**Course Description:**
This course proposes a hybrid teaching approach that pairs the study of literary and visual texts with an interest in the physical environment as a lens to examine cultural memory as well as contemporary phenomena. I suggest several distinct lines of synchronic and diachronic investigation that both focus and enrich the textual and contextual analysis: first, a focus on trees and forests, mountains, bodies of water, and the sky/air. Second, a focus on the contrast between the country and the city, on the German fascination with wilderness and desert landscapes (in contrast to cultivated landscapes), and on paradigmatic landscapes of solitude. Third, a chronological overview over the German(ic) engagement with nature/landscape/the environment from, roughly, the Celtic period through the Christian Middle Ages to Modernity. And, fourth, this class will discuss contemporary German approaches to recycling and renewable energy sources (in particular solar and wind) and examine how these approaches might be seen as an amalgamation of longstanding (mythological) forms of engagement with the natural realm and aspects of (scientific) modern thinking and technology.

For this class, I envision the design of challenging, student-oriented curricula that draw on multiple disciplines (e.g. Green Studies, Memory Studies, Romanticism Studies, Anthropology, Mythology, History, and Sociology, as well as the Natural Sciences) to promote a deeper appreciation the historical specificity of certain texts and phenomena. Simultaneously, this class will serve as an introduction to discourse criticism, which unfolds ‘naturally’ from critical discussion of the Germanic mystification of the forest and the disconnect between imaginary construct and historical reality. Within the broader context of German identity formation, classroom analysis of the historical, social, and political contexts in which sylvan and arboreal images were shaped and of the philological and philosophical sources that—consciously or unconsciously—inform their symbolic presentation offers profound insights into, for example, the Grimms’ romantic project of reclaiming the German cultural memory as a contribution to the national unification process. On a yet more abstract level, this approach also highlights the (perhaps specifically Romantic and/or German?) attempt to compensate for experiences of longing and loss (of the alleged unity of traditions, community, laws, customs, language, economy, institutions, beliefs, modes of thought, religion, national character, and popular wisdom) with the nostalgia of literary imagination.

But beyond serving as a theoretically informed introduction to the German engagement with the environment, this approach is flexible and adaptable to numerous contexts, discourses, and disciplines.

Although most readings and classroom discussion will be in the target language, the principle course design and many readings easily translate into other contexts. In particular, this approach serves as a window into German history, culture, and popular traditions from the nineteenth through the twenty-first centuries (the path to a unified nation state, Nazi and GDR exploitation of the Grimms’ tales, the formation of the Green movement, the fight against “Waldsterben,” and the creation of
The suggested approach draws on three different types of sources: the first, providing the intellectual framework, is rooted in the history of ideas and examines the representation of natural phenomena in mythology and fairy tales (Blumenberg, Harrison, Schama). The second is rooted in literary texts and films that focus on the role of nature and the interaction of humans with the natural environment (Zipes, Murphy, Bottigheimer). The third connects with contemporary Ecocriticism discourse and attempts to find new ways of making traditional texts and knowledge relevant to contemporary cultural and personal questions (Buell, Heise, Glotfelty). Drawing on a combination of backgrounds allows for an interdisciplinary/multi-disciplinary approach, innovative close-readings of individual texts, topical contextualizations, and socio-historically sensitive and informed discussions concerning philosophical, mythological, cultural, and environmental perspectives. On an advanced level, this approach facilitates critical discussions of the problematic Germanic mystification of forests as sanctuaries of origins and community and its ideologically tendentious remnants in contemporary discourse. It will make us aware of both accomplishments and pitfalls of “deep ecology” (what Buell dubbed “first-wave Ecocriticism,” steeped in Heideggerian thought), and — I hope — stimulate discussion of contemporary ecological questions and perspectives that broaden and transcend the horizon of narrowly-defined German Studies. To enrich our discussions and deepen our comparative perspectives, short guest lectures will be delivered by guest speakers from multiple disciplines and USU programs (History, Medieval Studies, Religious Studies, Early Modern Studies, Arabic, Chinese etc.)

