

Teacher(s)	Büssgen Antje ;
Language :	Deutsch
Place of the course	Louvain-la-Neuve
Prerequisites	Introduction to German literature and good knowledge of German (advanced level B2+ as defined in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).
Main themes	In a first stage, the meaning of <i>modern</i> coming from neighboring disciplines (sociology, philosophy and art history) will be examined to come up with a notion of "modernity" which is not simply inspired by historiography. This discussion makes the link to the courses on the history of literature and thought included in the BAC program. After this brief introduction the main part of the course covers the practice of literary interpretation. On the basis of selected texts of principal authors of the modernist period in German literature (Thomas Mann, Rilke, Kafka, Benn, Brecht, Döblin, Trakl, for example) we shall discover innovations in the choice of themes and esthetic expression related to this time. In particular, we shall examine how in the different texts and text types the authors conceive, imagine, and tell the relationship between the outer- and inner- worlds of the individual.
Learning outcomes	At the end of this learning unit, the student is able to : 1 Become familiar with the era of modernism with respect to both the concept of modernity in literary research (Modernethorie) and major authors and works of this period 2 Distinguish modernist German literature of the beginning of the 20th century from more traditional forms of poetic expression (realism, naturalism) and to describe in a critical view the themes and problems treated by the literature of the first decades of the 20th century.
Evaluation methods	Continuous assessment of the work done in the course (oral presentation, discussions) (30%). Final assessment in the form of a personal written assignment (70%). Regular attendance and active participation in the seminar are a prerequisite for assessment and access to the examination. Oral presentation (Referat und Thesenpapier) in the seminar (possibly in groups), personal written work as an extension of this presentation (see "content"). This will provide an introduction to and/or deepening of writing skills in German literature (-> thesis). The personal written work (final exam) is done individually with reference to specific contents discovered during the four-month period and by oral presentation (Referat). In case of failure, the second session consists of a revision of the submitted work. The use of AI is not permitted. Working language: German.
Teaching methods	Seminar. Introduction to the topic at the beginning of the course/quarter by the teacher. Then discussion of common readings in plenary. Presentation of literary and thematic analyses by the students in small groups on the basis of a prepared work with reference books and current scientific articles on the chosen themes (Referat mit Thesenpapier). The personal written work (=final exam) is a continuation and deepening of these oral presentations during the course.
Content	Modern literature: language as a medium for understanding the world Rainer Maria Rilke: Literature and Life. The seminar is devoted to the period known as the "Klassische Moderne", which marked the first decades of the twentieth century in terms of literature and the history of ideas. This period was characterised by a rupture with the great tradition of <i>Klassik/Romantik</i> and with literary realism. Modernist writing techniques, which developed particularly during the aesthetic and literary avant-gardes, experimented with new conceptions of language and representation. They were also nourished by linguistic reflection and anthropology, innovative approaches in the arts neighbouring modernism (painting, sculpture, music) or the reception of Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy. The first sessions of the seminar will lay the necessary foundations on the basis of a sample of theoretical texts and representative extracts. Subsequently, certain specific trends will be explored in greater depth, such as the contribution of women writers (Else Lasker-Schüler, Marieluise Fleißer, Irmgard Keun, Elisabeth Langgässer) to this new spirit of modernity. Focus 2025/2026: Rainer Maria Rilke.

	Lady Gaga had a quote from Rilke tattooed on her upper arm, a South Korean boy band set one of Rilke's poems to music, and Luxembourgish Commission President Jean Claude Juncker recited Rilke's poem <i>Der Panther</i> (The Panther) from memory in an interview: reason enough to examine the significance of the work of the Prague-born German-language poet in the year of his 150th birthday, a work that revolutionised German literature at the beginning of the 20th century with new styles of writing and a way of observing things inspired by the visual arts. Rodin was his 'master' and friend, and in Cézanne's work Rilke discovered a parallel approach to his own artistic endeavours. Rilke wrote the first modern novel (<i>Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge</i>), set in Paris, and corresponded with more than 1,000 people throughout his life. In this seminar, we will examine Rilke as a linguistic artist, as a political contemporary who experienced the profound upheavals of the 20th century, and as a committed European.
Inline resources	Text editions and research literature on Moodle.
Bibliography	Kiesel, Helmuth : Geschichte der literarischen Moderne. Sprache, Ästhetik, Dichtung im 20. Jahrhundert. München: Beck 2004. Une bibliographie détaillée sera diffusée au séminaire. Plusieurs nouvelles biographies ont été publiées à l'occasion de cet anniversaire : Sandra Richter: <i>Rainer Maria Rilke oder Das offene Leben</i>. Eine Biographie. Insel 2025. Manfred Koch: Rilke. <i>Dichter der Angst</i>. Eine Biographie. Beck 2025.
Faculty or entity in charge	ELAL

Programmes containing this learning unit (UE)				
Program title	Acronym	Credits	Prerequisite	Learning outcomes
Certificat universitaire en littérature	LITT9CE	5		
Master [60] in Modern Languages and Literatures : German, Dutch and English	GERM2M1	5		
Master [60] in Modern Languages and Literatures : General	ROGE2M1	5		
Master [120] in Modern Languages and Literatures : German, Dutch and English	GERM2M	5		
Master [120] in Modern Languages and Literatures : General	ROGE2M	5		