

Images of Germany

Fall 2018 | Dr. Wolfgang Johann

Course description

Cultural history knows Images of Germany over the past 2,000 years with very different contexts, perspectives, approaches and statements. From one specific point of view, we can divide those Images of Germany into two main categories: self-reflecting positions or descriptions from outside perspectives. In 2,000 years, these categories have been stable and unchanged – we can still divide modern Images of Germany into those categories. Therefore, in one way or another, Images of Germany contribute to the question of Alterity and Identity – and this is before we ask about the context, perspective, approach, and the actual content of those images.

Examples of a 2,000-year-old history of Images of Germany include the following: Tacitus reflection on *Germania* and Caesar's excurs on Teutons in his *De bello Gallico*; Walther von der Vogelweide's *Preislied*; the *Deutschlandlied* by Fallersleben and Heinrich Heine's *Germany. A Winter's Tale*; Mark Twain's essay *The Awful German language*; Richard Wagner's *What is German?* and Friedrich Nietzsche's response in *The Gay Science*. The leading questions regarding what is German or Germany have been radically changed as a result of World War II and the unthinkable atrocities of the Holocaust. Therefore, we will cast spotlights on different contemporary (short) movies and clips by Charlie Chaplin, the US Army, Monty Python, Alexander Kluge and Claude Lanzmann. We will also look at Images of Germany today: Is it the image campaign clip *Du bist Deutschland* (2005) that describes modern Germany precisely, or is it Böhmermann's *Proud of not being proud* (2016)?

The seminar depends upon the exchange of international student experiences and perceptions of native German students. We will try to discuss different approaches and different expectations towards the Images of Germany and how or if they have shaped our point of view in general.

The course language will be English, but some sources might be provided in German.

Course requirements

You should be prepared, responsive, and arrive on time for every class. You should be able to follow and engage in course discussions, and ask intelligent questions that contribute meaningfully to the course. You should help *Kommilitonen* with their questions if things seem to be clear to you. Reading groups form a common institution in German university culture, where you meet with comrades to discuss readings and course topics before class. You should become proactive and initiate and organize such groups with your peers. At the minimum, you should read the required texts and you should prepare questions for the discussion. You should be awake and be fully conscious.

Your writing assignments and other assignments will depend on your requirements: As an international student, it depends on how many ETCS points you need; in this class, you can be awarded with 3 to 5 points: The more points you need, the more tasks you will have to complete. Possible tasks may include writing assignments, an oral presentation or leading a group discussion.

As a regular student of EUF, you can take your *Modulprüfung* in this class (Modul 19.1. and 19.2 only). Details on your writing assignments will be provided in the first session of the semester. Writing assignments will be accepted in both German and English. In any case, as an international or a regular student, you will have to give a short oral presentation in English in the second half of the semester on any course-related topic. However, you are free to choose the topic.