

Tragedy, Comedy, Identity

Mark W. Roche
GE 40105

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:30-4:45
338 O'Shaughnessy Hall

Brief Description

Germany has one of the world's richest traditions of drama as well as arguably the greatest theorists of drama and of modern drama. We will read and discuss selected masterpieces of German drama, paying attention to its historical development; the nuances and ambiguities of individual works; categories of genre, above all tragedy and comedy, including challenges to these genre categories; and the ways in which identity and identity crises, both individual and collective, relate to issues of genre.

Dramas to be read and discussed are taken from German, Austrian, and Swiss literature; they include Lessing's *Minna von Barnhelm*, Schiller's *Don Karlos*, Büchner's *Leonce und Lena*, Nestroy's *Der Zerrissene*, Grillparzer's *Ein Bruderzwist in Habsburg*, Hofmannsthal's *Der Schwierige*, and Dürrenmatt's *Die Physiker*.

Some attention will also be given to distinctive German contributions to the theory of tragedy and comedy, including the singular contributions of Hegel and Scheler.

Logistical Information

Office: 349 Decio Hall

Office Hours: Tuesdays from 1:00 to 3:00 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/>

Calendar of Classes and Readings

January 12, 2016	Orientation
January 14, 2016	Lessing, 12-28 (16 pages)
January 19, 2016	Lessing, 28-45 (17 pages)
January 19, 2016	Lessing, 46-63 (17 pages)
January 26, 2016	Lessing, 63-84 (21 pages)
January 28, 2016	Schiller, 11-44 (33 pages)

February 2, 2016	Schiller, 44-83 (39 pages)
February 4, 2016	Schiller, 84-112 (28 pages)
February 9, 2016	Schiller, 112-150 (38 pages)
February 11, 2016	Schiller, 150-183 (33 pages)
February 16, 2016	Schiller, 183-212 (29 pages)
February 18, 2016	Theory of Tragedy and Comedy Variable Reading Assignments
February 23, 2016	Büchner, 338-348 (10 pages) Paper no. 1 is due today.
February 25, 2016	Büchner, 348-359 (11 pages)
March 1, 2016	Nestroy, 3-30 (26 pages)
March 3, 2016	Nestroy, 30-54 (22 pages)
March 8, 2016	Spring Break (no class)
March 10, 2016	Spring Break (no class)
March 15, 2016	Nestroy, 54-75 (21 pages)
March 17, 2016	Grillparzer, 3-22 (18 pages)
March 22, 2016	Grillparzer, 23-51 (28 pages)
March 24, 2016	Grillparzer, 52-73 (21 pages)
March 29, 2016	Grillparzer, 73-100 (27 pages)
March 31, 2016	Hofmannsthal, 6-44 (38 pages) Paper no. 2 is due today.
April 5, 2016	Hofmannsthal, 44-86 (44 pages)
April 7, 2016	Hofmannsthal, 87-125 (38 pages)
April 12, 2016	Hofmannsthal, 126-158 (32 pages)

April 14, 2016	Dürrenmatt, 9-39 (30 pages)
April 19, 2016	Dürrenmatt, 40-71 (31 pages)
April 21, 2016	Dürrenmatt, 72-93 (18 pages)
April 26, 2016	Discussion of Papers

Final papers are due at the time of our final examination, which is scheduled for Thursday, May 5, at 10:30.

Great Questions

The seminar will explore a number of great questions, including:

What is the value of studying literature?

What questions, categories, and vocabulary will help us better understand and enjoy literature?

What makes a literary work great?

In what ways do great literary works offer both supertemporal and culturally-specific insights?

What is a tragic world view, and what is a comic world view?

What distinguishes each genre?

Are there links between tragedy, comedy, and religion?

What can we learn from the tragic and the comic?

What constitutes identity?

What triggers identity crises and how does one best deal with them?

How are individual and collective identity crises related to historical developments?

Can we understand identity better through the lens of tragedy and comedy?

