# GE112-30 Provincial - Pariah - Powerhouse: Reading German-language Culture in a Global Perspective

## 24/25

**Department**
School of Modern Languages and Cultures
**Level**
Undergraduate Level 1
**Module leader**
Katherine Stone
**Credit value**
30
**Module duration**
22 weeks
**Assessment**
50% coursework, 50% exam
**Study location**
University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

---

# Description

## Introductory description

This module has a dual focus. It seeks to equip students with the tools for engaging critically with the narratives and media that determine our relationships with contemporary society. In so doing, students will encounter landmarks in the history of modern Germany, which emerged as a nation out of a confederation of provinces and principalities in the 19th century. We will touch on the political turmoil, conflicts, and violence that at times made Imperial Germany, the Third Reich, and the post-1945 Germanies pariah states in the eyes of the international community. We will also reflect on the developments that led to contemporary Germany's emergence as a cultural, political, and economic powerhouse, shaping global trends in film, literature, theatre, and music.
This module focuses on the media and representations through which many of us first encounter German-language culture: fairy tales and their cognates; performance, visual, and screen culture; music and sound. In other words, students will sample the works and ideas that have put Germany and the German language on the world map. We will meet a wide variety of notable characters,

including Nobel Prize winners and pioneering figures like Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, whose works helped to define what German culture meant at a time when "Germany" did not yet exist, and when the global elite looked down upon German as a provincial lesser cousin to Latin, Italian, and French. How, then, did German literature, film, art, and music transform the status of the German language? How did German-speaking artists shape the cultural genres that we consume today? And how does engaging with these works give us a more differentiated understanding of the positive and negative aspects of Germany's history and its global influence?

Across the module, you will build up your linguistic confidence by engaging with sources of increasing length in the target language, giving you a sense of the nuances of German delivered in written and oral form—and in a variety of settings. Distinct blocks will zoom in on different competencies (close linguistic analysis of texts; reading visual images; understanding performance cultures; responding to sound), illuminating how different media function and interact in our intermedial contemporary world. The module will help you develop skills that will be essential for the rest of your degree and your life after Warwick: detailed, critical reading; clear and concise argumentation; excellent written and oral communication skills; independent thinking and research.

## Module aims

This module has two principal aims. First, it seeks to equip students with a critical toolkit for tackling the diverse cultural sources that they might encounter in this module and more broadly. Secondly, as students learn to analyse these rich cultural sources, they will have the opportunity to explore debates about identity, nationality, gender, race, diversity, and memory that have made Germany what it is today. In particular, the module seeks to introduce students to key figures and historical events in German history, including the emergence of the German nation; the upheaval of World War I; the consequences of the Third Reich; the division of Germany; migration and/or the legacy of colonialism; the impact of unification.

## 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.

Term 1, Week 1: Introduction to the module and to close reading
Term, Weeks 2-5: "Telling Tales"
Term 1, Weeks 7-10: "The Image and Screen"
Term 2, Week 1: Feedback on formative essays and essay-writing workshop
Term 2, Weeks 2-5: "From the Theatre to the Streets: German Performance Cultures"
Term 2, Weeks 7-10: "Soundscapes of Germany: Past, Present, Future"
Term 3, week 1: Essay feedback and guidance
Term 3, week 2: Exam preparation

## Learning outcomes

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

- engage with other cultures, appreciating their distinctive features

- use the target language(s) for purposes of understanding
- demonstrate knowledge, awareness and understanding of one or more cultures and societies, other than their own.
- identify and outline major social, political and cultural turning points in the German-speaking world since 1800 and how they have shaped German identity and global culture.
- show awareness and understanding of the conventions associated with the different genres covered in the module.
- use sources from different media to discuss a range of topics in formal and informal settings.
- access and engage critically with primary texts as well as secondary literature in formal and informal situations.
- use knowledge acquired in lectures and seminars as a basis for individual research

# Indicative reading list

Texts may vary depending on the expertise of the lecturer leading the block in any particular year.

