Fall 2012: Transnational Approaches to German Studies, {3} cr.

German742 (meets with German 804/ French 804/ History 804/ Poli Sci 804/ Sociology 804/)

Tuesdays, 3:30-6:00 PM

Instructor: Professor B. Venkat Mani (bvmani@wisc.edu)

Prerequisites: Open to graduate students in all Humanities and Social Science disciplines with interest in Comparative/German Studies

Language of instruction: English (Knowledge of German appreciated, not Required)

Course Description: This course seeks to evaluate the term transnational and its efficacy as a qualifier for a discipline such as German Studies, institutionally categorized as a national language and literature department. Through discussions on literary, historical, linguistic/pedagogical, philosophical, political, and sociological texts, the course aims to explore multi- and interdisciplinary perspectives on German Studies in the 20th and 21st centuries. Along with spotlighting key texts that form and inform German self-imagination and German imagination of the non-German/non-European Other the course collates and examines reactions to German nationalism and cosmopolitanism, migration, colonialism and modernity from outside the geo-cultural boundaries of Europe. In addition, this course discusses contemporary scholarship on the German-speaking world that focuses on nationalism and cosmopolitanism, migration, and colonialism. The course analyses the modes in which the above-mentioned political and ideational phenomena have shaped and informed modern Germany, and the actual processes by which migrant, colonial, and cosmopolitan subjects have challenged, innovated, and revised the very definitions of the German nation and modernity. The course situates the discipline of German Studies in the larger investigation of the Humanities through filters of globalization and postcolonialism, in order to surmise new directions for the field. The course is offered in English and is open to interested graduate students from any field/discipline.

This is a reading intensive course. The course reader includes texts by literary authors and critics such as Thomas Mann and Edward Said; historians such as Dipesh Chakrabarty, Friedrich Meinecke, and George Mosse; philosophers and cultural critics such as Theodor Adorno, Jacques Derrida, W.E. B. Du Bois, Jürgen Habermas, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak; socio-political thinkers such as Arjun Appadurai, Etienne Balibar, Ulrich Beck, and Judith Butler; and a few contemporary scholars of German Studies working on cultural studies, history, literature, linguistics, film, sociology, political theory, and theater.

Course Requirements:
Active Participation (regular attendance with texts prepared well prior to the class and participation in discussions): 20%
Book review of a recent publication in German Studies relevant to the course (2007-2012; 2.5-3.0 pages, double-spaced): 10%
Abstract for a conference paper (500 words): 5%
One presentation (15 minutes): 15%
Mid-term paper (8 pages, double-spaced; conference format): 25%
Final Paper (expanded version of the mid-term paper; 15-20 pages, double-spaced): 25%

Required texts: Course Reader [Available at Bob’s Copy Shop: 1401 University Ave.]