

February 25, 2003

To: St. Olaf College Faculty
Fr: CEPC
Re: New German Major Requirements and Courses

At the March 6 Faculty Meeting CEPC will move the approval of a revised German major, together with new courses entailed by the revision.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJORS AND TEACHING MINOR

Graduation Major

A student must take eight courses in German above 232, including two 250-level courses, two 270-level courses (one of which must be taken on campus), two 370-level courses (one of which must be taken on campus), and two other courses of the student's choice. An internship taken abroad may count as one of the two courses a student may bring back from a semester's study in Germany or of the three courses a student may bring back from a year's study in Germany. Independent study or research may not be counted in lieu of any of the courses referred to above.

Teaching Major

A student must take eight courses in German above 232, including an intensive speaking course (233 or 250) or a semester/year of study in Germany, three 250-level courses, two 270-level courses, and two 370-level courses, plus Education 353 and other courses required for certification.

Teaching Minor

A student must take four courses in German above 232, including an intensive speaking course (233 or 250) or a semester/year of study in Germany, two 250-level courses, one 270- or 370-level course, plus Education 353 and other courses required for certification.

PROPOSED NEW COURSES ENTAILED BY THE REVISION

“250-Level” Courses. In 250-level courses, students focus intensively on development of their language skills while learning to do close textual analysis. These courses, targeted primarily at first- and second-year students, provide an introduction to the content areas of the major while sharpening specific critical and linguistic skills.

German 251: Understanding Narratives

Catalogue Description:

Examines fictional works such as fairy tales, legends, and other prose texts, including film, with an eye to understanding how they work. Emphasis on retelling stories in oral and written form and adapting them to different audiences. Analysis of plot, characterization, style and point of view. Review of cases, tenses, and word order. Regular group conversations with native speakers. Open to non-majors. Taught in German. Prerequisite: German 232 or equivalent. GE [pending]: FOL-G, ALS-L, WRI.

German 252: Exploring Non-Fiction

Catalogue Description:

Explores expository texts such as (auto)biographical writings, journalistic articles, and critical essays, with an eye to understanding the strategic organization of the text, the information presented, and the relationship between the two. Analysis of structure, style, argumentation, evidence, and perspective. Review of cases, tenses, and word order. Regular group conversations with native speakers. Open to non-majors. Taught in German. Prerequisite: German 232 or equivalent. GE [pending]: FOL-G, WRI.

“270-Level” courses. In 270-level courses, students explore the German-speaking world of the past and present while continuing to refine their critical and linguistic skills. Courses at this level are geared to majors preparing to study in Germany.

German 270: German in the Professions

Catalogue Description:

Examines a wide variety of texts used in a particular professional or disciplinary field such as economics, the sciences, medicine, art, music, and theology. Enhances listening and reading skills in specialized skills of the work world. Recommended for students considering an internship in Germany. Taught in German. Prerequisite: one 250-level course (two recommended). May be repeated if topic is different. GE [pending]: FOL-G.

German 271: Minority Voices

Catalogue Description:

Examines the lives and writings of selected authors representing a significant minority group rooted in two or more cultural traditions. Explores how the lives of these authors have been influenced by their dual heritage, how their cultural hybridity is seen in their writings, and the extent to which the voices of these authors have affected mainstream culture. Sample topics include: Jewish-German writers, Turkish-German writers and contemporary immigrant writers. Taught in German. Prerequisite: one 250-level course (two recommended). May be repeated if topic is different. GE [pending]: FOL-G, MCS-G, ALS-L.

German 272: Turning Points in German History

Catalogue Description:

Examines a major period of German history and its impact on the institutional, intellectual and artistic heritage of Europe. Close reading and analysis of primary sources and critical evaluations of the period. Focus on history as an interpretive reconstruction of the past. Sample periods include: the Reformation, Weimar classicism, the German revolution of 1848, German modernism, post-holocaust Germany. Taught in German. Prerequisite: one 250-level course (two recommended). May be repeated if topic is different. GE [pending]: FOL-G, HWC.

