

Syllabus
English 265/German 248/348: Special Topics
Kafka's Animals

Instructor:

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Course Description:

We will read most of Franz Kafka's major short stories, two of his three novels, and excerpts from his diaries and letters along with some critical and historical literature. We will soon notice that Kafka's fictitious characters are hybrids – often animal-human composites, such as the insectoid creature in "The Metamorphosis," but also hybrids of different sorts, in whom the sacred and the profane, the artistic and the quotidian, the self and the other mingle and conflict. Thus, Kafka's texts challenge our notions of personal, social, and national identity, and even our understanding of humanity itself.

Reading: For the purposes of this course, I suggest not to think of Kafka's texts as stories presenting a sequence of events. Rather, let's imagine Kafka's texts as coded messages and ourselves as code breakers. To crack a code, we have to be able to go back and forth within a text and between texts to identify patterns. Rather than absorbing a *story*, we are looking at a *map*. We thus need to read extremely closely, *and re-read frequently*, because the patterns we are searching may be in details of the language. To facilitate this process, each one of us needs to keep a reading journal (described below). Discussion and the sharing of ideas is going to be a crucial part of exploring the manifold layers of Kafka's writing, and each of us will have to share ideas frequently, but also listen carefully to others.

Sections of the Course:

English 265 and German 248 are taught in English; no knowledge of German is required.

Students in German 348 read all of Franz Kafka's texts in German, write their papers in German, and participate in sessions held together with German 248 in English. There will be one special session every week for German 348 students held Collectedly in German.

Assignments: Throughout the term, you will keep a journal in which you record features of Kafka's texts that strike you as typical, significant, recurrent, confusing, or elucidating. This journal will be the basis for your interpretive papers. You will have to hand in the journal several times in the semester. It should feature roughly 100 – 200 words per class session.

The three short papers (each three pages – circa 750 words -- in length) give you an opportunity to produce short and succinct analyses of the texts under scrutiny. The first will be an analysis of "The Metamorphosis" under consideration of Kafka's short parable "Poseidon." The second and third three-page text will use one of the scholarly texts read in class to elucidate a text (or theme, motif) of Kafka's.

The eight-page paper (circa 2000 words) is your research paper for the term. You will develop your topic yourself, but in close cooperation with the instructor. The paper needs to be on Kafka's literary production, which, understood here in a broader sense, may include letters and diaries. In your paper, you will draw on one or two scholarly articles or chapters from monographs.

You will give two mini-lectures of five to ten minutes each. Your lectures have to broach the topic of the class period; they can consist in your interpretation of the texts or in the presentation of contextual materials. Your mini-lecture needs to stimulate a discussion; therefore, you should include some class activities in your presentation. You are invited to meet with me before your presentation date for planning and practice.

Required for Purchase:

For German 248 – English

Kafka: *The Collected Stories*

Kafka: *The Castle*

Kafka: *The Trial*

For German 348 – German

Kafka: *Sämtliche Erzählungen*

Kafka: *Das Schloss*

Kafka: *Der Proceß*

Other texts will be made available as electronic files in the instructor's public folder at \\Fileserver1\acad_dept_pgm\Mod_Lang\Maurer_Karl_Heinz\Public\Kafka

Attendance of class meetings and at film screenings is absolutely mandatory. You can have two unexcused absences without lowering your grade. Each additional unexcused absence will result in a 3% deduction from your final grade.

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| <u>Grading:</u> | 3 three-page papers | 30% | (10% each) |
| | A journal recording K's themes/motifs | 10% | |
| | 1 eight-page paper | 25% | |
| | 2 mini-lectures (5-10 min.) | 10% | (5% each) |
| | Participation & preparation | 25% | |

Schedule (subject to change)

August 22 - 24

Th Introduction

August 27 – 30

T Kafka: “The Judgment.” *Collected Stories*. 25-39. [“Das Urteil”]

Th Kafka: “The Metamorphosis” *Collected Stories*. 73-128.
[“Die Verwandlung”]

September 3-6

M *Labor Day (no class)*

T Kafka: “The Metamorphosis” *Collected Stories*. 73-128.
[“Die Verwandlung”]
Kafka: “Poseidon.” *Collected Stories*. 401-2. [“Poseidon”]

