

Welcome to the Department of Germanic Languages at Columbia!

Our department has long been considered one of the strongest German departments in the country. We offer a rich and comprehensive curriculum on the history of German literature and culture from 1750 to the present. In addition to close mentoring by our core faculty, students profit from working with our affiliated faculty from Art History, Comparative Literature and Society, History, Philosophy, Architecture, and Anthropology. Strong ties to our international partner institution, the Free University in Berlin, allow students to engage in study abroad.

In our undergraduate program, German majors and concentrators acquire proficiency in examining literary, philosophical, and historical texts in the original, as well as critical understanding of German culture and society. Courses taught in translation build on Columbia's Core Curriculum, thereby allowing students to enroll in upper-level seminars and on the way to a major or concentration before completing the language requirement. For more information on our requirement or the major, concentration, STEM concentration, and SEAS Minor please visit: <https://germanic.columbia.edu/programs/german/undergraduate>

The German Language Program offers courses for beginning, intermediate and advanced learners. All classes are taught as part of a living culture and invite you to explore German-speaking cultures from multiple perspectives. Taking Courses in German will allow you to fulfill the language requirement at Columbia. For more information on our German Language Program please visit: <https://germanic.columbia.edu/programs/german/language>

To ensure optimal placement, students who have had prior German instruction are required to take our placement test. For more information please visit: <https://germanic.columbia.edu/content/germanplacementexam>

Please check the Columbia Directory for our course offerings: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/bulletin/uwb/#sel/dept-G.html>

Why study German and why at Columbia? Hear from former students:

“Most of all, the German Department felt like a family, with small seminars that might meet to discuss Goethe outside on a warm, sunny day and where I have kept touch with professors [...].”

“Columbia’s German language program was the highlight of my undergraduate education! Each professor is expertly skilled at teaching, approachable and well-versed in the culture and periods that we studied. I always left class with new knowledge in addition to my language learning. [...] I only wish I started earlier so I could have majored or minored in the Department.”

“The faculty challenged me to become a critical thinker and a passionate scholar – qualities crucial for success in any discipline.”

“It is safe to say that I never would have won my dream job of Berlin bureau chief for The New York Times if I hadn’t studied German at Columbia.”

“I cannot sufficiently state the impact studying abroad had on my intellectual development. At BCGS, the assignments for each class consisted almost exclusively of one large research essay on a topic of the student’s choosing. Having such academic freedom felt entirely foreign and rewarding, and my work there became the basis of grant and graduate school applications and my senior thesis. It pushed me outside of my academic comfort zone, beyond the format and academic structure I was used to.”

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For more information about our department and course syllabi, please visit our website: <https://germanic.columbia.edu/about>