Learning Goals

1) Engagement with Great Dramas: Students will be able to discuss and analyze a selection of great dramas along with basic literary concepts and historical context relevant for these works and for much future reading of literature. Students will grow in their appreciation of the value of reading great works and asking great questions as part of a life-long process of continual learning. In so doing, they will cultivate their enjoyment of the life of the mind, building resources for the continued development of their inner world, and they will learn to value complexity and ambiguity. In relating to these works and questions in a personal way, they will also recognize a connection between their academic work and personal lives.

2) German Cultural Literacy: Students will become familiar with a selection of important and influential literary works from the German tradition, thus increasing their exposure to the kinds of works that have been part of most well-educated Germans' repertoire across the ages. In understanding, analyzing, and interpreting these works, students will also gain an indirect window onto selected aspects of literary, social, and intellectual history. They will become

familiar with the ways in which tragedy and comedy have played roles in the development of the German tradition.

3) German Language Skills: Students will advance in their ability to read, write, speak, and understand German. Through practice they will reinforce basic issues as well as improve their capacity for articulate and precise mastery of the language, both spoken and written, and they will improve their basic communication skills insofar as they accompany the organization and communication of their thoughts.

4) Hermeneutic Capacities: 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.

5) Intellectual Virtues: Students will improve their capacities to process difficult materials, recognize complex patterns, ferret out contradictions, gain unexpected insights, formulate clear questions, listen carefully and attentively, explore ideas through dialogue, and express their thoughts eloquently and persuasively.

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, defending positions, 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. Accordingly, this course will be student-centered, with considerable focus on student-student discussion, daily written contributions, and paper topics chosen by students.
- *Peer Learning*: Students learn greatly from their peers, and we will do considerable amounts of group work. Indeed, the research shows that the student's peer group is the single greatest source of influence on cognitive and affective development in college.
- *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 these works not only to understand them in their own context, as interesting as that is, but also to ask, to what extent they speak to us today. Can we learn not only *about* these works, but also *from* them? That means relating these works to your past

experiences, daily lives, and future aspirations, without falling into a purely subjective interpretation of the meaning.

- *Intrinsic Motivation*: Motivation plays a large role in learning. The best learning comes not from external motivation, seeking external approbation and praise, but from intrinsic motivation, from identification with a vision of wanting to learn.
- *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. You can be sure that if the coach of an athletic team is nonchalant about physical fitness, discipline, timing, teamwork, and the like, the team will not win many games. So, too, an easy A will not help you in the long run, as you interview for highly competitive postgraduate fellowships or positions at the best graduate schools or with the leading firms. The best way to learn is to shoot high and to recognize what might still be needed to meet those high aspirations. Detailed feedback and discriminating grades are ways of pointing out strengths and weaknesses to students, challenging them to stretch, so that they are not lulled into thinking that their current capacities cannot be improved, and they needn't learn more.
- *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, making an effort to answer a question before being led to an answer 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? What arguments speak for and against a given position?
- *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. In our class, seeing connections across works as well as seeing connections between our discussions and discussions and works in other classes as well as your own life will help give you that larger context. The more you know, the more you can learn. Ask yourself, what larger lessons can be drawn from what I am exploring.

- *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. And don't hesitate to ask for help.
- *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. For this three-credit advanced course you will want to spend more than six hours per week preparing. An advantage you have in this course is that the works are challenging, fascinating, and enjoyable, so your study can be work and pleasure simultaneously.
- *Diversity:* Another learning principle is diversity. When you discover that your roommate is Muslim, you suddenly become more curious about Islam. Such encounters occur less frequently 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, many of our works, all of which arose in earlier times and in other cultures, introduce us to world-views radically different from our own, but precisely in their difference, they may provide interesting antidotes to some of the clichés of the present.
- *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 also after I graduate? We may occasionally have meta-discussions in which we reflect on our discussion at a higher level. Around what central interpretive question did the debate we were just having revolve? Why did we relinquish one interpretation and adopt another? How would we describe the evidence that spoke for and against the various positions? Why was today's discussion particularly successful or less successful? What is helping us learn? The latter question underscores why I have just placed these principles before you.

We will pursue each of these dimensions. Above all, your learning will depend on your active engagement. To that end the following contributions to learning will affect the assessment of your performance.

Student Contributions to Learning and Assessment Guidelines

50% of the grade will be based on regular contributions, oral and written, during the semester. 50% will be based on more formal written work, where you will be asked to perform at the highest possible level.

