

## Reading German for Non-German Speakers

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In this course, students will learn to read German proficiently, engage with a broad variety of German language texts, and convey their comprehension in spoken and written English translation. The course will meet 2 hours per week and move rigorously through the texts. Due to the intensive nature of the course, students will be required to attend class each week as well as conduct a fair amount of work outside of class. The contents of the course cover grammatical concepts from the main textbook, *German Quickly*, but also seek to introduce students a diverse selection of authentic German texts and scholarly reading scenarios. Students do not need to have any prior knowledge to the German language to take this course, and the course itself will be conducted in English. It is designed for graduate students from a broad variety of backgrounds including business, technology, science, and the humanities.

Students will be evaluated primarily on their ability to demonstrate their comprehension of German in weekly homework assignments, three written tests, and a final take-home exam.

By the end of the course, students will be able to engage with German texts with a dictionary, identify grammatical and stylistic traits of the German language, and pronounce basic German correctly.

### Required Text:

Wilson, April. *German Quickly: A Grammar for Reading German*. Rev. ed. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2007.

### Other recommended reading sources:

Since we will be working a lot with a German dictionary, you may want to invest in a large (unabridged) German-English dictionary, which will be helpful for the necessary understanding grammatical function of words. But we will also be working with numerous online resources in- and outside of class such as:

<http://dict.tu-chemnitz.de/>

<http://www.dict.cc/>

[http://canoo.net/index\\_en.html](http://canoo.net/index_en.html)

[http://dict.leo.org/ende/index\\_de.html](http://dict.leo.org/ende/index_de.html)

### Optional reading sources:

Zorach, Cecile, Charlotte Melin and Elizabeth Kautz. *English Grammar for Students of German*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Ann Arbor: Olivia and Hill Press, 2009.

Grading:

Class participation	15%
Homework	15%
Test 1	10%
Test 2	15%
Test 3	15%
Final Exam	30%

A note about participation:

Students are expected to attend each class unless I receive a doctor's note or grant permission ahead of time. One unexcused absence will result in a significant drop of the participation grade. All students are expected to make up work they missed in class.

A note about homework, tests, and the final exam:

- Homework must be brought to class and turned in each week. Students should use the answer key in the back of the textbook to self-correct assignments before submitting them. It is important you bring your work to class each week, since we will discuss it and conduct activities with it in class.
- Tests will be written in class and will cover the main themes from each individual section. Barring a medical emergency, there will be no make-up tests.
- The final exam is a take-home exam and must be emailed to me within a timeframe of 48 hours. There will be no extra accommodations for the final exam.

A note about office hours:

I will hold 2 hours of office hours per week and am also reachable online for questions. In addition, I will hold a prolonged review session for the final if there is enough interest.

Week 1

Chapters 1 - 3 in *German Quickly*; Introduction, Present Tense, Case Endings

Week 2

Chapters 4 - 6 in *German Quickly*; Adjectives/Adverbs, Prepositions, Verb Placement

Week 3

Chapters 7 - 9 in *German Quickly*; Weak Nouns, "es," Future Tense

**\*Test 1**

Week 4

Chapters 10 -12 in *German Quickly*; Da-/Wo- Compounds, Prefixes, Verb Tenses

Week 5

Chapters 13 - 15 in *German Quickly*; Verb Prefixes & Verb Tenses

Activity: "Die Bremer Stadtmusikanten" [http://germanstories.vcu.edu/grimm/bremer\\_dict.html](http://germanstories.vcu.edu/grimm/bremer_dict.html)

Week 6

Chapters 16 - 18 in *German Quickly*; Plurals, Dictionary, Suffixes

**\*Test 2**

Week 7

Chapters 19 - 21 in *German Quickly*; Modal Verbs, "zu + infinitive," Co-ordinating Conjunctions

Week 8

Chapters 22 - 24 in *German Quickly*; Verb Placement & Dependent Clauses

Week 9

Chapters 25 - 27 in *German Quickly*; Dependent Clauses, Reflexive, Adjective Constructions

**\*Test 3**

Week 10

Chapters 28 - 30 in *German Quickly*; Passive & Subjunctive I

Week 11

Chapters 31 - 33 in *German Quickly*; Subjunctive II & Sentence Structures

*review for final exam + Intro to Fraktur*

Week 12

Chapters 34 - 36 in *German Quickly*; Pronouns, Commas, Trouble

In-class Course Conclusion: "Fraktur lesen"

*Extra Review for Final Exam available*

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Example Activities in-class and out of class

**Example 1:** Week 5 "Die Bremer Stadtmusikanten" *in-class*

[http://germanstories.vcu.edu/grimm/bremer\\_dict.html](http://germanstories.vcu.edu/grimm/bremer_dict.html)

Learning Goals:

- students work together to understand the text
- identify past tense verbs
- be able to re-order the events in the text

a) Small groups 3-4 people

- Each group gets one section of the text - approx 200 words per group (approx 1000 total)
- Read through on the dual-language page (switch over to the dictionary page as necessary)
- Identify weak and strong past-tense verbs, underline them and be able to conjugate

b) Plenum

- Recap what happened in the text with key German verbs, section by section
- Collect the main verbs of each section, silently/implicitly list weak verbs on one side of board
- Ask students if they can identify any similar traits and rules of conjugation

c) Back to small groups

- attempt to re-order the texts in the online quiz:

[http://germanstories.vcu.edu/grimm/bremer\\_quiz.html](http://germanstories.vcu.edu/grimm/bremer_quiz.html)

**Example 2:** Week 11: Briefly introduce Fraktur to the class with a few examples and collective reads of scripts and characters. Give homework assignment to bring to class for the final lesson.

Week 12 "Fraktur lesen" last class, *in-class*

Find one page of a historical *realia* from the Universität Bielefeld's digitized collection of historical periodicals or from the *Deutsches Historisches Museum's* "Objektdatenbank" and seek to translate the general context of it and show one word you found difficult to decipher.

ie: who, what, where, what does it say + one word example to share in small groups, then with the group's pick 1-2 examples to share with the class as a whole

ie: This flyer about a Martin Luther Monument in Worms:

[http://dhm.de/datenbank/img.php?img=d1\\_01230&format=1](http://dhm.de/datenbank/img.php?img=d1_01230&format=1)