Selection of graduate seminars offered, 2009-2015

I. Seminars in Literature, Culture, and Film

Reformation Literature (Ruth von Bernuth)

The heavy impact of the Reformation on early modern religious life, on politics, and on society is well known. But how did the literary world of the period change? This course will investigate German literature written in the period from the end of the fifteenth century to the end of the seventeenth century, which shows the range of literary production, genres, and styles. The course will focus on songs, pamphlets, translations, and dramas by Martin Luther, Sebastian Brant, Andreas Karlstadt, Thomas Müntzer, Hans Sachs, Paul Rebhun, and Paul Gerhardt.

In addition, current scholarship as well as exhibitions of the Reformation’s 500th anniversary in 2017 will be used to examine the way in which the Reformation is conceived today.

Birth of the Novel (Ruth von Bernuth)

The prose novel was a new genre in the early modern period—its rise a result of the new medium of printing. The precursors of modern novels, prose novels rework old texts such as romances, and also introduce new themes made popular by recent voyages of discovery and advances in science. The course looks at a wide variety of these books, investigates questions of authorship and readership, and considers the significance of printers, publishers, and booksellers.

Early Modern Travel Literature (Ruth von Bernuth)

“Der Amerikaner, der den Kolumbus zuerst entdeckte, machte eine böse Entdeckung” (Georg Christoph Lichtenberg). This class is designed to provide an insight into early modern German literature and culture through travel reports and travel related texts from the 15th to the 18th century. In the course of the semester, we will work with a broad range of original material on German-American contacts, which is held in the Harold Jantz collection of Duke libraries. The course will explore how the literary interplay between the early modern German and American cultures may be understood as an example of the transculturation that occurs in "contact zones" analogous to colonial settings. Students will work with the rarely-explored material of the Jantz collection. They will write a research paper on one of the books, and present it in a conference-like setting at the end of the semester.

Figures of Perturbation: Aesthetics and Novelty in 18th-Century Literature and Philosophy (Gabriel Trop)

At the origin of the discipline of aesthetics in the eighteenth century lies not merely a rehabilitation of sensory knowledge, but also a shift in thinking about contingency and the possibility of worlds whose forms of organization are dramatically and radically different than our own. In the 1750 treatise Aesthetica, Alexander Baumgarten raises the possibility of a "heterocosmic" truth in art that posits contingent sensory perceptions as possible experiences of another world. Perhaps inadvertently, Baumgarten prepares the ground for a conception of aesthetic experience that is open to novelty, the absolutely unexpected, the possibility of perturbation and the revaluation of values.

This seminar will investigate aesthetic discourses and works of art in the eighteenth century that intensify, regulate, harness, or otherwise thematize their own contingency, works that are often fascinated more by possibility than by necessity and attracted more to unpredictability than to stability. We will undertake an investigation of this thematic constellation in exemplary texts of German eighteenth-century
thought and literature. Attention will be paid to the texts not merely as imaginative formal and rhetorical experiments, but as interventions in their specific cultural and socio-political historical moments. We will also put these works in dialogue with twentieth- and twenty-first century philosophical and theoretical perspectives. Every week there will be a theoretical focus that will launch, but not determine, the course of our discussion about the texts. The goal will not be to subordinate texts to any one regime of intelligibility, but rather, to let them stimulate our own particular and emergent form of collective intelligence. Eighteenth-century authors include: Kleist, Hölderlin, Novalis, Schlegel, Tieck, Jean Paul, Kant, Goethe, Schiller, and Wieland. Main theoretical authors include: Adorno, Benjamin, Heidegger, Foucault, Kittler, Iser, and Luhmann, among others.

**Kleist (Clayton Koelb)**

All of the major and minor works of Kleist, including letters and occasional pieces, form the basic subject-matter for the course. In addition, we will examine some of the biographical material available documenting his short life, along with some of the pertinent secondary literature. The course goals will be: to become familiar with the corpus of his works; to obtain a rough working knowledge of the facts of his biography; to understand the literary and cultural context in which he worked; and to develop strategies for interpreting his (often difficult and even downright bizarre) plays and stories. We will work in seminar format as much as possible, with lecturing by the instructor taking second place to informed discussion by the course participants, and so reading assigned material in preparation for class will be essential. Assignments assume a fluent command of written German and can be lengthy. Students will develop a topic of research, share that research with the class in an oral presentation, and finally write up the results in a formal paper of 15-20 pages.