Th Kafka: “Letter to His Father.” [“Brief an den Vater”] [EF]
English: <http://www.kafka-franz.com/KAFKA-letter.htm>
German:
<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/?id=12&xid=1362&kapitel=1&cHash=4ccc35c7d52>
Julian Preece: “Introduction: Kafka’s Europe.” *The Cambridge Companion to Kafka*. 1-8 [EF]

September 10-13

T Max Horkheimer: “Authority and the Family.” *Critical Theory*. 47-128.
[EF]

Th Excerpts from Anderson (Ed.): *Reading Kafka : Prague, politics, and the fin de siècle*. [EF]
Kafka: “The Crossbreed [A Sport]” and “The Cares of a Family Man”
Collected Stories. 393-5 & 183-5. [“Die Kreuzung” und “Die Sorge des Hausvaters”]
Due: 1st three-page paper

September 17-20

T Excerpts from Sander Gilman: *Franz Kafka, the Jewish Patient*. [EF]
Kafka: “Jackals and Arabs.” *Collected Stories*. 175-9. [“Schakale und Araber”]
Kafka: “The Great Wall of China.” *Collected Stories*. 374-87. [“Beim Bau der chinesischen Mauer”]

Th Kafka: “Speech on Jargon” and “Notes Toward a Minor Literature” [EF]
Excerpt from Deleuze, Guattari: *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* [EF]

September 24 – 27

T Richard Wagner: “Jews in Music.” [EF]
Kafka: “A Report to an Academy” and “A Report to an Academy: Two Fragments.” *Collected Stories*. 195-204 & [EF].
[“Ein Bericht für eine Akademie”]

Th Kafka: “Investigations of a Dog.” *Collected Stories*. 420-60.
[“Forschungen eines Hundes”]

October 1 – 4

T Kafka: “Josefine the Singer, or the Mouse Folk.” *Collected Stories*. 233-50. [“Josefine, die Sängerin, oder Das Volk der Mäuse”]

Th Max Horkheimer: “Art and Mass Culture.” *Critical Theory*. 273-90 [EF]

October 8-11

T Kafka: “A Hunger Artist.” *Collected Stories*. 222-32.
[“Ein Hungerkünstler”]

[Screening of Robert Wiene’s *Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919) day/time tba

Th Discussion of Wiene’s *Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*
Excerpts from Hanns Zischler: *Kafka Goes to the Movies* [EF]
Excerpts from Kafka: *Diaries* [EF]
Slide Show: German Expressionism (Dix, Grosz, Kollwitz, et al.)
Due: 2nd three-page paper

October 15-18

M *Fall Recess (no class)*

W *Fall Recess (no class)*

Th Kafka: „Before the Law.“ *Collected Stories*.173-5 [„Vor dem Gesetz“]
and Kafka: *The Trial* [*Der Proceß*]

October 22-25

T Kafka: *The Trial* [*Der Proceß*]
Karl Marx: “On Bureaucracy” [EF]

Th Kafka: *The Trial* [*Der Proceß*]

October 29 – November 1

T Kafka: *The Trial* [*Der Proceß*] and “The Problem of Our Laws.” *Collected Stories*. 404-6. [“Zur Frage der Gesetze”]

Th Kafka: “In the Penal Colony.” *Collected Stories*. 140-167.
[“In der Strafkolonie”]

November 5-8

T Kafka: "The Burrow." *Collected Stories*. 467-503. ["Der Bau"]
Due: 3rd three-page paper

Th Kafka: *The Castle [Das Schloss]*

November 12-15

T Kafka: *The Castle [Das Schloss]*

Th Kafka: *The Castle [Das Schloss]*

November 19-22

T Kafka: *The Castle [Das Schloss]*

W *Thanksgiving Recess (no class)*

Th *Thanksgiving (no class)*

November 26-29

T Kafka: *The Castle [Das Schloss]*

Th Kafka: „The Pail Rider“ *Collected Stories*. 205-7 [„Der Kübelreiter“]

December 3 – 5

T final class

Due: eight-page paper