GERMAN 3300 CONTEMPORARY GERMAN SPEAKING CULTURES

FALL 2015

Instructor: Dr. Claudia Schwabe  
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Class hours: TR 9:00-10:15 a.m.  
Class room: LIB 302  
Office hours: TR 10:30-11:30 a.m. and by appointment

Course Objectives and Goals:

This course provides a multidisciplinary examination of current trends in contemporary cultures in Germany. During the first half of the semester, the emphasis will be on Germany’s organizational structures, Germany as a multicultural society, questions of intercultural identity, gender aspects, and on related minority cultural discourse. Furthermore, we will look at various facets of popular and youth culture in Germany, including fashion styles, German cuisine, sports, leisure activities, and lifestyles. In the second half of the semester the focus will be on exploring both familiar and lesser-known aspects of German entertainment and media culture, including television, music, film, performing arts, literature, as well as on visual arts, architecture, and Germany’s production and consumption culture. In addition to reading German newspapers, magazines, brochures, and literary texts, there will be background lectures on socio-political, economic, and historical developments. Students will watch, listen to, and discuss German television shows, commercial advertisements, musical recordings, radio broadcasts, and interviews with native speakers, and thus gain a unique access to a significant dimension of German popular culture. Coursework will specifically advance oral and written proficiency in the German language. The class will be conducted primarily in German. Students will write four short position papers, give two in-class presentations, complete one German culture project, and take one final exam. Attendance and participation, as integral parts of the class, are expected and will be noted daily.

Language of instruction: German

Required Texts:

- Hyde Flippo, When In Germany, Do As The Germans Do
- Catherine Fraser & Dierk Hoffmann, Pop Culture Germany!

Course requirements:

- Active class participation (incl. homework assignments)
- 2 in-class presentations in German
- 4 position papers in German (2 pages/ 600 words)
- German Culture Project
- Final exam

Grading:

- Class participation 20%
- Presentations 20%
- Position papers 20%
German Culture Project 20%
Final exam 20%

Grading Scale
- A (100-93)
- A- (92-90)
- B+ (88-89)
- B (87-83)
- B- (82-80)
- C+ (79-78)
- C (77-73)
- C- (72-70)
- D+ (69-68)
- D (67-60)
- F represents a grade below 60

Learning Objectives:
Based on the IDEA evaluation system, the following objectives apply most closely to this course:
- Developing skills in expressing oneself orally or in writing
- Gaining factual knowledge (terminology, classifications, methods, trends)
- Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual-cultural activity (music, science, literature, etc.)

Semester Outline (Subject to Change):

Week 1: Course Introduction
September 1: Modern German Cultures
September 3: Language, Script, Gestures; Stereotypes & Prejudices

Week 2: German Idiosyncrasies
September 8: Symbols and Memorials
September 10: Health Issues and Sexuality

Week 3: Official Organizational Structures
September 15: The Social Net
September 17: The Political & The Legal System

Week 4: Official Organizational Structures
September 22: The Educational System (POSITION PAPER 1 DUE)
September 24: The German Army & The Role of Religion

Week 5: Youth Culture & Fashion Culture
September 29: Fashion
October 1: Lifestyle & Daily Life; Youth Culture

Week 6: Social Aspects & Intercultural Identity
October 6: Gender Equality & Social Issues; Multicultural Society & Minorities
October 8: Food Culture & International Cuisine

Week 7: Leisure & Game Culture
October 13: Activities & Clubs; Holidays & Local Festivals (POSITION PAPER 2 DUE)
October 15: FRIDAY CLASS SCHEDULE (NO CLASS)

Week 8: Sport & Travel Culture
October 20: Sports; Vacations & Travel
October 22: GERMAN CULTURE PROJECT DUE
October 23: Extra Credit Opportunity (Fairy-Tale Workshop)

Week 9: Print Media & Children’s Media Culture
October 27: Publishers & The Press
October 29: Popular & Belletristic Literature; Children’s Media Culture

Week 10: Entertainment Media Culture
November 3: Radio & Television
November 5: Film

Week 11: Digital Age & Celebrity Culture
November 10: The Internet & Social Networks (POSITION PAPER 3 DUE)
November 12: Advertising & Popular Germans

Week 12: The Performing Arts
November 17: Theater, Dance, and Musical
November 19: Pop, Schlagermusik, and Hip Hop Minority Music Culture

Week 13: Visual Arts & Architecture
November 24: Visual Arts; City Planning & Architecture; Innovation & Production
November 26: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY (NO CLASS)

