This course explores the “mentalities” of the German-speaking peoples with the goal of developing cultural awareness, sensitivity, and, ultimately, cultural competence through “immersion.” Participants will engage with various texts, cultural artifacts, film, and other media focusing on notions of time and space, untranslatable concepts such as *Heimat* or *Gastfreundschaft*, historical/geopolitical identities (German/Austrian/ Swiss), regional identities, ideological identities (West/East), and the transforming influence of European unification will be discussed. We will also interrogate our assumptions about contemporary German culture and examine how we can better define what “German” and “Germanness” means (if at all possible). The course is thematically (as opposed to chronologically) ordered, covering topics such as: identity, stereotypes, nationalism, minority groups in Germany, politics, history, language, art, gastronomy, pop culture, and the environment. *Speaking, listening, and reading* will be the core language skills that are emphasized in this course. Practical components are built into the course for using German skills in everyday situations, such as internships, correspondence, and restaurant etiquette. Students will work on one long-term creative video project with their group due at the end of the semester. In addition, students will submit a short final essay in German, in which they will be asked to provide a thoughtful self-assessment of their progress during the semester and where their interests and studies can take them in the future.