1) Class Contribution: 25%;

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 discussions.

After the review of the syllabus, the language for this class will be German.

Brief Presentations

Students will be asked to give at least one brief formal presentation, with a one-page written hand-out. You should conclude your presentation with a list of sources you consulted. Your oral delivery should be between 5 and 10 minutes. The topics will be distributed on a first come, first served basis. I would like biographical topics to be chosen first. Those options are below. After those are chosen, other relevant topics will be suggested. Since many of you may already have heard basic presentations on the first three authors, presentations on those thinkers should go beyond the most basic information.

- Lessing
- Schiller
- Büchner
- Nestroy
- Grillparzer
- Hofmannsthal
- Dürrenmatt

2) Short Written Contributions: 25%

For each class, students will prepare a few sentences of insights or questions. These will always be in German, typed and double-spaced, and brought to each class.

At a minimum these should be 50 words, though you might shoot for the most part between 100 and 200 words.

We will occasionally draw on your comments in class, either directly or indirectly, and I will collect them each time to provide you with feedback. Do not shy away from experimenting with more difficult formulations. Your writing will improve as you stretch your capacities.

On occasion we may experiment instead with your submitting comments to Sakai, so that everyone can read each others' thoughts in advance of class. Such variations in the routine will be announced well in advance.

You need not pursue one sustained reflection. You may choose to write isolated insights of a sentence each. You should also feel free to ask questions. You may include genuine questions to which you are seeking an answer; questions designed to elicit discussion (that is, open-ended, questions that encourage analysis and debate); or statements that explore the following: an insight that you have into the work, an idea that you find compelling or less compelling, an aspect of the work that struck you as unusually significant, a comparison with earlier passages or works, etc. I will occasionally offer you some pre-reading questions; if so, one or more of your contributions could respond to such questions, though this is not obligatory.

Please note that on the four days when papers are due (original submissions and revisions), no short contributions are to be submitted.

3) Two Short Papers (3-5 pages): 30%;

Students will write two short papers of 3-5 pages in German (approximately 750 to 1,500 words). Papers should not be more than six pages (1,750 words). Students are free to choose their topics within the context of the course and its readings. Creative topics and strategies are welcome. Students should not hesitate to think out loud with me about various options before settling on a topic. Starting early is always a wise strategy.

All papers should be Times New Roman or a similar standard font, 12 point, and double spaced.

Each paper should have a title and pagination, and you should list at the bottom the number of words.

You will want to use MLA style <<http://www.mla.org/style>>. (MLA stands for the Modern Language Association.) This style is widespread in the humanities and relatively simple and user-friendly. The library has reference materials that spell out MLA style, such as the *MLA Handbook* or the *MLA Style Manual*, and there are short versions available on the Web. I have a few copies students may borrow upon request.

The short papers are to be rewritten after you receive my comments and then resubmitted within one week of their return to you. Rewriting is an excellent strategy to improve your capacity for writing. The grade will be adjusted based on the revision.

The short papers are due as printed documents at class time. Late submissions of all papers will be downgraded a partial grade. A further drop of a partial grade will occur for every 24 hours that passes beyond the due date.

4) **One Long Paper (10-12 pages): 20%;**

Students will write one longer paper, which may be in German (but only with prior approval from the instructor) or in English. Papers should be 10-12 pages in length, double-spaced, and typed. This longer written assignment will allow students to engage some aspect of the course in greater depth and with a certain level of independence. If the student writes the final paper in German, the second of the shorter papers, though not the first one, may be in English.

In selecting a topic for a longer paper, students are encouraged to visit me in the office hours or after class and to think out loud about interests and options.

In rare cases, if a student would like to write the longer paper earlier in the semester, for example, because an appealing and complex paper topic has developed or because the student would like to develop a longer writing sample in English, students will receive permission to write the longer paper early and so revise it; the final paper would then not be revised.

The final paper should be submitted electronically as an attached Word or Wordperfect file (not via a link to google drive). My e-mail is mroche@nd.edu. The papers are due at the time of our final examination, which is scheduled for Thursday, May 5, at 10:30.

