

## ELEMENTARY GERMAN I (1101)

**Required Texts: *Kontakte:***  
*A Communicative Approach.*  
Tschirner/Nikolai.  
**9th Edition, 2021.**



Course offerings for Elementary German I (1101) can be found in the Course Directory:

[https://doc.sis.columbia.edu/#subj/GERM/\\_Fall2025.html](https://doc.sis.columbia.edu/#subj/GERM/_Fall2025.html)

An electronic version of this syllabus will be available under: <https://germanic.columbia.edu>.

Registration information: Columbia Bulletin, Vergil, or the Barnard Registrar.

For all questions about the courses, please contact **Jutta Schmiers-Heller** (js2331@columbia.edu), Language Program Director at Columbia, or **Irene Motyl-Mudretzkyj** (imotyl@barnard.edu), Senior Associate of the German Department at Barnard.

### GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

Elementary German I is a communicative language course, in which students develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in German and a basic understanding of German culture. Upon successful completion of this course (see expectation) with a minimum grade of B students should be able to:

- provide basic information in German about themselves, families, interests, likes and dislikes, daily activities; understand and participate in a simple conversation on everyday topics (e.g., weather, meeting people, school, shopping, etc.);
- read edited texts on familiar topics, understand the main ideas and identify the underlying themes;
- pick out important information from a variety of "authentic texts" (e.g. menus, signs, train schedules, websites, but also newspaper articles and simple literary texts, etc.);
- begin to follow film material, identify chief characters and plots;
- fill in forms requesting information, write letters, notes, or messages providing simple information;
- provide information about German-speaking countries (e.g., geography, weather, du/Sie distinction, customs);
- use and understand a range of essential vocabulary related to everyday life (e.g., days of the week, colors, numbers, months, seasons, telling time, foods, names of stores, family, transportation, etc.), and
- pronounce German well enough and produce German with enough grammatical accuracy to be comprehensible to a German speaker accustomed to speaking with non-natives.

## COURSE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

This course is conducted in German. Come ready to experiment and contribute!

- In order to learn the language, it is crucial that we speak it in class as much as possible, whether as a whole class or in small groups and pairs.
- Stay engaged. The course covers a lot of ground every day. The more you engage and ask questions, the more you will learn. Engagement inside and outside of class is expected and counts significantly toward your grade. Be prepared to work about two hours out of class for every hour in class.
- **Homework.** Homework is scheduled to align with the content in the class. Day to day homework affords further practice and is usually due before next class. Larger assignments have a bit more flexibility. If you are unclear about requirements or assignments, contact your instructor as soon as possible. Don't wait until after a deadline. **Late homework:** Homework must be submitted on time in the format requested (paper/electronic) in order to be graded as complete/full credit. You will lose 5% for each day it is late. After 10 days your homework will no longer be accepted.
- **Attendance.** Your attendance at every class meeting is important. Frequent or extended absences impede development of oral/aural skills and will lower your grade or jeopardize your success in class. You will be allowed **three unexcused absences which will not affect your grade**. Each additional unexcused absence will result in lowering your final grade by 1%. Examples of unexcused absences include, but are not limited to, work for other projects or courses and personal trips or events. If you cannot attend in person due to sickness, an unexpected family or personal matter, or a religious holiday, discuss strategies with your instructor ahead of time or as soon as possible to make up content. Be proactive. If you know you will be missing a class, it is your responsibility to let your instructor know in advance and arrange for any homework to be made up. Classes start promptly. Given the nature of language classes, it is essential that you be on time and that you do not disrupt the class by coming in late. If you have a prior commitment that is going to make you late on certain days, please let your instructor know. Please note that an accumulated 75/110 minutes of being late to class 5 minutes and above will result in an unexcused absence.
- **Device Policy.** The use of electronic devices, including but not limited to smartphones, tablet computers, and laptops, is generally prohibited during class sessions. While it is important to know how to use relevant permitted electronic resources as you learn the language, e.g. dictionaries, class time is limited and face-to-face interactions with peers and instructors are a priority. Your instructor will inform you in advance if this policy will be overridden for classroom activities supplemented with the use of a device.
- More detailed information on the course elements will be provided by your instructor throughout the course.

