



FIRST YEAR COURSE IN GERMAN

The idea of the first-year course (Prelims) is that it should lay down the foundations of a real competence in the German language, that it should give you some idea of literary genre (of the particular workings of drama, prose fiction, lyric poetry and film) and of literary-historical context, and that it should get you into the habit of close reading.

Works for three of the genres (prose fiction, drama and film) have been chosen from the period 1891-1937. They are (along with the recommended editions):

Drama: Frank Wedekind, *Frühlings Erwachen* (1891) (Reclam)

Arthur Schnitzler, *Liebelei* (1894) (Reclam)

Brecht, *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (1930) [Suhrkamp BasisBibliothek]

*M* (dir. Fritz Lang, 1931) [DVD: Eureka 2012 Masters of Cinema edition. ASIN B0030GBSSQ]

Prose: Theodor Fontane, *Effi Briest* (1894/5) (Reclam)

Thomas Mann, *Der kleine Herr Friedemann* (1897) [in *Frühe Erzählungen 1893-1912* (Fischer)]

Franz Kafka, *Die Verwandlung* (1912/15) (Reclam)

Irmgard Keun, *Nach Mitternacht* (1937) [List Taschenbuch]

Two of these texts, Wedekind's *Frühlings Erwachen* and Fontane's *Effi Briest* are prescribed for special study next year, and you need to know them particularly thoroughly (look up all or most of the words, and write down the ones you don't know). This means that you will in the exams at the end of the first year be set an extract from one of these works for commentary.

Poetry will be studied through a selection of poems taken from *Deutsche Lyrik: Eine Anthologie* edited by Hanspeter Brode (Suhrkamp, 1990). These are the poems, from medieval to modern:

Der von Kürenberg: Ich zôch mir einen valken (16)

Heinrich von Morungen: Owê, sol aber mir iemer mê (18)

Walther von der Vogelweide: Under der linden (24)

Fleming: An Sich (47)

Gryphius: Thränen des Vaterlandes (50)  
Hofmannswaldau: Vergänglichkeit der Schönheit (52)  
Goethe: Willkommen und Abschied (93)  
Goethe: Auf dem See (96)  
Goethe: Erbkönig (100)  
Goethe: Römische Elegien V (102)  
Hölderlin: Andenken (147)  
Hölderlin: Hälfte des Lebens (149)  
Eichendorff: Denkst du des Schlosses noch... (171)  
Müller: Der Lindenbaum (178)  
Heine: Sie saßen und tranken am Teetisch (185)  
Heine: Ich weiß nicht was soll es bedeuten (186)  
Heine: Wie langsam kriechet sie dahin (195)  
Droste-Hülshoff: Im Grase (201)  
Mörike: Auf eine Lampe (213)  
Mörike: Denk es, o Seele! (213)  
Meyer: Der römische Brunnen (236)  
Meyer: Auf dem Canal Grande (238)  
George: Es lacht in dem steigenden Jahr dir (250)  
Lasker-Schüler: Ein alter Tibetteppich (253)  
Hofmannsthal: Manche freilich ... (258)  
Rilke: Der Panther (263)  
Rilke: Archaischer Torso Apollos (265)  
Rilke: O Brunnen-Mund (269)  
Stadler: Fahrt über die Kölner Rheinbrücke bei Nacht (276)  
Heym: Der Gott der Stadt (296)  
Benn: Astern (288)  
Trakl: Grodek (305)  
Brecht: Die Liebenden (319)  
Brecht: Fragen eines lesenden Arbeiters (322)  
Brecht: Schlechte Zeit für Lyrik (327)  
Huchel: Der Garten des Theophrast (347)  
Celan: Sprachgitter (354)

Jandl: wien: heldenplatz (362)

Bachmann: Erklär mir, Liebe (366)

Enzensberger: Ins Lesebuch für die Oberstufe (371)

Brinkmann: Einen jener klassischen (374)

In addition, to get a bit more in the way of literary context, you need to read Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House / Nora oder Ein Puppenheim* (1879) in English or German before you come up in October. We will bear it in mind when reading the other plays, and reference will be made to it in lectures.

The easiest way of getting hold of these books is probably online on [www.amazon.de](http://www.amazon.de) or elsewhere. You can also try [www.abebooks.de](http://www.abebooks.de) for second-hand copies. All of the set texts will also be available in Blackwell's in Oxford, sometimes second-hand, but you need to get them before you come up in October. Keep your receipts – you will be able to apply for a book grant when you arrive which will cover more than half of the cost!

*Language work* will be partly topic-based. The topic is: 'Deutsche Gesellschaft und Kultur seit 1890'.

The aim is a unified course. Teaching in tutorials, classes and lectures, in language and literature, will be integrated and connected as much as possible. This means that the more you read the better your language will become, and the more you work on your language, the sharper your enjoyment and analysis of the literature will become.

## Preparation

We shall begin with the poems and plays/film, so you should read (watch) at least them before you come up, including the Ibsen play (see above). Bring with you when you arrive in October brief summaries of the three set plays and of the film. These are for your own use, but you should hand them in to me at the beginning of the term (that is, by Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October). You should also do all you can to increase your familiarity with and accuracy and fluency in the German language, by reading and listening to German or by going to a German-speaking country if you have the opportunity. The course, from the very beginning, will involve you in the close reading of texts in German, and you are strongly advised not to become dependent on translations. In order to learn to read German as fluently and accurately as English, you need to make sure you concentrate on the German from the very start. You will need your own dictionary (either the Oxford Duden or the Collins – the full edition, not the concise) and a copy of *Hammer's German Grammar and Usage* (sixth edition, by Martin Durrell).

There is no need to begin reading more widely in German literature, though of course you can if you like. The set texts will do for now. But it's a good thing to read the most important books of the Old and New Testaments (at least Genesis, Exodus, Book of Solomon and at least one of the Gospels), the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* by Homer, and Shakespeare's major plays (at least *Hamlet*). It's also a good idea to read some books to get you thinking, pursuing your existing interests. Two books you

are advised get hold of and read which will increase your cultural awareness are: John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (Penguin Modern Classics, secondhand copies easily available) and Mary Beard, *Women and Power: A Manifesto* (Profile, 2018). And read some poetry, following your own interests. You will enjoy the course more if you are familiar with a wide range of world literature. But if you have your own ideas as to what you would like to read, of course follow up those instead.

Charlie Louth

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