GRMN 4500/6500: German Capstone Course / Intercultural Seminar
Spring 2027

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A. Course Description

The goal of the course is to help students reflect on their experiences studying and/or interning abroad and deepen their awareness and understanding of their own and the German-speaking sociocultural perspectives and values. The course material is selected to foster a critical examination of students' own viewpoints and those of other cultural norms. Questions we will discuss in the course include: What is culture? What does it mean to be "interculturally competent"? What problems can arise if one lacks a nuanced understanding of culture? What opportunities arise when one can navigate intercultural situations appropriately and effectively? How can communication contribute to misunderstandings on the one hand, and to peacebuilding and conflict resolution on the other? Through questions like these, students will become aware of their own cultural lens, develop a broader understanding of differences and similarities of the German-speaking and the US culture and language, and foster their German language skills as well as intercultural abilities.

B. Learning Objectives

- Recognize and examine how one's own cultural template directs observation, interpretation, assumption, and judgment, and to recognize stereotypes and biases.
- Demonstrate understanding of the concept of "culture" and intercultural communication, especially regarding etic and emic description.
- Demonstrate critical thinking in the comparison of cross-cultural differences from an emic and etic perspective.
- Demonstrate differentiated analyses of intercultural communicative processes and practical application of the analyses through the development of educational material such as case studies, workshops, or round table discussions.
- Deliver oral presentations and written summaries regarding the course topic concisely and professionally and in the target language.
- Demonstrate an increased proficiency in the target language (grammar structures, vocabulary, style) compared to the beginning of the semester.

C. Course Material:

All material will be provided on Canvas.

D. Course Requirements:

1) Attendance and Active Participation		10%
2) Homework		15%
3) Discussions (2 x 5%) (ML 6500: + peer-reviewed articles)		10%
4) Individual Vocabulary: 5 x 10 new words (5 x 3%)		15%
5) Reflections (2 x 7.5%)		15%
6) Course project (ML 6500: + peer-reviewed articles)		35%
	TOTAL	**100%**

E. Grading Scale: 100 – 90% = A, 89 – 80% = B, 79 – 70% = C, 69 – 60% = D, 59 – 00% = F
Pass/Fail: Students need a C to pass.

F. Description of Course Requirements

1. Attendance and Active Participation (10%)
Attendance is mandatory. Active participation is essential to succeed in this course. To participate actively, you are required to come to class prepared (on time, homework, paper & pencil or laptop for taking notes) and engage in course discussions as a group and/or in partner and group work. Active participation is not when you use your phone or laptop for activities unrelated to the course (e.g., doing homework, chatting, surfing the internet).

2. Homework (15%)
Doing homework carefully prepares you to successfully participate in the course. Homework includes thorough reading, looking up new German words, reviewing German grammar, and researching unknown concepts to better understand the course content. Plan about 75 minutes per session (2.5-3 hours per week) for homework in this course.

3. Discussions (2 x 5% = 10%)
You will facilitate two discussions on the course reading. You will (1) summarize the text, (2) provide your reflection on the text, (3) provide 5 new words for your peers, and (4) create 2-3 discussion questions. M.S. students should read and include 1-2 peer-reviewed academic articles in their discussion.

4. Individual Vocabulary (5 x 3% = 15%)
You will create 5 individual vocabulary sheets from the course material. It is your responsibility to memorize the new words you found useful and integrate them into your German language use. You must include your new words in the writing assignments of the course.

5. Reflections (2x 7.5% = 15%)
You will write 2 reflections according to the course material and content. Reflecting means *to ponder*, *to consider*, *to meditate*. You will complete the reflections during class and revise your text based on my feedback.

6. Course Project (35%)
Depending on the class size, you will complete a course project as a group. The project could take the form of a workshop on intercultural competence for peers, a booklet, a movie, a podcast series, an academic article, etc. See Canvas for more details. M.S. students should read and contribute 2-3 peer-reviewed academic articles to the course project.

