O GERMAN SEMINAR

This intermediate-advanced conversation course is conducted entirely in German. Each week's topic is introduced using authentic materials from a variety of sources. Reading selections provided to the class in advance of each session are chosen to challenge participants, to keep the class up-to-date with the latest trends in the German language and cultures, and to engage the entire group in lively discussions about current events and "hot topics". Brief explanations of idiomatic expressions, specialized vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar are incorporated into class discussions.

BROAD AREAS EXPLORED DURING THE SEMESTER INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
THE ARTS
SOCIETY AND MODERN LIFE
CURRENT AND HISTORICAL EVENTS
HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
LITERATURE

EXAMPLES OF DISCUSSION TOPICS FALL 2026

When parents hover over their children – Digital surveillance of their children has divided parents into two groups: those who believe their children are safe, as they can track their movements online, and those who prefer to teach children skills that will enable them to keep themselves out of harm's way through awareness of their environment and the ability to respond appropriately to danger. Some children say that they have more confidence as parents are a click away, others prefer their private space and freedom from constant oversight. The big question: what impact will these apps have on all kinds of relationships and on society as a whole? What are we willing to accept and where are the limits?

Whale rescue! – This past summer an important debate was unleashed over the fate of a stranded humpback whale "youngster". Having wandered out of his natural habitat, he became stranded after getting tangled up in plastic waste. The drama played out on the evening news and pitted the scientists and animal behavior experts against the TikTok "Besserwisser", who believed that the whale should be rescued at all costs. In the end, private investors were persuaded to tow the whale, equipped with a tracking device, to a more suitable spot. About five days later he was dead, likely after much suffering. What responsibility do humans have in creating these situations? Should humans intervene in these tragic cases, when they continue to pollute and destroy the animals' habitats?

People who keep quiet never make mistakes! How should foreign languages be taught? Should the goal of a foreign language class be perfection? How do we

acquire language in general? Why do children seem to have such an easy learning one, two or more languages at a time? When, why and how should correct errors? Is there a fool-proof method that works for all learners. The biggest questions of all – do you enjoy the process and does the language enrich your life?

Modern Libraries: Multifunctional and Social Remember the days of the stern librarians who insisted on silence? What about the fun of learning the Dewey Decimal System and tracking down books on endless shelves? Would you have pulled out a snack if it had been hours since lunch? Those days are gone. The new models are user-friendly, welcoming, and offer more than books to borrow. What about a cotton-candy machine or seeds for your garden? What would you like to learn – there's a group for that. The next time you travel, check out the local library!