

**German Reading Group:
Heinrich Heine's *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland***

Mark W. Roche
GE 62301 / GE 32301

Wednesdays 5:00-6:00
O'Shaughnessy Hall 345

Description

This one-credit (pass/fail) reading course is designed to introduce students who have the equivalent of four-semester or more of college German, that is, the equivalent of German 20202 or more, to an interesting work in German and to help them continue to develop their reading skills, knowledge of grammar, and pronunciation. The language of discussion will be English, thus opening the course to a wider range of students, undergraduate as well as graduate.

The topic this fall will be Heinrich Heine's witty and intellectually rich essay *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* (1834). An essay that helped to define what intellectual history is, the work introduces readers to interwoven currents in German history, religion, literature, and politics (the German censor excised fifteen passages from the original work). The essay explores the distinction of Germany by engaging early Germanic folk traditions; the divide between Catholicism and Protestantism inaugurated by Luther and the Reformation; philosophical movements, such as pantheism and idealism; philosophers from Spinoza to Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel; and prominent literary figures, such as Lessing and Goethe.

The capacity to capture complex philosophical developments in such a lively and witty way is perhaps unique in the history of letters. Further, the essay offers a window onto Heine's own worldview and style. Heine is one of Germany's greatest poets and essayists and arguably its greatest wit, which is one reason why in some English-speaking countries Heine ranks behind only Goethe among Germany's greatest writers.

Learning Goals

1) Reading of German: Students will advance in their ability to read, decipher, and analyze complex German prose by looking at vocabulary, grammar, and style. They will learn strategies for effective reading, including attentiveness to cognates, root meanings, component parts of words, and context. They will also gain some experience with translation. Through these strategies students will improve their sensibility and intuition for learning and reading German. Since we will occasionally read sentences aloud, students will also find opportunities to improve their pronunciation.

2) German Cultural Literacy: Through the prism of Heine's work, students will become familiar with a remarkably broad sweep of German cultural and intellectual history. Heine's focus on religion and philosophy will provide a useful complement to courses in history, theology, and philosophy as well as other courses in German literature and culture.

3) Engagement with a Single Work: The course offers a rare opportunity to study intensively a single work by one of Germany's most intriguing and stylistically versatile authors, whose writings, most frequently his poetry and *Deutschland. Ein Wintermärchen*, are regularly taught at Notre Dame and elsewhere. We will be able to linger with the work in a way that is not possible in survey and overview classes. This more deliberate mode of learning is more common at German universities, where a semester's reading might involve only 100 pages instead of, say, ten novels.

4) Hermeneutic Capacities and Appreciation of Reading German: Students will improve their skills in interpreting, analyzing, and evaluating literary and cultural works. They will develop their capacity to ask pertinent and interesting questions and to argue for and against various interpretations. They will recognize the extent to which the parts and wholes of great works relate to one another. They will further develop their appreciation for close reading of German works outside the context of a regular classroom setting.

General Principles of Student Learning

The course will be organized in accordance with several common-sense pedagogical principles, most of which were embodied already by Socrates and which have been given empirical verification in our age:

- *Active Learning:* Students are not passive minds into whose heads content is to be poured. Students learn by becoming involved, asking questions, engaging in discussions, solving problems, writing papers, in short, by energetically devoting themselves to the learning process. Educators speak of active or student-centered learning. Students learn most effectively when they are actively engaged, not simply listening or absorbing material. In fact simply taking an exam, even when you perform poorly, helps you to learn the material. Accordingly, this course will be student-centered, with considerable focus on student-student discussion and one-on-one oral examinations. When you have the opportunity to help teach a work, you will see that your learning is greatly deepened.
- *Peer Learning:* Students learn greatly from their peers. You are influenced by the people with whom you spend your time, for good or for ill. The research shows that the student's peer group is the single greatest source of influence on cognitive and affective development in college. Since for almost all of you, this will be a voluntary course, we already have one sign of a motivated peer group. You are encouraged to discuss our text and questions with one another and with others beyond the classroom.
- *Existential Engagement:* Students learn more when they are existentially engaged in the subject, when they care about the questions under discussion and recognize their significance. If you volunteer in a soup kitchen, your course on the economics of poverty takes on a different meaning. If you spend a year in Berlin, German history and politics become far more important to you. To that end and because of its intrinsic value, we will

read this work not only to understand it in its context, as interesting as that is, but also to ask to what extent it speaks to us today. Can we learn not only *about* this work, but also *from* it, both linguistically and culturally?

