

## Land Acknowledgement

UBC's campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the *xwməθkwəyəm* (Musqueam) people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on in their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.



*Image: UBC Campus featuring clock tower and the IKB Learning Centre.*

### **GERM 406A 001: Selected Topics**

Putting German Studies into Action  
The University of British Columbia  
Dept. Central, Eastern, & Northern European Studies

Winter 2022 T2 | 3 Credits  
Mon/Wed | 11:00am-12:30pm  
Irving K Barber Learning Centre 461

### **Contact Information**

Instructor: Dr. Ervin Malakaj (he/him)  
Student Hours: Mondays 4-5pm & by appt  
Office Location: Buchanan Tower 927  
Email: [ervin.malakaj@ubc.ca](mailto:ervin.malakaj@ubc.ca)

### **Course Description & Goals**

This course explores the intersection of German studies as an academic discipline and community work. We will read scholarship on the value and relevance of the humanities, crucial approaches to care and community work, and will reflect how language learning and culture studies can be foundations for good relations. The readings and reflection will serve as foundation for a number of “putting German studies into action” initiatives developed by the class. We will ask ourselves: what different forms of community can emerge from the intellectual and relational pursuits at the core of German studies?

Each session will follow a variation of the following structure: 1. An introduction to the session with a short lecture on key historical or intellectual background required for discussion. 2. Structured group work in which students work collaboratively to generate answers to a series of questions about course material and engage in guided discussion about material. 3. A guided, open discussion in which students share their findings with the course. 4. Wrap-up lecture with comments about how daily discussion relates to upcoming lectures/course work.

## Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to

- **describe** select developments in the social, economic, and cultural history informing Germanophone cultural production of the modern era
- **discuss, analyze, and interpret** representative texts with a concern about how cultural engagement is the foundation for community
- **describe, discuss, analyze, and interpret** written and visual material using standard tools of cultural analysis

Consult the schedule below for detailed outcomes affiliated with each unit of the course.

### Grade Breakdown

Self-Assessment/Participation	20%
Reading Questions & Reflections	15%
Midterm Essay	30%
Final Project	35%

### Grading Scale

A+ (90-100%)	A (85-89)	A- (80-84)
B+ (76-79)	B (72-75)	B- (68-71)
C+ (64-67)	C (60-63)	C- (55-59)
D (50-54)	F (0-49)	

## Reading and Viewing Materials

All the texts are available online on our Course Reserves/Canvas Site.

The URL for our course reserves site is: <https://courses.library.ubc.ca/c.4XnpwQ>. You can also reach the course reserves site through our Canvas site. There you will find the following texts:

1. Lauren Berlant, "The Commons: Infrastructures for Troubling Times" (PDF)
2. Michelle Blackwell, "UBC Library Acquires the Personal Archive of Hanne Wassermann Walker" [LINK](#)
3. Slatan Dudow, *Kuhle Wampe* (film)
4. The Getty Research Institute, "Bauhaus: Building the New Artist" [LINK](#)
5. Walter Gropius, "The Theory and Organization of the Bauhaus" (PDF)
6. Michael Haneke, *The White Ribbon* (film)
7. Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, "Against Management: Watermelon Mannishness" [LINK](#)
8. Yuliya Komska, Michelle Moyd, and David Gramling. *Linguistic Disobedience: Restoring Power to Civic Language*. New York: Palgrave, 2019.
9. Audre Lorde, "Poetry is Not a Luxury" [LINK](#)
10. Elizabeth Otto, "Introduction: Embodying the Bauhaus" (PDF)
11. Christian Petzold, *Transit* (film)
12. Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, "Care Webs: Experiments in Creating Collective Access" (PDF)
13. Hithu Sanyal, "Home" [LINK](#)
14. Sasha Marianna Salzmann, "Visible" [LINK](#)
15. Smithsonian Museum, "Show off Your Story: How to Create an Exhibition" [LINK](#)
16. Carolyn Steedman, "The Space of Memory: In an Archive" (PDF)
17. Kyla Wazana Tompkins, "We Aren't Here to Learn What We Already Know" [LINK](#)
18. Robert Walser, "Berlin Life" stories (PDF)
19. Clara Zetkin, "The Struggle against Fascism" (PDF)

## Self-Assessment & Other Participation Assignments

An ideal setting for the course is achieved when we are all present, prepared, and eager to engage the material in our class. Engagement takes place differently for different people: being engaged can take place by responding to class discussions, contributing in small group discussions, asking for clarification, agreeing with the point someone makes in class, respectfully challenging a point someone made in class, etc. Some people are more vocal during class discussions and others will be more vocal in small group discussions. The point here is that you will have different venues in which you can contribute your ideas and, as such, are expected to engage on some level regularly throughout our course.