**GRADING**

Grades for the course will be calculated as follows:

Course Elements	Percentage of Grade	Additional Information
<b>Class Work (attendance, participation)</b>	20%	<p><b>Class work:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance is mandatory and is a crucial component to successful learning.</li> <li>• The participation grade is based on punctual arrival to class and active participation. Participation is not merely limited to speaking in class, but also your engagement in pair/group work, questions you may have before/after class, via email, or even coming to office hours.</li> <li>• Participation may also include informal writing and speaking projects.</li> </ul>
<b>Homework (practice)</b>	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework is due by the beginning of class in the requested form (paper/electronic). Please read the Homework section above carefully.</li> </ul>
<b>Projects and writing assignments</b>	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assignments in this category are scheduled in a way to allow some flexibility and time for completion. They are designed to allow you to use vocabulary and structures you have learned and practiced in class.</li> <li>• All formal writing assignments will be completed in two versions. You will receive feedback on the first version, make revisions, and submit a second and final version. The grade you receive will be that of the second version. If you do not hand in the second version, 25% will be taken off your first version as the final grade.</li> <li>• Short informal in-class writing may also occur and be graded and allow you to practice expressing yourself briefly using newly learned vocabulary and structures.</li> </ul>
<b>Oral Assessment</b>	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oral assessment will occur throughout the semester and will be announced as such. It can take the form of pronunciation practice, short presentations, brief in-class interviews, description of pictures, and informal conversation. These oral assessments are 10% of your final grade.</li> <li>• The semester will end with a larger oral exam, which will occur outside of class. The oral will be held in pairs to facilitate scheduling. This oral exam represents 10% of your final grade.</li> </ul>

<b>Quizzes</b>	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular graded quizzes (on smaller items, such as vocabulary quizzes) and larger quizzes (chapter reviews) are designed to help you practice various aspects of the language and will be scheduled inside and outside of class.</li> <li>Smaller quizzes: 10%; Chapter Review Quizzes: 20%</li> </ul>
<b>Please note:</b>		<b>There is <u>no final exam</u> for German. However, the larger oral exam will occur around the last day of class or during reading period.</b>

Grades are calculated in terms of percentages, and do not conform to a curve.

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Numerical Index</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Numerical Index</b>
A+*	99.00+	C+	77-79
A	94-98	C	73-76
A-	90-93	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D	65-69
B	83-86	F	0-64
B-	80-82		

\*Only for extraordinary performance across the board. No rounding up.

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

As the **Columbia and Barnard Policy on Academic Integrity** makes clear, the work you submit in any class must be your own. Handing in work (homework, vocabulary lists, essays, etc.) that has been edited by a tutor or in any way authored or rewritten by someone other than you is not permitted. In a language class, this means that the common practices of asking someone to look over your work, using online grammar and translation tools (e.g., to translate half a sentence, a complete sentence and/or more), or using AI, are, unless otherwise indicated by your instructor, not permitted. It is crucial that all work is completed by you and reflects *your* competency in German. **The department has created grading mechanisms that minimize the impact of mistakes on your grade, but that will also impact your grade if you do use outside tools.** (Your instructor will share more detailed guidelines for specific assignments). If you feel you need tutoring, speak to your instructor or contact Jutta Schmiers-Heller at Columbia or Irene Motyl-Mudretzkij for Barnard for permissible tutoring guidelines. Please also visit the following websites on academic integrity and the honor code:

<https://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/academicintegrity>

<http://www.college.columbia.edu/honorcode>

### **ACADEMIC, MENTAL, AND PHYSICAL SUPPORT**

Student life can get very intense. Please take care of yourself. If you feel that you need help in any way, please don't wait but act immediately. Let your instructor know that you are struggling. Our goal is to create a culture of flexibility and care in our class community, and we believe such a culture builds upon consistent engagement, empathy, and clear communication. We will try to create channels for these and model expectations, but we will also rely on you to help build our community and provide feedback so that we can make adjustments when needed. Most importantly, contact your Dean/Advisor so they can help you. In addition, visit Columbia's/Barnard's websites to know what services are available to you:

<https://health.columbia.edu/services/ods>

<https://www.barnard.edu/health>

<https://covid19.columbia.edu>

<https://thefoodpantry.studentgroups.columbia.edu>

<https://cc-seas.financialaid.columbia.edu/deans-fund>

### **LEARNING PREFERENCES AND ACCOMMODATIONS**

We acknowledge in our courses that people learn in different ways. For example, having visuals to support text may work better for some students, whereas others learn better by listening to the instructor. Please talk to your instructor about your learning preferences, so we can make the course work as well as possible for everyone. If you have, or suspect, a disability of any kind, please be sure to contact the office of disabilities (see link below) so that accommodations can be put in place. The earlier we know about it the better it will work.

