1. Contemporary German politics, culture and society

The opening of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the reunification of Germany in 1990 transformed the landscape of German politics, generating both euphoria and a mass of unforeseen problems. Fundamental were the challenges of integrating the Länder of the former GDR into the political system of the Federal Republic, the socio-economic and political legacy of the GDR, the question of the identity and self-image of the newly reunited Germany. Equally important were the implications of reunification for Germany’s position in the European Union and for the development of Germany’s relations with the wider world. The changes of government from Helmut Kohl’s CDU/CSU coalition to Gerhard Schröder’s SPD/Green coalition in 1998 both underlined continuities and signalled new beginnings. The emergence of Angela Merkel at the head of a grand coalition in 2005 and then of a CDU/CSU/FDP coalition from 2009 was accompanied by a growing self-confidence of the Berlin Republic which was evident in the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of ‘Die Wende’ in 2009-10 and the twenty-fifth anniversary in 2015-16. At the same time, however, further challenges and crises have emerged – ranging from the European financial crisis, the so-called refugee crisis and the rise of the right-wing AfD to Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing, yet increasingly urgent question of climate change. As Germany approaches the end of the ‘Merkel era’, this module will explore key themes and developments in German politics over the last 30 years and consider their relationship with wider cultural and socio-economic factors.

In addition to the preparatory reading below, students are encouraged to consult recent issues of the journal *German Politics and Society* – especially ‘30th Anniversary of German Reunification: Parties, Policies and Performance since 1989’, 37:4 (2019) – and to follow coverage of the 2021 election in both German and international media outlets.

- J. J. Anderson and E. Langenbacher (eds.), *From the Bonn to the Berlin Republic: Germany at the Twentieth Anniversary of Unification* (Oxford, 2010).
2. ‘Zwischen Kafka und Koran’: Islam in German Culture post-9/11

German-language writers from Wolfram von Eschenbach to Goethe and Lessing have long engaged with Islam, a religion often presented as bound to an exotic or dangerous ‘other’ against which the European ‘self’ might define itself. Today, however, in the wake of twentieth-century migration to Germany, the Muslim population of the FRG numbers over four million and many German-language writers and artists self-identify as Muslim, situating their work ‘between Kafka and the Qu’ran’. In this module, students will be introduced to literary and film texts that engage with Islam and Muslim identities. We will read these against the background of 9/11 and the increased visibility of Islam in German debates around identity and integration, engaging with issues of gender, sexuality, and orientalism as we do so.

Prescribed texts:

- Feo Aladağ, *Die Fremde* (2010). FILM

Secondary reading:

- James Hodkinson and Jeffrey Morrison (eds), *Encounters with Islam in German Literature and Culture* (Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2009)
- Yasemin Yildiz, ‘Turkish Girls, Allah's Daughters, and the Contemporary German Subject: Itinerary of a Figure’, *German Life and Letters*, 62.4 (2009), 465-481.
3. German *Flucht*-Narratives from the Second World War to the Present

In 2015 ‘Flüchtlinge’ was chosen by the Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache as Word of the Year, in a testimony not only to the sharp rise in refugees arriving in the European Union from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, but the German public discourse around what became known as a 'Flüchtlingskrise'. This module revisits these events and this discourse through the lens of Germany’s recent (literary) history: introducing four novels spanning the period from World War II to the present, we will interrogate the terminology that surrounds migration events: *Flucht* and *Emigration*, *Vertreibung* and *Exil*, *Heimat* and *Fremde*. Telling of emigrants fleeing the Nazi regime across countries and continents, of war refugees and of the Germans displaced from former Eastern territories after 1945, of smugglers of escapees from the GDR, and of asylum seekers navigating the German immigration system in the new millennium, these narratives shed light on the historical, geopolitical, personal and bureaucratic circumstances that make the concept, and the realities, of *Flucht* anything but straightforward.

- **Prescribed texts:**
  - Abbas Khider, *Ohrfeige* (München, 2016)

- **Recommended Reading:**
4. The ‘red decade’ and Political Violence in Germany

The years from 1967 to 1977 have been called West Germany’s ‘red decade’. This module addresses the New Left social movements, protest, and political violence in Germany during that decade, and the cultural memory or ‘memory contests’ that subsequently developed around the period. We begin with the emergence of the New Left and the student movement, and its concerns and hopes for local and global transformation. We then move to protest and look at modes of peaceful and violent protest and the emergence of armed terrorist groups such as the Red Army Faction and 2 June Movement. The student movement differentiated between violence directed against property (‘Gewalt gegen Sachen’), which was deemed acceptable, and violence against other human beings (‘Gewalt gegen Personen’), which was unacceptable; the latter part of this module looks at how and in what contexts a willingness to injure and kill other human beings develops in the context of hopes to change the world for the better. We will also look at how (and by whom) those developments are remembered, in images, film, and text.

- Sarah Colvin, *Ulrike Meinhof and West German Terrorism* (Rochester, NY, 2009).
- *Der Baader-Meinhof-Komplex*, dir. Uli Edel (Germany 2008) FILM.
This module will examine the ways in which the Germans have dealt with the Nazi past since the debate about the Schuldfrage immediately after 1945. The lectures will examine the contrasting development of the debate about what, in the 1960s, became known as Vergangenheitsbewältigung in the FRG and the official antifascist ideology in the GDR. The module will also survey developments since 1990, for example the implications of the creation of the Berlin Holocaust memorial (2005) and the formal statements about the German past before 1945 made by German Presidents and Chancellors in the last fifteen years.

- Mary Fulbrook, *German national identity after the Holocaust* (1999).