Why German Language and Literature at Brandeis?

What was Dada? Is Wagner’s music anti-Semitic? What was the relationship between “Bauhaus” and the Nazi regime? What is the “new German cinema?” Why is Goethe’s Faust so important? These and many more questions are addressed in courses in German language and literature at Brandeis. We offer students the unique opportunity to study the German language in its cultural context, with strong emphasis on literature, film, and cultural history. Students are encouraged to study abroad and participate in the many cocurricular offerings by the Center for German and European Studies.

Curriculum Overview

Students have the option of completing a major or a minor in German, as well as a secondary-level teaching certificate. Courses are offered in:

- German language
- German literature
- German and European cultural studies (GECS)

In order to fulfill the major in German, students must complete GER 103a, 104a, and 105a, and six additional courses in German literature and culture (two of which must be taken in German). In order to earn departmental honors, students must complete a thesis during their senior year. ECS 100a, the foundational course for the European cultural studies program, is also required for the German major.

In order to fulfill the minor in German, students must complete GER 103a or 104a, and 105a, plus two courses above 105.

A student majoring in German may obtain the Massachusetts teaching certificate at the high-school level by additionally completing the requirements of the Education Program.

Electives for the German program are divided into courses taught in German and courses taught in English translation.

This approach allows students to study German literature and culture at an advanced level without having to first reach full fluency in the language. Those who pursue the German major are encouraged to take as many of their upper-level courses in German as possible. At least two courses above GER 105 must be taken in German to complete the major.
Opportunities beyond the Classroom

Students are strongly encouraged to study abroad during their stay at Brandeis. No coursework can replace direct immersion. Together with our undergraduate departmental representatives (UDRs), we organize a number of exciting cocurricular events for students, including biweekly Kaffeestunde, our annual Nikolausfest, and film screenings of recent German releases.

Our Brandeis Berlin Summer Program gives students the option to begin or perfect their language study right in the heart of the German capital, with its tremendous opportunities in art, culture, film, and music. Visit www.brandeis.edu/uaafys/abroad for more information.

Events and Programs

The Center for German and European Studies (CGES) at Brandeis offers a multitude of events and programs that supplement coursework and enrich students’ experience. German majors are encouraged to take advantage of CGES offerings throughout their Brandeis careers. CGES also administers a number of attractive grants and scholarships. To learn more, visit www.brandeis.edu/departments/cges.

Career and Education Opportunities

German majors have gone on to graduate school in German literature to prepare for careers in teaching and research, and have pursued professional degrees in law, medicine, and business. They have entered government work, or found employment with publishing companies or business firms with international connections. Many of our students have gone on Fulbright or DAAD programs to German-speaking countries after graduating. Others have joined the Congress-Bundestag Exchange Program, or Internationales Parlaments-Praktikum in the Bundestag in Berlin.

Faculty

Following is a list of department faculty members and their areas of specialization:

• Stephen Dowden  
  Modern German literature and culture, European modernism

• Christine Geffers-Browne  
  Foreign language acquisition; teaching language through literature; Christianity and literature; German-Jewish identity

• Sabine Von Mering  
  Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German literature, German women writers, feminist theory, language pedagogy, drama