

Selected Readings in German Literature: What is Creativity?

German 4023 / German 8803

Prof. John Lyon Jlyon38@gatech.edu Swann Building 116F Office Hours: See Canvas and by appointment	Course meeting times: Tuesday/Thursday – 9:30-10:45 a.m. Location: Swann 320
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WHAT IS THIS COURSE ABOUT?

This course will be a collaborative effort to answer the question: “What is creativity?” Is it imitation, recombination, or inspiration? The product of individual genius or of context and collaboration? How is creativity influenced by forces such as history, technology, politics, race, and gender? This course will address these and related questions by surveying a variety of prose, drama, and poetry in German from the 18th to the 20th centuries. Major readings will include works by E.T. A. Hoffmann, Thomas Mann, and Bertolt Brecht.

This is a hybrid of two courses: a seminar intended for junior- and senior-level students (GER 4023) and a seminar for graduate students (GER 8803). It will be conducted entirely in German (readings—with a few exceptions—assignments, and discussions) and counts towards the major and minor in German. The subject matter, most readings, and in-class discussions for both seminars will be the same. The courses will differ, however, in the assignments and methods of evaluations for each. Students in the undergraduate seminar will write three short papers with minimal research required, give one brief oral report, and produce a final project (with an additional group oral report and written project). Students in the graduate section will have a number of supplemental readings, will meet with the instructor once weekly outside of class, and will also write a longer, scaffolded research-intensive project of their own design and give a formal presentation on it. Descriptions of the specific assignments for each group are available in the respective “How To” documents associated with this syllabus (found under “Course Documents” in Canvas). For both groups, there will also be regular low-stakes assignments to encourage participation and reflection.

Learning Objectives

For both the undergraduate and graduate seminar, students who successfully complete the seminar will 1) become familiar with a selection of major works in the German prose tradition; 2) become familiar with historical and theoretical approaches to the topic of creativity; 3) enhance their research skills with German subject matter; and 4) improve their German ability in writing, reading, speaking and presenting, and listening.

WHAT MATERIALS DO I NEED FOR THIS COURSE? (All Students)

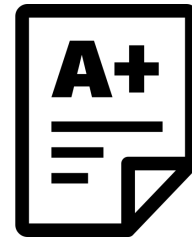
- Books (available in the [Barnes & Noble Bookstore](#). Note: if you buy these books elsewhere, please be sure to get the same edition, as we will refer to specific page numbers during our discussions)
 - E.T.A. Hoffmann: *Der goldne Topf* (ISBN: 978-3-518-18831-6)
 - Thomas Mann: *Der Tod in Venedig* (ISBN: 978-3-596-11266-1)
 - Bertolt Brecht: *Leben des Galilei* (ISBN: 978-3-518-18801-9)
- Access to Canvas – all other readings (including poetry and theoretical texts) and assignments are located there.
- A bound journal with lined paper. Something like this 
- Access to a good dictionary. Online dictionaries such as www.leo.org, www.dict.cc, or www.linguee.de contain useful information about grammatical aspects (e.g. gender, verb forms), pronunciation, and variations of word usage. Regarding translation software and AI, please see the “Be Honest” section below.

HOW DO I GET A GOOD GRADE? (All Students)

Your Course Grade will be calculated as follows:

For the Undergraduate Seminar

Active class participation	15%
Weekly Perusall comments / Response Journals	15%
Oral Presentation:	15%
Compositions:	30%
- Three Essays (10% each)	
Final Project	25%
-Object, Group Oral report, and Reflection Paper	100%
TOTAL	



For the Graduate Seminar

Active class participation	15%
Weekly Perusall comments / 4 Response Journals	10%
3 Extra Reading Responses	10%
Oral Presentation:	15%
Final Project	
-Preliminary Steps	10%
- Oral report	10%
-Seminar Paper	30%
TOTAL	100%

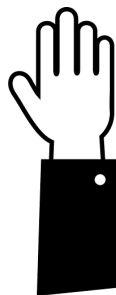
Grading Scale

Grade	Percentage	Pass/Fail: Students need a minimum grade of C to pass the class.
A	90-100%	
B	80-89%	
C	70-79%	
D	60-69%	
F	0-59%	

A list of specific assignments will be available on the “Wochenplan” (in Canvas). Specific evaluation rubrics will be provided for each assignment (also on Canvas).

