

GE331-15 German Memories of the War - from Perpetration to Suffering

26/27

Department

School of Modern Languages and Cultures

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Helmut Schmitz

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

Over the course of the 1990s post-unification Germany integrates the legacy of the Holocaust in the official self-image of the Berlin Republic (for example by creating a Holocaust memorial in the nation's capital). The re-inscription of Auschwitz into a national and collective memory opens the gates for a return of German wartime memory that appeared to have been obscured by the commemoration of Nazism's victims. The re-emergence of the issue of German wartime suffering to the fore of German public discourse since the turn of the millennium represents the greatest shift in German memory culture since the 1980s. The (international) attention and debates triggered by, for example, W.G. Sebald's *Luftkrieg und Literatur*, Günter Grass's *Im Krebsgang* and Jörg Friedrich's *Der Brand* testify to a change in focus away from the victims of National Socialism to the traumatic experience of the 'perpetrator collective' and its legacies. In this module, you will address the representation of German wartime experience in contemporary literature and film from several angles. Opening with a historiography of the problem of representing Germans as victims of war, you will move on to W.G. Sebald's essay *Luftkrieg und Literatur*. Sebald's thesis that German writers had failed to inscribe the experience of the air raids into post-war German literature, triggered a debate about the moral assessment of the Allied bombings of Germany and its literary representation (or lack of it). After focusing on literary and filmic representations of the bombings of Düsseldorf and Dresden, you will address the issue of family

memory, transgenerational trauma and the long-term legacy of traumatic war experience in both literature and film.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

This module aims to:

- provide students with an overview over the debate around representations of German wartime suffering within the wider context of cultural memory of National Socialism.
- enable students to analyse a number of literary and filmic representations of German wartime suffering and its long-term effects on family and society with respect to political/social discourse, cultural memory and gender issues.
- enable students to engage critically with a variety of theoretical and critical approaches to the problems of German memory of the war and German experience of wartime suffering.
- develop students' research and essay writing skills

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.

Indicative Syllabus:

Primary texts:

W.G.Se Bald, Luftkrieg und Literatur, Frankfurt, 2001.

Dieter Forte, Der Junge mit den blutigen Schuhen, Frankfurt, Fischer, 1995.

Günter Grass, Im Krebsgang, GöttingenSteidl, 2002, paperback Munich, dtv, 2003.

Hans-Ulrich Treichel, Der Verlorene, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1999.

Uwe Timm, Am Beispiel meines Bruders, Cologne, Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2003.

Text: Dagmar Leupold, Nach den Kriegen, dtv, 2004.

Films:

Dresden (TV film 2005)

Das Wunder von Bern (2005)

Learning outcomes

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

- By the end of this module, students should be able to demonstrate a broad understanding of the key issues in German memory of the war and its representation
- By the end of this module, students should be able to critically analyse and contextualise a range of texts representing the experience of German wartime suffering and its after-effects
- By the end of this module, students should be able to analyse and deploy a range of critical approaches to representations of German wartime suffering
- By the end of this module, students should be able to demonstrate their ability to research primary sources relating to a chosen topic from the module

- By the end of this module, students should be able to contextualise set texts in terms of their relation to the social and political history of the period
- In addition, the module will provide you with the opportunity to develop further the following skills:
 - the ability to abstract and synthesize key information from written sources in German and English;
 - the ability to organize, present, and defend ideas within the framework of a structured and reasoned argument;
 - the ability to formulate your opinions with reference to established interpretations;
 - the ability to analyse critically a range of materials in German and English (primary texts, secondary sources, contextualizing historical material);
 - the ability to apply critical methodologies to the analysis of literary texts;
 - the ability to conduct independent research using library and bibliographic resources and ICT skills

Indicative reading list

[Reading lists can be found in Talis](#)

[Specific reading list for the module](#)

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 German war memories 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
Seminars	9 sessions of 2 hours (12%)
Private study	132 hours (88%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

Includes one reading week.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A1

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
Essay	100%		No
Essay 3250-3500 words			

Reassessment component is the same

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.

Availability

Courses

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)