

Types of Classes

The short description of the major types of academic classes¹ provided in this document is aimed at providing some initial orientation. There are:

(L) LECTURES (VORLESUNGEN)

Lectures are dealing with topics of a broader scope outlining the respective state of research as well as the different conceptions within this research. They are aimed at providing students with access to a specific topic and encouraging them to pursue an independent consolidation of the knowledge acquired in the lecture. Regular attendance is usually not mandatory but recommended, as there will be a final exam at the end. The Department of English and American Studies (DEAS) offers two different types of lectures: introductory lectures and topical lectures. Introductory lectures are aimed primarily at first semester students or students in lower semesters, providing them with an introduction into a broader subject area of their respective studies. Topical lectures are usually aimed at students in higher semesters who already have some basic knowledge. They tend to deal with more specific exemplary topics of a particular subject matter within the field of studies and sometimes already require certain basic overview knowledge on the part of the students. Lectures usually include only minimal interaction between the lecturer and the students as they are taught in a presentation style in a bigger lecture hall.

(S) SEMINARS (SEMINARE)

Seminars serve the development and practice of special knowledge and practical skills in specific areas of study. They are usually taught in a much smaller format than lectures, with a much lower number of participants, and there will be far more interaction between the instructor and the students. The instructors usually assign readings and/or practical exercises which will then be discussed in the sessions. This type of course requires a certain amount of independent work and regular and active participation. Attendance is usually mandatory. There are various kinds of seminars suited for different levels of studies. You can find a list of the different categories of seminars below. There are:

(S) Accompanying Seminars (Begleitseminare)

Particularly the introductory modules of your studies will include a set of seminars which are aimed at teaching students various important skills crucial for the rest of their studies. For this purpose, they are taught in a small format and involve plenty of interaction between instructor and participants as well as a certain amount of independent work on the part of the students, which will then be discussed with the instructor and their peers in the sessions. Some lectures may also include a supplementary seminar to add a more practical component and forum for practice and discussion to the largely theory-based presentation of the topics in the lecture.

¹ LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION:

The language of instruction for most courses at the Department of English and American Studies is English. Only courses which have a German title and/or a German course description are held in German. The course descriptions in SPUR usually contain information about the language of instruction.

(PS) Undergraduate Seminars (Proseminare)

Undergraduate seminars are intended to introduce students to a specific area of their studies via the example of a representative subject matter. In undergraduate seminars, the focus is on the introduction of the methodology of the respective area of study as well as the techniques of academic work. In order to provide the students with an in-depth insight, the DEAS also offers overview undergraduate seminars. Like most seminars, undergraduate seminars are taught in a much smaller format and interaction between instructor and students is an important part of this type of class. The instructor usually provides a reading list for the entire semester and assigns specific reading materials for each session, which will then be discussed in class. Undergraduate seminars typically include a presentation/expert group and a term paper. They are mainly aimed at students in lower semesters. This type of course requires regular and active participation and attendance is usually mandatory.

(CS) Cultural Studies Advanced Seminars

Cultural Studies Advanced Seminars serve the purpose of research-oriented academic study with a special focus on cultural studies and different media (i.e. film, art, music, dance, etc.). Just like other seminars, Cultural Studies Advanced Seminars are taught in a small format and involve a great deal of interaction between instructor and participants. They are mainly aimed at students in higher semesters who have already consolidated their skills in research-based academic discussion and writing and have a solid overview and knowledge of the subject matters of their field of study as well as of the field of cultural studies/cultural theories. For this purpose, the DEAS usually requires students to have successfully completed a certain number of classes in their introductory modules and other seminars before they can participate in Cultural Studies Advanced Seminars. You can check these requirements in the respective Examination Regulations for your degree program. This type of course typically includes a presentation as well as a term paper. It requires regular and active participation and attendance is usually mandatory.

(HS) Advanced Seminars (Hauptseminare)

Advanced Seminars serve the purpose of research-oriented academic study. They deal with central areas of the respective subject via exemplary topics. Just like undergraduate seminars and Cultural Studies Advanced Seminars, Advanced Seminars are taught in a small format, which enables a great deal of interaction between the instructor and the students. The instructor usually assigns a considerable amount of reading for the duration of the semester as well as readings for specific sessions. The students are required to do a certain amount of work and reading independently and will then discuss their findings in class with their peers and the instructor. As the name suggests, Advanced Seminars are aimed at students in higher semesters who already have consolidated their skills in research-based academic discussion and writing and have a solid overview of the subject matters of their field of study. For this purpose, the DEAS usually requires students to have successfully completed a certain number of their introductory modules before they are admitted to Advanced Seminars. You can check these requirements in the respective Examination Regulations for your degree program. This type of course typically includes a presentation/expert group as well as a term paper. It requires regular and active participation and attendance is usually mandatory.

RESEARCH SEMINAR/COLLOQUIUM

In Research Seminars, students have the opportunity to present their work-in-progress and receive feedback from faculty and fellow students. Doctoral candidates and advanced researchers from the DEAS will be invited to present their ongoing projects and share their experiences. Occasionally, guest speakers will contribute to the program.

TUTORIALS (TUTORIEN)

Tutorials, which are usually taught by M.A. students or students in higher semesters, are additional supplementary classes accompanying some lectures and seminars. They aim at providing a forum for discussion and guidance. Attendance is not mandatory but highly recommended.