The goals of each assignment and of all evaluation are to improve understanding and performance. For more detailed comments on these assignments and on assessment guidelines, see below.

Required Works

Lessing, *Minna von Barnhelm oder Das Soldatenglück. Ein Lustspiel. Klassische Schullektüre*. Berlin: Cornelsen, 1983. 978-3-454-52100-0

Schiller, *Don Karlos. Klassische Schullektüre*. Berlin: Cornelsen, 2009. 978-3-464-60576-9

Büchner, Georg. *Leonce und Lena*. Provided by instructor.

Nestroy, Johann. *Der Zerrissene. Posse mit Gesang in drei Akten*. Stuttgart: Reclam, n.d. ISBN: 978-3-15-003626-6

Grillparzer, Franz. *Ein Bruderzwist in Habsburg. Trauerspiel in fünf Aufzügen*. Stuttgart: Reclam, n.d. ISBN 978-3-15-004393-6

Hofmannsthal, Hugo von. *Der Schwierige*. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2000. 978-3150180402

Dürrenmatt, Friedrich. *Die Physiker. Eine Komödie in zwei Akten*. Zurich: Diogenes, 1998. 978-3-257-23047-5

Learning Resources

I have placed some materials on Sakai and will continue to do so on an occasional basis.

Please note in particular the section entitled Resources. There you will find files under Context, Readings, Study Questions, Vocabulary, and Writing Aids. I will be adding additional files to various folders over time. I may also add some new folders such as Optional Reading.

Note as well that the Reclam edition of *Der Schwierige* includes some vocabulary, and I will be placing on Sakai a published vocabulary list for *Die Physiker* (from an Oxford edition). I am also preparing vocabulary lists for the works by Nestroy and Grillparzer.

You will also find on Sakai a link for “Audio Reserves,” which will offer excellent spoken versions of *Minna von Barnhelm*, *Der Schwierige*, and *Die Physiker*. Listening to such readings improves your German as well as your grasp of the works.

Reference Works and Further Reading

In terms of orientation to the authors, the best simple introductions to topics and writers can be found in the first floor reference area of the library, in the PT section. There you will find the very concise *Oxford Companion to German Literature*, the more extensive *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft*, and other works of an analogous nature that have entries on topics, authors, and works.

A meaningful avenue for further reading might well involve more primary reading than secondary reading, that is, additional works by the authors we are reading instead of secondary works about them. Still, secondary works can be useful for an initial orientation and are essential for more advanced scholarly work. In your papers, unlike senior theses, citations of secondary literature are welcome but not obligatory.

Instead of placing books on reserve, I invite you to look at those editions with recommended reading, to contact me for tips (with regard to literature on our authors and works as well as on the philosophy of tragedy and comedy), or to peruse the stacks. As you review books in the stacks—a practice I recommend to you along with more conventional bibliographical searches—you may notice some generic series, in which volumes on some of our authors have appeared.

- Rowohlt (rororo bild monographien) offers biographies, with ample pictures and quotations.
- Reclam (Erläuterungen und Dokumente) offers notes on the work itself along with supplemental materials concerning background and reception.
- Beck (a series called Epoche - Werk- Wirkung and more recent volumes devoted to major authors) offers overviews, always with some biography.
- Böhlau (UTB Profile) offers brief overviews of major authors.
- Metzler (Sammlung Metzler) offers biography and references to secondary literature, by work. These tend to be older. Metzler has begun to introduce series on individual authors with the recurring title Handbuch. Leben - Werk - Wirkung; these offer chapters on major issues and works.

- The Twayne World Author Series and the Frederick Ungar series, which appeared for the most part some time ago, contain simple introductions and overviews in English.

The amount of secondary literature will vary by author. An immense amount of literature exists on Lessing, Schiller, and Büchner. The literature on Grillparzer, Hofmannsthal, and Dürrenmatt could be described as less voluminous but still abundant. Nestroy has the least amount written about him, but even he has dozens of volumes devoted to his works.

