



**GR323 GERMAN WRITING AND COMPOSITION
(SCHREIBWERKSTATT)
IES Abroad Berlin**

DESCRIPTION:

This course is a place for sharing the pleasure of writing, reading, and composing texts. It is a practical class recommended for students who seek to improve their writing and composition skills on different subjects while developing their potential for creativity. Students will practice their oral and written German to increase active vocabulary and fluency. They will discover how to express themselves clearly and effectively while using appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and organization. (This course was previously offered as “Language and Writing Lab”).

CREDITS: 3

CONTACT HOURS: 45

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: German

PREREQUISITES: Students must qualify for GR301 Emerging Independent Abroad to join this course. This course is recommended for students who seek to improve their language competency by attending an additional German language course. With its added focus on academic writing, it is also especially recommended for all students taking courses at a local university.

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

The strategy of this course insists on the playful aspects of writing. Varied texts will be read for inspiration and as a source of useful vocabulary. Based on the proposed context (literary excerpts and vocabulary exploration), the students will produce short texts in class, with guidance from the professor. These texts will be read in class, and other texts devised on the same theme will be written at home (writing assignments) and returned to the professor (progressive evaluation). The written exercises will also develop semantic skills (study of vocabulary adapted to the cultural issues developed in the texts) and grammatical skills (revision of one specific point every week, triggered by the structure of the texts, as a complement). Each student will be able to focus on their weak points. The professor will post texts, as well as information on specific grammar and vocabulary topics on Moodle.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Participation - 10%
- Writing assignments - 30%
- Language tests and homework - 30%
- Final Exam – 30%

Participation

Students are expected to be well prepared for every class. Active participation is very important. Missed classes and/or passiveness will lower the grade. The grading rubric for participation is available in the IES Berlin Academics Manual on Moodle. Reading responses based on homework is part of active class participation.

Writing Assignments

Minimum of 7 writing assignments (portfolio assignments) increasing in length over the course of the semester, 150-200 words at the beginning of the semester, 400-500 words at the end of the semester – no maximum length). The 5 assignments with the highest grades will count.



Language Tests and Homework

Two tests (vocabulary and grammar combined) of 45 minutes each will be taken (in-class/take-home) in session 7 and 9 of the course. Homework is intended to support the learning process and will count with 10% towards this assessment. Homework consists of readings, further writing and grammar exercises. Homework is intended to support the learning process and is fundamental for class participation.

Final Exam

In the final exam (90 minutes in-class), students will apply the techniques for written expression learnt in class (portrait, description, dialogue, etc.). Students will invent a story, giving life to characters and expressing personal opinions.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students in this course should have the level of Emerging Independent Abroad level as defined by the IES Abroad MAP for Language and Intercultural Communication. By the end of the course, students should have the level of Independent Abroad level as defined by the MAP for Language and Intercultural Communication. The key learning outcomes from the MAP are summarized below:

1. Intercultural Communication
 - . Students will be able to express their own ideas, perspectives, and arguments thoroughly and yet tactfully, using language proficiency, sociolinguistic skills, and cultural knowledge.
 - . Students will be able to perform any activity (social, academic, professional) a local student of their age, skills, and background would do with a reasonable degree of success.
2. Listening
 - . Students will be able to recognize and appreciate the beauty and richness of language when they hear it.
 - . Students will be able to understand native speakers on a wide range of complex topics, including their digressions, side comments, and humor.
3. Speaking
 - . Students will be able to talk about abstract ideas and concepts, engage in agreement or disagreement, and defend their opinions with supporting evidence.
 - . Students will be able to use the language for a wide range of creative and presentational purposes.
 - . Students will be able to use an extensive variety of colloquial expressions and humor effectively.
 - . Students will be capable of varying their language to make subtle and complex distinctions (e.g. formality and informality) with a wide array of native speakers.
4. Reading
 - . Students will be able to read and understand a wide range of academic resources and popular texts (print or online).
 - . Students will be able to understand the main ideas and supporting details when reading many works of literature and nonfiction with some assistance at times.
 - . Students will be able to recognize and appreciate the beauty and the richness of the written word.
5. Writing
 - . Students will be able to write academic texts that describe, relate, report, compare and contrast, analyze, and summarize with a high degree of precision and accuracy on a wide range of topics.
 - . Students will be able to distinguish between the written style and the spoken style, and will be able to use the written style effectively with some support.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

