

German 111
Fall Semester 2019
Beginning German I
MWF 2-3 TR 1:40-3:05
http://faculty.mercer.edu/weintraut_ej
mercerdeutsch1@gmail.com

Dr. Edward J. Weintraut
Knight Hall 202B (301-2894)
Weintraut_EJ@mercer.edu
Office Hours: M 10-11; R 11-12; W 3-4
and by appointment
Facebook: mercerdeutsch

Course Purpose:

This course is designed to help you cultivate a basic level of proficiency in all four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). You will learn the basic structures and vocabulary of German while understanding fundamental cultural practices common to native speakers. This course is appropriate for students who have had less than two years of high-school German study or complete novices to the language. In this course you will acquire a basic ability to listen, speak, read, and write in German while becoming familiar with everyday culture in German-speaking regions.

This course fulfills a general education requirement since you will be able to demonstrate competency in German by the ability to articulate the role of language through comparative reflection with your own native language; characterize the culture(s) that use German; appropriately use the structures of German; and communicate meaningfully in writing in German.

Required Texts

Tschirner/Nikolai, Kontakte (Eighth edition: McGraw Hill; 978-1-25989137-3)
ConnectGerman Online (be sure to purchase Kontakte WITH the viable ConnectGerman key)

Grading Policy

fractional grades after "x.44" are rounded up (e.g. 64.45 = 65)

A (90-100)	B+ (86-89)	B (80-85)	
C+ (76-79)	C (70-75)	D (66-69)	F (00-65)
Homework			10%
Cultural PowerPoint/Prezi			5%
Compositions			15%
Tests and Quizzes			55%
Final Exam (Monday, 9 December, 2-5 pm)			15%

**No Class Sessions on Monday, 2 September; Thursday-Friday, 11-12 October;
Wednesday-Friday, 27-29 November; Friday, 6 December;
Withdrawal Deadline on Friday, 25 October**

**You are expected to observe the provisions of the Mercer Honor Code.
You may not solicit help on any class assignment from native or near-native speakers of German,
nor may you have any electronic device within reach during testing situations.
I will report any perceived violation of the Honor Code
immediately to the Honor Council, without exception.**

Disability Accommodations: Students in need of accommodation due to a disability should contact the Access and Accommodation Office to complete the verification process to become approved for services. In order to receive accommodations, each term, students will request accommodation and faculty notification forms through the Access Office online system *Accommodate*. Students are strongly encouraged to schedule a meeting with each professor in a timely manner to discuss arrangements. Accommodations are not retroactive in nature. Note - **Disability accommodations or status are not reflected on academic transcripts.** Students with a history of a disability, perceived as having a disability or with a current disability who do not wish to use academic accommodations are also strongly encouraged to complete the verification process with the Access Office. **Students must request accommodations in a timely manner to receive accommodations in a timely manner.**

The Access Coordinator for Macon Campus is
Katie Johnson, Director and ADA/504 Coordinator.
Phone: (478) 301-2778; email: johnson_kc@mercer.edu
Website: <https://access.mercer.edu>

Mental Health and Wellness: Mercer University faculty and staff recognize that mental health concerns can impact academic performance and interfere with daily life activities. Please notify your faculty member or academic advisor for academic assistance, as needed. The office of Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can also provide support if you are feeling stressed, overwhelmed, anxious, depressed, lost, or are struggling with personal issues. Please call (478) 301-2862 or visit the [CAPS website](#) for more information. These services are free and confidential, and support non-traditional, graduate, and undergraduate students. The CAPS office on the Macon campus is located in Linden House (attached to the MEP Residence Hall).

Attendance Policy and Class Participation

You are expected to attend each class session and to contribute constructively to classroom activities. Absences will affect your final grade adversely. Unless you provide me and/or the Dean's office with a valid written excuse for an absence, I will consider your absence unexcused. For each class session missed after your **fifth** unexcused absence, two points will be deducted from your final course grade.

Despite the best of our intentions, laptops, tablets, cell phones, text messengers and pagers tend to become troublesome distractions. **For this reason I want you to turn those devices off as soon as class starts. I will let you know when it is appropriate to access such devices for our class activities.** First-time violators will receive a warning; for every subsequent infraction **three** points will be deducted from the final course grade.

