

## IWU Kassel Course Outline: Reflections on German History: Literature and Art of the 19th and 20th centuries

### CLASS HOURS

45 Contact Hours incl. excursions and field trips + Preparation work; 5 ECTS credits

### ACADEMIC DIRECTOR

PD Dr. Kai Földner

Director of the Museum of Natural History Kassel and Municipal Museum Kassel

- Contact: Steinweg 2, 34117 Kassel

- Email: [iwu@uni-kassel.de](mailto:iwu@uni-kassel.de)

### 1) COURSE CONTENTS

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

*Reflections on German History: Literature and Art of the 19th and 20th Century*

In this seminar we will take a closer look at the so-called `Goethe-Zeit`. We will try to understand what led to Nietzsche's dictum that Goethe himself was culture. In order to do so, we will have a look at his major works and will be introduced to Goethe's concept to bring poetry and science together within the thinking. Thus, we will analyse Goethe as a scientist, i.e. Goethe's theory of colour and the "Goethe-Elephant."

In the second part of the seminar we will focus on the second half of the 19th century, during which time Nietzsche proclaimed the superman ("Übermensch") in accordance with his central thesis of the "will to power." This thesis had a great impact on the following decades as did his diagnoses concerning a fundamental change in the hierarchy of values which describe the Christian morality as "overcome". Nietzsche's type of thinking was later called "philosophy of life" and influenced many authors like Thomas Mann.

The seminar closes with a third topic: Revolutionary art movements in Germany. On a excursion to Weimar, a small town in Thuringia which had become a cultural melting pot during Goethe's time, we will see many cultural relicts of the time and we will explore the artefacts of the revolutionary art movements in Germany, like the 'Bauhaus', which was founded in Weimar, and Expressionism.

Further field trips include visits of museums in the Kassel area, like the Museum of the Brothers Grimm or the Ottoneum, which was the first fixed theatre in Germany and serves as a place for exhibitions these days. Among others, it is famous for the so-called 'Goethe Elephant', which Goethe used for his studies.

The content of this seminar is influenced and led by the areas of interest on the students' part. The lecture will hence put special emphasis and provide background information on particular topics the students want to know more about.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

The content of this seminar is influenced and led by the areas of interest on the students' part. The lecture will hence put special emphasis and provide background information on particular topics the students want to know more about.

**COURSE MATERIALS**

- Sheehan, James J.: *German history 1770 - 1866*. Oxford 1989.
- Milward, Alan & Saul, S.B.: *The economic development of continental Europe 1780 - 1870*. London 1973.
- Kitchen, Martin: *The political economy of Germany 1815 - 1914*. Montreal 1973.
- James, Howard Mumford: *Revolution and Romanticism*. Cambridge, London 1974.n.n.

Further material will be provided during the course.

**2. CLASS PARTICIPATION, ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS**

**PROFESSIONALISM AND CLASS PARTICIPATION**

Regular participation in classes and excursions (attendance lists); active contribution to discussions is expected. Optional: a presentation or paper can be given

**ASSIGNMENTS**

Presentation / paper, homework

**EXAM**

Students have to write an exam (written exam) covering all seminar topics at the end of the course (2h)

**3. GRADING AND ECTS**

**ACADEMIC STANDARDS**

Upon successful completion 5 ECTS will be awarded

**GRADING SCALE**

German Grade	Definition
Very good (1.0 - 1.3)	Outstanding achievement
Good (1.7 - 2.3)	Performance above the average standard
Satisfactory (2.7 - 3.3)	Performance meets the average standard
Sufficient (3.7 - 4.0)	In spite of errors performance conforms to requirements
Fail (4.3 - 5.0)	Does not meet minimum criteria