German 273: German Media

Catalogue Description:

Explores current issues, events, culture, politics, education, entertainment, advertising, and other non-literary topics as they are treated in contemporary German print and electronic media, including the press, television, film, the web and radio. Comparison/ contrast of presentation by different German media and by German versus U.S. media. Develops media literacy, including some consideration of ideological, cultural, aesthetic and ethical perspectives. Taught in German. Prerequisite: one 250-level course (two recommended). May be repeated if topic is different. GE [pending]: FOL-G. Counts toward Media Studies concentration [pending].

“370-Level” Courses. 370-level courses build upon students’ interpretive skills and the knowledge of the German-speaking world they have gained in 270-level courses as well as through study in Germany. Students examine in depth a particular genre, author, or topic through the analysis and interpretation of representative works.

371: Topics in Literature

Explores the form, history and theory of a particular genre or medium, including film, the novella, young adult literature, drama, poetry and short story, or the works of a single author. Close reading, discussion, analysis and interpretation of texts. Taught in German. Prerequisite: minimum of one 270-level course (two recommended). May be repeated if topic is different. GE [pending]: FOL-G, ALS-L (ALS-A for film), WRI.

372: Topics in German Studies

Explores a particular topic in language, literature, history, or culture through close reading, discussion, analysis and interpretation of selected works, including theoretical texts. Sample topics include: Kafka's Europe, the Faust story, women’s voices, German heritage, the German holocaust, and post-reunification Germany. Taught in German. Prerequisite: minimum of one 270-level course (two recommended). May be repeated if topic is different. GE [pending]: FOL-G, ALS-L, WRI.

RATIONALE:

Background

The existing German major curriculum dates from before 1990. While we have adapted it in recent years to take account of new General Education requirements, we had not reviewed the curriculum in a systematic fashion until we began work on our self-study during the 1999-2000 academic year. Outside evaluators of the Department recommended that a thorough review of the curriculum be undertaken with an eye to updating and improving overall coherence. We have been guided by a series of principles related both to the College's mission and to our own mission as a department of language, culture and literature. First, that the study of German be accessible to all students regardless of whether they have studied German in high school or not, and that a wider variety of students be encouraged to study German initially as well as to continue their study of German beyond the language requirement. Second, in order to realize these goals, that we create a curriculum that would give importance to German culture and to issues affecting contemporary Germany from the earliest levels and pay attention to student language proficiency continuously to the end of the major. Third, that we improve articulation between the language sequence and the German major as well as strengthen coherence within the major. Fourth, that we make good use of limited FTE and relative inflexibility in staffing while also allowing—and encouraging—faculty to develop new courses, especially courses incorporating recent developments in the field of German Studies.

Principal Innovations

Better linkage of courses offered for the language sequence (FOL) to courses for the major.

Identification of three “strands” within the major: (1) a language strand focusing on proficiency in spoken and written German, (2) a narrative strand focusing on the interpretation of narratives in German, and (3) a German studies strand focusing on study of German society, culture, and history through non-fiction.

Improved articulation and sequencing of the goals of language proficiency and knowledge of German history and culture. The relationship between content and language is more thoughtfully and carefully articulated at each level of the curriculum. The new curriculum gives attention to the study of content from the beginning and to language development to the end, through the identification of three “stages” in the major (indicated by the catalogue entries for courses in the 250’s, the 270’s and the 370’s).

Increased reliance on template courses. Declining enrollments at the upper level and a decrease in faculty FTE in recent years have made it difficult to offer all current courses—especially 300-level courses—on a regular basis. At the same time, the teaching of German has evolved over the past two decades as German area studies has brought a rethinking of the traditional domination of literature. In response to both a reduced FTE and the national movement towards German Studies, we have reduced the number of courses and are relying more heavily on template courses to provide variety and creative outlets for faculty. Template courses also allow for the possibility of collaboration with faculty in other disciplines who know German well, as well as for a more effective utilization of adjunct or visiting faculty.