Week 14: Production & Consumption Culture
December 1 From “Tante Emma Laden” to Shopping Mall
December 3: Consumer Culture versus Green Awareness

Week 15: Production & Consumption Culture
December 8: Communication (POSITION PAPER 4 DUE)
December 10: Public & Private Transportation; Review for Final Exam

Week 16:
December 17: FINAL EXAM (Thursday, 9:30 a.m.-11:20 a.m. in classroom)

Attendance
In accordance with USU policies, regular attendance is expected of all students. Attendance means physical as well as mental attendance. Planned absences should be discussed with the instructor beforehand. If you need to be absent due to an emergency, please notify me at your earliest convenience. Examples of planned absences that are excused are: university duties or trips and required court attendance. Examples of emergency absences that are excused are: serious illness or injury of the student or a close member of the student’s family. Medical excuses have to be signed by a physician. Written documentation for excused absences must be provided at your next attendance. All missed work must be completed and handed into me within one week from the day you return. It is the responsibility of each student to make up missed material. Please get notes from someone else in the class or talk to me during my office hours.
Students should plan to arrive on time and stay for the duration of the class. I reserve the right to regard constant tardiness (more than twice) as an unexcused absence.
Excessive unexcused absences (more than three) will result in a lower grade (each unexcused absence will lower the final grade by 2%). Classroom etiquette will be expected (e.g. students will refrain from reading material not related to class and packing up possessions prior to the end of the lecture). Cell phones are to be turned off before class begins (silent not vibrate). If you feel like an exception is necessary, please see me. There will be no laptop computers allowed in class unless used for taking notes. Students are encouraged to take thorough notes, participate in class discussion, and ask clarifying questions.

Class Participation & Homework (20%):
Active participation of the student in class is required. Oral practice of the German language is essential to become comfortable with it and the culture. Homework assignments are part of your final grade. All homework assigned may be collected at any time. If you do not hand in your work on the day it is due or asked for it counts as a 0.
The Discussion Board (see the link on the Canvas site) may be used for discussions outside class. Frequent contributions to the Discussion board will have a positive impact on the overall participation grade. From time to time, students will also be asked to respond to specific questions, using the Discussion Board for their answers.

Presentations (20%):
Each student will give 2 oral presentations on German culture, including one-page handouts for your classmates. I have to approve of the presentation topic in advance. Presentations should not be longer than 10 minutes, but should prove that the student has engaged with and understood the topic, and provide thought-provoking questions for class discussions.

Position Papers (20%):
Students will be expected to write 4 position papers (2 pages/600 words, Times New Roman, size 12, double spaced, in German) on German culture topics discussed in class. Criteria for the evaluation of these essays are linguistic proficiency, style, and content.

German Culture Project (20%):
Students will produce a creative project of their own choice (for example, poster board, photo collage, educational short film, audio podcast, sculpture, painting, comic, poem, model, invention, etc.) and of a topic related to German culture. However, the project may NOT address stereotypical cultural areas, such as German beer, cars, soccer, sausages, sauerkraut, lederhosen, etc. A brief 200 word abstract in English and German will be submitted along with the project that explains the cultural context. The final project will be displayed at a public exhibition at USU. Please talk to me regarding options of financial funding for your project.

Canvas
In addition to the Supplementary Readings, the Canvas website will host links to online resources relevant to the course. There is a wealth of German culture sites of various sorts (and the list is constantly expanding), so please feel free to suggest any sites for inclusion on the Canvas site.
Physical Impairments
Students with ADA- documented physical, sensory, emotional or medical impairments may be eligible for reasonable accommodations. Veterans may also be eligible for services. All accommodations are coordinated through the Disability Resource Center as early in the semester as possible. In class alternate format materials (braille, large print, digital or audio) are available with advance notice.

Plagiarism
Plagiarism includes knowingly “representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one’s own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged used of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.” The penalties for plagiarism are severe. They include warning or reprimand, grade adjustment, probation, suspension, expulsion, withholding of transcripts, denial or revocation of degrees, and referral to psychological counseling.

Honor Code Policy
As stated in The Student Code, “Each student has the right and duty to pursue his or her academic experience free of dishonesty. The Honor System is designed to re-enforce the higher level of conduct expected and required of all Utah State University students.” Complete academic honesty is expected in this course. Cheating on exams or plagiarism on written assignments will result in a failing grade and may result in further action according to university policy.