Note: I do not accept late work without prior notice. If you cannot submit work on time, you must contact me before the deadline.

HOW IS PARTICIPATION GRADED? (All Students)



Class sessions will consist of a variety of activities: lecture, class discussion, individual presentations, partner and group work, debates, in-class writing exercises, etc. For these to be effective, it is important that you a) attend and b) are prepared. This means reading the material in advance, reflecting on it, developing analytical questions about it, and completing any homework assignments related to it. The effectiveness of each class session will depend on your preparation. You should plan on spending about 2 hours outside of class for each hour in class. There will be short writing exercises for each class period.

Successful class participation depends not only on quantity of participation, but also on quality of participation; talking frequently will not help your grade if you haven't given thought to what you are saying. Listening attentively and responding thoughtfully to your fellow students is also an important component of participation. I evaluate participation in each class period on a 10-point participation rubric (below), with a 10 awarded for students who contribute both frequently and thoughtfully—less frequency and/or thought receives fewer points. You may request the current average of your participation scores at any time during the semester. I will update the grades on Canvas every week.

Point Value	Expectations
10	Participation that contributes to peers' learning: The student goes beyond simply repeating information, shows thoughtful reflection on the assignments for the day/week, and student offers original ideas / insightful questions.
9	Participation: The student is attentive and active, contributes to discussion, and contributes during group work.
8	Present and engaged: Student attends, makes eye contact, and seems to be following the discussion.
7.5	Present: Student is present.

7	Mostly present: Student arrives late or leaves early.
0	Absent: Student not present.

Note: Quality of contributions matters! One thoughtful contribution will count just as much or more than several thoughtless and distracting contributions. In addition, please note that **participation in in-class discussion and oral exercises will not be evaluated for grammatical correctness**, so please make every effort to speak up. It is OK to make mistakes—that’s how we learn!

Since I award daily participation grades, attendance is crucial for that component of your grade—0 points are awarded for each day of absence. (Family and medical emergencies are excusable, but only if you contact me before class and provide an official doctor’s excuse afterward). You are allowed **two unexcused absences** per term with no penalty.

WHAT WILL WE READ? (All Students)

We will sample a variety of texts from German-language culture, each related to the concept of “creativity.” You are asked to purchase three short books—all other reading and assignments will be available on the Canvas course page. Please read the assignments before class and come prepared to discuss them.



Please see the “How to Read German Texts” document on Canvas for strategies to make your reading most effective.

Graduate Readings: For those taking the course for graduate credit, you will be asked to read four additional essays/brief texts and write brief (1-page) responses to these, where you synthesize the reading material with other material we have read in the course. You will meet with the instructor outside of class to discuss the reading. More information will be available on Canvas.

HOW WILL WE STRENGTHEN READING SKILLS? (All Students)

Perusall[®]

To assist both class participation and your understanding of the texts we read, on most Thursdays you will prepare for class by using the online software, Perusall, which you can access through the Canvas site. Perusall allows you to annotate portions of the reading and to respond to annotations from others. To get a good grade on each daily Perusall assignment, please:

- Make **at least three** annotations of the text. Annotations can be basic comprehension questions (glossing vocabulary, cross-referencing plot details, etc.), interpretation questions (why was something said in a certain way? what might something mean?), or other questions that the text provokes in you;

- Make your annotations in different portions of the text (showing that you have read more than just the initial section); and
- Read your classmates' comments and **upvote two** that you find most helpful or that overlap with questions that you also have.

These annotations and your responses can help launch our class discussions.

Note: please type directly into the program—copied and pasted text will be flagged and not counted.

HOW WILL WE STRENGTHEN INTERPRETIVE SKILLS?

