

Spring 2026: UN2101 – Intermediate German I

REQUIRED BOOK

- *Anders gedacht*. Motyl, Späinghaus, 2013.
(Columbia Book Store / Book Culture)



Course offerings for Intermediate German I (2101) 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:

- for **Columbia**: Jutta Schmiers-Heller, Language Program Director at Columbia (js2331@columbia.edu)
- for **Barnard**: Irene Motyl-Mudretzkyj, Senior Associate of the German Department at Barnard (imotyl@barnard.edu)

GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

German 2101 is conducted entirely in German and emphasizes the four basic language skills plus cultural awareness. We have a very ambitious agenda.

By the end of the semester, if you have attended all classes, completed all written and listening assignments successfully, and received at least a B-grade on all assignments and assessments, you should be able to:

- speak and understand German well enough to converse comfortably with another German speaker about yourself, your family, interests, daily activities, and topics of general interest;
- read and understand the main ideas and most important supporting details of a variety of authentic and edited texts of varied length (e.g. brief newspaper articles, descriptions, summaries, poems, short stories) and be able to locate specific information in such texts;
- write reasonably coherent and grammatically appropriate texts (e.g. letters, notes, summaries, and descriptions) related to everyday topics, experiences, and class readings (on topics of culture, literature and history);
- understand and grasp the main ideas of spoken German in straightforward formal oral texts (e.g. announcements, weather reports, commercials), as well as conversations on familiar topics;
- understand the main ideas of a variety of videos and film clips intended for a native-speaker audience;
- demonstrate mastery of major grammatical concepts and usage of the 75 high frequency verbs (in present, past and future tenses in active and passive voice; as well as in the subjunctive mood).

EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES

- This course is conducted in German. Come ready to experiment and contribute, whether as a whole class or in small groups and pairs.
- You must be attending and caught up on class work by Friday, January 30th.
- **Stay engaged**. The course covers a lot of ground every day. You are expected to consistently and thoughtfully engage with class work from day one. 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.
- This course relies partly on portfolio assessment. Your Portfolio will help you track your progress and showcase your achievement. (more detailed instructions to follow 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 absences jeopardize your success in class. You will be allowed **3 unexcused absences, which will not affect your grade.** Absences and tardiness will affect your overall performance! Do inform your instructor when you cannot come to class. This is particularly important on days when you are scheduled to present.

Your attendance grade will be determined as follows:

0-3 absences: 100%;

4 absences: 90%;

Each further absence after this will lower your grade by 5%

Absences will be not counted in the participation grade if they are to participate in an officially sanctioned University athletic event (with documentation of your participation), for a religious holiday (See here: [Religious holidays](#)). There are no other "excused" absences. Please understand that, except the cases above, your instructor can't judge fairly the acceptability of an extremely large number of reasons for missing class, many of them very worthy and all understandable. This is why there is an allowance for absences.

If you cannot attend in person, 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. If you have a prior commitment that will make you late on certain days, please inform your instructor. 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.

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-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>

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

ACADEMIC, MENTAL, and PHYSICAL HEALTH

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 (js2331@columbia.edu) for Columbia and Irene Motyl-Mudretzky (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-Mudretzky**, 320 Milbank Hall (imotyl@barnard.edu).

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

X: @CUGermanic

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

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

DEUTSCHES HAUS

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>.

ASSESSMENT

Portfolio Assessment. The central feature of the portfolios is that samples of evidence demonstrate the progress you make toward self-defined objectives whose attainment requires creativity, self-discipline and inter-disciplinarity. Specific portfolio assignments may vary between instructors, but typically, at the end of the semester your Portfolio should contain:

- A cover page
- Your learning goals and strategies
- 2 essays (plus individual reflections)
- Your individual vocabulary lists of 20 entries per unit (with an overall reflection on learning vocabulary)
- Outline and slides of your oral presentation (plus reflection)
- The final group project (plus reflection)
- A cumulative self-evaluation of your learning process

GRADING

Preparation and engagement (attendance or equivalent, preparation for class, journals, engagement with asynchronous creative assignments - specific components may vary)	20%
Homework and quizzes	10%
Vocabulary lists	10%
Writing assignments	15%
Oral presentation	10%
Final project	10%
Final oral interview	10%
Portfolio (Learning goals and strategies, major assignments, creative assignments, reflections, final self-evaluation) - Completion and thoughtful reflections (5% for completed portfolio and 10% for homework related to the portfolio)	15%

Please note that three absences will not affect your grade. Each additional absence will result in lowering your final grade by 1%.

