

**Department of German Studies**  
**Vision Statement**  
(Approved unanimously, October 2008)

The Department of German Studies at Emory endeavors to develop competent and culturally literate users of the language. To this end, language learning is linked to the examination of the communicative and cultural codes operative in the German-speaking world of the past and the present. Each stage of the curriculum emphasizes particular types of discourse tied to specific themes that students approach as both resources for their language development and as systems for comprehending German-speaking cultures. The progression up through the curriculum is carefully articulated so that by the end of a four-year course of study students will have attained advanced language abilities that allow them to participate in a range of intellectual and professional contexts. Through their engagement with a wide variety of documents used in instruction (e.g., literature, film, journalism), students develop additionally their cultural literacy to the point where they are able to encounter unfamiliar texts and situations with confidence. Central to this developmental process is education abroad and the integration of that formative experience into students' overall program of study.

Within this curricular framework the department explores longstanding traditions and neglected connections in the German-speaking world. Canons and norms serve a heuristic function, enabling students to understand the relationship between center and periphery, dominant and marginal groups, tradition and innovation. This curricular approach makes it possible to grasp the subtleties of phenomena that transcend political borders (e.g., German-Jewish cultures, the cultural diversity of the former Austrian Empire, German immigration to the Americas). The courses taught in German Studies at Emory also complement the offerings of colleagues in departments across campus, particularly of those affiliated with our program (e.g., History, Philosophy, Music, Jewish Studies).

While acknowledging the reality and gravity of divisions that have existed historically (and continue to exist) between peoples and cultures, the Department of German Studies at Emory is committed to facilitating understanding and communication across these borders, thereby promoting a harmonious and pluralistic environment in the academy and, ultimately, the world at large.