Primary Texts
(All texts are either available in translation or translations will be provided by the lecturer)

- Goethe, 'Der Fischer' (poem; and online)
- Charlotte von Ahlefeld, 'Die Nymphe des Rheins', in Im Reich der Wünsche: Die schönsten Märchen deutscher Dichterinnen, ed. by Shawn C. Jarvis and Isabel Große Holtforth (C.H.Beck, 2012), pp. 61–76 (short story; and online)
- Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, 'Rapunzel,' 'Hänsel und Gretel,' 'Frau Holle' from Kinder-und Hausmärchen (Fischer, 2018; and online) (short stories, approx. 5000 words)
- Franz Kafka, Die Verwandlung (Reclam, 1995; and online. 88 pages)
- Ingeborg Bachmann, 'Undine geht' in Das dreißigste Jahr (Piper, 1991; and online. 10 pages)
- Bertolt Brecht, Der kaukasische Kreidekreis: Text und Kommentar (Suhrkamp, 2006. 113 pages)
- Nelly Sachs, 'Eli: Ein Mysterienspiel vom Leiden Israels' in Zeichen im Sand: die szenischen Dichtungen (Suhrkamp, 1962), pp. 5-91.
- Olivia Wenzel, 'mais in deutschland & andere Galaxien' in Dramatische Rundschau 03, edited by Friederike Emmerling, Oliver Franke, Stefanie von Lieven, Barbara Neu, and Bettina Walther (Fischer, 2021), pp. 287-337.
- Rimini Protokoll, '50 Aktenkilometer: Ein Stasi-Hörspiel für Selbstläufer' (2011). App "The Walks" and resources available at https://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/project/50-aktenkilometer [both available in English]
- Zentrum für politische Schönheit, 'Erster Europäischer Mauerfall' (2014). Web resources available at https://politicalbeauty.de/erster-europaeischer-mauerfall.html [English version available]
- Katharina Kellermann, 'How to hear the invisible: An Acoustic Mapping of the Post_Colonial Memory Landscape Hamburg' (2017). Available at https://www.how-to-hear-the-invisible.org/ with further resources at https://pab-research.de/pabr/
- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 'Der Erlkönig' in Goethe: Selected Poetry, ed. by David Luke (Penguin, 2005; and online).
- Franz Schubert, 'Erlkönig' Op. 1, D 328.

- Paul Celan, 'Todesfuge', in Todesfuge und andere Gedichte: Text und Kommentar (Suhrkamp BasisBibliothek, 2004). Musical settings by Matthias Fuhrmeister: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iB4hT95V-TI (4 mins 59); ii) Christa Abels: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnUyAa3qwLc (5 mins 30); Invisible Limits: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2s0vtvU5eQ (4 mins 51)
- 'Autobahn' LP by Kraftwerk (1974) (42 mins27), including Album cover and art.
- Fritz Lang (dir.), Die Niebelungen Teil I: Siegfrieds Tod (1924)
- Leni Riefenstahl, Triumph des Willens (1935)
- Fatih Akin (dir.), Gender die Wand (2004)
  Secondary Reading
- Elizabeth Boa, Kafka: Gender, Class, and Race in the Letters and Fictions (Clarendon House, 1996)
- Stephen Brockmann, A Critical History of German Film (Camden House, 2010)
- Renate Delphendahl, 'Alienation and Self-Discovery in Ingeborg Bachmann's Undine geht', Modern Austrian Literature, Vol.18 No.3/4 (1985), 195-210
- John Felstiner, Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew (Yale University Press, 2001)
- Mary Fulbrook, A Concise History of Germany (Cambridge UP, 1991)
- Neil Gregor, Germany: Memories of a Nation (Penguin, 2014)
- Daniela Hahn, "Performing Public Spaces, Staging Collective Memory: 50 Kilometres of Files by Rimini Protokoll," TDR/The Drama Review 58.3 (2014): 27-38
- Sabine Hake, German National Cinema (Routledge, 2002)
- Keith Hartley, The Romantic Spirit in German Art, 1790-1990 (Thames & Hudson, 1990)
- Katharina Kellermann, "Silence, motifs and echoes: Acts of listening in postcolonial Hamburg," in Performing Citizenship (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 93-109
- Eva Kolinsky and Wilfried van der Will, The Cambridge Companion to Modern German Culture (Cambridge UP, 2006)
- Priscilla Layne and Lizzie Stewart, "Racialisation and Contemporary German Theatre," in The Palgrave Handbook of Theatre and Race (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), pp. 39-60
- David Morgan, 'German character and artistic form: The cultural politics of German art theory, 1773–1814,' European Romantic Review 6.2 (1996): 183-212.
- Melanie Schiller, Soundtracking Germany. Popular Music and National Identity (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018)
- Uwe Schütte, German Pop Music. A Companion (De Gruyter, 2017)
- Maria Tatar, The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy-Tales, expanded edn (Princeton UP, 2019)
- Peter Thomson and Glendyr Sacks, eds. The Cambridge Companion to Brecht (CUP, 2006)
- Renate Usmiani, "The Invisible Theater: The Rise Of Radio Drama In Germany After 1945," Modern Drama 13.3 (1970): 259-269
- Shearer West, The Visual Arts in Germany, 1890-1937: Utopia and Despair (Manchester UP, 2000)
- Anthony Smith, The Nation Made Real: Art and National Identity in Western Europe, 1600-1850 (Oxford UP, 2013)
- Jack Zipes, Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion (London: Routledge, 2011)

