German Department
Spring Course Offerings 2016

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German 121 A: Beginning German I

German 121 introduces students to the basic structures of German and focuses on the four language skills of understanding, speaking, reading and writing German in cultural, functional contexts. Learning German, the language of vibrant societies in the heart of Europe and spoken by over 100 million people, is the passageway to cultures that continue to fascinate for historical, cultural, economic and political reasons. German 121 begins your preparation to access these cultures by introducing you to German grammar in a carefully designed sequence that will enable you to develop basic German language competence. Authentic materials, the textbook and classroom work will also teach you techniques that will help you understand the gist of passages and conversation that may be beyond your grammatical reach. Our main purpose in class is to use the language communicatively and creatively; grammar exercises are regarded as a means to this end. (Most of our classroom time will be in German; occasional brief explanations of grammar may be given in English.)

(MWRF 10:20-11:10, 118 Lawrence Hall)

German 122 A and B: Beginning German II

German 122 continues the study of German language and culture, with an emphasis on speaking and understanding, reading and writing as well as on increasing your familiarity with the history and culture of German-speaking Europe. We will thus fuse the process of becoming more fluent in the German language with learning about the history as well as contemporary aspects of life in Germany, Austria and Switzerland today. To this end, the course features communicative in-class activities that seek to facilitate your lively engagement with the German language. In German 122 you will solidify your understanding of the basic structures of the language and hone your linguistic skills. This will enable you to perform everyday functions in German and to begin to engage substantively with the culture of the German-speaking world. 122 also lays the groundwork for further work in German.

(MWRF 11:20-12:10 and 12:20-1:10, 118 Lawrence Hall)
German 201 A: Intermediate German I (GE)

In German 201 students continue to study the cultures of German-speaking countries while significantly advancing their German language skills of comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing. Each course unit explores a different German, Austrian or Swiss city, and combines a focus on its contemporary profile with background on its history and its local culture, and its place on the literal and figurative map of the German-speaking world. This course fulfills the GE requirement through its site-specific approach to the study of the German language as an expression of specific local, regional, national, and transnational identities. By the end of the course you should have significantly enhanced your cultural knowledge about German-speaking countries; developed your ability to communicate in German about topics of general interest, orally and in writing; strengthened your knowledge of essential structures of German grammar and increased your ability to use the language in everyday situations; learned to read modern German texts in various genres, and improved your active and passive vocabulary.

(MWRF 11:20-12:10, 115 Lawrence Hall)

German 202 A: Intermediate German II (GE)

In German 202 students continue to expand their knowledge of the cultures of German-speaking countries while advancing their linguistic skills of comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing in preparation for advanced academic work in German. Each course unit explores a different German, Austrian or Swiss city, and combines a focus on its contemporary profile with background on its history, its local culture, and its place on the literal and figurative map of the German-speaking world. The course fulfills Colgate’s Global Engagements requirement through its site-specific approach to the study of the German language as an expression of specific local, regional, national, and transnational identities. As you develop your German skills, you will simultaneously reflect on the large-scale phenomenon of linguistic practice as indicative of the ways that specific languages shape thought and perception, culture and experience. While gaining cultural knowledge, you will develop your ability to communicate with ease in German about topics of general interest and will also gain grounding in more sophisticated academic discourse. Your reading and writing ability will expand rapidly in this course, which serves as a bridge to the German department’s upper-level culture and literature courses.

(MWRF 12:20-1:10, 115 Lawrence Hall)
German 352: Crisis and Critique in Germanophone Europe
(Introduction to German Literature II)  
Matthew Miller

This semester’s German 352 conducts an introduction to German Studies by focusing on crisis and critique in the history, literature, and culture of Germanophone Europe. Not only do crisis and critique reverberate as unavoidable features of every person’s life. Central Europe’s politically turbulent modernity confronts us with a series of pivotal historical junctures in which crisis and critique are deeply intertwined: 1781, 1848, 1914-18, 1933, 1945, the 1960s in the Cold War, the transformation and unification of Europe beginning in 1989-90—these dates have all had a powerful impact on German and European culture and they constitute signposts of the course’s inquiry into social and political crises and the human responses they have elicited. Adopting a multi-medial approach, the course assembles historical, philosophical and literary texts as well as a few films and internet excursions to develop and practice the techniques and vocabulary of literary and cultural analysis in German. The course also prepares you for advanced literature and culture seminars by fostering the expansion of your German language skills in the specific areas of reading, writing, comprehension and speaking. Enrolling students will have completed German 202 or its equivalent.

(MWF 10:20-11:10, 115 Lawrence Hall)

German 479: Twentieth-Century Literature
Claire Baldwin

This seminar focuses on literary texts written in German from just after World War II until the present day from the former Federal Republic of Germany, the German Democratic Republic, reunified Germany, and Austria. Reading literary works in the context of cultural history, other media, and the contemporary press, we will investigate such topics as the aesthetic and political responses to the devastation of the war, artistic forms of representing and addressing history and cultural memory, constructions and constellations of gender in postwar society and in literature, and questions of German identity – both as an individual concern and as a national preoccupation after the catastrophic experiences of the Nazi years. The reach of that troubled history with its attendant issues of suffering, guilt, responsibility and remembrance remains an issue with strong contemporary relevance, as does the experience of German political and cultural division. The complications of unification and the transformations of European society effected by migration and transnational identities are further topics illuminated in contemporary literature. As we read texts by authors with widely differing cultural and even linguistic backgrounds, we will also address how literature can both engage and challenge our ideas of German culture today.

(MW 1:20-2:35, 115 Lawrence Hall)
Core 184C A: The Danube

Also register for: Core 184L A
(Required Film Screening)

Matthew Miller

“Core Danube” explores Europe’s second longest and most interesting river: from its beginnings in the German Black Forest to the Romanian and Ukrainian shores where it meets the Black Sea, the Danube flows through and/or borders ten countries, while its watershed covers four more. The river thus serves as a prominent artery of economic, cultural and international exchanges in the diverse region of central and southeastern Europe. Recent events such as the violent conflict in Ukraine and the migration of refugees into Europe along the “Balkan route” in the summer of 2015 have again placed the region in the spotlight as its geopolitical fate continues to hang in the balance. Examining the region’s longstanding history as a neglected, maligned and contested multilingual, multicultural and multinational space, this course structures its multidisciplinary inquiry around the river, its peoples, and their intertwined histories and imaginaries, with a focus on the nineteenth century to the present. Topics of study include the region’s geography and history, theoretical paradigms for understanding cultural differences and their negotiation, and literary and cinematic works of art from various Danubian traditions. Attendance at seven film screenings is required. Core 184c: The Danube fulfills the Communities and Identities requirement of Colgate’s Core Curriculum and can be counted toward the concentration in German as a cognate course. There are no prerequisites.

(MW 1:20-2:35, 203 Lawrence Hall)
(M 7:00-10:00, 115 Lawrence Hall)