Advanced German: Composition & Conversation
Contemporary Germany

Course Number
GERM-UA 9111D01

Spring 2020
Syllabus last updated on: 22-Jan-2020

Lecturer Contact Information
TBA

Course Details
Mondays and Thursdays, 10:30am to 11:45am

Location: Academic Center (BLAC – Schönauser Allee 36, 10435 Berlin). Please check Albert before your first class for the room number.

Prerequisites
Intermediate German 2 or Intensive Intermediate German

Units earned
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Course Description
In this course, we will focus on a set of films, literary texts, historical documents, contemporary media, and other sources that bring us to the heart of topics and debates in contemporary German culture. We look back at the division and reunification of the country, consider several films treating the respective Cold-War pasts of the two Germanys, and conclude with discussion of current discourse around migration, nationality, and identity.

German 111 is designed for post-intermediate students who already possess a solid grasp of German grammar and vocabulary, and wish to expand their knowledge of German language, history, and culture through active practice in reading, discussion, and writing. The stress of this course is on conversation and composition. Your ideas, questions, and contributions form the thrust of the seminar. All communication in the classroom is in German!

Course Objective
This course will enable you to gain greater proficiency and ease in speaking, listening, writing, and reading in German, equipping you to proceed to advanced-level work. You will have intensive practice in the skills of reading, discussing, and interpreting texts and other materials critically, and will develop your ability to discuss the culture, the history, and the present of Germany.

**Assessment Components**

**Preparation for class, and active in-class participation: 20% of final grade**

Regular attendance and on-time arrival to class are mandatory. Full class preparation includes:

1) Reading/viewing: Assigned materials should be read/viewed attentively and thoughtfully, making sure you understand them to the best of your ability.
2) Grammar review: The relevant sections of the *Practice Grammar* (PG) should be reviewed independently at home, and designated exercises completed in preparation for in-class review and practice.
3) Vocabulary list: Making real progress in any foreign language requires focused attention on vocabulary. In a designated notebook or folder, you will keep an ongoing list of words and expressions you encounter over the course of the semester.
4) Questions/comments: Part of your contribution to class discussions will consist in your writing down at least three questions and/or comments that arise from your preparation of that day’s material, and being prepared to share them in the seminar.

**Grammar quizzes: 20% of final grade**

This course presumes coverage of the basics of German grammar in prior coursework (see prerequisites). Using the assigned sections of the *Practice Grammar* (PG), we will selectively review key points of basic and intermediate grammar, and practice elements of advanced grammar and stylistics. There will be three in-class grammar quizzes over the course of the semester.

**Weekly writing exercises: 20% of final grade**

You will have weekly short writing exercises throughout the semester. These will be of three types, in rotation: Berlin journals, in which you are asked to respond freely and candidly to your everyday experience of the city; vocabulary-based exercises, in which you compose a text of any genre (fiction, diary, poetry, etc.) employing words from your vocabulary lists; and response papers, in which you write critically on one of the texts, films, or topics we have discussed in class.

**Two oral presentations: 10% of final grade**

Each course participant will a) give a presentation on a topic related to our syllabus, and will help lead the subsequent class discussion, and, at the end of the semester, will b) present their in-progress final research project.

**Midterm essay: 10% of final grade**

Before the spring recess, you will compose a critical essay responding to one of the texts or films we have discussed. Your first version of the paper will be returned to you with
grammatical, stylistic, and substantive comments, and you will then resubmit it in revised form.

**Final research project: 20% of final grade**

Your final research project for the course will be on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor, and will consist of both written and oral components (see above): The written component will be developed in stages, beginning with a very short preliminary statement of interest in a topic (just a few sentences), followed by a one to two-page draft, and culminating in a finished paper of 4–5 pages. Toward the end of the semester, all students will orally present to the class the material they are working on as a way to help to think the material through, to share what we’re learning, and to benefit from fellow students’ questions and comments.

Failure to submit or fulfill any required component may result in failure of the class, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments.

**Required Text**

One copy of the textbook will be kept in the Reading Room of NYU Berlin's Academic Center for you to consult in the center, but not to take out.

