

**Remembering, Repeating and Working through the Past:
Postwar German Literature and Visual Culture
GEW 4731/JST4936
Fall 2016**

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Meeting Time: Mon, periods 6-8
Place: Dauer Hall 233
Office Hrs: Mon/Wed, period 5

This seminar sets out to explore the transformation of German memory culture in relation to the catastrophic events surrounding the Second World War. “How have Germans come to terms with their recent history?” is the central question of this interdisciplinary course. Through an analysis of postwar German literature, philosophy and visual culture, we will investigate the attempts by German writers and filmmakers to confront the traumas surrounding World War Two, the Holocaust and the legacy of the National Socialist Past. By reading novels, short stories, philosophical texts, historical studies, and viewing films, we will examine the *Opferdebatte* (victim’s debate), that is, how has the question of German suffering—such as the bombing of German cities, the sinking of refugee ships, the division of Germany, the dead of Stalingrad---been represented over the past six decades. What problems do German artists face in representing the Nazi past, and how do these representations function as interpretations to the catastrophic history? What are the potentialities and limitations of different media (photography, film, painting, literature) aesthetic styles (realism, modernism, postmodernism) or genres (melodrama, documentary, reportage) as made apparent in their memorializations of traumatic events? In addition to reading texts from Jaspers, Adorno, Böll, Grass, Sebald, Timm and Schlink, we will view *Murderers are Among Us*, *Night and Fog*, *Deutschland*, *Pale Mother* and *Dresden*.

Texts: 1. *I will be sending to you PDFs for articles and essays that we will cover in class.*

2. Bernhard Schlink, *The Reader*
3. Gunter Grass, *Crabwalk*
4. W.G. Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction*
5. Uwe Timm, *In my Brother’s Shadow*

Grading:

Final Research Paper (8-10 pages)	25%
participation 20%/attendance 5%	25%
Midterm Exam (take home)	25%
Final Exam (take home)	25%

Students taking the class for German major or minor credit at the 4000 level are strongly encouraged to read the novels in German. When available, I will provide handouts of texts in German. Also, it is again strongly encouraged that exams and final paper be written in German.

1) Students are allowed 3 unexcused absences. 1 point will be deducted from your final grade for each unexcused absence thereafter. If you miss 5 classes in the semester, you will automatically fail the course. Participation will play a major part of the final grade and students are expected to partake and contribute daily to class discussions. If you do not bring to class the text we are discussing for that day, you will be marked as absent.

2) There will be a take home midterm and take home final exam comprised of identification and short answer questions.

3) There will be final research paper on topic of choice selected by the student in consultation with me. **The final paper is due 12/12/16. Late papers will not be accepted.**

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action. Violations of the honor code include, but are not limited to: plagiarism, cheating, bribery, misrepresentation, fabrication, and conspiracy. Such violations may result in the following: lowering of grades, mandatory 0 on assignments, redoing assignments, a final failing grade in the course, expulsion from the course, referral to the student-run Honor Court. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: *On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.* For more information, refer to: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/>

Students with Special Needs:

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

Syllabus subject to change:

8/22-- What is *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*?

—Review timeline on German history (Moeller); discuss Robert Moeller’s essay, “Germans as Victims? Thoughts on a Post-Cold War History of World War II’s Legacies” (PDF)

8/29—Karl Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt* (PDF)

9/5— NO CLASS

9/12— Screening of *Murderers are Among Us*; Read Shandley, “Coming Home through Rubble Canyons” (PDF)

9/19— Continue discussing *Murderers are Among Us*; screen *Night and Fog*

9/26- Discussion of *Night and Fog*, Adorno “What does Coming to terms with the Past Mean?” (PDF)

10/3—Screen in class *Germany, Pale Mother*; read beforehand Kaes' essay on film, "Our Childhood, Ourselves" (PDF)

10/10— Discuss *Germany, Pale Mother* and Kaes' essay

10/17— Discuss *Germany, Pale Mother* and Kaes article; Böll, *Across the Bridge Germany* (PDF) Start Schlink's *The Reader*

10/24- *The Reader* (**Midterm sent on 10/21, due at beginning of class today**)

10/31- Start discussion of Sebald, *On History of Natural Destruction*

11/7—Screening film *Dresden*

11/14— Discussion of *Dresden* and Sebald

11/21- Timm, *My Brother's Shadow*

11/28- Continue with discussion of Timm; start Grass, *Crabwalk*

12/5—Grass, *Crabwalk*
(**Final exam sent on 12/2, due on 12/7**)

(**Final Paper due 12/12**)