**POL 40995: Study Abroad**

**Experiencing Germany’s *Mittelstand***

**Kent State University**

April 29-May 7, 2017

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| Dr. Mark K. Cassell  302 Bowman Hall  [mcassell@kent.edu](mailto:mcassell@kent.edu)  330-672-8945 |  |

**Course Description**

Germany’s small to midsize manufacturing enterprises, known as *Mittelstand*, are global leaders in cutting-edge innovation, technological development, high-skilled labor, and efficient and flexible production systems. *Mittelstand* firms account for 52 percent of Germany’s economic output and almost two-thirds of its jobs. Germany is the world’s fifth most prolific generator of patents and is poised to overtake the United States as the second-largest exporter. The main source for that global success are manufacturing enterprises who employ between 50 and 500 workers and earn up to $500 million in revenue.

This intensive one-week experiential learning opportunity is designed to give workers, managers and CEOs of northeast Ohio manufacturing companies the chance to learn first hand what makes Germany’s *Mittelstand* successful. The course takes place in southern Germany, home to the highest concentration of small and midsize manufacturing firms considered world leaders in their markets. Topics taken up in the course include:

* Quality. What systems do *Mittelstand* firms use to insure quality?
* Innovation. How do *Mittelstand* firms innovate?
* Human capital. What training do workers and managers receive?
* Governance. What role do managers and workers play in the governance and decision making of the firm?
* Success. How do *Mittelstand* firms in Germany understand success?

The course is built around three elements: first, a series of briefings with owners, engineers and managers of world market leaders in manufacturing. The briefings take place at the firms, and include tours of the production facilities and broader discussions of issues important to Ohio manufacturers. Second, the course includes presentations from expert scholars in the area of small and midsize manufacturing at the German Graduate School of Management & Law in Heilbronn. And finally, the course includes time for participants to network with their German counterparts, visit tourist destinations in Heidelberg, Stuttgart and Munich, and explore Germany’s most interesting and dynamic cities on their own.

**Course Objectives**

1. An understanding of Germany’s economic system.
2. An understanding of how mid-sized manufacturing firms in Germany innovate and become world market leaders.
3. Develop a first-hand understanding of several issues including: a) worker retention and training; b) system design for quality; and 3) global marketing.
4. Foster relationships between market leaders in northeast Ohio and southern Germany.

**Reading:**

# Buchanen, Leigh, 2014. How to Build a Company That Lasts Forever. *INC. Magazine.* Februarypp. 48-105.

* Wagner, Joachim. 2013. Exports, imports and firm survival: first evidence for manufacturing enterprises in Germany.  *Rev World Econ* 149:113–130
* Herrigel, Gary. 2010 *Manufacturing possibilities: creative action and industrial recomposition in the United States, Germany, and Japan.* Oxford University Press: England.

**Course Assignments and Grading**

The course is organized around a series of briefings and tours. Participants are expected to participate in the sessions by posing questions and participating the conversation following the briefing.