G. Course Expectations and Policies

1. Plagiarism:
In a foreign language course, plagiarism and the use of AI and other translation tools are closely related. Plagiarism is "to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own: use (another's production) without crediting the source." Therefore, the use of AI, translation tools, German native speakers' feedback, and such is not permitted and is considered plagiarism. Even the subjective suspicion of tools other than a dictionary and course material may result in 0% of the assignment.

2. AI use:
This course provides an AI-free oasis. Learning and development of critical thinking skills are your responsibility. Because the course emphasizes critical reflection on your own experiences and cultural norms, as well as fostering German language skills, the use of AI is not productive.

3. Unexcused absence:
You must attend all class sessions. Please notify me in advance if you have to miss a class session. Under certain circumstances, your absence might be excused. Starting the 3rd unexcused absence, your final grade will be affected negatively (deduction of 1% per unexcused day). More than 5 unexcused absences result automatically in an F.

4. Late submission:
Homework and assignments that are submitted late without any prior notification will be accepted, but a late submission penalty of 10% per late day will apply. Please notify me in advance if you need more time for an assignment for an extension.

H. Further Resources

1. 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 e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

2. 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.

3. Georgia Tech Honor Code

At Georgia Tech students are expected to commit to uphold the ideals of honor and integrity by refusing to betray the trust bestowed upon me as a member of the Georgia Tech community. See https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-life/academic-honor-code for details.

4. Modified Operations and Digital Learning Day(s)

In the event of a weather-related event on campus or other emergency situation that requires modified operations, I will contact all students via Canvas, sending an Announcement about cancelling class or other plans for a digital learning day using Zoom or Teams. Should (one of) the Digital Learning Day fall on a day where an in-class exam/assignment is scheduled, the exam will most likely be postponed to the next in-person class session. However, students should always pay attention to the announcements sent through Canvas.

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.



GLOBAL SEAL OF BILITERACY

The Global Seal of Biliteracy is an internationally recognized credential that certifies your language skills in both English and at least one other language. It offers a valuable way to demonstrate your fluency to employers, graduate schools, and scholarship programs. The School of Modern Languages covers the cost for this for B.S. ALIS, IAML, and GEML majors and M.S. ALIS and M.S. GMC students.

Global Seal of Biliteracy for Modern Languages Majors and Graduate Students

During their senior year, typically in their capstone seminar (FREN 4500, GRMN 4500, SPAN 4500 etc.), majors in ALIS, IAML, or GEML will complete the Oral Proficiency Interview – Computer (OPI-C) and the Writing Proficiency Test (WPT) in the target language. Exams are proctored remotely by ACTFL (which administers the tests), so students have flexibility in when they take them. Your Instructor will make exam familiarization materials available to you ahead of time. If you require exam accommodations, please alert your instructor as soon as possible. Because this is part of the Capstone class, we won't have classes during the period(s) you take the exam.

German Majors and M.S. students should schedule an exam during **Week 6**. As part of the preparation for the test, please schedule a meeting with the course instructor Hyoun-A Joo (joo.hyouna@gatech.edu), in the first 2-3 weeks of the semester.

Please consult with your program director if you plan to take the capstone at another time. The same opportunity is available to graduate students in M.S. ALIS and M.S. GMC.
The School of Modern Languages covers the cost for this for B.S. ALIS, IAML, and GEML majors and M.S. ALIS and M.S. GMC students

Exam scores are submitted by the School to the Global Seal of Biliteracy organization.
You'll graduate with two nationally recognized certifications:

1. ACTFL proficiency scores for professional and academic use.
2. The Global Seal, an employer-friendly credential that highlights your fluency.

For more information, please follow this link

Global Seal of Biliteracy for non-Modern Languages Majors

Students outside the School of Modern Languages can still earn the Global Seal through Georgia Tech.To apply:

1. Register for the OPI-C and WPT exams through ACTFL.
2. Send your results to Tia Williams in the School of Modern Languages.
3. Include the email address where you'd like your certificate sent.
4. Complete testing at least six weeks before graduation to ensure timely processing.

Note: Non-Modern Languages majors are responsible for covering the exam costs on their own. For more information, please follow this link.