**Germans, Jews and the Pursuits of Literature, 1749-1918 (Jonathan Hess)**

In the two centuries leading up to WW II, the question of the place of Jews and Judaism in the modern world provided an almost unending source of fascination for German writers. From Enlightenment elites and 19th-century realist writers to producers of popular fiction and radical voices of the fin-de-siécle, representations of Jews proved to be an exceptionally productive springboard for more general reflections on modernity, secularization, bourgeois culture and the fault lines of empire and nationhood. How and why was it, though, that Jews came to be overrepresented in the realm of literature in this manner? And how did Jewish and non-Jewish writers respond to the disproportionate burden of symbolic work that Jewish figures were typically called on to bear in contemporary literature?

Conceived of as an introductory seminar in German-Jewish Studies for graduate students, this course probes the presence and the function of the “Jewish Question” in German literature by focusing on four discrete historical moments. We will begin by studying 18th-century articulations of literary ideals of the “noble Jew” and consider the uses to which they were put in Enlightenment-era discourses of acculturation and emancipation. Skipping ahead to the 1830s and 40s, we will then proceed to examine the relationship between the ambivalence toward Jewish emancipation in the literary imagination of German liberalism and the emergence of distinctly German-Jewish forms of belles lettres during this period. The third section of the course will consider the functions of Jewish figures in realist fiction. We will conclude our investigations by considering the diverse roles that representations of Jews and Judaism played in the literary experimentation of the fin-de-siécle. Students will be expected to contribute to the seminar through regular oral presentations, a 20-minute conference paper to be presented in the final weeks of the semester, and a final research paper due at the end of the semester.

**Bildungsroman (Eric Downing)**

This course explores the development of the German Bildungsroman tradition from the late eighteenth to the late twentieth century. Based on close readings of exemplary texts, the focus will be on
identifying both common generic traits (formal and thematic) and changing notions of the subject, aesthetics, and the relations of the subject and social sphere. While mostly addressing the literary tradition, we will also consider some of the other discursive dimensions to Bildung, especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. We will also be experimenting with the varied theoretical approaches of psychoanalysis, gender studies, and new historicism. Works to be read include Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, Schlegel’s *Lucinde*, Novalis’ *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, Keller’s *Der Grüne Heinrich*, Mann’s *Der Zauberberg*, Handke’s *Der kurze Brief zum langen Abschied*, and Wolf’s *Nachdenken über Christa T.*

**German Culture and the Making of Modern Melodrama, 1750-1850 (Jonathan Hess)**

It is a commonplace to trace the genealogy of melodrama, a ubiquitous form of 20th-century popular culture, back to the prominence that “sensibility” commanded in European literature and culture for a brief moment in the 18th century. Indeed, the new literary forms that sensibility gave rise to—the domestic drama and the sentimental novel—experienced a level of longevity that far outlived their rapid fall from critical grace in the late 18th century. Within the field of German Studies, nevertheless, the relationship between sensibility and 19th-century forms of popular culture has often gone understudied, just as melodrama has largely failed to establish itself as a viable critical concept and 19th-century popular literature has typically not been deemed worthy of serious critical attention.

This course seeks to fill this lacuna by exploring key genres of 19th-century popular literature and culture against the backdrop of the sentimental revolution in 18th-century letters. After an initial foray into recent critical literature on melodrama, we shall begin in the 18th century by reading Lessing’s bourgeois tragedies in the context of both Lessing’s theoretical writings on tragedy and domestic dramas by lesser-known peers (Johann Benjamin Pfeil, Johann Wilhelm von Brawe). From there we will move into the sentimental novel, reading one of the bestselling novels of the 1770s, Johann Martin Miller’s *Siegwart, Eine Klostergeschichte*, within the context of the “reading debates” that diagnosed *Lesewut* or *Leseseuche* as a public health hazard during this period. The second section of the course will move into the 19th century, considering popular drama (Kotzebue, Iffland), opera (Carl Maria von Weber’s *Der Freischütz*), sentimental fiction (August LaFontaine) and the historical novel (the numerous imitations of Sir Walter Scott’s historical fiction that dominated the book market in the second quarter of the 19th century).