DEPARTMENTAL GRADING SCALE

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.

KURSPLAN

The weekly plan is subject to change based on class needs.

Woche	Thema	Sprachliche Funktionen	Größere Aufgaben
Please note that Monday, September 1st is Labor Day and is a University holiday.			
1. Woche 20. – 23. Jan. Jan. 19 -MLK Day UN-HOL	Kennenlernen, Einführung in den Kurs Einheit E: Reisen Reisen - warum?	Wiederholung: Verben, Präsens, Perfekt Regelmäßige/trennbare Verben	
2. Woche (26. – 30. Jan.)	Freizeitstress oder Nichtstun	Pronomen Gründe und Zwecke angeben (weil, um...zu, Modalverben)	
January 30	Please note: Jan. 30 – last day to add a class. Last day to receive tuition refund for a class dropped.		
3. Woche (2. - 6. Feb.)	Aufsatz 1 - Version 1 im Kurs Lernstrategien und Ziele Einheit 4: Die Comedian Harmonists Geschichtlicher Hintergrund Weimarer Republik	Formelle Sprache: Präteritum	Aufsatz 1
4. Woche (9. – 13. Feb.)	Weimarer Republik Film: Comedian Harmonists	Reflexive Verben mit und ohne Präpositionalobjekt	Mini-Referate Weimarer Republik
5. Woche (16. - 20. Feb.)	Film: Comedian Harmonists	Erweiterte Beschreibungen: Relativsätze/ Relativpronomen	
6. Woche (23. - 27. Feb.)	Film - Enddiskussion Einheit 10: Das Leben im anderen Deutschland Einführung und Nachkriegszeit	Formelle Sprache: Passiv vs. Aktiv	Aufsatz 2 Version 1
February 24	Please note: Feb 24 -- Last day to drop a class		
7. Woche (2. - 6. März)	Film: <i>Good bye, Lenin!</i>	Temporale Sätze	Aufsatz 2 Version 2
8. Woche (9. - 13. März)	Film: <i>Good bye, Lenin!</i>	Genitiv	
March 9	Official midterm date -- No Written Midterm Exam but time for feedback		
March 16 - 20	Spring break! Viel Spaß!		
9. Woche (23. - 27. März)	Die Stasi Film: <i>Das Leben der Anderen</i>	Verben mit Präpositionalobjekten; Da-/wo-Komposita	Aufsatz 3 Version 1
10. Woche (30. März - 3. April)	Reflektion: Die Wiedervereinigung - und jetzt? Einheit 3: Multikulturelles Leben Einführung	Genitiv; Präpositionen mit Genitiv: <i>während, trotz, wegen, anstatt/statt</i> Vokabeln zur Diversität	Aufsatz 3 Version 2

11. Woche (6. - 10. April)	Migration Einwanderung und Einbürgerung	Konjunktiv II im Präsens	
12. Woche (13. – 17. April)	Kaminer: <i>Sprachtest + Wie sage ich es meiner Mutter</i> Interview	Konjunktiv II im Präsens; <i>bekommen vs. werden</i>	
13. Woche (20. - 24. April)	Afrodeutsche		Projektarbeit
14. Woche (27. April - 1. Mai) + Montag (4. Mai)	Aktuelle Diskussionen Arbeit an Schlussprojekten		Interviews
Reading Week	Mündliche Interviews	NO WRITTEN FINAL EXAM	Portfolios
Please Note:	There is no written final in this course. Final components are the completion of all assignments, the portfolio and an oral interview.		