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“Vienna: Portrait of a City” and Viennese *Kaffeehausliteratur*

Wiener Schnitzel? Sachertorte? Guglhupf? Jugendstil? Walzer? Riesenrad? Wiener Sangerknaben? Neujahrskonzert? Lippizaner?

Chances are that when you think of Vienna, at least a couple of these images come to mind. This poster project addresses how one course entitled “Vienna: Portrait of a City” introduced undergraduate students at Hendrix College to the multiple layers of Viennese identity. From capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire with its 54 million inhabitants to a strategically important city of the *Ostmark* to the capital of Austria’s Second Republic with 8,000,000 inhabitants, Vienna has witnessed remarkable changes, advances, setbacks, tragedies and triumphs in the past 150 years. In this course we took a literary, artistic, musical, architectural and historical stroll through Vienna, Austria. In the syllabus, I made the following promise: “From the moldy depths of the catacombs to the lofty spire of the *Stephansdom*, we will explore the clichés associated with Vienna and explore how individuals have sought to represent this enigmatic city in a variety of media.”

The two posters presented at this conference represent a broad overview of the course and a detailed account of a specific unit dealing with *Kaffeehausliteratur*.

Both posters were created jointly with Pam Barnes, a senior German and history major who, after taking the course, spent a year studying in Graz and a summer conducting her own research on Jewish life in Vienna. Her work will also be highlighted in the first poster as will student response to the course overall. In addition to offering a synopsis of materials, the poster will also indicate how I dealt with the issue of varying levels of proficiency in a large class. By letting the course participants divide themselves into one of two groups (the Gustav Klimt and Otto Wagner groups), I individualized writing assignments to better meet the two groups’ needs. In addition, a student assistant held weekly discussion groups to deal with students’ questions in more detail and address comprehension issues.

The second poster we will present deals with one particularly important aspect of Viennese society that we considered at length: *Kaffeehausliteratur*. From Peter Altenberg’s famous verses to Georg Danzer’s contemporary song about a stalker running through the much beloved *Hawelka*, we explored the rich complexity, the wit and, at times, the melancholy nature of the Viennese coffee house and its devoted guests. In addition to offering materials about this topic, the poster also contains photos of our very own Viennese coffee house complete with Guglhupf and, alas, American coffee.