- *High Expectations and Feedback:* Students learn the most when their teachers have high academic expectations of them and when students receive helpful feedback that supports them in their quest to meet those high expectations. To know what you don't know is to help focus your learning. A combination of being challenged and being supported helps learning immensely.
- *Effortful Learning:* Many think that easier paths to learning make for better learning. In truth, the evidence shows that easier learning is often superficial and quickly forgotten, whereas effortful learning leads to deeper and more durable learning as well as greater mastery and better applications. For example, trying to solve a problem before being taught a solution leads to better learning. Hard learning, making mistakes and correcting them, is not wasted effort but important work; it improves your intelligence. Striving to surpass your current abilities and experiencing setbacks are part of true learning, which, unlike superficial learning, develops and changes the brain, building new connections and increasing intellectual capacities. For better learning, difficulties are desirable: the harder the effort, the greater the benefit. For example, instead of simply reviewing notes on our readings, you might reflect on the reading: What are the key ideas? What ideas are new to me? How would I explain them to someone else? How does what I read relate to what I already know? What questions do I have?
- *Breadth of Context:* If you put what you are learning into a larger context and connect it with what you already know and are learning in your other courses, your learning will be deeper and more stable. If you can connect a story, an idea, or a principle as you uncover it to other stories, ideas, and principles or to what you yourself think, then the stories, ideas, and principles will more likely resonate for you in the future. The more you know, the more you can learn.
- *Faculty-Student Contact.* The greatest predictor of student satisfaction with college is frequent interaction with faculty members. Students are more motivated, more committed, and more involved and seem to learn more when they have a connection to faculty members. So take advantage of opportunities to connect with your teachers. Drop in during my office hours (come when you have a need or a question or simply when you would like to chat). Take advantage as well of other opportunities we will find for informal conversations.
- *Meaningful Investment of Time:* Students who major in disciplines that are less demanding of students' time tend to make fewer cognitive gains in college. Everyone who wants to learn a complex and demanding subject must make a substantial effort. Learning occurs not only during class time. It derives also from the investment you make

in learning, the quality of the time you spend reading, thinking, writing, and speaking with others outside of class.

- *Diversity*: Another learning principle is diversity. When you discover that your roommate is Muslim, you suddenly become more curious about Islam. That is not especially likely at Notre Dame, so we need to cultivate intellectual diversity, engaging works from other cultures and in languages other than English. We want to hear different perspectives from one another, even the most unusual, since thinking outside the box can help us see more clearly. Do not be shy about asking off-the-wall questions or making unusual comments. And don't let contrary views bother you emotionally. All such contributions can be useful, as the process of discovering truth involves listening to various perspectives. In addition, Heine's work offers multiple perspectives that are likely to challenge us today.
- *Self-Reflection*: Students learn more when they are aware of how they best learn (so that they can focus their energies), what they most lack, and how they can learn more. How can I become a better student? How can I learn to guide myself? We may occasionally have meta-discussions in which we reflect on our learning at a higher level. What is helping us learn? The latter question underscores why I have just placed these principles before you.

Learning a Language

Learning a language has several presuppositions. Among others, you must be motivated. Motivation is arguably the most important principle in any learning context. Moreover, you will need to exhibit hard work, discipline, and perseverance. That means focusing on what you need to learn, organizing your materials and learning techniques well, and investing the requisite time. You will want to have a plan of action, a way of capturing key grammatical concepts and useful vocabulary, via note cards, an Excel chart, or other sensible strategies. For this one-credit reading group you will want to spend at least two hours per week preparing; if you find yourself spending less (and completing the work superbly) or much more, let me know.

Student Contributions to Learning and Assessment Guidelines

1) Regular Work: 75%;

Students will be expected to contribute regularly to discussions and to adopt various facilitative roles during the semester. Class contribution is not equivalent with the quantity of class participation; instead both quantity and quality will be considered. Because student learning is aided by active student participation in the classroom, students will want to prepare well and contribute regularly and meaningfully to group discussions.

Each student will be asked to lead one session. The student will be responsible for knowing all of the vocabulary at an even higher level than normal as well as the notes and broader context. You

may, if you wish, choose a partner, and instead of leading one session, you would then with a partner co-lead two sessions.

Under regular work I consider also any short written assignments.

