

Courses in English Course Description

Department	13 General and Interdisciplinary Studies
Course title	Germany Today: Issues, Cultures, Identities
Course number	
Hours per week (SWS)	2
Number of ECTS credits	2
Course objective	Upon successful completion of the course, students will have an idea of what has shaped Germany after WW II, what makes Germans 'tick'- which will ideally enable them to interact better with their German counterparts on campus and off.
Prerequisites	Very good English
Recommended reading	Anne Fuchs and Katherine James-Chakraborty, Debating German Cultural Identity since 1989, Camden House: 2011; Mary Fulbrook, People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker. Yale UP: 2008; Karen Schönwälder et. al., Diversity and Contact: Immigration and Social Interaction in German cities. Palgrave Macmillan: 2016. In-class materials will be provided by professor.
Teaching methods	The class takes a Cultural Studies approach. Popular culture will play a role in getting a better understanding of events, artistic creativity in Germany, and the collective unconscious. Lecture parts will alternate with in-class reading and discussion, film analysis, group work and short student presentations.
Assessment methods	Written exam
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 the Oktoberfest, of Fahrvergnügen and of Angst. And yes, Germans are not known for their unbearable lightness of being; Mark Twain did fail to learn the "impossible German language"; and Germans (used to?) make some good cars. However, there is so much more to contemporary Germany than the clichés tell us. The course will deal with some of the issues that have shaped German identities and cultures (for there has never been just ONE German culture). Of course, the collective psyche is still affected by the horrors of the Nazi era; at the same time right extremist ideas and parties are gaining in popularity. Of course, some parts of the population still take the moral highground, e.g. vis a vis those 'aggressive and imperialist' Americans, while relying on the USA to protect them from aggressors from other directions. But much has changed in Germany after it became obvious that the golden days of cheap gas from Russia, cheap labour from China and cheap defence spending may be over for good. Germany is in need of reinventing itself – which paths will it go down is yet unknown, as is how identity shaping factors will help or hinder it: regionalism and federalism, unfinished reunification business, ambivalence about immigration and diversity.
Remarks	The course is aimed at international (exchange) students who would like to get beyond outdated and / or stereotypical views of Germany and 'the Germans'. Germans who are interested in their own culture(s) and how they are viewed by others around the world are welcome, too. Very good English mandatory; knowledge of German not necessary. Regular attendance highly recommended.