

Department of Germanics

Graduate Course Descriptions Winter 2008

GERMAN 537: STUDIES IN LITERATURE 1770-1830: Representing the Subject in Goethe's Wilhelm Meister Novels

Professor Jane K. Brown
MW 3:30-5:20, DEN 312
5 credits, sln: 13587

The goal of this seminar is to explore Goethe's role in developing the language of modern depth psychology. We will read Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre and Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre looking specifically at changes in the ways of representing the self in these novels of self-development. We will start from the hypothesis that the novels project their models of selfhood onto the women the hero encounters. I encourage participants to get started on the novels over break so that they can help shape the agenda of the course. Assignments will include reports, several short exercises, and a medium length paper.

GERMAN 550: GOTHIC

Professor Charles Barrack
MW 1:30-3:20, DEN 312
5 credits, sln: 13588

This course offers a description of the phonology, morphology, and syntax of Gothic as preserved in the texts of this earliest recorded Germanic language. The major developments from Indo-European through Germanic and into Gothic will also be treated; and the major differences between Gothic and the other Germanic languages will be investigated. Lecture and discussion along with the translation of texts.

GERMAN 590: PHIL ISSUES GERMAN CULTURE: Nature Discourses I

Professor Sabine Wilke
T 1:30-4:20, DEN 312
5 credits, sln: 13590

I am calling this seminar "Nature Discourses I" in the hope that there might be a "Nature Discourses II" in a future year that will deal with more current material. "Nature

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Discourses I” serves as introduction to the field of environmental criticism and lays the foundation for eco-critical work in the systematic study of the German tradition of “Naturphilosophie” and its resonance in German-language literature (primarily Romantic and post-romantic narratives). The discussion will be oriented around the themes of forest, landscape, mountains, the interior of the Earth, atmosphere, plants and animals, minerals, water, and human nature which surface in images and texts of the late eighteenth century and culminate in the Romantic period and the later nineteenth century. Eco-criticism, as it is practiced primarily in English Departments, is frequently ignorant of the philosophical roots of environmental thought and the concepts of nature in the tradition of dialectical thinking and aesthetics. We will try to pair the study of philosophical texts with literature and, to a minor extent, art in order to assess the full impact of the discourse on nature on German letters.

Students will be responsible for their weekly readings and will write a critical research paper. We will try to put together a special issue for a graduate student journal and will go through all the steps together (submitting abstracts, contacting editors, developing a competitive contribution, responding to peer review, revisions, etc.).