Germanic Languages and Literatures

The Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures offers a comprehensive program in the language, literature and culture — past and present — of Germany and German-speaking countries. Our faculty pursue a multiplicity of approaches in their research and offer seminars (https://german.wustl.edu/recent-seminars/) that provide a healthy balance of theory and the history of German literature and culture. The department offers numerous opportunities for interdisciplinary study (https://german.wustl.edu/interdisciplinary-certificates/), including a one-of-a-kind joint PhD program with Comparative Literature (http://bulletin.wustl.edu/grad/gsas/complit/) and an innovative certificate program that gives students the option of developing an expertise in one of seven associated fields.

Both faculty and students teach and do research in a wide range of related disciplines, including art history; comparative literature; digital humanities; European studies; film and media studies; higher education administration; Jewish studies; Medieval and Renaissance studies; religious studies; and women, gender, and sexuality studies.

We consider international exchange to be a crucial component of graduate education. We maintain an exchange agreement on all levels (faculty, graduate and undergraduate) with the University of Tübingen, in addition to a graduate student exchange with the University of Cologne. These arrangements enable us to guarantee a year abroad for all of our PhD candidates. At the same time, they enrich our program by bringing German exchange students to campus to study and teach alongside the full-time students in our program. Exchange is further facilitated by the Max Kade Center (http://www.max-kade-center.org), which, in addition to numerous other activities, plays host each spring to a writer- and a critic-in-residence. The department also invites a distinguished visiting professor to campus every other year.

Departmental faculty are known across campus and across the discipline for their close mentoring of graduate students, who are integrated into the department through their participation in numerous activities, from the graduate student symposium and the department’s biennial international symposium (https://german.wustl.edu/biennial-symposium/) to outreach programs like German Day (http://german.wustl.edu/events/german-day/). We also give close attention to instructor development through our unique pedagogy internships, through recurring workshops, and through a classroom mentoring program that ensures that all assistants in instruction receive feedback and advice from a large number of faculty members. Graduate students have the opportunity to teach in our undergraduate German program at all levels, in both German and English, and many also have a chance to teach courses or sections in other programs.

The combination of our extremely competitive funding packages and the low cost of living in St. Louis ensures that students have the resources they need to stay focused on their academic work. As a consequence, our graduate students not only produce first-rate dissertations (https://german.wustl.edu/recent-dissertations/), they also go on to accept positions at top universities and liberal arts colleges across the country.

Their success is facilitated by the outstanding research collections available at the Washington University library (http://library.wustl.edu/), including the Mike Lützeler Contemporary German Literature Collection (https://libguides.wustl.edu/contemporarygermanliteraturecollection/) and the Suhrkamp/Insel Collection (http://libguides.wustl.edu/c.php?g=47129&p=302734). Other resources include the Gontard Collection (18th to 20th centuries) in the Rare Book Collection of Olin Library, the internationally famous Reformation Collection at Concordia Seminary, and the Vatican Manuscript Collection at Saint Louis University. The Saint Louis Art Museum (http://www.slam.org/) and the Washington University Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum (http://kemperartmuseum.wustl.edu/) have extensive holdings in German expressionist and contemporary art.

For questions about the graduate application process (https://german.wustl.edu/graduate-application-and-admissions/), please contact our administrative coordinator (https://german.wustl.edu/people/cecily-stewart-hawksworth/), Cecily Stewart Hawksworth.

Contact: Cecily Stewart Hawksworth
Phone: 314-935-4276
Email: cecilyhawksworth@wustl.edu
Website: http://german.wustl.edu/graduate

Faculty Chairs

Matt Erlin (https://german.wustl.edu/people/matt-erlin/) (July 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021)
Professor of German
PhD, University of California, Berkeley
18th- & 19th-century German literature; intellectual history; digital humanities; material culture
Endowed Professors

Paul Michael Lützeler (https://german.wustl.edu/people/paul-michael-lutzeler/)
Rosa May Distinguished University Professor in the Humanities
Director of the Max Kade Center
PhD, Indiana University
Contemporary and exile literature; Romanticism; literary discourses on Europe

Gerhild Williams (https://german.wustl.edu/people/gerhild-williams/)
Barbara Schaps Thomas and David M. Thomas Professor in the Humanities
PhD in Comparative Literature, University of Washington
Early modern German and French literature and culture; demonology; Ottoman Eurasia

Professor

Erin McGlothlin (https://german.wustl.edu/people/erin-mcglothlin/)
Vice Dean of Undergraduate Affairs
PhD, University of Virginia
Contemporary literature; Holocaust studies; Jewish studies; narrative theory

Associate Professors

Kurt Beals (https://german.wustl.edu/people/kurt-beals/)
PhD, University of California, Berkeley
20th- and 21st-century German literature and media; poetry; translation; experimentalism; digital media

Caroline Kita (https://german.wustl.edu/people/caroline-kita/)
PhD, Duke University
Austrian literature; Jewish studies; music and sound studies; theater

Assistant Professor

André Fischer (https://german.wustl.edu/people/andre-fischer/)
PhD, Stanford University
20th- and 21st-century German literature; German cinema; myth-making; aesthetics and politics

Lecturer and Foreign Language Pedagogy Specialist

Mary Allison (https://german.wustl.edu/people/mary-allison/)
PhD, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Historical sociolinguistics; Germanic linguistics; second language acquisition and pedagogy

