

Syllabus for German 401 German through Critical Contemporary Topics

Acknowledgement

We are uninvited guests on this beautiful land. UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm people, who for millennia have passed on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site. We understand that we would not be able to learn and work on this land if it weren't for the history of genocide and the ongoing colonization of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Important Notes

This course deals with topics that are (potentially) upsetting and may evoke strong emotional reactions. If you need help coping with these feelings please contact student counselling services here <https://students.ubc.ca/health/counselling-services> or via phone at 604 822 3811. I can support you in gaining access to these services, if you prefer. Some of the readings might include derogatory language. Please note that such language can be *mentioned* (not *used*) for the purpose of discussing the readings. In this course, the *use* of derogatory language is not acceptable.

Course Information

Course Title	Course Code Number	Credit Value
German through Critical Contemporary Topics	GERN 401/101	3 Credits

Prerequisites

German 401 is intended for students who have completed GERM 310/GERN 302, or who have an equivalent level of proficiency in German.

Contacts: Your Instructor

Course Instructor	Contact Details	Office
Dr. Caroline Rieger	carolin@mail.ubc.ca & caroline.rieger@ubc.ca	Buchanan Tower 923

My name is Caroline Rieger. Please call me Caroline. I've been teaching German for over 25 years, and I'm also a researcher in applied linguistics. I grew up in rural Luxembourg (close to the Belgian border) and started speaking German at age 3; it wasn't until I was 14 that I learned English.

Office Hours

Although, I have not set aside a specific time for office hours this term, you are more than welcome (and encouraged!) to visit me in my office with any questions you

might have about the course, readings, or your assignments. I look forward to meeting and getting to know each of you.

If you want to make sure that I am available, please make an appointment. Send me an email with two to three suggested time slots that work for you (in person or via Zoom). I check my email Monday to Friday.

Meeting Times and Place

401/101 Monday, Wednesday 15:30 – 17:00 Buchanan D 204

Please note that we'll have one session on [Thursday, October 12, 2023](#) (same classroom) — UBC calls that particular Thursday “Make-up Monday” and has cancelled all regular Thursday classes on that day. We cannot opt out of Make-up Monday, which is a good thing given that there are so many holiday Mondays this term.

Course Structure and Learning Activities

This course is taught in German and emphasizes the responsibility of students for their own learning. At its core are active learning activities, such as pair, small group and whole class discussions, as well as individual, pair, and small group interactive learning activities, this might include translating. Lecturing is kept to a minimum and will mostly entail explanations on structural aspects of the German language (grammar). Homework assignments will include weekly readings, watching of video clips or listening to podcast episodes and weekly writings, including reflections on your learning progress.

The quality of the education you receive as well as your ultimate performance in this course will depend on the amount and quality of your own effort (including the frequency and quality of your work outside of the classroom). The class will complement, but not replace your independent reading, practicing and studying.

Learning Outcomes

With regular attendance, preparation, active participation, and completion of every assignment – you will increase your vocabulary and improve your reading and writing skills as well as listening skills and your fluency. In particular you will be able to:

1. understand and critically reflect the main ideas and details of a large variety of complex texts in German on both concrete and abstract topics;
2. critically discuss and assess current topics that are of relevance to people in German-speaking regions as well as around the world;
3. interact with a high degree of fluency and spontaneity with your peers and other speakers of German;
4. write clearly on a wide range of subjects, including current, controversial, cultural, inter- and transcultural issues;
5. critically reflect on and articulate your progress as an advanced learner of German;

6. apply a variety of learning, reading, writing, comprehension and communication strategies for successful German language use (reception and production).

Learning Materials

All materials will be available online (open access).

Students who wish to purchase a grammar book can ask for recommendations.

Assessments of Learning: Overview and Details

Active participation	15%
Weekly mini summaries or other short assignments(contract graded)	25%
Language Learning Journal (incl. small projects)	48%
Presentation	12%

Active participation (15%) addresses LO 1, 2, 3, 5

Regular and punctual attendance (with your learning materials, notes and questions), preparation and active participation are expected. Active participation includes initiative taking, willingness to communicate, volunteering answers, asking questions, contributing to pair and group work, and being supportive of others. Students are graded on a five-point scale as outlined in the following table.

