

Das Erwachsenwerden: Coming of age through the ages

German 202

Course Description

German 202 is the second half of the intermediate German language sequence that explores how young adults have come of age in different time periods in the German-speaking world. Following a thematically-based approach to language instruction, this course explores how different societal factors have affected German-speaking youth's coming of age and draws comparisons with comings of age in English language cultures. Specifically, the following sub-themes as they pertain to coming of age will be studied in German 202:

- Education (pursuing knowledge within confines of educational institutions)
- War (constructive and destructive aspects of war on one's maturation)
- Love (liberating or debilitating effects of love)

Through this focus on coming of age at different moments in German cultural history, students will build on the foundation established in first-year German and develop further their abilities as readers, writers, and speakers of German. Students will use theme-based readings and a grammar review textbook to acquire the language necessary to communicate meaningfully about the topic of coming of age. One of the criteria for choosing the sub-themes for 201-202 was to achieve some overlap with the topics discussed in 101-102. By revisiting some of the same themes, albeit from a different perspective and with a different focus, students should be able to find some familiar ground for developing their language abilities further. In addition, students will read a novel, *Die Geschichte von Herrn Sommer*, over the course of the entire semester that will provide students with the opportunity to examine how coming of age is portrayed in a longer text.

In terms of your long-term language development, German 202 is the second course of Level 2 in the Department of German Studies' integrated four-year, content-oriented undergraduate curriculum. As such, the course will focus on expanding your ability to tell personal stories. Specifically, your stories will span a longer time period, they will not only narrate, but also compare, contrast, and explain, and they will consist of more detailed and sophisticated information that becomes linguistically possible through your command of a wider array of lexico-grammatical features. The department has spent the past few years working collaboratively on revising the curriculum to support students' language development, and the faculty were delighted that the American Association of Teachers of German recognized these efforts in 2012 by designating the department as one of only two collegiate Centers of Excellence nationwide.

One additional component of the course is a yearlong focus on sustainability within the larger topic of coming of age. Specifically, you will examine what it means to be sustainable in terms of each subtheme of the course (e.g., education, war, love).

Prerequisite: Completion of three semesters of college-level German or placement via the German Studies Department's online placement exam (<http://german.emory.edu/placement/index.html>)

Course Materials:

- Rankin Jamie, & Larry Wells. *Handbuch zur deutschen Grammatik*, 5th edition. Heinle, 2011.
- Süskind, Patrick. *Die Geschichte von Herrn Sommer*. Diogenes Verlag, 1994.
- Supplemental texts for each thematic unit available on Blackboard and/or to be distributed by your instructor

Approach:

As the title of the course indicates, “Das Erwachsenwerden,” there is a specific thematic focus that runs throughout the two-course sequence (201 & 202), namely, an exploration of how different societal factors affect young adults’ coming of age. By focusing on an overarching topic for an entire course, German 201-202 reflects the teaching philosophy of the Department of German Studies that language is best acquired when learners have to explore a particular content area and to communicate meaningfully about it. In this content-based approach, rather than studying the language as an end unto itself, you will focus on those language features that are necessary to discuss and explore the content in a meaningful way. This is not to say that we will not study the traditional building blocks of language, namely, grammar and vocabulary. In fact, you will probably see right away that much of what you do for the class resembles how you might imagine a typical foreign language course; that is, you will read texts, learn relevant vocabulary, study grammatical structures that appear in the texts, complete exercises for homework on the grammar and vocabulary, interact with classmates and the instructor on specific topics, and complete writing assignments. What all these activities have in common is that they aim to familiarize yourself with the language and the content that you will need to communicate meaningfully about the topic at hand.

Also in line with the general pedagogical approach in the German Studies Department, the primary medium for delivering the content and modeling targeted language features in this course will be texts. As such, significant class time will be spent working with texts, understanding how they work, and approaching them as helpful resources for your own language use. Specifically, at this level of language learning the main text type or *genre* that you will encounter will be the personal narrative or story. There are many types of narratives (e.g., fairy tales, historical narratives, adventure stories), and we will examine together what constitutes an effective narrative so that you can develop your ability to narrate about a range of topics. There will be sufficient support to help you in this process, but there is also the long-term goal of gradually developing your ability to become an independent reader, learner, and user of German.

Finally, we want to remind you that learning a language is a long-term, non-linear, and error-full process. In other words, you will make wonderful progress this year, but you should not get frustrated by the challenges that the language presents. You will make mistakes, and that is completely normal. In fact, your errors are what indicate to us where we need to focus more attention and how your abilities are developing. You also might find that some aspects of the language that you thought you understood or had a firm grasp on are now causing your trouble. That, too, is completely normal. There is only so much that your brain can handle at a given point, and it is typical that new material takes up cognitive resources that you had used earlier for some other component of the language.

As you embark on this exciting and challenging process, you will be expected to use German for all communication in class. It is hoped that you will approach our three weekly meetings as an opportunity to immerse yourself in German and push yourself as a learner of the language.