Lecturer

Carol Jenkins (https://german.wustl.edu/people/carol-jenkins/)
PhD, Washington University in St. Louis
The history of reception; Weimar, Germany; literature & society; foreign language pedagogy

Professor Emeritus

James Fitzgerald Poag (https://german.wustl.edu/people/james-fitgerald-poag/)
PhD, University of Illinois
Early and high Middle Ages; history of the German language; medieval Bible exegesis; medieval law and literature; medieval romance; middle high German; mysticism

Degree Requirements

Master of Arts (AM) in German and Higher Education Administration

The AM in German and Higher Education Administration (HEA) offers qualified students with a strong background in German the opportunity to combine advanced study of German language, literature and culture with courses in higher education administration. In its fusion of discipline-specific postgraduate study with practical career-oriented preparation in a rapidly growing area of higher education, the program enables students to develop new career paths while further expanding their knowledge of German language, literature and culture.

Program Requirements

The AM requires 24 graduate-level course units in German language and culture and at least 12 units of higher education administration and other relevant courses in psychological and brain sciences, statistics, education, business, social work, nonprofit management and other disciplines. Courses will be supplemented by internships with academic and administrative units on the Washington University campus and with other higher education institutions in North America or the German-speaking world. During the final semester of courses, the student will complete a capstone project.

Suggested Sequence of Courses

(actual course progression may follow a different schedule)

Fall semester, 1st year:
Courses
The PhD requires 51 units of courses (including 36 AM credits) home-based in German. Students who complete interdisciplinary graduate certificates will be required to enroll in additional units as specified by the certificate-granting department or program. Students may not exceed 72 units of course credit.

Each student must take courses in the full range of German literature and culture, to be chosen in consultation with the director of graduate studies. The following courses are required (exceptions are only possible upon review by the faculty):

- German 453 Theories of Literary and Cultural Analysis (3 units)
- German 456 History of the German Language (3 units)
- German 457 Introduction to Linguistics and the Structure of German (3 units)
- German 5051 Introduction to the Teaching of German (1 unit; normally taken during the second semester of the first year of the program)
- German 5052 Teaching Practicum (1 unit)
- German 5053 Theory and Practice of Foreign Language Pedagogy (2 units)
- German 5061 Apprenticeship in the Teaching of Literature and Culture I (1 unit)
- German 5062 Apprenticeship in the Teaching of Literature and Culture II (1 unit)

In addition, students are required to take one additional course in German literature prior to 1700. This requirement must be completed in residence at Washington University.

These rules regarding required courses to be taken at Washington University apply to students joining the department with a bachelor's degree. Students entering with a master's degree may already have fulfilled some of these requirements. The fulfillment of Washington University requirements with courses completed elsewhere should be discussed with the director of graduate studies, who will make a determination about transfer credits.

Interdisciplinary Studies
Graduate students may wish to take courses in areas other than German. Of special interest are graduate offerings in art history; comparative literature; English; the digital humanities; film and media studies; higher education administration; history; music; philosophy; romance languages; and women, gender, and sexuality studies.

Students interested in completing one of our interdisciplinary certificates are generally required to complete additional seminars.
Foreign Language Requirement

Students planning to work primarily on post-1700 materials must display reading proficiency in French. The requirement may be satisfied by examination or by enrolling in and successfully completing French 400 and French 401. Students are strongly encouraged to pursue reading knowledge in languages other than French if necessary to conduct particular research for their dissertation.

Students planning to work on pre-1700 materials must pass a reading exam in Latin. Reading knowledge of French is also strongly encouraged.

Examinations

Master's Examination

Students who enter with a bachelor's degree must complete an oral and written master's examination at the end of their second year. A student's performance on both the oral and written exams is one important element affecting the faculty's decision about whether the student will receive permission to proceed with their graduate studies.

Qualifying Examinations and Dissertation Prospectus

Students taking qualifying exams should display general knowledge and understanding of the primary materials, historical contexts, scholarly questions and theoretical frameworks that are likely to drive their future dissertations. The qualifying exam is usually taken during the fourth year of study for students entering with a bachelor's degree and during the third year for students entering with a master's degree. The qualifying exam process consists of four phases:

1. Phase 1: development of a bibliography for the exams;
2. Phase 2: preparation for and completion of two exams, each of which consists of a written portion and an oral portion;
3. Phase 3: creation and defense of a dissertation prospectus; and
4. Phase 4: preparation and circulation of the dissertation abstract and filing of the Title, Scope and Procedure Form (the latter of which must be submitted to the Graduate School no later than at the end of the fourth year of graduate study).

For the first exam, the student is required to situate their primary materials and their author(s) in their respective historical contexts and periods, with specific points of emphasis to be determined together with the exam committee. The second exam serves to frame the student's primary materials in theoretical terms; it is meant to discuss in general terms the methodological approaches for the planned dissertation.

Teaching

Doctoral candidates are required to complete a minimum of six semesters (or the equivalent) of mentored teaching experiences (MTEs) within the German department in order to be eligible for the degree; some students may have the opportunity to complete additional MTEs in other departments. Most of our students (particularly students who do not enter with an MA in German and with experience teaching German at the university level) will complete eight semesters of MTEs (the maximum allowable number) in order to prepare themselves for the rigorous demands of the job market in German.

For information beyond what is presented here, please contact our administrative coordinator, Cecily Stewart Hawksworth (cecilyhawksworth@wustl.edu).