

## Seminar in German Studies: Comedy, Satire, and Humor

Fall 2019

Mark W. Roche

GE 43300 - 01

### Logistical Information

**Class:** Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 to 12:15 in 108 DeBartolo Hall.

**Office:** 349 Decio Hall.

**Office Hours:** Mondays from 12:30 to 1:30 and Wednesdays from 10:30 to 12:00 as well as by appointment. Impromptu meetings can also often be arranged before or after class.

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### Course Description

This seminar will explore the comic vision in the German-speaking world from the Enlightenment to the present. Comedy is an often overlooked genre, but a number of fascinating German, Austrian, and Swiss works invite our attention. Comedies are not only amusing and enjoyable, they have a tendency to expose complex historical and social issues and to raise existential, religious, and philosophical questions.

Dramas to be read and discussed include Lessing's *Minna von Barnhelm*, Büchner's *Leonce und Lena*, Hofmannsthal's *Der Schwierige*, and Dürrenmatt's *Die Physiker*. We will also view and analyze a contemporary cinematic comedy, Fatih Akin's *Im Juli*.

Beyond considering Schiller's and Tucholsky's theoretical reflections on satire, we will analyze what is arguably the best German satire, Heine's *Deutschland. Ein Wintermärchen*. In addition, we will include two sessions on satire in the visual arts, analyzing selected drawings, paintings, and photomontages.

Humor is a distinctively German(ic) category, which we will explore via philosopher Hermann Cohen and Swiss writer Gottfried Keller's novella *Kleider machen Leute*.

Four sessions have been left unassigned. Students will be given the opportunity to make the case for available options. These include

- simply slowing down to spend an additional session on a given work or set of works;
- a special session on writing, including some peer review of draft essays;

- a review session along the way or at the end;
- a brief excerpt from Heinrich Mann’s satiric novel *Der Untertan* along with an East German film version of the novel by Wolfgang Staudte;
- one or more sessions on distinctively German jokes;
- or an additional outstanding comedy from the Austrian or German dramatic repertoire, such as another Lessing comedy, for example, *Die Juden*, Grillparzer’s *Weh dem, der lügt!*, Nestroy’s *Der Zerrissene*, Schnitzler’s *Anatol*, or Brecht’s *Herr Puntilla und sein Knecht Matti*.

We could also weigh some idiosyncratic options,

- including, for contrast, a peerless silent film by Murnau, *Der letzte Mann*, with a satiric happy end;
- a German humorist, such as Wilhelm Busch or Lorient;
- an additional contemporary film, such as *Alamanya*;
- or even a German television show.

I will give you some orientation and, if you wish, help you narrow the options.

### Calendar of Classes and Readings

August 27, 2019	Orientation
August 29, 2019	Lessing, 7-31 (24 pages)
September 3, 2019	Lessing, 31-60 (29 pages)
September 5, 2019	Lessing, 61-84 (23 pages)
September 10, 2019	Lessing, 84-119 (35 pages)
September 12, 2019	Büchner, 5-25 (17 pages)
September 17, 2019	Büchner, 26-46 (20 pages)
September 19, 2019	Theoretical interlude on comedy, satire, and humor with excerpts from Schiller (on satire), Hegel (on comedy), and Cohen (on humor) and an essay by Tucholsky (on satire) (13 pages)

**Your first paper is due on September 19 at 5:00 p.m. Papers that devote at least 50% to Büchner may be submitted up to 24 hours later.**

September 24, 2019	Heine, “Bei des Nachtwächters Ankunft zu Paris” and “Zur Beruhigung,” to be supplied by instructor (4 pages) and Heine, 3-21 (18 pages)
September 26, 2019	Heine, 21-37 (16 pages)

October 1, 2019 Heine, 37-59 (22 pages)

October 3, 2019 Heine, 59-75 (18 pages)

October 8, 2019 Keller, 7-35 (26 pages)

October 10, 2019 Keller, 35-58 (18 pages)

October 15, 2019 Hofmannsthal, 6-50 (44 pages)

October 17, 2019 Hofmannsthal, 51-86 (35 pages)

October 22, 2019 Fall Break (no class)

October 24, 2019 Fall Break (no class)

October 29, 2019 Hofmannsthal, 87-125 (38 pages) and “Preuße und Oesterreicher: Ein Schema” (2 pages)

October 31, 2019 Hofmannsthal, 126-158 (32 pages)

**Your second paper is due on October 31 at 5:00 p.m. Papers that devote at least 50% to Hofmannsthal may be submitted up to 48 hours later.**

November 5, 2019 Satire in the visual arts with selected images from Käthe Kollwitz, Otto Dix, George Grosz, John Heartfield, and/or Andreas Paul Weber.

