# German Migrant Literature

# *How writers imagine exile, displacement*

# *and “the long journey”*

# *in the age of global migration*

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#### *GER BC 3050* German Migrant Literature

Instructor: Prof. Erk Grimm

Office: Milbank Hall 320 b

Barnard College

Office Hours: Wed 10-12 and by appointment

Contact: 🖀854 5415

🖳 [egrimm@barnard.edu](mailto:egrimm@barnard.edu)

*BARNARD COLLEGE Catalogue description: Examination of migration and the nomadic experience in the 19th and 20th centuries. Emphasis on the comprehension and construction of the"other" culture by travelers and migrants in fictional texts; and on questions of orientalism, colonialism, and multiculturalism.*

This survey course examines a social phenomenon that is widely considered as one of the lasting and most powerful legacies of modernity: the personal or collective experience of “***migration”.*** Our semester-long examination will focus on a rich and wide variety ofliterary representations from the early 19th century to the present, thus covering a field that comprises the era of Romanticism—often associated with the emergence of the modern nation state--as well as 20th-century modernism and the current modes of writing in a period shaped by globalization and international traveling. When do European authors actually start to respond to this kind of mobility and how do they perceive themselves when they turn into “migrants”? To answer such questions, we will discuss how German-speaking writers and intellectuals render the personal/collective experience of *migrants* and find out what kind of literary strategies major authors have developed over time to cope with the complicated issue of cultural belonging and forced or voluntary social mobility. By concentrating on a small number of exemplary texts, we will be able to discuss topical issues such as the question of citizenship in shifting political landscapes between 1789 and 1989, including aspects such as national or hybrid identities, gendered perspectives, and class- or race-oriented viewpoints of writers in different historical and geographical contexts. The selected fictional and essayistic texts give you the opportunity to become familiar with major German writers while developing a unique angle that will allow you to develop a broader understanding of the inherent problems of migrating and their literary representation. The selected works will allow you to learn about the migrants’ social perception and to discuss their exchange with another cultural settings and linguistic environments from a critical perspective. We will be guided by a number of important studies and the reflections of a few leading German intellectuals who have given much thought to the subject matter. One of them is the internationally celebrated writer Hans Magnus Enzensberger; another key source is Saskia Sassen’s study on the history of migration. In order to develop a useful model to understand the migrants’ experience, we will need to define the most crucial and important differences among key terms such as ***exile****,* ***asylum****,* ***emigration****,* ***expatriation***, ***diaspora***, “***Gastarbeit***,” and ***immigration***. By illuminating these specific terms, we will differentiate critical concepts and build up a critical vocabulary that easily applies to issues in other parts of the world. Our examinations cover many aspects of migration as memorable focal points (rather than a mere background) of literature; we will reflect upon the historical, socioeconomic, political, and personal reasons for living abroad and analyze the literary strategies of coping with a migrant’s experience. By the end of the semester, you will be well prepared to discuss a wide range of forms of migration in the context of multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, and globalization.

The sequence of topics: In method, we will examine exemplary texts all of which illustrate the particular historical stage of *migration* as an important theme of German literature. After an introduction to the topical issue of a new, “pan-European” identity, we will explore the historical origins of modern migration in the early nineteenth century. We then shift the focus to the construction of imagined communities in the age of the colonialism and discuss the real or imaginary encounters with India and Africa in the 19th century. The second half of the semester is dedicated to questions of expatriation and diaspora in the twentieth century. We will begin with a critical examination of a philosophy of homelessness, which is then followed by a close reading of texts that reveal important facets of the experience of migrant workers and vagabonds in the modern period. You will become acquainted with some interesting differences between exile and the phenomenon of “inner emigration” during WW II; the distinction is quite typical for the German situation in the mid-century. In the last quarter of the semester we focus on the politics of immigration and xenophobia in the post-war period and Germany after unification. Crucial notions such as “Gastarbeiter,” “Asylant,” and “Kosmopolit” will help us to understand the ramifications of current debates over migration in the European context; the emphasis is on a distinction between the class-related distinction between a literature of “guest workers” and “cosmopolitan” intellectuals, including the facets of gender-based experiences. Our examination of the phenomenon of “wanderer” between two cultures will not be limited to narrative prose; the reading list includes poems, letters, and essays, so that we can get a clearer sense of how writers transform their own authentic experiences or imaginations into different modes of literary expression.

