



GERM 197C: GLOBAL CULTURE AND BUSINESS, PART II: A CONTINUING  
INTRODUCTION TO GERMANY AND ITS ROLE IN THE WORLD MARKETPLACE

**Course Syllabus, Spring 2004**

*Instructors: Robert Sullivan and Ray Pfeiffer*

Thursdays, 4:00-5:15

Isenberg School of Management Room 35

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**Brief Course Description**

This course continues the study of Germany begun in the Fall semester and abroad in Germany during January. The purpose of this course is to delve further into the concepts and perspectives that we encountered thus far to enhance the understanding of Germany, of international trade, and of business in general.

**Course Objectives**

Our primary objective for you this semester is to further your understanding of Germany — its history, politics, culture, and international political and economic relationships — and of business — generally and in the particular context of Germany as an example of international commerce.

**Accomplishing the Objectives**

*Group papers and presentations*

We have chosen to adopt a somewhat unconventional approach to these goals. The course will be structured around intensive group investigations of questions of interest related to Germany, to business, and to their interactions. You, together with your group members, will study two specific issues and will organize readings for the rest of the class and a classroom discussion. Your group will also write a paper on each issue that you are assigned. We believe that involving you directly in the process will enable you to learn more than you could using a more conventional approach. Also, as by-products, we expect you will learn important additional skills: working as a member of a team, delivering presentations to an audience and facilitating a discussion, and writing effective documents in a business context.

More specifically, following the first meeting of the class, your group will select two issues for study during the semester. The issues are listed below. Your group should select one issue from items 1-7 and one issue from items 8-12. For each issue, you will work as a team to do research on the issue to gather relevant facts and perspectives. As a group, you will then formulate a position on the issue and write a 8-12-page paper that summarizes your research and communicates your position

on the issue. On the dates assigned to your group, you will then organize a class discussion on the issue. No later than Monday preceding the class meeting, you will provide copies of your paper, relevant additional reading materials, and a list of discussion questions to the rest of the class. During class, you will make a brief presentation on the issue and facilitate the class discussion.

The UMass library has tremendous resources (including Mike Davis, business reference librarian) that will be useful to you as you research your issues. However, what will make your work on the issues interesting and unique is *your* perspectives, thoughts, opinions, and interpretations of what you find. *To the greatest extent possible, please devote substantial attention to blending your own opinions, experiences in Germany, and what you learned in the Fall semester with what you find in your research.*

We want this to work and for you to learn a lot this semester. To make it work, we need *everyone* to cooperate and to make the effort to come to each class prepared to *actively* participate in the discussion. We're all learning about these issues, and everyone has something to contribute. We look forward to learning from you as much as you learn from us.

### **The Issues**

1. How is the European Union similar in effect to a free trade zone like that governed by NAFTA? How is it different (freedom of labor movement, single currency, unified agricultural policies, etc.) and why?
2. In what ways is the EU an economic rival to the US? Is it also a political rival?
3. How exactly did the "command economy" of the former German Democratic Republic work? What problems did it encounter? What problems did it solve?
4. How were East and West Germany united in practical terms? What were some of the political, social, legal, and economic changes that needed to be implemented?
5. How does contemporary Germany deal with the continuing social and economic problems of integrating the former East?
6. What are some of the political and cultural reasons for the current differences in foreign policy between the US and Germany (or Europe)?
7. What are some of the differences between the US welfare state and the German conception of the "social market." What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of each system? Does one system work better than the other?
8. What is happening today in Germany with respect to its economy? What is the state of their economy (unemployment rates, interest rates, inflation rates, balance of trade, international trade relationships within the EU/outside the EU, fiscal budget, etc.)? What are the trends?

What are the challenges that Germany faces? What should they do to address these challenges?