November 7, 2019 Library visit plus selections from Tucholsky (3 pages) and further visual images (mainly from Heartfield)

November 12, 2019 Dürrenmatt, 9-39 (30 pages)

November 14, 2019 Dürrenmatt, 40-71 (31 pages)

November 19, 2019 Dürrenmatt, 72-93 (18 pages)

November 21, 2019 Akin (96 minutes)

November 26, 2019 Akin (96 minutes)

November 28, 2019 Thanksgiving Break (no class)

December 3, 2019 TBD

December 5, 2019 TBD

December 10, 2019 TBD

December 12, 2019 TBD

**Your final paper is due at the time of what would be the conclusion of our final oral examination period, Friday, December 20, at 12:30 p.m.**

### **Great Questions**

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

What is the value of studying literature and the arts?

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

What makes an artwork great?

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

What is a comic world view?

What distinguishes comedy from tragedy?

What can we learn from the comic?

What constitutes satire? What is the difference between satire and comedy?

What are we to understand by the German concept of Humor?

Are there links between comedy, satire, humor, and religion?

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 comedy, satire, and humor?

Why is evil so fascinating to us and also so difficult to combat?

How do we intuit and recognize love?

How do we know which values to elevate?

What is a moral and effective relation to technological developments?

What would a loving critique of humanity look like?

What is the relation between ambiguity and aesthetic value?

What specific contributions can art make to our understanding of humanity and of the world?

### **Learning Goals**

1) Engagement with Great Works: Students will be able to discuss and analyze a selection of great works 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 strong relationship between their academic work and personal lives.

2) 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.

3) 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 German literary, intellectual, and social history.

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, formulate clear questions, listen carefully and attentively, explore ideas through dialogue, and express their thoughts eloquently and persuasively. They will also continue to develop various intellectual virtues, such as temperance, modesty, justice, intellectual hospitality, diplomacy, courage, honesty, perseverance, patience, curiosity, and wonder.

### **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 and rewriting 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, regular written contributions, and paper topics chosen by students.

- *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. Who among your friends awakens your most noble intellectual passions and helps you become a better interlocutor and person? The research shows that the student's peer group is the single greatest source of influence on cognitive and affective development in college. We will enjoy many student-student discussions in which the teacher simply plays a guiding role. You are also encouraged to discuss our various texts 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 semester in Berlin, German history and politics become far more important to you. To that end and because of their 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 very 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, 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? 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 seminar 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 and fun, 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. 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, many of the works we will study introduce us to radically different world-views from our own, but precisely in their difference, they may provide interesting antidotes to some of the cliches 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? 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.

### **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 list on the second page of your handout 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. Options are below:

Büchner  
Heine  
Keller  
Hofmannsthal  
Dürrenmatt  
Akin

## 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.

In terms of length you might shoot for around 150 words, give or take. If you are struggling with basic issues of grammar, you might write less but try to make fewer mistakes. If you have good command of grammar, you should feel free to write more.

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 (and thinking) will improve as you stretch your capacities.

On occasion we may experiment instead with your submitting comments to Sakai, so that everyone can read them 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 usually 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 day you deliver your presentation, you are free from having to submit a written submission on the regular material.

## 3) **Two Short Papers (4-6 pages):** 30%;

Students will write two short papers of 4-6 pages in German (approximately 1,000 to 1,500 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](#). (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.

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.

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 and time.

Please note that for at least one of your papers during the semester, you are required to review and cite at least one work of secondary literature. If you do not do so for one of your first two papers, this will become obligatory for your final paper, where in fact such integration would fit well.

#### **4) One Long Paper (8-12 pages): 20%;**

Students will write one longer paper of 8-12 pages in German (2,000 to 3,000 words). Papers should be 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.

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 past semesters, I have sometimes given students the choice of writing the longer paper in German or in English. If there is a preference for English on the part of one or more of you, we can weigh options and discuss parameters. There are advantages to both options, but for now the default is all German, as that has been the past student preference.

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, Gotthold Ephraim. *Minna von Barnhelm, oder Das Soldatenglück. Ein Lustspiel in fünf Aufzügen*. ISBN-13 9783518188736. Verlag Suhrkamp. Preise Deutschland 5,00 EUR.

Büchner, Georg. *Leonce und Lena. Textausgabe mit Kommentar und Materialien*. Reclam XL – Text und Kontext. ISBN-13 9783150191231. Verlag Reclam, Philipp. Preise Deutschland 3,60 EUR.

Heine, Heinrich. *Deutschland. Ein Wintermärchen. Textausgabe mit Kommentar und Materialien*. Reclam XL – Text und Kontext. ISBN-13 9783150194003. Verlag Reclam, Philipp. Preise Deutschland 4,40 EUR.

