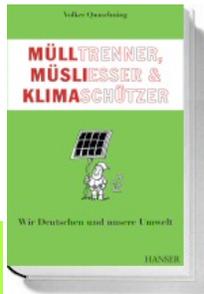


Contemporary Germany/Global Environmental Topics

Charlotte Melin, University of Minnesota
Department of German, Scandinavian and Dutch

Joachim Radkau
**DIE ÄRA
DER
ÖKO-
LOGIE**
Eine Weltgeschichte

C.H.Beck



Spring 2012 Ger 3501: Contemporary Germany "Environmental Debates—Food, Energy, Politics"

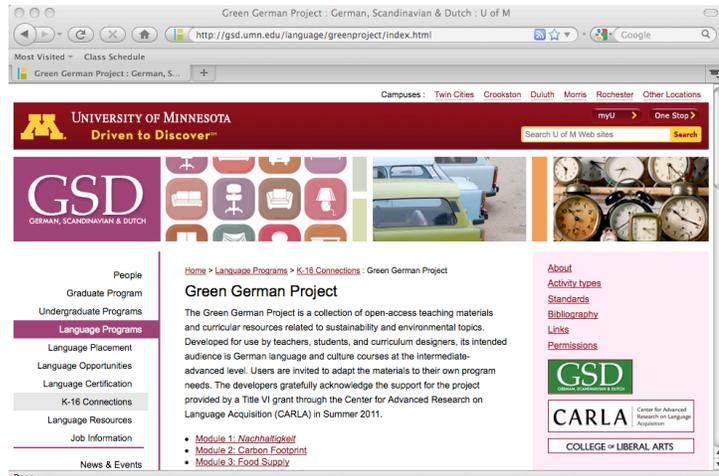
Course description and objectives:

Public concern about environmental issues is driving social, political, and cultural change in German-speaking countries today—a trend visible in the successes of the Green party in recent elections and plans to decommission nuclear power plants over the next decade. This course (taught in German) looks at the ways environmental imagination is expressed through language and contemporary culture. Frequent comparisons will be made with parallel global phenomenon, particularly in the U.S. We will examine the evolution of the environmental movement and European conceptions of sustainability through the lens of nonfiction writings, literature, on-line resources, and film. Historically, concepts of ecology arose out of early 20th century discoveries about interconnectedness, epitomized by the term *Umwelt* (surrounding world), which was coined by Jakob von Uexküll. In keeping with this systems perspective, we will study examples like food production, energy consumption, and urban design. To take into account the divergent opinions that surround these topics, assignments will include debates, expository writing, and creative projects that probe differing positions. Our starting point will be Volker Quaschning's witty, yet scientifically grounded overview of hot button topics, *Mülltrenner, Müsliesser und Klimaschützer: Wir Deutschen und unsere Umwelt* (*Trash Sorters, Muesli Eaters, and Climate Protectors*, 2010).

Objectives: In this course students will...

- explore the formal/aesthetic dimensions of literature and the arts, transnational public discourses about sustainability issues, and cultural/social/historical contexts that relate to the development of environmental imagination and awareness of global perspectives.
- expand abilities to read, interpret, and appreciate literary and multi-media texts related to contemporary Germany and environmental topics.
- exercise effective communication skills in German and English in ways that lead to the development of critical literacy skills applicable in many contexts (e.g., other classes, work settings, and personal communications).

Course premise: The majority of German majors are double majors and many students who minor in the department have majors in fields that intersect with sustainability studies, such as Global Studies, Journalism, Ecology and related science disciplines. Internationalization of the curriculum connects these areas of educational concentration.



UPCOMING EVENT:

Language / Environment / Media 2012
April 16, 2012 Institute on the Environment Commons
2-4:00 PM

Learning and Environmental Sciences Building
1954 Buford Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55108

This event showcases projects from Spring 2012 that have been created by students in participating German, French, and Spanish courses or submitted as independent entries. The Language/Environment/Media project is envisioned as a means to build communication bridges between the Humanities and sciences by involving students, faculty, and staff who have an interest in environmental questions. Students will display their projects at the showcase and awards for the outstanding entries in the six project categories will be announced.

The showcase is made possible through a mini-grant from the Institute on the Environment. The co-sponsors for the event are: Department of German, Scandinavian and Dutch; Department of French and Italian; Department of Spanish and Portuguese; Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA), and CLA Language Center.

Contact: Charlotte Melin (Department of German, Scandinavian and Dutch)
melin005@umn.edu