Increasingly today materials are also available via the Web of course. However, you should be cautious about what you consult there, as Web publications tend not to have gone through peer review. Promising are Websites associated with an official society or center, for example, an impressive site devoted to Nestroy: <http://www.nestroy.at/eingang.html>

A useful overview of sources and types of sources for the study of German literature is Carsten Zelle, *Kurze Bücherkunde für Literaturwissenschaftler* (München: Francke, 1998). Hansjürgen Blinn's *Informationshandbuch Deutsche Literaturwissenschaft* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1990) can guide you to archives for various authors; this could be relevant for students seeking grants to do research in Germany.

Grading

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

D	1.000	Minimally Passing	basic standards in several areas. Work just over the threshold of acceptability.
F	0	Failure	Unacceptable performance.

Criteria for Grading Class Contribution

Criteria for a Grade of B

The student ...

prepares well for each class by completing all assignments; rereading or reviewing, when appropriate; and making appropriate notes;
 does not miss classes for any unexcused reasons and comes to each class on time;
 makes daily contributions that show thorough familiarity with the assigned reading and thoughtful reflection on the material;
 asks good, searching questions that spark and advance discussion;
 is able to analyze and recognize flaws and mistakes when sample sentences are given;
 is able to answer difficult questions;
 listens well and exhibits by facial expressions and body posture the active art of listening;
 participates in the give-and-take of discussion, for example, by offering initial comments, asking clarifying questions of other students, offering evidence to support positions, or proposing alternative perspectives;
 is willing to engage an issue from multiple points of view;
 is able to make connections across works;
 can recognize strengths and weaknesses in an argument;
 demonstrates the capacity to think on his or her feet;
 speaks directly to other students and not simply to the teacher;
 is more interested in the group dynamic of truth seeking through dialogue than in demonstrating his or her own excellence;
 exhibits respect, tact, and diplomacy in debate with others.

The student is able to express his or her thoughts clearly and with good pronunciation, so that everyone understands. The student makes very basic grammatical errors only occasionally. The student exhibits good progress in accuracy and fluency over the course of the semester.

Criteria for a Grade of A

The student does all of the above and ...

regularly takes a leadership role in discussions through quality and quantity of contributions;
 exhibits intellectual hospitality, effectively encouraging the participation of others and successfully drawing good ideas out of others;
 gives unusually deep and rich responses to interpretive and searching questions;

consistently links the discussion to earlier works and themes;
asks fascinating and unexpected questions;
is forthcoming with excellent insights and questions.

The student communicates exceptionally well, speaking in such a way as to be clearly understood by others. The student has excellent pronunciation and exhibits very few basic grammatical errors. The student progresses in accuracy and fluency over the course of the semester.

Criteria for a Grade of C

The student ...

comes prepared to class;
occasionally contributes isolated, but thoughtful, comments to the discussion;
makes comments that are backed with evidence;
discerns the difference between more relevant and less relevant comments;
exhibits respect for others and treats all persons with dignity.

The student is able to make him or herself understood, although grammatical errors and vocabulary gaps are frequent; the student exhibits only modest progress in the capacity for oral expression.

Criteria for a Grade of D

The student ...

comes to class, but rarely contributes to the discussion;
has difficulties contributing to the flow of the conversation;
has difficulty giving evidence for his or her claims.

The student's speech is riddled with errors and rarely shows progress or improvement.

Criteria for a Grade of F

The student ...

does not speak at all or makes comments that exhibit a lack of preparation;
exhibits little or no respect for the class.

The student's speech is riddled with errors and rarely shows progress or improvement.

Policy on Attendance

You should attend every class. Up to two unexcused absences will be integrated into the class contribution grade. Three unexcused absences will lead to the reduction of the final course grade by one partial unit, for example, from a B to a B-. Four unexcused absences will lead to the

reduction of the final course grade by two partial units. Five or more unexcused absences will lead to failure of the course. Excused absences, with written documentation from a rector, a doctor, or the Office of Undergraduate Studies, will not affect your grade in any way.

Criteria for Grading Short Written Contributions

Each daily contribution will be given a mark of Check, Check Plus, or Check Minus. On very rare occasions I may give a Check Double Plus or a Check Double Minus. A non-submission will be recorded as a Check Double Minus.

