

Trier University
German as a Language Courses offered by the Language Center

Dear (prospective) students, dear colleagues,

The following is an overview of the German as a foreign language courses that are, as a rule of thumb, offered each semester by the Language Center (“Sprachenzentrum”) for exchange students and other short-term students (free movers).

The placement for the language courses is decided based on the results of the placement test. The placement test will be given on the last day of the orientation program that is offered by the International Office (“Akademisches Auslandsamt”) prior to the beginning of the lecture period.

The first five courses are for students with language levels A1 to B2. In these courses students will receive a graded certificate based on regular attendance and participation, tests covering certain skills or a midterm examination, and a final examination.

Intensive course A1 / “Intensivkurs A1”

10 hours per week / 10 ECTS credits

The participants of the intensive course start with limited knowledge of the German language.

An up-to-date textbook for German as a foreign language for level A1 provides students with a suitable structure for the course.

Course content: everyday communication, basic grammar, basic vocabulary, simple listening and reading comprehension exercises, writing letters, pronunciation practice, and language acquisition techniques.

The goal is to prepare students to take the “Extension course” A2 (“Brückenkurs” A2).

At the end of the course students will take a final examination that is made up of a grammar and vocabulary section, a reading comprehension, a listening comprehension, and a composition. Students will obtain a graded certificate based on this examination.

Extension course A2 / “Brückenkurs A2”

10 hours per week / 10 ECTS credits

The participants of the extension course have basic knowledge of the German language and are expected to reach the language level A2 by the end of this course.

An up-to-date textbook for German as a foreign language for level A2 provides students with a suitable structure for the course.

Course content: everyday communication, extension of grammar and vocabulary skills, simple but authentic listening and reading comprehension exercises, practical and argumentative writing assignments, pronunciation practice, and language acquisition techniques.

The goal is to prepare students to take the “Intermediate course I (B1.1) (“Mittelkurs I (B1.1)”).

At the end of the course students will take a final examination that is made up of a grammar and vocabulary section, a reading comprehension, a listening comprehension, and a composition. Students will obtain a graded certificate based on this examination.

Intermediate courses I-IV (B1-B2) - “Mittelkurse I-IV (B1-B2)”

6 hours per week / 6 ECTS credits

This course is offered in 4 groups: “Mittelkurs I” (B1.1), “Mittelkurs II” (B1.2), “Mittelkurs III” (B2.1) and “Mittelkurs IV” (B2.2) – depending on the results of the placement test at the beginning of each semester.

An up-to-date textbook for German as a foreign language provides students with a suitable structure for the course. Productive and receptive skills will be further built upon through work with authentic texts, including various types of texts; grammar and vocabulary exercises are integrated into the text assignments.

Course content: understanding lectures, presentations and news reports, taking one’s own position in an argument, understanding and categorizing longer authentic texts at a moderate level of difficulty, writing argumentatively and academically (summary and discussion), and using complex sentence structures and subject-specific vocabulary.

The goal is to prepare students for advanced (B1) and independent (B2) language use.

At the end of the course students will take a final examination that is made up of a grammar and vocabulary section, a reading comprehension, a listening comprehension, and a composition. Students will obtain a graded certificate based on this examination.

Pronunciation Training (B1/B2) - “Aussprachetraining” (B1/B2)

2 hours per week / 2 ECTS credits

The pronunciation training is aimed at participants of the intermediate courses.

The goal of this course is to instruct students in the standard German pronunciation, as it is used in official communication, in the media, in schools and universities, as well as in business and administration.

In this course the main tasks are to correct pronunciation mistakes and to learn the correct pronunciation of vowels and consonants as well as the rules of intonation and prosody.

Practice in the language lab also serves to attain these goals.

In this course students will receive a course certificate based on regular attendance and participation and a final examination.

Oral communication skills (A1-B1) / “Sprechkompetenzen (A1-B1)”

2 hours per week / 2 ECTS credits

The oral communication skills course is aimed at participants of the compact courses at beginners’ and intermediate level.

The goal of this course is to train the students’ oral skills, teach them different forms of day-to-day communication and prepare them for oral test situations. The students learn to formulate questions and give answers, to express their opinions and wishes, to talk about their experiences and differences between cultures and countries.

Course content: interplays, role plays, interviews, Q&A-sessions, presentations with plenum discussions.

In this course students will obtain a course certificate based on regular attendance, active participation and different oral tests.

Courses in the module system:

The specialized courses described below are available for exchange students and other short-term students (free movers) at level B2 and higher as well as for degree-seeking students who have passed the DSH (German language exam for university admission) and for short-time students of German as a foreign language (“Kurzstudiengang DaF”).

In these courses students will receive a graded certificate based on the results of the final exam and the work done throughout the duration of the course (including preparation of additional assignments before and after class).

Intercultural Communication (B2/C1) - “Interkulturelle Kommunikation” (B2/C1)

2 hours per week / 3 ECTS credits

The goal of this course is to accustom the participants to intercultural communication situations and to develop intercultural skills, particularly those in the area of language. How do we communicate effectively with people from other cultures? How do we deal with misunderstandings and difficulties? Course content: Through comments, discussion and role-play, the linguistic methods of intercultural communication will be developed and practiced.

Intercultural skills:

Sensitization to intercultural differences, reflection on the self-image and the image of the “other,” analysis of intercultural misunderstandings

Language skills:

Comprehension: text comparison of academic and media texts (e.g. charts, pictures, news reports, short stories, documentary films, short films, film sequences)

Speaking: discussion, debate, short presentation

Writing: expressing one’s views, commentary, essay

Additional requirements: short presentation and/or midterm examination

Images of Germany in Film and Literature (B2/C1) - “Deutschlandbilder in Film und Literatur“ (B2/C1)

2 hours per week / 3 ECTS credits

The goal of this course is the development and advancement of intercultural communication skills and a deeper cultural understanding.

