

Germany – a Great Place for Knowledge



Humanities

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Germany



Land of Ideas

The humanities in Germany

The humanities have been represented at most German universities since their foundation. The faculties of mathematics and natural sciences often emerged from the faculties of philosophy. In the 19th century the **philosopher and psychologist Wilhelm Dilthey** (1833-1911) established a theory of human sciences, distinguishing them in principle from the natural sciences of that time.

In Germany the humanities have always been firmly established in science and society, which has helped them to gain their good international reputation. Today, German studies is one of the top 5 subjects chosen by foreign students and education is one of the 20 most popular subjects.

Taking a degree course in the humanities in Germany essentially calls for an **interest in the German language and culture**. The courses teach above all the ability to investigate other ways of thinking and systems of thought independently and in an explorative manner and to put them into words.

With a bachelor's degree in a humanities subject in their pocket it is possible for graduates to **extend the skills they have acquired** in a master's course. Via a multitude of international doctoral programmes they can enter very different and increasingly also interdisciplinary fields of research.

This magazine provides an overview of the humanities in Germany for **anyone abroad who is interested in taking a degree** or in pursuing academic further training. In addition to languages and literature, the focus is on the disciplines of education, media, cultural and regional sciences, philosophy, history and classics. Psychology, too, can be assigned to the humanities and is dealt with in this magazine.

The **higher education landscape** and the disciplines of German studies and education are presented in the chapter "studying humanities". Foreign students are also given tips on how to get a place at university and the best way to commence studying.

Another section is dedicated to **master's courses** and doctoral studies, in particular in **international post-graduate programmes**. These guarantee special support for foreign students or doctoral students both in issues related to their studies and in general issues.

Finally the **career prospects** of humanities graduates in the German labour market are examined. During periods of economic prosperity there are increasingly opportunities for both German and foreign graduates also in the private sector, in particular in the transmission of culture.

We hope you enjoy reading the magazine!

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At the Freie Universität Berlin it is not only the university library that appears futuristic. In the Cluster of Excellence "Languages of Emotion" the humanities also show themselves from their most modern side.



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Open in all directions

The humanities are entrusted with the task of preserving cultural heritage. They ensure that languages and culture are taught and in this way have secured a place in the global economy. They are increasingly leaving their “ivory tower” and joining in public debate. They are also crossing the boundaries of their disciplines more frequently and participating in interdisciplinary projects. From their historical and ethical perspective they also reflect on findings from natural sciences and technology, thereby helping among other things to structure the future in a humane way.



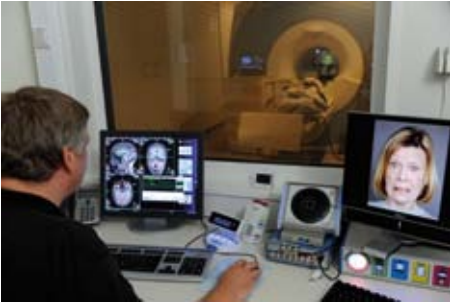
Music has the power to induce emotions in us. What happens in our brains when we listen to music or play an instrument? At the Freie Universität Berlin the music psychologist Professor Stefan Koelsch, who is involved in the Cluster of Excellence “Languages of Emotion” (LOE), wants to find that out.

Measuring a person’s brain activity while he or she is listening to music, using computer-assisted methods to find out how war films mobilise emotions, exploring the relationship between language and emotional competencies using a specially designed test game – in the Cluster of Excellence “Languages of Emotion” (LOE) at the Freie Universität Berlin the interdependencies between emotions and semiotic practices are examined in a highly interdisciplinary manner. 20 different disciplines, each with its own traditions of affective thinking, are involved in 40 current research projects.

“Humanities graduates work together with graduates of natural sciences and social sciences – that is the major challenge,” the speaker of the Cluster, Professor Hermann Kappelhoff, emphasises. “For the aim of the Cluster is not simply to add different approaches but really to develop a common language.” That has proved to be a manageable task: “For example, literature specialists have designed experiments together with neuroscientists to explore affective responses to texts,” the film studies specialist Kappelhoff explains.

Professor Hermann Kappelhoff is the speaker of the Cluster of Excellence “Languages of Emotion” and lectures in the Division of Film Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin.





In some of the studies conducted by the "Languages of Emotion" cluster, brain activity is visualised using magnetic resonance tomography (MRT). For example, test persons are shown facial expressions while the images are being made.

The idea for the Cluster originated in the humanities and they are represented in many projects: whether it is the "affective and aesthetic processes in reading", the "philosophical pre-conditions of speaking about emotion", the "expression and transference of emotion in 19th century Italian and French opera", or "Coolness. Forms and functions of culture-specific affect control in American and Japanese literature and culture".

Where are you heading, humanities?

Are these the humanities that the Alma Mater treated almost as a poor relation and provided with insufficient resources for so many years and which had withdrawn to specialised niches? Are the humanities, whose degree courses were regarded as a sensible phase of life but not as courses leading to qualifications, suitable for an occupation? They certainly are. One in five students here in Germany is enrolled in one of the humanities subjects. The popularity of the humanities stems from its quality of never considering its subjects separately from the human being, which is also the origin of the word "humanities". What is relatively new is the fact that the humanities are increasingly crossing the boundaries of their long-established disciplines and are living from the exchange with other ways of thinking.



Professor Gernot Wilhelm is vice-president of the Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur Mainz.

"Especially German classics enjoy an excellent reputation throughout the world," Professor Gernot Wilhelm, vice-president of the Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur Mainz, knows. "A substantial amount of the specialist literature is in German. Young academics educated in this sector in Germany also have good prospects of receiving offers for an appointment abroad." In contrast, Gernot Wilhelm considers the situation in the subjects that are relevant to present times to be capable of improvement in Germany: "Cultural studies or strategic studies which are relevant to present times have not yet been established to the extent that could be expected." The teaching of culture and intercultural competence are, however, an important aspect of the humanities, which has led to them gaining economic significance in the globalised world and also another name: in the Higher Education Compass of the German Rectors' Conference (Hochschulkompass der Hochschulrektorenkonferenz - www.hochschulkompass.de) you will no longer find the humanities as a heading when looking for courses. The term which is also becoming more and more common elsewhere is "languages and cultural studies".

Using technology to preserve cultural heritage

Cultural knowledge is based on the visualisation of cultural heritage, the preservation of which is perhaps one of the most obvious tasks of the humanities. Professor Wilhelm provides an example which shows that there is often an immense amount of scientific and technical work involved in our cultural memory. "Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi is a long-term project of the Academies of Sciences and Humanities, which has undertaken the task of scientifically researching medieval stained glass since 1952." The monuments of art, which are increasingly endangered by environmental damage, are documented in photographs and drawings. "To this end the windows had to be dismantled and among other things production techniques had to be researched in order to restore them," the vice-president of the Academy in Mainz explains.

It is therefore not only linguistic, cultural cognitive and empathic skills that are in demand in the humanities, for the underlying infrastructure in libraries, archives and museums also has to be created and maintained. Special knowledge of electronic communication and storage media is required for the digitalisation of documents or objects of art. Database know-how as well as text processing and layouting skills are



Using the test game "In the Laboratory of Feelings" it is possible to measure children's emotional competence. The key question of the LOE project in which the game was developed is: can reading and discussing children's books improve children's understanding of their own emotions and those of others?

all tools of the academics. "I regard IT skills in particular to be extremely important. As preparation for an occupation the training should be as broadly based as possible and should also focus on methodological issues," Gernot Wilhelm explains, urging students not to make their bachelor's degree courses too subject-specific.

Dialogue and international exchange

Some players have taken up the cause of making the humanities the topic of public debate more frequently. "Geisteswissenschaft im Dialog" (Humanities in Dialogue - GiD), for instance: the joint project run by the "Max Weber Foundation of German Humanities Institutes Abroad" (Max Weber Stiftung - Deutsche Geisteswissenschaftliche Institute im Ausland - DGIA) and the "Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities" (Union der deutschen Akademien der Wissenschaften) aims to make top-class and internationally oriented research that crosses disciplinary boundaries accessible to an interested audience. "The series of events taking place throughout Germany is very popular and is broadcast on the radio," explains Joachim Turré, the person responsible for the project at the Foundation. "Those attending the events become involved in an entertaining and informative discussion in the plenary session."

"In addition, the Max Weber Foundation promotes research in history, culture, economics and social sciences in selected countries and a mutual understanding between Germany and those countries," explains Gesche Schifferdecker, who is responsible for public relations. For this purpose the Foundation maintains ten humanities institutes in Beirut, Istanbul, London, Moscow, Paris, Rome, Tokyo, Warsaw and Washington. "The institutes abroad conduct their own research, thereby promoting communication and cooperation between the German humanities and those of the host country," the press officer adds. In the institutes transnational research projects are conducted on subjects that are relevant for several countries, currently, for example, on the First World War. Every year the Foundation and its institutes award more than 250 different scholarships, in particular to young researchers and increasingly to foreign academics.

Research is interdisciplinary

The German Academies of Sciences and Humanities also face the major global issues of the future with public events. "Within the Academies intensive discussions arise between the humanities and the social and natural sciences," Gernot Wilhelm reports, "promoting interdisciplinary discourse is one of the key tasks of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities, along with safeguarding research."

It is often overlooked that interdisciplinarity is not something that the humanities have yet to discover but that a lot can actually be



The condition of the windows is shown in so-called conservation diagrams. These indicate the medieval parts of the windows and later additions.

learned from the humanities in this respect. "Interdisciplinarity is a fundamental element of the humanities, which are segmented in regional, historical and methodological terms. Several disciplines therefore usually have to cooperate in research projects," Gernot Wilhelm emphasises and explains this by taking his specialism, Oriental studies, as an example: "Several disciplines are involved in almost all questions: historical linguistics, history and art history. Material-related disciplines, such as archaeology, cannot manage without the natural sciences. In this context you just need to think of surveying technology, paleobotany or materials analyses."

Empathic, critical, historical

Especially in neuroscience the natural sciences and the humanities work together in a very confined space so to speak: in the human brain. While scientific and technical equipment is used to describe when and how which parts of the brain are activated, philosophy, psychology and linguistics address the subjective pendants of the measurement results: the contents of consciousness or "qualia". The introspective methods of the humanities aim to understand the intentions of human emotions, modes of perception and actions. They describe their results from the first person perspective and therefore deliver the introspection of the scientific results.

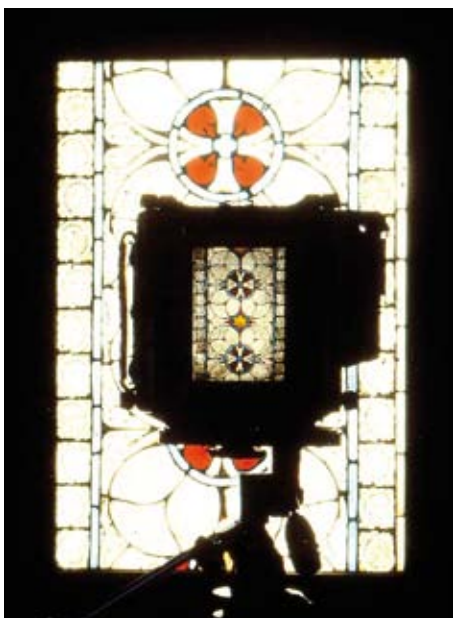
The question that remains is what the critical function of the humanities is. Oriental studies expert Gernot Wilhelm states: "It is their knowledge of established structures".

When assessing a political situation, for example, it is important to observe longer periods of time. "Information is generally only obtained by means of a historical analysis," says the vice-president of the Academy.

If there is an ethic that could generally be attributed to the humanities, then it is more of an attitude: being open to many different ways of thinking and different interests. "It is a matter of putting yourself in the other person's position and searching for compromises," Gernot Wilhelm says, continuing this idea. That is why it is so important for current social debates to be supported, structured and interpreted in a professional manner.

