

“Wer ich bin: Das Selbstkonzept”

Elementary German: Exploring Self-Identity in the German-speaking World

German 101.003, Fall 2009
MWF 2:00-2:50pm, T 3:00-3:50pm

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Welcome to GERMAN 101!

We in the Department of German Studies are glad you decided to learn German. As you might know, English and German have many words in common (“Gesundheit”, “Bratwurst”, Kindergarten”, etc.). This will help you to learn the language quickly. Nevertheless, you need to be an *active* learner in order to succeed. The following will give you a brief overview of what you can expect from this class and what will be expected from you.

Course Objectives:

German 101 is the first half of the elementary German sequence entitled “*Wer ich bin: Das Selbstkonzept*” and the first semester of the Department of German Studies’ integrated four-year, content-oriented undergraduate curriculum. In this course you will explore the roles and group affiliations that contribute to the identity of young adults in the United States and the German-speaking world. Through this exploration you will be introduced to the principles of the German language and to life in German-speaking countries, and you will begin the long-term development of your ability to speak, understand, read and write German.

Course Materials:

- Required:
 - o Di Donato/Clyde/Vasant. *Deutsch: Na klar! An Introductory German Course*, 5th Edition. McGraw-Hill, 2007.
 - o Online exercises at www.mhhe.com/dnk5
 - o supplemental texts for each thematic unit
- Optional:
 - o On-line activity pack at www.mhhe.com/dnk5. This online program offers various activities, as well as the listening comprehension audio and the lab manual audio.
 - o Workbook and lab manual to accompany the textbook

Course Description and Approach:

As you perhaps have noticed, first-year German has a title, “*Wer ich bin: Das Selbstkonzept*,” that indicates a particular thematic focus to the two-course sequence (101 & 102), namely, an exploration of the roles and group affiliations that contribute to the identity formation of young adults in the United States and the German-speaking world. Specifically, you will examine the following six different roles or groups this academic year, devoting 4-5 weeks to each:

German 101: (1) Student; (2) Hobbyist; (3) Family member

German 102: (4) Consumer; (5) Tourist; (6) Citizen

By focusing on an overarching topic for an entire course, German 101-102 reflects the teaching philosophy of the Department of German Studies that language is best acquired when learners have to explore content and communicate meaningfully about it.

On the one hand, then, because of its explicit thematic emphasis that frames and informs how the language is approached, this course differs from traditional first-year language courses. The six different roles or group affiliations listed above serve as thematic units for the course, and for each unit we will focus on those aspects of the German language that are needed to communicate effectively about that theme. In an ideal world, there would be a textbook that would adhere to this approach, but that is unfortunately not the case. As a result, we will supplement the textbook with additional texts that deliver the content that we feel is important for the topic. In addition, we will not always progress through the textbook in a chronological order. If, for example, a certain language feature that is needed to communicate effectively about a theme does not appear until later in the textbook, then we will jump ahead and study it for its relevance to the unit. For those who are very used to moving through a textbook one page at a time, this will take some adjustment, but we hope you will see quickly how necessary it is to use the textbook flexibly so that we learn structures and vocabulary that are necessary for communicating successfully about the themes in the unit.

On the other hand, this theme-oriented approach does not mean that we will not study the traditional building blocks of language, namely, grammar and vocabulary. In fact, you will probably see right away that much of what you do for the class resembles how you might imagine a typical first-year language course; that is, you will read texts, learn relevant vocabulary, study grammatical structures that appear in the texts, complete exercises for homework on the grammar and vocabulary, interact with classmates and the instructor on specific topics, and complete writing assignments. What all these activities have in common is that they aim to familiarize yourself with the language and the content that you will need to communicate meaningfully about the topic at hand.

Finally, we want to remind you that learning a language is a long-term, non-linear, and error-full process. In other words, you will make wonderful progress this year, but you should not get frustrated by the challenges that the language presents. You will make mistakes, and that is completely normal. In fact, your errors are what indicate to us where we need to focus more attention and how your abilities are developing. You also might find that some aspects of the language that you thought you understood or had a firm grasp on are now causing your trouble. That, too, is completely normal. There is only so much that your brain can handle at a given point, and it is typical that new material takes up cognitive resources that you had used earlier for some other component of the language.

As you embark on this exciting and challenging process, **the class will be conducted mainly in German**, and you will be expected to make your best effort to respond in German. For the remaining 23 hours and 10 minutes of the day, you can speak English, but for 50 minutes five times a week, really push yourself to use the language to communicate.

