

Intermediate German II: German in the World

Spring 2025

Mark W. Roche

GE 20202

Logistical Information

Class: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:00 to 3:15 in O'Shaughnessy Hall 202.

Office: 300 Decio Hall (at the very northern–Library–end of the third floor).

Advising Hours: Why? All students are encouraged to make use of advising hours, early and often. Come with course puzzles on which you would like think out loud or broader questions about how to make the most of your time at college. Advising hours are also an opportunity for me to better understand you and your aspirations, so come with a spirit of curiosity and expect generosity in return. / When? Tuesdays from 3:30 to 4:30 and Thursdays from 10:30 to 11:30 as well as by appointment. For appointments outside of advising hours, simply send me an e-mail that day or the day before or speak to me before or after class. Impromptu in-person meetings, with or without advance notice, can also often be arranged before or after class. Note that if too many students report conflicts during these hours, I will select different times and then update the syllabus as well as Canvas. In past semesters students have preferred [appointment slots](#), so I have continued that practice.

Phone: (574) 631-8142 (office); (574) 302-1813 (cell).

E-mail: mroche@nd.edu (this is the best choice for routine contact); **Web:** <http://mroche.nd.edu/>

Course Description

You will develop your language skills, including vocabulary, reading, listening, writing, and speaking, by working with materials that introduce you to aspects of the German-speaking world, including in particular Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and the German diaspora, including in the United States.

The course will help students explore distinctive aspects of Germany and the German-speaking world, specifically in their difference from the United States. Along with this thematic focus, students will work to strengthen and refine their language skills. Students will work toward greater fluency, accuracy, and complexity of expression.

Under the rubric “German in the World,” the course will introduce diverse units on Germany, including its history; the political system and political parties; society, including multicultural aspects; and culture. We will also discuss distinctive traditions and everyday life. We will consider proverbs, beautiful or interesting words, and jokes as well as idiomatic expressions, cognates, and comparisons with another Germanic language, English. In addition, we will explore quality of life indices (an area where German-speaking cities score remarkably well);

selected cities; regional and country differences; religion in the German-speaking world; and stereotypes of the Germans and of the various German-speaking areas.

Students will have flexibility in determining topics, some of which can be explored collectively, others in groups or individually. Other possible topics include, for example, the educational system, including the German university; the position of Germany as part of Europe, including questions about the European Union and the Euro; the nearly unrivaled German philosophical tradition; the prominent German theological tradition; German views of the United States; the German sports culture; German dialects; recreational trends and tourism; cuisine, beer, and wine; and German media.

In addition, we will include a selection of short and accessible readings, so that students have modest exposure to a few of the many great German writers and thinkers. Previous authors have included Kant, Goethe, Schiller, Hegel, Hölderlin, Heine, Mörike, Kafka, Rilke, Benn, Tucholsky, Langgässer, Brecht, Ausländer, Tawada, and Benedikt. We will also include recent political addresses and current events. In addition, we will include one or more films from various periods in German history.

In short, you will find that this course reinforces and deepens your interest in, and knowledge of, Germany and the German-speaking world, and so connects very well to your own existential interests. Because the goal of the course is to help you advance with the language by connecting your learning of German with your interests, including your curiosity about Germany and other German-speaking countries, suggestions of topics and statements of preferences are welcome at any time.

Although students' advancement in the German language will emerge from their content-based work, on a few occasions we will, as needed, step back and look at selected issues of grammar and pronunciation to help ensure students' advancement in the language.

By connecting their language learning with their interests in the German world, students will become more knowledgeable and better conversationalists in German. Students will move further toward the goal of being able to function meaningfully in a German context, eventually at a professional level. They will be poised to explore more deeply "German Literary and Cultural Tradition(s)" and "Contemporary Germany." They will also prepare themselves for a life-long engagement with German language, culture, and society.

Learning Strategies

Both traditional wisdom, as found in the great thinkers on education, beginning already with Plato, and in recent empirical work on education have identified some basic principles of learning that are stressed in ideal learning environments. These include the following:

- Students learn more when they have an existential interest in the subject matter.