Applied ethics

The spectrum of tasks in the humanities also includes evaluating technology and reconsidering scientific findings in a social context. Neurophilosophy, for example, addresses philosophical and ethical aspects of brain research, which confronts us with unsettling findings in quick succession and increasingly changes the way we see ourselves. The renowned philosopher and consciousness researcher from Mainz, Professor Thomas Metzinger, is the head of the "neuroethics/neurophilosophy" research centre at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. In the journal for psychology and brain research, "Gehirn und Geist", he expresses his opinion about neurotechnologies such as neural implants or neurological drugs: "Throughout the world scientists are busy working on new technological possibilities to access the brain. The possibilities to change our mental states are being optimised on many fronts. And that is a major new challenge for applied ethics."



In the long-term project Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi stained glass windows in churches are photographed and documented.

INFORMATION

Research cluster Languages of Emotion, Freie Universität Berlin
www.languages-of-emotion.de

Akademie der Wissenschaften und Literatur Mainz
www.adwmainz.de

Publication Platform for the Max Weber Foundation – German Humanities Institutes Abroad (Max Weber Stiftung – Deutsche Geisteswissenschaftliche Institute im Ausland)
www.perspectivia.net

Neuroethics portal of the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz
www.neuroethik.ifzn.uni-mainz.de

Interview with the Secretary General of the Volkswagen Foundation

Focus on the humanities

Dr Wilhelm Krull has been Secretary General of the Volkswagen Foundation (VolkswagenStiftung) since 1996. With a doctorate in literary studies, he has always been well aware of the special qualities of the humanities and the need to promote them in accordance with their specific characteristics: it is all about cultural memory, fundamental reflection and mediating in the major issues of the future.

Dr Wilhelm Krull studied German, philosophy, education and politics and was a DAAD lecturer at the University of Oxford. Before joining the Volkswagen Foundation he held important positions in the Wissenschaftsrat (German Science Council) and in the headquarters of the Max Planck Society.



Why is it important to promote humanities projects?

When the Volkswagen Foundation launched the "Focus on the Humanities" initiative together with the Fritz Thyssen Foundation, we wanted to set a new direction. The humanities, receiving little attention, had withdrawn into a corner to sulk. Jobs were cut and a false dichotomy arose between the natural sciences as promoters of social advance, and the humanities, which "merely" process historical issues. In the meantime, however, the humanities have moved back into the centre again. It is now recognised that the discipline offers a great deal of potential for reflection about the future and for developing perspectives for new approaches, if one adapts to its specific characteristics. This includes fundamental reflection, establishing complex relationships and the resulting slower publication process.

What is your vision of the future role of the humanities?

My vision rests on four pillars: internationality, infrastructure, innovation, interdisciplinarity. Internationality needs little explanation in our age of globalisation. Competence in foreign cultures, knowledge of other languages and regions has always been a key feature of the humanities. Fuelled by demand from a global economy, an entire small-scale industry for imparting intercultural competence has arisen in the context of cultural studies. The internationalisation of universities and research institutions can also be seen in the fact that on average 12 to 14 percent of students studying at German universities are foreign. For example, at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin most of the students enrolled on the regional studies master's programme "Central Asia/Caucasia", which is sponsored by the Volkswagen Foundation, come from that region. Infrastructure addresses the fundamental importance of libraries, archives and museums for our cultural memory. By collecting, preserving and communicating, we create the basis for all further processes of reflection. In this context I

would like to mention the Volkswagen Foundation's initiative "Documentation of Endangered Languages": it is estimated that some two thirds of the 6,500 languages still spoken around the world are in danger of disappearing within the next one to two generations. So projects that record dialogue of these language cultures that are generally only passed on by word of mouth are being funded. The documentation is being collected in an electronic archive of the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen (www.mpi.nl/DOBES).

How can the humanities with their largely historical focus be innovative?

Even though they are concerned with the past, they address issues that affect our future. It is their task to contribute towards increasing our potential for reflection and therefore to identify our options for action in the future in a process of preventive deliberation.

Does that require them to enter new territory and cooperate with other scientific disciplines?

Correct. By expanding into important key topics, such as the "Experimentalisation of Life", which can only be tackled in an interdisciplinary way, the humanities can once again make a substantial contribution to scientific and public debate. Particularly in the context of the Excellence Initiative, new institutional structures and altered ways of promoting the next generation of academics have developed, which open up new prospects especially for interdisciplinary projects. By forming centres, clusters and various institutes of advanced study, such as the Zukunftskolleg in Konstanz or the Lichtenberg-Kolleg in Göttingen, it has been possible for the first time to recruit a large number of post-doctoral researchers and junior professors, who, thanks to their interdisciplinary and problem-oriented research achievements, have gained opportunities with long-term prospects.

What changes are needed in the university education of humanities students for your vision to become a reality?

A lot has already been achieved within the framework of the Bologna conference and the switch to the bachelor's and master's system. Clear educational targets that ensure a balance between a good foundation and specialisation must be drawn up for each phase: bachelor's degree, master's degree and doctorate. During the bachelor phase, the basics have to be imparted in particular, of course. Nonetheless even at this stage courses should be developed that open up new career prospects for humanities

students. For example, the degree course "Philosophy & Economics" at the University of Bayreuth prepares philosophers extremely well for managerial positions in companies. In my opinion, master's and doctoral programmes would be well advised to include more modules that ease the transfer into different fields of practice. The Volkswagen Foundation is sponsoring a number of projects to achieve just that, for example, the graduate programme "Wertung & Kanon" (Evaluation and Canon) at the University of Göttingen, which includes internships in publishing houses, or the doctoral programme at the German Literature Archive in Marbach, where the archives of the publishers Suhrkamp and Insel are being processed by librarians (financed by a German Research Council grant) and researched by literature specialists.

INFORMATION

Volkswagen Foundation (VolkswagenStiftung)

The Volkswagen Foundation is an independent, non-profit foundation, which aims to improve training and research structures in Germany. With a funding volume of some € 120 million per year, it is the largest private German foundation promoting science. In the 50 years of its existence it has funded around 30,000 projects at a cost of approximately € 4 billion. It devotes special attention to the new generation of academics and cooperation between researchers across disciplinary, cultural and national borders. www.volkswagenstiftung.de

Focus on the Humanities (Pro Geisteswissenschaften)

The funding initiative offers support for researchers in the humanities who wish to address new and complex challenges with their research topics: the "Dilthey Fellowships" are currently being revised, which means they are being combined with the social science "Schumpeter Fellowships" under the name "Freigeist Fellowships" and opened to all academic disciplines. The fellowships are aimed at outstanding young researchers who, after completing their doctorate, wish to investigate new fields with longer-term, and therefore possibly risky, projects. The grant programme "Opus magnum" secures the necessary freedom for established professors to write an expansive scholarly treatise typical of the humanities on a challenging subject by financing a teaching substitute recruited from among younger academics. www.volkswagenstiftung.de/pro-geisteswissenschaften

Between classics and contemporary history

Whether history or philosophy, American studies or education, the humanities are an important part of a lively academic culture at Germany's universities. Their well differentiated range of courses, the intellectual diversity and the wealth of methods all contribute to the good reputation of the humanities internationally. Students and researchers also find an excellent landscape of libraries, archives and museums in Germany.



Evaluating and interpreting historical sources is common practice in many humanities degree courses, such as here in the library of the Afrika-Asien-Institut of the Universität Hamburg.

The humanities at German universities continue to possess considerable appeal: in the winter semester of 2011/2012 the degree courses in linguistics and cultural studies counted some 106,000 freshman students, including 13,361 from abroad. Approximately 20 percent of all new students in Germany therefore opt for a degree course in this field. Especially women are interested in degrees in the humanities: they account for about 70 percent of the students.

The public image of the humanities is characterised by the major subjects such as

German studies, English studies, education or history. These subjects are represented at numerous universities and more than half of the humanities students have chosen one of them. Subjects such as Arabic studies, Byzantine studies, Indology or classical archaeology have a long academic tradition but can only be studied at a few universities. Nonetheless it is the small subjects that stand out due to their excellent international reputation and demonstrate the diversity of the disciplines, subjects and methods in the humanities.

Single-subject or combined bachelor's degree

A bachelor's degree course in the humanities can either concentrate on one single subject (single-subject bachelor's degree) or cover a combination of several subjects (combined or double-subject bachelor's degree). In the latter case, English language and literature, for example, is taken as the main subject and a second subject or a minor subject is selected in addition from an extensive catalogue. This may be another subject from the field of linguistics and cultural studies or from a dif-



Degree courses in the humanities (a selection)

ferent academic field, such as economics or social sciences. Possible combinations differ from one university to another. In addition to this possibility to create one's own individual specialist or occupation-related profile, at some universities it is also possible for students to create academic profiles qualifying them to become teachers in the state school system in Germany later on.

Some universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschulen) also offer degree courses in linguistics and cultural studies. These include, for example, courses in the fields of business languages and intercultural communication or in media and communication studies, which are characterised by interdis-

ciplinary syllabuses and a distinct practical orientation. Degree courses in the field of education, too, for instance pre-school education or special education, are represented at universities of applied sciences. In addition the degree course in business psychology is found primarily at universities of applied sciences.

Personal initiative and soft skills

Studying the humanities requires a great deal of personal organisation. At the beginning of the semester, for instance, each student has to compile a study plan from an extensive range of courses and this must take into account the Study and Examina-

tions Regulations (Studien- und Prüfungsordnung). Furthermore, study groups have to be formed, presentations prepared and the required literature obtained from the various libraries. The Departmental Student Advice Services and student groups are helpful, with introductory events and examples of study plans, and provide valuable tips on how best to organise one's studies. Personal initiative and a talent for improvisation are also needed when the supervision situation does not permit an intensive exchange with the teaching staff, though the situation can differ enormously between the individual universities and individual subjects.



» I've been interested in philosophy since I was 13. My favourite philosopher is Martin Heidegger, who is not easy to understand even for German native speakers. Good language skills are essential for understanding most philosophical texts. I followed my sister to Germany after hearing so many positive things from her about the University of Düsseldorf. For me as an Iranian, the liberal atmosphere at German universities is a special quality. The first time that I stood on the university balcony during a seminar break chatting casually with the lecturer and other students it was like a dream come true. «

Sara Ipakchi comes from Iran and is studying philosophy and German at the Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf.

STUDYING HUMANITIES

As there is no clear-cut occupational image for most of the humanities, creating a recognisable qualification profile and gathering initial practical experience are very important to make career entry as smooth as possible. The modules aimed at imparting key qualifications and practical skills which are integrated into virtually all degree courses help with this. These include orientation modules, occupation-related events, language courses and the acquisition of business know-how. Time spent abroad at a partner university, a fieldwork project or an internship abroad are also a feature of many degree courses.

Dealing with texts

Anyone who wants to study a humanities subject has to enjoy reading. A good understanding of and feeling for language are also important requirements for studying successfully. In addition to primary and secondary literature in German, sources in other languages generally also have to be analysed, which makes it necessary to possess additional language skills or to acquire them. In classics it is almost always necessary to have a knowledge of Latin and Greek, too.

