



German
Studies
cenes.ubc.ca



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Department of Central, Eastern & Northern European Studies
(CENES)

German Studies

Undergraduate Handbook

Welcome

The [Department of Central, Eastern and Northern European Studies](#) offers Honours, Major, and Minor programs in German Studies, made up of courses on Germanophone culture, film, history, language, linguistics, literature, media, philosophy, society and thought. None of our programs require previous knowledge in German. Our programs represent the historically and socially diverse lives and communities that make up the German-speaking world in and beyond Europe—from Switzerland to Namibia to Hungary and elsewhere. Students can also read our [Program Outcomes](#).

Course Offerings

View our course offerings with their syllabi at [CENES Course Options](#).

German at UBC's Vancouver Campus

For more information: [German at UBC's Vancouver Campus](#).

Program Overview

Our German Studies Majors and Minors are community-building programs where UBC students can make new friends and feel at home (and be themselves!) while learning about cultures and languages that may be new to them.

There are no prerequisites in our programs. Our German language courses have no traditional midterms and final exams. Instead, we encourage students to develop portfolios and final projects that are cumulative expressions of their learning. No one is ever expected to have prior knowledge of German to begin work in our program, but those with any range of experience with the German language are very welcome!

We support more advanced students who join us as they prepare for life-long use of German as an additional language, participate actively and multilingually in German-speaking communities, and achieve more complex and articulate forms of meaningful self-expression in German.

Students who complete the Minor will achieve at least B1 proficiency. Students who complete the Major or Honours Program will attain at least B2 proficiency in German based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages ([CEFR](#)) B2 proficiency is equivalent to the successful completion of GERN 302.

The information listed in this handbook is obtained from our department's [German Studies Undergraduate Website](#) and the [UBC Calendar German Studies Website](#).

Major in German Studies

Lower-level Requirements

- **12 credits:** GERN 101, 102, 201, 202 (or placement test)

Upper-level Requirements

- **6 credits of:** GERN 301 and GERN 302 **AND**
- **24 credits:** any combination of GERN or GMST courses at the 300-level or above

Minor in German Studies (German Language)

Lower-level Requirements

- **12 credits:** GERN 101, 102, 201, 202 (or placement test)

Upper-level Requirements

- **18 credits:** Any combination of GERN or GMST courses at the 300-level or above with the exception of GERN 304 and GERN 404

Minor in German Studies (Anglophone)

Lower-level Requirements

- **3 credits:** Any GMST or GERN course at the 100 or 200-level

Upper-level Requirements

- **18 credits:** Any combination of GMST or GERN courses at the 300-level or above with the exception of GERN 304 and 404

Major in German Studies, Honours

Lower-level Requirements

- **12 credits:** GERN 101, 102, 201, 202 (or placement test)

Upper-level Requirements (Honours only)

- **6 credits:** GERN 301, 302 **AND**
- **12 credits:** Any combination of GERN courses at the 300-level or above with the exception of GERN 304 and GERN 404 **AND**
- **24 credits:** Any combination of GMST or GERN courses at the 300-level or above **AND**
- **6 credits:** GERN 492 (6) Honours Research Capstone or GMST 492 (6) Honours Research Capstone

At the discretion of the Director of Undergraduate Studies, a maximum 6 credits (two courses) of German Studies-themed classes with a different course code may be recognized for the Honours.

Winter Session 2024/2025 Courses

Students with no knowledge of German begin at the beginning: with first-semester German (GERN 101) in small and experiential workshop-style classes. If you have a background or secondary-school-level experience in any of our language programs, you are required to take a placement test to determine your course standings. If, after taking the placement test, you have been exempted from lower-level language courses, you do not need to make up those credits to fulfill your degree requirements. This placement test must be taken before the beginning of classes. To schedule one, email **Dr. Biz Nijdam**, the Director of Undergraduate Studies in the German Program, at ubc.german@ubc.ca.

Courses with a GMST course code have “English-plus” as their language of instruction. Courses with a GERN course code have “German-plus” as their language of instruction. By “plus,” we mean that no classroom is ever monolingual; students bring all of their languages to class with them and use those languages implicitly to help improve their German knowledge.