Students will be expected to contribute to the seminar through regular oral presentations, a 20 minute conference paper to be presented in the final weeks of the semester, and a final research paper due at the end of the semester.

**Lyrik und Sprachbild, 1772-1848 (Thomas Pfau)**

Theater, Culture, and Commerce in 19th-Century Germany (Jonathan Hess)

The nineteenth century witnessed the construction of an unprecedented number of theaters throughout the German-speaking world. As the theatergoing public expanded exponentially, a cultural sphere that had been dominated a century earlier by court theaters and itinerant theater troupes experienced tremendous diversification. In part because of the rapidity with which the theater established itself as a staple of middle-class urban life, the stage remained for much of the nineteenth century an object of fierce cultural politics. Critics who celebrated drama’s potential to stage ethical conflicts and launch a national culture of worldwide renown complained extensively about the decline of the German theater and the commercialization of Friedrich Schiller’s “moral institution.” Deploring the lack of great German drama following the golden age of Weimar classicism, critics railed against the endless imitators of Schiller and sensational, effect-driven spectacles that catered to the lowest common denominator of public taste. Yet amid all the strife and complaints about commercialism, the period produced tremendous innovations in acting, directing, and staging and the creation of many theatrical institutions that have lasted until the current day.

This course offers an introduction to nineteenth-century theater history that focuses on the interplay between cultural innovation and the market, studying the texts of dramas against the backdrop of their performance and reception history. A significant portion of the seminar will be devoted to close reading and analysis of plays that dominated the theater repertoire in the nineteenth century. In this context we will consider both canonical dramas (Schiller’s Maria Stuart, Grillparzer’s Medea, Lessing’s Nathan der Weise) and more popular fare (Kotzebue’s Die deutschen Kleinstädter, Birch-Pfeiffer’s Die Waise von Lowood, Mosenthal’s Der Sonnwendhof, etc.). We will supplement our readings of these texts with an exploration of nineteenth-century productions of them throughout the German-speaking world and abroad. Our discussion of these dramas and their performances will be set in dialogue with both nineteenth-century theoretical writings on drama and research into key players in the world of the nineteenth-century theater: representative theater companies, directors, actors, etc.

Student participation will be key to the seminar’s integration of close reading with original research, and the seminar will be designed in such a way as to help students develop the skills to engage in historical research that contributes in a meaningful way to our understanding of literary texts. Students will give a series of short presentations throughout the semester, participate actively in class discussion, and produce a conference presentation-length final paper (10 pp.). Preliminary drafts of the final papers will be presented at a mock conference on “Theater, Culture, and Commerce in Nineteenth-Century Germany” to be held in the final weeks of the semester.

Music in Philosophy and Literature, 1800-1947 (Thomas Pfau)

This seminar will explore affiliations of music with literary and philosophical culture in 19th and early-20th-century Germany. This cultural history is often said to have begun with the early fragments of F. Schlegel and Novalis, and the path-breaking manifestos of E. T. A. Hoffman—memorably transposed into Schumann’s post-classical experimentation with fragmentary forms in his early piano music—and to extend all the way to Thomas Mann’s Doktor Faustus, where the hero’s biography is fatally entangled with the successive compositional idioms and musical aesthetics of Romanticism, Impressionism, and high Modernism. Rarely do material (sonorous) beauty, formal-aesthetic models, and the shifting ideological purposes of cultural work come into such vivid alignment as in Germany’s prolonged and increasingly troubled preoccupation with musical culture.

