



## **CIEE Global Institute – Berlin**

<b>Course name:</b>	Contemporary German Women Writers and Berlin
<b>Course number:</b>	LITT 3002 BRGE
<b>Programs offering course:</b>	Berlin Open Campus, Berlin Global Architecture and Design
<b>Open Campus Track:</b>	Language, Literature and Culture
<b>Language of instruction:</b>	English
<b>U.S. semester credits:</b>	3
<b>Contact hours:</b>	45
<b>Term</b>	Spring 2020

### **Course Description**

This course aims to explore the literary tradition of German women writers, focusing on primary texts by 21st-century / contemporary women writers, while at the same time helping students acquire a broad knowledge of modern German culture, society and the gender politics which create the frame of reference for our understanding of the literary texts. Because many of the contemporary women writers are from Berlin, write or live in Berlin, class discussions will also illuminate the city's role in fictional writing.

### **Learning Objectives**

This course aims to provide students with

- A broad understanding of the cultural conditions that brought or bring about writing in general, and writing by German-speaking women in particular.
- An awareness of the social and historical forces that have affected women's lives and their writing during various eras of German history.
- An appreciation for diverse writing styles used by women writers
- The development of solid close reading and analytical skills

### **Methods of Instruction**

The course is divided into three main parts which structure the class throughout the six weeks:

1. Lectures / presentations about the historical background
2. The interpretation, reading and discussion of literary texts
3. Watching clips from documentaries and feature films



In-class learning experiences will be enhanced by 2-3 excursions for which participation is mandatory. Because many of the contemporary women writers are from Berlin, write or live in Berlin, class discussions will also illuminate the city's role in fictional writing. The course will moreover include the discussion of the literary canon, of the interpretation of literary texts, and last not least the question of the existence of "feminine writing".

There are two parallel lines of questioning that guide this course: What is women's writing, and how does the German context of these works matter to our reading? Following both these strands of discussion will help students better understand modern German culture and society and the gender politics that create a frame of reference for our understanding. Engaging with these texts also will help illuminate Berlin's long history as a place where gender and sexual mores are explored and questioned.

### **Assessment and Final Grade**

The course grade will be made up of the following components:

1. Presentation I:	10%
2. Presentation II:	10%
3. Presentation III:	10%
4. Midterm Exam:	25%
5. Final Essay:	25%
6. Participation:	20%
TOTAL:	100%

### **Course Requirements**

#### **Presentations**

Each student is required to give a total of three "impulse" presentations over the course of the term. Impulse presentations consist of a 10-minute talk, delivered freely with notes and supported by visual materials (Internet, YouTube, PowerPoint, slides, photos, music, etc.). Each presentation will need to be accompanied by a 1-page handout, listing the topic and main points as well as sources / resources, name of course and presenter.

#### **Midterm Exam**

There will be a short, in-class midterm exam halfway through the course. The midterm will consist of several short-answer questions, as well as a number original quotes that students will be asked



to place in the correct historical and intellectual context including explanations.

### **Final Essay**

The final essay will be an analysis (1,800-2,000 words) of one out of three topics to choose from.

### **Participation**

Participation is valued as meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared in advance of each class session and to have regular attendance. Students must clearly demonstrate they have engaged with the materials as directed, for example, through classroom discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.

### **Attendance Policy**

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and all unexcused absences will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for Open Campus and Short Term programs, unexcused absences that constitute more than 10% of the total course will result in a written warning.

Students who transfer from one CIEE class to another during the add/drop period will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of their new class, provided they were marked present for the first session(s) of their original class. Otherwise, the absence(s) from the original class carry over to the new class and count against the grade in that class.

For CIEE classes, excessively tardy (over 15 minutes late) students must be marked absent. Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as to Internship, Service Learning, or required field placement. Students who miss class for personal travel, including unforeseen delays that arise as a result of personal travel, will be marked as absent and unexcused. No make-up or re-sit opportunity will be provided.

Attendance policies also apply to any required class excursion, with the exception that some class excursions cannot accommodate any tardiness, and students risk being marked as absent if they fail to be present at the appointed time.



Unexcused absences will lead to the following penalties:

<i>Percentage of Total Course Hours Missed</i>	<i>Equivalent Number of Open Campus Semester classes</i>	<i>Minimum Penalty</i>
Up to 10%	1 content classes, or up to 2 language classes	Participation graded as per class requirements
10 – 20%	2 content classes, or 3-4 language classes	Participation graded as per class requirements; <b>written warning</b>
More than 20%	3 content classes, or 5 language classes	Automatic <b>course failure</b> , and possible expulsion

### Weekly Schedule

NOTE: this schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor to take advantage of current experiential learning opportunities.

#### **Week 1 Introduction**

Class 1:1 Discussion of syllabus and requirements; students pick presentation topics  
Tools for literary analysis  
The literary canon: what is it?

