

German 131: What is German Literature?

Autumn Quarter 2013

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Overview

This course places important cultural documents (literature, film, art, performance, architecture, etc.) in dialogue with their social and historical contexts. Exploring the shifting relationships between cultural aesthetics, entertainment, historical context, and “what is German” we will cover roughly 250 years of literary and artistic production, social and political upheavals, as well as the lives of numerous authors, both male and female. This course aims to engage you in discussions about German literature, culture, and history and to encourage you to think and rethink the significance of artistic production. This course is designed for students who have completed at least three quarters of German language. All class discussion will be in German. Assignments will be individually tailored to each student’s linguistic ability.

All readings will be available on CourseWorks.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- develop further proficiency in German beyond basic language skills.
- demonstrate facility with close reading techniques applied to literature, film, and other cultural products
- exhibit a capacity to think historically and understand the reciprocal relationship between social context and cultural production

Course Specific Outcomes

Students will

- develop an understanding of genre and literary techniques
- become proficient at writing and expressing ideas in German

Ways of Thinking/Ways of Doing: Aesthetic and Interpretive Inquiry

Requirements

Written Responses

Before each class (by 5pm the evening before) you are required to submit a written response to the reading. This response can be anywhere from one paragraph to two pages. It should contain a brief synopsis of the text (What is it about?) and questions that the text raised for you. Your questions might be linguistic (e.g., I didn't understand this line. What does this mean?) or they may be more substantive (e.g., What is the social context for the author's political engagement in the rights of minorities?). These written responses will serve as a measure by which I can assess how well you understood the text, and what issues are of interest to you and they will thus help me to guide the discussion.

Midterms

In this course you will have two multiple-choice tests (weeks 5 and 9) that will examine key concepts and information that we have discussed in class. They will also contain passages from the readings that you will be expected to identify.

Referate

Each student will select one topic to present orally to the class. Key to these presentations will be your ability to synthesize a lot of information into a few important points that you think it's important for your fellow students to take with them from this class. The information that you present in your Referat will be tested on the midterm, so when you present the material, think about it in terms of what questions you want your fellow students to be able to answer. I will ask you to submit three potential test questions from your Referat, one of which I will select to be included in the test.

Attendance

Your participation is crucial to this class. For that reason attendance and participation is worth a substantial portion of the grade. More than two absences will reflect negatively on your final grade. If you have a legitimate reason for missing a class (athletic commitment, illness, religious holiday, etc.) and you submit a formal note to me then it will not count against you.

Grading

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|-------------------|-----|
| Written responses | 20% |
| Midterm 1 | 20% |
| Midterm 2 | 20% |
| Referat | 20% |
| Participation | 20% |

Course Outline

WOCHE 1:

Mittwoch, der 25. September

Begrüßung; Grundlagen; Deutschland über alles?! Hoffmann von Fallersleben (1798-1874): "Das Lied der Deutschen" (1841)

WOCHE 2:

Montag, der 30. September

Märchen und Romantik

Jacob (1785-1863) und Wilhelm Grimm (1786-1859): „Aschenbrödel“ (1812)

Mittwoch, der 2. Oktober

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1842): „Der Erlkönig“ (1782) (Grainne)

WOCHE 3:

Montag, der 7. Oktober

Heinrich Heine (1798-1856): „Deutschland. Ein Wintermärchen“ (1844)

Mittwoch, der 9. Oktober

Expressionismus

Else Lasker-Schüler (1869-1945): „Weltende“ (1905)

Georg Trakl (1887-1914): „Grodek“ (1914)

Referat: Expressionismus

WOCHE 4:

Montag, der 14. Oktober

Dadaismus

Hugo Ball (1886-1927): „Karawane“

Kurt Schwitters (1887-1848): „An Anna Blume“ (1919)

Referat: Dadaismus

Mittwoch, der 16. Oktober

Die Nachkriegszeit und der Beginn der Weimarer Republik / Neue Sachlichkeit (1918-1933)

Gottfried Benn (1886-1956): „Kleine Aster“ (1912)

Kurt Tucholsky (1890-1935): „Nach fünf Jahren“ (1919)

Referat: Weimarer Republik

WOCHE 5:

Montag, der 21. Oktober

Prüfung

Mittwoch, der 23. Oktober

Josef von Sternberg (1894-1969): *Der Blaue Engel* (1930)

WOCHE 6:

Montag, der 28. Oktober

Auseinandersetzungen mit der Shoah

Paul Celan: „Todesfuge“ (1948) (Melissa)

Mittwoch, der 30. Oktober

Film von Frank Beyer (1932-2006): Jakob der Lügner (1974)

WOCHE 7:

Montag, der 4. November

Trümmerliteratur

Günter Eich (1907-1972): „Inventur“ (1945)

Louise Rinser (1911-2002): „Die rote Katze“ (1948)

Referat: Trümmerliteratur

Mittwoch, der 6. November

Kritik an Westdeutschland

Heinrich Böll (1917-1985): „Der Bahnhof von Zimpren“ (1958)

Referat: Gruppe 47

WOCHE 8:

Montag, der 11. November

Friedrich Dürrenmatt (1921-1990): *Die Physiker* (1961)

Mittwoch, der 13. November

Friedrich Dürrenmatt (1921-1990): *Die Physiker* (1961)

WOCHE 9:

Montag, der 18. November

Die DDR

Johannes R. Becher (Text) und Hanns Eisler (Musik), Nationalhymne der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik: „Auferstanden aus Ruinen“ (1949)

Christa Wolf (1929-2011): *Kassandra* (1983)

Mittwoch, der 20. November

Wladimir Kaminer (1967-): *Russendisko* (2000)

WOCHE 10.

Montag, der 2. Dezember

Vorbereitung auf die Prüfung

Mittwoch, der 4. Dezember

Prüfung