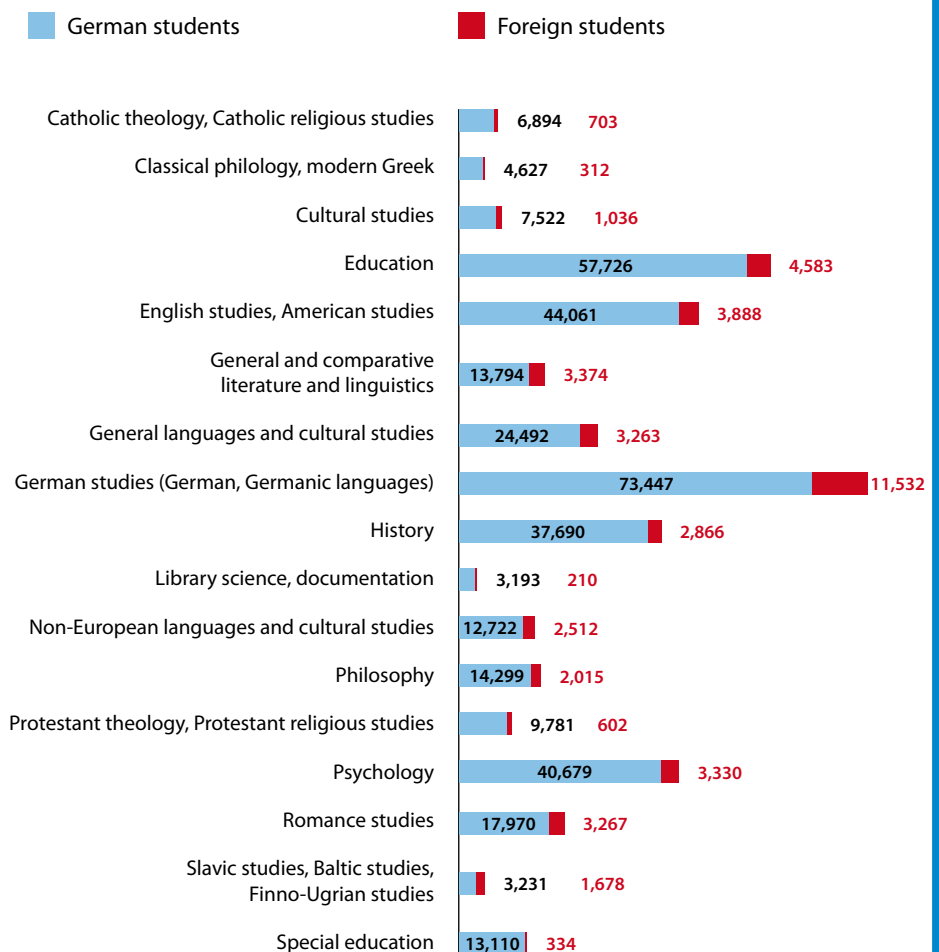
» In Konstanz I am studying at a small university where everyone knows everyone else and the professors have time for us – a pleasant cooperation instead of the rivalry that exists at large universities. At the same time the facilities are excellent, with a 24-hour library, for example. The history degree course imparts above all a distinct ability to differentiate with regard to historical developments over very long periods of time. This also deepens one's understanding of connections in contemporary history and everyday culture, which I find particularly interesting. By the way, there are differences between Austrian and German even in academic language, which I first had to get used to. «

Stefanie Hansbauer comes from Austria and is studying history and Slavic studies at the University of Konstanz.



If you come across collections of historical objects or prints in the main building of the University of Bonn, you can be sure that you are in a humanities institute.

German and foreign students in the humanities in the winter semester 2010/2011



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (Federal Statistical Office), Studierende an Hochschulen Wintersemester 2010/2011, Wiesbaden 2011

Self-assessment

Foreign prospective students can already test their personal aptitude for taking a humanities degree, on the Internet from their home country. Self-tests provide an idea of the requirements of the degree courses and help prospective students to assess their own strengths and weaknesses better. Below there is a selection of the tests provided online by higher education institutions and university associations.

BORAKEL – online advice tool of the Ruhr-Universität Bochum:

Two different test modules help you to gain information about characteristics of personal performance, career prospects and suitable degree courses. Individual feedback and advice, in German, free of charge.
www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/borakel

Self-assessment of the Association of North German Universities (Verbund Norddeutscher Universitäten) (Bremen, Greifswald, Hamburg, Kiel, Oldenburg, Rostock):

Aimed in particular at people interested in studying at one of the universities in the Association of North German Universities. Individual feedback and explanation of the results, in German; duration: 90-120 minutes, free of charge.
www.uni-nordverbund.de/selfassessment

OSA – Online Studienwahl-Assistent (online degree course selection assistant) of the University of Freiburg

With an attractive blend of interactive elements and multimedia information units, the test provides clear and detailed information about the degree courses offered in Freiburg.

The test is in German, free of charge.
www.studium.uni-freiburg.de/studieninteressierte/osa

Even if the tests are geared towards the degree courses offered by the particular university, taking part can provide valuable tips for choosing a degree course.

TestAS

is a central, standardised scholastic aptitude test for foreign students. Three test modules measure intellectual abilities that are important for successful university studies in Germany. The test is offered in German and English; free of charge. Registration online, tests can be taken in licensed test centres throughout the world.
www.testas.de



» Psychology research in Germany is recognised as being of a high standard and has an international reputation comparable with that in the USA or the Netherlands. First, at the Otto von Guericke University of Magdeburg the master's course in Environmental Psychology / Interaction between Humans and Technology is interesting with regard to international career prospects. The course deals with the "human-centred" organisation of technical systems – at the workplace for example – and with the psychological promotion of sustainable behaviour. Second, we have one of the leading centres for cognitive neuroscience in Germany. In addition, Magdeburg offers outstanding basic conditions as one of the least expensive and greenest cities in Germany. «

Florian G. Kaiser is professor of personality and social psychology and managing director of the Institute of Psychology at the University of Magdeburg.

A place at university in Germany – admission restrictions, application, admission

For just over half of the bachelor's degree courses in the humanities there are no admission restrictions in terms of student numbers. For the rest of the courses there are local admission restrictions with selection procedures. When selecting applicants the universities can take into account not only the average mark of the qualifications entitling the applicant to go to university but also other criteria, for example grades in certain subjects, the results of an interview, subject-related foreign language skills etc. What is also important is the waiting period for a university place. It is frequently only possible to begin a degree as of the winter semester.

In the case of combined degree courses (double-subject bachelor's degrees) the admission situation has to be taken into consideration for all of the modules selected.

All university applicants from outside Germany who fulfil the basic requirements for starting a degree course at a German university apply directly to their preferred university, which will inform them about admission requirements for the degree course. For a number of universities, applications have to be submitted via the University Application Service for International Students, **uni-assist**. You can find details about the member universities and detailed information about the application procedure at www.uni-assist.de.

In general the application for admission must have arrived at the relevant university by 15th July for the winter semester and by 15th January for the summer semester. The application deadlines may differ from this depending on the university, however.

Anyone interested in postgraduate studies (Master, PhD) also applies directly to the university or to uni-assist.

INFORMATION

Higher Education Compass of the German Rectors' Conference (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz – HRK)

Information about higher education opportunities, universities and colleges, doctorate opportunities and international cooperations with German higher education institutions
www.hochschulkompass.de

uni-assist

Internet portal of the University Application Service for International Students
www.uni-assist.de

anabin

Information system of the Central Office for Foreign Education Systems for the recognition and evaluation of foreign educational qualifications
www.anabin.de

www.daad.de/admission

This page of the DAAD website provides information about which educational certificates obtained outside Germany are required for admission to higher education in Germany.

Scope for research-based learning

As the public relations and media representative, Professor Tassilo Schmitt is a member of the extended management board of the Association of Faculties of Philosophy (Philosophischer Fakultätentag). He is familiar with the current situation in the humanities subjects and knows how important participation in German language and culture is for successful and enriching university studies.



Professor Tassilo Schmitt teaches Ancient History at the Universität Bremen and is the dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences.

From African philology to translation studies – at Germany's universities there is an exceptionally broad range of degree courses in the humanities – over 6,000 of them, with a wide variety of titles. What is the explanation for this variety?

The variety is the expression of a differentiated and lively academic culture which takes up a broad spectrum of issues and makes them the subject of academic research and teaching. At first sight, this may appear somewhat confusing and difficult to comprehend. The title of a degree course is often the expression of a profile and indicates a specific focus or emphasis. Even when the names of the degree courses differ, they are often essentially similar.

Is globalisation having an effect on the humanities?

Thinking in global contexts, linking, comparing and penetrating complex issues have always been typical of the humanities. Nonetheless globalisation has left its mark and has focussed the specifics of some subjects more strongly on the specific problems in the world. For example, today we aim to understand Islam as an entire system with its social and religious traditions and the historical background. The linking of our departments and faculties across the world and the numerous cooperation programmes with foreign universities and research institutions are very important in this context. They also contribute towards promoting the mobility and interculturality of our students.

What do you see as the advantages of studying the humanities in Germany?

In addition to the lively academic culture that is steeped in tradition, the facilities at the institutes, which are good by international standards, are also worth mentioning. I'm thinking of the libraries in particular. The university environment is also a plus point, with lots of cultural facilities and activities in the university towns. Another feature is the relatively large amount of freedom that the students have in organising their studies, which makes research-based learning possible. The large degree of interdisciplinarity is also characteristic of the humanities and is becoming visible in a new cooperation between technology and the humanities – for example in degree courses like computational linguistics or cognitive science.

What requirements should international applicants for places on humanities degree courses in Germany ideally fulfil?

Good German language skills are crucial, and not only for participating in classes and in academic discourse or for understanding German literature. Anyone studying a humanities subject in Germany should also be able to participate actively and productively in the language and culture of the

country. Another requirement has to do with our teaching and learning culture. University education here does not have such a pronounced school-like structure as that in other countries. This results in a great deal of freedom for students to develop their academic interests but in return demands a large degree of independence and the ability to take responsibility for organising one's studies oneself.

Does that also involve switching to a different German university?

Why not? That is an important aspect in the freedom of learning. It is not always easy to switch university, however, due to the different designs of the degree courses. There are interesting models here, though, which make mobility considerably easier. One example from classical archaeology is the PONS project, which aims to create a network to serve as a model for switching university within Germany. The institutes of archaeology at nine German universities have created a core curriculum together and agreed to mutually recognise the credits from the other universities. Students therefore have the opportunity to place the emphasis on specific aspects in their education and to broaden their personal skills by selecting the universities where they wish to study.

What is the situation with regard to the employability of humanities graduates?

Humanities graduates are learning better than before to use their specialist knowledge the way it is needed in society. The broad-based contents of humanities degrees and the problem-oriented training give the graduates considerable occupational flexibility. Equipped with the necessary key competencies, they are therefore also qualified for careers outside the classical fields of education and research. A philosopher in a managerial position in a bank – I can imagine that.

INFORMATION

Association of Faculties of Philosophy (Philosophischer Fakultätentag)

Interdisciplinary representation of the humanities, cultural studies and social sciences at the German universities, pertaining to higher education policy, in which 135 faculties and departments at 62 German higher education institutions cooperate
www.philosophischerfakultaetentag.de

PONS archäologie

Project aimed at promoting the exchange of students between institutes of classical archaeology within Germany
www.pons-archaeologie.de

Universität Bremen, Institute of History (Institut für Geschichtswissenschaft)

www.geschichte.uni-bremen.de

Learning German in a fun and easy way

Anyone intending to enrol as an international student at a German university normally has to provide proof that their German language skills are adequate. The Institute for Intercultural Communication (Institut für Interkulturelle Kommunikation e.V. – IIK) at the Georg-August-University Göttingen offers tailored courses which equip the students for the necessary examinations often in a fun and easy way. In addition the IIK prepares prospective students for student life in Germany.



It is easier to learn with fun and activity. At the IIK this insight from the psychology of learning is put into practice above all by using grammar games which are developed together with the course participants.

“Students can join German classes at any level here,” Ljudmila Schikowski, supervisor of the preparatory courses at the IIK, explains. “However, we recommend that prospective students acquire basic German skills in their home country.”

Within a year the course participants can progress from the A1 to the C1 level in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. They are then in a position to pass the examination required for registration as a student, such as the German Language Examination for University Admission (Deutsche Sprachprüfung für den Hochschulzugang ausländischer Studienbewerber – DSH) or the Test of German as a Foreign Language (Test Deutsch als Fremdsprache – TestDaF).

discher Studienbewerber – DSH) or the Test of German as a Foreign Language (Test Deutsch als Fremdsprache – TestDaF).

Skill courses and grammar games

In addition to this there are also short skill courses at the IIK – for instance on text production, grammar and listening comprehension – as well as special preparatory courses for humanities students in which, for example, the participants read academic texts and articles in journals and acquire subject-specific vocabulary. The students-to-be are also introduced to studying and to the university: they already use the university facilities such as the library or the media center and are able to take advantage of services like tours of the institutes and the student advice service. The courses are mainly taught by teachers who also teach at the university and are additionally available as advisors.

