

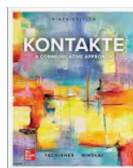
ELEMENTARY GERMAN I (1101)

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/ Fall2026.html>

More specific registration information: [Columbia Bulletin](#), [Vergil](#), or the [Barnard Registrar](#).

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

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 follows a communicative and flexible instructional approach that emphasizes active participation, collaboration, and a supportive learning community. Throughout the semester, students build foundational skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing while developing an understanding of German-speaking cultures. While the primary focus of the course is to develop students' ability to communicate meaningfully and express ideas in German, it also emphasizes structural accuracy by helping students recognize, understand, and apply the underlying patterns of the language. To support these objectives, the course prioritizes immersive learning by maximizing spoken German during class sessions. Students who successfully complete the course with a minimum grade of B should be able to:

- provide basic information in German about themselves, their families, interests, likes and dislikes, and daily activities; understand and participate in simple conversations on everyday topics (e.g., weather, meeting people, school, past events, etc.);
- read edited texts on familiar topics, identify main ideas, and recognize underlying themes;
- identify important information in a variety of "authentic texts" (e.g. menus, signs, train schedules, websites, newspaper articles and simple literary texts, etc.);
- engage with short audio-visual materials and discuss key ideas;
- complete forms requesting information and write letters, notes, or messages that provide basic information;
- provide basic information about German-speaking societies (e.g., geography, weather, the du/Sie distinction, and cultural customs);
- understand and use essential vocabulary related to everyday life (e.g., days of the week, colors, numbers, months, seasons, telling time, foods, stores, family, professions, transportation, etc.);
- pronounce German clearly enough and produce language with sufficient grammatical accuracy to be understood by speakers of German.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES

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

- Developing proficiency in German requires **speaking the language** as much as possible in class, whether during whole-class discussions or in small groups and pairs.
- **Stay engaged.** The course covers a lot of ground every day. The more you participate and ask questions, the more you will learn. Active engagement both in and outside of class is expected and constitutes a significant portion of your grade. Plan to spend about two hours working outside of class for every hour spent in class.
- **Homework.** Homework assignments are designed and scheduled to align with the content covered in class. Daily homework provides additional practice and is usually due before the next class meeting. Larger assignments allow for more flexibility. If you are unclear about assignment requirements, contact your instructor as soon as possible rather than waiting until after a deadline.
 - **Late homework:** Homework must be submitted on time in the requested format (paper or electronic) to receive full credit. Assignments submitted late will incur a 5% deduction for each day they are overdue. Homework submitted more than 10 days after the deadline will not be graded.
- **Attendance.** Your attendance at every class meeting is important. Frequent absences jeopardize your success in the course.
 - If your class meets 3 times a week for 75 minutes each, you are allowed **three (3) unexcused absences** without penalty to your attendance grade; if your class meets twice a week for 110 minutes each, **you are allowed two (2) unexcused absences**. Any additional absences or repeated tardiness will negatively affect your overall performance, particularly on days when you are scheduled to present.
 - Attendance grades are calculated as follows:
 - **0-3 absences/0-2 absences: 100%**
 - **4 absences: 90%**
 - **Each additional absence: attendance grade is reduced by 5%**
 - Absences will not count against your attendance grade if they result from participation in an officially sanctioned University athletic event (with required documentation of your participation) or the observance of a religious holiday (see: Religious Holidays). No additional absences will be excused. Please understand that aside from the circumstances listed above, it is not possible for the instructor to fairly assess the many individual reasons students may miss class, even when those reasons are understandable. This policy is intended to balance flexibility with fairness for all students.
 - If you are unable to attend class, it is your responsibility to notify your instructor in advance or as soon as possible and make arrangements to complete any missed work.
 - Classes start promptly. If you have a prior commitment that may cause you to arrive late, please inform your instructor in advance. If you are consistently late without an

excuse, your instructor will give you a warning. If it persists, you will receive an **unexcused absence**. All instances of lateness will be recorded and may negatively affect your grade.

