

German

Module descriptors for Inbound Students.

Name	Waldgänger
Code	GRU22262
Semester	2
ECTS credits	5
Pre-requisite	The module is taught in German.
Module Coordinator	Contact the Study Abroad Coordinator (German)

Module Content

This module explores the cultural history of what the German philosopher Ernst Jünger once called the Waldgänger, those withdrawing to forests for various purposes: from women decried as witches for living in the forest, to the Romantics' celebration of Waldeinsamkeit, forest solitude, the Canadian 'coureurs des bois,' to writers past and present (Ludwig Tieck, Heinrich Heine, Henry David Thoreau, Cheryl Strayed, Simone de Beauvoir, Sylvain Tesson), philosophers (Baptiste Morizot), and artists living, (long-distance) hiking, and artistically interacting with forests and trees.

The module will engage with authors and their narratives that all in some way see the sylvan eco-system with its species as vulnerable but also promising resilience and survival. In its range across various disciplines and areas, literary study, travel literature, eco-criticism, philosophy, the natural sciences, and biopolitics, as well as across a temporal trajectory from the medieval homo sacer, the witches/femina sacra of the early modern age, the German Romantics and American Transcendentalists, to forest travel today.

This module explores a range of questions: How do authors engage and represent this eco-system over time? How do women condemned as witches shape the forest and literary landscape? What do folktales like 'Hänsel and Gretel' or 'Little Red Riding Hood' say about the eco-system of the forest? How does the French writer Sylvain Tesson who spent six months in complete isolation in the forests of Siberia differ in his eco-focus from someone like Henry David Thoreau? Why is Hesse's urban Steppenwolf also a Waldgänger? How does the current fascination with tracking forest animals (Morizot) contribute to the sustainability of this eco-system but also disturb it? What are the gender aspects of forest living and hiking in wilderness? How is all this discussed in literary texts, film, and other genres?

Learning Outcomes

The module is taught in German and students will thus improve their German language skills and



learn about literature and the cultural history of forests and humans withdrawing to them, about the politics of walking and hiking, living in isolation for various purposes such as resistance, escape, and

healing. They will learn about the gender aspects of forest travel, philosophies of walking and how such things are represented in German literature and some literary texts from other cultures.

Assessment

- Presentation (50%)
- Essay (50%)