

German 640: Germans in Africa

CALL NUMBER: 10742-0

Dr. Nina Berman

M W 1:30pm-3:18pm
Hagerty Hall 251

In this advanced undergraduate seminar we will read autobiographical and fictional material written by Germans who spent an extensive time in Africa, and one autobiography by a Kenyan woman who now lives in Germany. We will also include visual material, such as Leni Riefenstahl's photographic work, and films that are based on autobiographical or fiction writing. The discussion will focus on the image of Africa, the self-image of the German/Kenyan authors, questions of gender and sexuality, and the relation of cultural production to political and economic developments. Narratological questions—perspective, rhetorical devices, imagery—will be central to the discussion.

The objectives of the course are to critically analyze the German image of Africa, as mediated through fiction and non-fiction material; to attain a grasp of key theoretical paradigms relevant to understanding ideological aspects of the texts; to address relevant historical events and developments; to analyze narratological tools used by the authors, and to explore the ideological function of these tools.

The course will be taught in German.

Primary sources:

Albert Schweitzer, *Zwischen Wasser und Urwald*

Ernst Udet, *Fremde Vögel über Afrika*

Leni Riefenstahl, *Afrika*

Corinne Hofmann, *Die weisse Massai*

Miriam Kwalanda, *Die Farbe meines Gesichts*

Stefanie Zweig, *Nirgendwo in Afrika*

Caroline Link (based on Zweig's novel), *Nirgendwo in Afrika*

The books by Schweitzer, Hofmann and Zweig are available at SBX. Ernst Udet's and Miriam Kwalanda's books are out of print; copies will be made available in class.

Leni Riefenstahl's volume *Afrika* will be available for checkout in the German department.

Secondary texts:

David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*; at SBX

A reader containing excerpts from the following texts will be available for checkout in the German department:

Nina Berman, *Impossible Missions: German Economic, Military, and Humanitarian Efforts in*

Africa

Fatima El-Tayeb, *Schwarze Deutsche: Der Diskurs um "Rasse" und nationale Identität 1890-1933*

Patrick Colm Hogan, *Empire and Poetic Voice: Cognitive and Cultural Studies of Literary Tradition and Colonialism*

Michael Schubert, *Der schwarze Fremde: Das Bild des Schwarzafrikaners in der parlamentarischen und publizistischen Kolonialdiskussion in Deutschland von den 1870er bis in die 1930er Jahre*

Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*

Andrew Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany*

On reserves:

Germany's colonial pasts, edited by Eric Ames, Marcia Klotz, and Lora Wildenthal

The imperialist imagination: German colonialism and its legacy, edited by Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop

Worldly provincialism: German anthropology in the age of empire, edited by H. Glenn Penny and Matti Bunzl

Crosscurrents: African Americans, Africa, and Germany in the modern world, edited by David McBride, Leroy Hopkins, and C. Aisha Blackshire-Belay

Grading and Requirements: Participation (10%); two book reports (30 %); oral presentation (20%); final paper (40%; including abstract and bibliography)

Book reports:

Each student is asked to write two book reports of autobiographies or novels about Germans in Africa. The library holds an extensive collection of such texts, in fact 1311 titles; you can search the collection in Oscar

under Title: >> Riesz German African Studies collection

<http://library.ohio-state.edu/search/t?SEARCH=Riesz+German+African+Studies+collection&searchscope=7&submit=Submit>

Titles from the collection may be used for the book reports and for your final paper.

If you use the "limit/sort" function, you can approach the collection by pursuing a historical, topical, or geographical focus, or by looking up the works of certain authors. For example, the collection holds 11 titles for the years 1850 to 1884, that is before the beginning of German colonialism in Africa. You can search by author: "Mader, Friedrich Wilhelm, 1886-1947," for example, yields 12 titles. 60 titles focus on "Ostafrika." 14 titles show the word "Frau" or "Frauen" in the title. Close to 30 titles come up under "Mission," "Missionare" or "Missionar."

The book reports should be 250 to 500 words in length and address the following:

- author, title, place and year of publication
- a brief summary of the plot

- a brief analytical commentary of the book

All book reports will be shared with the class, which will allow us to put together a larger database for the final projects.

Oral presentation:

The oral presentation should focus on a theoretical, historical or narratological question. For example, a presentation may explore relevant definitions of the genres “Autobiography” and “Travel literature” or the relationship between visual representations and text. Other possible topics are, for example, the role that ideas of race play in German accounts about Africa; the role of Christianity; the idea of “civilization.”

Final paper:

The focus of the final paper will be defined by the student; the paper may build on the book reports and the oral presentation; an abstract (roughly 250 words) is due on February 19; a one-page (undergraduates) or two-page (graduates) bibliography is due on February 26. The bibliography should be annotated, that is, the relevance of the book/article for the project should be explained in one or two sentences. Length of final paper: undergraduate students → between 6 and 8 pages; graduate students → 12 to 15 pages (including bibliography). Due: March 14, 4 pm.

Weekly schedule

Wednesday, January 3

Introduction:

Objectives of course; primary and secondary texts; requirements

Monday, January 8

Albert Schweitzer, *Zwischen Wasser und Urwald*

Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*

David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*

Wednesday, January 10

Albert Schweitzer, *Zwischen Wasser und Urwald*

Nina Berman, *Impossible Missions: German Economic, Military, and Humanitarian Efforts in Africa*

Monday, January 15 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day, no classes

Wednesday, January 17

Ernst Udet, *Fremde Vögel über Afrika*

David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*

Monday, January 22

Ernst Udet, *Fremde Vögel über Afrika*

David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*

book report

Wednesday, January 24

Leni Riefenstahl, *Afrika*

Andrew Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany*

book report

Monday, January 29

Michael Schubert, *Der schwarze Fremde: Das Bild des Schwarzafrikaners in der parlamentarischen und publizistischen Kolonialdiskussion in Deutschland von den 1870er bis in die 1930er Jahre*

book report

Wednesday, January 31

Corinne Hofmann, *Die weisse Massai*

Patrick Colm Hogan, *Empire and Poetic Voice: Cognitive and Cultural Studies of Literary Tradition and Colonialism*

book report

Monday, February 5

Corinne Hofmann, *Die weisse Massai*

book report

oral presentation

Wednesday, February 7

Corinne Hofmann, *Die weisse Massai*

book report

oral presentation

Monday, February 12

Miriam Kwalanda, *Die Farbe meines Gesichts*

Fatima El-Tayeb, *Schwarze Deutsche: Der Diskurs um "Rasse" und nationale Identität 1890-1933*

book report

oral presentation

Wednesday, February 14

Miriam Kwalanda, *Die Farbe meines Gesichts*

book report

oral presentation

Monday, February 19

Abstract for final paper due

Stefanie Zweig, *Nirgendwo in Afrika*

book report

oral presentation

Wednesday, February 21

Stefanie Zweig, *Nirgendwo in Afrika*

book report

oral presentation

Monday, February 26

Stefanie Zweig, *Nirgendwo in Afrika*

Annotated bibliography due

book report

Wednesday, February 28

Caroline Link, *Nirgendwo in Afrika*

book report

oral presentation

Monday, March 5

brief discussion of final papers

book report

Wednesday, March 7

brief discussion of final papers

final discussion

The **final paper** is due Wednesday, March 14, at 4 pm, in my mailbox in the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures.