



Faculty of Arts
School of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures and Cultures

GERM 359.17
German-Jewish Literature
Winter Term 2020
TR 11:00-12:15
CHE 106

COURSE OUTLINE

INSTRUCTOR'S NAME: Jan Süselbeck

OFFICE LOCATION: CHC 118

OFFICE HOURS: by appointment

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REVISED MARCH 2020

- There will be **no changes in the grading criteria** due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the canceled face-to-face teaching will not be substituted by tools like Zoom.
- Instead, the communication tools on D2L will be used as a **discussion forum** and as a **mailing-list**. Students will be asked to **write very short reflection-papers** (0,5 to 1 page maximum) on our forthcoming readings and to **send them to the entire class**. This way, students will share their ideas, give mutual feedback, and so will the instructor. Additionally, the instructor will moderate an open discussion on D2L, providing guidance and additional materials to the ones already posted on D2L. As said, **this does not change the grading criteria**. The reflection-papers will not be graded. But the instructor will take anything students write on and send over D2L as an **alternative to class participation**.
- Missing presentations will be delivered via D2L as **PowerPoint documents to all class members**. We will discuss them via email, and the instructor will ask the presenter for possible adjustments and clarifications. Every student is invited to give constructive feedback or to ask questions about the PowerPoint presentations too.
- The **missing papers** in both courses and the originally foreseen **take-home exam** will be written at home as planned and as scheduled, with the instructor's personal supervision via email.

DESCRIPTION

This seminar is based on the demographic trend of Jews starting a new life in Germany or Austria. Since the 1990s, an increasing number of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, Russia, the Ukraine, and Israel have begun to write in German, bringing fresh experiences, new critical perspectives, more global settings, and internationally relevant stories to the formerly much more homogenous literary scene of the Berlin Republic.



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This course aims at analyzing the emotional, political, and sexual ambivalences involved in this transcultural writing, especially regarding the problem of increasing current antisemitism in Germany and the question of remembering the Shoah from the point of view of the second or third Jewish generation after the Holocaust. Therefore, this seminar not only will critically look at historical, political and social backgrounds of this highly acclaimed literary trend, but also will discuss it against the background of the dangerously growing anti-Israeli and antisemitic resentments in Austria and Germany.

Students will read and interpret some of the most successful novels in recent years, describing Jewish perspectives on contemporary German speaking countries – such as Olga Grjasnowa's *Der Russe ist einer, der Birken liebt*, 2012, translated in 2014 as *All Russians Love Birch Trees*, disturbing short stories and novels by Maxim Biller (*Liebe heute*, translated as *Love Today*), Doron Rabinovici (*Suche nach M*, translated as *The Search for M*), and Katja Petrowskaja's recently translated bestselling novel on her family history during and after the Shoah in today's Ukraine, *Vielleicht Esther*, 2014 (*Maybe Esther*, 2018).

OBJECTIVES

By taking and completing this course with active engagement and the readiness to thoroughly read a couple of stories and novels over the semester, including exemplary research articles on these texts, students will get a decent survey of German-Jewish writing from the 1990s to most recent publications. They will learn how to interpret fictional and autobiographical texts by both male and female German-Jewish writers in contemporary literature, comparing their stance on the question of how to address the traumatic history of surviving the Holocaust from the perspective of younger generations.

OUTCOMES

Students will get a deeper understanding of what it actually means to live in contemporary Germany and Austria as a Jew, countries that still have not – and probably never should – end their so called *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, that is their coming to terms with its crime of killing six million Jews during World War II. Central questions to be understood are the aesthetic challenges of writing adequately about remembering the Shoah, or issues just as *post-memory*, which means the transmission of traumatic experiences from the first generation of Jewish Holocaust survivors to later generations, as described by researcher Marianne Hirsch. Moreover, students will reflect on migration and immigration in contemporary Germany and Austria, and the difficulty of experiencing love and sexuality in identity positions of in-betweenness or hybridity.