A special feature at the IIK is the use of “multifunctional grammar games”, which work in roughly the same way as well-known party games. “We have been using games like this for two years now; they are developed together with the course participants during classes and are very well suited for making relatively difficult subject matter, such as special aspects of German grammar, easier to understand,” Ljudmila Schikowski knows.

Ljudmila Schikowski comes from Russia and supervises the preparatory German language courses at the Institute for Intercultural Competence (IIK).



“In addition to imparting intercultural competence in corresponding courses, we always recommend that our course participants take advantage of the many cultural activities and services on offer in Göttingen, for example readings or theatrical performances,” Ljudmila Schikowski says. The participants in courses at the IIK also foster cultural exchange on their own initiative, for instance during tours of the city, barbecues or at IIK get-togethers.



» Although I could only speak a little German at the beginning, I passed the compulsory examination for university studies, “Deutsch als Fremdsprache”, after only five months”. I was so delighted with this first experience that I attended further courses at the IIK during my university studies. In particular I improved my academic written German as that is an important factor for good achievements in examinations. I was also able to develop my intercultural skills considerably by attending workshops and summer academies at the IIK. «

Maher Tyfour comes from Syria and has just completed his master’s degree in “Intercultural German Studies / German as a Foreign Language” at the Georg-August-University Göttingen.

INFORMATION

Institute for Intercultural Communication (Institut für Interkulturelle Kommunikation - IIK) at the Georg-August-University Göttingen
www.uni-goettingen.de/iik

Language courses and introductory courses

In the DAAD database “International Programmes”, prospective students can look for language courses and introductory courses/prep courses offered at German institutions of higher education:
www.daad.de/international-programmes

Tradition and media competence

With some 1,300 students, German Studies is the second largest subject studied at the University of Bamberg. Holding a top ranking, linked with occupational fields outside the university and enriched by an imaginative teaching of literature, the degree course provides a traditionally broad basic education with plenty of interesting development opportunities for the students.



At the University of Bamberg the town centre is the campus. The buildings of the Faculty of Humanities are located in the centre of the World Heritage Site of the Old Town. The students prefer to stay where Bamberg is most attractive.

Loveday Wright is quite taken with her study visit to Bamberg. In the beautiful little town with its historical façades she is always meeting someone to go out for a coffee with on the spur of the moment. In such everyday conversations the Englishwoman from Portsmouth perfects her German. From her degree course in German at the University of Oxford, one of Bamberg's partner universities, she is not accustomed to having the freedom to choose courses herself. The range of courses open to her in the context

of the Bamberg "Studium generale" is new ground for her, too. "Here I can concentrate on practical language courses and also have time to try out courses in psychology and philosophy."

Free choice of subjects

Professor Friedhelm Marx, holder of the Chair for Modern German Literature, knows that many students of German appreciate the "Studium generale". "They may choose ten percent of their credits freely from the entire range of subjects on offer." There are no marks for this but he tells us that looking further than the end of one's nose is essential for a student of German. "At the same time fundamental knowledge of our subject first has to be acquired in the bachelor's degree course," Professor Marx says, reminding us of the obligations of the students taking first-degree courses. Introductory courses therefore have to be taken in each of the three parts of the degree course – German philology, Modern and Older German Literature.

Within the boundaries of their subject, however, the students then have a lot of freedom when selecting modules and choosing the topic of their bachelor thesis. Loveday Wright, for example, is particularly interested in German Exile Literature. In Bamberg she is trying to find out everything about the writers who had to flee abroad during the Nazi dictatorship. Otherwise the 21-year-old attends classes every day, many of them in the field of "German as a Foreign Language", where she crams grammar and word formation in comparative linguistics.

Confidence in written and spoken German

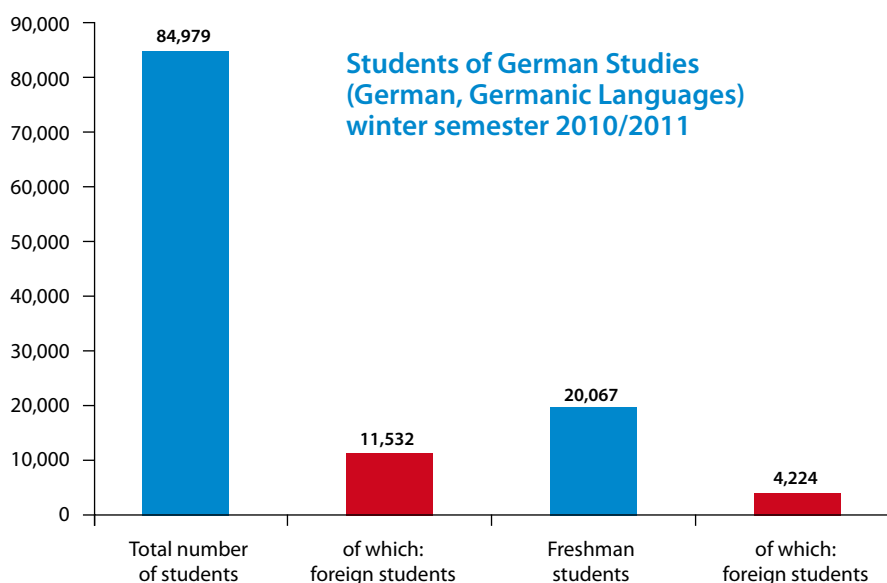
"Immersing oneself in the culture and surrounding oneself with native speakers, that is probably the greatest motivation for foreign students to complete at least part of their degree in Germany," Friedhelm Marx explains. "Anyone who takes a degree in German Studies should have a lively interest in the German language, culture and literature and be confident in written and spoken German," he says, listing the most important requirements. Loveday Wright already started learning German at the age of eleven: "I had a fantastic German teacher who taught me to love the language." So in Bamberg she has no trouble following the classes and lectures even if it is never very easy for a non-native speaker to distinguish between everyday language, standard language and artificial language: "I'm currently learning to do this better in the German Studies seminars."

Loveday Wright comes from England and is spending a year as an exchange student on the bachelor's degree course in German Studies at the University of Bamberg.



Professor Friedhelm Marx in front of the university library: "Despite constantly growing numbers of students, an informal atmosphere prevails at the University of Bamberg. The lecturers are more likely to be aware of an individual student than in the large-scale business of a major university."





Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (Federal Statistical Office), Studierende an Hochschulen Wintersemester 2010/2011, Wiesbaden 2011

For the numerous foreign students, learning the language is not the aim of a degree course in German Studies: "It is a matter of dealing with theoretical and methodological issues in all parts of the course," the literature specialist Marx emphasises. He goes on to say that people who can structure their thoughts well have an advantage. "Some freshman students experience a kind of culture shock when, for example, novels that they are very fond of are taken apart systematically in Modern German Literature," Professor Marx says, speaking of the analytical approach to texts which his guild generally pursues. However, at the same time this analytical view of literature and language opens up new worlds.

The exceptional fields of teaching and research in the Bamberg Department of German Studies include the varied study of contemporary literature. In the series of lectures "Literature in the University" well-known authors read from their own texts. The poetics professorship, held by Thomas Glavinic in 2012, comprises not only lectures and seminars by the author but also a research colloquium about his work. In addition, the Bamberg "Centre for Medieval Studies" provides numerous opportunities to become acquainted with the literature and culture of the Middle Ages within the degree course in German Studies. German as a Foreign Language is one of the main research areas in the field of linguistics.

Career orientation – a Bamberg trademark

"I also often have my bachelor students write critiques of literary works so that they come into contact with different text formats of the world of literature," Professor Marx says, emphasising the practical character which is a feature of all parts of the Bamberg degree course. "Media competence is of central importance for students of German Studies. They have to be able to write and interpret texts in quite different media contexts."

The transmission of literature is therefore firmly established in the curriculum of the bachelor's degree course. In addition to theoretical lectures on the history of the book trade, literary criticism and readers, the optional module "Text and Transmission" ("Text und Vermittlung") provides insights into relevant fields of practice and occupations. External teaching staff enrich the scene here: literary critics, legal experts and people from the press and publishing companies offer classes or lectures on subjects such as publishing law or the theory of literary evaluation.

Career orientation is then consolidated further in a master's degree course. "A compulsory internship is integrated into our German Studies master's courses 'Linguistics' ('Sprachwissenschaft') and 'Literature and the Transmission of Literature' ('Literaturwissenschaft und Literaturvermittlung')," says Friedrich Marx, explaining the approach which looks back on a long tradition in Bamberg. The previous graduates who had gained a diploma in German Studies (Diplom-Germa-

nisten) already stood out strongly from those with a "Magister" degree from elsewhere in Germany due to their practical skills.

From A as in antiquarian bookseller to W as in web content editor

A list of occupations held by alumni of the Department of German Studies shows how broad the range of fields is in which Bamberg graduates work: the spectrum ranges from the publishing industry to the creative industry, from public relations to cultural management, from lexicographers in non-university research, rhetoric coaches and communication trainers to teachers in adult education institutions. Of course there are also literary critics, lecturers, translators and editors among the alumni as well as press officers, speech writers and television and radio presenters. The occupations of stage or film director, dramaturge or in-game text writer are evidence of the flexibility of German Studies graduates.

What are Loveday Wright's plans for the time after her degree course? "I'd like to live in Germany and work as a journalist. What I'd like most would be to write about German literature, culture and politics for the English media." Bamberg is certain to have contributed to this preference.



INFORMATION

University of Bamberg – Bachelor's degree course in German Studies
www.uni-bamberg.de/ba-germ

Courses with a focus on linguistics and communication sciences at universities of applied sciences

At universities of applied sciences in particular there is a choice of degree courses with a definite practical orientation in the field of text, media and communication, e.g. journalism, technical editing, business communication or translating.

Shaping lives

Whether it is a matter of supporting pre-school children or working in socially deprived areas, of concepts for further education and training for migrants or the rehabilitation of people with disabilities – education-ists are always in demand. They create the basis for professional educational work. Their knowledge of the organisational, institutional and political basic conditions is an important precondition for this.



Among other things education graduates develop media education concepts and learning aids for pre-school children.

Education focuses on people's entire lives, in their families, at school, in their leisure time and their careers. Degree courses in education therefore open up to their graduates a broad spectrum of occupational fields in which they work with people of all ages in a wide variety of life situations, or work in planning and administrative jobs.

From the nursery to the working world

Elementary education, social education, adult education and rehabilitation education – these are the subsequent fields for which the students on education degree courses at the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg prepare themselves intensively. "By dealing extensively with major fields of action in education our students are able to obtain a broad overview and to develop a fundamental understanding of educational issues," explains Professor Johanna Mierendorff, who is responsible for social education with the focus on "early childhood education" at the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg. "Unlike other universities, it is therefore not possible to select individual fields of study. However, during the internship and in

the bachelor thesis it is then possible to set a personal specific focus."

A degree in education must not be confused with teacher training: "First, it is aimed at educational work outside the school system – apart from school social work. Second, it is also intended to provide access to scientific research for students who are interested in this – for example in the history of education or in individual disciplines such as social education," Professor Mierendorff emphasises.

Adventure playground or social services department?

Ekaterina Gonchar from Russia and Menghan Wu from the People's Republic of China have chosen the option of a single-subject degree in Halle-Wittenberg – this means that they do not study a second subject at the same time like some of their fellow students. They are both in their fourth semester and are preparing for their period of practical training, which begins in July and lasts a total of twelve weeks. The practical training is integrated into the degree course as an independent module. "I'm currently attending a seminar aimed at preparing for the

practical training. The instructor introduced the various internship fields to us. Representatives of institutions and organisations concerned with educational practice, for example from the youth welfare office, also came to us at the university and informed us about their tasks and the internship positions. It was organised perfectly," the student from Yekaterinburg in Russia tells us. She has already made her decision and is going to complete part of her practical training at an institution which looks after families with migration backgrounds. "I would also find it interesting to work in a social services department. Maybe I can do the second part of my practical training there," she says, outlining her plans.

Her Chinese fellow student, Menghan Wu, also finds the seminar very helpful: "We international students are not so familiar with the many social institutions and authorities in Germany. That is why the seminar is very important for me for orientation," she says and adds, "I would like to spend my period of practical training working with children and young people in the field of leisure education."

