

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS</b> <b>DEPARTMENT OF WORLD LANGUAGES, LITERATURES, AND CULTURES</b></p>
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**Introduction to German Linguistics – GERM 4330**  
**Spring Semester 2015**

**General Information:**

Instructor: Dorian Roehrs  
Email: roehrs@unt.edu  
Main office: (940) 565-2404

Office hours: TR 11:30 – 12:20 or by appointment (LANG 401-J)  
Class meets: TR 9:30 – 10:50 (LANG 209)

**Important Dates:**

Final project: Thursday, May 14, 8:00 – 10:00

**CORE CURRICULUM**

This capstone course is an important component of UNT's Core Curriculum. This course is related to the category of **Language, Philosophy and Culture** and will focus on how ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture express and affect human experience.

This course studies the structure and variation of language, exemplified by German, and how culture is reflected in that. This is particularly relevant for word choice which is regulated by stylistics, register as well as sociolinguistic and geographical factors. Students are given opportunities to compare their own linguistic experiences, values, and beliefs with those of others and draw conclusions from the comparison to better understand the human condition, specifically the capacity for sophisticated language.

Furthermore, this course studies German against the background of English, the native language of most students in the class. This inherent comparison fosters intellectual innovation by encouraging and enabling students to find commonalities in the human condition (specifically, the language capacity) but also differences in culture. A particularly interesting example involves the different ways of greeting in German and English, where the two different cultures are reflected in the differing types of (expected) replies.

As an integral part of the University Core Curriculum, while engaging in this course students will develop and demonstrate the core objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, Personal Responsibility and Social Responsibility.

**Critical Thinking Skills – including creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.**

As part of the course, students explore the structural patterns of words, phrases, sentences, and larger textual units. The contrastive analysis of these patterns language-internally but also cross-linguistically helps

develop critical thinking skills. The synthesis of this information helps students appreciate that languages differ only in certain (but not all logically-conceivable) ways.

**Communication Skills – including effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.**

This course focuses on oral and written argumentation that starts off by making certain empirical observations and then attempts to explain them. The oral argumentation is practiced in group work and whole-class discussion and the written argumentation in individual assignments (usually as homework).

**Personal Responsibility – including the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.**

Exemplifying with German and closely related dialects, this course encourages students to think about their own linguistic and cultural roots in order to foster a sense of tolerance towards differences in other languages and cultures while maintaining their own identity. This class provides students with opportunities to understand the importance of personal responsibility and to appreciate ways to express that.

**Social Responsibility – including intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.**

Illustrating with a few isolated and endangered languages in the US (Pennsylvania German, Texas German), this course encourages students to raise their awareness of problems associated with linguistic and cultural isolation and integration. Class discussions provide opportunities that foster the appreciation of the importance of the role of the individual in society and to develop an understanding of the issues involved in the co-existence of different communities.

**Course Description and Objectives:**

After a general introduction, we will be exploring the *structural* areas of German linguistics ([phonetics/phonology,] morphology, syntax, semantics) as well as topics with regard to [historical and] contemporary *variation* of the language. Besides developing analytical linguistic skills and a deeper understanding of language, our general goal is to improve proficiency in the language. We will build upon a wide range of language skills in GERM 4330:

Reading: Throughout the course, we will be reading our textbook and some other texts. For the class to be a success, it is important to take notes in German at home.

Speaking and listening: Spoken German also constitutes an integral component of the course. You are encouraged to participate *actively* in class discussions and group work. The notes taken at home will help you with this considerably.

Grammar: You are expected to have a good grasp of intermediate concepts of German grammar. During the course, we will revisit and elaborate on some of these grammar points with the intention to understand them better.

Writing: Another focus will be on writing in German - to express ideas and to argue a point. We will have regular homework assignments to be turned in and a poster based on the final project.

## Required Texts:

Fagan, Sarah. 2009. *German: A Linguistic Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kahn, Lily. 2012. *Colloquial Yiddish. The Complete Course for Beginners*. London and New York: Routledge.

## General Course Policies:

1. Attendance: Repeated unexcused absences and tardiness will affect your grade significantly. Three tardies is the equivalent of one absence. Leaving class before the end of the period will be considered an absence. You are allowed a maximum of two (2) absences, whether excused or unexcused, without penalty. After two absences, your attendance grade will suffer in percent. After the eighth absence, you will receive a failing grade for the entire class. Under certain circumstances, special accommodations can be made at the instructor's discretion.