Language Courses

GERN 101 (3) Learning German 1

Term 1 or 2 | various times and course deliveries

Introduction to the language for beginners. Ability to identify unique features and communicate in everyday situations.

GERN 102 (3) Learning German 2

Term 2 | in-person | various times

Meant for students who have completed GERN 101 (or one year of high-school German), this class helps students speak articulately about past experiences and future plans.

GERN 201 (3) Learning German 3

Term 1 | in-person | various times

Meant for students who have completed GERN 102 (or two years of high-school German), this class helps students practice complex forms of German language and discuss pressing intellectual and social questions.

GERN 202 (3) Learning German 4

Term 2 | in-person | various times

Prepares students for life-long use of German, to participate actively in German-speaking communities, and to achieve more articulate forms of language use and meaningful communication in German.

GERN 301 (3) Learning German 5

Term 1 | in-person | 3:30 pm – 5 pm

Meant for students who have completed the first two years of the German program. This class helps students join German-speaking conversations effectively, articulately, and confidently.

GERN 302 (3) Learning German 6

Term 2 | in-person | 3:30 pm – 5 pm

Meant for students who have completed GERN 301. Students continue to develop their personal styles in German, they focus on the details of interaction, rhetoric, and everyday social exchange across a diverse range of Germanophone media.

GERN 303 (3) Conversational German

Term 2 | in-person | 3:30 pm – 5 pm

This course provides students with a forum where they can apply their knowledge of German in meaningful and creative ways. A special focus lies on mastering phrases and idioms that recur frequently in formal and informal settings. To this end, we will engage in role plays emulating everyday life situations in German-speaking settings.

GERN 304 (3) German for Reading Knowledge I

Term 1 or 2 | online | various times

This is a guided self-study online German reading course for students with no prior German knowledge. All of the German reading course materials are grouped into 20 Exploration modules which are embedded in the interactive UBC Canvas platform including online assessments. A step-by-step introduction to German reading skills in synchronous online classes is in English. Students are expected to log on as scheduled.

GERN 344 (3) Discipline and Liberation: Studies in the 19th Century

Term 1 | in-person |

This survey course on 19th century literature in German-language Europe is focused on traditional views and changes in the perception of “nature and culture,” as well as “humans and animals.” This course operates in English and German. The expected language competence is GERN 202 (previously GERM 210). Students with advanced reading knowledge in German may be able to participate. Please contact the instructor if you have any questions.

GERN 347 (3) Progress & Disaster: Studies in the 20th and 21st Centuries

Term 1 | in-person |

Selected literary works from German-speaking societies against the larger background of the political and social developments of the period.

GERN 401 (3) German through Critical Contemporary Topics

Term 1 | in-person

This course supports students’ individual learning goals and prepares their path for life-long language learning. Discussion and analysis of current issues in a German-speaking seminar format. Spoken and written German communication about critical, societal topics foster advanced competence. Individualized assignments support learning progress throughout.

Find out more at <https://blogs.ubc.ca/cenesourses/german/>

German Studies in English

GMST 121 (3) Fairy Tales and Popular Culture

Term 2, in-person, M/W 12:30 – 14:00

Explore folk and fairy tales from the German-speaking tradition and their adaptations.

GMST 274 (3) The Frankfurt School

Term 1, in-person, M/W 9:30 – 11

Foundations of critical theory, and key media and cultural studies concepts developed by the members of the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research (1923 -), their collaborators and followers.

GMST 335 (3) German Cinema

Screening, discussion, and critical analysis of influential cinema from German-speaking societies from the silent era to the 21st century.

Term 1 or 2, various times

GMST 341 (3) Germanophone Literature before 1900

Term 1, multi-access, T/TR 15:30 – 17:00

Reading and discussion of selected works from German-speaking societies from the Middle Ages to 1900

GMST 342 (3) Heaven and Earth: Germanophone Culture and Literature before 1700

Term 1, multi-access, T/TR 15:30 – 17:00

Germanophone literature of the Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Baroque against the larger background of the political and social developments of the period.