#### **Week 2 1900 – 1920s**

Class 2:1 Women's role in the Wilhelmine Period  
The education of girls and boys in the Wilhelmine Period  
Women and illness in male fiction  
Reading:  
Frank 2007

Class 2:2      The women's movement at the turn of the century  
Sexuality in the German Empire

Reading:  
Menasse 2011

**Week 3            1930s – 1950s**

Class 3:1      Nazi policies on women and the family  
Women (writers) under Hitler  
*Lebensborn*: What kind of institution was it?  
Jewish women in the Holocaust  
Leni Riefenstahl: a portrait

Reading:  
Zeh 2017

Class 3:2      German culture in the 1950s  
The "deutsche Hausfrau" in the 1950s  
"Gruppe 47": Who were they?  
The German "economic miracle"  
German film in the 1950s

Reading:  
Oda 2010

**Week 4            1960s – 1970s**

Class 4:1      The German student movement  
The German women's movement (*Aktionsrat zur Befreiung der Frauen*)  
Female terrorists in the Federal Republic (Gudrun Ensslin et al.)  
Building the wall: two Germanies – two worlds

Reading:  
Strubell 2012

Class 4:2 GDR author: Christa Wolf; Turkish "guest workers" in Germany  
 Women's lives in the GDR  
 Alice Schwarzer and *Emma*  
 §218 "Wir haben abgetrieben" (*Stern*, 1971)  
 Reform of the marital law ("*Hausfrauenzehe*")

Reading:  
 lov 2013

### Midterm

#### Week 5 1980s – 1990s

Class 5:1 The portrayal of women in advertisements in the 1980s  
 The female reader: overview  
 Hera Lind, Gaby Hauptmann: best-selling women writers ("Frauenbücher")  
 The Green Party enters the scene  
 "Angst" after Chernobyl

Class 5:2 What is autobiographical writing?  
 Herta Müller: a portrait  
 What is "Pop-Literatur"?  
 What is "écriture féminine"?  
 German women filmmakers

Reading:  
 Klüssendorf 2014

#### Week 6 2000 – 2017

Class 6:1 Multiculturalism and migration literature  
 Elfriede Jelinek: a portrait  
 Women in German Politics  
 The "Frauenquote" in German society  
 German identity ten years after reunification

Reading:  
 Erpenbeck 2010



Class 6:2      A history of German publishing  
The current book market in Germany  
Women's employment in today's Germany  
Equality in real life: wages, care-taking of children and the elderly  
European integration under pressure

### **Final Essay Due**

### **Readings**

All primary (excerpts and / or complete books) and secondary texts will be provided by the instructor. Secondary material will be provided as handouts in class or on Canvas.

Course materials may be used as sources for the presentations, but additional research through the Internet and in libraries is expected.

Dirks, Liane. "Krystyna: And What about Love? I asked Her." Translated by Laura Radosh. *No Man's Land: New German Literature in English Translation* 8 (Winter 2013), <https://www.no-mans-land.org/article/krystyna/>.

Erpenbeck, Jenny. *Visitation*. Translated by Susan Bernofsky. New York: New Directions, 2010.

Franck, Julia. "Face Down." Translated by Nedra Eileen Bickham. *No Man's Land: New German Literature in English Translation* 2 (Winter 2007), <https://www.no-mans-land.org/article/face-down/>.

Iov, Margarita. "The Drift." Translated by David Burnett. *No Man's Land: New German Literature in English Translation* 8 (Winter 2013), <https://www.no-mans-land.org/article/the-drift/>.

Klüssendorf, Angelika. "April (two excerpts)." Translated by Deborah Langton. *No Man's Land: New German Literature in English Translation* 9 (Winter 2014), <https://www.no-mans-land.org/article/april-two-excerpts/>.

Koenig, Christoph. "The Political Fallout of Chernobyl: Evidence from West-German Elections." *Warwick Economics Research Paper Series* 1081 (November 2015), [https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/economics/research/workingpapers/2015/twerp\\_1081\\_koenig.pdf](https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/economics/research/workingpapers/2015/twerp_1081_koenig.pdf).

Lenze, Ulla. "The Endless City." Translated by Isabel Fargo Cole. *No Man's Land: New German Literature in English Translation* 10 (Winter 2015), <https://www.no-mans-land.org/article/the-endless-city/>

Liesegang, Torsten. "New German Pop Literature': Difference, Identity, and the Redefinition of Pop Literature after Postmodernism." *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies* 40, no. 3 (September 2004): 262–276. <https://doi.org/10.3138/sem.v40.3.262>.

Menasse, Eva. "Gluttony." Translated by Anna Altmann. *No Man's Land: New German Literature in English Translation* 6 (Winter 2011), <https://www.no-mans-land.org/article/gluttony/>.

Niemeyer, Christiane. "Aims and Obstacles, Gains and Setbacks: German Women, 1945 –1960." *University of Sussex Journal of Contemporary History* 1 (2000), <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=1-niemeyer-aims-and-obstacles&site=15>

Oda, Milena. "Call Me Servant." Translated by Steph Morris. *No Man's Land: New German Literature in English Translation* 5 (Winter 2010), <https://www.no-mans-land.org/article/call-me-servant/>.

Strubel, Antje Rávic. "When Days Plunge into Night." Translated by Zaia Alexander. *No Man's Land: New German Literature in English Translation* 7 (Winter 2012), <https://www.no-mans-land.org/article/when-days-plunge-into-night/>.

Zeh, Juli. "Other People". Translated by Sally-Ann Spencer. Accessed November 30, 2017. [http://www.new-books-in-german.com/sites/default/files/2016-11/Zeh\\_Sample.pdf](http://www.new-books-in-german.com/sites/default/files/2016-11/Zeh_Sample.pdf).