Mark	Category	Participation Criteria
5	Outstanding	Continually encouraging and supportive of others. Continuously engaged in classroom activities. Active leadership role in class. Volunteers information and facilitates the learning of others. Punctual and complete attendance. Excellent attitude and effort.
4	Very Good	Demonstrates leadership and active support with peers. Consistent and punctual attendance. Positive attitude and high level of effort.
3	Adequate	Works well with others, willing to contribute toward class discussion. Occasionally late and/or absent. Satisfactory effort and attitude.
2	Minimal	Only occasional contribution given during class. Frequently late and/or absent. Motivation and initiative low. Minimal effort.
0-1	Poor	Little to no contribution during class. Poor punctuality and attendance record. Attitude, participation and effort do not meet acceptable standard.

Contract graded weekly mini summaries and other short assignments (25%) addresses LO 1, 2, 4, 6

Having completed the reading/listening/viewing for the following week of the assigned text, podcast or video clip, you write a very short text of three to five connected sentences communicating the ca. three main ideas of the "text" (in written or spoken format). This assignment promotes a deep, interactive engagement with the read or viewed content, it increases your comprehension, your ability to identify principle ideas within a German discourse, and your writing skills. Mini summaries are due each

week on Saturday afternoon, **no later than 6 pm** (see schedule). Occasionally, the mini summary will be replaced with a different short assignment related to the “reading” (such as responding to a question)

If you submit your assignment on time, you will receive full marks; if you are one day late you will receive 80%; if you are two days late, but submit before the beginning of class, you will receive 60%. Later assignments will not be accepted unless you have concession (see policies).

Language Learning Journal and small projects (48%) addresses LO 1, 2, 4, 5, 6

The grading will be distributed as follows:

3% Journal 1

30% average of in term entries (Journal 2, 3, 4,...)

15% final entry: Reflective Essay

Objective & Journal 1

The objective of the Language Learning Journal is to improve your German writing skills and active vocabulary. Your Journal will provide feedback about your learning progress to the instructor and aids in designing customized tasks. Furthermore, it will give you the opportunity to critically reflect on your personal language acquisition process, your development of cultural awareness, and to develop your thoughts and opinions about your experiences with the German language. Start out by thinking about and verbalizing **your own learning goals**. This will consist of the **first entry** in your journal that is due no later than **September 14, 2023, 6 pm** and be about 250 words in length. Briefly describe your current German language abilities and define what your specific learning goals are, what you would like to be able to do in December when this class ends. It is important for your learning progress that these personal learning goals not be vague, i.e. not increase vocabulary, but increase vocabulary in a certain topic area such as outdoor activities, biology, film and theatre etc.; not increase comprehension, but follow the German news, understand podcasts on music, on societal matters, on racism etc. If accuracy and German structures are important to you, mention which ones in particular you want to master, for example passive voice, indirect speech, accurate usage of tenses, word order in longer, complex sentences etc.

What goes into Journal 2–5?

For all your other entries — the second one will refer to week 2, 3 and 4; the third to week 5, 6, and 7 and so on — you will write about your German language acquisition and learning during those weeks in and out of the classroom. When you focus on your language acquisition, you are encouraged to 1) briefly describe the experience and the interaction, 2) record any specific words or phrases or grammar needed, especially if it is still (fairly) new to you, 3) record any new words or phrases (heard and read) in a

vocabulary section of your journal, 4) identify gaps in your language, look up words or phrases that would have facilitated communication or comprehension and record them in your vocabulary section of your journal, 5) explain whether the communication/project was successful (i.e., “Did you achieve what you set out to?”) and whether there was any new cultural learning involved, and 6) set/adjust personal learning goals (i.e., identify and tackle common errors, set targets for speaking more often and in more varied places, strive to activate new vocabulary (even using Quizlet), use more complex sentences, ask more questions, etc.). Please note that your vocabulary list (#3, #4) will not be submitted to your instructor on a regular basis, only at the end of the term when you submit your reflective essay (see below) you will also submit your vocabulary list.

