

German Science Fiction / Fall 2014 / Instructor: Stefan Höppner
 Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 2-3 pm or by appointment / Craigie Hall C218
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Syllabus

In German culture, the divide between “high” and popular culture is especially strong – and few genres have been treated by criticism and academia with more contempt than science fiction. This class aims to discuss German-language science fiction texts (and films) from roughly 1800 to the present, many of them from canonical authors whose works straddle and question the divide between “high” and “low”. We will discuss their works and also use them as a starting point to explore the uses and the cultural status of Science Fiction in general. Thematic core areas include space travel, the divide between humans and robots, cold war science fiction, and outside images of Germany in Science Fiction. The class will likely be conducted in German. For inquiries, please write to shoppner@ucalgary.ca.

The following required core texts will be available at the U of C bookstore. Native speakers and graduate students in the German program are required to read all major texts in German. Due to their complexity and length, everyone else may choose to read Juli Zeh’s and Dietmar Dath’s novels either in English or German.

- Dath, Dietmar. *Die Abschaffung der Arten: Roman*. 2008. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2010. or
- Dath, Dietmar. *The Abolition of Species*. 2008. Trans. Samuel P. Willcocks. London; New York: Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2013.
- Hoffmann, E.T.A. *Der Sandmann*. 1819. Ed. Peter Braun. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003.
- Zeh, Juli. *Corpus Delicti: Ein Prozess*. 2009. Munich: btb Verlag, 2010. or
- Zeh, Juli. *The Method*. 2009. Trans. Sally-Ann Spencer. New York: Vintage, 2012.

All other texts will be made available on Desire2Learn. We will also watch the following movies:

- *Metropolis*. Dir. Fritz Lang. UFA, Germany 1927. (2010 restored version, *not* accessible online)
- *Raumpatrouille Orion: Rücksturz ins Kino*. Dir. Theo Mezger and Michael Braun. Bavaria Film, West Germany 1966/2003.
- *Der schweigende Stern*. Dir. Kurt Maetzig. DEFA Filme, East Germany 1960.
- *Interkosmos*. Dir. Jim Finn. Facets Multimedia, USA 2006.
- *Iron Sky*. Dir. Timo Vuorensola. Energia Productions, Finland 2012.

Markings	Grading	
Undergraduates (GERM 469):	A+ = 100-97%	C+ = 70-67%
In-Class Presentation 20%	A = 96-91%	C = 66-62%
Class participation 30%	A - = 90-86%	C- = 61-58%
Term paper 50%	B+ = 85-81%	D+ = 57-54%
	B = 80-76%	D = 53-50%
Graduates (GERM 627):	B- = 75-71%	F = 49% and below
In-Class Presentation 15%		
Class participation 25%		
Term paper 60%		

Participation: Class discussion is a key factor in this course. Attendance is mandatory; unexcused absences will have a negative effect of your participation grade. 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 come to a preliminary understanding of the material we will discuss in class. Needless to say, you should own a copy of the course book and print out and mark up any additional readings. Please don't use a laptop and/or cell phone during class (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; on the contrary – questions about vocabulary and meaning of specific passages are encouraged. 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. 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.

In-class presentation: Each student is to prepare one class session. This includes a short introduction to the text(s) to be discussed, providing questions for discussion, and leading the in-class discussion. An outline of your presentation as well as a few questions for discussion need to be provided to the instructor and your fellow students in an e-mail or handout at least three calendar days before class.

Research paper: Due December 9 at noon. Papers should be approx. 10-15 pages for Undergraduates, 15-20 pages for Graduate Students (letter-sized paper, Times New Roman font 12 pt, double-spaced). Topic needs to be discussed with and approved by the instructor, preferably during office hours or after class sessions. 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. 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; cases of plagiarism will result in a failing grade, be reported to the department head and the dean, and may result in consequences up to expulsion from U of C. 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 9 / 11	What is science fiction? Isaac Asimov, <i>Science Fiction and Society</i> Ursula LeGuin, <i>On Teaching Science Fiction</i> Georges Méliès, <i>Le voyage dans la lune</i>	Dietmar Dath, <i>Sie ist wach</i> (excerpt)
Week 2 September 16 / 18	Dietmar Dath, <i>Sie ist wach</i> (excerpt)	NO CLASS!
Week 3 September 23 / 25	Julian Offray de la Metrie, <i>L'homme machine</i> (excerpt) Mary Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i> (excerpt)	E.T.A. Hoffmann, <i>Der Sandmann</i>
Week 4 September 30 / October 2	E.T.A. Hoffmann, <i>Der Sandmann</i>	E.T.A. Hoffmann, <i>Der Sandmann</i>
Week 5 October 7 / 9	Karel Čapek, <i>R.U.R.</i> (excerpt) Film: <i>Metropolis</i>	Film: <i>Metropolis</i>
Week 6 October 14 / 16	Friedrich Dürrenmatt – <i>Das Unternehmen der Wega</i>	(West) Germany's most successful SF series: <i>Perry Rhodan</i> (reading TBA)
Week 7 October 21 / 23	Film: <i>Raumpatrouille Orion</i>	Film: <i>Der schweigende Stern</i>
Week 8 October 28 / 30	Christa Wolf, <i>Geschlechtertausch</i>	Christa Wolf, <i>Geschlechtertausch</i>
Week 9 November 4 / 6	Juli Zeh, <i>Corpus Delicti/The Method</i>	Juli Zeh, <i>Corpus Delicti/The Method</i>
Week 10 November 11 / 13	Reading Week – no class!	Dietmar Dath, <i>Die Abschaffung der Arten / The Abolition of Species</i>
Week 11 November 18 / 20	Dietmar Dath, <i>Die Abschaffung der Arten / The Abolition of Species</i>	Dietmar Dath, <i>Die Abschaffung der Arten / The Abolition of Species</i>
Week 12 November 25 / 27	Dietmar Dath, <i>Die Abschaffung der Arten / The Abolition of Species</i>	Film: <i>Interkosmos</i>
Week 13 December 2 / 4	Film: <i>Iron Sky</i>	Final discussion
Week 14 December 9	Noon: Term papers due!	No class!