- **Device Policy.** The use of electronic devices, including but not limited to smartphones, tablets, and laptops, is prohibited during class sessions. While learning to use appropriate digital resources is an important part of language study, class time is limited, and face-to-face interaction with your peers and the instructor is a priority. Your instructor will inform you in advance if a particular class activity requires the use of an electronic device.

GRADING

Grades for the course will be calculated as follows:

Course Elements	Percentage of Grade	Additional Information
Class Work (attendance, participation)	20%	● Attendance is mandatory and is a crucial component to successful learning. ● The participation grade is based on punctual arrival to class and active participation. ● Participation is not merely limited to speaking in class but also includes your preparation for class, engagement in pair/group work, asking questions before or after class, communication via email, or and making use of office hours. ● Participation may also include informal writing and speaking projects.
Homework (practice)	20%	● Homework is due by the beginning of class in the requested form (paper/electronic). Please read the Homework section above carefully.
Quizzes	25%	● Regular graded quizzes (covering smaller items, such as vocabulary) and Chapter Review Quizzes (CRQs) are designed to help you practice and demonstrate your developing language skills. These quizzes may be scheduled both in and outside of class. ● CRQs consist of grammar, reading, and brief writing components. Listening and vocabulary skills will be assessed separately. ● Smaller quizzes: 10%; Chapter Review Quizzes: 15%

Projects and writing assignments	15%	• These assignments 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. • All formal writing assignments will be submitted twice. The first version will take place in class on the same day of the Chapter Review Quizzes. You will receive feedback on the first version, make revisions, and submit a second and final version. The final grade for each essay is the average of both drafts. • Short, informal in-class writing activities may also take place, giving you opportunities to practice expressing yourself concisely using newly learned vocabulary and structures.
Oral Assessment	10%	• Small oral assessments will take place throughout the semester and will be announced in advance. These assessments may include short presentations, in-class interviews, picture descriptions, and informal conversations.
Midterm and Final Oral Assessment	10%	• There will be a short midterm oral assessment. • The semester will end with a final oral exam. There will be NO written final exam.

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

Letter Grade	Numerical Index	Letter Grade	Numerical Index
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, essays, etc.) that has been edited or in any way authored, translated, or rewritten by someone—something—other than you is not permitted. In a language course, this means that the common practices of asking someone to look over your work, using online 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. **A truly meaningful language education requires that *you* take an active role in your learning process, put forth consistent effort, and learn from any mistakes.** Linguistic development, in particular, depends on authentic practice and is ultimately a personal process. 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).

AI technologies can offer valuable support for language learning when used thoughtfully. Rather than prohibiting these technologies entirely, we will explore responsible and appropriate ways to incorporate them into the learning process. Throughout the semester, we will discuss the opportunities and limitations of AI in language learning and work together to develop meaningful, productive, and responsible ways to use these technologies to support language development.

If you feel you would benefit from tutoring, please speak to your instructor or contact Jutta Schmiers-Heller at Columbia or Irene Motyl-Mudretzkyj 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>

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 Schmiere-Heller for Columbia Irene Motyl-Mudretzkyj (imotyl@barnard.edu) for Barnard.

GERMAN STUDIES

Direct questions about language courses German at Columbia to **Jutta Schmiere-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).

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 7, 2026, is Labor Day; no classes will be held.**
- The weekly plan is intended to give you a general overview of the course schedule. More detailed information on topics and page numbers can be found in the textbook, and specific instructions for homework and assignments will be provided in Canvas.
- Course content and assignment may be adjusted as needed to best support class progress and learning goals.
- Significant changes to deadlines may occur based on class needs and will be communicated in a timely manner during class.
- Additional and detailed instructions will be provided by your instructor throughout the semester.

Week	Topic	Language Functions	Deadlines for larger assignments
Woche 1 Week of September 7 Sept. 7 – Labor Day UN-HOL	Getting to know each other Introductions A/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 Pre-course survey
Woche 2 Week of Sept. 14	Getting to know each other Introductions A/B Our Classroom, Descriptions, Family, The body Weather and Seasons Nationality, Origin, and Language	Definite and indefinite articles The verbs <i>sein</i> and <i>haben</i> Plurals of nouns Personal pronouns Possessive determiners	
September 17	Please note: September 17 – last day to add a class. Last day to receive tuition refund for a class dropped.		