Homework

Homework will be assigned on a daily basis and must be submitted before the beginning of the next class meeting (ideally, an hour or so before class begins). Late submissions receive NO credit. Assignments will be based primarily on web-based materials and hard-copy worksheets. Each component of a homework assignment is graded (3=excellent; 2=good; 1=adequate; 0=unacceptable, late, or not submitted). The total number of points accrued by the end of the semester constitutes ten percent of your final grade. Homework assignments and other ancillary materials will be updated regularly on the Canvas site for this course. Any special group projects that are assigned will be graded under the rubric "Homework." Given

the number and variety of homework assignments, there are no provisions for any extra-credit work.

Always check the Calendar in Canvas (left-hand sidebar) for a complete list of homework assignments for each day. Simply looking at what is assigned from Connect will not suffice!

In an ongoing effort to improve the quality of instruction, each student enrolled in this course is required to complete an end-of-semester course evaluation. Students failing to submit the evaluation by the deadline will be assigned the grade of "Incomplete."

Cultural PowerPoint/Prezi

By the beginning of September you will identify three other students with whom you would like to research a particular German festival or holiday. To be specific:

- September:** **Bundesfeiertag** (1 August; Schweiz)
Oktoberfest (21 September-6 October)
- October:** **Tag der Deutschen Einheit** (3 October)
Nationalfeiertag (26 October; Österreich)
- November:** **9. November**
Advent (1 December)
St Niklaus Tag (6 December)
- December:** **Heiliger Abend/Weihnachten** (24.-25. December)
Silvester/Neujahrstag (31. December-1. January)

Your group will then create a PowerPoint or Prezi on this topic and make a presentation in class (**in English!**). I will evaluate your presentation according to the rubric provided on this syllabus (85%); you will evaluate the quality of contributions made by each of your team members (15%).

Compositions

Objectives and evaluation criteria for each written composition will be assigned at least one week prior to the deadline for submission. Late submissions will be penalized 10 points for every calendar day past the deadline. If a rewrite is required or desired, you must hand in the revision by the second deadline. The revision will account for 35% of the composition grade (the original draft constituting the remaining 65%).

Whatever you submit must be your work. Do NOT seek help from native speakers, near-native speakers, or advanced German students. Do NOT use any translation app, but you may consult a dictionary for individual words or phrases. The composition you submit should NOT differ significantly from what you can write extemporaneously on a testing situation. If I suspect any violation of the cautions described above, I will report the case to the Honor Council.

Quizzes and Tests

In-class quizzes last approximately 5-10 minutes and will be announced at least one class day in advance. Occasionally you may be required to complete a grammar, vocabulary, or listening comprehension quiz electronically via Canvas. The average of all your quiz grades will be considered to have the value of one major test. You may drop your lowest test grade (or two lowest quiz grades) at the end of the semester.

Three major, hour-long tests are tentatively scheduled for **Thursday, 12 September**; **Thursday, 17 October**; and **Monday, 18 November**. If necessary, we can negotiate adjustments to this schedule in class. These tests are comprehensive, emphasizing the material presented in the most recent chapter, while including items from previous tests. Tests and quizzes may **NOT** be made up unless your absence had been excused by the University or Dean's Office.

The final examination **must** be taken on **Monday, 9 December**, between 2 and 5 pm. The final exam will be comprehensive. Emphasis will be placed on material covered in the final three weeks of the semester.

When taking a quiz or test you cannot have an electronic device anywhere near you. If you do, I will consider this an attempt to cheat and forward my concern to the Honor Council.

Access to Course Grades

Grades will be posted and updated regularly on Canvas. I strongly encourage you to check these data on a regular basis; please report any discrepancies or inaccuracies to me immediately. I also invite you to discuss your progress with me as often as you wish. I will not discuss your grades over the phone, via e-mail, or with anyone but you. If you receive a failing grade on any test, you **must** consult with me immediately.

Assessment of Cultural Presentations

Accuracy and Appropriateness of Information (x5)

Everything presented was factually true and germane to the topic;	90	95	100
Most information was factually true, but there were some errors or misunderstandings;	75	80	85
Information presented was either riddled with errors or digressed significantly from the topic	60	65	70

Presentation of Information (x3)

Excellent; well-developed ideas; clear and superbly contextualize discussion of facts; speakers spoke loudly, clearly, and engaged the listeners	90	95	100
Interesting; fairly clear development of ideas and coherent discussion of facts; speakers spoke loudly or clearly, but rather monotone	75	80	85
Boring; poor development of ideas; a vague and superficial recounting of facts; speakers mumbled or spoke almost inaudibly	60	65	70

