German Literature and Critical Thought

Degree Types: PhD

The Department of German (https://www.german.northwestern.edu/) offers a graduate program focused on the theoretical and cultural foundations of German literature, critical thought, and media from early modernity onward.

The program consists of six required and twelve elective courses. Students are encouraged to choose electives in related disciplines such as art history, comparative literary studies, film studies, French/Italian, history, philosophy, Slavic, Spanish, African-American studies, and Jewish studies.

Students in this program are also encouraged to participate in TGS’s Interdisciplinary Cluster Initiative program. For more information on how you can have a second intellectual “home” outside of your department or program, please visit the Interdisciplinary Cluster Initiative page (https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/admission/academic-programs/clusters-and-certificates/).

Additional resources:

• Department website (https://www.german.northwestern.edu/)
• Program handbook(s) (https://northwestern.box.com/s/bkhj64vdrvyl7jqgs9opb9luk2qsu8u0/)

Degree Offered

• German Literature and Critical Thought PhD (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/tgs/german-literature-critical-thought/german-literature-critical-thought-phd/)

German Literature and Critical Thought Courses

GERMAN 324-0 Modern German Drama (1 Unit)
Plays by authors ranging from Heinrich von Kleist to Peter Weiss, from the perspective of the stage as a "moral institution.”
Prerequisite: None.
Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

GERMAN 401-0 German Literature and Critical Thought 1750-1832 (1 Unit)
This course begins with the formative aesthetic discussions undertaken by Lessing and Mendelssohn, turns to Kant¿s program for critical self-reflection, and considers a wide range of responses, including those of Schiller, the early romantics, Kleist, Hölderlin, and Goethe.

GERMAN 402-0 History of Literature and Critical Thought 1832-1900 (1 Unit)
Thematic approach to key texts of 19th century German literature between Goethe and Gottfried Keller, tragedy and the Bildungsroman. Literary and philosophical texts are read side by side in order to interrogate traditional concepts of realism, mimesis, and interpretation.

GERMAN 403-0 German Literature, Critical Thought and New Media 1900-1945 (1 Unit)
Built around selected key texts on the aesthetic theories of modernism (e.g., by Nietzsche, Adorno, Bürger, and Kittler), this course explores the relationship of literature and the visual arts and scrutinizes the status of literature within aesthetic production in modernity. Particular attention to works by Rilke, Kafka, Brecht, Lasker-Schüler, Benn, Musil, and Mann.

GERMAN 404-0 German Literature, Critical Thought, and New Media since 1945 (1 Unit)
Overview of the most influential texts that reflect the mounting concern with media in German literary and critical theory since the Second World War. Emphasis on the effects of the rise of media studies and theory on the understanding and interpretation of literature.

GERMAN 405-0 Basic Issues in Foreign Language Teaching (1 Unit)
This course focuses on basic principles of second language acquisition and language teaching methodology. It introduces students to the major trends and theories in language teaching. The critical reflection of pedagogical practices is emphasized.

GERMAN 407-0 Proseminar (1 Unit)

GERMAN 408-0 Critical Theory and Religion (1 Unit)
This course explores the central place the concept of "religion" has occupied in the development of critical theory and, in turn, the role critical theory has played in reframing "religion" in modernity and in the contemporary geopolitical moment. We take up the question, “Is critique secular,” as we consider the contributions, potential and actual, of "religion" to social transformation.

GERMAN 431-0 Contemporary German Literature (1 Unit)
Readings from authors representative of literature in the former East and West Germany’s. May be repeated for credit with change of topic.

GERMAN 441-0 Studies in Communication and Culture (1 Unit)
Content varies. Samples; feminist literature, media studies, the history of literary journals, and other specific topics representative of current research interests. May be repeated for credit with change of topic.

GERMAN 490-0 Independent Reading (1 Unit)
May be repeated for credit. Permission of instructor and department required.

GERMAN 499-0 Independent Study (1 Unit)
May be repeated for credit. SEE DEPT FOR SECTION AND PERMISSION NUMBERS.

GERMAN 590-0 Research (1-3 Units)
Independent investigation of selected problems pertaining to dissertation. May be repeated for credit. SEE DEPT FOR SECTION AND PERMISSION NUMBERS.