In addition to writing about the learning as it relates to assignments directly related to GERN 401, you have to include thoughts and details on two personal, small German projects per every **21 days**. Examples of such projects are: reading a German short story, reading a longer German news or science/scholarly report, watching a German movie, listening to a podcast, having a long conversation in German with someone who is not a classmate, participating in a German online chat, learning a German song, going to a German play, etc. What matters is that you do a variety of activities that are not directly linked to any German class that you take, but will support you in reaching your personal learning goals. You will write at least one 300-word entry every week

Submitting your Journal (weekly; every 3 weeks)

Officially, you will hand in the language learning journal every three weeks, electronically on Canvas every third Friday, **no later than 6 pm** (see schedule). In addition, you will send your journal entry for the week to your instructor on a weekly basis (on Saturdays at the latest, no later than 6 PM). I call this an “unofficial submission”, meaning you will not be graded on the weekly submission and you will receive no weekly feedback; only the punctuality of the weekly submission will be considered in the grading. This also means that you can make changes and corrections in these already unofficially submitted parts.

By writing frequently, you will develop more fluency in your German writing skills. Your journal will be **graded on** the breadth and depth of your reflections, accuracy, complexity, overall comprehensibility, as well as completeness of the assignments.

Last entry: Reflective essay

At the end of the term, you will write one final 1000 to 1200-word entry reflecting on and documenting the reflections of (1) the process of keeping a journal, including the creation of and reflection on the small projects, and (2) how all of it — and especially the reflection on your learning process — has supported your own learning goals. This is not limited to the small projects but would include other aspects of GERM 400, such as the preparation for class (readings, videos, summaries etc.), in class activities and

so forth. (3) You will also include thoughts on how the journaling, the small projects, and other activities can support your learning of German in the future, i.e. which elements, activities, or project types you can carry over — into a time when you do not take German language classes — in order to keep up your German or further improve it. To guide you further, here is a selection of questions to which the reflective essay responds: Which of my own personal learning goals have I achieved? How have I achieved them? Which strategies were helpful and which ones were not or less helpful? Which learning goals, if any, have I not achieved and why? What could I have done differently? How will I approach this in the future? How have my learning goals progressed over the term? How have they changed? What learning goals do I set for time after GERM 400? It is also helpful to look at the bigger picture: Who am I as a learner and user of German? Which aspects of the language are especially important to me? What do I enjoy the most when it comes to learning/using German? Are these the same activities that best support my progress? If not, which activities do? How could I make those more enjoyable? Etc.

One final tip: The term 'reflective' is not a suggestion. Reflecting is essential to this assignment. Before you start writing a single word, think about the last few months, think about all your German activities, think about the questions you will answer. Don't do it all at once. Take 20 minutes here, 30 minutes there or just five minutes a few times a day. It is also okay to talk to a classmate, a friend, a mentor about parts of this, share your thoughts with them. All this would support the process of sorting through and organizing your experiences before putting it on paper.

This essay part of the journal is due **December 13, 2023 at 6:00 PM or earlier**. If you cannot make this deadline, it is imperative that you let me know before December 13, so we can work out a schedule that works for you.

In accordance with the University regulations on cheating and plagiarism, students must write all journal entries **independently**; that is, without the help of another person or AI tools (such as Chat GPT). Of course, students are encouraged to collaborate and interact with peers (and other German-using individuals in their circle) and are encouraged to include reflections on collaborative activities in their journal entries.

Presentation (12%) addresses LO 1, 2, 3, 5

On our second last and last days of classes, **December 4 and 6, 2023**, students will give a presentation (ca. 8 minutes in length, including q&a) on one or two of the smaller projects they undertook as part of the language learning journal and share a few thoughts on their journaling experience.

You will demonstrate that you are able to speak freely and answer your peers' and your instructor's questions about your most successful or most engaging project/s in German.

Your presentation will be graded for content (relevance, evidence-based knowledge) 1.5/5; German language usage 1.5/5; structure and organization 1/5; presentation style 1/5.