2) Oral Examination: 25%;

Students will take an oral examination of approximately 30 minutes that will include the kind of work we will have done during the semester, from textual description and analysis to cultural context.

Logistical Information

Office: 349 Decio Hall

Office Hours: Mondays from 12:30 to 1:45 and Wednesdays from 3:30 to 4:45 as well as by appointment. Impromptu meetings can also often be arranged before or after class.

Phone: (574) 631-8142 (office); (574) 302-1813 (cell).

E-mail: mroche@nd.edu; **Web:** <http://mroche.nd.edu/>

Required Book

Heinrich Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland*. Ed. Jürgen Ferner. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1997. 978-3-15-002254-2

Calendar of Classes and Readings

We can easily adjust the pace of reading as we proceed, but a tentative calendar is below. About 11 pages per week will ensure that we complete the book before the end of the semester. If students want to move at a faster pace, we can add some other works by Heine, probably poems or *Deutschland. Ein Wintermärchen*, or a chapter from a fascinating contemporary history of German philosophy, which follows in Heine's tradition, even it is more deeply philosophical, Vittorio Hösle's *Eine kurze Geschichte der deutschen Philosophie* (2013).

August 27, 2014	Orientation
September 3, 2014	5-16
September 10, 2014	16-28
September 17, 2014	28-38

September 24, 2014	38-49
October 1, 2014	50-60
October 8, 2014	60-70
October 15, 2014	70-83
October 22, 2014	Fall Break
October 29, 2014	83-93
November 5, 2014	93-104
November 12, 2014	104-116
November 19, 2014	116-126
November 26, 2014	Thanksgiving Break
December 3, 2014	126-138
December 10, 2014	138-153

Sakai

I have placed the syllabus on Sakai and may place additional materials there.

Reference Materials

I have placed on reserve the best biography of Heine, which is in English and was written by Jeffrey L. Sammons of Yale, now emeritus: *Heinrich Heine: A Modern Biography*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.

A digital version of the essay on Heine from the most recent edition of the *Metzler Lexikon Autoren: Deutschsprachige Dichter und Schriftsteller vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart* is now posted on the library reserve site.

Also on reserve is the most up-to-date reference work on Heine, the third edition of *Heine Handbuch. Zeit - Person - Werk*, edited by Gerhard Höhn, and published by Metzler Verlag in Stuttgart (2004). It contains references to additional works.

Further, although our edition has good notes, I include also volume three of Heine's *Sämtliche Schriften*, which has a thorough set of notes for *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland*, as well as volume 8.2, the commentary on our work, from the definitive Heine edition, the Düsseldorf Ausgabe, *Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe der Werke*, ed. Manfred Windfuhr, et al. Hamburg: Hoffmann and Campe, 1973- .

To help you with your pronunciation, I have placed a video on reserve entitled *The Challenges of German Pronunciation*.

Finally, a CD reading of the book is in the process of being placed on reserve and is expected to be accessible soon. It is a reading of the text by Alex Grube and published by Onomato Hörbücher in 2009. This may help you with both listening and speaking.

In the PT section of the library you will find a wealth of books by and about Heine.

Basic introductory material is available in the first floor reference area of the library, in the PT section. There you will find, for example, the *Daten deutscher Dichtung*, the *Encyclopedia of German Literature*, the *Oxford Companion to German Literature*, the *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturgeschichte*, and other such works, which have entries on topics, authors, works, etc.

Policy on Attendance

You should attend every class. Any unexcused absences will be integrated into your class contribution grade. Five or more unexcused absences will lead to failure of the course. Personal absences and non-acute medical conditions (such as an ordinary cold or a headache) do not represent excused absences; acute medical conditions or contagious medical conditions will be excused whenever the student provides documentation from a treating health care provider, a rector, or the Office of Undergraduate Studies. Excused absences for medical or other reasons will not affect your grade in any way.

In the unlikely event that a student misses a scheduled oral examination without having a legitimate excuse, a make-up examination will be arranged, but the student's oral examination grade will be dropped by one partial unit.

Grading

Grading for this course will be on a pass/fail basis.