Course content: lectures on and discussions of current German-language literature (short stories, poems, songs, novellas, novels, and/ or excerpts), as well as discussion of current film productions (short films, film sequences).

Course topics: current topics with an intercultural perspective; getting to know everyday culture

Language skills:

Comprehension: language usage specific to literature and film; culturally specific vocabulary

Speaking: discussions about readers’ perceptions, interpretation discussions, role-play

Writing: interpretation, revision and critique

Additional requirements: short presentation (e.g. presenting a book) and/or midterm examination

Cultural Studies: current - historical (B2/C1) - “Landeskunde: aktuell - historisch” (B2/C1)

2 hours per week / 3 ECTS credits

In this course students' basic knowledge of Germany will be broadened. Current topics within the realm of German cultural studies will be discussed through the use of authentic material (e.g. newspaper articles, radio broadcasts and video clips). Emphasis lies not only on the information presented, but also on the ability to communicate this knowledge and to speak about topics in intercultural studies.

Course topics:

Knowledge about current political, economic and social topics (with student-influenced selection)

Key contextual knowledge of a historical and political nature (with student-influenced selection)

Language skills:

Comprehension: text analysis of academic articles and media sources (e.g. illustrations, charts, dictionary entries, reports and commentaries)

Speaking: discussion, short presentation

Writing: summary, commentary, essay

Additional requirements: short presentation, essay and/or midterm examination

Practice of Listening Comprehension (B2/C1) - “Training zum Hörverstehen” (B2/C1)

2 hours per week / 3 ECTS credits

The goal of this course is the systematic development of the listening comprehension of the participants. The competence of understanding different types of foreign-language audio texts shall be improved by increasing the students' knowledge of text types, by training their awareness of listening styles, and by means of adequate listening strategies.

Course topics:

After a theoretical and methodical foundation (audio text types and global text patterns, listening purposes, listening styles and listening strategies), a wide spectrum of audio texts will be analyzed in terms of their formal structure and content, and the communicative intension of the speaker embedded in a broader context.

Language skills:

Comprehension: analysis of audio texts of different types (conversation, interview, report, coverage, speech, lecture) and linguistic varieties (everyday speech, educational language and technical jargon)

Speaking: discussion

Writing: summary, commentary

Additional requirements: summary of a longer audio text and/or midterm examination

Text-based Vocabulary and Grammar Learning (C1) - “Textbasierte Wortschatz- und Grammatikarbeit” (C1)

2 hours per week / 3 ECTS credits

In this course students learn lexical and idiomatic knowledge and skills as well as grammatical and syntactical skills that are necessary to understand academic texts and to be able to compose such texts. The vocabulary and grammar work is principally based on texts and is aimed at academic language usage.

Language skills:

Collecting, organizing, and using vocabulary found in texts; recognizing and using culture-specific vocabulary; dictionary work

On the basis of authentic academic texts and expressions: analysis of academic structures (nominalization, enhanced participial attributes, grammar of the spoken and written languages) exercises in converting grammar structures (verbalization, active-passive, dependent clause constructions, prepositional phrases)

Additional requirements: seminar-relevant exercises and a midterm examination

Working with technical texts (B2/C1) - “Mit Fachtexten arbeiten” (B2/C1)

2 hours per week / 3 ECTS credits

The goal of this course is the systematic development of the academic reading comprehension of the participants. The competence of understanding different types of technical texts shall be improved by increasing the students' knowledge of text types and by training their awareness of different reading strategies and adequate information management techniques.

Course topics:

After a theoretical and methodical foundation on the reading process and reading strategies, a wide spectrum of popular scientific articles, textbook texts and scientific essays will be analyzed in terms of their formal structure and content, and the communicative intension of the author embedded in a broader context.

Language skills:

Comprehension: analysis of technical and academic texts (popular scientific articles, textbook texts and scientific essays)

Speaking: discussion

Writing: excerpt, summary, commentary

Additional requirements: excerpt, summary and/or midterm examination.

Lecturing, Presenting, and Discussing (C1) - “Referieren, Präsentieren, Diskutieren” (C1)

2 hours per week / 3 ECTS credits

In this course students will be trained in the verbal language skills necessary for academic situations, e.g. giving a lecture, joining in a discussion in a seminar, taking an oral exam. In doing so, typical skills will be practiced: structuring lectures for listeners, speaking intelligibly and correctly, properly debating and discussing.

Language skills:

Comprehension: working with sources

Speaking: discussion, short presentation (impromptu), lecture (prepared), orienting a presentation to an audience and a situation; integrated: vocabulary and syntax of the spoken language

Writing: lecture outline, creating a lecture handout, summarizing sources

Additional requirements: seminar-based exercises, for example attentive listening exercises (oral and written), written evaluations for presentation feedback

Academic Writing (C1) - “Wissenschaftliches Schreiben“ (C1)

2 hours per week / 3 ECTS credits

This course is an academic writing training. The participants independently compose academic texts, including various types of texts (research papers, protocols, excerpts, abstracts, term paper chapters). In doing so, specific skills will be practiced: summarizing, excerpting, paraphrasing, using annotations, citing sources, and revising the writing process.

Language skills:

Comprehension: working with sources

Writing: summing up and comparing academic texts, using citations and annotations

Additional requirements: seminar-based exercises (summary, commentary, citation of sources), composition of 3-5 academic texts (research paper, protocol, excerpt, abstract, term paper chapter)