GERMAN STUDIES

Faculty: Eren (Department of Modern Languages)

The German Studies program at Randolph-Macon College invites you to explore the rich languages, literatures, histories, and cultures of German-speaking communities in Europe and beyond. The program helps you become a global citizen—ready to thrive in diverse cultural and professional environments. Courses at all levels are designed to immerse students in the language through real-life communication in a variety of settings—on campus and abroad. A multifaceted study of another culture sensitizes students to realities other than their own, and encourages them to become more understanding of cultural differences.
In its full range of courses, the German program of the Modern Languages Department seeks to develop student proficiency in four areas:

- listening,
- speaking,
- reading,
- and writing.

Students are encouraged to take advantage of exciting study abroad opportunities, including semester- and year-long programs in Marburg, as well as exchange programs with universities in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland through our ISEP affiliation.

The German Minor is ideal for students looking to broaden their horizons and complement majors in fields like psychology, political science, biology, environmental studies, and more. We also encourage students of junior and senior status to participate in field studies and projects that will enable them to enter the fields of business, industry, government, health, or social services. Internships provide several weeks of practical application of knowledge related to German culture and language. See also Internship Program.

- German Studies Minor (https://catalog.rmc.edu/programs/german/german-minor/)

GERM 111 - Elementary German (3 Hours)
This course introduces students to the German speaking world through the development of four core skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Over two semesters, students will master the fundamentals of German grammar, interpret authentic texts, and build a broad vocabulary applicable to real-life situations. Taught in German.
Curriculum: FL

GERM 112 - Elementary German (3 Hours)
This course is the second half of the introductory German sequence and builds on the skills developed in the first semester. Students will continue to strengthen their linguistic skills, with an emphasis on effective communication. They will deepen their understanding of fundamental German grammar, expand their working vocabulary, and develop their ability to communicate in real-life situations. Taught in German.
Prerequisite(s): GERM 111 or placement

Curriculum: FL

GERM 215 - Intensive Intermediate German (4 Hours)
This course builds on German grammar, vocabulary, linguistic skills(reading, writing, speaking, and listening), and knowledge of German culture introduced at in the elementary level. By the end of 215, students should reach the minimum ACTFL standards for the intermediate level. Offered fall term.
Prerequisite(s): GERM 112 or GERM 215 placement

Curriculum: FL

GERM 245 - Conversation and Film:The Context of the Two Wars (3 Hours)
Conversation and Film: Perspectives on Lives in the Context of the Two Wars focuses on the period of Weimar Germany and discusses how World War I and II affected German society and culture. Students will be able to apply their critical thinking skills to a range of films, texts, and examples of visual art and music to reflect upon the nature of the political and social changes that influenced and shaped individual lives. Students will learn for example of the spirit of the German sextet Comedian Harmonists that rose to worldwide fame in the 1920s and 1930s before being forced to disband by the rise of anti-Semitism. As a companion to the films, students will also read Stefanie Zweig's autobiographical account of her family's risky self-exile to escape Nazi persecution. A close reading of Bernhard Schlink's novel The Reader allows for an exploration of post-war German society and how it comes to terms with the Holocaust and the War in Germany. A review of selected grammar topics will also be an important aspect of this class. In German. Offered alternative years.
Prerequisite(s): GERM 215 or GERM Proficiency

Curriculum: AE,HU,WA

GERM 251 - Topics in German Literature (3 Hours)
An introduction to literary interpretation designed to enable students to engage in effective analysis of a variety of literary genres. Given in German. Offered alternate years.
Prerequisite(s): GERM 215 or GERM Proficiency

GERM 273 - Intro to German Business Culture (3 Hours)
Companies of the German-speaking world enjoy worldwide a brilliant reputation for innovation, quality, and pioneering technology. In today's global economy, German companies attract business partners from around the world. This course presents an introduction to the German business world and the language used in business settings. It provides students with a jump-start on how to use German in specific business-related contexts and develop a better understanding of the German corporate culture. Throughout the semester students will practice reading, writing, listening, and speaking subject matters relevant to the German-language business context.
Prerequisite(s): GERM 215 or GERM Proficiency