We will take up three paradigms of musical form and -aesthetics, as well as the changing literary/philosophical models aimed at rendering intelligible the inner workings and socio-cultural mission of music—especially so-called absolute Musik. (1) The first such cluster will involve on the emergence of organic form, the watershed moment where music, literature, and science show Romanticism to break
decisively with the classical style. Our principal materials here will be Goethe’s botanical writings (“Metamorphosis of Plants” et al.) and the shift from an architectural (or “quadratic”) to an epigenetic and variational conception of form in Beethoven’s middle- and late instrumental works. (2) A second focal point will address the growing entanglement of musical culture with pessimistic metaphysics—above all in Schopenhauer and Wagner—as well as the critique of that configuration in Nietzsche’s oeuvre. The dominant formal paradigm here is one of Steigerung (“intensification”), entwined with the increasing destabilization of classical tonality and the cultivation of the quasi-hypnotic types of Klang (“sonority”). Our focus here will be on Schopenhauer’s World as Will and Representation, Wagner’s Tristan & Isolde, as well as on Nietzsche’s Birth of Tragedy and “The Case of Wagner.” (3) The final cluster of readings will explore the emergence of a constructivist and hyper-rationalist model of aesthetic form in the modernism of Arnold Schoenberg—as well as how Modernist (musical) aesthetics and ideological commitments are being re-imagined in Adorno’s Philosophy of Modern Music and T. Mann’s Doctor Faustus. A variety of secondary materials will complement our discussions throughout the semester.

**Get Real! Or not… German Poetic Realism (Eric Downing)**

This course will focus on the rise of Realism and the wake of Romanticism in German-language literature of the second half of the nineteenth century. Emphasis will be on the delineation of realist literary strategies, with a special focus on the genre of the novella; on the political and historical compilicities of the movement in terms both overt (e.g., the rise of nationalism, regionalism) and indirect (e.g., visual practices, gender politics); the relation to other cultural fields (e.g., philosophy, historiography, education, art history); and the relation to other nineteenth-century realist movements in England and France. I have a particular interest in issues of inheritance I hope we can explore: as part of this, we will be asking why Romanticism, the supposedly superseded movement of the earlier part of the century, continued its afterlife in the Realism period. Although mostly focused on our primary texts, we will also consider various theoretical approaches to the problem of realism in general.

**Major Texts of German Modernism (Clayton Koelb)**

Seminar on German poetry, fiction, and drama from 1890 to 1939 in its cultural context. Authors treated will include Wedekind, George, Musil, Mann, Kafka, Hesse, Rilke, and Brecht. Students will prepare oral presentations in the manner of a conference paper and essays of the kind submitted for publication in scholarly journals.

**Austrian literature (Kata Gellen)**

Austrian have arguably produced a disproportionate number of outstanding works of twentieth-century literature in the German language. In this course we will examine great works by writers from this tradition, including Arthur Schnitzler, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Karl Kraus, Hermann Broch, Joseph Roth, Robert Musil, Ilse Aichinger, Peter Handke, Ingeborg Bachmann, Thomas Bernhard, Elfriede Jelinek, and Christoph Ransmayr. We will also consider various sites, groups, and movements associated with artistic and intellectual life (from Kaffeehaus culture to Wiener Aktionismus) in their relation to literature. Throughout the course we will remain attentive to historical and cultural contexts, but our primary concern will be the exploration of literary form and language. Some broad questions that will guide our readings and discussions are:

- What, if anything, distinguishes Austrian literature from German literature?
- To what extent have specific political formations and events (Habsburg monarchy, Red Vienna, the Anschluss, consensus democracy) influenced the nation’s literary culture?
- What other features of Austrian life and history have proven crucial to its literary development (provincialism, cosmopolitanism, anti-Semitism, “Easternness”)?
- Why has Austria been such fertile ground for avant-garde movements?
• How has the experience of exile shaped Austrian literature?
• Why have postwar Austrian writers developed such a strong tradition of “Österreichkritik”?

In addition to weekly readings of primary texts, we will read some relevant secondary literature. You can choose to write either 3 short papers (6-8 pp.) over the course of the semester or one longer research paper (20-25pp.) at the end. The course will also have a pedagogical dimension, which will involve working with undergraduates in a German theater course who will be reading and performing Schnitzler’s “Liebelei.”

**Kafka (Clayton Koelb)**

This seminar will examine almost all of Kafka’s literary output: the stories, novels, and major fragments, plus selected letters and material from the notebooks. In addition to discussing this corpus in detail with the instructor, each student will develop a research project culminating in 1) a class presentation of the sort given at scholarly meetings (GSA, MLA) and 2) an essay based on that presentation that aspires to be a genuine contribution to Kafka scholarship.