Weekly Response Journals (All Students)

On most Tuesdays you will write a brief response journal entry of at least 100 words. It will be **graded for completion only, not for grammatical accuracy**, so this is a good place to try out new vocabulary or grammatical structures without risk to your grade. This should be **hand-written** and in your best German. In the journal, respond to one of the texts that you have read during the week. I will give you a prompt, but if you would prefer to react to some other aspect of the text, feel free to do so: what did you find interesting, unusual, surprising? Why was the text written in this way and for whom was it written? If you were writing such a text, what would you do different? Be sincere and thoughtful in your response. You will hand in the journal at the end of class but may be asked to read from it during class, as well.

Essays (Undergraduate Students)

You will write three essays, each between 300-500 words. Separate assignment sheets (available on Canvas) will give more detail about each specific essay topic. For each of these essays, you will write a first draft, which you will workshop with your fellow students. The first draft will be worth 10% of the paper grade and will be graded only for completion of formal requirements and timely submission. The final draft will be worth 90% of the paper grade and graded for content, form, language, and, where appropriate, analysis, as well as an AI self-evaluation (see below). You will submit a final draft on Canvas.



More details are available in the “How to Write Papers” document on Canvas. In addition, specific paper topics will be provided well ahead of the due date.

Due Dates:

- Aufsatz 1 (First draft): den 17. September // Aufsatz 1 (Final draft): den 22. September
- Aufsatz 2 (First draft): den 22. Oktober // Aufsatz 2 (Final draft): den 27. Oktober
- Aufsatz 3 (First draft): den 24. November // Aufsatz 3 (Final draft): den 1. Dezember

HOW WILL WE STRENGTHEN SPEAKING SKILLS?

Oral Reports (All Students)

In addition to class participation and interaction, you will present one 10- to 15-minute oral presentation during the semester, as well as a group oral report as part of your final project (more on that below). A list of potential topics will be provided, but you may also propose your own topic in consultation with the instructor. The aim of these reports is to provide your classmates with additional information on theories of creativity or on the context and concepts associated with the authors we will read. Please see the “How to Give an Oral Report” document on Canvas for more detail on the oral report.

Please pay close attention to and take notes on the oral reports by your fellow students. You will be expected to incorporate some of this material into your papers and final project.

CREATIVE PROJECTS (ALL STUDENTS)

AI Creation

For one class period, you will work with a partner using AI to recreate a scene from one of the texts we read. You and your partner will present your AI creation to your classmates in the subsequent class period. This will be graded in terms of class participation.

Maker Space

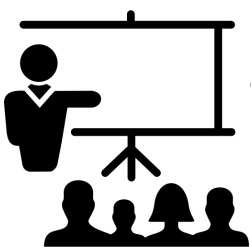
For one class period, you will go to a maker space and create a project that references or reflects on a text from the course. This will be graded on participation and effort. For your subsequent journal assignment, you should reflect on the process involved in your creation. What surprised you? What did you learn? How did creating in this manner relate to any of the ideas about creativity that we read or heard reports on in the course up until this point?

Creative Object for Final Project

See below.

FINAL PROJECTS

Final Group Creation, Presentation, and Paper (Undergraduate Students)



Your final course project will consist of three components. You should not use AI for any part of this project.:

- **A group-created cultural object** that is not a paper. This might include the following:
 - Visual & Digital: A small sculpture or diorama, a short film, an animated narrative, graphic novel chapter, a longer social media post, or a digital museum exhibit.
 - Audio & Music: A song, a brief podcast episode, a composition, etc.

