

GE312-30 The Writer and Imperial Germany, 1871-1918

20/21

Department

School of Modern Languages and Cultures

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Linda Shortt

Credit value

30

Module duration

22 weeks

Assessment

50% coursework, 50% exam

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

Ranging from the late 19th century to the late 1920s, this module covers a key period in modern German and Austrian literature and culture. Following a loosely chronological line, it examines the evolution of modern German literature from the late 19th century across a wide spectrum of authors, genres and themes in dialogue with major social, cultural and political movements that mark the transformation of Germany and Austria from the 1870s onwards. The late 19th century was not only the period in which German unification was achieved, but also an era of accelerated modernization.

On the one hand, the belated advancement of new technologies and industrial production went hand in hand with the widening demand for new democratic powers and the emergence of the women's movement. Gender roles, class positions, human sexuality and competing notions of identity were the subject of intense enquiry in the social sciences and in the arts. On the other hand, the rapid transformation of society was also experienced as a crisis of identity that fuelled anti-semitism and a völkisch version of German nationalism which finally erupted in World War 1. Literature, the fine arts and later film became main vehicles for expressing ambivalent attitudes to modernity.

This course explores the discourse on modernity by analysing major literary movements in

dialogue with broader social and cultural debates. Beginning with Poetic Realism, we then analyze Naturalism and the transition towards Modernism. Writers discussed include Theodor Fontane, Gerhart Hauptmann, Arthur Schnitzler, Robert Walser, Franz Kafka, Thomas Mann, Georg Kaiser. This final year module is open to all finalists taking German and German-related degree courses, and to suitably qualified external students.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

This module aims to provide students with a thorough understanding of modernity and modernism in Austria and Germany so that they understand key literary movements and authors in their social contexts. It

cultivates skills of literary analysis through close textual readings and analysis. It also aims to:

- (1) enhance students' analytical abilities through the study of primary literature and select theoretical texts
- (2) develop students' presentation skills through class presentations and develop students' research and essay writing skills
- (3) further students' understanding of the relationship between literature and society, in particular the location of cultural products within a social and political context.
- (4) extend students' understanding of the development of German society.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

The material analysed includes a wide range of prose texts and a variety of dramatic styles, as well as some political and philosophical essays. Texts are always related to their historical and political context.

Authors covered include: Theodor Fontane, Gerhart Hauptmann, Frank Wedekind, Henrik Ibsen, Thomas Mann, Robert Walser, Arthur Schnitzler, Franz Kafka & Georg Kaiser.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- (1) Intercultural awareness, understanding and competence
- (2) Knowledge of the cultures, communities and societies of the country of the target language(s) gained through the study of written texts and other cultural products in the target language
- (3) Ability to access, read and critically analyse primary and secondary source materials in target language
- (4) Knowledge and understanding of one or more aspects of the literatures, cultures, linguistic contexts, history, politics, social and economic structures of the country or countries of the target language
- (5) Familiarity with the methodologies and approaches appropriate to the discipline
- (6) An appreciation of internal diversity and transcultural connectedness in relation to target

Indicative reading list

TERM 1:

Theodor Fontane, Effi Briest, Mit Text und Kommentar von Dieter Wöhrle (Suhrkamp BasisBibliothek Nr. 47)

Gerhart Hauptmann, Einsame Menschen (Ullstein Verlag)

Henrik Ibsen, A Doll's House (Penguin)

Frank Wedekind, Frühlings Erwachen – eine Kindertragödie mit einem Kommentar von Hansgeorg Schmidt-Bergmann (Suhrkamp BasisBibliothek Nr. 21)

Arthur Schnitzler, Reigen (Fischer Taschenbuchverlag)

TERM 2:

Arthur Schnitzler, Fräulein Else (Reclam)

Thomas Mann, Der Tod in Venedig (Fischer TB)

Franz Kafka: Die Verwandlung. In: Franz Kafka Erzählungen, (Reclam, 1985)

Robert Walser, Jakob von Gunten (Suhrkamp)

Georg Kaiser Von morgens bis mitternachts (Reclam)

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

International

All modules delivered in SMLC are necessarily international. Students engage with themes and ideas from a culture other than that of the UK and employ their linguistic skills in the analysis of primary materials from a non-Anglophone context. Students will also be encouraged to draw on the experiences of visiting exchange students in the classroom and will frequently engage with theoretical and critical frameworks from across the world.

Subject specific skills

This module will develop students' linguistic skills through engaging with primary materials in the target language. It will build students' capacity to engage with aspects of German culture through analysis of this primary material and through seminar discussion aimed at deeper critical thinking. In particular, students' awareness of Imperial Germany will be enhanced through lectures and seminars which engage in scholarship in the field.

Transferable skills

All SMLC culture modules demand critical and analytical engagement with artefacts from target-language cultures. In the course of independent study, class work and assessment students will develop the following skills: written and oral communication, creative and critical thinking, problem solving and analysis, time management and organisation, independent research in both English and their target language(s), intercultural understanding and the ability to mediate between languages and cultures, ICT literacy in both English and the target language(s), personal responsibility and the exercise of initiative.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	22 sessions of 1 hour (7%)
Seminars	22 sessions of 1 hour (7%)
Private study	256 hours (85%)
Total	300 hours

Private study description

Students will be expected to read primary materials and engage with secondary material in order to research key topics and ideas and facilitate analysis.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group C1

	Weighting	Study time
Student essay	50%	
This module is assessed by one 4,000 word essay (not including footnotes) submitted in the spring term.		
Take-home examination	50%	

Feedback on assessment

Feedback will be provided in the course of the module in a number of ways. Feedback should be understood to be both formal and informal and is not restricted to feedback on formal written work. Oral feedback will be provided by the module tutor in the course of seminar discussion. This may include feedback on points raised in small group work or in the course of individual presentations or larger group discussion.

Written feedback will be provided on formal assessment using the standard SMLC Assessed Work feedback form appropriate to the assessment. Feedback is intended to enable continuous improvement throughout the module and written feedback is generally the final stage of this

feedback process. Feedback will always demonstrate areas of success and areas for future development, which can be applied to future assessment. Feedback will be both discipline-specific and focussed on key transferrable skills, enabling students to apply this feedback to their future professional lives. Feedback will be fair and reasonable and will be linked to the SMLC marking scheme appropriate to the module.

[Past exam papers for GE312](#)

Availability

Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 4 of UGEA-R200 Undergraduate German Studies
- Year 4 of ULNA-R2Q2 Undergraduate German Studies with Linguistics
- Year 4 of ULNA-R2A0 Undergraduate German with Chinese
- Year 4 of UGEA-RP33 Undergraduate German with Film Studies
- Year 4 of ULNA-R2R4 Undergraduate German with Spanish

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 4 of UPOA-M164 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and German
- Year 3 of UPOA-M16D Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and German (3 year degree)