

# The Faust Theme

Autumn 2014

T / Th 11:10-12:30

Prof. Hammermeister

GE Lit course - taught in English



**Faust**, the man who sells his soul to the devil, is one of the few mythical figures created by the modern age.

His story has, for hundreds of years, been told and retold in poems, dramas, puppet plays, ballets, novels, paintings, symphonies, book illustrations, operas, and films.

**Faust's** infinite attraction for the arts stems from the very idea he embodies, namely that of struggle. But the forces that are seen at war with each other change with every century, author, and composer. Faith and heresy, hope and nihilism, sensuality and asceticism, love and lust, art and politics -- all of these battle for redemption or damnation in different versions of **Faust**. This course on the **Faust** theme will thus shed light on the different ages and mentalities that are expressed in each version. From a close study of transformation of the **Faust** theme, we will ultimately derive an outline of the cultural history of Germany.

This class approaches the **Faust** theme from a variety of different angles. We will consider Elizabethan drama (Marlowe), and we will also study the **Faust** theme in the Arts like painting (Delacroix), etching (Rembrandt), symphonic and operatic music (Liszt, Berlioz, Gounod), as well as film (Murnau). The main focus of the course, however, will be two outstanding works of German literature: Goethe's *Faust* and Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*.

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