Analysing educational problems

However different the special focuses at the individual universities may be, imparting a fundamental understanding of educational problems and approaches, of social, political and cultural conditions and of research



Professor Johanna Mierendorff is the holder of a chair in social education with a special focus on "early childhood education" at the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg.

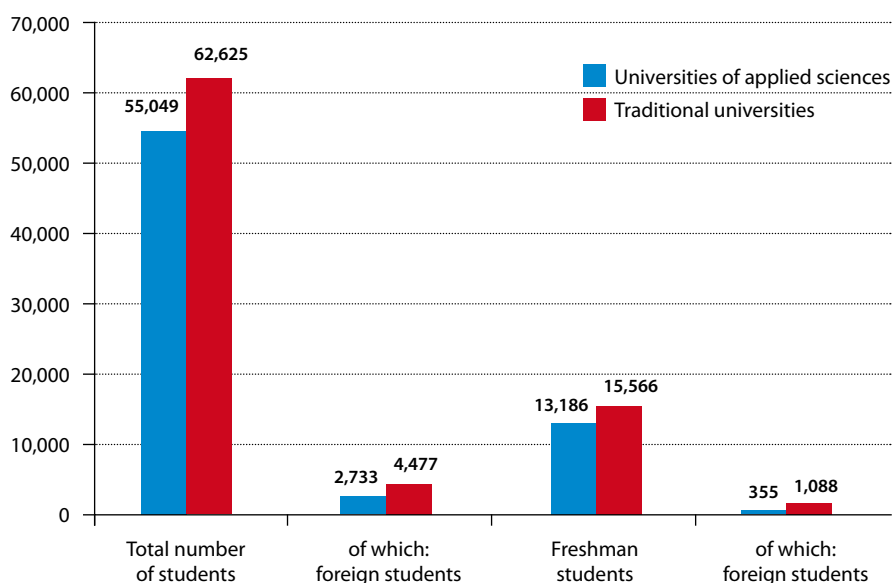
Ekaterina Gonchar comes from Russia and is studying education at the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg.



Menghan Wu comes from the People's Republic of China and is studying education at the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg.



Students of education and social affairs (excl. special education) winter semester 2010/2011



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (Federal Statistical Office), Wiesbaden 2011

methods is also a key component of the degree course in Halle-Wittenberg. "We want to enable our students to recognise educational problems and to classify and deal with them on the basis of comprehensive theoretical knowledge. Training in qualitative and quantitative methods also plays a major role. Legal and organisational aspects of educational action, too, are important parts of the degree course," Professor Mierendorff tells us, characterising the objectives of the theoretical modules of the course.

Ekaterina Gonchar also experienced at an early stage that academic working methods are of great importance in university studies. "Unlike in Russia, here in Halle we have to acquire large parts of the subject matter for the examinations ourselves. This means that we read lots of scientific texts, write excerpts or conduct comparative analyses," she says, reporting about the independent working methods which were unfamiliar to her initially and which also require a good knowledge of German. "It's not just a matter of reading the specialist literature. We have to give presentations, write term papers and familiarise ourselves intensively with the subject-specific vocabulary," explains the Russian student, who speaks German almost perfectly in the meantime. Menghan Wu had

problems at the beginning and therefore attended additional language courses: "In the first semester I often did not dare to speak to fellow students or the professors because I was afraid I would say something wrong. That's changed now."

If it weren't for the homesickness

The two students are convinced that their decision to study education in Halle was right. "The teaching staff are very friendly and make the classes really interesting for us. The support from the International Office was also excellent," Ekaterina Gonchar says, summarising her impressions. Today she feels closely attached to the city of Halle and its people. Because she wanted to learn more about her new home, she chose "History of the City of Halle" for the "General Key Qualifications" module.

Meghan Wu can well imagine starting a specialist master's degree that is also offered in Halle afterwards. Her Russian fellow student would like to gain some work experience in Germany but qualifies this by saying, "My entire family lives in Russia. Let's see how I cope with that."



INFORMATION

**Faculty of Philosophy III Education
(Philosophische Fakultät III Erziehungswissenschaften) of the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg**
www.philfak3.uni-halle.de

Degree courses at universities of applied sciences

Universities of applied sciences, too, offer bachelor's and master's degree courses with close reference to education subjects. They impart application-oriented skills for occupations in social work, early childhood education, curative education or cultural and media education.

A good image with a Master of Arts or Dr. phil.

Improved career opportunities, easier career entry or scientific curiosity are often cited as reasons for embarking on master's or doctoral studies. A differentiated range of master's programmes and extensive possibilities for doctoral studies at German universities provide the opportunity for scientific analysis of cultural phenomena. They also permit deeper insights into methods in the humanities as well as helping the graduates to gain a high level of practical competence in applying the academic qualification to real work situations.



The library infrastructure in Germany – ideal conditions for academic work during a master's degree course or doctoral studies, such as here at the Universität Leipzig.

At German universities, the number of master's degree courses has been growing steadily over the past few years, including in the humanities. Around 2,300 master's programmes are currently available as an alternative to an early career start. In more than 100 of them, English is the language of instruction; in others it is also French or Dutch. A practical orientation is an important aim of many master's programmes. This includes consolidating specialist knowledge and applying it to selected fields of practice. In special modules, the students get to know potential occupational fields better and guest lecturers from professional practice are

often involved in the courses, for example, to impart occupation-related skills in copy editing, librarianship, literature marketing or culture management and public relations.

Master's degrees – building on existing knowledge or learning something new

Apart from a few exceptions, master's degree courses in the humanities are offered at universities and usually last three or four semesters. They serve as a method of scientific and academic consolidation and specialisation. A master's degree course need not necessarily be restricted to the field of the first degree;

it may focus on a related discipline or explore a completely new domain. It can follow on immediately from a bachelor's degree or be started later on after a period of employment. The specific admission requirements, such as above-average examination grades in the first degree or particular specialist skills and work experience, are laid down by the university. A master's in the humanities leads to the qualification "Master of Arts". A master's degree can be the starting point for an academic career and is generally a prerequisite for doctoral studies.



» The good reputation of Bielefeld University for humanities and sociology was what prompted me to apply to the BGHS. My supervisors supported me and my project from the outset although I did not have a classic education in history. I enjoy the personal freedom, the variety of ideas and fields of work, and the exchange of ideas with my fellow researchers at the Graduate School. «

Mahshid Mayar comes from Iran and is working towards a doctorate at Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology (BGHS) on the subject "Growing Up In A Smaller World: United States in the 1890s".

Consider carefully whether to take a doctorate

Completing doctoral studies takes a lot of patience and persistence. A doctoral thesis takes four to five years to complete on average, and the student's individual situation, such as a simultaneous career, can prolong the doctoral study phase still further. That is why students should carefully weigh up their motives and the expected benefits against the effort involved in doing a doctorate.

Academic curiosity, a clearly outlined and delimited topic and sustained interest in the chosen research subject as well as trusting cooperation with the doctoral supervisor are important preconditions for swift completion of a doctorate. The number of doctorates earned at German universities has increased continuously over the past few years. In 2010, almost 2,800 doctorates were successfully completed in linguistics and cultural studies. The title of "Dr. phil." which is awarded is internationally prestigious and identifies the holder as a highly qualified young researcher.

Making doctoral studies calculable

The image of the doctoral candidate as often lonely, self-doubting, lost in detail, and struggling with his or her topic is a thing of the past. In the humanities, the traditional form of doctoral studies prevails in which the candidates choose and work on the topic of their doctoral thesis largely independently. Nonetheless, the doctoral candidates are often integrated into an institution: as employees of a university or research institute or in special colloquia for doctoral candidates, where they present intermediate results and can discuss problems and results of their work with other doctoral students and professors. Active participation in conventions and periods as guest researchers encourage communication in the scientific community. Moreover, interest in graduate colleges and graduate schools is growing in the humanities, too. They offer structured doctoral programmes in which the doctoral students

are integrated into the research process at an early stage and receive intensive support.

Programmes of this type are:

- doctoral programmes at universities,
- Research Training Groups of the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft),
- graduate schools at universities,
- International Max Planck Research Schools.

The programmes are often interdisciplinary and contain a curriculum to be followed concurrently with the doctoral studies. One of their aims is to make the time required for doctoral studies easier to calculate and even to shorten it. An increased transfer of academic qualifications into practical fields of occupation is also an objective of many doctoral programmes. At the University of Göttingen, for example, a new model of graduate promotion in the humanities is being tested in which a high qualification in literature is combined with practical competence in the fields of science, cultural work, media, publishing and journalism. The project run at the Göttingen Center of Modern Humanities includes six-month internships and placements lasting several weeks in the literary and scientific programmes of major German publishers.

In the "International Promovieren in Deutschland (IPID)" programme, the DAAD promotes the internationalisation of structured doctoral programmes at German Universities out of funds provided by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). A total of 39 programmes are supported in which young international researchers, in particular, can benefit from good academic supervision.

INFORMATION

DAAD – International Programmes in Germany

On the website of the German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst), you can search for internationally recognised, accredited bachelor's, master's and doctoral programmes in linguistics and cultural studies, most of them taught in English. All the programmes offered in the database ensure special course-related and personal support for students and doctoral candidates from abroad.
www.daad.de/international-programmes

PhDGermany – the platform for doctoral positions and research opportunities in Germany

The DAAD platform for doctoral positions contains doctoral study offers aimed specifically at foreign candidates. You can apply directly via the DAAD portal.
www.phdgermany.de

IPID – International Promovieren in Deutschland

The website of the programme provides an overview of the structured doctoral programmes promoted in IPID.
www.daad.de/ipid > Service

Further links

to find out about the programmes offered for graduates and postgraduates:

www.hochschulkompass.de

German Rectors' Conference

(Hochschulrektorenkonferenz - HRK)

www.dfg.de

German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft - DFG)

www.mpg.de

Max Planck Society

www.leibniz-gemeinschaft.de

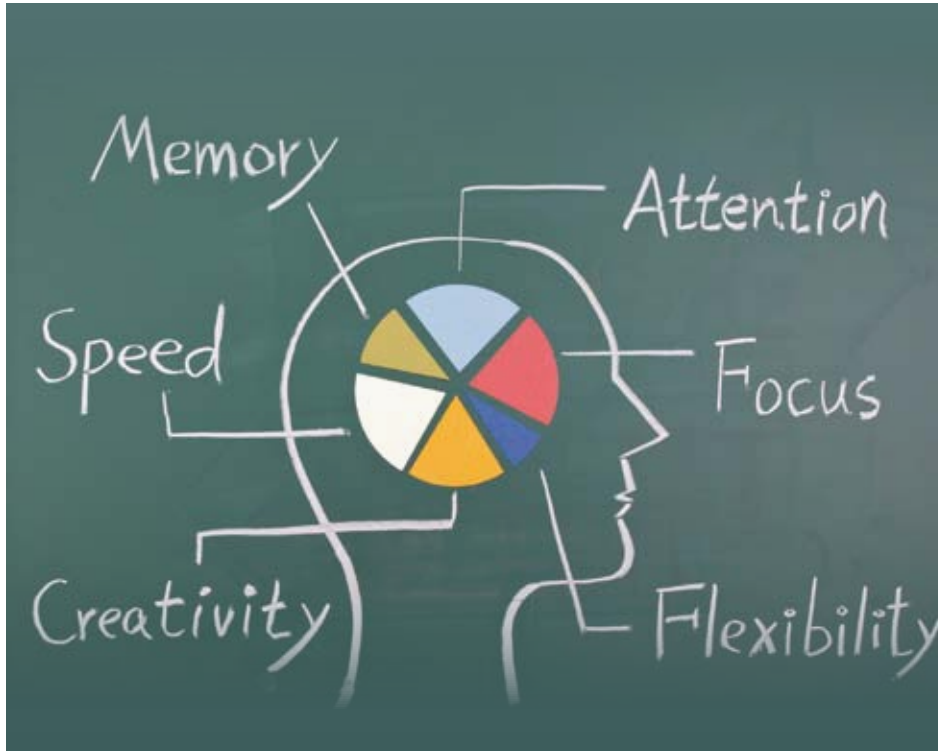
Leibniz Association

www.research-explorer.de

The Research Explorer of the DAAD and DFG

Mastermind

Professor Hermann J. Müller's students would hardly be able to follow his lecture if their brains did not filter out the details that are currently relevant from the wealth of information provided by their senses and memories. Aaron Prosser and the other students on the master's programme in Neuro-Cognitive Psychology (NCP) at the Department of Psychology of the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich are investigating this process and the possibilities that emerge when "attention" is understood.