Grading Scale for the University of Notre Dame

See <http://registrar.nd.edu/gradingsystems.pdf>

Letter Grade	Point Value	Description	Explanatory Comments
A	4	Truly Exceptional	Work meets or exceeds the highest expectations for the course.
A-	3.667	Outstanding	Superior work in all areas of the course.
B+	3.333	Very Good	Superior work in most areas of the course.
B	3.000	Good	Solid work across the board.
B-	2.667	More than Acceptable	More than acceptable, but falls short of solid work.
C+	2.333	Acceptable: Meets All Basic Standards	Work meets all the basic requirements and standards for the course.
C	2.000	Acceptable: Meets Most Basic Standards	Work meets most of the basic requirements and standards in several areas.
C-	1.667	Acceptable: Meets Some Basic Standards	While acceptable, work falls short of meeting basic standards in several areas.
D	1.000	Minimally Passing	Work just over the threshold of acceptability.
F	0	Failure	Unacceptable performance.

Academic Code of Honor

This course will be conducted in accordance with Notre Dame’s *Academic Code of Honor*, which stipulates: “As a member of the Notre Dame community, I will not participate in or tolerate academic dishonesty ... The pledge to uphold the *Academic Code of Honor* includes an understanding that a student’s submitted work, graded or ungraded – examinations, draft copies, papers, homework assignments, extra credit work, etc. – must be his or her own.” The code is available at <http://honorcode.nd.edu/>. Information on citing sources and avoiding plagiarism is available at <http://library.nd.edu/help/plagiarism.shtml>.

Students are encouraged to discuss readings with one another outside of class and should feel free to discuss assignments with one another, but the source of all ideas must be revealed fully and honestly.

Dictionaries

Students will want to have a print or electronic dictionary of some kind. German-German dictionaries include, among others, Pons, Wahrig, and Langenscheidt. Pons tends to be too basic even by the fourth semester. Wahrig is very advanced, more a dictionary for native and near-native speakers. For college students I prefer the Langenscheidt dictionary, either *Langenscheidts Großwörterbuch. Deutsch als Fremdsprache* (which you will find in the Center for Languages and Cultures, 329 DeBartolo Hall) or Hans Wellmann's and Dieter Götz's *Langenscheidt Taschenwörterbuch Deutsch als Fremdsprache: Einsprachig Deutsch*. Berlin: Langenscheidt, 2009. The latter is less expensive. A German-German dictionary will do wonders to help you advance in the language.

Also various Websites contain useful dictionaries. Helpful online German-German dictionaries include <<http://wortschatz.uni-leipzig.de/>> and especially <<http://www.duden.de/>>.

I have found the following German-English and English-German dictionary to be useful: <<http://www.dict.cc/>>. It is also available as an app.

Grammar Books

The standard reference work for your German is Duden. You might find at this level two works especially useful, volume 2 (*Das Stilwörterbuch*) and volume 4 (*Die Grammatik*).

If you have a grammar still from your earlier classes, you may wish to consult it. If not, our advanced composition and conversation classes have used the following three books:

German in Review, by Kimberly Sparks and Van Horn Vail. Now in its fourth edition.

Handbuch zur Deutschen Grammatik, by Jamie Rankin and Larry Wells. Now in its fifth edition.

Deutsche Wiederholungsgrammatik: A Morpho-Syntactic Review of German, by Frank E. Donahue.

Also very good is an introductory textbook from an earlier era that focused more on grammar than do today's textbooks: *German: A Structural Approach*, by Walter Lohnes and F.W. Strothmann. It went through three editions.

The library has copies of all of the above.

Websites

There are also Websites available for your work in German, for example:

German Language Lab: <http://german.about.com/library/blgerlab.htm>

Various materials of potential interest, including material on pronunciation and on German sounds.

Cactus 2000. German Conjugation: <http://conj.d.cactus2000.de/index.en.php>

A seemingly pedestrian site that contains the principal parts of German verbs. Very user friendly.

German Verb Conjugator: <http://www.verbix.com/languages/german.shtml>

Similar to the previous site in offering conjugations of German verbs.

Internet Handbook of German Grammar: <http://www.travlang.com/languages/german/ihgg/>

A reference grammar on the Web.

Vocabulary: <http://lw.lsa.umich.edu/german/hmr/vokabeln/index.html>

Some useful tips and resources on vocabulary. It includes a list of the ca. 200 most frequently used German words: http://lw.lsa.umich.edu/german/hmr/vokabeln/frequent_words.html.

Top Twenty German Verbs: http://german.about.com/library/almanac/blalm_vrb.htm.

The site contains a further link to the top fifty German verbs.

If you use an additional site that you find helpful for language and grammar, please let me know, and we can share it with the other students.

Finally, you can find a good number of Heine's works on the Web, including *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland*. See <http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/autor/257>