Week	Topic	Language Functions	Deadlines for larger assignments
Woche 3 Week of Sept. 21	Kapitel 1 – Wer ich bin und was ich tue. Leisure Time School and University	Present tense Likes and dislikes Telling time Word order in statements Accusative case The negative article kein-	First session of the week: Chapter Review Quiz A/B
Woche 4 Week of Sept. 28	Kapitel 1 – Wer ich bin und was ich tue. Daily Routine Personal Information Review	Separable pre-fix Verbs Word order in questions.	First session of the week: Padlet: „Wer bin ich?“ - Part A Last session of the week: Padlet: „Wer bin ich?“ - Part A: Comments
Woche 5 Week of Oct. 5	Kapitel 2 – Besitz und Vergnügen Possessions Presents	Accusative case The negative article kein- The verb möchte (would like)	First session of the week: Chapter Review Quiz – K1 + Essay 1 (version 1)
Woche 6 Week of Oct. 12 Oct 12: Last day to drop a class.	Kapitel 2 – Besitz und Vergnügen Clothing and Looks Pleasures	The verb möchte (would like) Possessive determiners Present tense of stem-vowel changing verbs	First session of the week: Essay 1 – Version 2
Woche 7 Week of Oct. 19	Kapitel 3 – Talente und Pläne Talents and Plans Duties	Modal verbs Accusative case for personal pronouns	First session in this week: Chapter Review Quiz – K2 + Essay 2 (version 1)
Oct. 21	Official Midterm Date	Time for Feedback	Midterm Oral Assessment. No Written Midterm Exam.

Week	Topic	Language Functions	Deadlines for larger assignments
Woche 8 Week of Oct. 26 Midterm Oral Assessment	Kapitel 3 – Talente und Pläne Services. Physical and mental state	Word formation: feminine pronouns Dependent clauses	Beginning of the week: Essay 2 – Version 2 Last session in this week or by end of weekend: Chapter Review Quiz – K3 + Essay 3 (version 1)
Woche 9 Week of Nov. 2	Kapitel 4 – Ereignisse und Erinnerungen Daily work day Vacation and leisure time	Talking about the past: the Perfect Tense	Last session in this week: Essay 3 – Version 2
November 2 November 3	University Holiday Election Day	NO CLASSES	
Woche 10 Week of Nov. 9	Kapitel 4 – Ereignisse und Erinnerungen Birthdays and holidays	Prepositions: um, am, im Dates and ordinal numbers Word Formation: feminine words -ung	
Woche 11 Week of Nov. 16	Kapitel 5 – Geld und Arbeit Providing Services Professions	Dative verbs Question Pronouns: wer, wen, wem Expressing change: werden	First session of the week: Chapter Review Quiz – K4 Essay 4 (version 1)
Woche 12 Week of Nov. 23	Kapitel 5 – Geld und Arbeit The workplace In the kitchen Around the town	Word formation: Masculine nouns in -er and feminine nouns in -in Location: in, an, auf + dative Dative Case: Personal Pronouns	First session of the week: Last session in this week: Essay 4 - Version 2
Nov. 25 Nov. 26. Nov. 27	University Holiday Thanksgiving University Holiday	NO CLASSES	

Week	Topic	Language Functions	Deadlines for larger assignments
Woche 13 Week of Nov. 30	K5 Review and CRQ Work on Oral Presentations	Review of Chapters A-5	First session in this week: Review of Kapitel 5 Last Day of the week Chapter Review Quiz - K5 Day 2: Group Google Slide Presentations
Woche 14 + 1 Week of Dec. 7 + Mo, Dec. 14	Oral Presentations and Review Period	Review of Chapters A-5	All week: Group Google Slide Presentations
Final Oral Assessment	There is no written final exam. Instead, you will complete a comprehensive oral assessment, scheduled sometime between the last day of classes and the university's assigned final exam period. Before the end of the semester, your instructor will provide detailed information and expectations for the final oral assessment.		