One of the main aspirations of the course will be to help you develop communication skills on complex topics. To this end, I will develop material and prepare exercises, which will facilitate the development of such skills; however, the activities don't work without *your* contribution. Meaning, even though you may not be a vocal participant in other contexts, think of our class as a perfect venue in which you can practice being more vocal.

What does it mean to be prepared? You will succeed in our class by preparing the material for the days on which it is assigned. Reading and viewing, for our purposes, are not passive activities: take notes about things you found engaging, confusing, illuminating, frustrating in a given text. Those notes (in the margins, on printouts, in notebooks) will come in handy when you are asked to tell your classmates about your reading experience. Being prepared also means that you should bring the text to class in some fashion (hard copy or digital). As for attendance, you will succeed in the course by attending regularly and being on time for class sessions.

You will be asked to submit four progress reports in which you assess your own contributions to class. You will find detailed information about what this entails on our course Canvas site. In addition, you will be asked to complete assignments throughout the semester. These and the self-assessment assignments will inform the self-assessment/participation portion of your final grade.

### **Reading Questions and Reflection**

In preparation for each session for which you are asked to engage with scholarly, literary, and visual material, you are asked to provide two critical questions that are intended to generate discussion in class. You will receive guidance on this process in the first week of class. At the end of the week, you will be required to submit these questions as an assignment. This assignment can also feature your personal responses to the material. These can be in German or English.

### **Midterm Essay**

You will complete a written assignment for our class that will serve as your midterm. This assignment will give you a chance to showcase what you have learned in the course. You will receive prompts for the project with detailed specifications ahead of deadline.

### **Final Project**

For the final project, you will develop a "Putting German Studies into Action" project proposal. This assignment will give you a chance to showcase what you have learned in the course. You will receive prompts for the project with detailed specifications ahead of deadline.

### **Inclusive Course**

You will effectively learn in an inclusive space that continues to challenge you intellectually. I will strive to foster such a space in the classroom and in online forums used for class. Most of all, *YOU* are required to contribute to the shaping of such an inclusive and intellectually stimulating setting by honoring the diverse backgrounds, statuses, and experiences of your fellow students. Please communicate to me any concerns or needs that immediately relate to your learning in this regard.

### **Communication**

Communication is essential for your success in our course. I will send you regular updates about class via email and will post to our Canvas site. For this reason, you should regularly (i.e., daily) check your official UBC email account and our Canvas site for important announcements about our course.

If you send me an email, please use the standard format for addressing faculty or standards employed in professional communication. Begin an email with a salutation such as "Dear Dr. Malakaj: . . ." and you can close with "Best/Yours/Sincerely, . . ." I will respond to your email within one or two business days and usually do not respond to email on weekends. During professional travel (unlikely during pandemic!), I will be unavailable via email but will respond to your inquiries as soon as I return to campus.

### **Academic Accommodation**

If you require any accommodation that can improve your experience in and facilitate success in the classroom, please reach out to me. Moreover, be sure to consult the Vancouver Academic Calendar, which provides helpful information about the services to which you have access as UBC student. For more info: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,34,0,0>. Here is an excerpt from the Calendar:

The University of British Columbia recognizes its moral and legal duty to provide academic accommodation. The University must remove barriers and provide opportunities to students with a disability, enabling them to access university services, programs, and facilities and to be welcomed as participating members of the University community. The University's goal is to ensure fair and consistent treatment of all students, including students with a disability, in accordance with their distinct needs and in a manner consistent with academic principles.

The UBC Centre for Accessibility can provide accommodations that enable successful classroom experiences for students with accessibility needs. For more information, visit: <https://students.ubc.ca/about-student-services/centre-for-accessibility>.

