Brief an Wilhelmine von Zenge vom 16. November 1800“</p> <p>Heinrich von Kleist: „Über das Marionettentheater“</p>
Week 5: Classicism	
Monday, February 27	<p>Becoming Greek</p> <p>Tübingen, 1804: Friedrich Hölderlin: “Hälfte des Lebens“</p> <p>Weimar as the capital of German literature?</p> <p>Goethe: <i>Faust</i></p>
Week 6: Romanticism	
Monday, March 6	<p>Jena vs. Weimar</p> <p>Novalis: „Wenn nicht mehr Zahlen und Figuren“</p> <p>Heinrich Heine: Gedichte</p> <p>Caroline von Günderode: Gedichte</p> <p>Wien, 1828: Franz Schubert: <i>Die Winterreise</i></p>
Week 7: Realism and Revolution	
Monday, March 13	<p>Georg Büchner: <i>Woyzeck</i></p> <p>London, 1848: Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels: Manifest der kommunistischen Partei</p> <p>Martin Puchner: <i>Poetry of the Revolution: Marx,</i></p>

	<i>Manifestos, and the Avant-gardes</i> (excerpt)
Friday, March 17: Midterm Essay due	
Week 8: Naturalism	
Monday, March 20	Annette von Droste-Hülshoff: „Am Turme“ Sylvia Bovenschen: <i>Imaginierte Weiblichkeit</i> (excerpt) Gerhardt Hauptmann: <i>Die Weber</i> Literatur und Imperialismus Wilhelm Raabe: <i>Stopfkuchen</i>
Week 9: Fin de Siecle	
Monday, March 27	Sprachkrise Wien, 1899: Hugo von Hofmannsthal: „Ein Brief“ Franz Kuna: “A Geography of Modernism. Vienna and Prague 1890-1928” Rainer Maria Rilke: „Im Jardin des Plantes, Paris“ Sigmund Freud: <i>Die Traumdeutung</i> (Auszug) Arthur Schnitzler: „Leutnant Gustl“
Spring Break (April 3 – April 7)	
Week 10: Expressionism and War	
Monday, April 10	Else Lasker-Schüler: Gedichte Prag, 1912: Franz Kafka: “Das Urteil” Deleuze/Guattari: <i>Kafka. Für eine kleine Literatur</i> Thomas Mann: <i>Der Tod in Venedig</i>

Week 11: Neue Sachlichkeit	
Monday, April 17	Irmgard Keun: <i>Das kunstseidene Mädchen</i> Alfred Döblin: <i>Berlin Alexanderplatz</i> Erich Kästner: „Kennst du das Land, wo die Kanonen blühen“ Bertolt Brecht: <i>Die Dreigroschenoper</i>
Woche 12: Trümmerliteratur	
Monday, April 24	Heinrich Böll: „Am Ufer“ Wolfgang Borchert: <i>Draußen vor der Tür</i> Adorno/Horkheimer: <i>Dialektik der Aufklärung</i> Ingeborg Bachmann: „Reklame“ Köln, 1968: Rolf-Dieter Brinkmann: „Godzilla“
Woche 13: No class	
Monday, May 1: Federal Holiday	
Woche 14: Deutsche Literatur global	
Monday, May 8	Herta Müller: <i>Herztier</i> Emine Sevgi Özdamar: <i>Mutterzunge</i> Christine Meyer: “At the Threshold of Rewriting: De- and Reterritorializing the Canon”, p. 77-81. May Ayim: Gedichte Final Discussion
Completion Week	
Wednesday, May 17: Final Essay due	

The spring semester runs from Monday, January 30 and runs until Friday, May 19, with spring break planned from Monday, April 3 – Friday, April 7.

- Normal course sessions end on Friday, May 12.
- Completion week is from Monday, May 12 through Friday, May 19. Make-up classes and final exams can take place in completion week. Students are required to be on campus during completion week.

Scheduled class times will be available online under the relevant course heading:

<https://berlin.bard.edu/academics/courses/>