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| **Day** | **City** | **Activities** |
| Sat 4/15 | Kent | Overview of German Political Economy. Review of trip. |
| Sat 4/29 | From Cleveland  to Frankfurt | Morning: Arrive at airport with passport, course materials, and luggage |
| Sun 4/30 | From Frankfurt to Heilbronn | Morning: Collect luggage from airport and take train from Frankfurt Airport to Heilbronn.  Afternoon: Check-in at hotel  Evening: Welcome dinner at local restaurant. |
| M 5/1 | Heilbronn & Heidelberg | Morning: Train from Heilbronn to Heidelberg  [Visit the Heidelberg Schloss/ Castle incl. Tram](http://www.schloss-heidelberg.de/start/)  Lunch is own responsibility.  Afternoon: City tour of Heidelberg.  Evening: Train back to Heilbronn followed by a dinner at a local restaurant. |
| T 5/2 | Heilbronn | Morning: [Official welcome in Heilbronn by the mayor,](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Diepgen)  [Mr. Martin Diepgen](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Diepgen)  City tour of Heilbronn  Lunch at local restaurant  Afternoon presentations at the [German Graduate School of Business and Law.](https://www.ggs.de/en/)  **Ms. Kirsten Hirschmann** – managing Partner of [Hirschmann laboratory equipment](http://www.hirschmannlab.de/?sc_lang=en)  [**Prof. Dr. Elisabeth Müller**](https://www.ggs.de/ueber-uns/fakultaet/professoren/elisabeth-mueller/)**,** “Success of family firms and SMEs”  **Mr. Jürgen Czupalla** – [CEO of Agentur für Arbeit (Agency for Employment and Economic Development), Heilbronn](https://www.heilbronn.de/wirtschaft-innovation/partner-der-wirtschaft/agentur-fuer-arbeit.html)  Evening: Dinner at local restaurant |
| W 5/3 | Heilbronn and the region | Morning Briefings:  [Recaro: manufacturer of aircraft and automotive seating.](http://en.recaro.com/)  [Peter Fenkl, CEO, Ziehl ABBEG: manufacturer of ventilation systems.](http://www.ziehl-abegg.com/global/en/)   Afternoon briefings: Lunch at a local restaurant [Mr. Thorsten Bauer, Manager of International Distribution, GEMÜ GmbH & Co. KG: manufacturer of valves, automation components and other piping products.](https://www.gemu-group.com/en_US/gemue-gruppe/ueber-uns/)  Evening: Dinner at a local restaurant |
| TH 5/4 | Heilbronn and the region | Morning Briefings:  [Mr. Matthias Raff, Managing Partner Losberger GmbH: manufacturer of temporary warehouse containers.](https://www.losberger.com/de/en_GB/home/modular-industrial-buildings-temporary-warehouses-containers/) [Mr. Volker Kitzelmann, CFO, Dieffenbacher, manufacturer of wood-based panels and biomass energy systems.](http://www.dieffenbacher.de/en/index.html)Dinner: Lunch at a local restaurant  Afternoon Briefings:  [Mr. Rutger Dautel, Managing Partner, Dautel GmbH: manufacturer of hydraulic tail lifts, dumpers and changing systems for trucks.](http://www.dautel.de/content1.asp?area=hauptmenue&site=unserwerk&cls=02)  [Mr. Rolf Kummer, Managing Director, AS Schneider: manufacturer of instrumentation and pipeline valves.](http://www.as-schneider.com/gb/en/Company/pid.21.24.81/AS-Schneider-Group.html)  Evening Dinner: Ernst & Young Evening Event with representatives of various manufacturing firms including: Schunk, Stihl, and LAPP. |
| F 5/5 | Stuttgart | Morning Briefings:  [Mr. Christopher Nagel, Business Development Key Account Management, Schunk GmbH & Co. KG: manufacturing of clamping and gripping equipment.](http://us.schunk.com/us_en/homepage/) [Mr. Kay Steffen-Gurr, Manager Electronic Development, Stihl Waiblinen: manufacturer of electrical and quality battery products](http://www.stihl.de/?gclid=CL7ds5-9vNACFUUW0wodSrIImw) Lunch: Local Restaurant  Afternoon Briefings:  [Kay Kollmer, LAPP Kabel Stuttgart: manufacturer of cables.](http://www.lappkabel.com/)    Check-in at hotel in Stuttgart  Dinner at restaurant in Stuttgart |
| Sat 5/6 | Stuttgart & Munich | Morning:  Visit the Porsche Museum  Lunch at a local restaurant  Afternoon:  Train from Stuttgart to Munich  Check-in at hotel in Munich  Dinner[: Hofbräuhaus](http://www.hofbraeuhaus.de/en/index_en.html) |
| Sun 5/7 | Munich | Morning:  [Visit BMW World](http://www.bmw-welt.com/en/)  Transfer to airport  Flight from Munich to Cleveland |