**“Mensch ohne Welt”: 20th-Century German-Jewish Literature (Kata Gellen)**

This course will offer a survey of German-Jewish literature from 1900 to the present. Readings will include works by Jakob Wassermann, Franz Kafka, Alfred Döblin, Arthur Schnitzler, Joseph Roth, Soma Morgenstern, Arnold Zweig, Veza Canetti, Else Lasker-Schüler, Paul Celan, Ilse Aichinger, Nelly Sachs, Edgar Hilsenrath, Robert Menasse, Ruth Klüger, and Barbara Honigmann. We will be attentive to historical and geographical contexts, as well as theoretical issues, such as how German-Jewish writers negotiate questions of modernity and modernism, tradition and ritual, multilingualism and multiculturalism, memory and nostalgia, and trauma and violence. What are the distinguishing features of German-Jewish writing in the twentieth century? How German is it and how Jewish is it? Are there stylistic and formal continuities between the works under consideration, or only thematic ones? Who writes this literature, for whom is it intended, and who actually reads it? How does it reflect and negotiate historical and political realities, such as assimilation, Bundism, Zionism, exile, and the Holocaust? How do these authors help shape modern German-Jewish identity—culturally, religiously, politically, aesthetically, and otherwise? The course takes its title from the German-Jewish critic, philosopher, and writer Günther Anders’s 1984 collection of essays on literature. The assertion of humanity in the face of a fundamental homelessness is a predicament shared by all the German-Jewish authors in this course.

**Gender & Sexuality in German Film: From Weimar to the Present (Priscilla Layne)**

Since film’s inception, directors and audiences have exploited the medium’s ability to reveal aspects of human sexual life previously deemed hidden or mysterious, whether for voyeuristic, educational, sensational or regulating purposes. German film is no exception to this phenomenon, beginning with Richard Oswalt’s sex educational film Anders als die Anderen (1919). The first film to explicitly thematize homosexuality, Anders als die Anderen was made at a time when Germany’s censorship laws had been retracted and German cinema started receiving international recognition. The "art cinema" of the Weimar era was especially experimental and daring, both in terms of form and content. Whether Expressionism, rubble films or auteur cinema, German filmmaking has often been a reflection of the radical discontinuities that characterize German political history; engaging with contemporary fears and concerns by pushing the boundaries of how gender and sexuality are portrayed. The existence of these uniquely German filmmaking traditions and the persistence of overarching themes – sex education, male subjectivity in crisis, the femme fatale – combine to make examining questions of changes in the representation of sexuality and gender in German culture from the Weimar era to the present from the perspective of German film an important undertaking.
In this seminar, we will watch seminal films by directors from every era, and representing both East and West Germany, including Richard Oswald, G. W. Pabst, Reinhold Schünzel, Wolfgang Staudte, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Helke Sander, and Iris Gusner. Readings of influential texts from the fields of German critical theory, feminist film theory, psychoanalysis, and queer and transgender studies will aid our approach to these films and aid seminar participants in contextualizing these films within German (film) history and in considering what their engagement with gender and sexuality means for their respective historical moments. Readings, class discussions, students' research and writing will focus on the following themes: The ways in which film has been utilized to represent aspects of gender and sexuality that were previously deemed difficult to see or understand; the participation of the moving image in the creation and maintenance of sexual difference and in the political struggles for women’s, gay and lesbian rights; the effects of censorship on filmic representations of gender and sexuality; and the intersection of German directors’ engagements with gender and sexuality with issues of class and race.

Students are required to contribute to the seminar through regular oral presentations, a 20-minute conference paper to be presented in the final weeks of the semester and a research paper due at the end of the semester.

Man, Animal, Cinema (Inga Pollmann)

This course proposes a cinematic investigation into—and intervention in—the historical and current debate about the ontological, political, biological, and emotional relationships between human beings and animals. To familiarize ourselves with this fundamental debate, we will read not only key philosophical texts, but also literary and scientific texts that approach this problem from the perspective of their own media and disciplines. However, the central goal of this course will be to consider the role of technology and mediation—and of the cinema in particular—for the “question” of the animal. To this end, we will confront philosophy and science with a variety of films as well as engage film criticism that focuses on the ways in which film communicates, mediates, and transforms creaturely life. What happens to animals when they are technologically mediated, what happens to technology in conjunction with the animalist, and what happens to (human) spectators in the film experience of wild, anthropomorphous, strange, or horrifying creatures?