**Online Media for Weekly Discussions**
- Süddeutsche Zeitung (Munich): sueddeutsche.de
- Der Freitag (Berlin): freitag.de
- Die Zeit (Hamburg): zeit.de
- Neues Deutschland (Berlin): neues-deutschland.de
- Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (Frankfurt): faz.net
- Die Tageszeitung (Berlin): taz.de

**Supplemental Text (recommended but not required to purchase)**

A quality German (not German–English!) print dictionary, e.g., Duden, Wahrig

**Films**
- Rainer Werner Fassbinder: *Angst essen Seele auf* (1974)
- Oskar Roehler: *Die Unberührbare* (1999)
- Andres Veiel: *Wer wenn nicht wir* (2011)

**Internet Research Guidelines**
To be discussed in class
Course Schedule
(subject to modification)

Session 1 on 3 February 2020
Introductory session: course overview and introductions

I. Two Germanys: Division

Session 2 on 6 February 2020
National anthems (and variants) by Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben, Bertolt Brecht, Johannes R. Becher, Bernd Jentzsch

Session 3 on 10 February 2020
Walter Ulbricht: “Die Sicherung des Friedens ist zum Hauptinhalt der Deutschlandfrage geworden”
Konrad Adenauer: “Regierungserklärung vor dem deutschen Bundestag zur Gründung der DDR”
Writing exercise: Berlin journal (150–200 words)

Session 4 on 13 February 2020
Zeitungsdiskussion: Süddeutsche Zeitung or Der Freitag, Topic: German politics
Grammar: PG p. 14, #9; p. 15, #11; p. 19, #4; p. 72, # 1; p. 84, #5

II. Two Germanys: The “Wende”

Session 5 on 17 February 2020
Speeches by Stefan Heym, Christoph Hein, Friedrich Schorlemmer, and Christa Wolf
Writing exercise: Response paper (150–200 words)

Session 6 on 20 February 2020
Zeitungsdiskussion: Süddeutsche Zeitung or Der Freitag, Topic: world politics
Grammar: PG p. 118, #12a (1–4), 12b (1–4), 12c (1–4); p. 121, #1a,1b, and 3; p. 124, #5b; p. 128, #11b

Session 7 on 24 February 2020
Speech by Helmut Kohl, November 8, 1989
Peter Schneider: “Der 9. November aus 10 000 km Entfernung betrachtet”
“Aufruf für eine eigenständige DDR”
Writing exercise: Vocabulary-based composition (c. 250 words)

Session 8 on 27 February 2020
Zeitungsdiskussion: Süddeutsche Zeitung or Der Freitag, Topic: culture
Grammar: PG p. 144, #1 (1–5) and 3; p. 145, #4 (1–6); p. 156, #5; p. 168, #1
Session 9 on 2 March 2020
Oskar Roehler: Die Unberührbare
Writing exercise: Berlin journal (c. 300 words)

Session 10 on 5 March 2020
Zeitungsdiskussion: Die Zeit or Neues Deutschland, Topic: World politics
Grammar quiz #1

III. Remembering the East

Session 11 on 9 March 2020
Christian Petzold: Barbara

Session 12 on 12 March 2020
Zeitungsdiskussion: Die Zeit or Neues Deutschland, Topic: Culture (Feuilleton)
Midterm response paper (c. 500 words) – first version due

Session 13 on 16 March 2020
Leander Haußmann: Sonnenallee

Session 14 on 19 March 2020
Zeitungsdiskussion: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung or taz, Topic: German politics
Grammar: PG p. 199, #1; p. 201, #4; p. 203, #4; and p. 208, #9 (1–4)
Midterm response paper – revision due

Spring Break – No Class on 23 and 26 March 2020

IV. West Germany: ‘68 and After

Session 15 on 30 March 2020
Paul Hockenos: “The Red Decade”
Andres Veiel: Wer wenn nicht wir
Writing exercise: Berlin journal (200–300 words)

Session 16 on 2 April 2020
Zeitungsdiskussion: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung or taz, Topic: World politics
Grammar: PG p. 233, #4; p. 235, #8; p. 246, #3; and p. 249, #2; p. 264, #1 (1–5)

