

**CMPL 230 / GER 230 / ENGL 232**

**“Fables and Parables”**

**Spring 2009 --MWF 1:30-2:20pm**

**in Stanley Coulter Hall 108**

**Prof. Beate Allert**

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This course fulfills the Western Heritage Requirement for the College of Liberal Arts at Purdue University. No German language required, taught in English. While focusing on the genres of fables and parables in the German and in the Western traditions, it is cross-listed with “Introduction to Comparative Literature” and will help students to read and research well, to make consistent arguments, to present in class, and to develop writing skills. Known for their apparent simplicity yet depth of meaning, fables and parables are wonderful genres of literature to get started with.

This introductory course to German Literature in English translation and to the study of Comparative Literature explores fables, parables, and related texts and films. Readings include masterpieces by Aesop, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Hans Christian Anderson, George Ade, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Bertolt Brecht, Franz Kafka, Kurt Schwitter, Oscar Maria Graf, Hermynia zur Mühlen, and Hartwig Stein. The texts will be supported also by films in which these genres play key roles including Wim Wenders *Far Away so Close*, Werner Herzog’s fable on frogs in *Kaspar Hauser*, Walt Disney’s version of *Uncle Remus*, and Josh Straub’s, *The Mante’s Parable*.

Why is switching to the animal world, to a remote place, to an apparently timeless realm, to humor and to comics, shaped into sketches and images, and formulated into brief verbal sketches often so appealing? It may be that truth is then at its sharpest.