GMST 420A (3) *Capital* and Commentary, Part II – Critiques

Term 2, in-person, M/W 9:30 – 11

Questioning dogmatic assumptions about 'Marxism', 'socialism', and 'historical materialism', this course examines how Marx's critique of political economy in his masterpiece, *Capital*, was itself criticized and creatively read by intellectuals in a variety of disciplines since the late 19th century. CENS 201: *Capital* and Contexts is recommended, but *not* required!

GMST 424 (3) Drugs, Dams and Aliens: Engineering Dreams and Cosmic Conspiracies

Term 2, in-person, T/TR 15:30 – 17:00

The course will concentrate on a strange mix of conspiracy theories and outlandish mega-projects that emerged in the early 20th century. Some were ridiculous, some explicitly genocidal; some have disappeared, others are still with us or have recently returned. We will discuss their cultural and historical origins and how they are related to totalitarian visions of control and a radical reconstruction of the world and even life itself.

GMST 440A (3) Selected Topics in Germanophone Literature

Term 2, in-person, M/W 9:30 – 11

This course is dedicated to historical seismic catastrophes and their rendering in German and other literatures of the 18th and 19th centuries. The four course modules will relate to the famous Lisbon tsunami disaster of November 1, 1755, the earthquake of Calabria and Sicily of 1783, the volcanic upheaval in Guadeloupe of 1843, and the earthquake of San Francisco of 1906. In all four modules we'll read renderings in dramatic or narrative form

as well as eyewitness accounts and other source materials, mostly in German, some of it in English, or French.

GMST 445 (3) Words and Music in Germanophone Literature

Term 2, multi-access, T/TR 14:00 – 15:30

Individual works and genres in which words and music together form a whole. Possible topics include the Lutheran Hymn, the Volkslied, the Romantic Lied and Brecht songs, operas by Mozart, Wagner and Strauss, and music and the musician as a subject in literature. No musical training is necessary.

GMST 475 (3) German Media Studies

Term 2, in-person, T/TR 15:30 – 18:30

Major themes and methods in German media studies

Find out more at <https://blogs.ubc.ca/cenesourses/german/>

Advising

Dr. Biz Nijdam is the [Director of Undergraduate Studies](#) for the German Program. She is here for you to discuss your options for major or minor degree specializations in the German Program and to support you as you complete your path through UBC. She is happy to find those courses that best fit your learning needs, especially when it comes to the level of instruction in our language classes. You can also bring any questions related to study abroad, summer field schools, and transfer credits – it is our pleasure to support you in any of these areas. Email her at ubc.german@ubc.ca for assistance, or if you would like to book an appointment. Drop-ins are also welcome, subject to office hours and availability.

Awards & Prizes

Each year, the UBC German Studies program issues up to \$30,000 in [awards](#) and scholarships to undergraduate students, thanks to our department's alumni who have donated more than \$50,000 annually to support current CENES students in their studies. Check out [this list of awards and prizes, and past recipients](#).

Alice H. Shelton Prize

A prize, endowed by a bequest from the late Alice H. Shelton, is awarded to an undergraduate student for proficiency in the field of Germanic Studies.

Dr. Isabel MacInnes Memorial Scholarship

A scholarship, established by W. H. MacInnes, Esq., of Vancouver, in memory of his sister, Dr. Isabel MacInnes, is offered to a student who is entering their fourth year. In choosing the winner, consideration is given to overall scholastic achievement and outstanding distinction in Germanic Studies.

Fred A. Krugel Memorial Prize

A prize is awarded by the Department of Germanic Studies for outstanding work in the field of Modern German Literature.

German Government Book Prizes

Book prizes, the gift of the Federal Republic of Germany through the Consulate General in Vancouver, are available for students showing proficiency in Germanic Studies.

MacInnes-Hallamore Scholarship

Scholarships have been endowed by Miss Letitia A. Hay, B.A.'30, M.A.'32, a former student of the late Professors MacInnes and Hallamore. Miss Isabel MacInnes, M.A. (Queens), Ph.D. (California) was Chairman of the German section of the Modern Languages Department from 1915-1946 when a separate department of German was established. She served as Head of the new department until her retirement in 1948. Miss Joyce Hallamore, M.A. (British Columbia), Ph.D. (Munich) was a member of the Faculty from 1928-1968 and served as Head of the Department of German from 1948 until she retired in 1968. The awards are made to students entering their third or fourth year in the honours or major program in the Department of Germanic Studies and are made on the recommendation of the Department.

