German 804, Spring 2016: Germany's Migrants: Texts and Contexts, 3 cr.

B. Venkat Mani, T 3:30 – 6:00

Prerequisites: Graduate standing

Open to Graduate Students from Languages and Literatures, History, Political Science, Sociology, Anthropology and other disciplines

Language of instruction: English.

Please contact bvmani[at]wisc.edu with any questions.

Course Description and Objectives: In the aftermath of the violent political crisis in Syria, hundreds of thousands of Syrian citizens arrived in Germany; by December 2015, the number of Syrian refugees in Germany is supposed to reach 800,000. The summer and early Fall of 2015 brought countless images and stories of a “foreigner-friendly” Germany. International media was replete with pictures of Germans standing at train-stations with placards saying “Foreigners Welcome” in German, English, and Arabic. Chancellor Angela Merkel—who in Fall 2010 declared that the idea of a “Multikulti” German society “had utterly failed”—transformed her political stance with an open door policy on immigrants. A closer look at recent events reveals the differences of opinion that are slowly emerging in German national, and European regional politics. The cost of absorbing Germany’s newest migrants has become a major issue for protests and public debates. Nationalist groups are once again expressing concerns about the “rapid decline” of an (ethnic-)German culture. Conservatives frequently reference the fact that already by 2014, the number of German residents born outside of Germany had reached a record high of 16.4 Million, a drastic change since 1974, when the number of foreign-born residents of Germany reached 400,000 because of the guestworkers from Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey and the former Yugoslavia.

With the current political and cultural debates serving as our point of departure, this seminar will explores the complex history of Germany’s migrants within the larger migratory contexts of Europe, especially after the Second World War. The aim of the seminar is threefold: first, we will investigate how the transformation of labor migrants to cultural and (since 2000) political citizens of Germany has been one marked with accomplishments and positive developments, but also fraught with anxiety, tensions, and discrimination. Second, we will evaluate state-
sponsored German models of multiculturalism (Multikulti), integration, and assimilation in the larger framework of the cultural politics of the European Union. Third, and most importantly, we will examine the artistic, cultural, historical, linguistic, political, and religious “contexts” of migrants’ lives through a variety of “texts”: film, media (print and electronic), literary works, and academic scholarship.

The seminar includes works by literary authors such as Abbas Khider, Nicol Ljubic, Emine Sevgi Özdamar, Aras Ören, and Yoko Tawada; films by directors such as Kutlug Ataman, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Xavier Koller; essays by controversial public figures such as the politician Thilo Sarrazin, sociologist Necla Kelek, the feminist lawyer Seyran Ates, among others.

One of the central tasks of the seminar is to fortify an interdisciplinary examination of concepts such as home, belonging, borderlands, citizenship, cosmopolitanism, diaspora, hospitality, and migration through theoretical frameworks developed in scholarship on multiculturalism, bi- and multilingualism, queer and gender studies, postcolonial studies, and transnational studies. Our discussions will therefore draw on works by literary and cultural scholars such as Leslie Adelson and Azade Seyhan; film scholars such as Daniela Berghahn and Randall Halle; socio-political linguists such as Hagen Peukert and Carol Pfaff; cultural anthropologists such as Arjun Appadurai and Ruth Mandel; historians such Rita Chin and Panikos Panayi; and political theorists such as Seyla Benhabib and Jürgen Habermas, among others.

Course Requirements:
- Attendance and Participation: 20%
- Book review of a recently published (2011-2015) literary work, text book, scholarly monograph or anthology (2.5-3.0 pages, Times New Roman, double-spaced): 10%
- Abstract for a conference paper (500 words): 5%
- One presentation (15 minutes): 15%
- Mid-term paper (8 pages, Times New Roman, double-spaced; conference format): 25%
- Final Paper (expanded version of the mid-term paper; 15-20 pages, double-spaced): 25%

Required texts: (available in German and English at College Library Reserves; for purchase at the University Bookstore or any online vendor of your choice. You may choose to access texts in English or German):


— — —. Please, No Police. Translated by Teoman Sipahigil. Austin, Tex.: Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Texas at Austin, 1992.


**Shorter texts** posted on learn@uw; **films** available through Learning Support Services’ password protected screening.

**Course website:** [https://learnuw.wisc.edu/](https://learnuw.wisc.edu/)