Scientists have been dealing with attention for a long time. Attempts to explain it go back as far as Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, who saw attention as an "internal process of will" in the early 18th century. Over the past two decades a trend has become increasingly recognisable in which the classical issues are approached not only using methods of experimental psychology but also those of the neurosciences. As a consequence a new interdisciplinary field of research has emerged which is termed "Neuro-Cognitive Psychology". The NCP study programme imparts research-oriented knowledge from this field at the intersection between psychology and the neurosciences at a top international level.

Attention controls thought

"Attention is a basic function of human cognition and is as central as perception, memory or consciousness. Attention also

has a major impact on the question of how I control my thoughts and my cognitive processes," says Professor Müller, head of the study programme, explaining the importance of his research subject.

Neuroimaging procedures – such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) – or the targeted stimulation of individual areas of the brain using strong magnetic fields – for instance by means of transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) – have already been developed so well that brain activity can be observed and influenced during an experiment. In sophisticated experimental set-ups they give the researchers in Munich insights into the complex process of attention control.

What attracts our attention visually and how we respond to visual stimuli are issues that Aaron Prosser already found interesting during his degree course in cognitive science in Canada. The 22-year-old heard about the

Munich master's programme after gaining his bachelor's degree in Toronto and obtained further information from the Department of Psychology in Munich during a private stay in Germany. "Germany has a good reputation in the field of visual perception research and the main focus in Munich goes well with what I have done so far," is how the young Canadian explains his decision to go to Munich.

In the middle of the future: research into dementia and robotics

It is easy to understand how important the attention-driven control functions are when they are disrupted. "We see it in children with ADHD, an attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in which among other things the visual-spatial working memory is impaired. Attention deficits can also be first signs of dementia, however. We are interested in diagnostic markers that can be used to record in quantitative terms the changes in attention processes throughout the age range, for example in order to develop instruments for an early diagnosis of dementia conditions," says Hermann J. Müller, outlining possible fields of application of research into neuro-cognitive disorders.

Aaron Prosser comes from Canada and is a student on the master's programme in Neuro-Cognitive Psychology (NCP) at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich.



Professor Hermann J. Müller (centre) is head of the study programme in Neuro-Cognitive Psychology (NCP) at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich, seen here with participants at an international research colloquium.

Just how future-oriented the Munich master's degree programme is can also be seen in the second focus of the course: neuro-cognitive ergonomics for the development of service robots, which, for example, assist elderly people in their everyday lives. "We cooperate with the Institute of Automatic Control Engineering at the Technische Universität München in the field of cognitive robotics. For instance, we are investigating what conditions have to be in place for communication between humans and robots to work and for humanoid robot systems to be accepted as partners by humans," Professor Müller tells us, explaining a market that is increasingly gaining importance.

Conducting multidisciplinary experiments

"Our study programme is multidisciplinary and covers sub-disciplines such as experimental psychology, developmental psychology, neurobiology, neurophysiology, computational neurosciences and ergonomics," is how Professor Müller characterises the concept of the degree course. This includes cooperation with other universities, for example with the TU München or the Bernstein Center for Computational Neuroscience Munich.

"Our students get to know all of the important methods in cognitive neurosciences. That would not be manageable in a degree course lasting one year as is usual in the Anglo-American system," course director Müller is sure of that.

One part of the master's degree course is a series of experimental projects and the so-called laboratory internships where the students are involved in "real" research projects during the semester breaks. Aaron Prosser, too, has just completed a two-month period of experimental work. "I examined how visual stimuli are perceived and how the brain processes and prioritises them. I was able to see that the prioritisation also depends on what the test persons already had in their 'heads' beforehand."



A predetermined path to a research career

"We want to encourage students to publish scientific work as soon as possible," says Professor Müller, citing another important aim of the study programme. Clearly a success, for those completing the course had already collaborated on a publication in a renowned international scientific journal after one year on average. This part of the training is supported by additional classes on the techniques of scientific communication and by participation in international research colloquia at the Department of Psychology.

The overwhelming majority of the graduates obviously also think that this field of research is not only fascinating but also has enormous potential for the future: just over 90 percent of them continue their research in doctoral studies, with just under half of them staying in Munich to do so. Aaron Prosser, who appreciates in particular the good support and the cooperative working atmosphere in Munich, also sees that as his future: "I would like to take part in a doctoral programme later on and then begin a research career in Germany." Plans for the future that are exceptionally realistic, as Hermann J. Müller says, "our students are well qualified for the research tasks and have no trouble finding a PhD position, for example in one of our 'Excellence' graduate courses."



INFORMATION

Neuro-Cognitive Psychology, Department of Psychology at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich
www.psy.uni-muenchen.de/ncp

Graduate School of Systemic Neurosciences (GSN-LMU)
www.mcn.lmu.de

Munich Center of the Learning Sciences (MCLS)
www.en.mcls.lmu.de

Master's courses in psychology

Other universities also offer master's degree courses in cognitive science and psychology. Universities of applied sciences offer master's courses in the fields of business psychology, sport psychology or psychosocial counselling.

Film in the European context

Creativity and originality, expertise and research excellence – these are the strengths of the Faculty of Media at the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar. Its subjects span the fields of art, science and technology. The students on the tri-national master's programme European Film and Media Studies (EFMS) take a close look at issues in the field of film and media and gain comprehensive insights into the culture of neighbouring countries in Europe.



What are the photography, the cut and the soundtrack of the film like? Intensive viewing and assessment of film material is part of a degree course in film studies.

"France, the French language and French film have always fascinated me," Claudia Cornelius tell us. "My dissertation for my first degree at the Universität Leipzig was already on French film." After the German student had looked into the master's programmes available on the medium of film, the irrefutable formula for her was: "France + Film = Weimar".

"With its focus on film studies, the degree promoted by the Franco-German University deals with issues of film history, theory and practice from a European and Anglo-American perspective," is how junior professor Dr Hedwig Wagner describes the profile of the study programme for European Media Culture, for which she has been responsible at the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar since October 2010. The European co-operation partners also involved in the programme are the Université Lumière Lyon 2 in France and the Universiteit Utrecht in the Netherlands.

Lyon, Utrecht, Weimar – study as an anthology film

For Claudia Cornelius, the four-semester degree course began in Lyon, took her to Weimar and then on to the Universiteit Utrecht in the Netherlands in the third semester. In the fourth semester the students return to their home university to complete their master's thesis. She found the whole course very interesting but also exhausting and very demanding. "Every semester is different and you have to adapt to the different cultural situations and topic focuses. No sooner had I finally begun to feel at home than I had to prepare for the next move."

The thematic focus and the learning cultures at the participating universities also differ considerably. "In Lyon, the emphasis was on the intermediality of the scenic arts. That included dance, music and drama. The course there was far more school-like than in Utrecht or Weimar, and the French view of

Claudia Cornelius comes from Germany and is studying on the tri-national master's programme European Film and Media Studies (EFMS) at the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar.



things dominated. In Utrecht, on the other hand, the perspective was very intercultural. Under the guidance of Professor Frank Kessler and Dr Chiel Kattenbelt, we dealt in particular with aspects of film history and media studies there. However, the differences are what give the programme its appeal and enrich it," she says, summing up her experiences at the partner universities.

Weimar with a focus on Europe

The second semester in Weimar is dedicated to the philosophy of film and media and to European issues. "The focus is on the discussion of mediality and intermediality and reflection on the conflicting areas of national identities and postcolonial globalisation processes," says Hedwig Wagner, describing the Faculty of Media's contribution to the degree programme. Another major project module is media philosophy, during which the students

Junior professor Dr Hedwig Wagner is responsible for European Media Culture at the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar.



examine, for example, the aesthetics and philosophy of media processes, the anthropological reflection of cinema, or the media philosophy of humour. "The project module was structured very professionally. We met for a four-hour colloquium every week and shared the results of our work," Claudia Cornelius remembers. And then there is the Europe module. The syllabus of this module involves examining selected classics of European thinking, the history of ideas in Europe, eras and their visual media or selected image icons in European history.

The personal support and the facilities in Weimar also came up to Claudia Cornelius' expectations: "In Weimar we had access to the 'Limona' media library with thousands of films. Moreover, the digital reserve collections with literature references relevant to current classes are provided online there." Well-equipped workshops, laboratories and classrooms also provide the best conditions for successful study.

Mentoring talks with senior fellows

Students on the master's programme also benefit from another facility at Weimar: the Internationales Kolleg für Kulturtechnikforschung und Medienphilosophien (IKKM). This is a research institute of the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar and offers master's students, doctoral students and postdocs from Germany and other countries

the opportunity to consult one of the senior fellows currently residing in Weimar as a mentor. In the "IKKM Lectures", the senior fellows of the IKKM also regularly present the projects they are working on during their studies in Weimar. The students on the master's programme can make free use of the lecture series, discuss with the specialists or approach them directly if they have questions.

An additional enrichment for the students is a lecture series on media philosophy that is held regularly by the Bauhaus-Universität and open to everyone: important and high-profile representatives and critics of media philosophy from Germany and abroad provide insights into current research and the state of debate.

Why not prepare a film festival?

Back in Weimar, Claudia Cornelius completed her master's thesis in the spring of 2012 on the topic "Cinemas on film: representation of the cinema situation in silent films of the 1910s". "My topic combines the main teaching focuses of all three universities: film history (Lyon), film motif research and media philosophy (Weimar) and social history of the cinema (Utrecht)."

She is about to complete her degree, as she now only has to "defend" her master's thesis. In addition to the Master of Arts in "Kulturwissenschaftliche Medienforschung"

from the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, she will also receive a master's in "Humanités et Sciences Humaines, Spécialité Études cinématographiques" from the Université Lumière Lyon 2 and an attendance certificate from all three universities. After university, she can imagine working in a number of different occupations. "Having studied EFMS and worked as an intern in film archives like the Harvard Film Archive and the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, I feel well prepared to work in film education or film archiving."

Asked if she can still enjoy a film impartially, she replies "Of course, I still enjoy going to the cinema. The fact that I notice things that others would not doesn't spoil the fun."



Claudia Cornelius was able to view film material in the Harvard Film Archive in the USA.

INFORMATION

Faculty of Media of the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar

www.uni-weimar.de/medien

Internationales Kolleg für Kulturtechnikforschung und Medienphilosophien (IKKM)

www.ikkm-weimar.de

Degree courses at universities of applied sciences

Universities of applied sciences, too, offer media-related bachelor's and master's degree courses. They impart application-oriented skills in fields such as media design, media technology, media computer science, media production or media management.

Researching cultures in dialogue

Knowing and understanding other cultures – that is becoming more and more important in the increasingly internationalised world in which we live and work. In internationally oriented graduate programmes cultural studies specialists acquire the specific knowledge and skills necessary for this. In a bi-national doctoral programme at the Justus Liebig University Giessen and the University of Helsinki, Hanna Mäkelä from Finland is laying the foundations of her academic career.



The doctoral students at the International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture (GCSC) conduct research with lots of freedom and, as it were, tailor-made support.

Hanna Mäkelä did not have any great expectations when her Finnish professor of English suggested that she do part of her doctoral studies in a German town called Giessen. Today though, when she looks back on the one and a half years that she spent at the International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture (GCSC) of Giessen University, she goes into raptures: about the support and internationality at the GCSC, the cooperation with the other doctoral students and not least about the country and its people.

