

German Identities. Continuities and Discontinuities since 1800

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FU-BEST Course Number:	-
Live Sessions	Wednesday, 9 – 10:30 a.m. CET (Berlin time)
Duration	Feb. 10 – May 12, 2021
Language of Instruction:	English
Contact Hours	30
ECTS Credits	4

Course Description

What is Germany? Who is German? Who defines und who decides – politicians, academics, collective groups, or anyone for oneself? How does it “feel” to be German emotionally? What makes one a German and who might think to be more German than others? What is Germany, and where is Germany? Since when does Germany exist? How many Germanys are there? And, finally, what do others think about Germany?

These questions will be discussed in a course that is covering the still ongoing and ever-changing German discourses on the search for “German-ness”, that is, a national identity rooted in common historical experiences. We will look at how these processes of national “identity-building” have unfolded in German history since 1800. How have history, philosophy, politics, and culture been intertwined in Germany in the past, and what is “German” today – as seen by Germans and others? Throughout the course’s chronology, we will investigate to what extent, if at all, the historical debates we analyze still play into present-day understandings of being German.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this course students will be able to critically engage in discussions about national (self-)perceptions and stereotypes. They will have acquired basic theoretical knowledge of stereotyping and are prepared to relate this knowledge to mechanisms and topics of collective identity-building. They will know fundamental facts about the course of German history and dominant societal issues since 1800. Altogether, this knowledge will enable them to categorize and interpret historical and existing stereotypes and clichés on “the Germans”. Finally, they know the multi-layered meanings of concepts central to the construction of a collective national identity, like “Nation”, “Volk”, “Heimat”, or “Bildung”, as well as the political debates about these concepts.

Student Prerequisites

Students should have completed at least three semesters of higher education when the course starts and need to possess English language abilities in speaking and writing on the Upper Intermediate Level (at least B2, preferably above).

General Requirements

Attendance of the weekly live sessions is mandatory (for the specific time slot, see above). These live sessions will be combined with recorded video lessons and intensive work through the online course platform, both individually and in groups. Please see course requirements for the various formats and weight of the course assignments as well as forms of assessment.

This course features a certain amount of independent coursework and thus expects you to be able to set up a self-disciplined study routine. We recommend that you make sure to have a quiet and appropriate working space. To ensure a comfortable learning environment for all, please adhere to our [Code of Online Conduct](#).

Technical Requirements

Stable internet connection.

Fully functional device, such as computer, laptop or tablet (use of smart phones is not recommended) with camera and microphone, headset recommended.

Recommended operating systems: Windows 7 or higher or MacOS 10.13 or higher. Avoid using a VPN.

Software: Webex Meetings.

Course Requirements

Three Course Assignments: 300 Points (30%)

Midterm Exam: 250 Points (25%)

Research Paper: 250 Points (25%)

Live Online Attendance (min. 75% required) &

Participation (includes 1 independent project report and a presentation): 200 Points (20%)

Grading

FU Grade	Points of 500	Points of 1,000
1.0	490-500	980-1,000
1.3	475-489	950-979
1.7	450-474	900-949
2.0	425-449	850-899
2.3	400-424	800-849
2.7	375-399	750-799
3.0	350-374	700-749
3.3	325-349	650-699
3.7	300-324	600-649
4.0	250-299	500-599
5.0	< 250	< 500

Literature

Provided online.

Course Schedule

Calendar	Topics, Reading, etc.
Week 1	<p>“Germanness”. Constructing and deconstructing collective identities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective identity building and identity politics • The German “Volk”: Reality or Imagination?
Week 2	<p>“Barbarians, poets and philosophers, or football machines”. Germans seen from outside: continuities and discontinuities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stereotypes and Prejudices • Perceptions and Attributions
Week 3	<p>Birth of the Modern. Literature, philosophy, and culture around 1800</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Bürgerlichkeit”: The quest for freedom and equality • “Weltliteratur und Weltbürgertum”. Germany and the (imagined) world • Weimar: model city and society
Week 4	<p>Germany as “belated nation”. The twisted tracks towards a German nation state</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prussia or Austria? German powers before the German nation-state • German Regionalism • Blood and Iron? The Foundation of the German Reich 1871
Week 5	<p>Germans and their “others”. Minorities and minority politics in the German Empire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National minorities (Poles, Frenchmen, Danes) • Antisemitism and racism
Week 6	<p>Did Weimar fail? Democratic traditions and antidemocratic movements in Germany before National Socialism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “Weimar Republic”, its destruction, and legacy • The Volkish movement • Anti-Modernism as social movement

<p>Week 7</p>	<p>National Socialism, Holocaust and German memory cultures after 1945</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memory politics in the two German states • Memory and democracy • Challenges to the memorialization of NS and Holocaust
<p>Week 8</p>	<p>“Made in Germany”. The “economic miracle” and the social security state of West Germany</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Westernization” • Social market economy • Consumer culture
<p>Week 9</p>	<p>“Sovietification”? The German Democratic Republic as a Socialist state</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collectivization and nationalization of the economy • The Stasi system • Everyday life
<p>Week 10</p>	<p>“1968”. The student rebellion, new social movements, and the “second democratization” of (West) Germany</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1968 as turning point • “Daring more democracy” • Left-wing terrorism in the 1970s
<p>Week 11</p>	<p>1989. Two states, one nation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDR opposition movement • Fall of the Wall and reunification • The “great transformation” of the East
<p>Week 12</p>	<p>European Germany or Germanic Europe? Germany’s role within unified Europe since 1989</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Europeanization • Germany as European hegemon

Week 13

“New Germans” and “Post-Nationalism”. Discourses on nation, ethnicity, and belonging in the age of migration

- Germany as a country of immigration
- The modernization of citizenship laws
- Return of nation and “Volk” since 2015?