

The German Experience in North America



Location: Hopkins Hall 0246
Instructor: Dr. Berit Jany
Office: Hagerty Hall 336

Time: T R 11:10am-12:30pm
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Office Hours: T 9:30-10:30;
W,F 10:15-12

Course Description

More than 250 years ago, Benjamin Franklin worried that German immigrants “will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our Anglicizing them”. Although his prediction did not prove true, America has since experienced several waves of German immigration that had led German-Americans to make up the nation’s largest ethnic group. But what brought these Germans to America? How did they establish themselves in the new country? And, what influences have they exerted in American history and culture?

This course serves as an introduction to the history, culture, and literature of German immigrants to North America, from the 17th into the 21st century. We study reasons for migration, selected settlements, as well as stories and tales of German pioneer authors. During the semester, you will work on a project. In small teams, you will pick a topic, conduct research and interviews, and plan, prepare, film, and edit material to put together a short documentary about a topic related to the German immigrant experience.

This class is taught in English and knowledge of German is not required.

Course Objectives This course fulfills the GEC requirement. By completing the requirements for this course, you will:

- 1) acquire** an understanding of the factors that shape human activity by learning about the motives and conditions of German immigrants, the culture of their settlements, difficulties they faced, and their contributions to American life and culture.
- 2) develop** critical thinking by evaluating the role of national origin as it relates to international institutions and citizenship.
- 3) recognize** national and international diversity in shaping one’s own attitude and values as a global citizen.
- 4) improve** communication skills in class discussions, further develop writing skills through writing assignments and the production of a documentary script and project reports, and acquire digital technological skills through your work on the video project.

You will leave this course with a broadened knowledge of the German immigrant experience to North America, improved critical reading and writing skills, and the ability to analyze and synthesize information. In addition, you will develop digital media skills and gain knowledge about the different stages of developing a digital documentary video.

The readings for this course will consist of historical and cultural information, immigrant stories, and letters. Please check the syllabus for reading/discussion questions and other writing/blogging assignments. Taking notes during reading and class discussions will greatly enhance your ability to perform in this course.

Required Texts [All texts will be made available on Carmen]

Course Requirements and Grading

The final grade for this course can be broken down as follows:

Attendance & Participation	10%
Writing Assignments	10%
Quizzes	10%
Midterm	20%
Documentary & Blog	50%

(research summary 5%; research clip 5%; storyboard 5%; script 10%; documentary report 10%, documentary 15%)

Attendance/Participation (10%)

Our class meetings will be a combination of presentation, reading, and discussion. Your contribution to discussions is a vital part of this course. In order to engage in discussions, it is important that you make sure you have done all the required readings by class time.

Attendance and participation are required. Unexcused absences will affect your grade adversely, and you will miss key information regarding the various topics and concepts we discuss.

Writing Assignments (10%)

Short writing assignments for each session will help you to prepare for class discussions. While reading questions will guide you through the bi-weekly material, other writing prompts will engage you in small research tasks and more creative text production. As a result, I will assign grades based both on completion and on the level of effort and engagement that your work demonstrates.

Quizzes (10%)

Short quizzes are based on readings and materials discussed in immediate past classes (power points are posted on Carmen after each class).

Midterm (20%)

The midterm exam will consist of identification and short essay questions based on the readings and discussions in class.

Documentary and Blog (50%)

At the beginning of the semester, you will form small groups, consisting of 4 members. Each group will create a blog documenting every stage of the digital video production. You will select a topic (see list of German-American institutions in Columbus/Ohio on Carmen), summarize research, collect materials, create short “practice” clips, work on storyboards and scripts, conduct interviews, film, and edit your documentary. At the end of the semester, you will then submit a 10min. video and report on the project. Details on the individual assignments are listed in the weekly schedule and on Carmen together with a grading rubric.

Note on Appropriateness

I am genuinely interested in learning your opinions and hearing your arguments, but be aware that all responses should be appropriate in language, content, and political correctness.

Also, no cell phone in action, please! You may only use your laptops/tablets as reading devices for class materials only.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT)

The Ohio State University's *Code of Student Conduct* (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's *Code of Student Conduct* is never considered an "excuse" for academic misconduct, so I recommend that you review the Code of Student Conduct and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct. If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by university policy to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you have violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct* (i.e. committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me.

Sources of information on academic misconduct (integrity) to which you can refer include:

The Committee on Academic Misconduct Homepage (oaa.osu.edu/coam/home.html)

Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity (oaa.osu.edu/coam/tensuggestions.html)

Note on Disabilities / Mental Health:

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact me to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. I rely on the Office for Disability Services for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. If you have not previously contacted the Office for Disability Services I encourage you to do so (Office for Disability Services at (614) 292-3307, or visit 150 Pomerene Hall). Additionally, should your personal mental health become an obstacle during the quarter, please do inform me about the situation and how it affects your ability to participate in the course.