She had to meet a large number of requirements in order to gain a place at all at the GCSC in 2010. "We receive more than 600 applications per year, only 30 to 40 of which we can accept," says the Director of Graduate Studies at the GCSC, Professor Ansgar Nünning, illustrating the competitive situation. In the selection procedure the dissertation

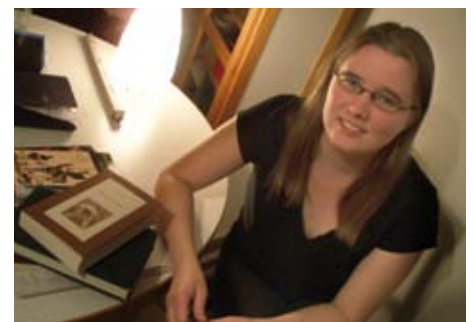
projects are assessed first: in addition to their academic quality, their compatibility with other disciplines is of importance. "Our doctoral students should become specialists in their subjects but also develop distinct interdisciplinary skills and views as well as a realistic feeling for social and cultural problems," Ansgar Nünning explains.

Anthropology meets literature

Hanna Mäkelä's dissertation in "comparative literature" fits into this concept. In it the 30-year-old analyses contemporary English and American novels on the basis of René Girard's mimetic theory. "The cultural anthropologist Girard shows how catastrophes in society can have their roots in interpersonal problems, for instance in envy or prejudice. By illustrating the interactions between characters in novels I can explain how inter-

personal relationships have a determining influence not only on the plot of a successful novel but also on culture as a whole. As a result of its clearness and subtlety, fiction even proves to be particularly suitable for making the origin of violence and conflict comprehensible."

The quality of her project alone would not have smoothed the way to the GCSC for Hanna Mäkelä, however. "The applicants should already have gained international experience," Ansgar Nünning emphasises. That is no problem for the literature specialist: she was able to show that she had spent periods of time in Anglo-Saxon countries, which meant that she was well prepared for the internationality at the GCSC. In the context of the European Phdnet "Literary and Cultural Studies", which is associated with the GCSC, a constant international exchange of ideas between doctoral students and lecturers is fostered. The network, which is funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst - DAAD), so far includes universities in Finland, Italy, Portugal und Sweden in addition to the University of Giessen.



Hanna Mäkelä comes from Finland and is working towards a bi-national doctorate at the universities of Giessen and Helsinki on the subject "Narrated Selves and Others: A Study of Mimetic Desire in Five Contemporary British and American Novels".

New blood for the scientific community

Hanna Mäkelä is pleased that she was able to establish so many new contacts via the PhDnet, for example at symposia, workshops and summer schools that are organised regularly in alternating countries. During this specialist and personal exchange the doctoral students develop their projects, at the same time growing into the scientific community. In this context the Finnish student has held several lectures which linked her own work with a general subject, for instance at a conference on the relationship between mediation and art in Lisbon or during a summer school in London which dealt with cultures of food, eating and cooking. "During the research work there was never a lack of joie de vivre and personal exchange. I not only benefited from the expert feedback from the professors and the other doctoral students, I also made friends," Hanna Mäkelä tells us.

The fact that the young academics do not complete their doctoral studies in isolation or in a school-like situation is all part of the plan at the GCSC. "We want to make it possible for the doctoral students to develop their personalities extensively and to let them participate in shaping the GCSC," Ansgar Nünning emphasises. "So although our study programme is primarily research-oriented, we also teach occupation-related and general qualifications. The students need both specialist and key qualifications, scientific and career orientation, freedom to conduct research and incorporation in a programme."



Professor Ansgar Nünning is the Director of Graduate Studies and one of the founding directors of the GCSC, which is funded in the context of the Excellence Initiative. He supervises Hanna Mäkelä's doctoral studies together with a colleague from the University of Helsinki.



Studying on the campus of the Justus Liebig University Giessen is very popular. The GCSC alone receives applications from more than 600 students every year.

From Azulejos through Kaurismäki to Zibaldone

While the GCSC, with its Teaching Centre and its Career Service, supports especially the planning of and preparation for academic and non-academic careers, the students themselves have created the basis for inter-cultural dialogue: in a group that they set up on their own initiative they introduce their countries of origin and their cultures to each other. Hanna Mäkelä, too, is involved in this educational exchange and dealt in particular with the film director Aki Kaurismäki in her presentation about Finland.

After gaining her doctorate at the beginning of 2013 Hanna Mäkelä wants to begin a career in higher education. Her prospects are good, since "about 30 percent of all the doctoral students at the GCSC manage to do this", as Professor Nünning knows. Despite her enthusiasm for Germany, the Finnish student does not plan to work at a German university: "My German is not good enough for that unfortunately." Nonetheless she hopes to return to Giessen again soon, since she says the popular joke there, that the best thing about Giessen is its rapid connection to Frankfurt, definitely applies to her in the other direction.



INFORMATION

International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture

<http://gcsc.uni-giessen.de>

European PhDnet "Literary and Cultural Studies"

<http://phdnet.uni-giessen.de>

GCSC Teaching Centre

http://cultdoc.uni-giessen.de/teaching_centre

Resolving cultural misconceptions

Professor Claudia Bickmann lectures in philosophy at the University of Cologne, is president of the Society of Intercultural Philosophy and a board member of the International Confucius Association (ICA). In the context of various guest professorships, research visits and lecture tours in virtually all parts of the world, she has dealt intensively with the different understandings of philosophical traditions in a comparative perspective.



You have lectured and conducted research a lot abroad. What reputation does European, and in particular German philosophy have in other cultures?

In the Arabic-Islamic world as well as in China and Japan I was able to perceive how highly esteemed the traditional lines of European and in particular German philosophy are. In various countries the ability to speak German is therefore also a precondition for access to degree courses in philosophy. Even if more efforts are currently being undertaken in large

parts of the non-European world to reflect back on one's own philosophical sources and roots, it is rarely done without passing through European philosophy. This generally also remains the reference framework for one's own reorientation.

What is associated with German philosophy abroad?

German philosophy is associated above all with the traditional line of the philosophies from Leibniz through Kant, Fichte and Schelling to Husserl, Heidegger and Wittgenstein. Within this line the major issues of classical European philosophy, starting with Plato and Aristotle, have been reflected upon using the contemporary methods of modern thought. It is also linked with the questions regarding the validity of the sciences and the resulting challenges for the modern world in which we live. At the same time, however, the major catastrophes of the 20th century are also closely associated with the philosophies of Marx and Engels, as well as with those of Nietzsche or Heidegger.

What can students from all parts of the world learn when they study philosophy in Germany?

Especially with regard to the catastrophes I have just mentioned, philosophical reflection can basically teach us not to translate intellectual approximations rashly into practical references or guidelines. During their bachelor's or master's courses or their doctoral studies the students will encounter a great wealth of philosophical ideas, theories and systems. If examining the forms and structures of cultural self-interpretation is important to them, they will frequently be able to find the philosophical roots of these within German philosophy.

Where does intercultural philosophy come in, which you teach and represent in the Society of Intercultural Philosophy?

Neither with reference to its subjects nor with reference to the fields of research does intercultural philosophy differ from general philosophy. It also uses all the methods which have evolved within philosophy over the centuries. The difference is perhaps that intercultural philosophy includes the different preconceptions of the philosophical traditions in its analyses and questions. It therefore does not consider one philosophical concept in isolation but examines, for example, the discourse on the essence of things, nothingness, existence, becoming, life, mind or happiness in the context of the particular culture or theory. In this way it provides help with

translation, builds bridges between the cultures and is able to point out structural misconceptions which are based on ignorance of the respective other culture.

In Africa the song is a form of philosophical statement. How do you deal with such completely different forms of reasoning?

In a similar way to how we approach literary or fragmentary forms within our own philosophical traditions – for instance in pre-Socratic philosophy or in the works of Hölderlin and Nietzsche: we decipher the songs or sentence-like speech, consider their form specifically, inquire as to the philosophical content and reflect upon the contexts within which they originated or were written.

How does the situation of a female philosophy professor in Germany differ from that in other countries?

In almost all other countries the routes leading to the career of a professor are more permeable. Although there is an army of highly qualified young academics in Germany, only about eight percent of all lecturers in philosophy at German universities have a tenured professorship. Moreover, of the few that do hold a professorship, the proportion of women is still very small, at about ten percent.



INFORMATION

University of Cologne, Faculty of Philosophy
www.philosophie.uni-koeln.de

Society for Intercultural Philosophy
(Gesellschaft für Interkulturelle Philosophie e.V.)

organises diverse conferences, symposia and congresses in Germany and abroad, publishes various academic journals, provides information about the activities associated with intercultural philosophy and works in a global network with the philosophy institutions in a wide variety of countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Arab world.
www.int-gip.de

Ingenious niches and numerous paths

Humanities graduates are very rarely mentioned explicitly in job advertisements. Yet they are not excessively affected by unemployment. How are these two statements about this highly varied group of graduates related? It is quite simple: humanities graduates find their niches by using their own initiative and they identify strongly with the activities and contents of their work. That makes them resourceful and capable of surviving on the labour market even in times of crisis.



Besides art, culture and institutions of education, training and research, the media and publishing are typical sectors for humanities graduates.

Most students of humanities subjects chose their degree course because of the contents and the opportunities for personal development. "That alone also applies to engineers – what is characteristic of humanities scholars is that other labour-market-related aspects only play a subordinate role," emphasises Kolja Briedis from the Higher Education Information System (HIS-Institut für Hochschulforschung), project centre "Studies on Graduates and Lifelong Learning." "They are oriented towards things that they enjoy," the researcher continues, "making a career for themselves or earning a lot of money are regarded as aspects of secondary importance." In graduate surveys, humanities graduates mainly report that they are very satisfied with their jobs even when the occupation is not regarded as particularly secure.

A network of lateral thinkers

Looking at the often very specific topics in the degree courses, some critics question the labour market suitability of humanities graduates. Wrongly so, as gaining a degree in the humanities requires enormous flexibility because the students regularly have to familiarise themselves with varying complex topics, structure them and master a complicated spectrum of methods. These are talents which the graduates can use on the labour market too. Equipped in this way most of them adapt to their employer's demands rapidly if they do not remain in academia anyway and find a position in higher education or in non-university research institutes.

"Humanities graduates are often lateral thinkers," Kolja Briedis knows, "this means that they are able to think critically and at

the same time as part of a network. In many cases they have studied two subjects and in so doing have learned to look beyond the boundaries of a discipline. This may slow down some processes in everyday working life, but that is also necessary if something is to be designed well."



*Kolja Briedis,
HIS-Institute
for Research on
Higher Education*

Skills for the information society

What opinion does the private economy have of philosophers, German specialists and historians? That is difficult to answer in figures, as humanities graduates are the “dark matter” of the official statistics: one never knows what names they are operating under. However, the labour market expert from the German Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit), Judith Wüllerich, spoke very positively to the Süddeutsche Zeitung in the boom year of 2011: “Humanities graduates are increasingly in demand in a broad range of sectors.” She reported that in a knowledge-based working world their interdisciplinary skills are highly important for firms, adding that humanities graduates can also score points wherever information has to be procured, prepared and communicated.

The financial services provider MLP, for example, made a name for itself as a recruiter of humanities graduates. The company confirms their structured way of thinking and distinct communication skills, saying that this is more important for the job than specialist financial skills, which can be acquired in in-firm training courses later on.

“Thanks to their epistemological and methodological education and their ability to see the big picture, humanities graduates are able to create a good balance in interdisciplinary teams,” says Dr Wilhelm Krull, Secretary General of the Volkswagen Foundation (VolkswagenStiftung) and holder of a doctorate in literary studies, who knows the clientele. “It is not unusual for this to take them as far as management positions, just think for example of the former communication managers of Volkswagen or Telekom,

the CEO of the foundation Zeit-Stiftung or also our Federal Minister for Education and Research, Professor Schavan.”

More than science, culture and media

In the opinion of HIS expert Kolja Briedis, graduates of information and communication studies can be integrated into the labour market most rapidly, which may be explained by the reference to media and the partly technology-related contents of the courses. It can be regarded as a highlight when humanities graduates are recruited for the strategic departments of large industrial enterprises (see page 30, interview with the Director of Education Policy in the BMW Group). “If a firm wishes to expand into new markets, cultural studies specialists can make a considerable contribution towards analysing the markets,” says Kolja Briedis, providing a nice example. “In order to judge whether a product will work on a certain market, it is necessary to understand the mentality of a country.” Applicants may well collect a few more plus points if they themselves come from the culture that is to be examined – provided of course that they can speak German well.

