

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

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

**2017-2018 GERM 399 A1: Identity Construction on Social Media in Germany and
Canada**

(Fall Term)

Instructor: Dr. Andreas Stuhlmann
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Time: M W F 11:00 - 11:50
Place: HC 2 41
Office Hours: M, W, F 1-2 or by appointment

Course Prerequisite: N/A

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: No other event has changed the global mediascape more dramatically in the past 20 years, than the arrival of social media around the turn of the 21st Century. The first part of this course is dedicated to the exploration of the individual social media and their individual media logics, and students are enabled to analyse their own media repertoire, and to track and monitor their social media usage. In a second phase, students will acquire a working knowledge of the central concepts of social media and will carry out analyses of German social media content and identify trends specific for the

German social media sphere. Concepts we'll cover will include prosumption, digital re-appropriation and fan culture, remix and remediation. But social media have also become an indispensable part of identity formation and construction for the younger generation, the so-called "millennials." We will aim to analyze the ways in which users use social media to construct their identities through text (posts, comments, "likes", etc.) and images (photos, memes, videos etc.) across a variety of platforms. Which roles do norms and stereotypes play in the expression of identity, in which way do the platforms constrain and "guide" the expression of identity, which new modes of expression, i.e. new genres have developed online? Lastly, students will be enabled to create their own social media narratives and curate them across different platforms. Successful students will be able to analyze, understand and evaluate their own social media usage and that of others, they will understand central concepts of how social media operate, and will be able to apply these concepts in the creation of their own social media content.

Texts: All course material will be available on eClass or will be distributed by the instructor.

Grade Distribution (see "Explanatory Notes"):

Participation, class-to-class preparation	15%
Social media journal	15%
Test (Oct 25)	15%
Social media analysis paper (due Oct. 18)	15%
Presentation	10%
Final paper / project (due Dec 1)	30%

Date of Deferred Final Exam (if applicable): N/A

[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, viewing the assigned films and reading all texts carefully in advance, doing written or oral homework diligently, participating in group work, and contributing meaningfully to class discussions.

Social Media Journal: For the first three weeks of the course, students are expected to monitor their own social media usage in a journal, noting how often per day they use individual social media and how much time per day they spent using each as well as all of them combined.

Test: There will be a test in the middle of the term. The test will consist of questions relating to the theories, texts, and films studied in class, as well as to the group

work and discussions. The test will be 50 minutes long: it is tentatively scheduled for October 25.

Social Media Analysis Paper: In preparation for the final paper, students write one research paper on one social medium, covering both the content specific to the medium and central formal aspects. The paper will be in German and approximately 500-600 words long.

Presentation: Throughout the course, students are expected to prepare a very brief (7-10 minutes) introduction to either an assigned text or to a film to be discussed, including relevant facts (e.g. director, cast, and crew for the films) and three questions for discussion (groups of 2-3).

Final Paper / Creative Project: The final assignment is an end of term paper or project. Either one building on the previous work in this course, i.e. the theoretical concepts, the journals, and the analysis paper. The papers are in German, 800 words long and should document the additional insight gained since the first paper. Projects can be undertaken by individual students as well as groups. All papers are due December 1, the group projects will be presented and discussed on Wednesday, December 6.

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 www.governance.ualberta.ca) 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 [Student Conduct & Accountability Office](#) 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, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course 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, attendance, preparation, and regular participation go hand in hand; students will not only be expected to attend each session, but they are expected to come prepared for the day’s lesson and participate in that day’s lesson. As the course will be

run in seminar-style, the success of the course is dependent on informed and lively discussions driven by student engagement. It is therefore vital that each student completes the required readings, film screenings, or written exercises assigned for the scheduled class. Attendance, preparation, and regular participation will count for 10% of the overall grade for the course.

Policy for Late Assignments: Students who consult in advance with the instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension. Otherwise, late assignments with no prior arrangement will receive a 5%-per-class-day penalty for each subsequent class-day of lateness.

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 (1-800 SUB; Email 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	%
Excellent. 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	97-100
	A	4.0	93-96
	A-	3.7	90-92
Good. 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	87-89
	B	3.0	83-86
	B-	2.7	80-82

<p>Satisfactory. 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.</p>	C+	2.3	77-79
	C	2.0	73-76
	C-	1.7	70-72
<p>Poor/Minimal Pass. 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.</p>	D+	1.3	65-69
	D	1.0	60-64
<p>Failure.</p>	F	0.0	0-59