In addition to key texts of the current debate (Giorgio Agamben, Jacques Derrida, Cary Wolfe, and others) and classic positions, we will also look at the long history of the man/animal question, beginning with Aristotle but focusing on debates that took place primarily in Germany (and to a lesser extent in France) in the early 20th century, involving authors such as Jakob von Uexküll, Martin Heidegger, Georges Canguilhem, Wolfgang Köhler, and Max Scheler. This canon is supplemented by literary texts by Rainer Maria Rilke, Franz Kafka, J. M. Coetzee, and Marion Poschmann. The films cover a broad range of genres, styles, and periods, and encompass early safari and hunting films, popular science films, animation, documentaries, narrative films featuring animals, and contemporary experimental film and video, including films by Werner Herzog, Robert Bresson, Carolee Schneemann, Stan Brakhage, Jean Painlevé, and F. W. Murnau.

Postwar German Culture (Jakob Norberg)

After the fall of Hitler’s regime and the end of the Second World War, a new German nation emerged, the Federal Republic of Germany. Given the historical background, it faced a range of particular challenges. This course serves as an introduction to the major problems and trends of postwar West German culture: Vergangenheitsbewältigung, or coming to terms with the National Socialist past; the Cold War division of Germany; the cultural value and impact of rapid economic recovery; the social, political and cultural aspects of advanced industrialism; the emergence of consumer society and audiovisual mass media; democratic governance, the public sphere, and the role of intellectuals and writers.
We will read both theoretical and literary texts that deal with the issues above: journalistic reports, political commentaries, sociological studies, literary essays, poems etc. Authors include Theodor W. Adorno, Hannah Arendt, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Arnold Gehlen, Jürgen Habermas, Uwe Johnson, and others.

**Postcolonial German Literature (Priscilla Layne)**
In this seminar, our main focus will be German texts and films that could be considered postcolonial. Some of these texts might be set in the so-called “Third World,” while others might depict the experiences of foreigners in postwar Germany. A few of the questions that will guide our discussion over the course of the semester are: What is postcolonial German literature? Do the German authors of the postwar period succeed in a cultural exchange with the “Third World” that does not simply repeat the racism and fetishism found in colonial literature? And to what extent is a postcolonial approach useful for discussing texts by foreign authors who are not from former colonies? In addition to reading aesthetic texts, we will also read essays from postcolonial theory and German Studies to complement our analyses and help us consider what differentiates German post-colonial theory from the theoretical texts from other countries.

**Science +/- Fiction (Richard Langston)**
The future. Spaceships. Alien encounters. Underlying this superficial stuff of “science fiction” are fundamental concerns regarding the historical status of knowledge production and the relationship between narrative and experience in our modern era governed by scientific progress. This graduate seminar will query both sides of science fiction: on the one hand, the composition and transformation of the genre throughout the entirety of twentieth-century German literary history. On the other hand, the seminar investigates the epistemic functions fiction awards scientific inquiry (compared to literature’s own) and to the truths and fabrications it attributes to the scientific process as well. Primary literature: Lasswitz, Scheerbart, Benn, Döblin, Brecht, Dürrenmatt, Schmidt, Koeppen, Kluge, P.M., Wolf, Steinmüller, Dath, Kehlmann. Secondary literature: Chu, Foucault, Habermas, Haraway, Jameson, Latour, Rheinberger, Schnädelbach, Stengers, Suvin, Vogl.

**II. Seminars in Criticism and Theory**

**Classics of Literary Criticism (Thomas Pfau)**
This course will examine some of the great literary critics of the 20th century, writers whose ability to produce focused, inspired, and influential readings of major works of literature has been widely recognized. Our focus will be on studying, and learning from, exemplary readings of major literary works. In other words, this is not a course in literary theory. Readings of landmark critical texts will be combined with selections of canonical texts of English and continental European literature. While the syllabus has not yet been finalized, we will almost certainly attend to the following critics/literary works: William Empson and Stanley Fish on Milton’s *Paradise Lost*; Erich Auerbach, T.S. Eliot, and Charles Singleton on Dante’s *Divine Comedy*; Christopher Ricks, John Bayley, and Cleanth Brooks on Keats; Frank Kermode and Rene Girard on secrecy and desire in the nineteenth-century novel; Geoffrey Hartman and Alan Liu on Wordsworth; Jean Starobinski and Paul de Man on Rousseau, and Walter Benjamin on Goethe’s *Elective Affinities*.