Kolja Briedis basically sees a wide variety of fields in which humanities graduates may find employment. The spectrum expands the better the economic situation is. This group of graduates then also frequently finds work in untypical sectors and occupations. Lecturers, editors and PR staff can then often be found with job titles such as assistant human resources manager, marketing coordinator or e-learning consultant. The trade sector, banks and legal and business consult-

ing services are also possible employers to a greater extent during an economic upswing. Of course, other sectors are more typical: in addition to art and culture, they include the media and publishers as well as institutions of education, training and research.

Career entry – an obstacle

The graduate surveys conducted by the HIS show quite clearly that career entry is the most difficult phase. “It takes somewhat longer to become established in a career than is the case with other graduates,” as Kolja Briedis has been able to ascertain, “but the situation improves after a while.” On average the employment rate moves into line with that of other graduates.

Humanities students therefore have to decide where they are heading earlier than other students. “There has to be a central theme throughout the university studies which is flanked by the corresponding courses and internships,” says the HIS researcher, who knows the problems associated with these career opportunities which have relatively unclear contours. “The students should work on their profile in good time and consider what kind of work would be of interest after university, what skills they already have for this work and which skills they still need to acquire.”



» The years during which I moved back and forth between Italy and Germany were real “educational years” for me. For I learned not only to link two mentalities with one another but also to be open to other ways of thinking and other cultures in general. As a coordinator for the Asian markets I have benefited from these experiences enormously. In an intercultural environment it is extremely important to work with a lot of empathy. I learn something new every day. «

Milena Pighi comes from Italy and studied German in Verona and Ludwigsburg. After periods working at FIAT Deutschland and BMW Italia, she now coordinates international PR activities for the Asian markets in BMW corporate communications in Munich.

INFORMATION

Higher Education Information System (HIS Hochschul-Informations-System GmbH)

HIS-Institute for Research on Higher Education (HIS-Institut für Hochschulforschung)
www.his.de

German Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit)

Statistik nach Themen > Statistik nach Berufen
<http://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de>

Focus on people

Gülseren Sengezer works as a freelance editor for the TV channel Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (ZDF). The German with Kurdish roots started there with a traineeship following her degree in education and sociology. She learned the skills of journalism little by little. Her appreciation of the diversity of human perspectives was sharpened by her degree in humanities and her migration background.



Gülseren Sengezer at work: she is interested in the individual perspectives of the people interviewed. Her humanities background especially raised her awareness of this.

On 3rd February 2008 an apartment building caught fire in Ludwigshafen. Nine people of Turkish origin died. Thousands of curious onlookers took photos and put them on the Internet, numerous politicians made statements, all of the media reported – a multitude of perspectives of one and the same event. Yet one important perspective was neglected or biased: that of the people affected.

At least that is the way Gülseren Sengezer sees it. She decided at the time to make a documentary: “I wanted to talk more to the people and less about them. So although my film provides insights into migrants’ lives, at the same time it was important to me not to show them ‘as Turks’ in particular but simply as people who had become victims of a disaster.” In 2010 the 38-year-old received the Mainzer Journalistenpreis (Mainz Journalists’ Award) for her documentary “Die Brandkatastrophe von Ludwigshafen. Das Leben danach” (“The fire disaster of Ludwigshafen. Life afterwards”).

Journalistic skills

Gülseren Sengezer learned the tools of the trade as a trainee at the ZDF. “Basically it was learning by doing: from the very beginning I was able not only to accompany and support

the experienced editors but also to make editorial decisions, for instance concerning the structure of a report and the film material to be used. The daily routine was roughly the same as it is today. It began with the daily morning conference on the topics of the day, included the evaluation of agency reports and newspaper articles, through to research and the creation of films.” In editing this last phase covers the shoot, examination of the filmed material and preparation for cutting.

Gülseren Sengezer was well prepared for the occupation of a journalist: “During my degree course in education and sociology I acquired the ability above all to analyse neglected or alternative perspectives on an event, to relate them to other perspectives and to present them appropriately.” Everyone creates their own reality: the journalist still heeds this key insight of constructivism in her work today by trying to come as close as possible to the views of the people she portrays. “What was also important for this was the work I did in a girls’ club run by the workers’ welfare association while I was a student, as I came into contact with the dark side of life there and experienced that I can deal with people sensitively. That’s a skill and a characteristic that is also essential in journalism.”

A different way of looking at things

It is also often possible for Gülseren Sengezer to develop a different way of looking at things due to the fact that she is at home in several worlds. “When I have to do with migrants of Turkish origin in my work – as was the case with the victims of Ludwigshafen – my knowledge of their language, culture and social contexts is a huge advantage.” That is also an asset for the ZDF, as this is precisely the diversity that the TV channel wishes to reflect in its programmes. However, Gülseren Sengezer’s work cannot be reduced to this aspect, as the journalist emphasises: “I’m more than just my migration background.”



Gülseren Sengezer is a freelance editor for the ZDF. She was awarded the Mainzer Journalistenpreis for her documentary about the fire disaster in Ludwigshafen on 3rd February 2008.

INFORMATION

Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (ZDF)
www.unternehmen.zdf.de

**Mainzer Journalistenpreis
(Mainz Journalists’ Award)**
www.stiftung-presseclub-mainz.de

Not just for the museum

At first sight it may seem surprising that there are an increasing number of humanities graduates among the academics recruited each year by BMW, even outside the "BMW Museum". But Dr Christoph Anz, Director of Education Policy in the BMW Group, has a clear message: speculative applications from humanities graduates are welcomed at BMW, not least due to the very good experience the company has had with them in mixed teams.



The BMW Group hires about 2,000 new employees in Germany every year, two thirds of whom are graduates who can be found in various departments.



Dr Christoph Anz is responsible for education policy in the BMW Group.

Which departments at BMW employ humanities graduates?

Almost all of them, and that is no exaggeration. At BMW, we even have a humanities graduate in production planning. The majority are employed in the communications and human resources departments, but they can also be found in sales and corporate strategy. The fewest are employed in research & development. Our company archives and the "BMW Museum" are a special case where mainly historians and other humanities graduates work.

Does the way you recruit humanities graduates differ from the way you recruit engineers and business economists?

The sole difference is that we do not actively seek humanities graduates. But we always welcome convincing speculative applications. Otherwise, the same criteria basically apply for humanities graduates as for graduates of other disciplines. They are just as welcome in our trainee programmes as engineers, for example. In principle we look at the applicant's entire skills profile. What counts at the end of the day is whether the applicant fits into the company. If it becomes clear during the interview that the applicant has no interest in the automotive industry, he or she will not be taken on of course.

What skills must humanities graduates have when they apply to BMW? What do you value most in them?

They should be able to read and understand a business report and know how a company operates, in other words they should have business knowledge and practical experience. What we really value is the interdisciplinary qualifications of humanities graduates, especially their communications and foreign-language skills. It has also been our experience that, all in all, humanities graduates excel in mixed teams due to their coordination, motivation and communication strengths. They can bring together different ideas. Their sometimes unconventional approaches are refreshing and frequently result in new viewpoints and solutions.

What opportunities exist for applicants from outside Germany?

BMW cooperates with companies and institutions from many cultural spheres. Currently, China and India are very important. It goes without saying that we need people who can help us bridge the cultural divide.

What advancement prospects do humanities graduates have?

I can only repeat what I said before: the same as for any other employee. In fact, the higher you climb in the hierarchy, the less important the employee's degree subject is.

Can you cite one example from your own experience where a humanities graduate was able to put his or her skills to excellent use in the company?

The analytical skills of an employee who had studied philosophy came to my attention. The task in hand was to reorganise sales networks. I have never seen a keener perception or better ability to categorise in any other employee.

INFORMATION

BMW Group

www.bmwgroup.com

BMW Museum

www.bmw-welt.com

Careers in the BMW Group

www.bmwgroup.jobs

Important links at a glance

Preparation and overview of degree courses

www.study-in.de

First information about living and studying in Germany, with videos, chat forums, reports from foreign students, city portraits and a database of all degree courses

www.daad.de

Website of the German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst – DAAD); more detailed information regarding first degree courses and doctoral studies in Germany

www.daad.de/international-programmes

Possibility to search for internationally recognised, accredited bachelor's, master's and doctoral programmes at German universities, most of them taught in English

www.hochschulkompass.de

Information portal of the German Rectors' Conference (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz – HRK) with information on German higher education institutions, their courses and opportunities for doctoral studies, as well as international cooperations

www.hrk.de/forschungslandkarte

Interactive research map provided by the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) showing the 'institutional research priorities' of German universities

www.exzellenz-initiative.de/faecher/geistes-und-sozialwissenschaften

Video portal of the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft – DFG) on the Excellence Initiative

Support and service

www.internationale-studierende.de

Information portal of the 58 student unions (Studentenwerke) in Germany with information about economic, social, health and cultural support for international students at German universities

www.daad.de/aaa

Addresses of the International Offices (Akademische Auslandsämter – AAA) at the German universities

Application, admission

www.daad.de/admission

This page provides information about which educational certificates obtained outside Germany are required for admission to higher education in Germany.

www.anabin.de

Information system for the recognition of foreign educational qualifications run by the Central Office for Foreign Education Systems (Zentralstelle für Ausländisches Bildungswesen – ZAB)

www.uni-assist.de

Internet portal of the University Application Service for International Students (Arbeits- und Servicestelle für ausländische Studienbewerber)

Scientific organisations, networks

www.dfg.de

German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft – DFG)

www.research-explorer.de

Research explorer of the DAAD and the DFG

www.akademienunion.de

The Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities (Union der deutschen Akademien der Wissenschaften), the umbrella organisation of eight academies of sciences and humanities

www.wgl.de

Leibniz Association (Leibniz-Gemeinschaft, Wissenschaftsgemeinschaft Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz e.V.)

www.mpg.de

Max Planck Society (Max-Planck-Gesellschaft)

Funding

www.funding-guide.de

Database of scholarships offered by the DAAD and other funding organisations

www.volkswagenstiftung.de/pro-geisteswissenschaften

Focus on the Humanities (Pro Geisteswissenschaften) – funding initiative of the Fritz Thyssen Foundation and the Volkswagen Foundation

Associations, organisations

www.geisteswissenschaft-im-dialog.de

Humanities in Dialogue (Geisteswissenschaft im Dialog – GID), a joint project of the Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities and the Foundation of German Humanities Institutes Abroad

www.altphilologenverband.de

Association of German Classical Philologists (Deutscher Altphilologenverband – DAV)

www.anglistenverband.de

German Association of Anglicists (Deutscher Anglistenverband e.V.)

www.bdue.de

Federal Association of Interpreters and Translators (Bundesverband der Dolmetscher und Übersetzer e.V. – BDÜ)

www.deutscher-romanistenverband.de

German Association of Romance Philologists (Deutscher Romanistenverband – DRV)

www.dgps.de

German Psychological Society (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Psychologie e.V. – DGPs)

www.dgphil.de

German Philosophical Society (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Philosophie e.V. – DGPhil)

www.dgfe.de

German Society for Educational Science (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft – DGfE)

www.hochschulgermanistik.de

Society for University German Studies in the German Association of Germanists (Gesellschaft für Hochschulgermanistik im Deutschen Germanistenverband – DGV)

www.slavistenverband.de

German Association of Slavists (Deutscher Slavistenverband)

www.historikerverband.de

Association of German Historians (Verband der Historiker und Historikerinnen Deutschlands – VHD)

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"Perfectly structured and absolutely comprehensive. For me, Germany is the world's No.1 location for higher education."

Thi Hang Vo from Vietnam is pursuing her master's degree in German as a foreign language at Bielefeld University.

Picture taken at the Reclam booth at the Frankfurt Book Fair. The publisher is known for its "Universal-Bibliothek" collection.

www.study-in.de

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