- Students learn more when they are actively engaged in the learning process and not passive observers or mere recipients of knowledge.
- Students learn more when ambitious academic goals, high expectations, and demanding standards have been set.
- Students learn more when they are provided with detailed and constructive feedback on their progress.
- Students learn more when they cooperate and learn from their peers.
- Students learn more when learning is effortful, involving setbacks, such as mistakes and corrections.
- Students learn more when they spend their time on meaningful and productive tasks, including those that truly test their knowledge.
- Students learn more when a variety of learning strategies are introduced or are available.
- Students learn more when they encounter diversity.
- Students learn more when they can place what they are learning into a larger context and recognize connections.
- Students learn more when meaningful faculty-student contact exists.
- Students learn more when they become conscious of effective learning strategies.

We will pursue each of these strategies. Above all, your learning will depend on your active engagement. To that end the following contributions to learning will affect assessment of your performance.

Student Contributions to Learning and Assessment Guidelines

The assessment for the class will be divided into seven categories. This will allow for frequent feedback, which is essential to learning a language. The majority of the grade, 55%, is based on regular contributions, oral and written, during the course of the semester. The remainder, 45%, covers overall assessments, a midterm examination, an oral examination, and a final examination.

1) Class Contribution: 20%

Students will be expected to contribute regularly to discussions and to adopt various facilitative roles during the semester, including offering informal presentations. Class contribution is not equivalent with the quantity of class participation; instead both quantity and quality will be considered. Because student learning is aided by active student participation in the classroom, students will want to prepare well and contribute regularly and meaningfully to group discussions.

After the review of the syllabus, the language for this class will be German.

To help you with your speaking, I want you in advance of midterm to spend at least two hours outside of class speaking German with a peer tutor in the Center for the Study of Languages and

Cultures (CSLC); with persons speaking German at any scheduled *Deutschisch*, *Kaffeestunde*, or *Stammtisch*; or with an advanced student in German or a native speaker of German.

Keep a simple log of your hours, with the date, the interlocutor(s), the context, and the amount of time. If you have done fewer than two hours, you should still submit the information in order to receive partial credit. Hours beyond two will be considered extra credit. Expectations for the second half of the semester will be analogous. This will be weighed as part of your class contribution, since it will indirectly contribute to your class contribution.

2) Regular Assignments: 10%

Before every class, except on days when a paper is due or you are giving an informal presentation (student explorations), you will prepare three sentences in German that show that you have thought about the material and sought to avoid basic mistakes.

These will be graded for the most part on a scale of check plus, check, and check minus. Constant practice in writing is essential to improving your German. Moreover, written work in advance of class helps with oral performance.

These daily exercises will help your class preparation, allow you to explore ideas, and will be a superb strategy to aid you in your developing language skills. **These daily exercises will always be in German, typed and double-spaced, and brought to each class, so that I can give you feedback.**

You will want to keep all of your contributions in a folder and in order. This will aid your self-analysis of evolving strengths and weaknesses. Toward the midterm I will request a self-evaluation.

If you run into an occasional printing snag, I will be happy to receive your submission via e-mail immediately before or after class. However, these should be rare exceptions. I will not accept e-mail submissions on a regular basis, and any e-mail submissions not sent immediately after class will be eligible for at most a check.

Occasionally, I will request an audio recording instead of a written submission. These are to be submitted before the start of each class via email.

3) In-Class Written Exercises: 10%

You will be asked to do some writing during class. Your only resources for this writing are a book dictionary, if you choose to use one. No electronic devices will be allowed.

4) Three Short Papers: 15%;

Students will write three short papers, of increasing length, at least 250, 350, and 500 words. Please jot down in your calendars the following due dates: February 6, March 27 (note that this is shortly after midterm break, so start early), and April 29, each time at 11:00 p.m., with a one-hour grace period for technical difficulties.

Each paper will count 5%. Because students learn immeasurably from reviewing and improving their mistakes, students will submit a rewrite of the first two papers, within approximately one week after they are returned (I will send you the precise date when I return the first drafts). A much higher standard will be applied to your writing in these more formal exercises than writing submitted as regular short assignments. In addition, expectations will increase as the semester advances, and improvement across the semester will be one factor in grading. The topics themselves should also become increasingly substantive and significant.

- All papers should be Times New Roman or a similar standard font, 12 point, and double spaced.
- Each paper should have a title and pagination, and you should list at the bottom the number of words.
- Unless we very consciously move to Canvas for assignment submissions, please submit your papers via email (to mroche@nd.edu) as a Word document. In either case, your file name should have three elements: your name, the course number or some such designation, such as German 2xx, and the paper number (for example, Alice German 2xx Paper 1 or Alice German 20202 Paper 1 Revised). This will make it much easier for me to organize and archive submissions.
- All paper submissions that are more than one hour late will be downgraded a partial grade. A further drop of a partial grade will occur for every 24 hours that passes beyond the due date and time.
- Technology is not an excuse for not submitting work or not submitting work on time. Please save your drafts regularly and back them up to remote devices on a regular basis.

