

Languages in Contact

Past and Present

The seminar will cover theories of contact linguistics and bi- and multilingualism as they apply to the German-speaking regions and borders of Europe. We will begin with the present day and move backward in time discussing the interaction of language with nationalism, identity, history, politics, culture and education. General phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical changes in the development of the German language will also be covered as will general approaches to historical and sociolinguistics.



Sample Topics:

EU Multilingualism

Kanak Sprak and the German/Turkish interface

Denglisch/Russian influence

Multilingualism in Switzerland and Belgium; in the Austro-Hungarian-Empire; in the Hanseatic League

German speech islands in Europe and abroad

À la mode and the 30 Years War

Eastern colonization (the Slavic, Baltic, Yiddish/German interface; minority languages e.g. Sorbian)

Language in the Frankish Empire(s)

Students will be asked to present a topic of their choice and to either write a take-home exam or a research paper.