# Interdisciplinary

With its focus on the study of cultural representation this module takes an interdisciplinary approach, combining history, politics, folklore, queer, and gender studies as well as linguistics, literature, regional and transcultural studies.
Special focus will be put on the analysis of cultural phenomena regarding their specific context and their interrelationships.

## International

Students will be learning about and actively practicing intercultural competence while immersed in an international setting of German-speaking and anglophone contexts. Taking a comparative approach between the source and target languages and cultures, this module is taught by German native or near-native speakers. The intercultural training programme of this module, focusing on language, intercultural and research skills will equip students to better understand, communicate, and build effective relationships with those from different cultural backgrounds.

## Subject specific skills

This module will enhance students' reading and oral comprehension skills by engaging with pertinent material in German. It will develop students' capacity to engage critically with different cultural genres and with secondary literature. It will introduce them to key aspects of German history and culture from 1800 to the present. Students will learn to present their ideas in a variety of forms, from seminar discussion and oral presentations to written critiques and essays. This knowledge and skills base will provide the building blocks for students' subsequent studies.

## 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 | 20 sessions of 1 hour (7%) |
| Seminars | 20 sessions of 1 hour (7%) |
| Private study | 260 hours (87%) |
| Total | 300 hours |

# Private study description

On a weekly basis, students will be expected to read/watch carefully and make notes on the primary works, guided by preparation materials provided by the teaching team. In some cases, students will also be directed to supplementary material to deepen their understanding, asked to conduct scaffolded independent research to inform class discussion, or expected to prepare short (group) presentations. Independent learning in this instance also includes preparation for formative and summative assessments, such as wider reading, note-taking, planning, revision and/or writing.

# Costs

| Category | Description | Funded by | Cost to student |
|---|---|---|---|
| Books and learning materials | Cost of purchasing primary texts. Many works for this module are available online and copies will be available in the library. | Student | £40.00 |

---

# Assessment

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

## Assessment group C

| | Weighting | Study time | Eligible for self-certification |
|---|---|---|---|
| Assessed Essay | 50% | | Yes (extension) |

Students will write an essay of 2000-2500 words in English (excluding footnotes and bibliography) on one of the proposed topics. Essays must confirm to the guidelines in the UG handbook (1.5 line spacing, page numbers at the top of the page, footnotes at bottom, bibliography of primary and secondary sources at the end) and adhere to the School's guidelines on plagiarism. Students' arguments must be based on ample evidence taken from their research material. Students should consult the departmental web pages and notice boards for submission dates and hand in essays electronically in line with school-wide procedure. We recommend that students consult the following three documents when writing this essay: Undergraduate Studies Handbook, Assessed-essay-writing guidelines and the Essay-marking criteria for options and core modules.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Exam | 50% | | No |

24-hour online exam through the Alternative Exams Portal (AEP). Students should not substantially reuse material from the formative and summative essays.

~Platforms - AEP

|  | Weighting | Study time | Eligible for self-certification |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |

- Online examination: No Answerbook required

## 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 focused 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 GE112](#)

# Availability

# Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 1 of ULNA-RR14 Undergraduate French and German
- Year 1 of UGEA-R200 Undergraduate German Studies
- Year 1 of UGEA-RN21 Undergraduate German and Business Studies
- Year 1 of ULNA-R2L4 Undergraduate German and Economics (4-year)
- Year 1 of UGEA-R2V1 Undergraduate German and History
- Year 1 of UGEA-RW24 Undergraduate German and Theatre Studies
- Year 1 of UGEA-RP33 Undergraduate German with Film Studies

This module is Core optional for:

- Year 1 of ULNA-QR37 Undergraduate English and German

This module is Core option list B for:

- Year 1 of ULNA-R9Q2 Undergraduate Modern Languages with Linguistics
- Year 1 of UPOA-M164 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and German

This module is Core option list C for:

- Year 1 of ULNA-R9Q1 Undergraduate Modern Languages and Linguistics