- Check = Good insights and adequate control of grammar, with mistakes not overly abundant and sentence structure not being of minimal complexity. Good Work.
- Check Plus = Excellent insights and excellent control of grammar, with mistakes mainly involving modest issues or arising from ambitious formulations. Excellent Work.
- Check Double Plus = Extraordinary insights and extraordinary command of grammar. Exceeds even the most ambitious expectations.
- Check Minus = Little intellectual insight or effort and/or overabundant mistakes. These submissions may be rewritten for the next class after they have been returned. If you choose to resubmit, return both the original and the revision. The highest possible grade for a revision would be a check.
- Check Double Minus = No submission, no serious insights, and/or overly abundant mistakes. Unacceptable work for the 40000-level. These submissions may be rewritten for the next class after they have been returned. If you choose to resubmit, return both the original and the revision. The highest possible grade for a revision would be a check.

The collection of approximately 20-25 short written contributions will then be translated into letter grades, using the criteria below.

Criteria for a Grade of B

The student ...

prepares comments and/or questions in advance of each class and according to the guidelines;
makes contributions that show thorough familiarity with the assigned material and thoughtful reflection on it;

makes insightful observations on the works;

is willing to engage an issue from multiple points of view;

is able to make connections across the works of the semester;

asks good, searching questions;

offers compelling analyses;

draws interesting comparisons;

can recognize strengths and weaknesses in an argument;

is able to marshal evidence in favor of a position.

The student writes in a language that is understandable, varying in structure, and avoids a high number of grammatical and stylistic errors, especially those that are basic in nature or have been discussed in class. The style is not pedestrian or overly simple but exhibits a range of grammatical structures, including some complexity. The student exhibits, where necessary, increasing consistency and improvement in writing.

Across time the student receives more check pluses than checks.

Criteria for a Grade of A

The student does all of the above and ...

offers unusually rich and intelligent observations;
consistently links the discussion to earlier works and themes as well as issues of greater significance;
asks fascinating and unexpected questions;
gives evidence of a searching mind, the mind of a developing intellectual.

The student exhibits a developing capacity for smooth and interesting writing, with only occasional mistakes.

The student almost always receives a check plus.

Criteria for a Grade of C

The student ...

contributes regularly and conscientiously, but for the most part makes observations and asks questions that fall below the criteria for a B grade.

The student exhibits a fair control of grammatical structures, but with limited variation in sentence structure. One sees little use of new or complex vocabulary. Spelling is poor. The contributions have far too many errors that should not be surfacing at this stage.

The student will have received very few check pluses and is likely to have received some check minuses.

Criteria for a Grade of D

The student ...

contributes most of the time but still misses some sessions;
exhibits basic knowledge of the material;
makes primarily pedestrian comments.

The student exhibits poor control of grammatical structures and little variation in sentence structure. Basic problems in grammar, spelling, or punctuation surface regularly.

The student will generally have received mainly checks and check minuses.

Criteria for a Grade of F

The student ...

frequently fails to contribute to the discussions;
contributes comments that show a lack of knowledge of the material;
makes observations that are unhelpful in advancing the discussion or irrelevant.

The student exhibits very poor control of grammatical structures and little variation in sentence structure. Problems in grammar, spelling, or punctuation interfere with the writer's capacity to communicate.

The student will have received few, if any, check pluses and a very high number of check minuses.

Criteria for Grading Papers

Criteria for a Grade of B

Clarity

The paper presents a clear thesis.

Complexity

Though clear, the thesis is also complex and challenging, not simplistic. Multiple points of view are engaged, and the limits of one's own interpretation are acknowledged, either through the avoidance of overreaching or through the refutation of alternative arguments. The essay integrates a variety of connected themes and exhibits a curious mind at work.

Structure

The title is effective. The introduction is inviting and compelling, appropriate and succinct. The essay is structured logically and coherently, with good analyses. The overall outline or organization makes sense, and the paragraphs flow appropriately, one to the other. The conclusion is powerful.

Evidence

Appropriate evidence is given for the paper's claims, for example, evidence from the work being interpreted, historical information, or a chain of abstract arguments. The analytical framework is strong and convincing.

Independence

The paper does not simply restate the obvious or repeat what others have said, but builds on what is known to exhibit the student's own thinking about the topic. The writer avoids simply repeating plot structures or paraphrasing the ideas of others. The student exhibits some level of independence and a new perspective.