### **Academic Integrity**

The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise, and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment or exam and more serious consequences may apply if the matter is referred to the President's Advisory Committee on Student Discipline. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences.

I'd be happy to discuss this with you in more detail. You can also find more info about UBC's official academic integrity policy here: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,286,0,0>.

### **Technology/Other Distractions/Food in the Classroom**

Technology has enhanced academic life tremendously and continues to impact our work! I love technology as much as you do. It can be a great asset to your experience in our class. To this end, you might like to take notes on laptops or tablets and might like to consult resources during class. However, technology can be distracting and can negatively impact your learning and that of your fellow students. Please refrain from texting and other distracting communication, which includes working with materials not required for course, online shopping, and completing assignments for another class.

Sometimes we lose track of time. Or things happen. If you have to eat in class, try to be as considerate of the other people in class as possible. When possible, try to eat before or after class.

### **Content Warning**

Our class will feature written and/or visual material which depicts violence. The written and visual texts are not included in our syllabus because of an interest to engage gratuitously in violence. We will instead approach these texts intellectually and assess in which ways and why violent material is deployed in a given cultural text. I respect your perspective and will be very glad to discuss this with you individually.

### **Personal and Intellectual Support for Learning**

UBC provides a number of services to help students succeed in learning and being in our campus community. This includes services on topics such as academics, money, immigration, health and wellbeing. You can find out more information about various programs following this link: <https://students.ubc.ca/support>. If you feel comfortable, reach out to me. I can try to provide additional information about available resources.

**Copyright**

All materials of this course (course handouts, lecture slides, assessments, course readings, etc.) are the intellectual property of the Course Instructor or licensed to be used in this course by the copyright owner. Redistribution of these materials by any means without permission of the copyright holder(s) constitutes a breach of copyright and may lead to academic discipline. I do not permit students to record classes.

**German Studies and Modern European Studies @UBC**

You can complement the work you do in our course by enrolling in other courses offered in the German Program, the Modern European Studies Program, or other coursework in the Department of Central, Eastern, and Northern European Studies. We offer exciting minors and majors in language and culture studies, as well as interdisciplinary studies. For more information about these programs, check out the department website ([cenes.ubc.ca](http://cenes.ubc.ca)) or reach out to me! I'd be glad to put you in touch with the advisors for these programs.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

The semester schedule is not absolute. I will adjust it as needed to suit the needs of the class.

### UNIT 1: Setting the Stage

Upon successful completion of this unit, students will be able to

- recall select critical approaches to culture studies
- recall pertinent information from theoretical texts and apply it in the service of community work
- develop takes on theoretical texts in collaboration with other members of the classroom community

<b>Week 1</b>		
	<b>Prepare for Class</b>	<b>Work in Class</b>
Mon., Jan. 9	Syllabus	Introductions Introduction to the Course Lorde on Poetry & Poetry Exercise
Wed., Jan. 11	Wazana Tompkins, "We Aren't Here to Learn What We Already Know"	Engaging with Complicated Cultural Products Conversation as Community Practice
<b>Week 2</b>		
	<b>Prepare for Class</b>	<b>Work in Class</b>
Mon., Jan. 16	Komska, Moyd, Gramling, "Introduction" & "Critique"	Critique as Practice of Good Relations
Wed., Jan. 18	Harney and Moten, "Against Management"	The Perils of Individuation  <b>Due: reading questions/reflection</b>
<b>Week 3</b>		
	<b>Prepare for Class</b>	<b>Work in Class</b>
Mon., Jan. 23	Berlant, "The Commons"	How to Build Collectives around Ideas
Wed., Jan. 25	Piepzna-Samarasinha, "Care Webs"	Disability Justice and Care Webbing  <b>Due: self-assessment</b> <b>Due: reading questions/reflection</b>

### Unit 2: Working with Cultural Texts

Upon successful completion of this unit, students will be able to

- recall pertinent information about select cultural texts
- analyze visual and written texts pertinent for German studies with a focus on community
- develop takes on cultural texts in collaboration with other members of the classroom community

