About

The Department of Germanics, originally called the Department of Germanic Languages and Literature, was first established with the founding of the University in 1861. In 1972, the name was changed to the Department of Germanics to reflect the more comprehensive nature of the program's content and the development of a German Area Studies Program. The Department currently presents one of the largest programs offering advanced degrees in Germanics in the United States and was ranked 12th in the most recent ratings of the National Research Council.

The Department offers two undergraduate programs leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree. The major in German Language and Literature offers training in verbal and written interpretation and analysis and is useful for any career that involves formulating and solving problems, especially for those with a particular interest in Europe and the German-speaking countries. The major in German Cultural Studies is designed for students who wish to hone their critical skills to analyze various aspects of culture and society, such as literature, film, art, architecture, and political and social institutions.

The Graduate Program (Master's and PhD) offers a broad, flexible and integrated curriculum. Students gain in-depth knowledge of the language, literature, and thought of German-speaking Europe and develop critical and discursive skills through research and scholarly writing.

Students may participate in the Department's study abroad program in Vienna (see “Spring in Vienna”) or in direct exchanges with German universities, among them Freiburg, Tübingen, Münster, and Berlin.

The Germanics faculty represents a diverse group of scholars working in the fields of German literature, linguistics, intellectual history, and cultural studies. Primary research areas encompass German literature and culture since the 17th century, including German Classicism, German Romanticism, Realism, Modernism, contemporary German and Austrian literature and culture, German/Jewish studies, literary sociology, history and theory of drama, film and cultural studies, historical and comparative linguistics, and various branches of critical theory. Recent honors for Germanics faculty include one Guggenheim fellowship, two Senior Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Research Prizes, one National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship, one American Council of Learned Societies Senior Research Award, one Senior Fulbright Award, and one Lockwood Professorship, among others.

Germanics organizes many events that attract a wide range of visitors to the University. Interdisciplinary conferences—such as the May 2007 “Inventions of the Imagination: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Imaginary since Romanticism”—bring scholars to campus from across the US and Europe. Community events such as the lecture series “Connections and Contexts” (organized collaboration with and hosted by Seattle's Frye Art Museum) provide a venue for area residents to learn about and enjoy Germanic culture. The Department also collaborates with the German, Austrian and Swiss Consulates to bring visiting artists and dignitaries to campus for seminars, public performances, and receptions.
Diversity Statement

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