Germanic Languages and Literatures offers a diverse and challenging program of study in the language, literature and culture of the German-speaking countries. In this program, students engage in intensive study of the German language and explore German literature and culture, from the Middle Ages to the present. They also have the opportunity to learn business German and to study the politics and culture of contemporary Germany.

Our six-semester language core curriculum aims to provide students with the linguistic and cultural skills needed to communicate effectively in a German language environment. Beginning (100-level) courses combine intensive interactive classroom activities with at-home preparation and reinforcement activities (following a “flipped-classroom” approach) to enable students to rapidly acquire the basics of German vocabulary and grammar. Intermediate (200-level) courses are designed to expand and deepen students’ understanding of German society and culture while furthering the development of speaking, writing, listening, and reading skills. Both 100- and 200-level courses work toward the completion of large chapter projects, which prepare students to communicate in various modalities in real-life scenarios. In advanced (300-level) language courses, students refine their core skills, acquire new knowledge of complex grammatical structures, and improve their ability to express sophisticated ideas orally and in writing.

In Washington University’s German program, students take courses from internationally recognized faculty members who are leaders in their fields and who have been recognized for their expertise in undergraduate teaching. Faculty areas of interest include medieval through 21st-century literature, history, film and media, translation, German-Jewish studies, music and sound studies, narrative theory, second-language acquisition, and gender studies. All German classes are small, thus facilitating lively faculty-student interaction. Our collection of contemporary German literature, housed in Olin Library, is the largest in North America and attracts many visiting scholars to our campus.

Students of German can choose among several study abroad programs, and they can take advantage of an array of cocurricular activities, including film series, the national German honor society Delta Phi Alpha, lectures by guest speakers, and readings by visiting authors. Many German students also elect to share their interest in German with the next generation of students by assisting with our annual German Day, which is hosted for high school students from Missouri and Illinois.

A degree in German prepares students for a wide range of future pursuits, including graduate study in such fields as German studies, language education, comparative literature and art history. Students frequently combine a degree in German with another major in the college and, upon graduation, earn advanced degrees in law, medicine, economics, business, engineering, environmental studies, and international and area studies. Our graduates pursue work in diverse fields, from academia to international banking and from diplomacy to publishing.

Contact: Benjamin L. Locke
Phone: 314-935-4276
Email: blocke@wustl.edu
Website: https://german.wustl.edu/undergraduate

Faculty

Chair

Lynne Tatlock (https://german.wustl.edu/people/lynne-tatlock/)
Hortense and Tobias Lewin Distinguished Professor in the Humanities
Director, Comparative Literature
PhD, Indiana University
17th-, 19th- and 20th-century novel and book history; gender; nationalism; translation

Endowed Professor

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

Professors

Matt Erlin (https://german.wustl.edu/people/matt-erlin/)
Professor of German
PhD, University of California, Berkeley
18th- and 19th-century German literature; intellectual history; digital humanities; material culture

Erin McGlothlin (https://german.wustl.edu/people/erin-mcglothlin-0/)
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/)
Director of the Max Kade Center
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 Professors

Aylin Bademsoy
PhD, University of California, Davis

André Fischer
PhD, Stanford University
20th- and 21st-century German literature; German cinema; myth-making; aesthetics and politics

Sarah Koellner
PhD, Vanderbilt University

Lecturers

Carol Jenkins
PhD, Washington University in St. Louis
The history of reception; Weimar, Germany; literature and society; foreign language pedagogy

Katherine Kerschen
PhD, Penn State University
Second language acquisition; vocabulary learning; psycholinguistics; foreign language pedagogy; inclusive teaching practices

Professors Emeriti

Paul Michael Lützeler
Rosa May Distinguished University Professor in the Humanities
PhD, Indiana University
Contemporary and exile literature; Romanticism; literary discourses on Europe

James Fitzgerald 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

Majors

The Major in Germanic Languages and Literatures

Total units required: 25

Required courses:

- German 340C German Literature and the Modern Era and its 1-unit discussion section German 340D German Literature and the Modern Era
  - Or German 341 German Thought and the Modern Era and its 1-unit discussion section German 341D German Thought and the Modern Era
  - Or German 342 German Literature and the Premodern Era and its 1-unit discussion section German 342D German Literature and the Premodern Era
  - The senior assessment (undertaken in conjunction with a 400-level seminar)

To be admitted to any 400-level courses except German 402 Advanced Grammar and Style Lab, German 403D Advanced Vocabulary and Usage, German 404 Germany Today, and German 408D German as a Language of Business, students must take German 340C/German 340D
  - Or German 341/German 341D
  - Or German 342/German 342D

Admission to 400-level courses (except German 402, German 403D, German 404 and German 408D) without the completion of German 340C/German 340D, German 341/German 341D, or German 342/German 342D is by departmental permission only.