For our up-to-date attendance and exam policy, see: <https://moodle.iesabroad.org/mod/page/view.php?id=1004317>.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:



Students are expected to abide by the IES Abroad Academic Integrity Code. Assigned papers need to be properly and amply footnoted where appropriate, with all sources attributed. Poorly written and grammatically sloppy papers will be judged more severely. Work with a language tutor.

CONTENT:

Week	Content	Assignments and Readings (class preparation)
Week 1 INTRO	Session 1 • Introduction of the general principles of the course • Talking about life in a new city, first impressions and challenges • Watching Endlich August: Das ist Berlin and describing pictures and atmosphere • Making assumptions and phrasing expectations about a semester in Berlin • Written exchange about first Berlin impressions • Vocabulary: city life, personalities, comparisons, hospitality • Grammar: local prepositions, Wechselprepositionen, subordinate sentences (indirect questions, dass/weil-Sätze), comparisons, past tense	• Writing a diary entry (homework) • Leonard Thoma, „Mein Haus ist dein Haus“. In: <i>Das Idealpaar</i>. Hueber, Madrid, 2018, S. 9-11. • „Das Salz auf der Pizza.“ In: Leonard Thoma, <i>Der Hundetraum und andere Verwirrungen</i>. Hueber, Madrid, 2018, S. 13- 21.
Week 2 CONFLICTS & CHALLENGES	Session 2 • Describing a conflict • Performing a dialogue • Vocabulary: personalities, describing a person, changes, comparisons • Summarize a novel and write a short critique • Writing a blurb • Writing an (informal) email • Grammar: adjectives, participles 1 & 2, verbs with prepositions; adjectives	• Lena Töpler, <i>Novemberfotos</i>. Hueber, Madrid, 2015, S. 1-54. • Lena Töpler, <i>Novemberfotos</i>. Hueber, Madrid, 2015, S. 55-80. • 1#Portfolio Assignment: Buchrezension
Week 3 PLOTS & STORIES	Session 3 • Write about your daily routine • Write a newspapers article • Vocabulary: daily routine • Writing short texts in class based on photographs and other materials • Writing and performing an interview in class • Grammar: sentence structure, separable verbs, reflexive verbs	• Leonard Thoma, „Der 24. Oktober“. In: <i>Das Idealpaar</i>. Hueber, Madrid, 2018, S. 71-79. • 2#Portfolio Assignment: Write a letter or an email from Anas perspective. Actively use the new vocabulary (adjectives based on participles).

