
GREEN GERMANY

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GERM 230-01/ENVI 230-01
M/W/F 1:10 – 2:10pm
ARTCOM 202
Spring 2023



Germany is famous today as a worldwide leader in discussions about environmental sustainability, green politics, and renewable energy. The term "sustainability" is in fact the translation of the much older German word "Nachhaltigkeit." In this course, we will explore the development of ecological consciousness in the German-speaking world, with a focus on the relationship between environmental movements and broader cultural and intellectual traditions of thinking about nature. Through the study of visual art, literature, film, scientific texts, and philosophical writings, we will discuss topics such as: the political and theoretical underpinnings of eco-activism in Germany; the specter of disaster in the German environmental imaginary; influential scientific, literary, and philosophical attempts to challenge the division between the human and the nonhuman; and eco-architecture and related efforts to envision and create alternative modes of human-nonhuman coexistence. Taught in English. No previous knowledge required.

Learning Objectives:

- I. Writing proficiency: we will work together on developing your writing skills (mechanics and substance) throughout the term through short writing assignments and structured essays.
- II. Oral proficiency: you will have several opportunities to hone your speaking skills through in-class discussions and discussion leadership; over the semester you will also gain a vocabulary for analyzing and interpreting issues central to the environmental humanities

Guidelines and Expectations

Required Texts. The only text you are required to obtain a physical copy of is Christa Wolf's *Accident: A Day's News* (ISBN: 9780226905068), which we will read mid-March (please order in advance). All other materials will be provided via Moodle, and all films will be available to stream. You are expected to always have assigned readings and materials with you in class, whether in print or via computer or tablet.

Attendance. This is a discussion-based seminar and there is typically no way to make up what you miss. Regular attendance is paramount to your success. Please email me in advance if you will miss class. Students are expected to attend three meetings per week, with **no more than three excused absences (no questions asked)**. For each absence after three, your overall grade will be lowered a half letter (B changes to B- etc.). However, I acknowledge that is an unusually difficult time for many of us and that health and other factors may interfere with your ability to attend. **Please talk to me if there are extenuating circumstances you would like to discuss.** When feasible, I'm happy to be flexible and work with you to find alternative solutions to support your success in the course.

Participation. You are encouraged to **participate actively** by contributing to class discussions, taking notes, and engaging fully during group activities. While you are encouraged to speak often, please be self-aware of your role within the classroom. If you tend to be a quieter student, consider ways that you can contribute more to the class discussions. If you tend to be more vocal, consider when it would be opportune to let others speak.

It is important that we all **respect** the perspectives of others in the seminar. Respectful and active participation includes not only comments made in class and on virtual learning platforms, but also taking notes, actively listening to the viewpoints of fellow students, allowing others to speak without interrupting, and always having your phone and other distractions put away during class.

Homework. For most class sessions, you will have texts to read or artworks to analyze and often an accompanying task to complete: a discussion or video post, a text annotation assignment (Perusall), or a handout, etc. It is your responsibility to **complete and submit assigned work before class** (or the time indicated on the detailed weekly schedules posted to Moodle). You should **expect to spend approximately 1.5 – 2 hours on homework and preparation for each class session**. Please contact me if you are working more than this amount.

Discussion Board. A mainstay of homework throughout the semester will be the discussion forum. You will be asked to **post to the "Discussion Forum" on Moodle once a week**. On average, there will be 2-3 eligible discussion forums each week, but you are only required to select and complete one a week for full credit. The discussion board will play a key role as the virtual extension of our in-class dialogue. Posts are to consist of short responses (10-12 sentences) addressing one of the upcoming works. Occasionally, you will receive specific prompts or guidelines, but often it will be open topic. **Posts are due by 12:10pm**. A-level work means not only regular completion of one post a week, but also a deep level of engagement with the assigned materials.

Discussion Leadership. Once during the term, you will assume the role of discussion leader for an assigned text or work. You will design and facilitate an interactive 25-30-minute class discussion of the selected course material. In preparation, you will receive more guidelines and we will review

together possibilities for how to structure your session as discussion leader. In addition, you will have the opportunity to meet with me for advice and assistance in designing your session.

Writing Assignments (2 essays)

- **First essay (3-4 pages):** you will receive a prompt and instructions approximately one week in advance. You will receive feedback and then have the chance to submit a revision.
- **Final essay (7-8 pages, includes 1-page abstract):** In preparation for the final essay (and as part of the overall task), you will work in consultation with me to develop an individual research question based on course materials. You will submit an abstract outlining the planned essay and receive feedback in advance of commencing your project.
- All papers will be graded for both content and style/structure/expression. Always proofread carefully before turning in writing assignments.

Formatting (for all written assignments)

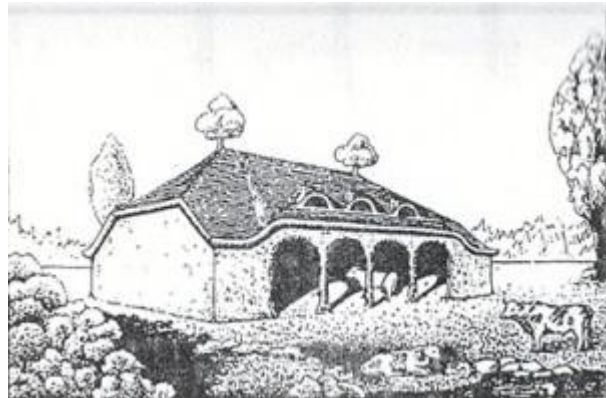
- saved as a docx file
- Times New Roman; font, size 12, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and page numbers
- Include a heading (Name/Date/Course) and title in the header

Submission:

Submit via the assigned Dropbox provided on Moodle. No assignments will be accepted via e-mail. Late submission of papers will result in a grade penalty unless you are given an extension. Please get in touch at least 2 days before the due date to request an extension.

