Second year modules

German Post-A-Level: As well as continuing to develop your language skills, you also study special topics chosen from a wide range of courses in the fields of German literature, business German, film and theatre, gender studies, history, society, politics, culture and linguistics. In the second year some core elements of the course continue, but we also offer a wide range of options dealing with German culture, business German, politics and linguistics to allow students to pursue their own interests.

Compulsory modules

- Practical Language II (20 credits)

Optional modules (choose 40 credits)

- Bühne und gesellschaftlicher Alltag nach 1945
- Wirtschaftsdeutsch
- Texts in Context: From the Middle Ages to the 'Age of Goethe'
- Old High German Language & Literature
- Introduction to German Cinema
- The German Political Parties & Party Government
- Thomas Mann
- Franz Kafka
- Cultures of Protest and Terror in West Germany, 1967-1977
- Knights, Maidens and Priests
- Women in 19th-Century German Literature
- Post-War German Literature

Please note:

- All of the above modules carry 10 credits, with the exception of 'Bühne und gesellschaftlicher Alltag nach 1945' and 'Wirtschaftsdeutsch', which carry 20 credits.
- Some of the optional modules may not be available in a given year if staff are away on study leave.

Ex-Beginners in German: You will take a further 40 credits of intensive German this year, in order to achieve competence in using German in common situations, and you will study aspects of German grammar. You will also study the history of German. In the second year, you will take the following modules:

- Intensive ab initio German III (20 credits)
- Intensive ab initio German IV (20 credits)
- Introduction to German Cinema (10 credits)
- The German Political Parties and Party Government (10 credits)

In addition, you will do 60 credits in your other subject.

German Practical Language II

Various tutors.
20 credits - core module

The Year 2 advanced course helps you to develop your German language through three weekly classes (one hour each):

- Grammar and Translation, a weekly class, taught in small groups, which addresses certain specific grammar problems and offers training in translation both into and out of German;
- 'Sprachpraxis', a weekly class taught in small groups, focuses on improving your written and oral German and your comprehension skills, helping you to develop your vocabulary and your awareness of how German is used;
- Landeskunde-Vorlesung: A weekly hour-long lecture in German, dealing in Semester 1 primarily with German and Austrian politics and society since 1945, and in Semester 2 with various aspects of German and Austrian culture.

Assessment: combination of coursework and end-of-year written and oral exams

Bühne und gesellschaftlicher Alltag nach 1945

Ms Dorothee Sachse, Ms Claudia Merz
20 credits - optional module

Theatre is often an unjustly neglected form of art. In this seminar we will discover the stage that is the world. Amongst finding the answers to questions like 'How does German theatre compare with British theatre?'; 'Who are its makers and stars?' and 'What are the gems in German theatre?'. You will deepen your understanding of social contexts and cultural life in post-1945 Germany, Austria and Switzerland. In the second part in the course you will work largely independently on a topic of your own choice in the area of culture, politics and/or society in the German-speaking world, which also serves as a means of helping you to prepare for your Year Abroad.

Assessment: coursework and oral presentation

Wirtschaftsdeutsch

Dr Ruth Whittle
20 credits - optional module

This course builds on the first year module 'Politik und Wirtschaft' and extends your practice of getting business done 'auf deutsch'. Whether you want to learn about preparing for a trade fair, complain about a bad supplier or provide oral translations (called 'interpreting') in settings where one or other speaker is monolingual -

‘Wirtschaftsdeutsch’ has it covered! You will be taught in small groups, with more than half the class time devoted to practising with a partner or with the lecturer.

Assessment: one essay, one class test and two oral tests

Texts in Context: From the Middle Ages to the ‘Age of Goethe’

Dr Nigel Harris, Dr Elystan Griffiths
10 credits - optional module

This module continues the focus of the first-year Texts in Contexts course. We will study a selection of short texts written between the medieval period and the early nineteenth century, including writings by Konrad von Würzburg, Goethe and Kleist. We will discuss the texts in detail in class, looking at how the selected texts reflect or challenge the views of the era. Key running themes are knighthood and heroism, and we will chart the ways in which these themes changed over time. We will not only be looking at the texts themselves, but also aspects of the history and thought of the periods in which they were written.

Assessment: one coursework essay

Old High German Language & Literature

Mr Robert Evans
10 credits - optional module

This module follows on from German Linguistics (Past) and explores in greater depth the language and literature of the Old High German period (750 to 1100AD), the oldest period in which we have written records in German. The course will cover, amongst other things, the 'Hildebrandslied', the most famous literary text of the period (indeed some would say the most famous text in the whole of German literature) and Old High German dialectology, namely how to establish the dialect and approximate date of an Old High German text using only the linguistic evidence provided by the text itself.

Assessment: either a translation/commentary exercise (see above) or one coursework essay

Introduction to German Cinema

Dr Elystan Griffiths
10 credits - optional module

Why was German cinema considered so innovative during the years of the Weimar Republic (1918-33)? Why did Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels disapprove of some of Hitler’s pet film projects? What role did film play in establishing a democratic Germany after 1945? How did film production function in the communist German Democratic Republic? And how has German film developed since reunification in 1990?
This module aims to answer all of these questions and more. Each week, we will spend time discussing a major period in German film history and analysing one key film from each period. Sessions are mainly student-led and discussion-based. A key focus of the course will be the analysis of cinematic techniques, and you can expect to develop your skills in visual and textual analysis.