GERM 305 - Culture of Birth, Culture of Migration (3 Hours)
This course offers a broad exploration of recent German history through the themes of migration and cultural exchange. Through an interdisciplinary study, students will analyze literary, visual, and musical representations of individuals and migrant groups navigating life in society, as portrayed in German literature, film, music, and art. Students will examine the work of multiethnic writers and artists, including those with roots in Turkey, Africa, Asia, and Jewish communities, examining how their perspectives contribute to the broader understanding of postwar and contemporary German society. Students will also engage with a range of historical and social contexts-such as labor migration, citizenship policies, German reunification, and international economic shifts-to better understand the forces shaping these narratives. Themes and concepts include borders and boundaries, identity, social status, religion, and interpersonal relationships, as they appear in narratives dealing with questions of integration, displacement, and national belonging. Course conducted in German. Offered occasionally.
Prerequisite(s): one course above GERM 215

GERM 315 - The German Novelle (3 Hours)
A brief history of the European Novelle and a close reading of selected works by 19th and 20th century German writers. A prior familiarity with other genres in German literature is recommended for a more complete appreciation and understanding of the unique character of the German Novelle. There will be close textual analysis of the Novellen, which will be read in German, supplemented by critical writings in both English and German. By the end of the semester, students will be expected to have read representative works by the major authors of German Novellen of this period and to be able to explain their unique characters in proper historical and literary critical perspectives. The ability to read and understand contemporary German is essential. Offered every three years.
Prerequisite(s): one course above GERM 215

Curriculum: AE,HU,WA

GERM 317 - Enchanted: German Fairytales (3 Hours)
In this course you will investigate the function of fantasy, the fantastic, science fiction, and the supernatural in 19th century German society. Specifically, we will discuss fairy tales and how these narratives function as a site of cultural critique within the socio-political context of German Romanticism. We encounter instances of the grotesque and the macabre, of the mysterious and the uncanny, all the way to the outright monstrous and the sublime. Questions that guide us through the course are: In what ways do the works discussed mirror modern life experience? How do monsters and other (evil) creatures of the imagination interrelate to German culture and society? As fairy tales thrive because of their universal nature, our investigation will be interdisciplinary, with approaches such as literary, historical, sociological, feminist, and psychoanalytic. Offered every three years.
Prerequisite(s): one course above GERM 215

GERM 328 - The Artificial Body in German Culture (4 Hours)
This course offers an in-depth exploration of historical and visual representations of the artificial body in German culture. Through an interdisciplinary study, students will examine Western culture's enduring fascination with and fear of scientific and technological advancements. Central to the course are concepts such as the homunculus, android, cyborg, and other (non-)humans, analyzed in relation to evolving ideas of technology, sexuality, and identity from the Enlightenment to the modern era. Key themes include the definition of the body, the construction of gender roles, the creation of humanoids, and contemporary discourses surrounding technology and identity. The course focuses on the works by E.T.A. Hoffmann, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and Friedrich Dürrenmatt, alongside cinematic texts such as Fritz Lang's Metropolis (1927), to explore the role of technology and what it means to be human in an increasingly automized world. Students will develop critical reading, analytical, and writing skills, with class discussions and brief lectures supported by visual materials such as film clips, artworks, and documentary excerpts. Students may not receive credit for both FLET 228 and GERM 328. Offered occasionally.
Prerequisite(s): one course above GERM 215

GERM 373 - Advanced Business German (3 Hours)
This advanced business course will help students to communicate in German professionally. It provides students with an overview of how to use German in specific business-related contexts and function in various business settings. With a focus on the larger context within which it is situated (political/economical system), students will discuss economic and political issues (a subscription to a free German news service is mandatory) and practice "hands-on" experience with everyday situations. Students will work on topics such as current economic and political events related to the EU, environmental issues, recent historical events, cultural issues that inform business practices, job search and job interviews, office organization and equipment, social meetings with business partners and small talk. Given in German with English used on discussions related to intercultural communication and differences between German and American business culture. Offered occasionally.
Prerequisite(s): one course above GERM 215

GERM 381 - Special Topics (3 Hours)
Prerequisite(s): one course above GERM 215

GERM 382 - Special Topics (3 Hours)
Prerequisite(s): one course above GERM 215