

GERMAN STUDIES MAJOR

MAJOR DESCRIPTION

The Major in German Studies provides students with a strong foundational understanding of German language, literature, and thought as they explore the rich and diverse cultures of German-speaking countries. The department offers courses both in German, at all levels of proficiency, and in English. The department's interdisciplinary program is organized around three major periods in German history: Enlightenment, Weimar Classicism, and Romanticism (1650–1830); Liberalism, Modernism, Fascism (1830–1945); and Cold War, Postmodernism, and Neoliberalism (post-1945). Students will strive for insight and understanding about the development of German-language cultures while achieving fluency and accuracy with spoken and written German in a variety of contexts. Study abroad in a German-speaking country is highly encouraged and supported by the department.

There are no prerequisites for students seeking to pursue the major. The department offers two sections of elementary German every semester, and the quick pace of learning in the department's language sequence enables students to study abroad as early as the spring semester of their sophomore year. The department's student body represents a diversity of intellectual backgrounds and academic interests. Students typically combine their German Studies major with an additional major, such as College of Letters, History, English, Psychology, Biology, or Computer Science.

German majors develop linguistic, transcultural, and analytic skills that can lead to advanced study and various career opportunities in fields such as international relations, business, academia, publishing, or cultural exchange.

ADMISSION TO THE MAJOR

To become a German studies major, a student should have no grade lower than a B in any language course taken in the department. All German language courses below the 300-level counted toward the major must be taken for a letter grade. The department recognizes the diversity of student interests and goals by giving its majors great flexibility in designing their programs of study. Students should work closely with their major advisors to put together coherent courses of study and assure that they will make steady progress toward their German language proficiency goals. The department strongly recommends that majors fulfill Stages I and II of the General Education Expectations.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

The German studies major requires satisfactory completion of nine credits' worth of courses. At least six credits must be earned in courses taught in German above the level of GRST102, with at least three of the six being GRST seminars at the 300-level or courses taken at a university in Germany. The remaining three courses may be in either English or German. All German language courses below the 300-level counted toward the major must be taken for a letter grade. Majors are strongly encouraged to spend a semester or a summer participating in an approved program in Germany. We encourage students to study at our Smith/Wesleyan program in Hamburg during their spring semester of the sophomore or junior year. A fall semester option is also available. Courses taken in Hamburg count toward the major, provided the subject matter is relevant to German studies and the instruction and assignments are in German. A maximum of four courses in one semester or six courses in two semesters taken in Germany may

be counted toward the major. For students who have not taken GRST213, one credit of intensive language instruction in Germany may count toward the major. Before enrolling in courses in Germany, students must obtain approval from their major advisor. Students must take at least one 300-level German studies course at Wesleyan upon their return. Please note GRST101 and GRST102 do not count towards the German Studies minor.

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

The German studies major is designed to allow students to explore the rich and diverse cultures of the German-speaking countries through a flexible interdisciplinary program that stimulates the students' creative and critical capacities and can serve as the basis for future academic or professional study or employment.

The specific goals are as follows:

- **Knowledge of the German language:** Courses are designed to enable students to achieve at least advanced mid-level proficiency in speaking and comprehending spoken German, according to the ACTFL guidelines. Students will have ample opportunity to become fluent and accurate writers in German in a variety of genres and contexts.
- **Intercultural literacy:** Students can expect to gain insight into unfamiliar cultural attitudes and artifacts, which enables them to be open-minded and competent participants in their own and foreign environments.
- **Historical breadth:** Students will be able to acquire insight into the development of German-language cultures and thought from the Enlightenment to the present and those cultures' and ideas' impact in Europe and across the globe.
- **Knowledge in the field of German studies:** Through their courses, majors become acquainted with techniques of textual interpretation, with the scope of the field, and with prevailing research methods and scholarly concerns.
- **Experience in German-speaking countries:** Students will receive strong encouragement and support to experience a German-speaking country firsthand through study abroad during the academic year or the summer, internships, thesis/capstone research, or study or teaching after graduation.

STUDY ABROAD

For more information about studying abroad in Germany, please visit our department website. (<http://www.wesleyan.edu/german/studyabroad.html>)

Please make sure to check the application procedures and deadlines for your program as well as those for Wesleyan's Office of Study Abroad (<http://www.wesleyan.edu/cgs/osa/>), located in Fisk Hall 201.

Those students for whom study abroad is not possible during the fall or spring semester should consult with the department about the possibility of taking courses during the summer.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT

See Advanced Placement Credit (http://www.wesleyan.edu/registrar/general_information/ap_ib_credit.html) information. Students with prior knowledge of German should take the online placement examination before registering for courses. For information about the placement test, please contact

Emmanuel Paris-Bouvret (eparis@wesleyan.edu) in the Fries Center for Global Studies.

PRIZES

Students who demonstrate excellence in the study of German may be candidates for prizes given from the Scott, Prentice, and Blankenagel funds. Students seeking funding for special projects or summer language study can apply for the Helmut and Erika Reihlen Fund (http://www.wesleyan.edu/german/scholarships_prizes.html).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

German Haus is a wood-frame house at 65 Lawn Avenue, with six single rooms and one double, that provides a vibrant center for German-themed events and activities on campus. Whether discussing current events over coffee and pastries, interpreting poems, watching classic or contemporary films, or hearing about faculty members' research, the residents and their guests can explore a multitude of interests.

HONORS

- **Eligibility.** To become a candidate for honors in German studies, a student must have earned a B+ or better in all German Studies courses above GRST102 taken for a grade.
- **Candidacy.** A prospectus must be handed in and approved by the prospective tutor or the department chair by the end of the Reading Period in the spring of the junior year. Enrollment in senior thesis tutorials (GRST409 and GRST410) is required. Candidates for honors in German studies and another department or program may be required to have two thesis tutors. The two departments or programs must agree in advance about the tutoring arrangement and evaluation of the honors project.
- **Honors projects.** Honors can be earned only for two-semester projects.
- **Deadlines.** Deadlines for nomination to candidacy and submission of the honors project are set by the Committee on Honors.
- **Evaluation and award of honors.** Honors projects will be evaluated by the tutor(s) and at least two other readers. A student receiving high honors may, at the department's discretion and subject to the guidelines of the Committee on Honors, be nominated to take the oral examination for University Honors.

CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

Students who wish to undertake a one-semester capstone project have wide latitude as to the topic, medium, and form they choose. They should discuss their idea with a member of the department and enroll in an individual tutorial (GRST401 or GRST402) supervised by a German studies or affiliated faculty member.