

GERM 349: GERMAN STUDIES RESEARCH METHODS

Fall 2013

Instructor: Stefan Höppner

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11 am – Noon or by appointment, 218C Craigie Hall

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**German Studies Research Methods: Berlin
Preliminary Syllabus (August 22, 2013)**

This class has two aims: 1. to acquaint you with the methods and resources you need to conduct your own research in the field of German Studies, be it literature, film, history, philosophy, music, gender studies, or a related field. 2. To provide an introduction to (Literary) Theory, a field that has played a huge role in Cultural Studies for the past 40 or 50 years, and will ideally provide you with a toolkit to approach the objects of your study. Berlin will serve as our thematic focus, but in a really broad sense. Within this context, you are expected to come up with and manage your own project, which you can select from a broad variety of topics. The theory part will focus on a broad introduction on Literary Theory in general, and selected writings by German author/philosopher Walter Benjamin (1892-1940). This class will be partly taught in cooperation with our departmental librarian, Rosvita Vaska.

Texts:

The following core texts will be available at the U of C bookstore. All of these will be required.

1. Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. Introd. Hannah Arendt. New York: Schocken Books, 1969. (WB)
2. Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. (LT)
3. Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th ed. New York: MLA Press, 2009. (MLA)

All other texts will be made available via Blackboard.

Assignments, evaluations, and due dates

Marking		Grading	
Class participation	30%	A+ (97-100)	C+ (75-77)
Various assignments	20%	A (93-96)	C (70-74)
In-class presentation	20%	A- (90-92)	C- (64-69)
Final paper (ca. 10 pp.)	30%	B+ (86-89)	D+ (56-64)
		B (82-86)	D (50-55)
		B- (78-81)	F (0-49)

Participation: Class discussion is a key factor in this course. The quality of the sessions will depend upon your preparedness and willingness to engage with each other. You must have read and thought about the required readings before coming to class. You will need to read the assigned course material, look up the words you don't know, and prepare a preliminary analysis of the form and content

of the poems we will discuss in class. Needless to say, you should own a copy of the course books and print out and mark up any additional readings. Please don't use electronic devices during class, as using them might distract yourself as well as those around you (that, of course, does not include computer use when directed by the instructor).

Please note that you do not have to have understood everything you have read to make a valuable contribution. Expressing doubts, disagreements, and asking for clarification is a useful way of contributing to discussion, especially as the language used in poetry may vary greatly from the everyday German you have learned so far. Your class participation mark will be based on the quality rather than the quantity of your contribution. Dominating discussion without listening to others will damage your grade. Also, it is essential that all participants treat each other with respect and courtesy. Students who feel unable to actively engage in classroom discussion must bring their concerns to the instructor's attention early so that an alternative strategy to ensure adequate performance can be sought. Unexplained absences will be penalized up to a loss of a full letter on the final grade.

Various assignments: Each student is to follow his or her personal project throughout the course, from deciding on a topic and drafting a thesis proposal to writing a term paper on the subject (see below). To this end, you will be given a series of assignments, including writing a bibliography, annotated bibliography, and an abstract, for which you will receive a cumulative grade.

In-class presentation: The largest of these assignments will be a short mock conference presentation (approx. 10 minutes) in which you will present the results of your project. Here, you may use graphic images and/or other media. You are strongly encouraged to discuss your presentation with the instructor beforehand, preferably during office hours.

Research paper: Due December 11 at noon. Please submit via email at shoppner@ucalgary.ca. Papers should be approx. 10 pages (letter-sized paper, Times New Roman font 12 pt, double-spaced), and written in English. However, if you are a German major, writing in German is encouraged, and your individual proficiency level will be taken into account. Ideally, your paper will be able to serve as the foundation of a larger project in the future. At the discretion of the instructor, paper submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late. By turning in a paper, you certify that the work is your own; that you have given proper credit and citation to the work of others; and that you have not committed any other form of plagiarism or academic dishonesty. For definitions of plagiarism, please see the course calendar. Students are required to complete all assignments in order to receive a passing grade in this course.

Writing skills statement: All writings assignments will be marked according to content, form, analysis, and originality as well as clarity of writing including grammar, spelling, and organization. To improve your writings skills, contact the Effective Writing Centre (SS 301). If you are a student with a disability, who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to:

- Register with the Disability Resource Centre (220-8237), and
- Discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of this course.

	Tuesday	Thursday
Week 1 September 10/12	Introduction Sample reading I: Analyzing a poem	Sample reading II: Alfred Döblin, <i>Berlin Alexanderplatz</i> (excerpt)
Week 2 September 17/19	Sample analysis III: Walter Ruttmann, <i>Berlin: Symphony of a Metropolis</i> (excerpt)	What is your research topic? / How to Write A Thesis Statement
Week 3 September 24/26	Culler, <i>A Very Short Introduction</i> (LT 1-42)	Culler, <i>A Very Short Introduction</i> (LT 43-82)
Week 4 October 1/3	Homework #1: Thesis Statement due (300 words max.) Culler, <i>A Very Short Introduction</i> (LT 83-133)	Library Tour / Introduction to Bibliographical Research (9:25 am, Meet at TFDL, 1st Floor)
Week 5 October 8/10	Literary Theory Sample I: Walter Benjamin, <i>The Task of the Translator</i> (WB 69-82)	Introduction to Bibliographical Formats (9:25 am, Meet at TFDL, 1st Floor)
Week 6 October 15/17	Homework #2: Research bibliography for your topic due (ca. 10 titles) / Share your results in discussion	What is an annotated bibliography? / What is Plagiarism and Why to Avoid It 9:25 am, (Meet at TFDL, 1st Floor)
Week 7 October 22/24	Homework #3: Annotated bibliography samples due (2-3 titles) / Share your results / Literary Theory Sample II: Walter Benjamin, <i>Theses on the Philosophy of History</i> (WB 253-264)	What is an abstract? / Literary Theory Sample II: Walter Benjamin, <i>Theses on the Philosophy of History</i> (WB 253-264)
Week 8 October 29/31	Homework #4: Abstract of Walter Benjamin, <i>The Task of the Translator</i> or <i>Theses on the Philosophy of History</i> due / Share your results	What is a book review? / (9:25 am, Meet at TFDL, 1st Floor)
Week 9 November 5/7	Literary Theory Sample III: Walter Benjamin, <i>The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction</i> (WB 217-251)	Homework #5: Book review due (1-2 pages) / Literary Theory Sample III: Walter Benjamin, <i>The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction</i> (WB 217-251)
Week 10 November 12/14	Reading Days – No class!	Conference presentations and how to discuss them (9:25 am, Meet at TFDL, 1st Floor)
Week 11 November 19/21	Presentations, Part 1 / (9:25 am, Meet at TFDL, 1st Floor)	Presentations, Part 2 / (9:25 am, Meet at TFDL, 1st Floor)
Week 12 November 26/28	Presentations, Part 3 What do I need to know about term papers? / (9:25 am, Meet at TFDL, 1st Floor)	What do I need to know about term papers? (continued)
Week 13 December 3/5	Literary Theory Sample IV: Surprise Text (supplied by professor)	Final discussion / Please bring your own questions and comments
Week 14 Term paper due	December 11 (Wednesday), Noon: Term papers due!	