3 April 2020: No Class (our make-up day will be on April 23)

Session 17 on 6 April 2020
Joschka Fischer: “Ein magisches Jahr”
Ulrike Meinhof: Columns from *konkret*
Writing exercise: Response paper (c. 300 words)

**Session 18 on 9 April 2020**
Zeitungsdiskussion: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* or *taz*, Topic: Culture
Grammar quiz #2

**Public Holiday – No Class on 13 April 2020**

**V. Migration, Nationality, Identity**

**Session 19 on 16 April 2020**
Emine Sevgi Özdamar: “Die neuen Friedhöfe in Deutschland”
Grammar: PG p. 272, #1 (1–5); p. 275, #1; p. 283, #1a; and p. 286, #5

**Session 20 on 20 April 2020**
Fatih Akin: *Gegen die Wand*
Writing exercise: Berlin journal (c. 300 words)

**Session 21 on 23 April 2020**
Interview with Mirna Funk and Deborah Feldman: “Deutsche können das Wort Jude bis heute nicht normal aussprechen”
Grammar: PG p. 300, #1; p. 326, #1; p. 331, #1
Prospектив topic for final project due (2–3 sentences)

***Session 22 on 23 April 2020 – Make-Up Day for April 13 ***
Author reading with Mirna Funk, 7:30pm to 9:00pm

**Session 23 on 27 April 2020**
Thilo Sarrazin: Auszüge aus *Deutschland schafft sich ab*
Writing exercise: Vocabulary-based composition (c. 300 words)

**Session 24 on 30 April 2020**
Rainer Werner Fassbinder: *Angst essen Seele auf*
Grammar quiz #3

**Session 25 on 4 May 2020**
Zeitungsdiskussion: Newspaper of your choice, topic of your choice!
First draft of final research project (500–600 words)

**Session 26 on 7 May 2020**
Final project presentations
Session 27 on 11 May 2020
Final project presentations

Session 28 on 14 May 2020
Final project presentations

Final written research project due on Monday, May 18

Classroom Etiquette
Laptops, tablets, smartphones, or any other electronic devices are **not permitted in the classroom unless otherwise noted**. Readings that have been made available as PDFs should be printed out and brought to class on paper. Exceptions will be made for students with academic accommodations from the Moses Center.

Suggested Co-Curricular Activities
Talk with native speakers as often as possible in the course of your everyday life in Berlin! Always have your eyes and ears open for words or expressions that are new to you. Actively keep vocabulary lists, even outside of your classes. Go to German films (without subtitles), watch German television, read German media. Take advantage of studying the language in Berlin!
Take part activities offered by the German language team (tutorials, excursions, Buddies, *Stammtisch*). And make the most out of your access to the Humboldt-Universität by exploring the offerings there!

Your Lecturer
Michael Saman holds a Ph.D. in German from Harvard University, and has taught at New York University, Princeton University, UCLA, Brown University, the College of William & Mary, and the College of the Holy Cross. His research interests include eighteenth and nineteenth-century German literature and thought, and intersections of German and Africana intellectual history. Current projects focus on the work of W.E.B. Du Bois, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and Kraftwerk. Michael’s research has been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council of Learned Societies, and the Fulbright Foundation.
Academic Policies

Assessment Expectations

Grade A: The student makes excellent use of empirical and theoretical material and offers well-structured arguments in their work. The student writes comprehensive essays / answers to exam questions and their work shows strong evidence of critical thought and extensive reading.

Grade B: The candidate shows a good understanding of the problem and has demonstrated the ability to formulate and execute a coherent research strategy.

Grade C: The work is acceptable and shows a basic grasp of the research problem. However, the work fails to organize findings coherently and is in need of improvement.

Grade D: The work passes because some relevant points are made. However, there may be a problem of poor definition, lack of critical awareness, poor research.

Grade F: The work shows that the research problem is not understood; there is little or no critical awareness and the research is clearly negligible.