For the most part topics will be open to the students, but they should explore some aspect of one of the broad themes noted in the course description. The first paper may have a first-person focus. The final two papers should be broader in nature, though they may include you and your aspirations; unlike the first paper, however, they should not be simply autobiographical. Any short papers, beyond the first one, not related to the material we are exploring together will need to be approved in advance. Otherwise, students are free to choose their topics.

At the bottom of each essay, please note any sources you used (even if you did not cite the sources). Also be sure to note any assistance you received, with a note at the end, explaining also the type of assistance you received. Papers should present your own thinking and may not simply reformulate what you have read in books or on the Web. A reminder that here, and elsewhere throughout this course, you may not use any form of AI to assist you in your writing.

5) Midterm Examination: 10%

Before midterm break, students will take an in-class midterm examination, the topics for which, both substance and grammar, will all have been explored in the assigned readings and videos and in class. No paper or electronic resources may be used.

6) Oral Examination: 15%;

A one-on-one oral examination of approximately twenty minutes will take place with each student between midterm break and the end of the semester. Each student will be asked to engage in conversation on topics that have been explored to date. We will begin with topics chosen by the student, after which questions and conversation may cover the entire course. Although content will play a role, greater weight will be placed on the student's ability to be forthcoming and to speak effectively on topics he or she knows well.

The best practice strategy is to speak German with one another also outside of class and to ask each other questions in German. Students are encouraged to prepare for oral examinations together. However, students who have taken their examination may not discuss the exam in any way with other students until all examinations have been given.

7) Final Examination: 20%

Students will take a final examination, the topics for which, both substance and grammar, will all have been explored in the assigned readings and videos and in class. No paper or electronic resources may be used.

The goals of each assignment and of all evaluation are to improve learning. For assessment guidelines, please see the syllabus supplement.

Tentative Calendar of Classes

The course calendar is posted on Canvas, Modules, Calendar. It will be a live document, updated on a regular basis. **Please note that for every session you will have a handout (under Canvas, Modules) with precise directions and relevant study questions for each session. In other words, the calendar is a skeleton of tentative assignments, with final and more specific guidance given under the respective handout.** For virtually every class I have tried to include both reading and listening/viewing.

Because this course benefits from a high level of flexibility, based on your developing capacities and interests and current events in the German-speaking world, assignments have not been given in full for every session. However, if you wish to plan well ahead, please note the due dates listed above for the longer essays. As the semester unfolds, the handouts will always be there a bit in advance of forthcoming sessions, so that you can plan ahead.

Though unconventional, this has been proven to be the best way to make this language and culture class both student-centered and current. The student-centered orientation means that I can adjust assignments and topics to your capacities, needs, and interests. The flexibility further allows us to be current. Past classes have integrated contemporary events or documents, such as Pope Benedict's address to the Bundestag; Pope Benedict's television interview with German reporters; a poem on Christ by the German poet Friedrich Hölderlin that Pope Francis prominently cited; German political campaigns and elections; Notre Dame in the leading German newspapers; and the visit of former Bundespräsident Horst Köhler to Notre Dame.

Syllabus Supplement

Additional information that will be useful to you is contained in the syllabus supplement under Canvas, Syllabus. Its sections are listed below.

Language Resources and Information

- Learning and Mastering a Language
- Recommended Works
- Canvas Videos and Films
- Dictionaries
- Vocabulary
- Grammar
- Writing in German
- Useful Websites
- Presentation Tips

Grading Criteria

- Policy on Attendance and Tardiness
- Grading Scale for the German Program
- Criteria for Grading Class Contribution
- Criteria for Grading Short Written Contributions
- Criteria for Grading In-Class Writing
- Criteria for Grading Papers

University and Departmental Policies, Guidelines, and Support Structures

- Departmental Learning Goals for German 20202
- Departmental Policy on Anti-Racist, Anti-Authoritarian Pedagogy
- Disability Accommodation
- Support for Student Mental Health at Notre Dame
- Student Privacy Statement
- Academic Code of Honor
- Generative AI, True Learning, and Academic Integrity