

iGerman

GERM 380, Fall 2015

T 9:00 – 9:50, ML 330

Instructor: Prof. Hiram Maxim

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Description

This one-credit course taught in German is a fresh take on the traditional grammar review class found in many foreign language departments in the U.S. While the primary goal of the course is to solidify students' knowledge of the German grammatical system, grammar will be approached not as an end unto itself but as a resource for meaning making. To help in this process of understanding how particular grammatical structures function to make meaning, students will work with online corpora of contemporary German language use to find examples of grammar at work and to test the validity of textbook grammar explanations. As students become more comfortable with the usage of German grammar, they will turn their attention to creating online tutorials for teaching and reviewing specific grammar points. The "i" prefix in the course title refers to the creation of these *Internet*-based tutorials but also to the *individually* focused and *interactive* nature of the course that will allow students to focus on those grammatical points that pose the greatest challenge to them and to work interactively with the class to determine the most effective way to understand and present them.

Goals

At the end of the semester students in this course will be able to

- demonstrate a firmer grasp of German grammar;
- apply central tenets of functional linguistics to their understanding of grammar;
- use online corpora to better understand language in use;
- use software authoring tools to create a successful online tutorial of a particular grammar point;
- describe the characteristics of a successful online tutorial;
- reflect about their own evolving views on grammar and language use;

Prerequisites: Completion of German 202 or its equivalent or permission of the instructor

Course materials:

- Access to a grammar reference book (e.g., Rankin & Wells or Dreyer & Schmitt). Additional grammar reference books are on Course Reserves in the library.
- Access to a computer for viewing language corpora and creating tutorials.

Assessment:

1. Participation and preparation (30%). The hands-on approach to this course requires active participation and thorough preparation. You will be allowed a maximum of 1 absence for routine doctor visits and travel for non-emergencies, etc., during the semester without penalty. Beginning with the 2nd 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 your instructor 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. Varsity athletes can get excused with coaches' notification of announced absences but must, of course, do the required work.

Regular homework assignments could consist of any of the following activities: (re)reading an assigned text, completing a worksheet about a particular grammar point, exploring online corpora for specific grammar points, evaluating online tutorials or software, working on one's own online tutorial, working on a presentation. In other words, in addition to weekly grammar practice, there will be a fair amount of meta-level reflection and analysis about language use and language instruction. Homework will be graded according to the following criteria:

- "√+" (100%): Homework handed in on time and indicating a very thorough effort, including a conscious attempt to use language features emphasized in class;
- "√" (80%): Homework handed in on time and indicating a satisfactory effort;
- "√-" (60%): Homework handed in on time but indicating an unsatisfactory effort.

Note: Homework that receives a check or check minus can be corrected, turned back in, and, assuming the issues have been addressed, receive a mark of 90%. Late homework will not be accepted and will receive no credit. Students are encouraged to use the homework exercises to experiment with the language and become resourceful users of German. At the same time, they are expected to use online resources to check their work for any unnecessary errors. Specifically, it is expected that on take-home assignments students will use resources available to them (e.g., spellcheck in MS Word or Google Doc; websites with verb conjugations; online dictionaries with gender and plural forms) to avoid committing the following errors: gender (G), punctuation (I), case after prepositions (K), plural form of nouns (Pl), spelling and capitalization (R), and subject-verb agreement (SV) = GIKPRS! Random errors in these categories are unavoidable but consistent inattention to these avoidable errors will negatively affect the final grade.

2. Arbeitsjournal (10%). Three times during the semester you will write a journal entry (in English or German) that documents your current views and approaches to German grammar and language learning.
3. Class presentations (10%). Twice during the semester you will be asked to give a short presentation on a particular topic relevant for class work (e.g., introduction and review of software; explanation of the tutorial genre).
4. Final project/online tutorial (45%). The major assignment in this course will be the creation of an online tutorial about one grammatical point of your choice.
5. Peer feedback on final project (5%). In addition to producing your own online tutorial, you will be asked to provide feedback on a classmate's project according to a rubric developed in class.

Academic Honor:

The Honor Code of Emory College is in effect throughout the semester. By taking this course, you affirm that it is a violation of the code to cheat on quizzes and exams, to plagiarize, to deviate from the instructor's instructions about collaboration on work that is submitted for grades, to give false information to a faculty member, and to undertake any other form of academic misconduct. You agree that the instructor is entitled to move you to another seat during examinations, without explanation. You also affirm that if you witness others violating the code you have a duty to report them to the honor council.

The central issue is that any work submitted to an instructor for evaluation should be one's own. Within the German Studies Department assistance is possible and even encouraged in two limited situations: online or in person. Online resources can be used for grammatical explanations (e.g., verb conjugations) or the translation of words, expressions, and phrases. **However, use of online resources to translate entire sentences or paragraphs is not permitted.** Seeking assistance in person should be limited to receiving suggestions, reviewing certain topics, and addressing revisions, but the ultimate production of the work to be turned in will rest with you.

- The Honor Code, a list of offenses and the Honor Council process may be found; http://college.emory.edu/home/academic/policy/honor_code.html

Semesterüberblick:

1. 1. Sept: course intro; pretest diagnostic
2. 8. Sept: theoretical background on functional grammar
3. 15. Sept: study of rules & existing resources
4. 22. Sept: use of corpora to see language/rules in use (Vyatkina workshop)
5. 29. Sept: use of corpora to see language/rules in use
6. 6. Okt: use of corpora to see language/rules in use; Arbeitsjournal
7. 13. Okt: Fall break
8. 20. Okt: analysis of the genre of online tutorials & creation of rubric
9. 27. Okt: practice with online authoring tools
10. 3. Nov: practice with online authoring tools
11. 10. Nov: practice with online authoring tools; Arbeitsjournal
12. 17. Nov: creation of tutorial
13. 24. Nov: creation of tutorial
14. 1. Dez: creation of tutorial; Arbeitsjournal
15. 8. Dez: posttest diagnostic; course survey