

Introduction to German Literary Studies  
Sprechstunde: M 3:30-4:30, F 10-11, or by appt.  
Course website: <https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1221596>

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Denny 338

## **Forms of Desire: Critical Approaches to German Literature**

**Goals:** This course is intended to introduce you to the basic techniques of literary discussion, to develop your ability to interpret by close reading of German literature, and to refine your writing skills. To do so, we will read and discuss a wide range of texts across three centuries (18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>) and three genres (lyric, prose narrative, drama).

**Theme:** Despite this variety, each of our texts will focus in a different way on the nature of human desire. In each case, we will reflect on the ways that the *form* of the text at hand inflects and shapes its representation of desire.

Thus, we'll use the lens of love to examine a variety of works of German literature. The texts we will discuss approach the theme of desire from different directions and with different emphases. The course will explore the following questions, always taking the texts at hand as observational proving grounds for our ideas: What is desire? Is it different from love? (If so, then how, exactly?) Why does desire play such an important role in cultural artifacts like novels, poetry, plays, operas, music, film, etc.? Why do so many of the best and best-preserved love stories end badly? What are the social uses of cultural representations of desire over time? What historical, cultural and philosophical shifts have occurred in German culture's use of love? How should we understand desire philosophically? Most fundamentally, what is the relation between desire and its (literary) representations?

### **Policies:**

- The general method of instruction is through lectures and classroom discussions. The primary language of instruction is German. We recommend that the student have completed German 203 or its equivalent.
- Because of the heavy emphasis on discussion, daily participation is expected. Not participating in class will affect your grade. Share your thoughts and ideas!
- Readings of up to 30 pages of text in German are assigned for every class meeting.
- Always bring your book or text to class.
- The best way to contact me outside of class or office hours is through e-mail. I aim to answer all e-mails within 48 hours of their receipt (though if you send something Friday afternoon, I may not see it until Monday).
- Written assignments should be submitted in class. Exceptions on paper due dates can only be made with the advance permission of the instructor. There can be no exceptions on exercises or poetry presentations. Assignments are to be written in English.
- Anyone with a documented disability requiring special accommodation must meet with the instructor during the first week of classes to arrange for such accommodation.

**Readings:** The poems and stories are collected in the **Course Reader**. The dramas are available at the UW bookstore. You will also need a good dictionary, for instance the The Oxford/Langenscheidt's. On-line dictionaries of course are also available (e.g., [dict.leo.org](http://dict.leo.org)). They are not oriented toward the material in this course; you will probably find them often quite good, but not fully dependable for our purposes.

For the longer prose texts and the dramas you may consult a website called [Annotext](#), which is a web-based application developed at Dartmouth College to assist students in tackling difficult texts. It offers an alternative to such traditional reading aids as word lists, footnotes, or even standard German-English dictionaries. Students access an especially-prepared work on-line and then click on any word or phrase to receive its meaning instantly. All the same, students should procure hard-copy versions of the texts. This allows you to make marks and comments in the margins of your reading, and will greatly facilitate your engagement with the texts.

Finally, we will be using an online primer, Jochen Vogt's [Einleitung zur Literaturwissenschaft](#) as introductory background readings for the terms of literary analysis. All readings should be completed before the class for which they are assigned.

**Required Books:**

- Course Reader (available at EZ Copy N Print, 4336 University Way NE)
- *Emilia Galotti*, by G.E. Lessing (available from UW bookstore)
- *Woyzeck*, by Georg Büchner (available from UW bookstore)

**Expectations:**

- **Class participation:** We learn much more by actively and critically engaging in the back-and-forth of conversation than we do by listening passively to lectures. The principle aim of class time in this course will therefore be to foster lively and thoughtful discussions. To this end, the texts and lectures will serve as an impetus for inquiry and debate. As a teacher, I will provide some background context and reflections for the works we consider, but my principle role will be to open them up for discussion by you. The discoveries you make with each other's help will be the true learning experience of the course. For this reason, when you are silent in class, you are not only failing to express your own engagement with the text, but you are also robbing your classmates (and me!) of your insights and questions. In this course, I expect everyone to contribute to the conversation. This does not mean you need to come to every class with brilliant theories to propound, but rather that you open up and share your questions, ideas, and thoughts about the works we are considering.
- **Exercises:** Written answers to questions to be turned in during class on the dates signaled in syllabus. These will be graded with a simple check plus, check, or check minus. I will toss out the lowest of the exercise grades from the final grade. **Late assignments will not be accepted.**
- **Papers:** Your first essay (ca. 3-4 pages) will interpret a single poem by means of reflecting on your translation of it. The second paper (ca. 4-5 pages) will consist of a narrative analysis based on a chosen question. The final essay (ca. 6 pages) will concern drama. All essays should be typed, double-spaced. More information and guidelines will be provided in due time. If you wish to receive W credit for this course, let me know when you submit your second essay. You would then re-write this paper based on my feedback.
- **Group Projects:** will include one poetry translation and one drama *Inszenierung*. Details forthcoming.