- **Performance & Fine Art:** A recorded original script/scene, a curated physical or digital mini-art gallery with detailed artist statements, or a mixed-media sculpture installation.
- **Other:** I am open to other options/media, but please speak with me first.
- **Note:** Creative Requirements for this portion of the project
 - **Clear Integration:** All three literary texts must be meaningfully represented (e.g., characters from different eras meeting in a shared space, themes juxtaposed through visual motifs, or plotlines woven together).
 - **Intentionality:** Every stylistic choice (color scheme, soundtrack, character design, medium) must serve a specific analytical purpose. Keep track of these as process notes and submit them when you make your oral presentation.
- **A group oral presentation** of 10-12 minutes explaining and analyzing the created object for your classmates, indicating how it relates to 1) the three main texts that we have analyzed and 2) concepts of creativity that we have discussed in the course. How might this object have turned out differently if you had used AI? The presentation should include the following:
 - **Part 1: The Pitch & Artifact Showcase:** Introduce your created object (or a curated 3-minute excerpt if your object is longer).
 - **Part 2: Thematic & Textual Analysis:** Explain how your project synthesizes the three texts as well as ideas of creativity we have discussed in the course. Cite specific scenes, quotes, or literary devices from the original works that inspired your creative choices.
 - **Reflection & Q&A:** Briefly discuss your group's creative process and the challenges you faced. Consider how your process or object might have been different if you involved AI.
 - Please remember to submit your process notes along with the presentation.
- **An individual reflection paper** of 3-4 pages (600-700 words) discussing 1) how your group came up with the idea for the project, 2) how creativity worked as a collaborative rather than an individual process (what were the positives and negatives), 3) what ideas of creativity in the course were most relevant for you and your group in creating this object, 4) what new approaches to creativity have you learned in this course, and 5) whether or not AI can be creative based on what you have studied in this course. (10%)

Final Project Assessment & Rubric

Your project will be graded out of **100 points**, split across three main categories:

Category	Weight	Description
Creative Object	25%	The final artifact is thoughtful, cohesive, and demonstrates effort and intentionality in its chosen medium. Reflects deep understanding of all 3 texts in the course as well as ideas of creativity.
Oral Presentation	35%	Clear, well-paced delivery; demonstrates deep understanding of all 3 texts and ideas in the course; effectively bridges the creative work back to textual evidence. Please submit individual peer evaluations and a brief submission of process notes/script showing equal distribution of labor.
Reflective Paper	40%	Demonstrates deep understanding of all 3 texts and ideas in the course, drawing nuanced thematic or structural connections between them.

The final papers are due on the day of the scheduled final exam for this course (the paper will take the place of the final exam).

Final Paper and Oral Report (Graduate Students)

Instead of writing shorter essays, graduate students will write a longer essay of 12-15 pages in length. This will be an in-depth analysis of a literary work and its relation to the concept of creativity. Graduate students should meet with the instructor by the third week of the term to select a topic. A more precise description of intermediate steps and a timeline for the graduate final project will be posted on Canvas and on the Graduate Syllabus Supplement.

You will present a 10-minute oral report on your project at the end of the term. The grade for the final project will be a composite of: 1) completion of preliminary steps; 2) the oral presentation; and 3) the final paper.

The final papers are due on the day of the scheduled final exam for this course (the paper will take the place of the final exam).

AI

Artificial Intelligence (“Künstliche Intelligenz” or “KI”) has forced us to reckon more thoroughly with what it means to create, and we will wrestle with this issue frequently in this course. As a result, you will be asked at various times in the course to use AI for creative and analytic projects. If you are not specifically asked to use AI, please do not use AI, including for language translations.

If you wish to use AI for any stage of any assignment where it is not explicitly required, please discuss it with me first and, if approved, please list the source according to one of the citation styles below (in the Be Honest section) and also provide a transcript of all interaction with the AI. For each major written and oral assignment, I will ask you to submit a rubric indicating to what extent you used AI and in what ways you engaged with and challenged AI. **If you do not follow this procedure, it will be considered plagiarism.**

The main purpose of the course is to improve your linguistic (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) skills as well as your cognitive, analytical, and creative skills, which includes developing ideas and outlines for essays. These are skills that employers today want in employees and skills that will help you to succeed at many stages later in life. If AI does this work for you, you are less likely to acquire these skills; it will only impede your cognitive growth and long-term ability to adapt to a rapidly-changing job market. Research has shown that using AI for these kind of tasks not only prevents growth, but also leads to decline in these abilities.

