German Language and Literature

**Degree conferred**
Philosophiae Doctor in Lingua et Litteris germanicis / Doctor of Philosophy in German Language and Literature (PhD)

**Commencement of studies**
An application for admission may be submitted at any time.

**Regulation**
http://studies.unifr.ch/go/dGLfK (French and German only)

**Application procedure**
Candidates with Swiss qualifications
http://studies.unifr.ch/go/0bJpN
Candidates with foreign qualifications
http://studies.unifr.ch/go/4a2qV

**Fribourg profile**
The Germanistik Domain at Fribourg offers a doctoral training in the three areas of study: linguistics, medieval studies and literature. German Studies’ doctoral students therefore have the full range of study areas from which to choose their research subject. The subjects of the theses are arranged individually. They may be connected to current research projects financed by third parties. However, intensive discussions are held with the PhD advisor to find the subject, taking into account the interests of both sides. The theory and methods implemented in the Germanistik Domain at Fribourg are focused on the one hand on historical and cultural studies (in particular medieval studies and literature) and on the other hand on social-cognitive studies (in particular linguistics). In general, theses are written in German.

The main research fields of German Linguistics are language use, language variation and language acquisition, sociolinguistic and perceptual dialectology and sociolinguistic and contact linguistic issues from a synchronic or diachronic perspective. Alongside intensive personal support, there are three further types of support available to doctoral students. (1) A regular research conference, which in spring is also accessible to doctoral students from the western Swiss universities, where the progress of work is presented and unresolved questions are discussed in a wider circle. (2) Anyone writing a thesis within the framework of one of the research projects launched by one of the two professors can benefit from an exchange with a large international research network and from internal workshops. Doctoral students will also be supported in launching debates on their area of research in domestic and international meetings. (3) Doctoral students can also make use of the doctoral programmes of CUSO (Conférence Universitaire de Suisse Occidentale), such as the Programme doctoral en langue et littérature allemandes and forge contacts with other doctoral students. Linguistics doctoral students working on the subject of contact linguistics and language acquisition can work with the Institute of Multilingualism and with the Centre for Teacher Training for Secondary Levels I and II (Centre d’enseignement et de recherche francophone pour l’enseignement au secondaire I et II (French-speaking section) or Lehrerinnen- und Lehrerbildung für die Sekundarstufe I und II (German-speaking section)).

**German Medieval Studies** is deliberately open to other medieval disciplines and encourages interdisciplinary questions. It attaches importance to the exchange between fields of study within the framework of the Medieval Institute and the seminars of guest professors (Wolfgang-Stammel-Gastprofessur), as well as to international experiences made available during the doctoral studies. As standard, all work has an external co-advisor. Individual discussions with doctoral students are complemented with three supportive avenues: (1) The monthly interuniversity «Forschungskolloquium Germanistische Mediävistik», offered jointly by chairs of the universities of Fribourg and Geneva; this culminates in the annual, three-day «Internationales Graduiertentreffen Germanistische Mediävistik (OFFG)», which has connected the universities of Oxford, Freiburg im Breisgau, Fribourg and Geneva since 2002. (2) The interdisciplinary Mediävistik doctoral programme of Fribourg University, for which doctoral students of all disciplines are registered and completion of which is accredited. (3) The doctoral programme of CUSO, whereby doctoral students studying medieval studies alongside the field-specific offer have access to the bilingual Programme doctoral en études médiévales.

**German Literature** offers a doctoral training which, in terms of subject and method, is purposely open. However, particular emphasis lies on the subjects of general and comparative literature, like, for example, issues of genre typology, stylistics, or historical poetics. German Literature offers the following forms of support for doctoral students: (1) In addition to individual support from professors in Fribourg, a research conference takes place two or three times a term. This conference my be attended by all graduate scholars, doctoral and qualified scholars of German and comparative literature from Fribourg and other Swiss universities. At these meetings, chapters from qualification work are regularly submitted, which are annotated by all participants in advance, thus giving doctoral students the opportunity to learn how to read texts thoroughly and how to discuss them critically. In these circles of students, qualified scholars and professors, current research articles are presented, which serve for in-depth discussion of the topics. (2) Further, doctoral students will also be supported in launching debates on their area of research at domestic and international meetings. (3) Lastly, the network of western Swiss universities, CUSO, offers the opportunity to exchange with students from other universities.