OVERVIEW OF TOPICS:

THEMENGRUPPE I:
Bäume und Wälder
Berge und Gebirge
Gewässer (Flüsse, Seen, Meere)
Himmel, Luft und Wolken

Stadt vs. Land
Wüsteneien/Wildernis vs. Kulturlandschaft
Freundliche vs. feindliche Natur (Locus amoenus vs. locus terribilis)
Landschaften der Liebe und der Einsamkeit

THEMENGRUPPE II:
Germanische Mythologie
Christliches Mittelalter
Renaissance/Aufklärung
Romantik

Parallel:
Kurzvorträge von
Gastrednern aus
verschiedenen
Disziplinen

THEMENGRUPPE III:
Erneuerbare Energien: Wind- und Solarenergie
Naturschutz und Recyling in Deutschland
Naherholungsgebiete, Walderlebnispfade, Maiwanderungen etc.
Language of instruction: This class will be conducted primarily in German.

Texts: Most readings for this class are in German and will be made available via our course website or as photocopies. Some texts are available online at Projekt Gutenberg (http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/), www.zeno.org, or www.vorleser.net. An German online version of the Bible (different translations) can be found at http://www.bibel-online.net. Most of the fairy tales we will discuss are available on one of the following websites:
http://khm.li
http://www.maerchenlexikon.de
http://www.sagen.at/texte/maerchen/maerchen.htm
http://www.maerchen-archiv.de/grimms-maerchen.php

Course requirements: Active class participation (including one short presentation, 5-7 minutes)
Short interpretive position papers (one paragraph in German)
One in-class midterm exam
One (interpretative) final paper
One final exam

Grading: Class Participation (including attendance, presentation) 30%
8 short Position Papers (one longer paragraph) 30%
Midterm Exam 10%
Final Paper (4-5 pp., due April 16) 20%
Final Exam (Tuesday, April 28, 9:30 a.m. – 11:20 p.m.) 10%

No Class Dates: Feb 17 (Monday Class Schedule), March 10 and 12 (Spring Break)

Student Responsibilities: Students are required to read the assignments listed on the class schedule prior to class. Since all class discussions will depend heavily on students’ contributions, thorough preparation and active participation are essential.

Extra-Credit: You may attend German Club events or a performance of Utah Opera, watch a German movie (there are several on Netflix), or read a German book. You may meet with a German tutor (in the TALC Language Lab; schedule will be made available) and talk German with them, discuss aspects of German grammar or culture, or consult help with an assignment. (Please have the tutor send me an e-mail confirming the meeting.) Or you may play a German song or recite a German poem that is appropriate in class and give a brief introduction to its theme/central vocabulary.
**Students with Disabilities:**
The Americans with Disabilities Act states: “Reasonable accommodation will be provided for all persons with disabilities in order to ensure equal participation within the program. If a student has a disability that will likely require some accommodation by the instructor, the student must contact the instructor and document the disability through the Disability Resource Center (797-2444), preferably during the first week of the course. Any request for special consideration relating to attendance, pedagogy, taking of examination, etc. must be discussed with and approved by the instructor.

**Learning Objectives:**
Based on the IDEA evaluation system, the following four objectives apply most closely to this course:

- Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity (music, science, literature, etc.)
- Learning to analyze & critically evaluate ideas, arguments, points of view
- Gaining factual knowledge (terminology, classifications, methods, trends)
- Developing skill in expressing oneself orally or in writing

**Academic Integrity, “The Honor System”**
(http://www.usu.edu/provost/faculty/teaching/syllabus_resources.cfm)
Each student has the right and duty to pursue his/her academic experience free of dishonesty. The Honor System is designed to establish the higher level of conduct expected and required of all Utah State University students. To enhance the learning environment at Utah State University and to develop student academic integrity, each student agrees to the following Pledge: “I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity.” A student who lives by the Honor Pledge is a student who does more than not cheat, falsify, or plagiarize. A student who lives by the Honor Pledge: (1) Espouses academic integrity as an underlying and essential principle of the Utah State University community; (2) Understands that each act of academic dishonesty devalues every degree that is awarded by this institution; and (3) Is a welcomed and valued member of Utah State University.

**Plagiarism:**
Plagiarism is defined as “Representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, 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 using materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the sale of term papers or other academic materials.” The penalties for plagiarism include warning or reprimand, grade adjustment, withholding of transcripts, probation, suspension, expulsion, and denial or revocation of degrees.
Sekundärliteratur


**Textsammlungen:**


**Andere Texte:**

- “Barnstock,” *The Saga of the Volsungs*, ch. 2-3 (Barnstokkr, Völsunga Saga/Sage von den Volsungen)
- Bayon, “Stell’ dich mitten in den Regen” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SUw3ZcnKjQ4
- Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué, *Undine* http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/suche?q=Undine
- Ludwig Tieck, Der Runenberg http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/der-runenberg-5463/1