9. What is the legal environment for business in Germany? For example, what are the laws governing labor, government involvement in commerce, taxation, international investment (both outbound and inbound investment), mergers and acquisitions (both domestic and international), financial reporting (US GAAP, IAS, German GAAP), international trade and tariffs, etc.? How does the legal environment in Germany differ from that in the United States? What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the alternative legal approaches in the two nations?
10. How do German people differ from Americans? How are they the same? Focus on how these similarities and differences affect the conduct of business among people of both countries. For example, how are relationships different – employer/employee, customer/supplier, employee/employee? Why do you think these differences exist? Are there historical reasons? Cultural reasons? Educational differences? Given these differences, how would you advise an American who was considering a business relationship with a German counterpart?
11. How is the banking system organized in Germany (both the national banks and the private banks)? How are the capital markets organized? Where do German businesses typically obtain the financing they need? What trends are present in the banking industry and capital markets in Germany? How do these institutions in Germany differ from the United States? What do you think are the reasons for these differences? How does Germany influence monetary policy given the existence of the monetary union and the Euro? How is Germany influenced by this multi-country banking system? What are the challenges facing Germany in this respect? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the European Central Bank as compared to the Federal Reserve system in the United States?
12. What sorts of products and services do German consumers like? How are these things different from the things demanded by United States consumers? What products are particularly successful in Germany? What makes those items successful? To what extent are consumer demands in Germany met by German-made products, and to what extent are foreign products preferred or more successful? Why? What sorts of issues are important to consider when marketing/advertising a product in Germany? What are the legal requirements/restrictions over advertising and marketing? What are the product liability laws? How does all of this compare with customs in the United States? Why do you think these differences exist? Given these differences, how would you advise a U.S. company that was planning to sell products or services in Germany?

*Class project*

One further aspect of the course this year is a whole-class project. The Massachusetts Office of International Trade and Investment (MOITI) indicated that they would benefit from the

construction of a database of German companies with operations in Massachusetts. They asked whether our class might be willing to undertake a project to compile such a database, and we have offered our services. The specifics of the project are yet to be ironed out. However, as a group, we will attempt to create the database and present it to MOITI at the conclusion of the semester.

### The Instructors

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### Grades

Your grade will be based on the quality of your papers and your group's organization of class discussions. You will also be graded on your overall participation in class discussions when other groups are facilitating discussions. Finally, your grade will also be based on your performance on a comprehensive final examination.

<u>Input</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Group facilitation of discussions	25%
Group papers	25%
Class participation	25%
Final exam	25%
Total	<u>100%</u>

Letter grades will correspond to the following numerical grades:

A	> 93%	C	73-77%
AB	88-93%	CD	68-72%
B	83-87%	D	60-67%
BC	78-82%	F	< 60%

### Helpful Resources

Please involve us as you develop your responses to the issues. *We are here to help!* Come see us in our offices, borrow our reference materials, email us, whatever you need to help you. In addition,

you should make use of the UMass library materials and staff. J. Michael Davis, the Business Reference Librarian, is a terrific resource for business students. Also, make use of the Isenberg School's writing center. The people there are another excellent resource for helping you with drafting your papers and organizing your presentations at any stage of the process.

### Course Calendar

Date	Activity
Thursday, 1-29	Introduction to the semester; syllabus; thank you notes; photos; organizing groups
Thursday, 2-5	No class today
Thursday, 2-12	J. Michael Davis, Business Reference Librarian; Debriefing of Germany experience
Thursday, 2-19	Group A, discussion 1
Thursday, 2-26	Group B, discussion 1
Thursday, 3-4	Group C, discussion 1
Thursday, 3-11	Group D, discussion 1
Thursday, 3-18	S P R I N G B R E A K !!!!!
Thursday, 3-25	Group E, discussion 1
Thursday, 4-1	No class today
Thursday, 4-8	Group A, discussion 2
Thursday, 4-15	Group B, discussion 2
Thursday, 4-29	Group C, discussion 2
Thursday, 5-6	Group D, discussion 2
Thursday, 5-13	Group E, discussion 2

### Potentially Useful Internet Resources

For some useful web links, go to

[http://intra.som.umass.edu/pfeiffer/GERM197b/useful\\_web\\_resources.htm](http://intra.som.umass.edu/pfeiffer/GERM197b/useful_web_resources.htm)