Assessment:

- 1. Participation (20%).** Attendance *and* participation are essential to your progress. You will be allowed a maximum of 3 absences for routine doctor visits and travel for non-emergencies, etc., during the semester without penalty. Beginning with the 4th absence, a penalty of -1% will be levied on the earned final grade for each class missed. The best policy to adopt is to **keep your instructor informed** if you miss any classes or assignments. Extended illnesses and family emergencies will be treated as exceptions, and absences for these purposes will be excused. Be prepared to show proof of the need for the absences, however, if your instructor asks for it. Note that you can make up for one absence by participating in a fourth extra-curricular event of the department (guest-lectures, parties in the German House, film etc.). Varsity athletes can get excused with coaches’ notification of announced absences but must, of course, do the required work.

Part of your participation grade is based on your attending at least three extra-curricular events (such as films, parties, guest lectures, etc.) each semester. There is a great amount of flexibility as to what counts as an appropriate activity because we want you to seek out those aspects of the German-speaking culture that interest you. For each event, please submit a brief summary of the event and your reactions to it to your instructor in as much German as possible (50-75 words). To avoid waiting until the end of the semester to complete this course requirement, you are asked to attend one event during each instructional unit. The last day of classes is the deadline for submitting your reports on your extra-curricular activities.

Class Participation Criteria:

| Grade | Criteria |
|-------|--|
| A | always well-prepared always is attentive and eager to volunteer always tries to use German with classmates and instructor always makes the most of each exercise shows real resourcefulness and imagination when using the language always responds to and engages classmates in a respectful manner remains critical and open-minded toward target and native culture |
| B | usually well-prepared usually is attentive and volunteers occasionally usually tries to use German with classmates and instructor usually makes the most of each exercise completes exercises with some imagination and resourcefulness makes some effort to engage fellow students shows some development of cultural sensitivity |
| C | adequately prepared and attentive occasionally needs to be reminded to use German with instructor and classmates responds and completes exercises with minimal imagination does not engage classmates beyond the minimum requirements for an assignment |
| D | usually unprepared makes little effort to participate or complete exercises rarely tries to use German with instructor or classmates |
| F | makes no contribution to class whatsoever |

2. **Preparation (25%).** Completing **homework** thoroughly, regularly, and on time is extremely important. Learning a foreign language is long-term process, and cramming simply does not work. All *Arbeitsblätter* (AB) must be completed and brought to class, but only those marked with an asterisk (*) need to be turned in for a grade. They will be graded according to the following criteria:

- “√+” (100%): Homework handed in on time and indicating a very thorough effort, including a conscious attempt to use language features emphasized in class;
- “√” (85%): Homework handed in on time and indicating a satisfactory effort;
- “√-” (65%): Homework handed in on time but indicating an unsatisfactory effort.

Note: Homework that receives a check or check minus can be corrected, turned back in, and, assuming the issues have been addressed, receive a mark of 90%. Late homework will not be accepted and will receive no credit.

Depending on the quality of class preparation, there might also be an occasional announced short quiz. In addition, there will be periodic take-home exercises that target central grammatical concepts.

3. **Writing assignments (30%).** At the end of each of the three units you will complete a writing assignment on a topic relevant to the unit. Submit your writing as a hard copy to your **instructor**. The first draft will be annotated and returned for revision.
4. **Speaking events (15%).** There will be formally assessed speaking events based on the material covered in class at the end of the first two thematic units.
5. **Final exam (10%) on Thursday, May 1, from 11:30am to 2:00pm.** The time slot for this exam is determined by the registrar. Please plan your summer travel accordingly.

Honor Policy

The honor code is in effect throughout the semester. By taking this course, you affirm that it is a violation of the code to cheat on exams, to plagiarize, to deviate from the teacher's instructions about collaboration on work that is submitted for grades, to give false information to a faculty member, and to undertake any other form of academic misconduct. You agree that the teacher is entitled to move you to another seat during examinations, without explanation. You also affirm that if you witness others violating the code you have a duty to report them to the honor council.

The general rule to remember is that any work that you turn in to your instructor or tutor should be your own. Asking an advanced learner of German or a native speaker to proofread your work before turning it in is not permitted. If you want help with an assignment before turning it in, set up an appointment with your instructor.

Overview of semester:

Education „Bildung“ (weeks 1-5):

- "Jugend im Griensteidl," Stefan Zweig
- "Ich möchte gerne schreiben," Corinna Schnabel
- *Das weiße Band*, Michael Haneke (Film)
- *Die Geschichte von Herrn Sommer*, Patrick Süskind

War "Krieg" (weeks 6-10):

- Auszug aus *weiter leben*, Ruth Klüger
- *Deutschland im Jahre Null*, Roberto Rossellini (Film)
- "Die Küchenuhr," Wolfgang Borchert
- *Die Geschichte von Herrn Sommer*, Patrick Süskind

Love „Liebe“ (weeks 11-14):

- „Ein Jüngling liebt ein Mädchen,“ Heinrich Heine
- „Irgendwie hat sich der Junge verändert,“ Willi Fahrmann
- *Das Versprechen*, Margarethe von Trotta (Film)
- *Die Geschichte von Herrn Sommer*, Patrick Süskind