<b>Week 4</b>		
	<b>Prepare for Class</b>	<b>Work in Class</b>
Mon., Jan. 30	Walser, "Berlin Life"	Experiencing the Past Through Literature
Wed., Feb. 1	Petzold, <i>Transit</i>	Getting Lost in History Film Studies as Community Work  <b>Due: reading questions/reflection</b>
<b>Week 5</b>		
	<b>Prepare for Class</b>	<b>Work in Class</b>
Mon., Feb. 6	Kleist, "The Earthquake in Chile"	Rupture and New Beginnings
Wed., Feb. 8	Sanyal, "Home"	The Trouble with Belonging  <b>Due: reading questions/reflection</b>
<b>Week 6</b>		
	<b>Prepare for Class</b>	<b>Work in Class</b>
Mon., Feb. 13	Haneke, <i>The White Ribbon</i>	Bad Relations
Wed., Feb. 15	Salzmann, "Visible"	Who Gets to Act in the World?  <b>Due: midterm paper</b>

<b>Week 7</b>	<b>Prepare for Class</b>	<b>Work in Class</b>
Mon., Feb. 20	<b>No class: mid-term break!</b>	<b>No class: mid-term break!</b>
Wed., Feb. 22	<b>No class: mid-term break!</b>	<b>No class: mid-term break!</b>
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>Prepare for Class</b>	<b>Work in Class</b>
Mon., Feb. 27	Dudow, <i>Kuhle Wampe</i>	Change in the World
Wed., Mar. 1	Zetkin, "The Struggle Against Fascism"	Resisting Violence  <b>Due: self-assessment</b> <b>Due: reading questions/reflection</b>

### Unit 3: Putting German Studies into Action

Upon successful completion of this unit, students will be able to

- apply the theories and cultural histories explored in class in the service of community projects
- develop own cultural analysis to be shared with the public

<b>Week 9</b>	<b>Prepare for Class</b>	<b>Work in Class</b>
Mon., Mar. 6	Blackwell, "UBC Library acquires the Personal Archive of Hanne Wassermann Walker"	Workshop: Rare Books and Special Collections
Wed., Mar. 8	Steedman, "The Space of Memory: In an Archive"	Workshop: Rare Books and Special Collections  <b>Due: reading questions/reflection</b>
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>Prepare for Class</b>	<b>Work in Class</b>
Mon., Mar. 13	Read Midterm Essay & Prepare Revision Plan	Workshop: publishing in <i>Augenblick</i>
Wed., Mar. 15	Revise Midterm Essay Find Accompanying Image	Workshop: publishing in <i>Augenblick</i>  <b>Due: self-assessment</b> <b>Due: watch party assignment</b>
<b>Week 11</b>	<b>Prepare for Class</b>	<b>Work in Class</b>
Mon., Mar. 20	Miller and Denham, "How to View a Building"  Gropius, "The Theory and Organization of the Bauhaus"	Excursion: Buchanan Complex – Bauhaus Description Exercise
Wed., Mar. 22	Otto, "Embodying the Bauhaus"	Workshop: planning a dossier on UBC/Bauhaus for <i>Augenblick</i>  <b>Due: reading questions/reflection</b>
<b>Week 12</b>	<b>Prepare for Class</b>	<b>Work in Class</b>
Mon., Mar. 27	The Getty Research Institute, "Bauhaus: Building the New Artist"	Workshop: Examination of Materials
Wed., Mar. 29	Smithsonian Museum, "Show off Your Story: How to Create an Exhibition"	Workshop: Development of Action Plan (What do we need to make this happen?)  <b>Due: German Program outcomes discussion board</b>
<b>Week 13</b>	<b>Prepare for Class</b>	<b>Work in Class</b>
Mon., Apr. 3	Group Action Plan	Workshop: production and design of exhibit
Wed., Apr. 5	Group Action Plan	Workshop: installation and promotion  <b>Due: self-assessment</b>

<b>Week 14</b>	<b>Prepare for Class</b>	<b>Work in Class</b>
Mon., Apr. 10	<b>No Class: Easter Monday</b>	<b>No Class: Easter Monday</b>
Wed., Apr. 12	Finishing touches on exhibit	Exhibit opening and presentations

**Final project: submit the final project to me through our Canvas site by Friday, April 21, 11:59pm.**