In German, the essay exhibits good usage and variety of vocabulary, displays solid control of grammatical structures, with some variation in sentence structure, and the number of mistakes is modest, most of them being understandable at this level and not basic mistakes. As the semester advances, fewer mistakes occur.

In English, the language is well-chosen, the essay reads smoothly, and the writer avoids grammatical errors. The essay has very few, if any, awkward or wordy stylistic constructions.

Criteria for a Grade of A

The paper integrates the expectations of a B grade, but is in addition highly effective in communicating meaningful ideas and unusually engaging. The paper is thoughtful, deep, creative, and far-reaching in its analysis and evidence.

In German, the language exhibits a developing capacity for smooth and sophisticated writing, and mistakes are very few in number.

In English, the language is elegant.

Criteria for a Grade of C

The thesis of the paper is clear, and the paper takes a stand on a complex issue. The writer exhibits some competence in exploring the subject. Most of the essay is well-organized, and the logic is for the most part clear and coherent. Some evidence is given for the points made in the essay. The argument is sustained but not imaginative or complex. The paper exhibits clear weaknesses; these might include, for example, plot summary, simplicity, repetition, false assumptions, a derivative quality, or avoidance of alternative perspectives that should be considered. The writer barely goes beyond paraphrase. While some of the criteria for a B grade may have been fulfilled, a majority has not.

In German, errors include both more complex areas of advanced writing as well as basic issues that should be part of the student's repertoire at the 40000-level. Examples of basic errors that occur frequently at the C-level involve gender, case, adjective endings, verb conjugations, appropriate helping verbs, subject-verb agreement, word order, and punctuation, that is, items

that students should be able to control, at the very least by consulting dictionaries and an editing check list.

In English, the language is understandable and free of extraneous material. The paper is without basic grammatical errors, but the style is occasionally deficient.

Criteria for a Grade of D

The thesis of the paper is missing, unclear, or overly simple. The writer tends toward paraphrase. The paper includes some arguments, but counter-arguments are not considered in any serious way or are misconstrued. The essay's structure is not readily apparent. Ideas are present but are not developed with details or examples. Paragraphs are poorly constructed and contain little supporting detail.

Sentences are riddled with grammatical mistakes.

Criteria for a Grade of F

The assignment is not completed or is completed in a format that is clearly substandard. The essay exhibits little, if any, preparatory reflection or study. It contains no serious ideas and lacks an argument as well as supporting evidence. The essay is difficult to read or comprehend. No meaningful structure is discernible.

Problems in grammar, spelling, or punctuation interfere with the writer's capacity to communicate.

Writing in German

Dictionary

Students will want to have a print or electronic dictionary of some kind, ideally a German-German dictionary for daily use, such as Langenscheidt, Pons, or Wahrig. Pons tends to be too basic even by the fourth semester. Wahrig is very advanced, more a dictionary for native and near-native speakers. I prefer the Langenscheidt dictionary for college students, 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. (978-3468490446). 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 are <<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. At this level you might find 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 need 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.

Verb Conjugation: <http://www.verbformen.de/konjugation/>

A site that allows you to check the conjugation of German verbs.

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~deutsch/Grammatik/Grammatik.html>

A review of German grammar by topic.

Writing in English

The best recommendations I can give you for your writing in English are Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style*, which is a slim and basic volume, but if you have not read it, I recommend it to you very strongly.

The best advanced resource for writing in English is Claire Cook's *Line by Line: How to Edit Your Own Writing*. New York: MLA, 1985. This, too, is a superb resource.

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 <https://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 (including papers) with one another, but the source of all ideas must be revealed fully and honestly. Whenever information or insights are obtained from secondary works or Web sources, students should cite their sources. Also, if you talk about the material with a friend, and that person suggests an idea, you should formally acknowledge that person's idea if you use it in your paper. If an idea is presented in class discussion, and you wish to reuse it in your paper, you should also acknowledge the source of this idea. Any unacknowledged help will be considered a violation of the honor code. The style and grammar of your papers should be entirely your own. The only exceptions would be assistance provided by me.