

Green Germany: From Nature Poetry to the Green Party to Being a Leader in Environmental Technology

Taught in German

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Foreign Languages and Literatures
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http://www4.ncsu.edu/~hgb/flg390_green_germany/390syllsp08.htm



German-speaking culture has a long "green" tradition reflected in the arts, in literature and in scientific discoveries that have made Germany, Austria, and Switzerland leaders in the development of alternative environmental technologies. This course familiarizes students with everything from nature poetry and landscape painting to the Germans' strong environmental consciousness, issues of climate change, and the latest environmental technologies. The course starts with texts and art on the concepts of nature during Romanticism (around 1800), investigates the effects of industrialization at the end of the 19th century, presents the Nazis' attitude towards nature, and then spends most of the semester discussing the second half of the 20th and the beginning 21st centuries. The time after 1960 brought a steep rise in environmental consciousness, the success and tremendous political effect of Germany's Green Party, issues of increased air and water pollution, waste management, energy production, climate change, transportation systems, green architecture, urban planning, and how to develop sustainable, alternative energy sources. German literary as well as non-literary text and image sources are being used and students learn to discuss nature and environmental issues, policies and technologies in German through class and discussion board debates, group projects, essays, a portfolio, and oral presentations.

In order to provide students with the perspective of professionals in the field, the course is enriched by several guest lectures:

- Dr. Gary Blank, Forestry, on the history of German forests and the science and practice of forestry in Europe (in English)
- Dr. Heike Winter-Sederoff, Plant Biology, on genetically engineered plants and European attitudes towards genetic engineering (in German)
- Dr. Philipp Tavakoli, Interdisciplinary Studies, on environmental ethics and the concept of carrying capacity (in German)
- Dr. Sofus Simonsen, German Studies Emeritus and former staff member of the NC State Solar House. He will lead a tour in German of the NC State Solar House.

Curricular Context

In July 2007 a new CHASS major was approved: German Studies. One of its three tracks, “German – Science and Technology,” was designed in collaboration with the College of Engineering in order to provide an attractive opportunity for engineers for a strong dual major combination and also for other students in NC State’s science and technology fields. In all of its three tracks, our German Studies major is a new kind of foreign language major: instead of following the traditional model of a language/literature combination, it is interdisciplinary, including courses from other departments (history, political science, etc.), and even within our FLG courses it will employ a cultural studies approach that stretches our disciplinary boundaries. This is also the direction that is recommended by national organisations for future developments in our field.

Semester Schedule (*Lesson and Topic*)

- 1 Introduction to the course; interviews about students’ attitudes toward nature and the environment
- 2, 3 Romanticism’s ideas about nature (paintings by Caspar David Friedrich, texts and poetry by Goethe, Novalis, Eichendorff, Tieck, Mörice, songs by Schubert); the gender of nature; Grimm’s Fairy Tales; legends on nature
- 4 19th century: *Pfister’s Mill* – the first piece of German environmental literature (water pollution; industrialization versus village culture)
- 5 From the 19th to the 20th century: a history of policies and initiatives to protect nature; manifestos and pamphlets on the protection of nature
- 6 Mountain film *The Blue Light* by Leni Riefenstahl
- 7 Nazi ideology and issues of space and the exploitation and control of nature
- 8 Grass roots movements and the beginning of the German environmental movement, environmental poetry and protest songs
- 9 The Green Party, ecofeminism (Petra Kelly; women leading the Green Party), Joschka Fischer
- 10 Water pollution, management of river, lake and coastal environments
- 11 Air pollution, acid rain and its effects on health, plants, buildings, etc.
- 12 The German forest and the science of forestry (Dr. Gary Blank, in English)
- 13 The Forest in German literature; the issue of deforestation
- 14 Waste Management, Recycling
- 15 Transportation issues; oil crisis
- 16 Fossil fuel (oil, coal) versus nuclear energy; German anti-nuclear movement
- 17 Food production, conventional and organic agriculture
- 18 Genetic engineering of plants and German/European attitudes towards it (Dr. Heike Winter-Sederoff, in German)
- 19 The 21st century: global warming, climate change, natural catastrophes
- 20 Case studies: European storms, flooding; the Alpine region
- 21 Environmental Ethics (Dr. Tavakoli, in German)
- 22 The idea of renewable energy sources and sustainability
- 23 Solar energy; visit to NC State Solar House (Dr. Simonsen, in German)
- 24 Wind energy
- 25 Other forms of renewable energy (water, ocean waves, etc.)
- 26 Urban planning, green architecture, the 3-liter-house and 1-liter-house
- 27 Environmental politics and the future of the planet: Angela Merkel; Arnold Schwarzenegger
- 28 German/Austrian/Swiss environmental technology in a global context
- 29 Summary, review, final assessment of what was learned
- 30 Final: Student groups major project presentations.