Keller, Gottfried. *Kleider machen Leute*. ISBN-13 9783518188682. Verlag Suhrkamp. Preise Deutschland 5,00 EUR.

Hofmannsthal, Hugo von. *Der Schwierige. Lustspiel in drei Akten*. ISBN-13 9783150180402. Verlag Reclam, Philipp. Preise Deutschland 5,40 EUR.

Dürrenmatt, Friedrich. *Die Physiker. Eine Komödie in zwei Akten*. ISBN-13 9783257230475. Verlag Diogenes. Preise Deutschland 8,00 EUR.

In Spring 2017 the Department made a decision to use only one reference grammar in all advanced classes, *Handbuch zur deutschen Grammatik*, by Jamie Rankin (who also created the Web textbook currently being used in our first three semesters) and Larry D. Wells (6th Edition) 2016. 978-1-305-078840. If you are an underclassman or if you would like to own a good reference work for postgraduate learning, you will want to buy this text, which is available as a paper or electronic copy. If you are a graduating senior and do not want to purchase the work, please let me know, as we have some copies for temporary loan during this initial transition period.

## Recommended Works

We will be making occasional references to European and German history. Most of you will have a basic understanding of some of the important events—the Reformation, the French Revolution, the revolution of 1848, the unification of Germany in 1871, the Treaty of Versailles, World War I, etc—but for those of you without basic knowledge and for those of you who wish to bore more deeply, you might wish to consult the two works the Department has chosen for historical orientations in German and in English.

Manfred Mai's *Deutsche Geschichte*. Weinheim: Beltz, 2012. Readable and accessible. In addition to a print copy in the library, a recorded version of the book is available via Library Reserves. This recording also offers you a great way to practice your listening comprehension.

Schulze, Hagen. *Germany: A New History*. Trans. Deborah Lucas Schneider. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001. I have placed a print copy on reserve.

### **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 folders entitled Exercises, Grammar, Images, Optional Readings, Readings, Roster with Emails, Study Questions, Syllabus, Vocabulary, and Writings Aids. I may be adding additional folders over time and will certainly add new files.

Library Reserves offers spoken versions of our dramatic works. Listening to such readings can improve your German as well as your grasp of the works. Please note that it is standard practice for live performances to condense works modestly without otherwise altering them.

### **Reference Materials**

In terms of orientation to the authors, the best simple introductions to topics and writers can be found in the second floor reference area of the library, in the PT section (and to a lesser extent the PN section). There you will find, for example, the *Encyclopedia of German Literature*, the *Oxford Companion to German Literature*, the *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturgeschichte*, the *Metzler Lexikon Autoren*, the *Metzler Lexikon Literatur*, and other such works, which 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. As noted above, this course will require some secondary reading for at least one of your papers.

Please note that there are many kinds of introductions to authors, which you will find in the stacks. A few of these fall under various series.

- The Rowohlt series offers biographies, with ample pictures and quotations.
- The Reclam series offers notes on the work itself along with supplemental materials, usually concerning background and reception.
- The Beck series offers overviews, always with a biography.
- The Metzler volumes offer biography and references to secondary literature, by work.
- The Metzler Handbücher offer chapters on major issues and works.
- The Twayne and Ungar series, which tend to be older, offer simple introductions and overviews in English.

Most monographs and edited volumes, however, do not fall into these series, but it is useful for you to know of them.

Note that all of our editions include varying amounts of supplementary orientation materials. Most assist with difficult vocabulary words and have a glossary of some kind.

Increasingly today materials are also available via the Web. 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, impressive sites are devoted to [Büchner](#).

### **Guides to Further Resources**

A useful overview of sources and types of sources for the study of German literature is Carsten Zelle, *Kurze Bücherkunde für Literaturwissenschaftler* (Münich: 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.

Since you will be consulting secondary literature, you will be using the resources of the Library. Here are three guides that could be helpful to you, one on [German Language and Literature](#); one on [Contemporary Germany](#) (which covers in essence modern Germany); and one on [Austrian and German History](#).

### **Support for Student Mental Health at Notre Dame**

Care and Wellness Consultants provide support and resources to students who are experiencing stressful or difficult situations that may be interfering with academic progress. Through Care and Wellness Consultants, students can be referred to the University Counseling Center (for cost-free and confidential psychological and psychiatric services from licensed professionals), University Health Services (which provides primary care, psychiatric services, case management, and a pharmacy), and the McDonald Center for Student Well Being (for problems with sleep, stress, and substance use). For more information, visit [care.nd.edu](http://care.nd.edu).