DISTRIBUTION OF GRADES

2 essays, 3-5 pages each = 40 % (20 % and 20%)

Participation and "Tickets to class" = 20%. Tickets to class are short assignments to keep your reading focused. You will be either given questions on your readings for the week, or asked to comment or pose a good question on an aspect of the reading. The ticket to class is due on Blackboard the day before the reading will be discussed.

Presentation (list of topics to be distributed in class) = 15%

Take Home Exam (will be handed out during the last class meeting of the term, to be submitted one week later) = 25 %

GRADING SCALE

A+ (97-100 %), **A** (91-96%), **A-** (86-91)



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B+ (81-85%), **B** (76-80%), **B-** (71-75)
C+ (67-70%), **C** (62-66%), **C-** (58-61%)
D+ (54-57%), **D** (50-53%), **F** (0-49 %)

REQUIRED TEXTS

Maxim Biller: *Love Today*. Translated from the German by Anthea Bell. New York / London / Toronto / Sydney: Simon & Schuster 2008.

https://www.amazon.ca/Love-Today-Stories-Maxim-Biller/dp/B005MZA3BO/ref=sr_1_9?keywords=Maxim+Biller&qid=1557065024&s=gateway&sr=8-9

Olga Grjasnowa: *All Russians Love Birch Trees*. Translated from the German by Eva Bacon. New York: Other Press 2014.

https://www.amazon.ca/All-Russians-Love-Birch-Trees/dp/1590515846/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=olga+grjasnowa&qid=1557065498&s=gateway&sr=8-1

Katja Petrowskaja: *Maybe Esther*. Translated from the German by Shelley Frisch. London: 4th Estate 2019.

https://www.amazon.ca/Maybe-Esther-Family-Katja-Petrowskaja/dp/0062337548/ref=sr_1_fkmrnull_1?keywords=katja+petrowskaja&qid=1557065252&s=gateway&sr=8-1-fkmrnull

Doron Rabinovici: *The Search for M*. Translated and with Afterword by Francis M. Sharp. Riverside, California: Ariadne Press 2000.

https://www.amazon.ca/Search-M-Doron-Rabinovici/dp/1572410884/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=doron+rabinovici&qid=1557065685&s=gateway&sr=8-1

Maxim Biller: *Inside the Head of Bruno Schulz*. Translated from the German by Anthea Bell. With two stories by Bruno Schulz. London: Pushkin Press 2015.

<https://www.amazon.ca/Inside-Bruno-Schulz-Maxim-Biller/dp/1782271007>

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

COURSE NOTES

All numbers about the page lengths of assignments refer to the layout: double spaced, font Times / Times New Roman 12, 1 inch margins.

Attendance and Participation are the key factors of this class. Participation means active engagement in the activities of the class (with your ideas you improve the discussions for everybody); it is based on thorough readings of the assigned texts and other homework assignments. Attendance is mandatory; unexcused absences will result in a lower participation grade. The quality of the sessions will depend upon your preparedness and willingness to engage with each other. 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. Your class participation mark will be based on the quality rather than the quantity of your contribution. 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. Also, please don't use electronic devices during class except for accessing digital copies of the required texts on a reading device, as using computers or cell phones for other purposes might distract yourself as well as those around you.

Missed presentations, missed tests, missed deadlines: Expected to contact the instructor *prior* to the missed class / deadline in order to reschedule the presentation (phone / email) or in order to ask for an extension.



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Updated reading (for example of theoretical texts or interpretations), homework as well as schedule changes will be announced in class or via e-mail.

Assignments

1. Presentation: Power Point presentation or 1 or 2 pages handout for class to be submitted one day before presentation; 10-20 minutes of presentation in class – the topic for the presentation will be an open (group) research on a topic about one of the texts to discuss in class.

2. The Ticket to Class tests the students' understanding of the assigned readings. You may be asked to come up with a research question based on the reading or to respond to a question or issue raised by one of the readings.

