

A Germanic Christmas and other Winter customs in German-speaking countries

Start date 13th December 2019**End date** 15th December 2019**Venue** Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge**Tutor** Paul A. Hoegger**Course code** 1920NRX020**Director of ISP and LL**

Sarah Ormrod

For further information on this course, please contactHead of Academic Centre Administration, Zara Kuckelhaus
zara.kuckelhaus@ice.cam.ac.uk, 01223 746204**To book** See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Paul A. Hoegger is a graduate of King's College, Cambridge. He is the Coordinator for German at the Language Centre of the University of Cambridge where he has developed a range of general and specialised language courses for postgraduates, which he also teaches. He is Principal Examiner and setter for the German *Pre-U* certificate at the University of Cambridge International Examinations and teaches translation at the Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages Cambridge. He is currently also teaching the poetry of Wilhelm Müller for the *Winterreise* paper at the Faculty of Music.

Paul is Affiliated Lecturer in the German Department of the University of Cambridge. He is an Associate of King's College and Bye Fellow and Director of Studies for Modern Languages at 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 **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 by asking ourselves why it is that more winter customs have survived into modern times than any others, and why the traditions around Christmas in particular have come to play such an important role in Western societies.

22:00 Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

07:30 Breakfast

09:00 **The meaning of tradition and custom**

In this session we will examine the semantic differences between „Brauch“, „Sitte“, „Tradition“ and „Ritus“ and what they mean for us. We will further explore their function in society and see how they evolved from pre-Christian times to now.

10:30 Coffee

11:00 **The origins of Christmas**

In this session we will explore the origins of Christmas. How much of it is pagan, how much is linked to the birth of Jesus? How did many of the traditions originating in the German-speaking countries of Europe become universal? And what are the socio-political implications of this development world-wide?

13:00 Lunch

14:00 Free

16:00 Tea

16:30 **Different Traditions of Germany, Austria and Switzerland**

In this session we will take a look at the major differences between German, Swiss and Austrian Christmas traditions and how these differences came about? We will sample specialities associated with Christmas and originating from the German speaking countries and we will listen to and join in the singing of carols in German.

18:00	Free
18:30	Dinner
20:00	<p>Viewing of Joseph Vilsmaier's film <i>Bergkristall</i> (2006)</p> <p>The film is an adaptation of the famous novella of the same name by Adalbert Stifter from the year 1853. The duration of the film is exactly 90 mins. We will therefore postpone the discussion of it to the first session on Sunday morning.</p>
21:30	Terrace bar open for informal discussion
Sunday	
07:30	Breakfast
09:00	<p>Discussion of the film <i>Bergkristall</i> and exploration of the pre-Christian tradition of Chlausen in Appenzell.</p> <p>In this session we will share our impressions of the film. We will also examine pre-Christian winter customs and concentrate on the ancient custom of „Chlausen“ which is still very much alive in the North Eastern canton of Appenzell in Switzerland.</p>
10:30	Coffee
11:00	<p>A literary Christmas</p> <p>For our final session we will read short pieces of prose and poetry on the topic of winter and Christmas, written by poets of different literary periods, such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Hans Christian Andersen, Adalbert Stifter, Theodor Storm, Rainer Maria Rilke and others. We will examine what unifying themes there are throughout the periods and discuss new trends in the celebration of Christmas. We will also ask ourselves whether in our increasingly secular societies there is a future for such traditions beyond the commercialism of our times.</p>
12:45	Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch

Course syllabus

Aims:

- To further the students' knowledge about pre-Christian and Christian traditions surrounding the mid-winter and Christmas.
- To develop the students' understanding of the social significance of customs and traditions, as well as of the cultural differences between different German-speaking regions and countries.
- To extend students' vocabulary and grammar of the target language. [SEP]
- 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, history and culture. The language spoken is German throughout, though some exchanges on issues of grammar and vocabulary might be dealt with in English. [SEP] 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 of their choice. [SEP] Saturday and Sunday will be devoted to exploring why the mid-winter as well as the end of winter are celebrated around the world and what role the German speaking countries have played in establishing universal traditions around the winter and Christmas.

Language Level

This course is taught in German at the following CEFR levels:

Reading: B2: *I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument, provided that the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.*

Listening: B2: *I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.*

Spoken Interaction: B1: *I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest, or pertinent to every day life (e.g. families, hobbies, work, travel and current events)*

Writing: B1: *I can write simple connected text on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.*

Presentation of the course:

The main objective of this course is to give students ample opportunity to practise their speaking and reading skills, so the emphasis will be on discussing a range of short written texts and audio-visual material presented during the course. 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:

- develop a deeper understanding of the History of the traditions of winter and Christmas in the German speaking countries.
- read excerpts of German literary works from the early modern and modern period.
- formulate questions and express opinions in German about any of the issues treated during the course.
- contribute to the discussion of other course material in the target language.
- broaden the participants' range of vocabulary and of grammatical structures in the target language.
- increase 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
Stifter, Adalbert	Sämtliche Erzählungen	Verlag W. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart 2001
Scharfe, Martin	Brauchforschung	Wissenschaftl.Buchgesellschaft Darmstadt 1991
Goettle, Gabriele	Deutsche Bräuche: Ermittlungen in Ost und West	Eichborn Verlag, Frankfurt a.M. 1994
Unverhau, Henning	Gesang, Feste und Politik	Peter Lang, Frankfurt a.M. 2000
Schell, Csilla (ed.)	Fest, Brauch, Identität	Johannes-Künzig Institut für Ostsdeutsche Volkskunde, Freiburg i.Br. 2008
Hartke, Wilhelm	Über Jahrespunkte und Feste	Akademie-Verlag, Berlin 1956
Förster, Hans	Die Anfänge von Weihnachten und Epiphanias	Mohr Siebeck Verlag, Tübingen 2007
Von Neményi, Géza	Götter, Mythen, Jahresfeste	Kersken-Canbaz-Verlag, Holdenstedt 2004

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.

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