General Evaluation Criteria

The assignments, should demonstrate your understanding of the course materials through synthesis and application. The grading criteria are consistent with the criteria established by the Faculty of Arts.

90-100% = A+	76-79% = B+	64-67% = C+	50-54% = D
85-89% = A	72-75% = B	60-63% = C	00-49% = F
80-84% = A-	68-71% = B-	55-59% = C-	

According to the UBC Guidelines:

- An "A" grade is "Exceptional performance: strong evidence of original thinking; good organization; capacity to analyze and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base."
- A "B" grade is "Competent performance: evidence of grasp of subject matter; some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with the literature."
- A "D to C" grade is "Adequate performance: understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material; acceptable but uninspired work, not seriously faulty but lacking style and vigor."

What follows is the provisional, incomplete course schedule. Any changes to this schedule will be announced on Canvas.

Tentative & Incomplete Course Schedule

GERN 401 (my schedule)

	Class Date	Topic and material	Assignments with due dates
W1	We SEP 6	Soziale Klassen und Lernen	
W2	Mo SEP 11	Freunde: von Laffert, Bartholomäus (2020). Respekt! Crystal und Christoph sind politisch völlig anderer Meinung und trotzdem Freunde. <i>Fluter</i> , 77, 10–12. https://www.fluter.de/freunde-unterschiedliche-meinung	SA SEP 9: First mini summary (Freunde)
	We SEP 13	Freunde	FR SEP 15: Journal 1 SA SEP 16: Mini summary (Flüchtende)

	Class Date	Topic and material	Assignments with due dates
W3	Mo SEP 18	Flüchtende: Hausdorf, Tobias (2021). Unter Einsatz seines Lebens. <i>Fluter</i> , 79, 20–21. https://www.fluter.de/Dawod-Adils-Flucht-aus-Afghanistan	
	We SEP 20	Flüchtende	SA SEP 23: Mini summary (Gender)
W4	Mo SEP 25	Gender: Männlich oder weiblich? Das dritte Geschlecht WDR Doku https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CwN8mjaiSrQ	
	We SEP 27	Gender	FR SEP 29: Journal 2 (weeks 2, 3, 4)
W5	We OCT 4	Tba	SA OCT 7: Mini summary
W6	We OCT 11	Tba	
	Th OCT 12	Tba	SA OCT 14: Mini summary
W7	Mo OCT 16	Tba	
	We OCT 18	Tba	FR OCT 20: Journal 3 (weeks 5, 6, 7) SA OCT 21: Mini summary
W8	Mo OCT 23	Tba	
	We OCT 25	Tba	SA OCT 28: Mini summary
W9	Mo OCT 30	Tba	
	We NO 1	Tba	SA NOV 4: Mini summary
W10	Mo NOV 6	Tba	
	We NOV 8	Tba	FR NOV 10: Journal 4 (weeks 8, 9, 10)
	<i>Break</i>		SA NOV 18: Mini summary
W11	Mo NOV 20	Tba	
	We NOV 22	Tba	SA NOV 25: Mini summary
W12	Mo NOV 27	Tba	

	Class Date	Topic and material	Assignments with due dates
	We NOV 29	Tba	FR DEC 1: Journal 5 (weeks 11,12)
W13	Mo DEC 4	Student Presentations	
	We DEC 6	Student Presentations	
	We DEC 13		Last journal entry: reflective essay (on journaling, on learning, on future as language learner, etc.)

University and Course Policies

Names and Pronouns

UBC provides us with a class roster that lists your given name and your “preferred” name. I will default to using your preferred name as listed on this roster, but please don’t hesitate to let me know at any time (in person or by e-mail) if you would prefer me to use anything else (or if I am inadvertently mispronouncing your name). You can update your preferred name by logging onto the Student Services Centre (SSC) and choosing the “Personal Info” tab. Unfortunately, there is currently no way to register your pronouns in a similar way. I will attempt to be relatively neutral with gendered pronouns, unless you have explicitly told me which pronouns you prefer. Please don’t hesitate to let me know at any time (in person or by e-mail) if you have preferences about your pronouns that you’d like me to follow (including e.g. whether you’d like me to be explicit about correcting mis-gendering in class if it happens).

