

## **German 140 – German Castles, Customs and Culture** **Prof. John F. Lalande II**

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Welcome to German 140! It's a pleasure and honor to have you in this class!

Let me tell you about the goals of the course, my expectations of you, the materials we will use, grading, some selected resources, and about a few miscellaneous items.

**Office Hours** – You can find me Mondays from 330-430 at the International Coffee Hour (which takes place right here in our classroom), and Fridays from 9-10 in my office (242 CC).

### **Texts for the Course:**

Phipps, Alison (ed.). Contemporary German Cultural Studies. NY: Oxford University Press, 2002. This book recently went out of print, so it is optional. However, certain chapters will be required reading. Details on how to access the readings will be forthcoming.

Barry Tomalin. Culture Smart! Germany. London: Kuperard, 2003 (6<sup>th</sup>, revised printing, 2006). This text is required; it can be purchased at the College Bookstore or Kraftees.

**What are the goals of the course?** The primary goals are to provide you with an introduction to German culture, customs and civilization. Using castles, palaces, forts and *Stifte* as departure points, we will examine a variety of forces (political, social, religious, artistic, philosophical, and scientific) that have shaped the course of German history.

We are highlighting castles (as well as palaces, forts and *Stifte*) in this course for several reasons. The first reason, of course, is to capture your fancy, imagination and attention as you (re)acquaint yourself with the culture of the German-speaking countries. Secondly, I believe that castles (as well as palaces, forts and *Stifte*) can be used as creative segue to important historical figures and events of the German-speaking world. We will also use them to discuss significant demographic changes. For example, the transformation of castles and palaces into retirement homes, youth hostels, Elderhostel centers, open-air theaters, research centers, political think tanks, refugee centers and concert halls can be used to illustrate various noteworthy facets of culture and civilization, while at the same time providing information about contemporary developments worthy of note. Finally, a discussion of historical figures associated with many of those same places (not to mention related cultural festivals and celebrations) will also serve as a springboard for discussions about today's German-speaking world.

To sum up, then, we will look back to the **past**, forward to the **future**, yet remain attentive to the **present** and current events. As we do, we will explore not only the German-speaking world, but also its connection to other countries, cultures and civilizations. We will see, for example, how Greek & Roman, European, Asian and American influences have left their mark (positively and negatively) on the face of "German" culture. And vice versa.

By the time the course is over, it is hoped that you will at least be able to:

- Identify selected major figures, events, customs and traditions associated with the culture of German-speaking countries.
- Relate the development of German, Austrian and Swiss culture to happenings in

Western civilization. In other words, as we said earlier, you should acquire an understanding of how the German-speaking world has impacted Western civilization, and how it has in turn been impacted by that same civilization. By the end of the course, I expect you to be able to talk or write extensively on these connections in at least three areas.

- Differentiate stereotypes from (over) generalizations---at least as they apply to the people, products, customs and culture of the German-speaking countries.
- Relate castles and/or *Stifte* to at least 10 of the cultural topics we will have covered in the course.
- Facilitate your tolerance of cultural differences.

**What about grading?** First of all, I don't believe in pop quizzes. I respect you too much that I would ever administer a pop quiz. All the quizzes and tests in this course will be announced either on the course outline or by me in class at least one class period before they are given. That's a promise! Secondly, I don't believe in trick questions. I see examinations as a means of rewarding you for the hard work you have invested in the course. I see examinations as opportunities for you to show me what you have learned, rather than what you do not know.

**Grading for the course will be determined as follows:**

300 points	Class Attendance, Participation and Homework
200 points	Three Examinations (Your worst grade will be dropped; if you miss an exam for whatever reason, that is the grade which will be dropped.)
125 points	Final Examination (comprehensive)
25 points	Movie – Attend and report <sup>1</sup> on one movie (titles and times TBA)
50 points	Book Report <sup>2</sup> - Due 20 February; the title and author of your book must be approved by me no later than 2 February. I will be distributing a list to help you with your selections. The book must be literary.
100 points	Short Paper (3-5 pages, 12" font, double-spaced, 1" margins on 8" x 11" paper) on a topic which I will distribute in class. You must commit to a topic by 5 March and submit your paper by 30 April.)
800 points = total points for the course	(A= 100-94%; A- = 93-90; B+ = 89-97; B = 86-84; B- = 83-80; C+ = 79-77; C = 76-74; C- = 73-70; D+ = 69-68; D = 67-64; D- =63-60;F = 59-0%.)

As you can see, attendance and participation are key elements to your successful completion of the course. Discussion is strongly encouraged and rewarded. Feel free to ask lots of questions—of me and of one another. As you do, I simply ask that you keep an open mind and respect for the view of others---whether you agree with them or not.

Anything else? Yes! I sincerely want you to do well and to enjoy this course. If there is anything I can do to help your success in, and enjoyment with, this course, please let me know. Meanwhile, I wish you success in this course and all the others of this semester.

With warmest regards,

*John F. Lalande II*

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<sup>1</sup> Your single-page report should include both a summary of the movie **and** your reaction to it. Unless your signature is on the attendance sheet for the movie, the report will not be accepted.

<sup>2</sup> No two people may read the same book. The books must be works of literature written by German, Austrian or Swiss authors. Here too, you are asked to summarize the work **and** give your reactions to it.