

GRMN 3024: Conversation & Composition Fall 2026

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A. Course Description

This course is designed to foster and deepen your German listening, speaking, reading, and writing proficiency, expand your vocabulary, and improve your stylistic skills. Using authentic sources from literature and media, we will discuss current issues from German-speaking cultures and compare them to your own socio-cultural perspectives.

One objective of this course is to foster and deepen your German speaking and writing skills and develop high intermediate communicative skills. Another goal is to be able to describe, interpret and compare various **aspects of intercultural (global?) competence** from the perspective of the German-speaking culture.

B. Core IMPACTS

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the [Humanities](#) area. Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides you with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas.

This course will help you master the course content and support your broad academic and career goals by guiding you toward the broad orienting question: How do I interpret the human experience through creative, linguistic, and philosophical works?

The course content, activities, and exercises in this course should help students develop the following [Career-Ready Competencies](#):

- Ethical Reasoning
- Information Literacy
- Intercultural Competence

C. Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, you will

- demonstrate oral proficiency at the intermediate-mid or higher level on the ACTFL scale through several oral news reports and facilitations of discussions throughout the semester,
- have improved your presentation skills in German,
- demonstrate writing proficiency at the intermediate-mid or higher level on the ACTFL scale by composing several essays and a final portfolio,
- demonstrate reading and listening proficiency at the intermediate-mid or higher level on the ACTFL scale, as all of their oral and written work is based on authentic material from German-speaking media (websites, books, articles, videos, film, etc.),
- have reflected, criticized, and reviewed issues from both perspectives the target and the U.S. culture.
- effectively analyze and interpret the meaning, cultural significance, and ethical implications of literary/philosophical texts or of works in the visual/performing arts. (Core IMPACTS).

D. Course Material

All course material will be provided on Canvas and will be made available on Canvas.

E. Grading Scale

A 90-100%, B 80-89%, C 70-79%, D 60-69%, F 0-59%

Pass/Fail Students: You need a grade of C to pass the class.

F. Course Requirements

Active Participation (15%)

You are expected to come to class on time and prepared and demonstrate active engagement with the course material by contributing your thoughts, questions, and comments during the class sessions. It is your responsibility to prepare the homework thoroughly and to look up notions or concepts, grammar, and vocabulary that you encounter in the homework but are unfamiliar with. I strongly recommend that you take notes when doing the homework to actively participate in the in-class discussions. You are further expected to attend all class sessions. If you cannot attend a class, you must notify me in advance. Unexcused absences affect your Participation grade. See also the section "Attendance" in the policies below.

Homework (20%)

Homework should be done thoroughly and as preparation for the upcoming class session, and should be completed before class time.

Individual Vocabulary (10%)

You are responsible for expanding your vocabulary. You will submit several vocabulary sheets throughout the semester with new German words that you learned from the material in this course. You will use these vocabulary words in your writing assignments. Check the Canvas site for a template of the vocabulary sheets.

Conversation: News Kick off and Discussion (15%)

Each class session will start with a short news kickoff. Throughout the semester, you will do several short news summaries (5 minutes) in German about something you read or watched in the German media. Then, you will lead a short discussion (5 minutes) about your report. Choose a media entry according to your interest from one of the following websites. You must read/watch/listen to a media entry **in German**. Check the Canvas site for detailed instructions.

- <https://www.dw.com/de/deutsch-lernen/video-thema/s-12165>
- <https://www.planet-wissen.de/index.html>
- <https://www.easygerman.org/> (also as podcast or on YouTube)
- <https://www.spiegel.de/>
- <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/>

Composition: Essays (15%)

You will write a total of three short essays in German (approx. 1.5-2 pages, double-spaced each): an objective report, an argumentative discussion, and a film review, incorporating specific grammatical structures and expressions. You will revise each of your essays based on the feedback, and the revised version will be graded.