The course is being designed for students who have completed the second year of language acquisition (Intermediate level). While advanced language classes such as one of our V 3001/3002 courses may be beneficial for taking such a literature course, the department does not make advanced language classes a requirement. In this course, you will be able to practice and develop your speaking and writing skills since we will spend much time on discussing accessible topics and composing essays. What makes this course particularly welcoming to students beginning on the advanced level is the brevity of texts, the focus on a current social/cultural issue, and the opportunity to improve on writing skills by continuously working on short writing assignments and essays. Most of the texts are written in vivid, contemporary German – they are inviting, transparent, and highly instructive in terms of idiomatic usage of language and cultural viewpoints. Thus they provide an excellent opportunity for discussing the topics of diaspora, exile, and migration, all of which are highly relevant topics of discussions regarding global awareness of social change. One or the other issue you might also encounter in the social sciences or neighboring fields; the German texts add the freshness of insights you gain from reading texts in the original language. Both newcomers and those who already have some familiarity with German literature will appreciate the vividness and conciseness of our readings.

**Readings:** Hans Magnus **Enzensberger**, *Die Große Wanderung*

Suhrkamp, ISBN-10: 3518388347

ISBN-13: 978-3518388341

Adelbert von **Chamisso**, *Peter Schlemihls wundersame Geschichte*

*Guro, ISBN-10: 1530079519*

*ISBN-13: 978-1530079513*

Bertolt **Brecht***, Furcht und Elend des Drittes Reichs*

Suhrkamp, ISBN-10: 351810392X

ISBN-13: 978-3518103920

Saskia **Sassen**, *Guests and Aliens*

*The New Press, ISBN-10: 1565846087*

*ISBN-13: 978-1565846081*

Note: All books are available at the **Bookculture Book store** (books in German). The book store is located at 536 W 112TH St, New York, NY 10025-1601 (between Amsterdam Avenue and Broadway.)

+ Xerox course material: distributed in class week by week; the Xeroxed material includes all other texts we are reading for this class

**Course Requirements:**

Classroom Activities (active and measurable participation in discussions) 15 %

Written Homework Assignments (brief weekly responses to questions for guided readings of the primary literature) 20 %

4 Essays , incl. one rewrite at the beginning 45%

Essay # 1: 3 pages (rough draft; the final version will be graded)

Essay # 2: 4 pages

Essay # 3: 4 pages

Essay # 4: a revised version of one of your essays, based on your research on a given subject (6 pages). Research means: making oneself familiar with the deeper issues of a text, studying the background and checking on secondary sources that may shed new light on a given text. The suggested secondary literature is available at Barnard Course Reserves or will be distributed in class (handouts)

In-class Final Examination 20 %

Grading Scale A A- B+ B B- C+ C C- D

93 92/90 89/85 84/83 82/80 79/75 74/73 72/71 70

General policies: ⏹ your oral participation is an important component of all classroom activities; to develop your speaking skills, make comments on your reading experience or ask questions; re-read your notes from previous meetings and sum up the findings so that you can more easily participate in the discussions; make yourself familiar with the broader issues we are discussing by studying all required, and if time permits, a few of the suggested texts, websites, and common references

⏹ contact your instructor immediately if you think you must miss a deadline; late essays will not be accepted after a period of four days, unless you can provide evidence of a severe health problem or an emergency. In all cases, you need to communicate via email or phone about a possible delay (see information on the first page of this syllabus)

⏹ document all sources: include a section “Works Cited” and list the works alphabetically; footnotes are optional but try to include them in the more polished or revised versions if you want to add information

If you copy down everything on a given subject from an encyclopedia, scholarly book/article or if you include material from INTERNET sources or if you paraphrase another person’s wording or line of thinking without documenting it, you *plagiarize*. Therefore, list all sources, indicate the borrowed material, and add page numbers after a citation or a paraphrased passage. Plagiarism is an attempt to deceive the reader. Also, check if electronic sources provide you with accurate and reliable data. When writing an essay, use the proper format for “in-text citations,” “footnotes” (for first entry) at the bottom of the page and a rubric “Works Cited” at the end of your paper. For more information consult the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, Latest Edition (NY: MLA), chapter 1.8. Information on the web: go to <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/RES5e_ch08_s1-0001.html> (for in-text citations) and to <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/RES5e_ch08_s1-0011.html> (for a list of works). Or begin with the first page at <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/> and click on “Humanities,” then “Documenting Sources.”

