The PhD Program in German at Johns Hopkins is unique in its dual emphasis on critical theory and cultural phenomena from the seventeenth to twenty-first centuries. The program attends to the multifaceted relations between literature and philosophy, aesthetics, art history, media theory, cultural criticism, and the sciences. This exceptional interdisciplinarity has led to German’s extraordinary placement record.

Our Program

The German program at Johns Hopkins is among the most distinguished in North America. It has been a leading force in literary criticism with recognized strength in the intersection of literature and philosophy from the Enlightenment to the present. The faculty is committed to the study of works of art and literature in conjunction with political theory, gender and sexuality studies, environmental thought, history of science, religion, anthropology, psychoanalysis, media theory and political science. The interdisciplinary orientation of the program has led to important contributions in the study of phenomenology and poetry, romanticism and gender, early modern science and baroque literature, the modern novel and print history, among many other topics. A further interest lies in the problem of representation with an eye toward the aesthetic, epistemological, and political implications of this overarching topic.

Our PhD students, who are offered five years of guaranteed and generous funding, take three years of courses to gain broad familiarity with literature from the baroque period to the contemporary stage as well as philosophy from the Enlightenment to recent environmental to political theory. Seminars within the German program are offered on a wide range of literary genres, authors, cultural phenomena and issues in poetics and aesthetics. In addition to their seminars within the German program and other offerings within the Modern Languages and Literatures Department, students are encouraged to develop a strong interdisciplinary perspective through courses in departments such as Anthropology, Comparative Thought and Literature, English, History of Art, Philosophy, Political Science and Women, Gender and Sexuality, and the Peabody Conservatory. The final two years of graduate study are devoted to the dissertation, the first of which is spent abroad to enable students to gain international exposure.

Our Faculty

Christiane Frey
Associate Professor of German. Research Interests: 17th and 18th-century German literature, culture and philosophies; the Enlightenment; modernist and avant-garde literature and poetics; cultural studies of representation; German-Jewish culture.

Katharina Kraus
Miller Associate Professor of Philosophy. Research Interests: continental philosophy, history of philosophy, European modernism, cultural and political theory.

Peter Jelavich
Senior Lecturer in German and Coordinator for Intermediate German.

Katharine Kraus
Miller Associate Professor of Philosophy. Research Interests: 17th and 18th century German literature and thought; feminist philosophy; the early modern and Enlightenment; continental philosophy.

Lyle. W. Lim
Associate Professor of Comparative Literature, German Literature, and Modern Languages. Research Interests: German literature; German/Jewish cultural relations; cultural studies; modernism and postmodernism; contemporary spirituality.

Karin Weckert
Professor and Chair of German.

Our Program Resources

The program also hosts the Max Kade Center for Modern German Thought dedicated to exploring the political, cultural, historical, and philosophical developments associated with the German discourse on knowledge. The Max Kade Center invites a renowned visiting professor every spring, sponsors lectures and offers travel grants for summer research, internships or study in the German-speaking world. Students are encouraged to attend conferences as well as organize their own regular conference, and are invited to participate each semester in graduate colloquia in which they present their latest work to faculty and peers. Graduate students also help with the production of the German Issue for the highly regarded journal MLN. In addition to their regular stipends, the German subdivision offers several summer fellowships for students to continue their work at libraries, museums and archives in Europe.

Graduate Admissions

The graduate admissions cycle begins in the fall of the year prior to the applicant’s anticipated entry date. Applicants must complete and submit the online application and the supplemental application materials to the Graduate Affairs and Admissions Office no later than January 15. For more information, contact the Director of Graduate Studies, Jennifer Gosetti-Ferencei, at jgosett1@jhu.edu.