**Difference/Indifference: Texts and Contexts in the Eighteenth Century and Beyond (Gabriel Trop)**
This seminar explores the way in which aesthetic and philosophical texts "account for differences," focusing on the legacy of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century literature and philosophy. Special
emphasis will be placed on interrogating the limits of the Cartesian subject as it emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In response to the supposed separation of the subject from the exterior world, certain eighteenth- and nineteenth-century thinkers seek out processes of "indifferentiation" (as opposed to mere indifference) that call into question not merely subject-object boundaries, but instances of discrete separation as such. We will examine the diverse strategies developed by artists and thinkers to overcome (or embrace) the perceived threats and problems of subjectivism through figures of difference, identity, and indifferentiation, reading literary works by Goethe, Novalis, Hölderlin, Rilke, and Musil, along with philosophical and theoretical texts by Descartes, Fichte, Hegel, Schelling, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Barthes, Deleuze, Luhmann, Derrida, and Badiou. Readings available in German or English; class discussions in English.

**Nietzsche, Freud and Benjamin: On History (Eric Downing)**

This course examines the positions of Nietzsche, Freud, and Benjamin on human history. It focuses on close readings of primary texts, with were, how these ideas related to their broader projects, and how their ideas of history compare both with each other and with other, relatively contemporary positions on history. Readings include Nietzsche's *vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben* and *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, Freud's *Totem und Tabu* and *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*, and Benjamin's "Theologisch-politisches Fragment," "Ueber den Begriff der Geschichte," and several other essays.

**Frankfurt School Critical Theory (Henry Pickford)**

This course serves as an introduction to the “Frankfurt School” and Critical Theory, with particular emphasis upon rationality, social psychology, cultural criticism and aesthetics. Through close readings of key texts by members of the school, we will work towards a critical understanding of the analytical tools they developed and consider their validity.

**German Aesthetics after Adorno: The Case of Alexander Kluge (Richard Langston)**

The posthumous publication of Adorno’s *Ästhetische Theorie* in 1970 was the last great deliberation on aesthetics to emerge from the founding generation of the Frankfurt School. With the ascendancy of a second generation of theorists after Adorno’s death, aesthetics was relegated—save a few notable exceptions—to its margins. While aesthetics has in recent years made a comeback among affiliates of this tradition (especially those interested in networking Adorno with French thought, for example), little has been made of those notable exceptions to emerge since the seventies. A “self-proclaimed unskilled laborer” of the Frankfurt School, Alexander Kluge is one such notable exception who has been continually toiling away (with the partial assistance of sociologist Oskar Negt) since the sixties at studying, testing, revising and extending Critical Theory through the media of literature, film, television, and philosophy. This graduate seminar introduces students to both the core of Frankfurt School aesthetics as well as Kluge’s most important work in all four of these media. It will also trace the development of German aesthetic thought after Adorno, the nature of Kluge’s unique aesthetic interventions, as well as the array of intertexts (e.g., Benjamin, Benn, Bloch, Brecht, Deleuze, Fontane, Foucault, Habermas, Kleist, Luhmann, Musil, Sloterdijk) subtending these interventions.

**German Political Thought (Jakob Norberg)**

This course serves as an introduction to German political and social thought. No previous knowledge is required. We will read short but important and influential texts by, for instance, Immanuel Kant, J. G. Herder, Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, Max Weber, Georg Simmel, Carl Schmitt, and Hannah Arendt. Our discussions will cover the central concerns and key concepts of the German tradition of political and social thought, such as autonomy, state, society, people, and community. The seminar is intended as a complement to studies in German literary and intellectual history.
German Cinema: Frankfurt School, Film, and Film Theory (Inga Pollmann)

This course aims to provide students with a thorough introduction to the work of Frankfurt School theorists, especially Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor W. Adorno. We will consider their critical engagement with modernity, and the role of cinema and other mass media in and for modernity. Our focus will be on the complex and often ambivalent status of cinema for Frankfurt School theory, for though cinema epitomizes for Frankfurt School theorists key elements of capitalism and mass culture, it also contains possibilities for a critical, “playful,” and liberatory engagement with life in modernity. We will place these authors’ writings in a broader cultural and film-theoretical context and consider especially their dialogue with Georg Lukács, Béla Balázs, Rudolf Arnheim, Russian montage theorists Sergei Eisenstein and Dziga Vertov, as well as French film theorists, including Jean Epstein and Germaine Dulac. Finally, we will spend some time thinking about the legacy of Frankfurt School thought in film theory and critical theory more generally. The course also will include separate film screenings of seminal films that constitute major theoretical touchstones for Frankfurt School theorists, including works by F. W. Murnau, G. W. Pabst, Charlie Chaplin, Eisenstein, Vertov, Alain Resnais, Alexander Kluge, and others.

III. Core Courses

German Linguistics (Paul Roberge)

This course is an introduction to the formal analysis of German grammar: phonology, morphology, word formation, syntax, semantics. It is designed to provide future teachers and scholars with a basic understanding of German as a linguistic system. The course also considers the German language in its historical, sociolinguistic, extraterritorial aspects.

Middle High German (Ruth von Bernuth)

This course teaches the basic elements of the Middle High German language and exposes students to a variety of textual genres from the high Middle Ages such as courtly romance, heroic epic, love lyric, and late medieval rhymed couplet texts. The focus of the course is on language and translation, but the close textual work also provides an introduction to the medieval German literature and culture.

Cultural Foundations in German Studies I (taught by rotating faculty)

This seminar offers an intensive survey of literary, cultural and intellectual developments in German-speaking lands from 1200 to 1800. We will begin our investigation with a sampling of the major epics and poetry of the High Middle Ages. From there we will move into humanism and consider the invention of print and the popular literary forms characteristic of Reformation culture in the German lands. Venturing on into the 17th century, we will consider the revival of German poetry and the popularity of the picaresque novel in the aftermath of the Thirty Years War. The final section of the course will be dedicated to the drama, poetry, aesthetic writings and narrative fiction of the so-called Age of Goethe.

Over the course of the semester, we will cultivate an understanding of literary history as a cultural formation that changes over time by paying particular attention to: 1) the role that shifts in media (orality and literacy, visual studies, print) played in constructing different concepts of literature; 2) conflicting models of what is German that have historically shaped the study of the diverse set of texts we are considering; and 3) the categories of gender, religion and secularization as critical indicators of social and cultural paradigm shifts.

This course is designed as a reading-intensive seminar. In addition to completing the readings and participating actively in seminar discussions, students will be expected to take a midterm and final exam and to give several oral presentations. No papers will be required. After successfully completing this course, students can expect to have acquired an overview of the canonical texts, authors, and epochs of German
literature from the beginnings to ca. 1800; an active understanding of the cultural and aesthetic categories through which a literary heritage is created and maintained, and the ways in which literary history came into being and has changed over time; and a deep knowledge of the modern tools of scholarly inquiry (editions, translations, dictionaries, and so on) in both print and electronic versions that are fundamental to the field of German literary studies.

**Cultural Foundations in German Studies II (taught by rotating faculty)**

Sampling of major authors and works from Romanticism, Realism and Poetic Realism, Naturalism, Modernism, as well as postwar and contemporary periods. Works will be placed within their literary-aesthetic, as well as their social and intellectual contexts. Authors include Fontane, Nietzsche, Freud, Schnitzler, Rilke, Thomas Mann, Kafka, Grass, and others.

**Foreign Language Pedagogy: Theories and Practice (Corinna Kahnke/Tin Wegel)**

This course introduces new Teaching Assistants in the joint program to current methodologies and pedagogies relevant to teaching in a communicative classroom. We will consider theoretical developments as well as current issues in language pedagogy discussed in recent articles (*Die Unterrichtspraxis, Foreign Language Annals* et al.) and such readings as *Making Communicative Language Teaching Happen* (Lee and VanPatten), *Teaching Language In Context* (Omaggio-Hadley), and *Approaches and Methods in Language Training* (Richards and Rodgers). Furthermore, we will explore practical applications of the studied approaches and theorems, debate and engage with language, literature and culture classroom settings and methods and start building online teaching portfolios containing sample lesson plans, syllabi, and teaching philosophies.