Academic Integrity

Paramount in this course is the respect and dignity of all people involved and **all people involved are responsible for the co-creation of a learning space where everyone’s input can be respectfully heard**. If at any time you wish to further discuss an issue taken up from class, or do not feel comfortable to engage, please feel free to contact the instructor so alternate arrangements can be made.

The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment or exam and more serious consequences may apply when the matter is referred to the Office of the Dean. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences. A more detailed description of academic integrity, including the University’s policies and procedures, may be found in the [UBC Calendar: Student Conduct and Discipline](#).

Students might additionally consult the Purdue Writing Lab for general information on plagiarism, information on safe practices to avoid plagiarism and more: <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/researchandcitation/usingresearch/avoidingplagiarism/index.html>

Academic Concessions

Under UBC's academic concession policy (<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,329,0,0>), students seeking academic concession for any of three reasons: conflicting responsibilities; medical circumstances; and compassionate grounds, would take the following steps.

If you miss marked coursework for the first time (assignment, exam, presentation, participation in class) and the course is still in-progress, please submit a Student Self-Declaration (<https://www.arts.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2019/10/Student-Self-Declaration-Form-1.6-Arts.pdf>) to the instructor as soon as possible so that your in-term concession case can be evaluated.

If this is not the first time that you have requested concession or if classes are over, you are required to fill out the Arts Academic Advising's online academic concession form, so that an advisor can evaluate your concession case. For additional information you can consult this site: <https://students.arts.ubc.ca/advising/academic-performance/help-academic-concession/>

If you are a student in a different Faculty, please consult your Faculty's webpage on academic concession, and then contact me where appropriate.

Academic Accommodation

Academic accommodations help students with a disability or ongoing medical condition overcome challenges that may affect their academic success. Students requiring academic accommodations must register with the Centre for Accessibility (previously known as Access & Diversity). The Centre will determine that student's eligibility for accommodations in accordance with Policy LR7: Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities. Academic accommodations are not determined by your instructors, and instructors should not ask you about the nature of your disability or ongoing medical condition, or request copies of your disability documentation. However, your instructor may consult with the Centre for Accessibility should the accommodations affect the essential learning outcomes of a course.

Class Preparedness

For every class you are expected to have required reading and/or due assignments completed, and are ready to participate in discussions.

If at any time you wish to further discuss an issue taken up from class, or do not feel comfortable to engage, please feel free to contact the instructor so alternate arrangements can be made.

Early Alert

The instructor will do their best to reach out and offer support if she is concerned about students' academic performance or well-being. She will identify her concerns using Early Alert, a program that allows academic, financial, or mental health concerns to be identified sooner and responded to in a coordinated way and respectful manner. This provides students with the earliest possible connection to resources like academic advising, financial advising, counselling or other resources and support to help students get back on track. The information is treated confidentially and is meant to help students not hurt them. If you are feeling stressed, please notify the instructor

and indicate that you would like assistance. While we are not trained to help with personal problems, we can get you help from people who are. For more information, please visit [EarlyAlert](#).

Learning Analytics

Learning analytics includes the collection and analysis of data about learners to improve teaching and learning. This course will be using Canvas. Canvas, like many analytics tools, captures data about your activity and provides information that can be used to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In this course, I plan to use analytics data to:

- View overall class progress
- Track your progress in order to provide you with personalized feedback
- Review statistics on course content being accessed to support improvements in the course

Copyright

All materials of this course (course handouts, lecture slides, assessments, course readings, postings on CANVAS etc.) are the intellectual property of the Course Instructor or licensed to be used in this course by the copyright owner. Redistribution of these materials by any means without permission of the copyright holder(s) constitutes a breach of copyright and may lead to academic discipline.

Students are not permitted to record our classes. Under special circumstances a student may ask in writing to record classes. The student needs to wait for the Course Instructor's written consent to record our classes.