### **GERMAN GRAMMATICAL GENDER**

Nouns in German have a gender (masculine, feminine, or neuter) that often does not obey any apparent logic. The German language also assigns humans a gender, and German is not special for having a rigid binary gender system. Pervasive gender normativity is reflected in our use of language, and language instruction is one of the spaces in which such traditional structures are reinforced. At Columbia and Barnard, we strive to be respectful and inclusive. Whereas we still need to learn language in its normative form, we encourage you to be aware of the implications of such norms and to be attentive to your classmates' and instructors' desires. Please contact your instructor right away should you have any preferred name and/or preferred pronoun by which you would like to be addressed. Although there are limitations to what the language allows grammatically, the German Department faculty and staff are committed to finding solutions that work for everyone.

### **PLACEMENT EXAM**

If you have prior knowledge of German, you must take the German placement exam so we can help you to find the best level. You can find information on the test here:

<https://germanic.columbia.edu/content/germanplacementexam>. Or you can contact Jutta Schmiers-Heller for Columbia and Irene Motyl-Mudretzkj ([imotyl@barnard.edu](mailto:imotyl@barnard.edu)) for Barnard.

### GERMAN STUDIES

Direct questions about language courses German at Columbia to **Jutta Schmiers-Heller**. For questions about German major, minor, and concentration (before FA24), contact **Prof. Annie Pfeifer**, 415 Hamilton Hall, x4320 (ap750@columbia.edu). Barnard students should contact **Irene Motyl-Mudretzkyj** ([imotyl@barnard.edu](mailto:imotyl@barnard.edu)).

### DEPARTMENTAL ONLINE PRESENCE

Webpage: <https://germanic.columbia.edu> | <https://german.barnard.edu>.

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/cugermanic/>

X: @CUGermanic

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CUGermanic>

### DEUTSCHES HAUS

(420 W. 116 St.) is a center for academic, cultural, and social exchange. Programs and events include lectures, films, conferences, recitals, art exhibits, and gatherings like Kaffeestunde. All levels of German students are encouraged to attend events which provide students with a great opportunity to practice speaking German. <https://germanic.columbia.edu/deutsches-haus>.

### WEEKLY PLAN

#### Please note:

- Monday, September 1, 2025 is Labor Day – we have no classes.
- The weekly plan just gives you a general overview, however, more information on topics and page numbers can be found in the book and detailed instructions for homework and assignments will occur in Canvas as given by your instructor. .
- The overall content and assignment may change based on our class needs.
- Major changes to deadlines can still occur based on class needs, but will be discussed in class in a timely manner.

Week	Topic	Language Functions	Deadlines for larger assignments
<b>Woche 1</b>  <b>September 2-5</b> <b>September 1: Labor Day</b> <b>NO CLASS</b>	<b>Getting to know each other</b> <b>Introductions A/B</b> Requests Names Alphabet and Numbers Clothing and Colors Greetings and Goodbyes	The verb <i>heißen</i> The German Case System Grammatical Genders Formal/Informal Address of people	First week Survey on learning and basic info.

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<p><b>Woche 2</b></p> <p><b>September 8-12</b></p>	<p><b>Getting to know each other</b></p> <p><b>Introductions A/B</b></p> <p>Our Classroom, Descriptions, Family, The body Weather and Seasons Nationality, Origin, and Language</p>	<p>Definite and indefinite articles</p> <p>The verbs <i>sein</i> and <i>haben</i></p> <p>Plurals of nouns</p> <p>Personal pronouns</p> <p>Possessive determiners</p>	
<p><b>September 12</b></p>	<p><b>Last day to add a class. Last day to receive tuition refund for a class dropped. Please note that you need to be caught up by the end of week 3, if you join late.</b></p>		
<p><b>Woche 3</b></p> <p><b>September 15-19</b></p>	<p><b>Kapitel 1 – Wer ich bin und was ich tue.</b></p> <p>Leisure Time School and University</p>	<p>Present tense</p> <p>Likes and dislikes</p> <p>Telling time</p> <p>Word order in statements</p> <p>Accusative case</p> <p>The negative article <b>kein-</b></p>	<p>First session of the week: <b>Chapter Review Quiz A/B (in class)</b></p>
<p><b>Woche 4</b></p> <p><b>September 22-26</b></p>	<p><b>Kapitel 1 – Wer ich bin und was ich tue.</b></p> <p>Daily Routine Personal Information <b>Review</b></p>	<p>Separable pre-fix Verbs</p> <p>Word order in questions.</p>	<p>First session of the week: Wer bin ich Padlet – Part A</p> <p>Last session of the week: Wer bin ich Padlet – Part B: Comments</p>
<p><b>Woche 5</b></p> <p><b>September 29 – October 3</b></p>	<p><b>Kapitel 2 – Besitz und Vergnügen</b></p> <p>Possessions Presents</p>	<p>Accusative case</p> <p>The negative article <b>kein-</b></p> <p>The verb <b>möchte</b> (would like)</p>	<p>First session of the week: <b>Chapter Review Quiz – K1 (in class)</b></p> <p>Essay 1 – Version 1: Profile</p>
<p><b>Woche 6</b></p> <p><b>October 6-10</b></p> <p><b>Oct 7: Last day to drop a class.</b></p>	<p><b>Kapitel 2 – Besitz und Vergnügen</b></p> <p>Clothing and Looks Pleasures</p>	<p>The verb <b>möchte</b> (would like)</p> <p>Possessive determiners</p> <p>Present tense of stem-vowel changing verbs</p>	<p>First session of the week: Essay 1– Version 2: Profile</p>

