

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

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

**2017-2018 GERM 453 B1:
Cultural and Literary Theories: German Culture since 1989**

(Winter Term)

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Time: T R 11:00-12:20am
Place: HC 2.14
Office Hours: M W F 11:00am-12:00pm
by appointment
Course Website:
on eClass

Course Prerequisite: pre-requisite GERM 343 or 340

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 course traces key developments of German cultures from the fall of the Berlin Wall to the present. We shall discuss all kinds of cultural artifacts from the past twenty-eight years dealing with political developments, social conditions, class and race, gender roles and identities, high and low cultures across a wide array of traditional and digital media. To analyze and interpret these cultural products, we will introduce the necessary and matching theories (from cultural studies, memory studies, gender studies, media studies, literary theory etc.) that will help us to understand the objects and their contexts better.

By the end of the course, successful students are expected to

- Be able to identify central trends in German culture since 1989.
- Analyze and discuss different cultural artifacts in the historical context.
- Engage with the different art forms and media and their different formal structures, in particular the key concepts of their production, to understand how form helps to construct meaning.
- Critically engage with the introduced theory and apply it to analysis and interpretation.
- Demonstrate critical writing skills using formal aspects to comment on both the structure and content of the different cultural artifacts.
- Analyze, argue, and communicate ideas about German culture since 1989 in both written and oral formats.
- Accept constructive feedback and revise work accordingly.
- Work collaboratively in a shared environment to achieve our common goal.

Texts:

Selected readings from:

Stuart Hall, Jessica Evan, Sean Nixon: *Representation*. 2nd edition. Los Angeles, London: Sage 2013. (978-1585102631)

Additional readings will be assigned through eClass.

Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):

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| Attendance, participation & preparation (throughout the semester) | 10% |
| Roundtable debate | 10% |
| Text introduction | 15% |
| 2 essays (essay #1 due after individual text intro, 10%, essay #2 due April 10; 40%) | 50% |
| Test (Feb 13) | 15% |

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

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.

Roundtable Statement / Debate and Text Introduction

Each student is expected to give an introduction to one specific text or object during the term. In addition, students will participate in a roundtable discussion on a specific topic.

Participants in roundtables present on a question, by preparing a 5-7-minute statement and by preparing a set of discussion questions to actively engaging in the debate following the short presentations. The statement should give an introduction to and overview including important facts and dates. In case the statement is based on a text, instead of a summary of the plot, it should focus on the central idea and a specific aspect, introduce an assumption or opinion, and finally articulate at least three related questions that will be discussed during the debate. The individual presentations follow the same model, and focus on one main theme or topic, supporting the argument with background research and stylistic features found within the text. Outlines and bibliographies for the presentations are due a week in advance.

Essays

Two essays are due during the term. The essays should reflect and elaborate on the objectives and materials learned and used in class. The first essay (1,000 words for Majors or Minors writing in German, 1,500 words for those students writing in English) should describe a specific research interest, on the basis of a piece of theory or secondary literature, formulate a research question, and develop strategies to pursue this question. The research question, a bibliography, and an outline of the argument are due two weeks before the essay. The second essay (1,500 words in German, 2,000 in English) should follow up on the first and should display a structured argument with a compelling thesis and insightful conclusion. Again, the research question, a bibliography, and an outline of the argument are due two weeks before the essay. You are expected to use academic secondary sources, articles and books.

Test

There will be one test in the middle of the term. The test will consist of questions relating to the theories, central concepts, texts, and films studied in class, as well as to the group work and discussions. The test will be 50 minutes long.

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 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, 10% of the grade is assigned to attendance, preparation and participation, i.e. students must view all assigned films and 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 the 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; 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 |

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| <p>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.</p> | 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 |