

## 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/ Spring2026.html>.

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

An electronic version of this syllabus will be available under: <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 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 expectations) with a minimum grade of B 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 languages, **speaking German** in class as much as possible, whether as a whole class or in small groups and pairs, is crucial.
- **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 and 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 absences jeopardize your success in class. You will be allowed **three (3) unexcused absences which will not affect your grade**. Any additional absences and 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: 100%**
    - **4 absences: 90%**
    - **Each additional absence: grade is reduced by 5%**
  - Absences will not count against your attendance grade if they are due to participation in an officially sanctioned University athletic event (documentation of your participation required), or 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 wide range of reasons students may miss class—many of which are understandable. This policy is intended to balance flexibility with fairness for all students.
  - If you are unable to attend class in person, you should discuss strategies with your instructor ahead of time or as soon as possible to make up missed content. Be proactive. If you know you will miss a class, it is your responsibility to let your instructor know in advance and arrange to complete any required work. Classes start promptly. If you have a prior commitment that cause you to arrive late on certain days, please inform your instructor in advance. Accumulating a total of 75 minutes out of 110 minutes of tardiness (defined as arriving 5 minutes or more late) 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.

**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 may include:</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.</li> <li>• 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 submitted twice. 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.</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>	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small oral assessments occur throughout the semester and will be announced as such. Oral assessment can take the form of short presentations, brief in-class interviews, description of pictures, and informal conversation.</li> </ul>

<b>Quizzes</b>	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular graded quizzes (on smaller items, such as vocabulary) 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>Midterm and Final Oral Assessment</b>	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There will be a short midterm oral assessment.</li> <li>The semester will end with a final oral exam. There will be NO written final exam.</li> </ul>

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, 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

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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 Irene Motyl-Mudretzkij ([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, January 19, 2026, is Martin Luther King Day; no classes will be held.
- The weekly plan is meant 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
<b>Woche 1</b>  <b>January</b> <b>20 - 23</b> <b>Jan. 19 -MLK</b> <b>Day</b> <b>UN-HOL</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	<b>First week</b> Survey on learning and basic info.

<p><b>Woche 2</b></p> <p><b>January 26 - 30</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>January 30</b></p>	<p><b>Please note:</b></p> <p><b>Jan. 30 – last day to add a class. Last day to receive tuition refund for a class dropped.</b></p>		
<p><b>Woche 3</b></p> <p><b>February 2 - 6</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>February 9 - 13</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: Padlet: „Wer bin ich?“ - Part A</p> <p>Last session of the week: Padlet: „Wer bin ich?“ - Part A: Comments</p>
<p><b>Woche 5</b></p> <p><b>February 16 – 20</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>February 23 - 27</b></p> <p><b>Feb. 24: 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>

<p><b>Woche 7</b></p> <p><b>March</b> 2 - 6</p>	<p><b>Kapitel 3 – Talente und Pläne</b></p> <p>Talents and Plans Duties</p>	<p>Modal verbs Accusative case for personal pronouns</p>	<p>First session in this week: <b>Chapter Review Quiz – K2 (in class)</b> Beginning of week: Essay 2 – Version 1 – was machen wir gerne und was nicht</p>
<p><b>Woche 8</b></p> <p><b>March</b> 9 – 13</p> <p><b>Midterm Oral Assessment</b></p>	<p><b>Kapitel 3 – Talente und Pläne</b></p> <p>Services. Physical and mental state</p>	<p>Word formation: feminine pronouns Dependent clauses</p>	<p>Beginning of the week: Essay 2 – Version 2 – was machen wir gerne und was nicht</p> <p>Last session in this week or by end of weekend: <b>Chapter Review Quiz – K3 (Take home)</b></p>
<p><b>March 9</b></p>	<p><b>Official Midterm Date</b></p>	<p><b>Time for Feedback</b></p>	<p><b>Midterm Oral Assessment. No Written Midterm Exam.</b></p>
<p><b>March</b> 16-20</p>	<p><b>SPRING BREAK</b></p>	<p><b>NO CLASSES</b></p>	<p><b>Viel Spaß!</b></p>
<p><b>Woche 9</b></p> <p><b>March</b> 23 - 27</p>	<p><b>Kapitel 4 – Ereignisse und Erinnerungen</b></p> <p>Daily work day Vacation and leisure time</p>	<p>Talking about the past: the Perfect Tense</p>	<p>Last session in this week: Essay 3 – Version 1 – NYC</p>
<p><b>Woche 10</b></p> <p><b>March 30 - April 3</b></p>	<p><b>Kapitel 4 – Ereignisse und Erinnerungen</b></p> <p>Birthdays and holidays</p>	<p>Prepositions: um, am, im Dates and ordinal numbers Word Formation: feminine words -ung</p>	<p>Last session of the week: Essay 3 – Version 2 – NYC</p>
<p><b>Woche 11</b></p> <p><b>April</b> 6 - 10</p>	<p><b>Kapitel 5 – Geld und Arbeit</b></p> <p>Providing Services Professions</p>	<p>Dative verbs Question Pronouns: wer, wen, wem Expressing change: werden</p>	<p>First session of the week: <b>Chapter Review Quiz – K4 (in class)</b></p>

<p><b>Woche 12</b>  <b>April</b> <b>13 - 17</b></p>	<p><b>Kapitel 5 – Geld und Arbeit</b> The workplace In the kitchen Around the town</p>	<p>Word formation: Masculine nouns in -er and feminine nouns in -in  Location: in, an, auf + dative  Dative Case: Personal Pronouns</p>	<p><b>First session of the week:</b> Essay 4 - Version 1 – Meine Woche  <b>Last session in this week:</b> Essay 4 - Version 2 – Meine Woche</p>
<p><b>Woche 13</b> <b>April</b> <b>20 - 24</b></p>	<p><b>Work on Oral Presentations and Review Period</b></p>	<p>Review of Chapters A-5</p>	<p><b>First session in this week:</b> <b>Chapter Review Quiz - K5 (in class)</b> <b>All week:</b> Group Google Slide Presentations (presentation all week)</p>
<p><b>Woche 14 + 1</b> <b>April 27 –</b> <b>May 1 + Mo,</b> <b>May 4</b></p>	<p><b>Oral Presentations and Review Period</b></p>	<p>Review of Chapters A-5</p>	<p><b>All week:</b> Group Google Slide Presentations (presentation all week)</p>
<p><b>Final Oral Assessment</b></p>	<p>There is <u>no final exam</u> for German. Instead, you will complete a larger oral assessment scheduled sometime between the last day of class and our assigned finals period. Your instructor will share detailed information and expectations closer to the end of the semester.</p>		