Grading:

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| Attendance | 10% |
| Participation | 20% |
| Discussion Posts & HW | 20% |
| Discussion Leadership | 15% |
| Short Essay | 15% |
| Final Essay | 20% |



Arthur Wiechula, *Developing Houses from Living Trees* (1926)
[*Wachsende Häuser aus lebenden Bäumen entstehend*]

Weekly Schedule

Fri. 1/20 Introduction: Course Overview

Into the Wild: Romanticism and Early Ecological Thought

Mon. 1/23 Heinrich von Kleist, "The Earthquake in Chile" (251-267)

Wed. 1/25 Caspar David Friedrich, Selected Paintings & Short Video "The Sea of Ice"

Fri. 1/27 Bettina von Arnim, "Queen's Son"
Amalie von Helwig, "The Symbols"

Mon. 1/30 Film: *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* (Dir. Werner Herzog)

Wed. 2/1 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "The Fisherman" and "Elf King"
Friedrich Hölderlin, "The Oak Trees"

Fri. 2/3 Andrea Wulf, *The Invention of Nature: Alexander von Humboldt's New World* (excerpt)

Mon. 2/6 Alexander von Humboldt, "The Nocturnal Wildlife of the Primeval Forest" (141-147) and "Ideas for a Physiognomy of Plants" (155-169) from *Views of Nature*

Wed. 2/8 Goethe, "In Honor of Mr. Howard" and Selected Scientific Writings

Fri. 2/10 *Mental Health Day (No Class)*

Heimat, "Blood and Soil": Environmentalism, Nazism, and Eco-Fascism

Mon. 2/13 Georg Heym, "God of the City" and "Berlin I"
Franz Marc, "How does a Horse See the World?" and Selected Paintings

Wed. 2/15 William H. Rollins, "Imperial Shades of Green"
Otobong Nkanga, "Reflections of the Raw Green Crown"
Skye Arundhati Thomas, "Otobong Nkanga Excavates Material Histories"

Fri. 2/17 Selected Songs from the Wandervogel Movement
Peter Staudenmaier, "The 'Green Wing' of the Nazi Party and its Historical Antecedents"

Mon. 2/20 Staudenmaier, "The 'Green Wing' of the Nazi Party and its Historical Antecedents" (continued)

- Wed. 2/22** Sam Moore and Alex Roberts, “A History of Far-Right Ecologism” from *The Rise of Ecofascism* (14-28)
- Fri. 2/24** Moore and Roberts, “A History of Far-Right Ecologism” (28-45)
- Mon. 2/27** Ursula Heise, “The Legal Lives of Endangered Species: Biodiversity Laws and Culture” (87-107)
- Wed. 3/1** Heise, “The Legal Lives of Endangered Species” (107-126)
- Fri. 3/3** *Class Cancelled—use this time to work on your essay.*
- Sat. 3/4** Short Essay due at Midnight on Saturday (via Moodle Dropbox)

Nuclear Catastrophe and Environmental Movements in Divided Germany

- Mon. 3/6** Martin Kalb, “Rather Active Today than Radioactive Tomorrow!” Environmental Justice and the Anti-Nuclear Movement in 1970s Wyhl, West Germany (excerpt)
- Wed. 3/8** Merrill E. Jones, “Origins of the East German Environmental Movement” (excerpt)
- Fri. 3/10** *Class Cancelled—Recommended Viewing: Chernobyl (HBO Miniseries)*
- 3/11 – 3/19** *Spring Break – No Classes*
- Mon. 3/20** Christa Wolf, *Accident: A Day’s News* (3-37)
- Wed. 3/22** Wolf, *Accident: A Day’s News* (38-59)
- Fri. 3/24** Wolf, *Accident: A Day’s News* (60-80)
- Mon. 3/27** Wolf, *Accident: A Day’s News* (81-109)

Constructing a Sustainable Future: Green Politics, Ecocentrism, and Rethinking Growth

- Wed. 3/29** The Origins and Development of the German Green Party (selected works)
- Fri. 3/31** Sustainability and the “Energiewende”: The Ongoing Shift toward Renewable Energies (selected works)
- Mon. 4/3** “Fridays For Future” in Germany and the Hambach Forest Protests (selected videos and texts)

- Wed. 4/5** Arne Naess, “The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement”
- Fri. 4/7** Franz Kafka, “A Report to an Academy”
- Mon. 4/10** Jakob von Uexküll, *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans* (excerpt)
- Wed. 4/12** Peter Wohlleben, *The Hidden Life of Trees* (excerpt)
- Fri. 4/14** Wohlleben, *The Hidden Life of Trees* (continued)
- Mon. 4/17** Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* (excerpt)
- Wed. 4/19** Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass* (continued)
- Fri. 4/21** Matthias Schmelzer, Andrea Vetter, and Aaron Vansintjan, *The Future is Degrowth* (excerpt)
- Mon. 4/24** Schmelzer, Vetter, and Vansintjan, *The Future is Degrowth* (continued)
- Wed. 4/26** Friedensreich Hundertwasser, “Concrete Utopias for the Green City,” “Greenery on the Roof: a Futuristic, Ecological Building Method,” and “Spittelau District Heating Plant, Vienna” from *Hundertwasser Architecture*
- Fri. 4/28** Video: Ferdinand Ludwig’s TED Talk, “Designing Living Buildings with Trees”
Video: “*Baubotanik* Shapes Living Tree Branches into Building Facades”
- Mon. 5/1** Final Discussion

Final Essay Due: 5/10 (via Moodle Dropbox)