Final Project (25%)

For the final project, you can work individually, with a partner, or in a group of max. three students. Detailed instructions will be on Canvas. There are several steps involved in completing this assignment:

a. Proposal (2%)

Select a final project topic related to the course topic. Explain your project idea in 1-2 paragraphs, explaining why you are interested in the topic, why others should care about your topic, what you already know about the topic, and what the “gap” is that you want to address in your final project. Formulate a specific question you are going to answer.

b. Annotated Bibliography & Revised Proposal (3%)

Find at least five research articles (peer-reviewed) that inform your final project topic. Provide a bullet-point list with core information in the article, highlighting how the articles help you in your project. Based on your bibliography and the feedback on your proposal, revise your initial final project idea.

c. Oral Presentation (10%)

Prepare a 10-minute presentation about your final project topic and a short discussion of 5 minutes. Possible formats of the presentations may be – but are not limited to – a “traditional” presentation, a short movie, an interview, a discussion, a debate, a music video, etc.

d. Written Presentation (10%)

Finally, submit your final project in a written format, following an academic, formal format (min. 8 pages, double-spaced). Use the [APA citation style](#) for your final paper. You will revise your final paper based on my feedback, and the revised version will be graded.

G. Policies

Attendance Policy

Since the purpose of this course is to grow and foster your communication skills in German, regular attendance is of crucial importance to reach this goal. Therefore, you are expected to attend all class sessions. Absences due to health issues that are communicated to the instructor before the day of absence are excused and will not affect the overall grade negatively, only your Participation grade. Absences without any prior notification to the instructor will result in a lowering of the final grade. Starting the third unexcused absence, 1% of your overall final grade will be deducted for each day absent. Five or more unexcused absences result in an F.

Late Submission Policy

All due dates for assignments are available on the Canvas site. If you encounter any issues in meeting the set deadline, contact me in advance to discuss possible extensions. Late submissions without any prior notification that were completion-based are not accepted, and those with a percentage grade will be lowered by 10% per late day.

Academic Integrity

Cheating, plagiarism, and all forms of academic dishonesty are expressly forbidden in this class, and by the university’s Honor Code (<http://honor.gatech.edu/content/2/thehonor-code>) and the student Code of Conduct (<https://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/>). The first cheating on quizzes, exams, and all other course assignments will lead to an automatic zero; the second cheating will immediately earn you a failing grade for the entire course. I will also pursue further disciplinary actions according to Georgia Tech’s policies and procedures (see <http://honor.gatech.edu/plugins/faq/> for more information on this). All submitted work must be your own original work. The original thoughts, ideas, and drafts must be your own work.

Responsible Use of AI

In the age of AI, it is important to understand how AI can help or hamper you in growing your intellectual skills. The core ability that sets humans' intelligence apart from artificial intelligence is critical thinking. Therefore, you must not misuse AI (i.e., be used by AI) to do the thinking for you, but demonstrate metacognition about your AI use that enhances your education. You are required to be transparent about how you used AI and adhere to the following AI use criteria: (1) critical engagement (verify, question, recognize AI failure, synthesize information), (2) responsible use (transparency, judgment when to use AI, academic integrity), (3) ethical awareness (recognizing bias and broader impact of AI output)

Dictionary

The consultation of dictionaries is encouraged to ensure constant growth of vocabulary knowledge. Online dictionaries such as www.leo.org or www.dict.cc contain useful information about grammatical aspects (e.g., gender, verb forms), pronunciation, and variations of word usage.

- For example, "to save" can mean "sparen" in German, but only in the context of money. Other meanings of "to save" are "speichern" as in saving files or "retten" as in saving someone's life. So, "John hat die Katze gespart" does NOT mean that "John saved the cat('s life)" but something like "John got some profitable/monetary benefit out of the cat"! Therefore, make sure to go through the complete list of English-German, German-English equivalents before picking a word.
- A helpful link is www.linguee.de, which is based on corpus data. You can check the usage of certain words in their context as they have appeared in various written texts.

Plagiarism

Because this is a language course, overuse and misuse of online dictionaries, AI tools, and help from more advanced German speakers, for any assignments and course contributions, is considered plagiarism in this course. Webster's defines plagiarism as follows: "to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own: use (another's production) without crediting the source." Make sure to always mark words that you looked up and the sources you used. Be transparent about the help you used. Do not look up and copy-paste complete sentences. Check Canvas for instructions on how to do that.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404)894-2563 or <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/> as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also email me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. See <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/22/> for an articulation of some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

Mental Health Resources

We value your well-being and want to support students experiencing mental health challenges. GA Tech Psychiatry: 404-894-2585 (during business hours); Counselor on call: 404-894-2575

(also available after-hours). If you or someone else is experiencing a mental health crisis, call 1-800-273-8255 (24 hours).

UNSDGs Endorsement Statement

The German Program in the School of Modern Languages at Georgia Tech wholeheartedly endorses the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and understands them to be at the center of our pedagogic and research mission.

