

GER 3160: German Composition/Schreiben auf Deutsch

Semester: Fall 2015

Meetings: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2pm-3:15pm in Dunbar 2207

Prerequisite: GER 2000/2010

Instructor: Jacob van der Kolk (goo.gl/DexB66)

Office: 814 Sprau

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00-11:00 am, or by appointment

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Course Objectives and Outcomes. This course focuses on increasing your command of written German, specifically German grammar structures as well as writing fluency and style. Early in the semester students are encouraged to identify their trouble area in German writing and grammar. By the end of the semester you should be able to write with considerable fluency using main grammatical constructions as well as organizing thoughts in a coherent, smooth manner.

Course Materials.

Required: Brigitte M. Turneure, *Der treffende Ausdruck: Texte, Themen, Übungen. Second Edition.* ISBN: 9780393968231

Suggested: A standard German-English dictionary will, of course, be useful. If you do not have one at the present, or are dissatisfied with the one you have, consult the instructor.

Course Requirements.

1. **Chapter Texts** (*Kapitelprüfungen*). Each chapter from the textbook will have a short test on the reading assignment. (*10% of overall grade*)
2. **Daily Work.** (*40% of overall grade*)
 1. **Informal Writing** (*informales Schreiben*). We will primarily address our readings and topics through informal writing in class or for homework. In these assignments, students should try out their best German and assist the instructor in identifying where improvement is needed. These writing assignments will practice the grammar of the particular chapter in the text and deal with the topics introduced in the course readings. These assignments will be graded √, √+, or √- on effort, care in addressing the particular grammar lesson, and improvement. Do not guess at forms when you write; be sure that the reader can follow your thoughts. Your peers or your instructor will grade your informal writing assignments as time permits.
 2. **Homework** (*Hausaufgaben*). You will have daily homework exercises such as reading a passage or completing several grammar exercises.

3. **Formal Writing** (*formales Schreiben*). At four times during the semester you will write a formal passage or essay in German of approximately 200 - 400 words relating to the course materials. Here, you should write your most sophisticated German, and thereby assist the instructor in identifying areas for improvement. These assignments will emphasize grammatical and lexical correctness, thoughtful argumentation, style, and organization. You should also rewrite your piece in order to improve language, content, organization. Each rewrite will allow you to earn back up to 75% of the points lost on your first draft. (25% of overall grade)
4. **Final Exam** (*Endexamen*). We will have a cumulative final exam during exam week. (25% of overall grade)

Course Policies

Attendance.

- **Unexcused Absences.** Five unexcused absences will automatically cut your "Daily Work" grade by 15%.
- **Tardiness.** Being more than 10 minutes late twice counts as an unexcused absence.
- **Excused Absences.** You must notify me of any excused absences at least one week in advance, if possible.

Late Assignments. All graded assignments must be turned in on their noted due dates, even if you have an excused absence. *No late assignments accepted.*

Electronics. Laptops and tablets are encouraged as long as they are not a distraction (e.g. Facebook). If I witness one person with any distracting material or tabs open, I will ban all electronics.

How to Succeed

Do the work on time. What we learn in this course builds on what we have learned and done earlier. Missing an assignment won't just cost you points, but will leave you unprepared for what comes next.

Put in the time. Language learning is not particularly difficult, but it does take a lot of time. With all of the repetitive practice and memorization you have to do, we expect you to spend up to 6 hours/week on this course. However:

Learn smarter, not longer. People retain languages better when they learn teaspoons of it at a time, and revisit those tidbits repeatedly. If you do all of your coursework in one big sitting, you may not be giving yourself time to let things "sink in". Instead, do a little bit every day and give yourself time to review your work.

- **If you need more than the 6 hours/week to keep up, or just feel overwhelmed, get help!** Come and see me in my office hours, so that we can hash out methods that will hopefully make the coursework easier.
- **If you get stuck, skip it for now.** If a lesson or exercise frustrates you, put it aside, move on to the next item, and let your brain reset. It may make sense later.