### **Grading**

#### **[Grading Scale for the University of Notre Dame](#)**

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Point Value</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Explanatory Comments</b>
A	4	Truly Exceptional	Work meets or exceeds the highest expectations for the course.
A-	3.667	Outstanding	Superior work in all areas

B+	3.333	Very Good	of the course. 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.

### **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;  
acts as an artisan of the common good.

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 and Tardiness**

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 grade by one partial unit, for example, from a B to a B-. Four unexcused absences will lead to the reduction of the final grade by two partial units. 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; however, acute medical conditions or contagious medical conditions are excused but require documentation, as is spelled out in the Academic Articles. Excused absences for medical or other reasons will not affect your grade in any way.

If you are ever absent, be it excused or unexcused, it is your responsibility to find out from a colleague what you missed.

We will begin class on time. If you are late, it is your responsibility to touch base with a peer to see what you have missed. Recurring tardiness will affect your class contribution grade.

### **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 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. The arguments integrate both content and form of the works. 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, impressively original, 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 plot summary and 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**

Students will want to have a print or electronic dictionary of some kind, ideally a German-German dictionary for daily use, such as Pons, Wahrig, or 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. 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.

The Library offers us access to: *Oxford language dictionaries online. English-German, German-English* New York: Oxford University Press, 2007

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*). Please note that the Library now has access to a significant group of Duden dictionaries and other Duden reference titles as an online database. Simply search for Duden online. You can browse the books or search for keywords across titles. Among the Duden titles included are: Deutsches Universalwörterbuch; Das Stilwörterbuch; Das Herkunftswörterbuch; Das Synonymwörterbuch; Das Wörterbuch sprachlicher Zweifelsfälle; Das Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache; Zitate und Redewendungen; Das Wörterbuch der Abkürzungen; Lexikon der Familiennamen; Medizinische Fachbegriffe; Das Wörterbuch der New Economy; Lexikon Wirtschaft A-Z; Die deutsche Rechtschreibung; Lexikon der Vornamen; Lexikon Geographische Namen; Das Wörterbuch der Szenesprachen [slang]; and Lexikon Recht A-Z.

If you are having trouble with basic grammatical issues, and the *Handbuch* is not sufficiently helpful, you might consult an introductory textbook from an earlier era that focused more on grammar than do many of today's textbooks: *German: A Structural Approach*, by Walter Lohnes and F.W. Strothmann. It went through multiple editions. The library has a copy, but affordable copies are also available on the Web.

Very useful on Sakai is the "Editing Checklist" (under Writing Aids)

### **Writing in English (if we choose this option)**

The best basic recommendation 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 [here](#). Information on citing sources and avoiding plagiarism is available [here](#).

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.

## **Appendix: Student Presentations**

### **Student Presentations**

*Students will be asked to give at least one brief formal presentation, with a one-page written hand-out in German and oral delivery in German of approximately 5-10 minutes. For presentations on authors, you will present your Referat on the first day we discuss that particular author.* Students who are not prepared to deliver on schedule will be graded accordingly, since delays will affect the contextual learning of your peers. The topics will be distributed on a first come, first served basis. If you are open to any topic, I will, after students with preferences have expressed them, simply make assignments. Options are listed above.

For the formal presentations themselves, here are some basic expectations.

- If you go over ten minutes, I may stop you midstream. Discipline in delivery is a virtue, so do not be surprised.
- Do not read your text; instead learn to speak from notes.
- Choose items that you yourself would be interested in hearing, not items that you somehow think should be included for the sake of completeness. Choose what is essential and interesting, what you would want to know about the person.
- Define any words that you think your peers might not know and speak clearly, loudly, and slowly, so that everyone understands you. (Your presentation after all is intended more for your classmates than for me.)
- To prepare your presentation, use primarily the reference section of the Library. Web resources are uneven, whereas books selected for the reference area will have gone through a more elaborate peer review process. This will also allow you to gain some sense of available resources for the future. Obviously any images are likely to be found on the Web.
- Please list your sources on the second page of your handout.
- PowerPoint is not obligatory but has tended to be well received by other students.

I will give you some basic feedback on grammar, pronunciation, content, and delivery. In past semesters, suggestions on delivery have included, for example, the following: speak at a reasonable pace, that is, slowly enough so that your peers can follow you; finish your presentation within the allotted time (this may mean a private trial run); present less material so that the more important issues are highlighted; speak freely instead of reading the presentation (speaking freely is not only a valuable skill, your audience will be able to absorb your ideas more easily); and introduce and define new vocabulary words, so that your peers are able to absorb everything you say.

For further, amusing tips, you can consult the two Kurt Tucholsky texts under Sakai (Optional Reading), which I have posted in both German and English. Tucholsky is among the wittiest Germans after Heine.