Week	Topic	Language Functions	Deadlines for larger assignments
<b>Woche 7</b>  <b>October</b> <b>13-17</b>	<b>Kapitel 3 – Talente und Pläne</b> Talents and Plans Duties	Modal verbs Accusative case for personal pronouns	First session in this week: <b>Chapter Review Quiz – K2 (in class)</b> Beginning of week: Ich und mein Zimmer – Version 1
<b>October 16</b>	<b>Official Midterm Date</b>	<b>Time for Feedback</b>	<b>NO MIDTERM EXAM!</b>
<b>Woche 8</b>  <b>October</b> <b>20-24</b>	<b>Kapitel 3 – Talente und Pläne</b> Services Physical and mental state	Word formation Feminine pronouns Dependent clauses	Beginning of the week: Ich und mein Zimmer Part Version 2
<b>Woche 9</b>  <b>October</b> <b>27-31</b>	<b>Kapitel 4 – Ereignisse und Erinnerungen</b> Daily work day Vacation and leisure time	Talking about the past: the Perfect Tense Prepositions: um, am, im Dates and ordinal numbers	First session in this week: <b>Chapter Review Quiz – K3 (In Class)</b> Last session in this week: Essay 1 – Version 1: NYC
<b>Woche 10</b>  <b>November</b> <b>3-7</b> <b>November</b> <b>3+4- No Class:</b> <b>Election Day</b>	<b>Kapitel 4 – Ereignisse und Erinnerungen</b> Birthdays and holidays	Word Formation: feminine words -ung	First session of the week: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Essay – version 2 – NYC
<b>Woche 11</b>  <b>November</b> <b>10-14</b>	<b>Kapitel 4 – Ereignisse und Erinnerungen</b> continued  <b>Kapitel 5 – Geld und Arbeit</b> Providing Services Professions	Dative verbs Question Pronouns: wer, wen, wem Expressing change: werden	Last session in this week: Essay 3 - Version 1: Meine Woche

Week	Topic	Language Functions	Deadlines for larger assignments
<b>Woche 12</b>  <b>November</b> <b>17-21</b>	<b>Kapitel 5 – Geld und Arbeit</b> The workplace In the kitchen	Word formation: Masculine nouns in -er and feminine nouns in -in	First session of the week: <b>Chapter Review Quiz – K4</b> <b>(in class)</b>
<b>Woche 13</b>  <b>November</b> <b>24-27</b>  <b>Nov. 26 +27</b> <b>Thanksgiving</b> <b>Break</b> <b>No Class</b>	<b>Kapitel 5 – Geld und Arbeit</b> Around the town  <b>Work on Oral Presentations</b> <b>and Oral Preparations</b>	Location: in, an, auf + dative Dative Case: Personal Pronouns	All week: Group Google Slide Presentations (presentation all week) Last session in this week: Essay 3 - Version 2: Meine Woche
<b>Woche 14 + 1</b>  <b>December</b> <b>1-5 +</b> <b>Monday,</b> <b>December 8</b>	<b>Oral Presentations and Oral</b> <b>Preparations</b>		Last session in this week: <b>Chapter Review Quiz - K5</b> <b>(in class)</b>  All week: Group Google Slide Presentations (presentation all week)
<b>Concluding</b> <b>Oral Exams</b>	There is <u>no final exam</u> for German. However, a larger oral exam will occur around the last day of class or during reading period. Your instructor will share more information later on.		