

Instructor: Stefan Höppner

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11 am – Noon or by appointment, 218C Craigie Hall

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Franz Kafka

Few German-language writers have reached a bigger audience than Franz Kafka (1883-1924), who, during his lifetime, was only a minor character on Austria's and Czechoslovakia's literary scene. On the one hand, his surreal stories seem to have a timeless appeal, on the other hand his writing was strongly shaped by his double minority position as a Jew and as a German-language writer in predominantly Czech-speaking Prague. This class wants to explore both avenues – Kafka as a timeless writer and as a writer of his time and place. To this end, we will do in-depth readings of his novels *Amerika/The Missing Person* and *The Trial* as well as some of his most enduring stories, including „The Judgment“, „Metamorphosis“, „A Country Doctor“, and „The Hunger Artist“. Moreover, we will also look at Kafka adaptations in graphic novels and films and see how they portray the legacy of the author.

The following texts are available at the U of C bookstore. All of them are required.

1. Kafka, Franz. *Metamorphosis and Other Stories: Newly Translated with an Introduction by Michael Hofmann*. London; Toronto: Penguin Classics, 2008.
2. Kafka, Franz. *The Trial: New Translation, Based on the Restored Text*. Trans./Introd. Breon Mitchell. New York: Schocken Books, 1998.
3. Kafka, Franz. *Amerika/The Missing Person: New Translation, Based on the Restored Text*. Trans./Introd. Mark Harman. New York: Schocken Books, 2008.

Digital editions are OK, but please use **these editions only**. Earlier translations of *Amerika* and *The Trial* were based on corrupted versions of the German text. I have selected this book called *Metamorphosis* because, to my knowledge, it is the only collection containing everything Kafka published during his lifetime. Beware of other books called *Metamorphosis* since they often only contain a smaller selection of stories or the title story only.

Markings		Grading	
Class participation	30%	A+ = 100-97%	C+ = 70-67%
2 Essays	30%	A = 96-91%	C = 66-62%
Final	40%	A - = 90-86%	C- = 61-58%
		B+ = 85-81%	D+ = 57-54%
		B = 80-76%	D = 53-50%
		B- = 75-71%	F = 49% and below

Participation and attendance: Class discussion is a key factor in this course. Attendance is mandatory and will be monitored; unexcused absences will result in a lower participation grade. The quality of the sessions will depend upon your preparedness and willingness to engage with each other. You must have read and thought about the required readings before coming to class. You will need to read the assigned course material, and attempt to come to a preliminary understanding of the material we will discuss in class. Needless to say, you should own a copy of the course books and print out and mark up any additional readings. Please note that you do not have to have understood everything you have read to make a valuable contribution. Expressing doubts, disagreements, and asking for clarification is a useful way of contributing to discussion. Your class participation mark will be based on the quality rather than the quantity of your contribution. Dominating discussion without listening to others will damage your grade. Also, it is essential that all participants treat each other with respect and courtesy. Students who feel unable to actively engage in classroom discussion must bring their concerns to the instructor's attention early so that an alternative strategy to ensure adequate performance can be sought. Unexplained absences will be penalized up to a loss of a full letter on the final grade. Also, please don't use electronic devices during class except for accessing digital copies of the required texts on a reading device, as using computers or cell phones for other purposes might distract yourself as well as those around you.

Essays: You will be required to write two response essays (2-3 pages each, letter-sized paper, Times New Roman font 12 pt, double-spaced) to the texts discussed in this class, or an aspect of these texts. Topics should be discussed with the instructor beforehand, either after class, during office hours, or via e-mail. You will be expected to give your personal opinion on a text. To make sure your impressions are still fresh, please turn in your essay no more than a week after we discussed a specific text. Make sure you spread the essays across term so you don't have to cram during the last few weeks before the final. To avoid the common "Yikes, I haven't finished all my assignments yet" end-of-term pile-up, you may only turn in one essay each during the last two weeks of the semester. By turning in an essay, you certify that the work is your own; that you have given proper credit and citation to the work of others; and that you have not committed any other form of plagiarism or academic dishonesty. Any case of plagiarism will result in a failing grade and possible consequences up to expulsion from U of C. For definitions of plagiarism, please see the course calendar. Students are required to complete all assignments in order to receive a passing grade in this course.

Final: The Final Examination (90 minutes) will be scheduled by the Registrar during April 19-30, 2013. Requests for pre-assignment of examinations to special dates for whatever cause or reason cannot be accommodated (sorry, it's the Registrar's decision, not mine). Similarly, changes in the dates of scheduled examinations cannot be approved. No exceptions will be made to the Examinations Timetable. Detailed information on the structure and content of the final will be given in class, probably no later than early March.

Syllabus

	Tuesday	Thursday
Week 1 January 13/15	Introduction: Selected Short Prose: “The Trees” and “The New Advocate” (MOS 29 and 183-184)	The Breakthrough Story: „The Judgment“ (MOS 35-50)
Week 2 January 20/22	The Breakthrough Story: „The Judgment“ (MOS 35-50)	„Metamorphosis“ (MOS 85-146) (taught by Professor Dueck/Professor O’Moran)
Week 3 January 27/29	„Metamorphosis“ (MOS 85-146) (taught by Professor Dueck/Professor O’Moran)	„Metamorphosis“ (MOS 85-146)
Week 4 February 3/5	<i>Amerika/The Missing Person</i> , Chapter 1 (AMP 3-34)	<i>Amerika/The Missing Person</i> , Chapters 2-3 (AMP 35-84)
Week 5 February 10/12	<i>Amerika/The Missing Person</i> , Chapters 4-6 (AMP 85-183)	<i>Amerika/The Missing Person</i> , The Ending (AMP 182-284)
Week 6 February 17/19	NO CLASS: Reading Week	NO CLASS: Reading week
Week 7 February 24/26	NO CLASS	NO CLASS
Week 8 March 3/5	Daytime (regular meeting time) / Evening class (TBA): “In the Penal Colony” (MOS 147-180)	Daytime (regular meeting time) / Evening class (TBA): Stories from <i>A Country Doctor</i> (MOS 181-235)
Week 9 March 10/12	<i>The Trial</i> , “Arrest” and “Conversation with Frau Grubach” (TT 3-34)	<i>The Trial</i> , From “First Inquiry” to “The Flogger” (TT 35-87)
Week 10 March 17/19	<i>The Trial</i> , From “The Uncle” to “Dismissal of the Lawyer” (TT 88-198)	The Trial, “In The Cathedral” and “The End” (TT 199-231)
Week 11 March 24/26	Film – Orson Welles, <i>The Trial</i> (1962)	NO CLASS
Week 12 March 31/April 2	Final Stories: “A Hunger-Artist” (MOS 252-263)	Kafka and German Literature in Prague
Week 13 April 7/9	The Kafka Legacy: Film – Steven Soderbergh, <i>Kafka</i> (1991)	Kafka in Translation / Transcultural Kafka (Texts TBA)
Week 14 April 14	Final Discussion / Review Time	
Week 15 (April 18-29)	Final exam: Time and date to be announced	

Page numbers refer to the three required books:

MOS = *Metamorphosis and Other Stories*

AMP = *Amerika/The Missing Person*

TT = *The Trial*