

German Studies

at Centre College

Luther, Dürer, Leibniz, Goethe, Mozart, Hegel, Freud, Einstein . . . These are just a few of the German speakers who have changed our world. But you don't have to be Einstein to learn German! The word "English" comes from an old Germanic tribe called the Angles! Even a beginning German student will already understand hundreds of words that are common to both English and German, like *das Buch, die Mutter, der Apfel*, and many more!

Learning German at Centre is an exciting adventure into a culture that has helped shape our modern world. When the great German-speaking poet Rainer Maria Rilke said "*Du mußt dein Leben ändern!*" (You must change your life!), he was referring to the profound effect that a work of art had elicited in him. Art and literature have transformative powers. Nothing transforms you as much as immersing yourself in another culture, and learning German opens up a whole new perspective: you will be able to visit, enjoy, and live in a German-speaking country, and you will be able to appreciate masterpieces of German literature and works of great philosophers, theologians, and scientists in the original language.

Some of the world's greatest artists and thinkers in almost every discipline in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences have come from a strong German tradition. Through 2006, scientists from the three major German-speaking countries won 35 Nobel Prizes in physics, 38 in chemistry, and 31 in medicine, while many laureates from other countries received their training at German universities. 12 German-speaking writers have been awarded the Nobel Prize for literature (including 2004 winner Elfriede Jelinek and 1999 winner Gunter Grass), and seven Germans or Austrians have received the Nobel Peace Prize.

Your professors in the German program at Centre College believe in helping you to reach both language and cultural fluency through a variety of experiences that integrate German, Austrian, and Swiss culture into the classroom. Indeed, our classrooms reach beyond the walls of Centre in Danville to embrace all of these countries.

Deutschklub, Theater, Kaffeeklatsch, und Bratwurst

Goethe said: "*Es ist nicht genug zu wissen, man muß auch anwenden. Es ist nicht genug zu wollen, man muß auch tun.*" (It is not enough to know, we must also put into practice. It is not enough to want to, we must also act.) In the spirit of Goethe's dictum, we enhance our classes with special activities:

Deutschklub. The German club on campus, the Deutschklub, sponsors an informal weekly Stammtisch (conversation table), organizes trips to cultural events and German restaurants, and helps bring German-language cinema to Centre's campus.

Theater. As part of a course emphasizing oral expression and pronunciation, students spend a term improvising scenes from great works of German-language drama. The course requires no skill in play-acting, just interest in the interplay of language and action.



"Studying German at Centre includes mastering the language and then applying the knowledge to the studies of history, culture, art, expression, and philosophy. All of this leads to understanding the values of German society."

Andrea Bishop
Centre Class of 2009
Double Major: German Studies and Government

Kaffeeklatsch. We conduct all departmental business in German and enjoy meeting our students for coffee to chat informally in German about their *Weltanschauung* and the current *Zeitgeist*.

Bratwurst. At least twice a year, the culinary-minded Germanophiles get together to cook a German meal. Some years it is just sausage and Sauerkraut, but other years the spreads have been more elaborate. It is fun to lift a glass to the lands that gave the world hamburgers, frankfurters, *Strudel*, *Spätzle*, *Wiener Schnitzel*, and *Kaffeekuchen*.

German Courses

Our German curriculum seeks to integrate the most fascinating aspects of German-speaking culture with the acquisition of language skills. Each course in the German major focuses on a central question. In "Faustian Ways, the Encyclopedia of Experience" we ask: Was the nearly simultaneous maturing of the Enlightenment, Classical and Romantic thought in the works of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe an anomaly or was it typical of a Germanic drive to synthesize and integrate all human knowledge? Geography means destiny, and in the course "German Cultural Geography" we examine the role of boundaries in the development of Germanic culture from the Limes wall that crossed through Roman Germania to the Berlin Wall which, for 28 years, stood as a surrealistic monument to political and cultural division. German Film seeks to better understand the culture, history, politics, social structures, and language of Central Europe through arguably the most important art form of the 20th century.

Study Abroad

One of the most exciting aspects of our program is our requirement of an abroad experience of at least six weeks for all majors. We maintain vital contacts with institutions throughout Germany and Austria and will find the right study-abroad experience for you, be that in a home-stay in German-speaking Kehl (right across the river from Centre's own Strasbourg program) or a program sponsored by another institution. Recently students have chosen to further their German fluency in cities such as Regensburg, Munich, Trier, and Freiburg among others. "*Wanderlust*" is a wonderful German word that expresses the joys that come from setting out from home and discovering a whole new world. Many German students continue their study of German after they graduate, whether on Fulbrights or as teachers of English.

German Assistant

Centre is proud to host regular language assistants. Many have come from the Karl-Ruprechts Universität in Heidelberg, Germany. Our assistants spend a year with us, living and studying alongside our students, while also acting as invaluable resources for language learning and cultural events.

Who teaches German at Centre?

MARKUS HARDTMANN (Ph.D. candidate, Northwestern University). A native of Freiburg, Germany, Hardtmann joined Centre's faculty in 2008 as a visiting assistant professor of German. He speaks German, French, and English fluently, and has reading knowledge of Latin and Ancient Greek. He is currently completing his Ph.D. in German literature and critical thought from Northwestern University.

KENNETH KEFFER (Ph.D., University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill). Dr. Keffer is Stodghill Professor of Modern Languages at Centre College, where he has taught since 1979. He has received three Centre awards for outstanding teaching, has taught in Germany as a Fulbright scholar, and loves to discuss Kant and Hegel while walking with his students.

IAN WILSON (Ph.D., University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill). New to Centre in 2003, he has taught German, international studies, and history courses in German at UNC-Chapel Hill and spent a Fulbright year in Vienna. Since arriving at Centre, he has won two teaching awards. He was the leader of a CentreTerm trip to Berlin, Prague, Vienna, and Munich in 2008, and is serving as director of the Centre-in-Strasbourg program in 2008-09.



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