

German 01:470:392:01 • CompLit 01:195:398:02
German Memory Cultures/Erinnerungskulturen
Fall 2009
MW5 (2:50-4:10)
Scott Hall 206

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Office hours: Thurs. 2-4, and by
appointment

*Wir sind geboren, um uns zu erinnern. Nicht
vergessen, sondern Erinnerung ist unsere
Aufgabe...*

*We are born to remember. Not
forgetting, but remembering is our
duty...*

(Heinrich Böll, *Das Vermächtnis*)

Course description:

This course provides an overview of German literature, film, and culture since 1945, with a focus on the topic of memory. German culture after 1945 has been preoccupied by the memory of war, National Socialism, and the Holocaust; debates among historians are front-page news, particularly the Historians' Debate of the 1980s and the Goldhagen debate of the 90s. Literature and film have been important vehicles for the process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, or coming to terms with the past, and we will discuss texts that both portray and perform acts of memory. We will examine various strategies of remembering and memorializing the past, always asking what the significance of memory is for the present and future. Furthermore, we will examine a range of memory cultures, considering memories of the 1950s "economic miracle," the 60s student movement and 70s radicalism, and the GDR and its demise, all of which coexist (and compete) with memories of the war and the Holocaust in the same cultural space.

No expertise in spoken or written German is required for participation in the course. However, students majoring in German will be expected to read texts in the original German.

Required texts:

- Peter Weiss, *The Investigation*. Marion Boyars, 1996 (ISBN 0-7145-0301-0)
- Günter Grass, *Crabwalk*. Harvest, 2004 (ISBN 0-15-602970-7)
- All other texts for the course are either excerpts or out of print and will be available online for download in PDF format from the course's Sakai page.

- Occasional handouts and websites. Budgetary restrictions require the German Department to collect from each student 5 cents per page toward the cost of handouts other than the syllabus, quizzes and tests. The department may also assess a fee for optical media (blank CD-Rs and DVD-Rs), when appropriate. When readings are available electronically, students are expected to print them out and bring them to class.
- It is your responsibility to have watched each film either on reserve at the Language Institute (20 Seminary Place, just off College Ave., <http://languageinstitute.rutgers.edu>) or at home on your own by the time we discuss it in class.

Students wishing to order texts in German are encouraged to use the International Book Import Service, www.ibiservice.com.

Course requirements and grading:

Class Participation: **25%**

Your participation grade includes a range of factors including:

- Attendance. This is a discussion-based seminar, so being in class is essential. If you have to miss class, please let me know in advance.
- Discussion and preparation. All students are expected to take part actively in class discussion. To this end, you are expected to bring with you to each class **three** written or typed clusters of questions that you think would contribute to a productive discussion and deepen your understanding of the text at hand. I will collect these occasionally and provide written feedback. Your questions should total around half a page if handwritten.

Papers: **75%** (20% + 20% + 35%)

Each student will write 2 short (5-7 pp.) papers on works studied up to that point in the course; they will be due on Monday, 10/19/09 and Monday, 11/16/09. Each of these short papers may be revised subsequently (subject to consultation with me) if you have definite ideas about how you can improve them, and the new grade will replace the old one. The final paper will be longer (10-15 pp.) and will be due on Monday, 12/21/09.

Course Schedule
(subject to change)

(F) = Film

W 9/2: Introduction; from Jörg Friedrich, *The Fire*

Mary Nolan, "Air Wars, Memory Wars"; Daniel Levy & Natan Sznaider, "Memory Unbound: The Holocaust and the Formation of Cosmopolitan Memory"; Andreas Huyssen, "Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia"; Aleida Assmann, "Europe: A Community of Memory?"; Peter Novick, "Comments"; Aleida Assmann, "Reponse"

*T 9/8: Anna Seghers, "The Outing of the Dead Schoolgirls"; Elisabeth Langgässer, "In Hiding," "Lucky"

W 9/9: Ingeborg Bachmann, "Youth in an Austrian Town," "Among Murderers and Madmen"

M 9/14: A. & M. Mitscherlich, *The Inability to Mourn*

*German readers: Heinrich Böll, "Es wird etwas geschehen," recommended: M. Mitscherlich, *Erinnerungsarbeit*

W 9/16: R.W. Fassbinder, *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (F)

M 9/21: Peter Weiss, *The Investigation*

W 9/23: Weiss (cont.)

M 9/28: Michael Verhoeven, *The Nasty Girl* (F)

W 9/30: Michael Verhoeven, *The Unknown Soldier* (F)

M 10/5: Grete Weil, *My Sister, My Antigone*

W 10/7: *My Sister, My Antigone* (cont.)

M 10/12: Benjamin Wilkomirski, *Fragments*

W 10/14: *Fragments* (cont.); Andrew S. Gross & Michael J. Hoffman, "Memory, Authority, and Identity: Holocaust Studies in Light of the Wilkomirski Debate"; Michael Bernard-Donals, "Beyond the Question of Authenticity: Witness and Testimony in the *Fragments* Controversy"

M 10/19: W.G. Sebald, "Air War & Literature"

W 10/21: W.G. Sebald, from *The Emigrants*

M 10/26: Günther Grass, *Crabwalk*

W 10/28: *Crabwalk* (cont.)

M 11/2: Zafer Şenocak, *Perilous Kinship*

W 11/4: *Perilous Kinship* (cont.); Andreas Huyssen, "Diaspora and Memory"; G. Steinmetz & J. Hell, "The Visual Archive of Colonialism"

M 11/9: Margarethe von Trotta, *Marianne and Juliane* (F)

W 11/11: Volker Schlöndorff, *The Legend of Rita* (F)

M 11/16: Uli Edel, *The Baader Meinhof Complex* (F)

W 11/18: Oliver Hirschbiegel, *Downfall* (F) & debates (Wenders et al)

M 11/23: Max Färberböck, *A Woman in Berlin* (F)

W 11.25: **Thanksgiving**

M 11/30: Wolfgang Becher, *Good Bye Lenin!* (F);; Roger F. Cook, "Recharting the Skies above Berlin: Nostalgia East and West"; Paul Cooke, "Ostalgie's Not What it Used to Be: The German Television GDR Craze of 2003"; other texts on "Ostalgie" TBA

W 12/2: Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, *The Lives of Others* (F)

M 12/7: Holocaust memorial debates (Jane Kramer et al.), Palast der Republik/Stadtschloß debates

W 12/9: Review & conclusion

Internet Resources:

Goethe Institut site "Konstruktion der Erinnerung"/"Constructed Memory":

<http://www.goethe.de/ges/ztg/dos/dos/ern/enindex.htm> (English)

<http://www.goethe.de/ges/ztg/dos/dos/ern/deindex.htm> (German)

University of Giessen Sonderforschungsbereich Erinnerungskulturen/Collaborative Research Centre Memory Cultures:

<http://www.uni-giessen.de/erinnerungskulturen/home/sfb-konzept.html> (German)

<http://www.uni-giessen.de/erinnerungskulturen/home/sfb-concept.php> (English)