2. Participation: Besides becoming more fluent in important topics in German grammar and linguistics, we will be working steadily on developing our language skills. Careful preparation for class and regular, active participation are the foundation of this course! **Cellular phones must be switched off and kept out of sight. If it is visible to the instructor, you will receive a zero grade for participation on that day.**

3. Homework: Unless otherwise specified by the instructor, all homework is to be turned in *before* class starts. These assignments will consist of taking notes, problem sets, and short essays. Since some of the reading will be in English, these assignments are meant to further activate your linguistic skills in German and help you in the preparation for the Midterm exam and the final project.

4. Midterm Exam on Structure: After half the semester, we will be taking an exam in German. It will consist of short questions and identifications based on the readings and discussions of the first part of the class. In preparation of this exam, you will be turning in homework regularly. N.B.: taking notes at home and during class will help you immensely!

5. Final Project on Variation: In the last part of the class, students will, in consultation with the instructor, choose a topic and elaborate on it. Focusing on issues related to German-based minority languages such as Texas German and Yiddish, students will present the results of this work as a group effort and turn it in as a poster on **May 14**.

COLLECTIVE WORK. Students are allowed (in fact, encouraged) to work together on the homework assignments. However, every student will turn in their own write-up (and not a copy of somebody else's). The final project requires group work (of max. three students).

## Evaluation:

Attendance and <i>active</i> participation	10%
Homework (taking notes, problem sets, short essays)	40%
Almost Final Exam	25%
Final Project (presentation: 10%; poster 15%)	25%

**Grade Distribution:**

A = 100 – 90%

B = 89.9 – 80%

C = 79.9 – 70%

D = 69.9 – 60%

F = 59.9 – 0%

***Student Behavior in the Classroom:***

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr)

**Religious Holidays:**

In accordance with Section 51.911 of the Texas Education Code, UNT will allow a student who is absent from class for observance of a religious holy day to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time. Students are required to file a written request with each professor within the first 15 days of the semester to qualify for an excused absence. A copy of the state rules and procedures regarding holy days and the form for notification of absence from each class under this provision are available from the Registrar's Office.

**American with Disabilities Act Compliance:****DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION STATEMENT**

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at [940.565.4323](tel:940.565.4323).

**Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness:**

The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in the feedback I get from students, as I work to continually improve my teaching. I consider the SETE to be an important part of your participation in this class.

### Nützliche Internet-Adressen

<http://www.nthuleen.com/teach/grammar.html> (There you find explanations and Worksheets (Arbeitsblatt) and the solutions (Lösungsblatt) for all sorts of Grammar Issues.)  
[www.dw-world.de](http://www.dw-world.de) (German news, radio, and TV online)  
[www.tagesschau.de](http://www.tagesschau.de) (German news with TV clips)

### Tentative Schedule

week	contents		assignments (due Thursdays)
WEEK 1 <b>Jan. 19 MLK Day</b> Jan. 20 – 23	Introduction to the course; Twain: <i>The Awful German Language</i> ; Introduction		
WEEK 2 Jan. 26 – 30	Structure	<b>Chapter 2:</b> Morphology Parts of words	
WEEK 3 Feb. 2 – 6		Different kinds of word formation	hw
WEEK 4 Feb. 9 – 13		<b>Chapter 3:</b> Syntax Words, phrases, sentences Word order	hw
WEEK 5 Feb. 16 – 20		Different positions of the verb Case	hw
WEEK 6 Feb. 23 – 27		<b>Chapter 4:</b> Semantics Idioms	hw
WEEK 7 March 2 – 6		Registers and Relations between words	
WEEK 8 March 9 – 13			Midterm Exam
	Variation	<b>Chapter 7:</b> Sociolinguistic Issues Stylistic levels	hw
		<b>Spring Break</b>	
WEEK 9 March 23 – 27		<b>Chapter 6:</b> Regional Variation Dialects	hw – short newspaper article
WEEK 10 March 30 – April 3		Pennsylvania German Texas German	hw
WEEK 11 April 6 – 10		Yiddish (Intro and Chapter 1)	hw
WEEK 12 April 13 – 17		Yiddish (Chapter 2)	hw - short essay
WEEK 13 April 20 – 24		Yiddish (Chapter 3)	
WEEK 14 April 27 – May 1		Yiddish (Chapter 4)	hw - find topic for Final Project
WEEK 15 May 4 – 7 <b>May 8 Reading Day</b>		Yiddish (Chapter 5) preparation of Final Project	
Finals		<b>May 14, 2015; 8:00-10:00</b>	Presentation and poster of Final Project