Elective courses:

Students interested in studying German may declare German as their major or second major. Majors and second majors are required to complete 25 credit units of upper-level courses (202D and higher), at least 12 of which are at the 400 level. If students begin German at Washington University and follow the regular sequence of courses (German 101D Basic German: Core Course I–German 102D Basic German: Core Course II–German 201D Intermediate German: Core Course III), they will be ready to begin the German major after three semesters. With the exception of German 340C or German 341 or German 342, only courses taught in German will count toward the major. All majors and second majors are required to participate in the senior assessment interview in the final semester of their senior year.

Applications for admission to the honors program must be submitted by the first week of classes in the student’s final year of study.

Note: For both majors and minors, at least half of the courses at the 300 level and above must have been acquired either in residence at Washington University or in overseas programs affiliated with Washington University.

Additional Information

Study abroad: German majors or minors are encouraged to participate in one of our overseas study programs. The German department sponsors a semester and a year abroad at the University of Tübingen, Germany. To participate in the Tübingen program, students must complete German 202D (for the semester program), German 301D (for the year program), or their equivalent by the time the program begins. Upon returning to campus, German majors are required to take at least one 400-level course (other than German 497–German 498) during their senior year.
Communicative skills necessary to find an apartment to being able to
communicate in the language. Prerequisite: German 101D, the equivalent, or placement by examination. Students who complete this course successfully should enroll in German 202D. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: LCD, LS BU: HUM EN: H

L21 German 201D Intermediate German: Core Course III
Continuation of German 102D. This course is designed to expand and deepen students’ understanding of modern German society and culture and to help them improve their skills in all four key areas of foreign-language learning: reading, speaking, listening and writing. All class discussions and assignments will be in German in order to provide students with an opportunity to expand their active and passive vocabulary and gain confidence in their ability to communicate in the language. Prerequisite: German 202D, the equivalent, or placement by examination. Students who complete this course successfully should enroll in German 402D. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: LCD, LS BU: HUM EN: H

L21 German 202D Intermediate German: Core Course IV
Continuation of German 201D. In preparation for study at the advanced level, this fourth-semester course will continue the four-skills based approach of 201D, focusing on a range of cultural topics relevant to the German-speaking lands, including diversity in modern German society, the media, local and national politics, and transatlantic relations. The course also includes additional review of grammatical structures that will enable you to express yourself more fluently andidiomatically in German. All class discussion and assignments will be in German, in order to provide you with an opportunity to expand your active and passive vocabulary and gain confidence in your ability to communicate in the language. Prerequisite: German 201D, the equivalent, or placement by examination. Students who complete this course successfully should enroll in German 301D. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: LCD, LS BU: HUM EN: H

L21 German 301D Advanced German: Core Course V
This course involves the discussion of literary and non-literary texts in combination with an intensive grammar review. It also presents a systematic introduction to the expressive functions of German, with an emphasis on spoken and written communication. In addition to the regular class meetings, students should sign up for a twice-weekly subsection. Prerequisite: German 202D and German 210D or equivalents, or placement by examination. Students who complete this course successfully should enter German 302D. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: LCD, LS BU: HUM EN: H
L21 German 302D Advanced German: Core Course VI
Continuation of Ger 301D. Refinement and expansion of German communication skills (speaking, listening, writing, reading), deepening understanding of German grammatical structures, acquisition of more sophisticated and varied vocabulary, introduction to stylistics through discussion, and analysis of literary and nonliterary texts. In addition to the regular class meetings, students should sign up for a twice-weekly subsection. Prerequisite: Ger 301D or equivalent, or placement by examination. Students completing this course successfully may enter 400-level courses. Note that German 340C/340D, German 341/341D, and German 342/342D are prerequisites for most 400-level courses. Credit 4 units. A&S IQ: LCD, LS BU: HUM EN: H

L21 German 313 Conversational German
Practice in speaking and vocabulary development in cultural contexts. Prerequisite: German 210D, equivalent, or placement by examination. May be repeated for credit. Credit 1 unit. A&S IQ: LCD EN: H