⏹ if you must miss a class because you are sick, please have the courtesy to inform your instructor; this way you are sending a clear message about your commitment and avoid misunderstandings about your temporary absence from class; please note that absenteeism and arriving late repeatedly for the weekly sessions will have a negative impact on you grade for classroom activities. It is your responsibility to inform the instructor about an illness or severe academic difficulties—a conversation during office hours is highly recommended

⏹ As in any other class being taught by Barnard or Columbia instructors, the following policy on religious holidays applies: if you need to be absent from school because of your religious beliefs you will be given an equivalent opportunity to make up a home work assignment, to turn in work after the holiday, to contribute to a discussion that you may have missed because of such absence on a particular day or days. You will not be penalized for absence due to religious beliefs, and alternative means will be sought for satisfying the academic requirements involved. Let the instructor know how accommodate you if this is the case.

⏹ if you think that your instructor should know about special needs, an impairment or a chronic medical condition, please make an appointment at the beginning of the semester. Let me know how and when I can accommodate you. If you are concerned about an exam or if you think you need a different environment for taking the exam, contact the Barnard Office of Disability Services (or its Columbia equivalent) at your earliest convenience. Please take advantage of their aide program at the beginning of the semester. Find out about the program and check their web page at [www.barnard.edu/ods](http://www.barnard.edu/ods) or call 854-4634

⏹ be considerate and help us create an environment conducive to learning--please turn off your cell phone or turn it silent for the duration of our meeting. When the session has started, please refrain from sending messages, texting, shopping or searching the Internet since such activities are a considerable distraction and prevent you from focusing on discussions and critical analyses.

# Course Schedule

WEEK 1: General Introduction to the Course Topics and Relevant Issues: Migrating within, to and from the German-speaking countries

Sep 6 and 8

WEEK 2-3: MIGRATION and Visions of a Pan-European Identity

Hans Magnus **Enzensberger**, *Die große Wanderung*

Sep. 13, 15, 20

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**Part I: MIGRATION and NATIONAL IDENTITIES in the Age of the Bourgeoisie (earl 19th century)**

WEEK 3-4: MIGRANTS and IMAGINED COMMUNITIES

Sep. 22, 27, 29

Between two Cultures: French-German Writers in the Age of Romanticism

Adelbert von **Chamisso**, *Peter Schlemihls wundersame Geschichte*

WEEK 5:

Oct. 4 and 6

The Poetic Construction of NATIONAL Identities

Heinrich **Heine,** Poems

WEEK 6: CONCEPTS OF THE EAST: ORIENTALISM *Essay 1* (draft)

Oct. 11 and 13 🖙due: Oct 6

Orient and History in German Idealism

Philosophy in a Global Context: Imaginary India and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich **Hegel**

WEEK 7: 19th-century COLONIALISM

Oct 18 and 20

“Out of Africa”:

Popular Literature in the Age of the Bourgeoisie: Karl **May**, Durch die Wüste

*Essay 1* (final version)

🖙due: Oct 18

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**Part II: EXILE and MODERNITY: MIGRATION in the early 20th century**

WEEK 8 and 9: Reflections on HOME and HOMELESSNESS

Oct 25, 27 and Nov 1

From Biographical Experience to Philosophical Contemplation

Jakob **Wassermann**, *Mein Weg als Jude und Deutscher*

WEEK 9 and 10: MIGRATION and WORK

Nov 3, 8, 10

Sites of DISPLACEMENT: Mexico

“Crisanta.” A Short Story by Anna **Seghers** *Essay 2*

🖙due: Nov 3

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**Part III: MIGRANTS, DIASPORA, and CITIZENSHIP in the late 20th century**

WEEK 11: EXILE and the Question of “HEIMAT”

Nov 15 and 17

Modernist Constructions of EXILE and the Third Reich

Bertolt **Brecht**, *Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reichs*

(sel scenes from the play)

if time permits: Modernist Constructions of EXILE and the Politics of “INNER EMIGRATION”:

Speeches and Letters: Thomas **Mann** and Gottfried **Benn**

WEEK 13: The Trauma of “MUTTERSPRACHE”

Nov 22

Poet, Jew, Survivor: The Poems of Paul **Celan**

*Essay 3*

🖙due: Nov 22

WEEK 14: CITIZENSHIP and HYBRID IDENTITIES

Nov 29 and Dec 1

Leaving Germany?

Christa **Wolf**—An East German Woman Writer Contemplating about East German Identity and Exile

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WEEK 15: Towards a new MULTICULTURAL Society? *Essay 4*

🖙due: Dec. 8

Dec. 6 and 8

Immigration and TURKISH-GERMAN WRITERS: New Cosmopolitans?

Emine **Özdamar**, excerpts from her novel *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei*

Dec. 13 and 15 Reading Week

✍ In-class Final Examination (3 hours)

(likely a Tuesday or Thursday morning, for the exact date see the website of the *Barnard Office of the Registrar and the Columbia calendar*)