

SAMPLE COURSE DESCRIPTION 1: FEELING FOREIGN: DIVERSITY IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD

This class is designed as an interdisciplinary writing-intensive seminar that teaches students how to present evidence-based, scholarly arguments about a diverse range of culturally relevant topics. They will learn how to write and speak to different audiences, and they will practice effective communication strategies, in order to engage with their peers' and professor's viewpoints in an open-minded way.

Course Description:

What does it mean to be a stranger, a foreigner, an outsider? What leads to the marginalization of certain groups, and what societal consequences does it have? Finally, how can we overcome such a rhetoric of exclusion, and what role does the digital realm (think: social media for example) play in moving towards a celebration rather than a condemnation of diversity? We will engage with these questions from a variety of viewpoints, and through different analytical categories, like race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, and ability. We will study a diverse set of materials, such as newspaper articles, blog posts, literary texts, Tweets and Facebook posts, as well as some theoretical scholarship addressing questions of diversity.

You will engage in various writing and reading exercises that equip you with the skills to 1) critically analyze different viewpoints on the topic of diversity, 2) understand how a certain source constructs an argument to prove its point of view, and 3) position your own understanding of diversity vis-à-vis the one articulated in a source document. You will find that the debates around diversity are as complex as the concept itself. Rather than trying to resolve the contradictions between different positions, our goal is to analyze them in order to formulate our own understanding of diversity in critical dialogue with existing discourses. The different assignments throughout the semester will culminate in your preparation of a TED-talk style presentation. In this talk, you present a 7-10 minute, evidence-based argument about your understanding of diversity, as it is constructed and talked about in contemporary societies.

SAMPLE COURSE DESCRIPTION 2: DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILIES IN POST-1945 FICTION

This class is designed as an advanced-level course for German minors or majors, with readings and films exclusively in German. The fictional material was chosen in a way that allows students to engage with the course topic through multiple forms of written and spoken discourse. At the same time, the texts and films will be used as a springboard to review important grammatical topics within relevant communicative contexts.

The course could also be taught in English, possibly as a first year seminar, or outreach course. In that iteration, I would include American texts or films to add a stronger intercultural component to the readings.

Course Description:

Husbands betraying their wives, parents neglecting their children for their love of the state, siblings willing to kill each other for besmirching the family honor. What has happened to the family in post-war Germany? In this course, you will engage with post-1945 German cultural history through the lens of representations of kinship in film and literature. You will investigate family as a crucial social and narrative construct for the negotiation of memories, particularly in the aftermath of historical caesurae, trying to understand how representations of family and memory intersect in contemporary German-language literature and film. Specifically, we will look at portrayals of dysfunctional families, and ask ourselves how this dysfunctionality can be read in dialogue with the specific historical context of the works in question.

Throughout the whole semester, you will work on a series of short writing assignments (like critical summaries, blog posts, creative writing), which you will curate into an online portfolio (using a platform of your choice) that seeks to explain the importance of kinship as a social and narrative construct from your point of view, and in dialogue with the literary works that we discuss.