L21 German 331 Topics in Holocaust Studies: Children in the Shadow of the Swastika
This course will approach the history, culture and literature of Nazism, World War II and the Holocaust by focusing on one particular aspect of the period—the experience of children. Children as a whole were drastically affected by the policies of the Nazi regime and the war it conducted in Europe; yet different groups of children experiencing the period in radically different ways, depending on who they were and where they lived. By reading key texts written for and about children, we will first take a look at how the Nazis made children—both those they considered “Aryan” and those they designated “enemies” of the German people, such as Jewish children—an important focus of their politics. We will then examine literary texts and films that depict different aspects of the experience of European children during this period: daily life in the Nazi state, the trials of war and bombardment in Germany and the experience of expulsion from the East and defeat, the increasingly restrictive sphere in which Jewish children were allowed to live, the particular difficulties children faced in the Holocaust, and the experience of children in the immediate postwar period. Readings include texts by Ruth Klüger, Harry Mulisch, Imre Kertész, Miriam Katin, David Grossman and others. Course conducted entirely in English. Open to freshmen. Students must enroll in both main section and a discussion section. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM EN: H

L21 German 340C German Literature and the Modern Era
Introduction in English to German writers from 1750 to the present. Discussion focuses on questions like the role of outsiders in society, the human psyche, technology, war, gender, the individual and mass culture, modern and postmodern sensibilities as they are posed in predominantly literary texts and in relation to the changing political and cultural faces of Germany over the past 250 years. Readings include works in translation by some of the most influential figures of the German tradition, such as Goethe, Nietzsche, Freud, Kafka, Thomas Mann, Brecht, and Christa Wolf. Open to first-year students, non-majors and majors. Admission to 400-level courses (except 402, 403D, 404, and 408D) is contingent on completion of this course or 341/341D. The main course is conducted in English, so this will only qualify for major or minor credit when taken in conjunction with one-hour discussion section in German (L21 341D). Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM EN: H

L21 German 341D German Thought and the Modern Era
In this introduction to the intellectual history of the German-speaking world from roughly 1750 to the present, we will read English translations of some of the most influential authors and works in the medieval and early modern German tradition, including the "Heroic Age" (e.g., "Nibelungenlied"), the classical period of the 12th and 13th centuries (e.g., Walther von der Vogelweide, Wolfram von Eschenbach, Gottfried von Straßburg), late-medieval philosophy and mysticism (e.g., Mechthild von Magdeburg, Meister Eckhart), and early modern humanism and the Reformation (e.g., Martin Luther). Students enrolled in this course engage in close and sustained reading of a set of texts that are indispensable for an understanding of the German and European literary tradition; these are texts that continue to offer invaluable insights into humanity and the world around us. Our discussions will focus on concepts such as heroism, chivalry, and courtly love and on questions regarding the relationship between the individual and society, the role of religion in society, and the emergence of modern mass media (e.g., the Gutenberg revolution). We will consider the texts both on their own terms and against the backdrop of the historical contexts in which they were written. Credit 1 unit.

L21 German 342D German Literature and the Premodern Era
In this introduction to the literary and intellectual history of the German-speaking world from roughly 800 C.E. to the 17th century, we will read English translations of some of the most influential authors and works in the medieval and early modern German tradition, including the "Heroic Age" (e.g., "Nibelungenlied"), the classical period of the 12th and 13th centuries (e.g., Walther von der Vogelweide, Wolfram von Eschenbach, Gottfried von Straßburg), late-medieval philosophy and mysticism (e.g., Mechthild von Magdeburg, Meister Eckhart), and early modern humanism and the Reformation (e.g., Martin Luther). Students enrolled in this course engage in close and sustained reading of a set of texts that are indispensable for an understanding of the German and European literary tradition; these are texts that continue to offer invaluable insights into humanity and the world around us. Our discussions will focus on concepts such as heroism, chivalry, and courtly love and on questions regarding the relationship between the individual and society, the role of religion in society, and the emergence of modern mass media (e.g., the Gutenberg revolution). We will consider the texts both on their own terms and against the backdrop of the historical contexts in which they were written. Credit 1 unit.
L21 German 403D Advanced Vocabulary and Usage
This one-unit workshop is designed for advanced undergraduate students wishing to develop advanced communication skills by improving their grasp of German vocabulary and usage. Over the course of the semester, students will discuss a wide variety of texts related to German art, philosophy, literature and contemporary culture, focusing on specific aspects of the language that pose challenges for non-native speakers. Assignments (not to exceed 1.5 hours per week) will include short written responses and exercises aimed to help students speak and write more elegantly and idiomatically. Prerequisite: German 302 or the equivalent or permission of the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Credit 1 unit.