**Professors who are eligible to supervise theses**

**German Linguistics**

- Prof. Helen Christen

Areas of specialisation:
- Variational linguistics with emphasis on social dialectology
- Language change
- Folk linguistics
- Gender linguistics
Areas of specialisation:
- Theory of literature, in particular interpretation theory
- Narrative theory
- Literary modernism
- History of German studies

**Prof. Ralph Müller**

Areas of specialisation:
- Contemporary literature, in particular Swiss literature
- Poetry and rhetoric
- Genre theory and spelling
- Lyricology and narratology
- Digital humanities, corpus stylistics, cognitive poetics

**Prof. Regula Schmidlin**

Areas of specialisation:
- Swiss language situation
  - Acquisition of writing skills
  - Lexicography
  - Phraseology
  - Language variation and language standardisation
  - Language and age

**German Medieval Studies**

- **Prof. Martina Backes**

Areas of specialisation:
- Literature from the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Era, in particular the history and development of novels
- 12th to 15th-century poetry
- German-French literature relations
- Middle Age manuscript and book culture
- Regional history of literature of the German-speaking south-west

- **Prof. Eckart Conrad Lutz**

Areas of specialisation:
- Mediality and identity
- Text, image and diagram
- Processes of writing, reading and cognition
- Education and conversation
- Courtly culture and its proponents in the Middle Ages

- **PD Dr Stefan Matter**

Areas of specialisation:
- Literature of the high and late Middle Ages
- Spiritual Literature
- Manuscript Studies and History of the Book
- Word and Image Studies
- Transmission of Texts

**German Literature**

- **Prof. Arnd Beise**

Areas of specialisation:
- Literature and history
- Intermediality
- Theatology
- History of drama
- Edition philology

- **Prof. Sabine Haupt**

Areas of specialisation:
- German and French literature from the 18th to 21st centuries
- Literature and picture media
- Literature and natural science
- History of ideas/Discourse analysis
- Literature and politics

- **Prof. Tom Kindt**

Areas of specialisation:
- Theory of literature, in particular interpretation theory
- Theory of humour and history of comedy
- Narrative theory
- Literary modernism
- History of German studies

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- Lyricology and narratology
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**Studies organisation**

**Structure of studies**

No ECTS credits can be earned.

**Doctoral school**

- [https://deutsch.cuso.ch](https://deutsch.cuso.ch)
- [https://medieval.cuso.ch](https://medieval.cuso.ch)
- [https://lettres.unifr.ch/de/sprachen-literaturen/germanistik/mediaevisk/projekte/forschungskolloquium.html](https://lettres.unifr.ch/de/sprachen-literaturen/germanistik/mediaevisk/projekte/forschungskolloquium.html)
- [http://www.mediaevum.unifr.ch/d/graduiert/doktoratsprogramm.htm](http://www.mediaevum.unifr.ch/d/graduiert/doktoratsprogramm.htm)

**Admission**

In order to be admitted to a doctorate the candidate must have been awarded an academic Bachelor's and Master's degree or an equivalent qualification by a university recognised by the University of Fribourg.

Before applying for a doctorate the candidate must contact a professor who would be willing to supervise the thesis work.

There is no general right to be admitted to a doctorate.

*The respective conditions of admission for each doctoral study programme are reserved.*

**Contact**

- Faculty of Humanities
- Department of German
- Sylvia Kilchör
- sylvia.kilchör@unifr.ch
- [http://studies.unifr.ch/go/de-german](http://studies.unifr.ch/go/de-german) (German)

**Doc- Postdoc-portal**

[http://www.unifr.ch/phd](http://www.unifr.ch/phd)