Grade Conversion

Your lecturer may use one of the following scales of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

A = 94-100 or 4.0
A– = 90-93 or 3.7
B+ = 87-89 or 3.3
B = 84-86 or 3.0
B– = 80-83 or 2.7
C+ = 77-79 or 2.3
C = 74-76 or 2.0
C– = 70-73 or 1.7
D+ = 67-69 or 1.3
D = 65-66 or 1.0
F = below 65 or 0

Attendance Policy

Participation in all classes is essential for your academic success, especially in courses that meet only once per week. Your attendance in both content and language courses is required and will be checked at each class meeting. As soon as it becomes clear that you cannot attend a class, you must inform your professor by e-mail immediately (i.e. before the start of your class). Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, Moses Center accommodations, religious observance or emergencies. Your professor or NYU Berlin's administration may ask you to present a doctor's note or an exceptional permission from NYU Berlin's Director or Wellness Counselor as proof. Emergencies or other exceptional circumstances must be presented to the Director. Doctor's notes need to be submitted to the Academics Office, who will inform your professors. Doctor's notes need to be from a local
doctor and carry a signature and a stamp. If you want the reasons for your absence to be treated confidentially, please approach NYU Berlin's Director or Wellness Counselor.

Unexcused absences affect students' grades: In content courses each unexcused absence (equaling one week's worth of classes) leads to a deduction of 2% of the overall grade and may negatively affect your class participation grade. In German Language classes two or three (consecutive or non-consecutive) unexcused absences (equaling one week's worth of classes) lead to a 2% deduction of the overall grade. Three unexcused absences in one content course and five unexcused absences in your German language course may lead to a Fail in that course. Being more than 15 minutes late counts as an unexcused absence. Furthermore, your professor is entitled to deduct points for frequent late arrival or late arrival back from in-class breaks. Please note that for classes involving a field trip, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student’s responsibility to arrive in time at the announced meeting point.

Exams, tests and quizzes, deadlines, and oral presentations that are missed due to illness always require a doctor's note as documentation. It is the student's responsibility to produce this doctor's note and submit it to the Academics Office; until this doctor's note is produced the missed assessment is graded with an F and no make-up assessment is scheduled. In content classes, an F in one assignment may lead to failure of the entire class.

Regardless of whether an absence is excused or not, it is the student's responsibility to catch up with the work that was missed.

**Attendance Rules on Religious Holidays**

Members of any religious group may, without penalty, excuse themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students who anticipate being absent due to religious observance should notify their lecturer AND NYU Berlin's Academics Office in writing via e-mail one week in advance. If examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the Academics Office will schedule a make-up examination or extend the deadline for assignments. Please note that an absence is only excused for the holiday but not for any days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. See also University Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays

**Late Submission of Work**

1. Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor.

2. Late work should be submitted in person to the lecturer or to the Academics Office, who will write on the essay or other work the date and time of submission, in the presence of the student. Another member of the administrative staff may also personally accept the work and will write the date and time of submission on the work, as above.

3. Work submitted late receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100 point scale for each day it is late (excluding weekends and public or religious holidays), unless an extension has been approved (with a doctor's note or by approval of NYU Berlin's administration), in which case the 2 points per day deductions start counting from the day the extended deadline has passed.

4. Without an approved extension, written work submitted more than 5 days (excluding weekends and public or religious holidays) following the submission date receives an F.
(5) End of semester essays must be submitted on time.

(6) Students who are late for a written exam have no automatic right to take extra time or to write the exam on another day.

(7) Please remember that university computers do not keep your essays - you must save them elsewhere. Having lost parts of your essay on the university computer is no excuse for a late submission.

Provisions for Students with Disabilities
Academic accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980 or see their website for further information.

Plagiarism Policy
The presentation of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism. Proper referencing of your sources avoids plagiarism (see as one possible help the NYU library guide to referencing styles).

NYU Berlin takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. Your lecturer may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form.

Note that some assignments in the course may be checked for plagiarism by using TurnItIn or other another software designed to detect offences against academic integrity.

It is also an offense to submit work for assignments from two different courses that is substantially the same (be it oral presentations or written work). If there is an overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), you MUST inform your professor.

For a summary please follow the link to NYU Global's academic policies.