

ML 2500 Syllabus

Intro Cross-Cult Studies, Concentration German Culture, 92439, A, 3 Credits

Fall 2026

Instructor Information

Instructor: Annika Orich

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General Course Information

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/Shawn-Whiteside-Searle-Florian-Illies/dp/1846689619/ref=sr_1_1?crid=55MQ4FVCQ66R&keywords=florian+illies+1913&qid=1704554952&srefix=florian+illi%2Caps%2C126&sr=8-1

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 (<https://padlet.com/>), E-Mail/Teams Chat, Internet

Grading Policy:

Course Assignments	Percentage of Grade
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.

Description of Graded Components

Preparation & Participation

You will complete weekly homework assignments. You are expected to contribute by articulating your own thoughts on the weekly topic matter. Please take note of the attendance policy, as you are expected to come to class. During class, the expectation is that you participate in tasks and discussions! If you are in class but are not engaged in the activities, you are not participating.

Presentation

You, together with 2-3 peers, will prepare a presentation on one of the major art movements/styles that emerged and characterized the early 20th century.

Individual Course Project (Padlet)

On your own, you will prepare a Padlet project about Florian Illies' *1913. The Year before the Storm*. You must read the book in its entirety to successfully complete this part of the course. (<https://padlet.com/>)

Group Course Project

During the semester (Wednesdays), you, together with a team of several people, will design your own creative project based on our course material, namely a sketch/short play/short video. This project should showcase what you have learnt about our course topic. Part of this assignment is writing a self-evaluation of your contribution to the project at the end of the semester.

Course Policies

Attendance, Participation, Late Assignments

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 or have to hand in an assignment late, 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 and late assignments 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 Integrity

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 Honor Code](#) and the student [Code of Conduct](#).

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarism on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

USG Mandatory Inclusion of Syllabus Statement for Core Impacts Area “Humanities”

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

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, [contact the Office of Disability Services](#) (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

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. [The Student-Faculty Expectations](#) articulate some basic expectations 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.

Pre- &/or Co-Requisites

Please reconsider taking this class

- if you find no enjoyment in reading
- if you plan to rely on AI assistance to complete assignments
- if you have no interest in the subject matter
- if you lack the motivation and skills to learn independently

Learning

Please realize that you are taking this class for your benefit, not mine. Learning requires risk taking – that means, you must participate in discussions and assignments. Please be open to learning – to be engaged with the material, to absorb new information, and to transform this information into your own knowledge. To facilitate this process, I will engage with you by asking follow-up questions, giving direct constructive feedback, and suggesting extra material to explore on your own.

Technology Policy

By enrolling in this course, you commit to completing any work for this class on your own. Don't plagiarize, don't use AI, don't copy and paste.

It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with all websites and technology we will be using in this class. Please ensure that you receive notifications from all platforms we will be using, and that you keep yourself updated. You must read and respond to any communication I am sending out within a reasonable time (48 hours). Please show the same courtesy to your peers.

I will respond to emails between 9 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday. You can expect to hear back from me within 48 hours. The same policy applies to Microsoft Teams.

Since I won't prepare other work, or check my Facebook or WhatsApp messages, or watch Netflix or read up on the latest fan theory of my favorite show during class, I am expecting you will show the same respect to me and your peers.

Inclement Weather and Digital Learning Days

In the event of a weather-related event on campus or other emergency situations that require modified operation, I will contact all students via Canvas about cancelling class or our plans for a digital learning day.

Campus Resources for Students

Student Well-Being:

At Georgia Tech, we are concerned about your overall physical, social, and mental well-being. A [comprehensive list](#) of wellness related resources has been compiled and maintained by the Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement and Well-being ([student-resource-guide \(gatech.edu\)](#))

UNSDGs Endorsement Statement

The German Program in the School of Modern Languages at Georgia Tech wholeheartedly endorses the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030) and understands them to be at the center of our pedagogic and research mission.

