

Service-Learning “Oral Histories Project”

*GRMN2102 – Intermediate German II
(Spring 2021, Prof. Carolin Fuchs)*

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Purpose

- To engage virtually with German-speaking elders through regular interviews (4x/semester) on mutually agreed topics
- While the interviews were informal and conversational in nature, student-generated questions were scaffolded beforehand
- Main focus of the interview was on the elders' unique experiences and perspectives rather than objective facts about a topic
- The exchange was also meant to provide participants with a broader worldview on some course themes (e.g., history, immigration)
- The exchanges provided the elders with an opportunity to engage in a multicultural dialogue during a time of COVID-19 lockdown in Germany

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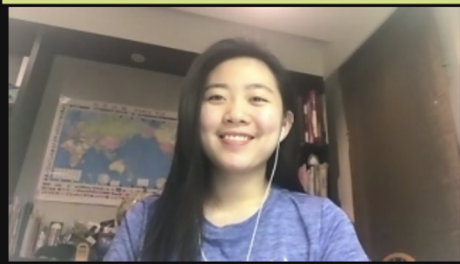
Goals

- Broadening our horizons beyond the classroom walls
- Practicing linguistic, pragmatic, and communicative skills
- Engaging in intercultural and intergenerational dialogue
- Obtaining first-hand information on different topics
- Practicing time-management, self-efficacy, conflict resolution

German 2102, Spring 2021

Zoom Meeting

Recording...



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Student Reflection 1

I learned...

- about Germany's response to Covid-19
- about my German partner's experience as an electrician and training as an electrician's apprentice
- about some unique regional foods in Berlin (for example, Boulette)



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Student Reflection 2

I learned...

- about some of my partner's political beliefs
- about my partner's interests in history
- about how Germans see different current events from different perspectives



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Student Reflection 3

I learned...

- about my partner's taste in music and poetry
- about my partner's job and how it changed after she had children
- about a local "Literaturfestival"



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Student Reflection 4

I learned...

- about German foods and what “Saumagen” is
- what the pandemic is like in Germany and the vaccination process
- a LOT about my German partner’s family and how much earlier people get married there compared to here



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Student Reflection 5

I learned...

- about the different perspectives towards immigrants and refugees in Germany
- about my partner's life values and attitudes that I agreed with, especially ones about how to maintain meaningful relationships
- about her favorite aspects of Germany, such as the healthcare system and support for low-income families



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Student Reflection 6

I learned...

- a lot about my partners interests and her daily life during the pandemic
- about the differences between the German and American schooling systems
- about German professional system and how it was to work for a German firm

	Fachschule Berufsausbildung (Lehre)	Berufsschule Berufsausbildung (Lehre)	Fachhochschule Studium	Universität Studium		
			Fachoberschule Fachabitur			12./13.
10.		Realschule Realschulabschluss		Gymnasium Abitur	Gesamtschule (alle 3 Schulformen)	11.
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1.-	Grundschule					

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Student Reflection 7

I learned...

- what the role of elders in families are, where they do not necessarily live together but can live alone in an apartment
- how older Berliners might view recent immigration to Berlin in a negative way
- about the struggle to get an education or have a stable career after the war during the rebuilding



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Student Reflection 8

I learned...

- about my partner's family life this semester
- that despite the fact that I was nervous about speaking with connecting with an elderly German citizen, we got along really well
- that her family dynamic was interesting because of COVID, her granddaughter visited for the first time in a year during our conversations

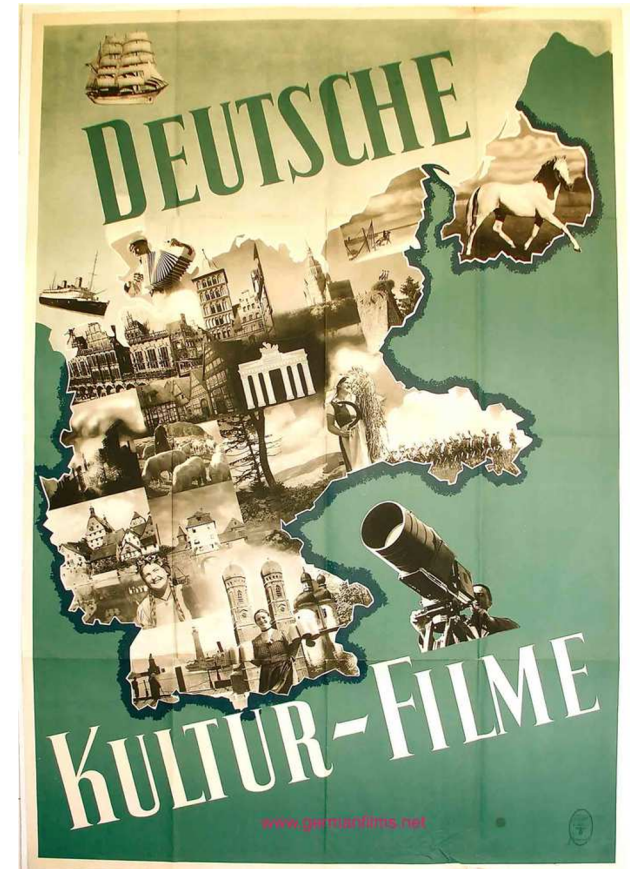


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Student Reflection 9

I learned...

- about the differences between northern and southern Germany
- about art in Germany and in Boston and about German films
- about how Germany and the US dealt differently with the pandemic



DANKESCHÖN!!

vereinigend

austauschen

einzigartig

hilfreich

ansehnlich

angenehm

sympathisch unterhaltsam

erfahrungen

einfühlsam