Mary Stewart MacInnes Memorial Scholarship

One scholarship, established by W. H. MacInnes, Esq., of Vancouver, in memory of his mother, Mary Stewart MacInnes (1841-1936), is offered to a student in the Faculty of Arts, Applied Science, Agricultural Sciences, Forestry, or Science, who is entering the fourth year of University work. In choosing the winner, consideration is given, not only to scholastic standing but also to achievement in the field of student government and athletics, or a special interest in Germanic Studies. The award is made on the recommendation of the Department of Germanic Studies.

German Studies Undergraduate Research Showcase

The German Studies programs at the University of British Columbia, the University of Victoria, and the University of Washington Seattle are teaming up to host the second annual German Studies Undergraduate Research Showcase (#GSURS2024).

For more information: [GSURS 2024](#).

UBC Augenblick

Augenblick is UBC's student-run and faculty-supported undergraduate research journal in German Studies. Launched in 2022, this initiative centres around "Putting German Studies into Action"—a key component of UBC's German Studies undergraduate curriculum. Students across all disciplines, years, and backgrounds can (and are encouraged to) submit their work – be it an essay, poem, video, song, or graphic novel. For more information about the journal and with instructions on how to get involved, visit [the journal's official website](#)

German Activities at UBC

There are a variety of opportunities to supplement your studies of German language, literature and culture.

- **[Kaffeestunde](#)** Four times each term we gather as a community for an afternoon of tea, coffee, and snacks and conversation in the CENES Lounge (Buchanan Tower 910). During Kaffeestunde, you will be able to meet fellow German Studies students and faculty as you engage in lively conversation. The event is also open to the broader UBC community. Join us! Check out the UBC CENES Events Calendar for more information.
- **[Plauder-Treff](#)** Looking for a place to practice your German? UBC Stammtisch is a weekly German conversation hour created and designed to assist German language learners in the UBC community to develop their speaking skills. Whether you are a beginner or a proficient German speaker, you are welcome. Check out the UBC CENES Events Calendar for more information.
- **[UBC German Student Association](#)** The German Students Association aims to unite people from various backgrounds through creating an environment that stimulates the traditions of German culture. For more information, visit the association's official AMS page and their Instagram account
- **Dr. Hempen's Library of Easy Readers** contains books designed for individuals learning German as a foreign language. Visit the [catalogue](#) or get in touch with Daniela at hempen@mail.ubc.ca
- Follow us on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#)
- Join the [CENES Discord Server](#)
- Subscribe to the CENES student [listserv](#) to stay up to date with CENES news and events.

Experiential Learning

Make the most of your degree by participating in opportunities that apply classroom knowledge to the real-world. Get involved at UBC, gain work experience, and/or study abroad in Europe. For more information: [Undergraduate Opportunities](#).

- **Arts Co-op:** Intake for the Arts Co-op program occurs every September and is open to all students in second and third year. [Apply now](#).
- **[UBC Work Learn](#):** Work Learn Positions in CENES click [Apply now](#).
- **[Go Global](#)** is recommended for CENES students that have completed their second-year requirements. Studying abroad allows students to explore their degrees from a different perspective, in another country, and gain access to courses and teachings beyond what is available at UBC. Students who study abroad get an edge in the workforce, as more industries value cross-cultural competencies and experience. Learn more about [our partner universities](#) for each of our language programs.
- The following universities have numerous pre-approved courses for transfer credits and are recommended exchange destinations for students from German and German Studies.
 - [Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg](#), Freiburg, Germany
 - [Freie Universität Berlin](#), Berlin, Germany
 - [Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin](#), Berlin, Germany

- [Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München](#), Munich, Germany
- [Universität zu Köln](#), Cologne, Germany

For a full list of all partner universities available to German and German Studies students, please visit Go Global's partner pages: [Germany](#), [Austria](#), [Switzerland](#).

Career and Experience

Explore career possibilities, create connections, and make the most of your program in CENES. For more information: [Your degree in CENES](#).

Other

- UBC Science: [Forms and Applications](#) (e.g., Double Major, Minor forms).
- UBC Arts: [Adding a Major/Minor](#).
- [Degree Requirements in Arts](#) (e.g., Literature Requirements).