Creative Use of Images (x2)

Excellent selection and sequencing of images; Images alone provide insights into theme; images arrest attention of viewer	90	95	100
Most images illuminate the theme; some images have little bearing on the topic or seem to be mere "fillers;" sequencing of images is "jumpy"	75	80	85
Most images have little bearing on the topic; sequencing of images is poor or ragged; most images seem to have been selected merely to "fill space"	60	65	70

Course Objectives: Functional Skills To Be Mastered

General Abilities

- Speaking: You'll be able to adapt and personalize memorized material to form questions, statements, requests, and commands in everyday situations in a way that a sympathetic native speaker would understand
- Listening: You'll be able to comprehend basic spoken discourse pertaining to familiar situations in a well-defined and limited context
- Reading: You'll be able to comprehend narratives and dialogues on familiar topics, composed in simple, declarative sentences
- Writing: You'll be able to record in narrative or dialogue sentences or paragraphs which communicate some of your everyday, practical needs.

Specific Abilities

- 1) Exchanging Pleasantries
Greeting Others, Learning Names, Discussing Weather
- 2) Sharing Personal Information
Birth Place, Current Residence, Likes and Dislikes, Appearance, Employment Situation, Academic Situation, Family Relations, Recreational Activities, Frequency or Duration of Activities
- 3) Addressing Friends and Strangers
Making Requests; Asking Questions
- 4) Using Numbers
Telling Time, Exchanging Currencies, Counting Items, Determining Cost of items, Explaining Duration and Frequency
- 5) Describing Everyday Scenes and Situations in Simple Narratives

What to expect from me this semester ...

I teach at a fairly brisk pace. Virtually all of my interaction with the class will be in German, and I use a whole lot of visual aids to help you understand what I'm talking about. I try to call on each student a few times every class session. There may be days when you get called on a lot, others on which you don't get a chance to say anything. Most of the time I use a four-second rule: if you are unable to respond to my question within four seconds, I'll move on to another student. Don't let this get you down! I'll ask the very same question to other students and then come back to you. By paying attention to what they say, you'll learn from the other students **how** you should respond to the question, and this should gradually build up your confidence and competence in speaking German.

My approach to teaching German does not line up perfectly with any textbook currently on the market. Kontakte comes close, but I'm not entirely pleased with the sequence in which it presents certain topics. For this reason I do not proceed page-by-page through the book; I jump around quite a bit. Some students find this bewildering, but you can always keep track of what I've covered by checking the assignments on the Calendar in CANVAS. On CANVAS I also have an archive of every visual and handout that I use in class.

I want you to **have fun** communicating meaningfully in German about simple, everyday activities. The fun part should come from the activities we do in class. To communicate meaningfully, you need vocabulary, but you also need structure. For this reason I emphasize the importance of grammar. You will learn what the basic rules for structuring simple German sentences are, but, more importantly, I want you to apply them fairly accurately. It is very possible that you make errors while responding to questions from me or other students. Have no fear! You're not alone! Everyone makes errors; even I do (I'm not a native speaker)! If you make an egregious error I will not call you out, as long as you are communicating well. However, after we complete an activity I will usually draw attention to common errors that the **entire** class made and show how they can be avoided.

What about tests? My tests generally have three components: German-English and English-German equivalents of individual words and phrases; a variety of grammar-based exercises; and a creative part in which you write out responses to personal questions and/or narrate a story based on a visual (e.g. cartoon). This latter part usually carries somewhat more weight than the other two. It's important to keep one thing in mind: I test only that which I teach in class or which you saw in homework assignments. No test or quiz should ambush you. If you attend class and complete all homework assignments, you should have a fairly good idea of what will I test and how I will test it before every seeing the actual exam.

What can you do to be a successful student of German? Paying attention in class, asking questions about things you don't quite understand, and completing all homework assignments are essential. But equally important is studying properly. Learning a language is a skill like riding a bike or playing a musical instrument. You cannot get good unless you practice regularly and attentively. Studies have shown that you will retain a foreign language better if you study for 15- or 20-minute intervals three or four times a day rather than one long marathon session. Two concepts are important here: **daily** practice, and **brief** intervals. Sure, there may be times when you need to extend those intervals, or when you need to focus exclusively on one of your other classes. However, if you can discipline yourself to be as consistent as possible in practicing German, I think you'll make quicker and more substantial progress.