Assessment:

1. **Attendance + Participation + Preparation + Quizzes (25%).** Attendance *and* participation are essential to your progress. You will be allowed a maximum of 3 absences for routine doctor visits and travel for non-emergencies, etc., during the semester without penalty. Beginning with the 4th absence, a penalty of -1% will be

levied on the earned final grade for each class missed. The best policy to adopt is to **keep me informed** if you miss any classes or assignments. Extended illnesses and family emergencies will be treated as exceptions, and absences for these purposes will be excused. Be prepared to show proof of the need for the absences, however, if your instructor asks for it. Note that you can make up for one absence by participating in a fourth extra-curricular event of the department (guest-lectures, parties in the German House, film etc.). Varsity athletes can get excused with coaches' notification of announced absences but must, of course, do the required work.

Completing **homework** thoroughly, regularly, and on-time is extremely important. Learning a foreign language is long-term process, and cramming simply does not work. If it is any comfort, there are explanations in English in the book to help you understand concepts. If the explanations do not make sense to you or you are still having difficulty with a topic and would like to discuss it in English, come to my office hours. You also might find the optional exercises in the online activity pack helpful. Depending on the quality of class preparation, there might also be an occasional announced short quiz.

Part of your participation grade is based on your attending at least three extra-curricular events (such as films, parties, guest lectures, etc.) each semester. There is a great amount of flexibility as to what counts as an appropriate activity because we want you to seek out those aspects of the German-speaking culture that interest you. Soon you will notice the benefit of it and the fun that can evolve from engaging German-speaking culture.

2. **Language tutor (includes on-line work) (15%)**. You will meet with your tutor for one hour each week for oral language practice. Look for the sign-up sheet in Modern Languages outside classroom 128 during the 2nd week of classes. The goal is two-fold: to confront you with speakers outside the class and to give you more chance to speak and try out new things in German within a small group. This year's Teaching Assistant from Germany **Katharina Babczyk** will coordinate the tutoring program and will be aided by 2-3 advanced students of German. In addition to leading the weekly meeting, your tutor also keeps a record of your performance on the online quizzes. Keep taking the quiz until you achieve 90% success or better and then email your results to the tutor and your instructor. In your tutorial or alone you will also work with the lab manual to **practice your listening comprehension** using the audio material on-line. The student lounge in our department has computers and a copy of the lab manual so that you can practice on your own.
3. **Unit tests (20%)**. There will be a 50-minute written test after each of the first two units.
4. **Writing assignments (15%)**. At the end of each of the three units you will complete a writing assignment on a topic relevant to the unit. Submit your writing as a hard copy to your **instructor**. The first draft will be annotated and returned for revision.
5. **Speaking events (Midterm 5%; Final 10%)**. The midterm speaking task will be a 5-minute dialogue with a classmate outside of class. The final speaking task will be an 5-minute interview during finals week with two instructors.
6. **Final written exam (10%)**. The time slot for this exam is determined by the registrar. Please do not make any winter travel plans until you have checked the final exam schedule.

For your convenience, much of the material supporting your learning progress is stored in **Blackboard**. Students can practice there independently and find interesting links. You might also find **Learnlink** is a useful to stay in touch with your peers.

Class Participation Criteria:

Grade	Criteria
A	always well-prepared always is attentive and eager to volunteer always tries to use German with classmates and instructor always makes the most of each exercise shows real resourcefulness and imagination when using the language always responds to and engages classmates in a respectful manner remains critical and open-minded toward target and native culture
B	usually well-prepared usually is attentive and volunteers occasionally usually tries to use German with classmates and instructor usually makes the most of each exercise completes exercises with some imagination and resourcefulness makes some effort to engage fellow students shows some development of cultural sensitivity
C	adequately prepared and attentive occasionally needs to be reminded to use German with instructor and classmates responds and completes exercises with minimal imagination does not engage classmates beyond the minimum requirements for an assignment
D	usually unprepared makes little effort to participate or complete exercises rarely tries to use German with instructor or classmates
F	makes no contribution to class whatsoever

Honor Policy

All courses in the Department of German Studies strictly adhere to the Emory College Honor and Conduct Code. The general rule to remember is that any work that you turn in to your instructor or tutor should be your own. Asking an advanced learner of German or a native speaker to proofread your work before turning it in is not permitted. If you want help with an assignment before turning it in, set up an appointment with your instructor.

Final words of advice:

Come to class prepared, having read the assigned pages in the textbook and completed work online or on a worksheet. Feel free to ask questions in class.

Get off to a good start. Postponing your studies will only make learning the language that much harder.

Seek my advice during office-hours if you are having trouble. Don't wait too long!

View this class as an exciting opportunity to learn how others live and communicate and, in turn, come to better understand how you live and communicate.