Find learning partner(s). Get to know people in your class. See if there are others with whom you can collaborate (not copy off of) on day-to-day assignments like the grammar exercises or readings. Students who work in study groups are more successful than students who fly solo. *However, make sure you still do your own work!*

Get help when you need it. If you don't understand something, get help NOW. Working out what you don't understand *immediately* will save you aggravation and extra work further down the line. We have a lot of resources that you can consult if the first explanation doesn't make things clear to you:

- **Ask questions in class.** If you have a question, ask it! Don't be scared of looking dumb. The highest achieving students often ask the most questions.
- **Visit me in my office.** I hold office hours regularly, and can often meet at other times by appointment (typically on Tuesdays or Thursdays between 11am and 2pm).
- **Tutoring.** Go to the German Club's *free* tutoring sessions (hours to be announced). Ask me if you think you might need professional tutoring.

Master the basics. Understanding more fundamental things is necessary for understanding more complex things. You can't learn nuclear physics without understanding what an atom is. Likewise, it gets harder to get dative case right if you don't know your genders.

- **Keep it simple.** You are intelligent people who can fluently communicate very complex ideas in at least one other language already. However, remember that it took *years* for you to learn your first language(s), and you are still pretty new to this language. Instead of trying to replicate the richness of your knowledge of English in German, focus on using what you know and what you learn here creatively to express your thoughts.
- **Memorize vocabulary from the book.** Having a lot of well-known vocabulary in your head makes writing easier, faster, and a whole lot better to read.

Experiment. Look at assignments (like essays) not as drudgery, but as a way to try out what you have learned and a chance to try out new ideas.

Academic Honesty and Student Conduct

University-wide. You are responsible for making yourself aware of and understanding the policies and procedures in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs that pertain to Academic Honesty. These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity and computer misuse. The academic policies

addressing Student Rights and Responsibilities can be found in the Undergraduate Catalog at goo.gl/NsrFzM and the Graduate Catalog at goo.gl/F7IzfU. If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. You will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s) and if you believe you are not responsible, you will have the opportunity for a hearing. You should consult with your instructor if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment or test. In addition, students are encouraged to access the Code of Honor, as well as resources and general academic policies on such issues as diversity, religious observance, and student disabilities:

- Office of Student Conduct goo.gl/b1k7Eq
- Division of Student Affairs goo.gl/5ddaPo
- Registrar's Office goo.gl/uFJ3pG
- Disability Services for Students goo.gl/cLvHf5

In Foreign Language Courses. Academic honesty means giving evidence of what you can produce on your own. In the foreign language learning context, that also means:

- Do not ask someone else to correct your graded work. Developing your own correcting skills is a vital part of this course. Instead, have your proofreader note what is wrong using a proofreading key, as I will do when I grade your essays. It is up to you to figure out *how* to fix it.
- Do not use translation services (online or otherwise). By now, you are already better than most online translators. Moreover, use of them is painfully obvious:

A student who had missed class once wrote a colleague of mine named Rob: *"Lieber Fruchtsirup: Ich verpasse heute die Kategorie."* :: *"Dear Fruit Syrup (Rob)*: I'm passing by the category today."*

*'Rob' is a type of spiced fruit syrup.

Instead, use what you have learned, including the vocabulary you have already learned. Occasional use of online dictionaries like dict.leo.org or linguee.de is helpful, too.

- Do your own work. Unless you are participating in a sanctioned group project, you and you alone should do the assignments *graded for content or correctness*. Collaboration does not mean dividing up tasks, but rather helping each other figure things out so that you can do them on your own. What you turn in should be an accurate representation of what you can do alone.

Accommodation for Disabilities. Any student with a documented disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, or hearing) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact Ms. Beth Denhartigh at 387-2116 or at beth.denhartigh@wmich.edu at the beginning of the semester. A disability determination must be made by this office before any accommodations are provided by the instructor.

Important Dates. Items in **bold** signify graded assignments *due* on that date. Depending on how well we complete certain grammar activities, this schedule may change.

