

The Best Bookshops in Hamburg, Germany

Olivia Spyth takes us on a tour of the best bookshops in Hamburg, Germany. If there's a bookshop that you think other students and academics should visit when they're undertaking research or visiting a city for a conference, further information about contributing follows this article.



Image Credit: View from Poggenmühlenbrücke at Speicherstadt, Hamburg, Germany (Thomas Wolf)

The city of Hamburg is Germany's second biggest city, and famous for its harbour, the warehouse district – which became a UNESCO world heritage site in 2015 – and its overall connection to the sea. Not only does Hamburg attract millions of tourists each year because of its beautiful architecture and cultural offerings, but it is also home to some of the biggest and most important publishing houses in the country.

In addition to Hamburg's strong connection to the publishing industry, a large number of independent bookshops can be found here. While big chains like *Thalia* are closing some of their branches, smaller, local bookshops thrive through a modern approach and personalised service.

The first bookshop on my literary tour through Hamburg is *Cohen + Dobernigg* on Sternstraße. Settled in the hip and alternative district Sternschanze, this bookshop strongly appeals to a young audience. Founded in 2002, *Cohen + Dobernigg* see themselves as an ‘urban bookshop’, which is reflected by their location among concert venues, coffee shops and walls full of street art. When you come inside, you’re greeted by a modern interior with big, circle-like shelves displaying contemporary literary gems. Their interior design reflects their approach to bookselling: their books are as modern as their bookshop.



Among a selection of current bestsellers, travel guides, cookbooks and children’s literature, there is a reading corner with unique magazines and a shelf with titles in English. *Cohen + Dobernigg* also offers beautifully designed publications about pop culture, music, design and photography. Each month, you will find a selection of five books displayed in the shop window – the Pearls of the Month. These books are chosen by staff and cover a variety of topics and genres. The only condition for a book to be a Pearl of the Month is that a staff member has to personally read and enjoy it, so that they can wholeheartedly recommend it to anyone who might also be interested in it.

The second stop leads to a very different bookshop: a journey from modernity to history. *Felix Jud & Co. – Bookshop, Antiquarian Bookseller and Art-Dealing* is situated on Neuer Wall in the city centre. This bookshop has existed for over 90 years and is brimming with history. Founded in 1923 by Felix Jud, after whom the bookshop is named today, this is a true institution of Hamburg. During the Second World War, Jud was part of the resistance against the Nazi Regime and a member of The White Rose. He survived the concentration camp Neuengamme and became an active lobbyist for cultural politics in Hamburg.



Today, this elegant bookshop offers publications spanning the areas of fiction, children’s books, history, philosophy and the fine arts. However, you will not only find classics and contemporary literature in the well-stocked shelves; *Felix Jud* also specialises in antique books. Special editions, signed copies and first editions can all be found here. Some impressive books and a selection of unique artworks are displayed behind glass, and wandering through the three floors of the bookshop feels like an authentic history lesson. Today, *Felix Jud* also acts as a small publisher, dedicated to limited special editions. Most of the books are in German, but for any bibliophile this bookstore is a must-see, if only for admiring intricately designed editions and artworks in an authentic historical interior.



The last bookshop on my list is not far from here. Located in the Hanseviertel, which is just around the corner, *stories!* guarantees a calm and personalised bookshop experience. Entering this store will make you forget about the outside world for a short time. With its bright lights, white shelves and thoughtfully displayed books, *stories!* is all about the experience. Among a small selection of bestsellers, gifts and postcards, you

will mostly encounter staff favourites: there is an entire wall displaying personal recommendations with handwritten notes. If you are still unsure about which book to take home with you, one of the booksellers will happily give you their advice.

Stories! also has a small but special selection of British and American books, graphic novels and a neat little section of literature about Hamburg, including everything from local guides to books on the regional accent and cuisine. In the heart of this bookshop, you will find a long table surrounded by shelves with impressive coffee-table books, where you can browse in peace. The cosy feel of this shop is rounded off by a coffee bar serving everything from an espresso to a latte, making it the perfect escape even for your lunch break.

All of the bookshops on my list offer regular author events and literary evenings, so it is always recommended to look up current events on the websites of each of the mentioned stores.



Olivia Spyth recently graduated with an MA in Twentieth-Century Literary Studies from Durham University, after having completed her BA in American Studies and Media and Communication Studies at the University of Hamburg. Currently, she acts as the Managing Editor of [Perfect Daily Grind](#), a quickly developing online publication, and also writes her own articles. Her research interest lies in the period of American Modernism and contemporary literature, with a special focus on all forms of life writing. [Read more features by Olivia Spyth](#).

Note: This bookshop guide gives the views of the author, and not the position of the LSE Review of Books blog, or of the London School of Economics.

Do you have a favourite bookshop? If there's a bookshop that you think other students and academics should visit when they're undertaking research or visiting a city for a conference, then this is your chance to tell us all about it.

As part of a [regular feature](#) on *LSE Review of Books*, we're asking academics and students to recommend their favourite two or three bookshops in a particular city, with the aim of building an exciting online series for our book-loving community of readers the world over.

Bookshops could be academic, alternative, foreign language, hobby-based, secret or underground institutions, secondhand outlets or connected to a university. We'd like to cover all world regions too.

If something comes to mind, we're looking for around 150 words per bookshop, detailing why each place is a must-see. Our editorial team can then find suitable photos and links to accompany the piece, though you're welcome to supply these too. We only ask that you focus on just one city or region, and two or three bookshops within it.

Email us now if you'd like to contribute: lsereviewofbooks@lse.ac.uk

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