Assessment: one coursework essay

The German Political Parties & Party Government

Mr Dietmar Wozniak
10 credits - optional module

Although the German constitution explicitly states that the political parties are only one of many players in the political arena, the practice looks quite different. Indeed, political parties have become the dominant force in German politics and society. Although heavily criticised, political life without them seems inconceivable. The political party scene is undergoing some dramatic and rapid changes. We have only recently experienced the transition from a stable system of three parties to a highly volatile and dynamic multiparty system with multiple options. What are the underlying causes for this rapid transformation? This course will help you understand how German politics 'ticks' and enable you to assess developments and events more easily. The course assumes no prior knowledge of politics and is suitable for those who wish to gain an insight into current affairs in Germany.

Assessment: one coursework essay

Thomas Mann

Dr Nicholas Martin
10 credits - optional module

Thomas Mann (1875–1955) is one of the finest and most fascinating German writers of the modern era. He is also one of the more controversial German cultural figures of the twentieth century. The module (two hours per week) provides an introduction to his methods and changing concerns as a writer and covers a broad range of textual, interpretative, literary and political questions. The module traces Thomas Mann’s development as an author and explores in detail a representative selection of his shorter fiction. Texts prescribed will normally include Tristan (1903), Tonio Kröger (1903), Der Tod in Venedig (1912), Mario und der Zauberer (1929), and Bruder Hitler (1939).

Assessment: one coursework essay

Franz Kafka

Professor Bill Dodd
10 credits - optional module

Franz Kafka (1883-1924) lived most of his life in Prague. He wrote in German, but has become a celebrated figure of ‘world literature’. This module introduces you to Kafka’s life and approaches to understanding his work, including the vast secondary literature that has grown up around him. The seminars will offer you the opportunity to practise and further develop your skills in close reading and critical discussion of complex literary works. You will learn to read closely and with attention to the nuances of tone and perspective which make Kafka such a remarkable writer.

Assessment: one coursework essay

Cultures of Protest and Terror in West Germany, 1967-1977

Dr Nicholas Martin
10 credits - optional module

The module will explore the history, politics and cultural memory of the West German student movement and its violent offshoot, the Red Army Faction, during the period 1967-77. Materials studied will include contemporary media reports and terrorist manifestos as well as a range of cultural phenomena associated with protest and terrorism in West Germany in this period, such as documentary and feature films and (semi-)fictional writings by Heinrich Böll, Bernhard Schlink and others.

Assessment: one coursework essay

Knights, Maidens and Priests

Dr Nigel Harris
10 credits - optional module

The module will study some short works from the medieval and early modern periods of German literature: Hartmann von Aue's Der arme Heinrich, Der Stricker's Der Pfaffe Amis, and poems or short pieces by Mechthild von Magdeburg, Oswald von Wolkenstein, and Martin Luther. These will be analysed as literary texts, but also as sources of information and criticism of medieval culture and society. Particular emphasis will be placed on themes relating to the three social groupings named in the title. The problematic but fruitful relationship between religious and secular perspectives and stereotypes will be an especially important recurring theme.

Assessment: one coursework essay

Women in 19th-Century German Literature

Dr Ruth Whittle
10 credits - optional module

Using a range of primary texts, you will study a selection of female writers and female figures in German and Austrian literature in the late 19th century. Although it self-evidently cannot attempt to cover the totality of ideas about women in this era, it will seek to enable you to develop an understanding of and sensitivity towards the topic. The course will also develop your critical understanding of the question of gender and gender theory and thus examine concepts about the space of woman (in the family, in the state, in creation) and body image. The course attempts to raise your awareness of gendered concepts, which in various guises still inform women's (as well as men's) self-image and actions today.

Assessment: one coursework essay

Post-War German Literature

Professor John Klapper
10 credits - optional module

Want to know more about how Germany developed and divided after the Second World War and how this was reflected in and influenced the literature of the time? Feel you ought to know more about two of the leading names in twentieth-century German writing, Heinrich Böll and Günter Grass? Then this is the course for you. The module considers (West) German literature from 1945 to the early 1960s and examines key literary developments against the background of wider political and social developments, including the establishment of the Federal Republic, the Economic Miracle, the building of the Berlin Wall and Germany's troubled relationship with its Nazi past. All students read a range of short texts, including one play, two short story collections and one short novel.

Assessment: one coursework essay

Intensive Ab Initio German III

Mr Dietmar Wozniak
20 credits - core module

This module consolidates and further extends skills acquired in Intensive Ab Initio German I & II. Most main (remaining) grammatical structures and functions of the language will be dealt with through classroom exercises reinforced by private study. You will become proficient in a wide range of less predictable and complex situations and functions. Practical language classes will focus on productive and receptive skills, helping students to achieve effective communicative competence in even unpredictable situations. More emphasis will be put on speaking skills. Simple texts for translation from German into English and vice versa will be introduced. Wide-ranging aspects of modern Germany will be integrated at appropriate points by using a variety of materials: complex authentic texts, dialogues, short presentations, interviews and semi-authentic radio & TV programmes. Discussion and debating skills in German will also be developed and enhanced. Where feasible students will be encouraged and supported to pair up with a native German speaker in a Tandem partnership to experience authentic language outside the classroom.

Assessment: four class tests (reading and translation; listening; presentation/debating; writing and translation)

Intensive Ab Initio German IV

Mr Dietmar Wozniak
20 credits - core module

This module consolidates and extends skills acquired in Intensive Ab Initio German III and forms the basis for residence in Year 3 in a German-speaking country. Remaining grammatical structures and functions of the language will be dealt with through classroom exercises reinforced by private study. You will become proficient in using German in a wide range of unpredictable and complex contexts. Several sessions will be dedicated to developing your translation skills (English - German / German - English) as well as to reading skills, to enable you to access highly complex texts. Aspects of modern Germany will be discussed by using a variety of materials: complex authentic texts, dialogues, short presentations, interviews and semi-authentic radio & TV programmes. Where feasible you will continue to work with a native German speaker in a Tandem partnership to experience authentic language outside the classroom.

Assessment: Oral and written exams

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