

Intro Cross-Cult Studies

Last Updated: Sat, 01/03/2026

Course prefix: ML

Course number: 2500

Section: D

CRN (you may add up to five):

33638

Instructor First Name: Annika

Instructor Last Name: Orich

Semester: Spring

Academic year: 2026

Course description:

This course introduces students to German-speaking culture during the early 20th-century, a revolutionary era in culture, politics, and society whose impact is still felt today. We will be exploring a variety of cultural productions (literature, films, paintings) and learn about key thinkers, artists, and historical figures (Freud, Kafka, Lasker-Schüler) to understand the historical period they and their works actively shaped but also to investigate their cultural legacies across the globe. Taught in English.

Course learning outcomes:

The World Economic Forum states: “To thrive in today’s innovation-driven economy, workers need a different mix of skills than in the past. In addition to foundational skills like literacy and numeracy, they need competencies like collaboration, creativity and problem-solving, and character qualities like persistence, curiosity and initiative.” (<https://widgets.weforum.org/nve-2015/chapter1.html>). “Cultural and civic literacy” and “social and cultural awareness” are two additional vital skills and character qualities that employees are expected to have in today’s global marketplace. These skills, competencies, and characteristics will also assist us in creating a prosperous life outside of work.

In this class, you will hone your literacy skills (reading and writing), and you will also develop and practice collaboration, creativity, and problem-solving. While cultivating these skills and competencies, you will exercise being persistent, curious, and proactive. As this work takes place within the context of German-speaking culture, you will moreover expand your ability to consider civic and cross-cultural parameters in assessing positions, processes, and environments.

- Gain knowledge about cultural productions, art movements, and central figures shaping Germany and Europe during the 1910s.
- Draw connections among events, trends, and ideas that constitute German-speaking culture in the early 20th-century and organize them in relation to cross-cultural, long-term impacts.
- Appraise and weigh a response to Germanophone cultural productions by articulating your own thoughts.
- Design original, creative research projects based on German-speaking culture prior to World War I. driven by your and your peers' interests.

If you are willing to explore, learn, and grow, you will do wonderfully in this class!

Required course materials:

Buy: Florian Illies, 1913. *The Year before the Storm*, Clerkenwell Press; Main edition (June 12, 2014), https://www.amazon.com/Shaun-Whiteside-Searle-Florian-Illies/dp/1846689619/ref=sr_1_1?crid=55MQ4FVCQ66R&keywords=florian+illies+1913&qid=1704551

Both Kindle/e-book or print works – besides your individual preference, you might consider that the printed version will give your eyes a break from screens.

Films, if not available for free, might have to be rented via streaming services.

Additional readings will be uploaded to Canvas.

Platforms: Canvas, Padlet, E-Mail/Teams Chat, Internet

Grading policy:

Preparation & Participation: 25%

Presentation: 15%

Individual Course Project: 30%

Group Course Project: 30%

A 90-100%, excellent

B 80-89%, good

C 70-79%, satisfactory

D 60-69%, passing

F 0-59%, failure

Pass/Fail Students: You need a Grade of C to pass the class.

Attendance policy:

Please reconsider taking this class if you believe that there is no value in learning and collaborating with your peers. This is the space in which deep learning takes place—and where you will make lifelong friends. Through interaction with others, you will reach the goals you set for yourself for this class and beyond. It is therefore vital that you participate. Participating means being actively engaged in class, as well as completing homework on time.

If you are feeling ill (cold, flu, COVID-19, etc.), please do not come to class—no doctor's note is needed, a simple email informing me of your absence due to illness counts as excused. Please consult GT policy for further Institute approved absences at <https://studentlife.gatech.edu/resources/class-attendance> and <https://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/4/>, as well as <https://studentlife.gatech.edu/>, <https://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/students/classroom-and-academic-accommodations> and <https://mentalhealth.gatech.edu/>. If you have any other reasons why you cannot participate, don't hesitate to get in touch with me ASAP and prior to deadlines. It is up to you to communicate with me to have your absences count as excused. I trust that you will not abuse this policy—otherwise, we will meet to discuss your options (lower participation grade, dropping the class/withdrawing, leave of absence etc.).

If you miss a class, please get in touch with one of your peers to find out what you missed. If you have any additional questions afterwards, you are more than welcome to get in touch with me.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Review Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code at <https://catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/> and the Student Code of Conduct at <https://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18>. Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing or using generative AI on a quiz, exam, assignment, or any other work for this class will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity (<https://osi.gatech.edu/>), who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

At Georgia Tech we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. See the GT Student Faculty Expectations (<https://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/21/>) for some basic expectation that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

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This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Humanities area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I interpret the human experience through creative, linguistic and philosophical works?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze and interpret the meaning, cultural significance and ethical implications of literary/philosophical texts or of works in the visual/performing arts.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Ethical Reasoning
- Information Literacy
- Intercultural Competence