



## Syllabus

# HOELDERLIN HEIDEGGER CELAN - AN UNCANNY ENCOUNTER (1942/1967) - 32820

*Last update 03-09-2016*

HU Credits: 2

Responsible Department: german, russian & east european studies

Academic year: 0

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: English

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Prof Birgit Erdle  
DAAD Walter Benjamin Chair

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Coordinator Office Hours: Sunday, 14-16, and by appointment

Teaching Staff:  
Prof Birgit Erdle

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### Course/Module description:

The encounter of Martin Heidegger, the philosopher who had inscribed National Socialism into his thinking, and the poet Paul Celan, whose Jewish parents were deported and murdered in 1942, is an event in German Jewish intellectual history that is difficult to decode and full of tension. It has been analysed many times and still raises fundamental, disconcerting questions. An important document is Celan's poem "Todtnauberg", which was written just a few days after he first visited Heidegger on 25 July 1967. The exchange between Celan and Heidegger had begun before this visit, through the reading of and referring to each other's texts, and we can find further traces in later texts, which we will explore during the course. Paul Celan studied Heidegger's works from 1953 until 1969. Celan's library contains 33 volumes by the philosopher, marked with several comments and notes. An important point of reference is Friedrich Hölderlin, whose poems were extensively studied by both Celan and Heidegger. In his lectures, developed in 1934/1935 and 1941/1942, and in his *Elucidations of Hölderlin's poetry* (*Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung*), Heidegger considers Hölderlin. Celan finds in Hölderlin's work a form of poetic processing of history and of historical experience which he can engage with. In this course, we will use the texts to reconstruct and examine the "silent dialogue" between Heidegger and Celan, which also discusses the relationship between poetry and philosophy.

### Course/Module aims:

the course intends to make students familiar with the post 1945 debate in Germany on the interrelation between literature, philosophy, and historical experience, focusing on a constellation of texts by Friedrich Hölderlin, Martin Heidegger, and Paul Celan

### Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

analyze some of the key texts of Friedrich Hölderlin, Martin Heidegger and Paul Celan;  
explain various aspects of german-jewish intellectual history post 1945 in Germany;  
critically discuss the relation between literature and philosophy in 20th century;  
discuss different concepts of memory and the aftermath of Nazism in Germany;  
critically reflect on aspects of literary history post 1945 in Germany;  
explain the concept and practices of intertextuality.

### Attendance requirements(%):

80 %

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*Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: seminar discussion  
reading reports  
student presentations*

*Course/Module Content:*

*close reading of exemplary texts (in english) by Friedrich Hölderlin, Martin Heidegger, and Paul Celan,  
and discussion of secondary literature*

*Required Reading:*

*to start with:  
Avital Ronell:  
On the Misery of Theory without Poetry: Heidegger's Reading of Hölderlin's  
"Andenken"  
PMLA, Vol. 120, No. 1, Special Topic: On Poetry (Jan., 2005),  
pp. 16-32*

*All primary texts and secondary literature will be provided*

*Additional Reading Material:*

*Course/Module evaluation:  
End of year written/oral examination 0 %  
Presentation 30 %  
Participation in Tutorials 0 %  
Project work 40 %  
Assignments 0 %  
Reports 10 %  
Research project 0 %  
Quizzes 0 %  
Other 20 %  
activity in seminar discussion*

*Additional information:*