UNDERGRADUATES COURSES IN GERMAN

GER 4552

The Essential Goethe

In this course you will become acquainted with one of Germany’s most celebrated writers, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, by reading a selection of his best-known works. In addition to reading and discussing the works, we will explore their sources, the larger literary trends in which they participate, and their (lasting) influences. We will continue to circle back to the questions: who is Goethe and what was he trying to achieve in his literary works? By the end of the semester you will have engaged with major literary texts and have a familiarity with their writer, as once referred to by Lord Byron, “the illustrious Goethe.” All readings and discussions in German. Prerequisites: GER 3201 and 3202. [3] (INT)
MWF 10:10–11 | Heidi Grek

GER 4553

30 Years After: The German Reunification in Film and Literature

The fall of the wall in November 1989 heralded the German reunification rather than the reformation of the GDR as an example of democratic socialism or ‘socialism with a human face’ as the slogan read in 1989. The thirtieth anniversary of the opening of the borders between East and West Germany gives reason to recapitulate the historic events of 1989/1990, to discuss the development of Germany since its reunification and to explore the books and films about the GDR and its end that have been published since then. Readings include Volker Braun, Christa Wolf, Thomas Brussig, Thomas Rosenlöcher, Ingo Schulze, Clemens Meyer, Cees Noteboom, Friedrich Christian Delius. Films: “Goodbye Lenin,” “Das Leben der anderen,” “Willenbrock,” “Das Versprechen”. Issues discussed cover Cold War, Perestroika and Glasnost, Reunification and East-/West-German identity, Migration and Globalization, the Far-Right Resurgence. All materials and discussions are in German. Prerequisites: GER 3201 and 3202. [3] (INT)
TR 2:35-3:50 | Roberto Simanowski

UNDERGRADUATE COURSES IN ENGLISH

GER 2432

Soccer: Media, Art, Culture

The great Brazilian athlete Pele once called soccer the “beautiful game”—a sport second to none in inspiring memorable performances, grand passions, deep commitments, potent conflicts, media spectacles, and artistic representations. Soccer is a ritual through which cultural identities and relationships are constituted, but it is also big business today, a global industry engaging millions of viewers, consumers, and dollars every week. This course explores the relation of international soccer to various political, economic, and cultural dynamics. In a series of cross-cultural case studies, it will investigate the game’s relationship to issues such as political power, globalization, gender, migration, economic and social inequality, national identity, and transnational commerce. We will discuss the history of the game and the development of its tactics, as much as we will study the particularities of soccer in Germany, Spain, England, and the United States. Last but not least, this course will address the representation of soccer in various artistic media such as literature, film, and video installation art. Class discussions will be complemented by visiting speakers and at least on field trip. Funds provided through an Immersion Grant will allow us to take 6-7 students to London and Manchester over spring break to conduct research on soccer on site as part of an ongoing or future Immersion project.
MWF 11-12 | Lutz Koepnick and John Sloop
GER 2440
History of German Thought
In this course, we will read German philosophers and critical theorists from the Enlightenment to the present day not only in order to evaluate the ideas they present but also to understand how these ideas fit into the social and political history of the German-speaking world. The question of how thought is related to history—does philosophical thought influence history, does it reflect history, or does it evolve in a way that is largely independent from its historical context—is itself one of the central questions of German philosophy, and it will be one of the central questions of this course. We will approach the work of thinkers including Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Marx, Freud, Benjamin, Adorno, Arendt, Marcuse, and Habermas as part of German culture and as our entry point to a larger exploration of German culture and its history. All readings and discussions in English. (HCA)
MWF 2-3 | Alexander Lambrow

GER 2444
German Fairy Tales: From Brothers Grimm to Walt Disney
This course juxtaposes some of the most influential, fascinating, and disturbing fairy tales by authors such as Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, Charles Perrault, and Hans Christian Andersen, with their popular transformations on the screen. We will first discuss the connection between fairy tales and the oral tradition of storytelling, and analyze how authors and collectors adapted their tales for different audiences. We will then explore the continued appeal that European fairy tales make to the visual imagination of directors and their international audiences, while also addressing problematic aspects of contemporary fairy tale retellings, such as stereotypical gender roles, lack of diversity, excessive violence, and archaic pedagogical practices in the original tales. As part of the course, students will create and analyze their own fairy tale re rewritings. The course is designed to strengthen critical thinking and writing skills and to guide students toward perceptive, close readings of both literary and visual material. All readings and discussion are in English.
MWF 1:10-2 | Christoph Zeller

GER 2555
Richard Wagner: Culture, Politics, Music
This is a course on Richard Wagner’s nineteenth-century art, ideas, and politics, including his influence on everything from media to race theory up to the present day. Readings consist of biography, critical commentary, Wagner’s own writings, and the music dramas themselves. No musical training required. [3] (INT)
TR 1:10–2:25 | Celia Applegate and Joy Calico