German Studies

German Studies exposes students to the language, literature, and culture of the German speaking areas of Central Europe. Concentrators combine intensive study of the German language with interdisciplinary studies by complementing courses from the German Studies core program with courses from other departments that deal with topics from the German cultural tradition. The quest for national identity that dominated German history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been augmented by contemporary Germany’s efforts to come to terms with its past and create new ways of dealing with diversity. Our curriculum therefore looks back at the German literary, cultural, and historical tradition, examining figures from Goethe or Christa Wolf to Marx, Freud, Nietzsche, and Heidegger, alongside the “texts” of contemporary German media, including television, film, and music. Most concentrators study abroad for one or two semesters.

Standard program for the A.B. degree

Many students elect to complete a double concentration, combining German Studies with one of the above areas, or with fields such as International Relations or Economics, Comparative Literature or History of Art and Architecture.

Knowledge of the German language is not required for declaring a concentration in German Studies. However, since language fluency is the basis for sophisticated understanding of German culture, students must meet a language requirement by the time they graduate.

Concentration Requirements

• Nine courses beyond GRMN 0400 or GRMN 0450;
• At least six of the nine courses must be at the 1000-level (or higher);
• Two of the 1000-level courses must involve writing assignments in German, and students must obtain at least a grade of B in these courses;
• At least five of the nine courses must be taken in the Department of German Studies (or four if a student spends a whole year in Germany on Study Abroad);
• Completion of a Senior Seminar during the senior year (i.e. a course from the German Studies 1900 series) as part of the five courses within the Department of German Studies; and
• If a student studies abroad for one semester, as many as four courses, in the case of two semesters, as many as five courses, from study abroad may count toward the concentration.

Honors

Candidates for honors will be expected to have a superior record in departmental courses and will have to be approved by the Department of German Studies. Honors candidates must take one additional course at the 1000-level from the German studies offerings and present an acceptable Senior Honors Thesis. The additional course may be used for preparation of the honors thesis. Students are encouraged to discuss their thesis topics with the concentration advisor no later than the third week of classes in Fall of their Senior year.