**Grading:**

- Class Participation: 20%
- Exercises: 20%
- 3 Papers: 15% each
- 3 Creative Projects (Übersetzung, Fabel, Inszenierung): 15%

### Syllabus<sup>1</sup>

Date	Class Discussion	<i>Einführung zur Literaturwissenschaft</i>	Assignment
<b>LYRIK</b>			
9/26	Introduction: Was ist eigentlich 'Literatur'? Form und Sehnsucht		
9/28	Introduction to Lyrik: Eichendorff, "Wünschelrute"	Gattungen und Textstrukturen II: Lyrik—Grundbegriffe der Metrik (Übersicht): Metrik, Metrum, Vers	
10/1	Eichendorff, "Sehnsucht," "Nachtblume"	Grundbegriffe der Metrik: Strophe, Rhythmus	Ex. 1
10/3	Goethe, "Der Fischer," "Heidenröslein," "Das Veilchen"	Grundbegriffe der Metrik: Reim, Enjambement, Zäsur, Ballade	Ex. 2
10/5	Goethe, "Wanderers Nachtlied / Ein Gleiches"; Hölderlin, "Hälfte des Lebens"		Ex. 3
10/8	Rilke, "Archaischer Torso Apollos"; Trakl, "Verklärter Herbst"; Lasker- Schüler, "Versöhnung"	Grundbegriffe der Metrik: Sonnett	Ex. 4
10/10	Brecht, „Erinnerung an die Marie A“		Ex. 5
10/12	Group Presentations: <b>Poetry Translation</b>		
<b>EPIK</b>			
10/15	Introduction to Narrative Lessing, Kafka, Brecht, Doderer	Gattungen und Textstrukturen 1: Epik: Übersicht, Parabel, Märchen, Novelle	<b>Paper One</b>
10/17	Kleist, "The Earthquake in Chile"	Gattungen und Textstrukturen 1: Erzählzeit und erzählte Zeit, Erzählsituationen (personale, auktoriale, Ich-Erzählung), Fokalisierungstypen	
10/19	Kleist, "Das Erdbeben in Chili"	Gattungen und Textstrukturen 1: Epik: Epik, Rückwendungen und Vorausdeutungen, Zeitraffungen, Zeitstrukturen	Ex. 1
10/22	Hofmannsthal, "Reitergeschichte" (bis: „abzapfen konnte“)	Gattungen und Textstrukturen 1: Epik: Episches Präteritum, erlebte Rede	
10/24	Hofmannsthal, "Reitergeschichte"		Ex. 2
10/26	<b>FABELWERKSTATT</b>		

<sup>1</sup> Any changes to this schedule will be announced in class and by e-mail.

10/29	Kafka, "Das Urteil" (bis "Das wäre übrigens sehr vernünftig")		<b>Fabel</b>
10/31	Kafka, "Das Urteil" (fertig)		Ex. 3
11/2	Kafka, Diskussion		Ex. 4: Forum
<b>DRAMA</b>			
11/5	Introduction to Drama Lessing, <i>Emilia Galotti</i> , act 1	Gattungen und Textstrukturen III: Dramatik: Übersicht, Aristoteles, Shakespearetheater, Lessing: Hamburgische Dramaturgie	
11/7	Lessing, <i>Emilia Galotti</i> , act 2	Gattungen und Textstrukturen III: Dramatik: Tragödie, bürgerliches Trauerspiel	
11/9	<b>SCHREIBWERKSTATT</b>		<b>Paper Two (DRAFT)</b>
<b>KEIN UNTERRICHT: GEDENKTAG ZU DEN VETERANEN</b>			
11/12			
11/14	Lessing, <i>Emilia Galotti</i> , act 3	Gattungen und Textstrukturen III: Dramatik: Botenbericht, Mauerschau	Ex. 1
11/16	Lessing, <i>Emilia Galotti</i> , act 4		<b>Paper Two (FINAL)</b>
11/19	Lessing, <i>Emilia Galotti</i> , act 5		
11/21	<b>SZENENWERKSTATT</b>		
11/23	<b>KEIN UNTERRICHT: ERNTEDANKFEST</b>		
11/26	Lessing, Diskussion		Ex. 2: <b>Der Prozess</b>
11/28	Büchner, <i>Woyzeck</i> (bis "beim Doktor")	Gattungen und Textstrukturen III: Brecht: das epische Theater	
11/30	Büchner, <i>Woyzeck</i> (bis "Kasernenhof")		
12/3	Büchner, <i>Woyzeck</i> (fertig)		Ex. 3
12/5	Büchner, Diskussion		
12/7	Group Presentations: <b>Inszenierung</b>		
12/11	<b>Submit final paper</b>		