L21 German 404D Germany Today
This course is an introduction to the history, politics, and culture of contemporary Germany from 1945 to the present. Topics include the cultural construction of identity in post-unified Germany; European integration and the post-wall economy; the German constitution, electoral system, and current elections; current debates and controversies; political parties and leading political figures; the role of literature, film, music, the visual arts, media, and popular culture; and the role of universities. Discussions, readings, and papers in German. This course is required for candidates who are planning to attend the overseas program in Tübingen, Germany. Prerequisite: German 302D (may be taken concurrently with German 404), or permission of the director of undergraduate studies. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD, LS Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: IS EN: H

L21 German 408D German as a Language of Business
This course introduces students to concepts and issues relevant to German business and economics and helps them to develop the language skills necessary to succeed in the German business world. We concentrate on the basic elements of the German economic system, looking at Germany as a site of production and exchange, the legal structure of German firms, the relations between labor and management, and strategies for product development and marketing in national and international contexts. Students also are introduced to specific German business practices, including forms of communication, management styles and general corporate culture. Students learn business vocabulary, writing skills for business correspondence, oral presentation techniques, and reading and comprehension strategies for German newspapers and news reports. All discussions, readings and assignments are in German. Prerequisite: German 302D. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: LCD, LS BU: IS EN: H

L21 German 4100 German Literature and Culture, 1150-1750
This course involves the exploration of medieval and early modern literature and culture within sociohistorical contexts. Genres and themes vary and may include visual culture; representation; the development of fictional and historical writing; questions of race, gender, and class; courtly culture; law, magic and marvels; and medical and scientific epistemologies. Readings may include such genres as the heroic epic, drama, "Minnesang," the courtly novel, the Arthurian epic, fables, the novella, religious or devotional literature, witch tracts, pamphlets, political writings, the "Völksbuch," the picaresque novel, and the essay. Discussion, readings, and papers are in German. Prerequisites: German 302D and German 340C/340D or German 341/341D or German 342/342D. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD, LS, WI BU: HUM, IS EN: H

L12 German 4101 German Literature and Culture, 1750-1830
This course explores the literature and culture of the Enlightenment, Storm and Stress, Weimar Classicism, and Romanticism within sociohistorical contexts. Genres and themes vary and may include the representation of history, absolutism and rebellion, the formation of bourgeois society, questions of national identity, aesthetics, gender, romantic love, and the fantastic. Readings and discussions include texts by authors such as Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, Kant, Nevalis, Günderode, the Brothers Grimm, Kleist, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Eichendorff, and Betjena von Arnim. Discussion, readings, and papers are in German. Prerequisites: German 302D and German 340C/340D or German 341/341D or German 342/342D. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD, LS, WI Art: HUM

L21 German 4102 German Literature and Culture, 1830-1914
This course presents an exploration of 19th-century literature and culture within sociohistorical contexts. Genres and themes vary and may include the representation of history, liberalism and restoration, nationalism, industrialization, colonialism, class, race and gender conflicts, materialism, secularization, and fin-de-siècle. Readings and discussions include texts by authors such as Büchner, Heine, Marx, Storm, Keller, Meyer, Fontane, Droste-Hülshoff, Nietzsche, Ebnerr-Eschenbach, Schnitzler, and Rilke. Discussions, readings, and papers are in German. Prerequisites: German 302D and German 340C/340D or German 341/341D or German 342/342D. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD, LS, WI Arch: HUM Art: HUM EN: H

L21 German 4103 German Literature and Culture, 1914 to the Present
This course is an exploration of modern and contemporary literature within sociohistorical contexts. Genres and themes vary and may include the representation of history, the crisis of modernity, the two World Wars, the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich, generational conflicts, the women’s movement, and postmodern society. Readings and discussions of texts include authors such as Wedekind, Freud, Mann, Kafka, Brecht, Seghers, Boell, Bachmann, Grass, and Wolf. Discussions, readings, and papers are in German. Prerequisites: German 302D and German 340C/340D or German 341/341D or German 342/342D. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD, LS, WI Art: HUM BU: HUM EN: H