Directory – [Faculty and Staff](#)

Department Head

Prof. David Gramling david.gramling@ubc.ca [Profile](#)

Director of Undergraduate Studies, German

Prof. Biz Nijdam biz.nijdam@ubc.ca [Profile](#)

Full-Time Faculty

Florian Faller falf@mail.ubc.ca [Profile](#)

Prof. Kyle Frackman kyle.frackman@ubc.ca [Profile](#)

Prof. Florian Gassner florian.gassner@ubc.ca [Profile](#)

Prof. Markus Hallensleben mhallen@mail.ubc.ca [Profile](#)

Dr. Daniela Hempen hempen@mail.ubc.ca [Profile](#)

Prof. Ilinca Iuraşcu iurascu@mail.ubc.ca [Profile](#)

Dr. Uma Kumar uma.kumar@ubc.ca [Profile](#)

Prof. Jason Lieblang Jason.Lieblang@ubc.ca [Profile](#)

Prof. Ervin Malakaj ervin.malakaj@ubc.ca [Profile](#)

Adelheid O'Brien aob25r@mail.ubc.ca [Profile](#)

Prof. Gaby Pailer pailer@mail.ubc.ca [Profile](#)

Prof. Caroline Rieger carolin@mail.ubc.ca [Profile](#)

Prof. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young winthrop@mail.ubc.ca [Profile](#)

Sessional Lecturers

Dr. Igor Maslennikov igmas123@mail.ubc.ca [Profile](#)

Sara Pashan sara.pashan@ubc.ca [Profile](#)

CENES German Program Outcomes

1. Undoing the effects of monolingualism, Anglocentrism, and linguistic nativism

- Experience and contribute to our multilingual world.
- Recognize how multilingual meanings impact people and processes—in complex, subtle, and profound ways.
- Describe how monolingualism and linguistic nativism intersect with racism, nationalism, classism, ableism, and other forms of oppression.

2. Knowing—from a multilingual, Germanophone standpoint

- Describe how knowledge is made in diverse Germanophone contexts—including collaborative, historical, methodological, linguistic, social, aesthetic, creative, technological, material, and political processes.
- Interpret texts and narratives using various literary, linguistic, and multimodal frameworks.
- Help undo colonial processes of knowledge production—both those arising from Germanophone colonial modernity and in Canada’s colonial past and present.

3. Enjoy using German—with confidence

- Speak, read, and write in German creatively and confidently, taking pride in the accents and heritage language proficiencies you came to the program with (English, German, Mandarin, Persian, Cree, etc).
- Work across languages—through translation, interpretation, code-mixing, assistive technology, etc.
- Understand that language is constantly changing amid social and historical fluid.

4. Living and being alive in a volatile age

- Use the experiences, texts, and topics explored in your classes, you will be able to describe:
 - Express what it means for you to be alive and human today.
 - Express what responsibilities you have to other people, communities, land, and ecologies.
 - Identify the complexities of historical, socio-political, and cultural processes that particularly affect German-speaking people and places.

5. Aiming for planetary justice & public responsibility

- Identify and describe how power works in the settings that matter to you and your communities.

- Describe Germanophone societies' specific responsibility to redress genocide, eugenics, Nazism, colonialism, settler colonialism, and the ongoing effects of empire.
- Use resources from cultural history and experiences of crisis from the 20th century and before to pursue justice and responsibility in the 21st century.
- Critique propaganda, linguistic deceit, obfuscation, linguistic racism, elitism, authoritarianism, hate, exclusionary purism, and various forms of fascism in linguistic, visual, and symbolic forms.

6. Modelling intellectual humility

- Strive to comprehend beyond your own experience and standpoint, through processes of listening, reflecting, conceptualization, analysis, and translation.
- View knowledge and language as a commons, rather than a possession
- Identify the difference between the use of language and knowledge to manipulate or gain power over others, and the use of language to uplift and nourish others.
- Identify how your experiences shape you differently than do those of a person of another gender, sexuality, race, religion, background, immigration status, ethnicity, language, accent, embodiment, age, language, and worldview.

Students can also read or download the [full-version of our Program Outcomes](#).