

GE339-15 Exploring Zeitgeist: Politics, Culture and Society in Germany Today

26/27

Department

School of Modern Languages and Cultures

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Elisabeth Herrmann

Credit value

15

Module duration

9 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module allows advanced students of German to explore contemporary German culture and language. Students will acquire profound knowledge of current social, political, cultural, economic, and ecological developments in Germany, advancing linguistic fluency alongside cultural fluency. Taught in German, this module aims at a critical in-depth understanding of highly topical debates that shape German society today, including Germany's role on the international stage. Newspapers, journal articles, essays, TV series, films as well as media like news channels, broadsheets, blogs, and podcasts will provide materials for the module.

Module aims

Students will explore and analyse current affairs in Germany. The central aim of this module is to enable students to engage with German-speaking people and future employers on a sophisticated cultural level. Students will be immersed in German, practicing it in real life situations and learning how to use it in academic as well as business and job-related contexts.

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.

Week 1: Introduction to the module & Cultural Studies; Week 2: Cultural and collective identity; Week 3: The political system, federalism, economy, and industrial locations; Week 4: Migration, minorities, and diversity; Week 5: Germany in Europe and the world; Week 6: Reading week; Week 7: Gender in politics, society, and language; Week 8: Climate, sustainable energy and environment; Week 9: What's on in Germany? - Culture and Art; Week 10: East, West, North, South: Regional differences, dialects, and local patriotism

Learning outcomes

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

- Students will critically assess current affairs in Germany; make use of cultural theories as an analytical tool to contextualise, evaluate and contrast current German social and political discourses with developments in other countries.
- Cultural competency will be acquired alongside enhanced linguistic competency in German.
- The module will equip students with language, intercultural and research skills to interact in an increasingly globalised world.

Indicative reading list

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

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' linguistic (oral and written) skills through engaging with pertinent material in German. It will build students' capacity to engage with various aspects of public life and current affairs in Germany through the analysis of a variety of different sources, e.g. newspaper articles, videos, podcasts etc, as well as oral presentations, seminar discussion,

workshops, and student-led roundtable discussions in the target language.

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	9 sessions of 1 hour (22%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (22%)
Private study	22 hours (55%)
Total	40 hours

Private study description

Extracurricular engagement with content related material, such as reading the daily news, watching German films, news, listening to podcasts etc.

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 A2

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
Assessed Essay	60%	60 hours	Yes (extension)
Students will write an essay of 2250 words in length (excluding footnotes and bibliography) on one of the proposed topics. They may also choose their own topic in consultation with the module tutors. Depending on your level of language, the essay can either be written in English or German. Your essay 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.) Please adhere to the School's guidelines on plagiarism. Your argument must be based on ample evidence taken from your research material. Please consult the departmental web-pages and notice boards for submission dates and hand in your essay electronically in line with school-wide procedure. We recommend that you 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.			

Reassessment component is the same

Assessment component			
Individual student presentation	30%	25 hours	No
Students will be asked to prepare and perform an individual 10 min-presentation in German on one of the proposed topics. Presentations might be part of a roundtable discussion.			

Reassessment component is the same

Assessment component			
Class Participation	10%	25 hours	No
Students will be encouraged and are expected to actively participate in class discussions by asking questions, volunteering an answer and responding to other students' contributions or questions. The aim of assessing class participation is to encourage students to share their ideas and knowledge with the group, and to motivate students to engage with background reading, homework and preparation for each learning session. In addition to assessing students' disciplinary knowledge and understanding, assessing class participation will also be used to encourage and reward development of communication skills and group skills such as interacting and cooperating. There is a clear difference between attendance and participation.			

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Reassessment component			
Assessment weighting to essay			No
Weighting to transfer to essay component.			

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.

Availability

Pre-requisites

German proficiency of at least B1 level.

Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 4 of UGEA-RN21 Undergraduate German and Business Studies
- Year 3 of UGEA-RN22 Undergraduate German and Business Studies

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 4 of UPOA-M164 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and German