

Courses in English Course Description

Department	13 General and Interdisciplinary Studies
Course title	Germany Today: issues, cultures, identities
Hours per week (SWS)	2
Number of ECTS credits	2
Course objective	Upon successful completion of the course students will have acquired more knowledge of events and developments in Germany after WWII, with special emphasis on contemporary Germany. They will have gained a greater understanding of the diversity of German culture(s) and ideally have been enabled to interact better with their German counterparts in everyday life. This is a course aimed at international (exchange) students who would like to get beyond outdated and/or stereotypical images of Germany and "the" Germans. Germans who are interested are welcome, too.
Prerequisites	Very good English skills, knowledge of German not necessary.
Recommended reading	Mattelart, A. (2003). Kleine Geschichte der Informationsgesellschaft. Berlin: Avinus Verlag. More literature hints and direct access to materials used within the lectures are available at the course website: https://sites.google.com/site/fk13utopias
Teaching methods	The class takes a cultural studies approach. Popular culture will play a role in gaining a better understanding of events, artistic creativity in Germany, and the collective unconscious ("what makes them tick?"). Some lecture parts will alternate with in-class reading and discussion, film analysis, group work and short student presentations.
Assessment methods	Written examination; Regular attendancy is highly recommended.
Language of instruction	English
Name of lecturer	Prof. Dr. Silke Järvenpää
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Link	
Course content	Germany – to many in the world this is the country of Angst, of "Achtung, schnell, schnell", Fahrvergnügen and the Oktoberfest. And yes: Germans are not known for their unbearable lightness of being; not only Mark Twain failed trying to learn the language, Germans still make some good cars, and they do delight in ripping off drunken tourists at the world's largest beer orgy. However, contemporary Germany has so much more to offer than the clichés surrounding their people. This course will deal with a variety of issues that have been shaping German identities and cultures (for there has never been one unifying German culture!). Of course the collective psyche still is affected by the horrors of the Nazi era, but with WW II having ended 67 years ago, it is less and less of a trauma. Other developments have had an equal impact on Germany, and will be discussed: Regionalism for instance and a new ethnic diversity that came with the "guest worker" programme of the 60s; Germany's role in the European Union; reunification and the clash of West and East German value systems; the student revolutionaries of 1968 that have aged, joined the establishment and are back with a vengeance as Wutbürger ("furious NIMBY's"). A look at German family life / lives, the role(s) of women, and the attitude to children as well as alternative lifestyles will also be highly instructive. Last but not least: Germans do have a sense of humour, there are jokes and respectable comedies out there, and it remains to be seen if it travels well when translated.
Remarks	