3. Essays: You will be required to write **two essays** (but only 3-5 pages each), to the texts discussed in this class, or an aspect of these texts. Topics should be discussed with the instructor beforehand, either after class, during office hours, or via e-mail. You will be expected to develop a personal thesis about a text and to use some secondary literature. To make sure your impressions of the chosen text are still fresh, please turn in your essay no more than a week after we discussed a specific text. Make sure you spread the essays across term so you don't have to cram during the last few weeks before the final. To avoid the common "Yikes, I haven't finished all my assignments yet" end-of-term pile-up, you may only turn in one essay each during the last two weeks of the semester. **You must submit a first paper on Doron Rabinovici before mid-term, on February 13, 2020.**

If you are a major or graduate student in our German programs, you are encouraged to write in German; if you are not a native speaker, this will of course be taken into account. At the discretion of the instructor, a paper submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

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 writing skills, contact the Effective Writing Centre: https://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing_support/overview.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

1. **Plagiarism** is a serious offence, the penalty for which is an F on the assignment and possibly also an F in the course, academic probation, or requirement to withdraw. Plagiarism exists when:

- the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test);
- parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author;
- the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or
- a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted."

Plagiarism occurs not only when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement but also when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. A bibliography is insufficient to establish which portions of the student's work are taken from external sources; footnotes or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose.

2. **Cheating** at tests or examinations includes but is not limited to dishonest or attempted dishonest conduct such as speaking to other candidates or communicating with them under any circumstances whatsoever; bringing into the examination room any textbook, notebook, memorandum, other written material or mechanical or electronic device not authorized by the examiner; writing an examination or part of it, or consulting any person or materials outside the confines of the examination room without permission to do



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so, or leaving answer papers exposed to view, or persistent attempts to read other students' examination papers.

3. **Other academic misconduct** includes, but is not limited to, tampering or attempts to tamper with examination scripts, class work, grades and/or class records; failure to abide by directions by an instructor regarding the individuality of work handed in; the acquisition, attempted acquisition, possession, and/or distribution of examination materials or information not authorized by the instructor; the impersonation of another student in an examination or other class assignment; the falsification or fabrication of clinical or laboratory reports; the non-authorized tape recording of lectures.

4. Any student who voluntarily and consciously aids another student in the commission of one of these offences is also guilty of academic misconduct.

COPYRIGHT LEGISLATION

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf>) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorised sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PRIVACY (FOIP) ACT

Graded assignments will be retained by the Department for three months and subsequently sent for confidential shredding. Final examinations will be kept for one calendar year and subsequently sent for confidential shredding. Said material is exclusively available to the student and to the department staff requiring to examine it. Please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip> for complete information on the disclosure of personal records.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations according to the University policies and procedures listed below. The student accommodation policy can be found at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy>.

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/procedure-for-accommodations-for-students-with-disabilities.pdf>).

Students needing an Accommodation in relation to their coursework or to fulfil requirements for a graduate degree, based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to their Instructor or the Department Head/Dean or to the designated contact person in their Faculty.

FACULTY OF ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING AND STUDENT INFORMATION RESOURCES

Have a question, but not sure where to start?

The Arts Students' Centre is the overall headquarters for undergraduate programs in the Faculty of Arts. The key objective of this office is to connect students with whatever academic assistance they may require.

In addition to housing the Associate Dean (Undergraduate Programs and Student Affairs) and the Associate Dean (Teaching, Learning & Student Engagement), the Arts Students' Centre is the specific home to:

- Program advising
- Co-op Education Program
- Arts and Science Honours Academy
- Student Help Desk

Location: Social Sciences Room 102

Phone: 403-220-3580

Email: ascarts@ucalgary.ca



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Website: arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at 403-210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Block.

Contacts for the Students' Union Representative for the Faculty of Arts: arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca, arts4@su.ucalgary.ca.

INTERNET AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Devices such as laptops, palmtops and smartbooks are allowed provided that they are used exclusively for instructional purposes and do not cause disruption to the instructor and to fellow students. Cellular telephones, blackberries and other mobile communication tools are not permitted and must be switched off.

SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

A link to required information that is not course-specific related to student wellness and safety resources, can be found on the Office of the Registrar's website: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines>.