

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

<https://uofa.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

**2016-2017 GERM 320-A1 From Masterpieces to Bestseller**

(Fall Term)

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Time: T R 11:00 - 12:20  
Place: T 1 100  
Office Hours: T R 2:00-3:00,  
or by appointment  
Course Website:  
on eClass

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**Course Prerequisite:** consent of department

**Course-based Ethics Approval** in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

Yes       No, not needed, no such projects approved.

**Community Service Learning** component

Required     Optional     None

**Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available**

- Exam registry – Students’ Union  
<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exam/>
- See explanations below
- Document distributed in class
- Other (please specify)
- NA

**Additional mandatory Instructional fees (approved by Board of Governors)**

Yes       No

**Course Description and Objectives:**

The way we attribute value to cultural product is ever changing. In this course we will discuss what makes a “masterpiece,” how the notion of masterpiece has changed over time, and look at “masterpieces” across all areas of culture: from books to movies, from games to music and beyond. For bestsellers we’ll look at excerpts from two recent German books made into movies: “Tschick” by Wolfgang Herrndorf, the film is scheduled for a release in early October, and “Er ist wieder da”, a satire on Hitler’s return to today’s Berlin with a film adaptation

already available on Netflix. The course aims to introduce students to short texts in German, across a variety of genres and to practice reading and writing skills.

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

**At the end of this course, successful students should be able to:**

- 1) Identify, evaluate and debate the central features of both “bestsellers” and “masterpieces” and the historical context where they emerged.
- 2) Debate and deconstruct underlying theories of cultural production and memory culture.
- 3) Demonstrate critical research and writing skills as they conduct research of print, electronic, and visual texts using both primary and secondary sources.
- 4) Formulate research questions and evaluate the appropriateness of using relevant theoretical and methodological approaches
- 5) Perform a close reading of a short literary text, relating it to the formal, thematic, and contextual issues discussed in class.
- 6) Develop skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking as well as appropriate vocabulary and structures that will allow the students to carry out all of the above in German.
- 7) Accept constructive feedback and revise work accordingly.
- 8) Work collaboratively in a shared environment to achieve a common goal.

### **Texts:**

All required text and worksheets will be made available on eClass,  
Recommended: Wolfgang Herrndorf, *Tschick*. Reinbek: Rowohlt, 2011 and  
Timur Vermes: *Er ist wieder da*. Köln: Bastei Lübbe, 2012.

### **Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):**

Participation	10%
Individual project (Nov 3)	20%
Group project (Nov 29)	30%
Midterm essay (Oct 13)	20%
2 presentations	20%

### **Date of Deferred Final Exam (if applicable):**

n/a Please consult the following site:

[http://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=806#Examinations\\_\(Exams\)](http://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=806#Examinations_(Exams))

### **Explanatory Notes on Assignments:**

#### ***Attendance, Participation, Preparation, and Homework***

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in a foreign-language course. Students are expected to participate fully in all aspects of class work and assignments. That means coming to class prepared, and reading all texts carefully in advance, doing written or oral homework diligently, participating in group-work, and contributing meaningfully to class discussions.

### ***Projects***

Two projects are due during the term. The projects should reflect and elaborate on the objectives and materials learned and used in class, and on transferring these insights to new contexts. The first (individual) project is equivalent to a 600-800 word, the second (group) project is equivalent to a 1500 word essay.

### ***Essay***

The midterm essay (600 words) should document your own reflections on the material covered up to that point, preferably on the bestseller readings.

### ***Presentations***

Over the course of the class students will give two presentations to introduce new material to the class or as an introduction to class reading.

## **Required Notes:**

“Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) of the University Calendar.”

## ***Academic Integrity:***

“The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at <http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/en/CodesofConductandResidenceCommunityStandards/CodeofStudentBehaviour.aspx> ) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.”

## ***Learning and Working Environment:***

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students; faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the [Office of the Student Ombuds](#). Information about the [University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures](#) is described in [UAPPOL](#).

***Academic Honesty:***

**All students** should consult the information provided by the [Office of Judicial Affairs](#) regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general (see the [Academic Integrity Undergraduate Handbook](#) and [Information for Students](#)). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

**Students involved in language courses and translation courses** should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.” **Students in languages courses** should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, **excessive editorial and creative help** in assignments is considered a form of “cheating” that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

***Recording of Lectures:***

Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the content author(s) or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

***Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:***

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections [Attendance](#) and [Examinations](#) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

**In this course, 10% of the grade is assigned to attendance, preparation and participation, i.e. students must read and prepare texts for the assigned class period so that they can participate successfully in the group work and class discussions.**

***Policy for Late Assignments:***

Students who consult **in advance** with an instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension just one time throughout the course with no penalty. However, if a second excuse will be granted for late assignments, half of the mark assigned for this particular work will be deducted. Otherwise, all assignments should be handed in on the stated deadline. Any assignment not handed-in in time or unexcused late assignments will not be given any marks.

Late excuses will **not** be accepted for any reason

**Student Accessibility Services:**

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with [Student Accessibility Services](#), contact their office immediately (1-80 SUB; Email [sasrec@ualberta.ca](mailto:sasrec@ualberta.ca); Email; phone 780-492-3381).

**Grading:**

Assessment of the individual course components may be in the form of numerical marks or letter grades. The final letter grade will be based on "a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class" (University Calendar, [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#)). The University Grading Procedure mandates that "a student's level of achievement of the goals/outcomes of a course, their grade, and the descriptor of that grade must be aligned" (<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/>). The following guidelines have been adopted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

**“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”**

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	%
<b>Excellent.</b> A+, A or A- is earned by work which is superior in content and form and demonstrates an exceptional grasp of the subject matter. The grade of A+ designates work that far exceeds course expectations. Grades in the A range are normally achieved by a small number of students.	A+	4.0	<b>97-100</b>
	A	4.0	<b>93-96</b>
	A-	3.7	<b>90-92</b>
<b>Good.</b> B+, B or B- is earned by work that demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the course material and a good command of relevant skills. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students.	B+	3.3	<b>87-89</b>
	B	3.0	<b>83-86</b>
	B-	2.7	<b>80-82</b>
<b>Satisfactory.</b> C+, C or C- is earned by work that demonstrates an adequate grasp of the course material and relevant skills. Grades in the C range designate work that has met the basic requirements of the course.	C+	2.3	<b>77-79</b>
	C	2.0	<b>73-76</b>
	C-	1.7	<b>70-72</b>
<b>Poor/Minimal Pass.</b> D+ or D is earned by work that demonstrates minimal familiarity with the course material. Grades in the D range generally indicate insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.	D+	1.3	<b>65-69</b>
	D	1.0	<b>60-64</b>
<b>Failure.</b>	F	0.0	<b>0-59</b>