From the end of the war to the end of the wall, German literature of the past half-century has been engaged in a complicated relationship with the socio-political sphere. Through a study of select literary texts, non-fiction essays, and films, we will explore how the author engages with (or, alternatively, rejects engagement with) the socio-cultural environment through the counter-discourse of literature. Topics of particular focus will include: representation of the National Socialist past; inter-generational conflict in German society; the ‘terrorist’ movement of the 1970s; the politicized climate of the women’s movement; the response of the writer in East Germany; the role of historical memory in contemporary Germany; and the politics of national unification and citizenship.