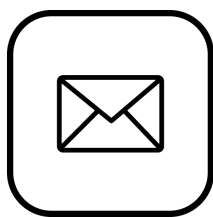
THE RULES

Be Digitally Respectful

Please plan to bring a device (smartphone, tablet, laptop) for in-class exercises and for taking notes. When not doing exercises or taking notes, please turn off your phone and/or other electronic devices. You and your fellow students will learn best if you can concentrate on the material while you're in class. If you or your neighbor seems distracted by what's on your screen, I will ask you to put away your device.

Communication Policy

I will use both Canvas and e-mail to communicate official course information. Please check messages in both regularly.



You were issued a Georgia Tech e-mail address (username@gatech.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the Institute for official communication with you. You are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to Institute communications in a timely manner does not absolve you from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. If you choose to forward your e-mail from your gatech.edu address to another address, you do so at your own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve you from responding to official communications sent to their Institute e-mail address.

Student-Faculty Expectations

At Georgia Tech, we continually strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. Both you and I are expected to abide by the rules and regulations laid out in the GA Tech catalog: <https://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/21/>

Be Honest

Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students suspected of violating the Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code (<https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-affairs/academic-honor-code>) will be reported, per the policy, and a minimum sanction of a zero score for the quiz, exam, or assignment will be imposed.



For any assignment (paper, oral report, etc.), when you use someone else's words, ideas, or research, you should credit them properly. This includes use of artificial intelligence of any kind, whether translation software, chatbots / Chat GPT, or other AI (unless specifically assigned).

For most sources, please use either the Modern Language Association *MLA Handbook* (9th Edition - <https://style.mla.org/> [MLA style]) or the *Chicago Manual of Style* (17th Edition - <https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html> [CMS style]). You can find helpful reference information and practice with each citation format at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html.

Don't Record It!

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor.

Freedom Of Expression



All students in this course are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the Georgia Tech strategic value, Freedom of Expression (https://students.gatech.edu/freedom_of_expression). You should be civil and respect the sanctity of the learning environment; you should avoid disruptive and deceitful behavior toward other members of the class. This means respecting the rights and sensitivities of those who are different than you and contributing to an academic culture where the freedom of thought and expression and compassion for others are equally valued.

Non-Discrimination Policy

As an educational institution and as an employer, Georgia Tech prioritizes a culture characterized by equal opportunity, nondiscrimination, and anti-harassment. Accordingly, the Institute prohibits and will not engage in discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, disability, or status as a veteran. For more information, visit <https://www.policylibrary.gatech.edu/employment/equal-opportunity-nondiscrimination-and-anti-harassment-policy>. Students from all backgrounds and perspectives are welcome in this course. Students' learning needs will be addressed both in and out of

class and the diversity that students bring to this class will be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit.

Modified Operations and Digital Learning Days

In the event of a weather-related event on campus or other emergency situations that require modified operations, I will contact all students via email/Canvas about cancelling class or our plans for a digital learning day. On such days, please be sure to check e-mail and Canvas for updates.

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

Disability Services

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404)894-2563 or <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>, 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.

Mental Health

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, or if you have questions about the mental health resources available to you, please contact the Center for Mental Health Care & Resources: <https://mentalhealth.gatech.edu/>.

Financial Hardship

If you face financial hardship as you complete your studies, please be aware that Georgia Tech has student emergency available. You can learn more here: <https://development.gatech.edu/student-emergency-funding>. Students experiencing food insecurity should reach out to Klemis Kitchen (<https://star.studentlife.gatech.edu/klemis-kitchen/>), Georgia Tech's on-campus food bank.

