

Advanced German: Christian Kracht's *Imperium*

Start date 24 November 2017**End date** 26 November 2017**Venue** Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge**Tutor** Paul A. Hoegger**Course code** 1718NRX022**Director of Programmes**

Emma Jennings

**For further information on this
course, please contact**Public Programme Coordinator, Clare Kerr
clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk or 01223 746237**To book** See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Paul A. Hoegger is teacher and coordinator for German at the Language Centre of the University of Cambridge. Originally from Bern in Switzerland, Paul moved to Germany in his late teens. After a career as a ballet dancer and later as a newsreader for the German World Service (Deutsche Welle) he moved to Cambridge to study Modern and Medieval Languages at King's College Cambridge. He holds a BA in French and German and an MPhil in European Literature from the University of Cambridge and has been researching eighteenth-century German drama for his PhD project at the German department of Cambridge University. Since 2004 Paul has been working as a language supervisor for German at several colleges of Cambridge University. Since 2009 he has been setter and principal examiner for the German *Pre-U* paper at University of Cambridge International Examinations and for the last five years examiner for the *Text and Culture* paper of the Modern and Medieval Languages Tripos. Paul is a Bye-Fellow of Fitzwilliam College Cambridge.

Course programme

Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00 Dinner

20:30 – 22:00 **Introduction to the course and contemporary German topic**

After a short introduction to the course we will be 'setting the scene' for the weekend's work on Christian Kracht's *Imperium*, as well as distributing the poems to the participants to be recited on Saturday afternoon. This will be followed by a sharing and discussing of newspaper or magazine articles or other stories which have caught your eye and which deal with any aspect of German speaking culture.

22:00 Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

07:30 Breakfast

09:00 – 10:30 **Historical and cultural background to Christian Kracht's *Imperium***

We will begin by placing the novel in its historic context, surveying the development of colonial expansion around the turn of the 20th century and examining the particular German brand of colonialism in the nation's quest for what was commonly known as 'Ein Platz an der Sonne'. We will also examine what happened in Germany while the events described in the novel unfold in New Guinea, as well as looking at what happened historically to the colonial endeavours of the Germans after the end of the novel.

You will then be asked to give your personal reactions to reading *Imperium*.

10:30 Coffee

11:00 – 12:30 **Discussion of Christian Kracht's *Imperium* and the scandal around the Wilhelm-Raabe literary prize**

In this session we will continue to discuss Christian Kracht's novel in more detail. We will also attempt to look at it in the light of the notorious debate, which took place around its publication in 2012, triggered by an article in *Der Spiegel* accusing the work of being colonialist and ultimately racist and the author of attempting to spread fascist views. Based on the storm of reactions to that attack we will also examine the fundamental question of how far critics can and should go, and what their role is in our society of 'post-truth'.

13:00 Lunch

14:00 – 16:00	Free
16:00	Tea
16:30 – 18:00	<p>Poetry Reading and discussion / Women in colonies</p> <p>In this session participants will be asked to recite the poems they have chosen the previous day and to explain why they chose it, which will lead to further discussion of the poems and the context they were written in.</p> <p>In the second part of this session we will take a look at the role women played in the Colonial setting, how they coped in a world that was even more male-dominated than at home. We will particularly examine issues around class, mixed marriages, and also what happened to the women when they returned to Germany.</p>
18:00 – 18:30	Free
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	<p>Viewing of the film <i>Nirgendwo in Afrika</i> (2001) by Caroline Link</p> <p>The duration of the film is 130mins. We will therefore postpone the discussion of the film to the first session on Sunday morning.</p>
21:30	<i>Terrace bar open for informal discussion</i>
Sunday	
07:30	<i>Breakfast</i>
09:00 – 10:30	<p>Film discussion and the examination of anti-Semitism in <i>Imperium</i></p> <p>We will begin this session by discussing the film <i>Nirgendwo in Afrika</i> and how it ties in with Kracht's novel <i>Imperium</i> despite depicting different periods of colonisation. In particular we will be examining the anti-Semitic attitude of August Engelhardt's and whether from it can be drawn inferences about the author's own views on the subject.</p>
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	<p>The 'hippies' of the Wilhelmine era</p> <p>We will be examining the phenomenon of exoticist escapism, which was widespread in Wilhelmine society and which was reflected in literary works of the period by authors such as Hermann Hesse and Stefan George. In particular we will be looking at August Engelhardt's cocovorism and nudism, by reading extracts from his <i>Evangelium für eine sorgenfreie Zukunft</i> and by examining how it tied in with a general move towards the loosening of moral constriction in German society at the beginning of the 20th century.</p>

12:45

Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch

Course syllabus

Aims:

- To study the set text as a work of literature in the target language.
- To extend students' vocabulary and awareness of German culture and current affairs.
- To increase students' confidence when expressing themselves in the target language.

Content:

This course is designed to provide an opportunity for students to immerse themselves in German language, literature and culture. The language spoken is German throughout, and a number of sessions will be devoted to discussing and analysing the set text which should be read in advance in preparation for the course. Newspaper articles on subjects of current interest as well as audio-visual materials will be provided to practise comprehension and speaking skills. For the first session on Friday students are encouraged to bring along and to present a short news item relating to any German topic.

Presentation of the course:

As the main objective of this course is to give students ample opportunity to practise their speaking skills, the emphasis will therefore be on discussing and analysing the set text as well as newspaper articles and audio-visual material used during the seminar. Some work will be done in pairs or small groups to make the best use of the time available.

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

- identify the main themes and concerns of the set text.
- broaden their knowledge on various aspects of the period treated in the seminar.
- express an opinion in German about the treatment of these themes in the text.
- contribute to the discussion of other course material in the target language.
- broaden their range of vocabulary in the target language.
- increase their fluency in the target language.

Reading and resources list

Listed below are a number of texts that might be of interest for future reference, but do not need to be bought (or consulted) for the course.

Author	Title	Publisher and date
August Engelhardt	<i>Eine sorgenfreie Zukunft – Das neue Evangelium</i>	Reform-Verlag, Herbertshöhe 1906
Marc Buhl	<i>Das Paradies des August Engelhardt</i>	Eichborn-Verlag Frankfurt a.M. 2011
Hubert Winkels (ed.)	<i>Christian Kracht trifft Wilhem Raabe</i>	Suhrkamp-Verlag Berlin 2013
Christoph Kleinschmidt (ed.)	<i>Christian Kracht</i> (in: Text + Kritik; Heft 216)	Richard Boorberg Verlag München 2017

Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

Information correct as of: 23 November 2017