1. Woche	Dienstag 8.9	Einführung; Wiederholung
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	Donnerstag 10.9	Syllabus Test & Umfrage; Wiederholung
2. Woche	Montag 14.9	Last day to drop/add classes
	Dienstag 15.9	Kapitel 1
	Mittwoch 16.9	\$100 Late Add fee begins Begin recording withdraws as "W" on transcript
	Donnerstag 17.9	Kapitel 1
3. Woche	Di 22.9	Kapitel 1
	Do 24.9	Kapitel 1
4. Woche	Di 29.9	Aufsatz 1; Kapitel 2
	Do 1.10	Kapitel 2
5. Woche	Di 6.10	Kapitel 2
	Do 8.10	Kapitel 2
6. Woche	Di 13.10	Kapitel 3
	Do 15.10	Kapitel 3
7. Woche	Di 20.10	Kapitel 3
	Do 22.10	Kapitel 3
8. Woche	Di 27.10	Aufsatz 2; Kapitel 4
	Do 29.10	Kapitel 4
9. Woche	Di 3.11	Kapitel 4
	Do 5.11	Kapitel 4
10. Woche	Mo 9.11	Last day to withdraw from classes
	Di 10.11	Kapitel 5
	Do 12.11	Kapitel 5
11. Woche	Di 17.11	Aufsatz 3; Kapitel 5
	Do 19.11	Kapitel 5
12. Woche	Di 24.11	Kapitel 5
	Do 26.11	Thanksgiving-Ferien, keinen Unterricht
13.	Di 1.12	Aufsatz 4; Kapitel 6

Woche	Do 3.12	Kapitel 6
14. Woche	Di 8.12	Kapitel 6
	Do 10.12	Kapitel 6
Examen- woche	Mo 14.12	Endexamen, 12:30-14:30 (12:30-2:30pm)

Syllabus Test. Answer the following prompts based on information from the syllabus. You may read directly from the syllabus.

1. True or False: You must have *Der treffende Ausdruck* by B. Turneure.
2. True or False: You may look at Facebook during class.
3. What is the late assignment policy for this course?
 - a. ____ 25% off assignment's maximum possible grade after 3 days late.
 - b. ____ 10% off assignment's maximum possible grade for each day late.
 - c. ____ Late assignments are not accepted.
4. What are the absence policies for this course? (check all that apply)
 - a. ____ 15% off Daily Work grade after 3 unexcused absences.
 - b. ____ 15% off Daily Work grade after 3 absences of any sort.
 - c. ____ Inform me of an excused absence one week ahead of time.
 - d. ____ Being more than 30 minutes late twice counts as an absence.
 - e. ____ Being more than 10 minutes late twice counts as an absence.
5. How much are you expected to work on this course outside of class each week?
 - a. ____ There's no outside work required for this course.
 - b. ____ Up to 6 hours/week. If I need more than this, I should get help.
 - c. ____ There's no upper limit to the amount of time I am expected to work.
6. When and how should you complete your daily homework?
 - a. ____ A little bit each day so it's done by the day of class *before* class.
 - b. ____ All at once in the hour before it is due.
 - c. ____ A little bit each day so that it is all done by Friday after class.
 - d. ____ Completing the ungraded homework is completely optional.
7. Which are *acceptable* academic practices? (select all that apply)
 - a. ____ Using an online translator to convert a text in English to German.
 - b. ____ Using an online dictionary here and there to help you find *a* word.
 - c. ____ Having a tutor mark point out mistakes in your paper.
 - d. ____ Having a tutor correct all the mistakes in your paper.
 - e. ____ Working with a partner on an ungraded homework assignment.
 - f. ____ Writing in a group a graded essay that you turn in individually.

Umfrage/Survey. Tell me a little bit about yourself!

1. What is your major and/or minor and in which year are you at WMU (1st year, 2nd year, etc.)

2. Why did you choose to continue your German education beyond the requirement?

3. What would you like to do with German? (e.g. marry a German speaker, study in Germany/Austria/Switzerland, become the next great German writer, talk to Grandma)

4. For organizing study groups: Do you live on campus or off campus? If on campus, in which complex do you live? If off campus, in which city and/or neighborhood do you live and/or work?

5. What do you want to be able to do with the knowledge you learn in this class? What sort of writing in German might you do in the future?

6. What do you want to be able to do with German by the end of this course? (e.g. be able to write a four-page essay on Goethe, write a short story, fill out a job application questionnaire, etc.)