

The German Experience in North America

Dr. Berit Jany

GE Cultures & Ideas Course

Tu Th 11:10AM - 12:30PM

taught in English



More than 250 years ago, Benjamin Franklin worried that German immigrants “will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our Anglicizing them.” Although his prediction did not prove true, America has since experienced several waves of German immigration that have led German-Americans to make up the nation’s largest ethnic group. But, what brought these Germans to America? How did they establish themselves in the new country? And, what influences have they exerted in American history and culture?

This course serves as an introduction to the history, culture, and literature of German immigrants to North America, from the 17th into the 21st century. We study reasons for migration, selected settlements, as well as stories and tales of German pioneer authors. A field trip to German Village will provide a first-hand encounter with the culture and life of the early settlers. Students develop and present individually a research project of their interest relating to German immigrant experience.