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Spring 2010

Germans, Jews and Turks (Spring 2010)

Robert D. Tobin

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Clark University
Germans, Jews and Turks
German 286 / Jewish Studies 286 / Holocaust and Genocide Studies 286
Mon-Wed 4:15-5:30
Spring 2010

Professor Tobin
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Office hours: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 1-2, and by appointment

This class studies the expression of cultural identity in central European literature. How have people come to think of themselves or others as “Germans,” “Jews,” “Turks,” or some combinations thereof? While the Holocaust is obviously central to the German-Jewish relationship, it is not the only focus of this course—we will read literary reflections of the emancipation of the Jews, of German-Jewish assimilation and symbiosis, of the rise of anti-Semitism and Zionism, as well as attempts to remember the past. And while the long history of the relationship between Jews and non-Jews in Germany will be a major component of our course, we will also study the emergence of Turkish culture in the German-speaking world and conclude with reflections on Germany today as a multicultural nation.

Some of the goals of this course include:

- Specifically, an increased knowledge of the complicated relationship between Germans, Jews and Turks in central Europe.
- More generally, a more subtle understanding of the formation of identity and the representation of identity.
- Awareness of important literary texts that address the relationship of Germans, Jews and Turks, as well as issues of identity formation and representation
- Methodologically, increased subtlety in analyzing literary texts
- Increased skill in understanding scholarly writing on literary texts
- Increased abilities to speak and write on sensitive topics.
- Students taking the course for credit will improve their abilities in reading, writing, and speaking German.

Assignments:

Short presentations	20%
4 5-page essays (journal for German students)	40%
Final Paper (10 pages, with five secondary sources)	20%
Participation	20%

Short Presentations:

On most days, students will begin with a short presentation on the topic suggested in parentheses in the syllabus. (These topics may change as necessary)
Each student will do at least two short presentations. In the second round, I would like students to have read a scholarly article on the subject of their presentation and present a summary of the article's conclusions.

Short Essays:

At the end of each section, students will write a short analysis of the literary texts that they have read.
Instead of the short essays, German students will keep a diary in German with an entry for each day of class.

Final Paper:

The final paper will be a research paper with roughly five scholarly sources (in addition to the literary text at hand).

Participation:

Participation is vital for a seminar to work. Come to class having read the texts in question and prepared to talk!

Day by Day

Jan. 20 Intro, opening

Enlightenment, Emancipation and Assimilation

Jan. 25 Lessing, Nathan the Wise, Acts I-II
(G.E. Lessing)

Jan. 27 Lessing, Nathan the Wise, Acts III-IV
(Moses Mendelssohn)

Feb. 1 Lessing, Nathan the Wise, Act V
(Christian Wilhelm Dohm, "On the Civil Improvement of the Jews")

Feb. 3 Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, The Jew's Beech, pp. 11-51
(Droste-Hülshoff)

Feb. 8 Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, The Jew's Beech, pp. 51-107
(Berlin Salons: Henriette Herz, Rahel Levin Varnhagen)

Feb. 10 Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, The Jew's Beech
(Assimilation)

Feb 12: First Paper Due – Responses to Lessing and Droste-Hülshoff

Anti-Semitism and Zionism

Feb. 15 Gertrud Kolmar, A Jewish Mother in Berlin, Part I (pp. 3-57)
(Political Anti-Semitism from the 1870s on)

Feb. 17. Gertrud Kolmar, A Jewish Mother in Berlin, Part II (pp. 61-112)
(Rise of Zionism)

Feb. 22 Gertrud Kolmar, A Jewish Mother in Berlin, Part III (pp. 115-160)
(Life in Weimar Berlin)

Feb. 24 "The Golem" (1920)
(The Jewish Community in Prague)

Mar. 1 "Jud Süß" (1940)
(Hitler)

Mar. 3 "Aimee and Jaguar" (1999)

Mar 5: Second Paper due – Responses to Kolmar and Golem/Jud Süß

*** SPRING BREAK ***

Exile and Memory

Mar. 15 Paul Celan, "Death Fugue" and other poems
(Celan)

Mar. 17 Ingeborg Bachmann, selected poems and tales.
(Bachmann)

Mar. 22 Jurek Becker, Jacob the Liar, pp. 1-60
(Becker)

Mar. 24 Jurek Becker, Jacob the Liar, pp. 60-125
(Holocaust representations in literature)

Mar. 29 Jurek Becker, Jacob the Liar, pp. 126-182
(Holocaust representations in film)

Mar. 31 Jurek Becker, Jacob the Liar, pp. 182-244
(Holocaust memorials)

Apr 2: Third Paper due – Responses to Celan/Bachmann/Becker

Multi-Cultural Germany Today

Apr. 5 Maxim Biller, Love Stories
(Jeff Peck, Jews in Germany Today)

Apr. 7 Maxim Biller, Loves Stories
(Schlink, The Reader)

Apr. 12 Özdamar, The Bridge of the Golden Horn, pp. 1-76
(Özdamar)

Apr. 14 Özdamar, The Bridge of the Golden Horn, pp. 77-130
(Turks in Germany Today)

Apr. 19 Özdamar, The Bridge of the Golden Horn, pp. 133-205
(Cinematic Representations of Turkish-Germans)

Apr. 21 Özdamar, The Bridge of the Golden Horn, pp. 207-257
(Senocak Essays)

Apr. 26 Yoko Tawada, essays

Apr. 28 Academic Spree Day

Apr. 30: Fourth Paper Due – Responses to Biller / Özdamar / Tawada

May 3 Conclusion