Student Resources

For a more detailed list of student resources, please visit this site: <https://www.sga.gatech.edu/resources/>

German Club At GT

The GT German Club meets regularly to watch movies, to arrange cultural events, and to discuss various topics. You can find links to the German Club's social media pages here: <https://modlangs.gatech.edu/languages/german>

OTHER ACADEMIC OPPORTUNITIES IN GERMAN

Major or Minor

If you have come this far in German, you really ought to consider adding a major or minor in German. It will make you more marketable and demonstrate to future employers your well-

roundedness and your ability to work in diverse environments. Georgia Tech offers a minor in German, as well as three different options for majors: **B.S. in Applied Languages and Intercultural Studies (ALIS)**, **B.S. in Global Economics and Modern Languages (GEML)**, and a **B.S. in International Affairs and Modern Languages (IAML)**. For more information on the programs go to: <https://modlangs.gatech.edu/languages/german> and <https://modlangs.gatech.edu/programs/undergraduate>

Study Abroad (LBAT)

Studying abroad will not only improve your language skills; as many of our alumni attest, it will also change your life. Georgia Tech has multiple opportunities for study abroad in German-speaking countries.

- **The German Language for Business and Technology program** takes students on a 12-week journey through German-speaking countries and is conducted in German. Students wishing to participate in this program must have completed GRMN 2002. For more information, please go to <https://modlangs.gatech.edu/lbat/germany>.
- We also have partnerships with the **Technical Universities of Munich and Berlin**, with **RWTH Aachen**, the **Ludwig-Maximilian University** in Munich and the **University of Stuttgart**, where students can study. For more information, please go to: <https://oie.gatech.edu/>

The International Plan and Global Engagement Certificate

Are you looking for other ways to certify your intercultural competence and linguistic ability. You might consider the International Plan (<https://ip.oie.gatech.edu/home>) or the Global Engagement Certificate (<https://inta.gatech.edu/programs/undergraduate/certificates/global-engagement>).

Master's Degree

The School of Modern Languages offers two Master programs that are designed to be highly interdisciplinary and tailored to your interests and strengths. You can find more information on the websites. There is contact information there for advisors who can tell you about these programs in greater detail:

- Applied Languages and Intercultural Studies (**M.S. ALIS**, German): <https://modlangs.gatech.edu/graduate/ms-alis>
- Global Media and Cultures (**M.S. GMC**, German): <https://gmc.iac.gatech.edu/>

SCHOOL GOALS AND VALUES

ML PERFORMANCE GOAL #1: ADVANCED COMMUNICATION	
ML Learning Outcome 1: Demonstrate oral and aural proficiency in the target language	Students will demonstrate oral proficiency at the intermediate-mid or higher level on the ACTFL scale through two oral news reports and facilitations of discussions throughout the semester.

ML Learning Outcome 2: Demonstrate effective presentation skills in the target language	Students will perform an oral presentation, individually or in groups, on a course related topic at the end of the semester.
ML Learning Outcome 3: Demonstrate writing proficiency in the target language	Students will demonstrate writing proficiency at the intermediate-mid or higher level on the ACTFL scale by composing several essays and a final portfolio.
ML Learning Outcome 4: Demonstrate proficiency in comprehension of authentic written and auditive media entries in the target language	Students will demonstrate reading and listening proficiency at the intermediate-mid or higher level on the ACTFL scale as all of their oral and written work is based on authentic material from German-speaking media (websites, books, articles, videos, film etc.).
ML PERFORMANCE GOAL #2: INTERCULTURAL SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE	
ML Learning Outcome 5: Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of a specific target-language topic	Students will paraphrase, summarize, contrast, and compare various themes related to the overarching topic of global citizenship and intercultural competence.
ML Learning Outcome 6: Demonstrate the ability to analyze an issue from target-language perspective(s)	Students will be encouraged to interpret and evaluate an issue from the target culture and language's perspective and draw comparisons between the US and the target culture and language. They will demonstrate this ability in their written and oral assignments.
ML Learning Outcome 7: Demonstrate critical reflection on cultural complexity and context	Students will be encouraged to reflect, criticize, review, and if needed restate controversial issues from both perspectives, the target culture and the US. They will demonstrate this ability throughout the semester in their oral and written assignments and class discussions.

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.



ZIELE FÜR NACHHALTIGE ENTWICKLUNG

17 ZIELE, DIE UNSERE WELT VERÄNDERN