L21 German 4104 Studies in Genre
This course explores the definition, style, form, and content that characterize a specific genre. It will investigate the social, cultural, political, and economic forces that lead to the formation and transformation of a particular genre. Students will examine generic differences and the effectiveness of a given genre in articulating the concerns of a writer or period. Topics and periods vary from semester to semester. Discussions, readings, and papers are in German; some theoretical readings are in English. Prerequisites: German 302D and German 340C/340D or German 341/341D or German 342/342D. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD, LS, WI Art: HUM BU: HUM EN: H

L21 German 4105 Topics in German Studies
This courses focuses on particular cultural forms such as literature, film, historiography, social institutions, philosophy, and the arts or on relationships between them. The course examines how cultural meanings are produced, interpreted, and employed. Topics vary and may include national identity, anti-semitism, cultural diversity, the construction of values, questions of tradition, the magical, the erotic, symbolic narrative, and the city. The course may address issues across a narrow or broad time frame. Discussions, readings, and papers are in German. Prerequisites: German 302D and German 340C/340D or German 341/341D or German 342/342D. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD, LS, WI Arch: HUM Art: HUM EN: H
L21 German 4106 Studies in Gender
This course investigates the constructions of gender in literary and other texts as well as their sociohistorical contexts. Particular attention will be paid to the gendered conditions of writing and reading, engendering of the subject, and indicators of gender. Topics and periods vary from semester to semester and include gender and genre, education, religion, politics, cultural and state institutions, science, sexuality, and human reproduction. Discussions, readings, and papers are in German; some theoretical readings are in English. This course may be repeated with different content. Prerequisites: German 302D and German 340C/340D or German 341/341D or Ger 342/342D. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD, LS, SD, WI: EN: H

L21 German 432 Undergrad Seminar: What Dreams May Come: Explorations of the Psyche in Viennese Modernism
This course investigates the relationship of the burgeoning field of psychoanalysis to modernist art and literature in Vienna at the beginning of the 20th century. Examining literary texts and artworks alongside theories of dreams and the unconscious by thinkers such as Ernst Mach and Sigmund Freud, we will analyze the ways that visual artists, composers, and poets sought to divulge the inner workings of the psyche. Our discussion will focus on key questions: What forms and what visual, aural, and verbal languages were developed to represent subjective experience? How did theories of memory and trauma and ideas about gendered psyches shape the depiction of individual agency in these works? What can these works tell us about the larger societal forces at play in this cultural moment? Readings will include the drama, poetry, and novellas of Arthur Schnitzler and Hugo von Hofmannsthal; musical works by Mahler and Schoenberg; and the visual art of Gustav Klimt, Helene Funke, and Oskar Kokoschka. Readings and discussion in German. Prerequisites: German 302D; German 340C/340D, German 341/341D, or German 342/342D. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM: EN: H

L21 German 4381 Contemporary German Literature
Taught by the Max Kade writer and critic in residence, the course deals with the most recent trends and developments in contemporary German literature, including its multicultural, feminist, and postcolonial aspects. In all, the writer and critic will deal with approximately eight literary texts during the semester. The writers generally include a work of their own and give an idea of their personal poetics. Admission for undergraduate senior German majors is allowed only with permission of the Director of Graduate Studies. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD Arch: HUM Art: HUM EN: H

L21 German 457 Introduction to Linguistics and the Structure of German
This course is an introduction to the structure of the German language and to linguistic theory: phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics, as well as semiotic, pragmatic, and sociolinguistical theories. Prerequisite: Undergraduates may only take this course with permission of the director of graduate studies. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: LCD: EN: H

L21 German 490 Undergraduate Topics in German Film: Introduction to German Cinema
In this undergraduate course, we will watch and discuss some of the great highlights of German film history. The course will provide students with a visual and linguistic foundation for discussing German film from the early days of cinema to the present. To cover such an extensive time span and range of cinematographic output, we will view representative works from various periods, genres, and authors that deal with a wide variety of themes. Class discussions will address the social and cultural significance of cinematic production in 20th- and 21st-century German culture as well as historical moments in German culture that are viewed through film. Certain themes will recur throughout the semester, including gender, the city, technology, violence, and social crisis. This course will also help students to improve their reading, writing, listening and speaking proficiency in German. Classroom discussions and readings will be entirely in German. The films will have English subtitles. This class will accommodate a range of levels of German proficiency. The reading and writing assignments will be adjusted accordingly. All instruction and all discussion will be in German. Note: There will be required weekly screenings. Prerequisite: successful completion of German 302D AND German 340C/340D OR German 341/341D OR German 342/342D or permission of the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD Arch: HUM Art: HUM EN: H