Week 4 CHARACTERS & CHARACTERIZATION	Session 4 - Continue reading easy short stories - Rewriting a dialogue - Vocabulary: description of personalities and attitudes - Reading an authentic short story - Exercises on a text: rewriting the end of a story - Grammar: indirect speech: Konjunktiv 1, past tense vs. present tense, when: wenn – wann – als	- Leonard Thoma, „Das Idealpaar“. In: <i>Das Idealpaar</i>. Hueber, Madrid, 2018, S. 65-70. - Leonard Thoma, „Das Mädchen im Zug“. In: <i>Das Idealpaar</i>. Hueber, Madrid, 2018, S. 21-24. - Nora Gantenbrink, „Nadine aus Barmbek-Süd“. In: <i>Neue Schule für die nächste Generation</i>. Hrsg. v. Leander Steinkopf, S. 73-86.
Week 5 NARRATIONS	Session 5 - Talking about challenges <i>What if...</i> alternative plots and endings - Performing scenes from literary texts - Discussing and identifying metaphors and topics - Creating metaphors - Inventing the title and writing a blurb - Grammar: Modalpartikeln, indirect speech: Konjunktiv 1, <i>What if...</i> Konjunktiv 2	- Leonard Thoma, „Dieb im Garten“. In: <i>Das Idealpaar</i>. Hueber, Madrid, 2018, S. 65-70. - Fatma Aydemir: <i>Ellenbogen</i>. In <i>einfacher Sprache</i>, Spaß am Lesen Verlag, Münster, 2020, S. 1-58. 3#Portfolio Assignment: What if character a) were to meet character b)? Write a short scene or dialogue.
Week 6 COLUMNS & COMMENTS	Session 6 - Reading and discussing (German) language and its changes and challenges - Creative definitions: inventing words and writing a fictitious dictionary entry - Creating metaphors on language - Reading and understanding an article - Summarizing and discussing comments on an article - Writing a comment - Grammar: relative clauses	- Leonard Thoma, „Der relaxte Outdoor Single“. In: <i>Das Idealpaar</i>. Hueber, Madrid, 2018, S. 65-70. Linh Reuter: Sprachbarrieren in Familien: Mein Vater spricht eine fremde Sprache - Jonë Zhitia: <i>Nadryw. Sprache fühlen</i>. Sukultur, Berlin, 2023. 4#Portfolio Assignment: Write a comment
Week 7 FILM & MIDTERM	Session 7 #1Quiz: Take Home Quiz (45 min) Excursion to movie theatre (tbd)	
Week 8 ESSAY & DEBATE	Session 8 - Inventing a complex situation or dilemma - Discussing solutions and their pros and cons - Dilemma - Studying and teaching at a German University - Assignments - Language - Expectations & conventions: Intercultural aspects	Themen zum Üben des Argumentierens - Writing a formal email to a professor (in-class) 5#Portfolio Assignment: Summarize and find a personal approach to a complex situation

	– Understanding German (academic) hierarchies and titles • FAQ • Vocabulary: Uni-specific Vocab, How to address a professor (and who is actually a “Professor” and who is not?)	
Week 9 ACADEMIA	Session 9 • Academic writing • Writing an email to a professor • Grammar: specifics of academic writing, prepositions and directions • Bibliography, citation, research • Formulating a research question • Reading an academic text • Vocab & Grammar: specifics of academic writing, comparisons, the verb <i>lassen</i>, prepositions and directions • #2Quiz (45 min)	• Start creating a vocabulary list of frequently used academic words • Katharina Walser, „Vorwort“. In: Dies. (Hg.) <i>(Nicht-)Urlaub. Sechs postmigrantische Erzählungen über Erholungsversuche und Care-Arbeit in den Ferien</i>. SuKuLTuR, Berlin, 2024, S. 5-12. • 6#Portfolio Assignment: Write an essayistic reflection on what vacation means to you
Week 10 DEBATES	Session 10 • Learn about different languages and their influence on perception • Vocabulary: special words, favorite words, untranslatable words • Intro to gender neutral German and it’s challenges • Learning about “Gender” and “gendern” in Germany • Grammar: How to avoid and where to expect gendered language?	• Reading Kübra Gümüsay, <i>Sprache und Sein</i>, Hanser, Berlin 2020, S. 11-25. • Reading an excerpt from the Novel <i>Dschinns</i> by Fatma Aydemir (Hanser, München, 2022): introduction to Turkish pronouns (in-class reading). • Gábor Paál: Wie gendert man elegant, ohne dass es auffällt? Geschickt gendern
Week 11 DEBATES & ACADEMIC WRITING	Session 11 • Vocabulary: Synonyms, genderneutral vocabulary • Expression of personal experiences, emotions, opinions on a complex and contemporary topic • Phrases and Vocab for Pro and contra argumentation • Summarizing a complex debate • Bibliography, citation • Comparing different views and experiences on a similar topic • Identifying and phrasing differences and parallels • Grammar: How to avoid and where to expect gendered language? • Grammar & Vocabulary: Comparisons	• Gender-Debatte: Pro-& Contra • Artikelsammlung zum Thema Gendern • Katharina Walser (Hg.), <i>(Nicht-)Urlaub. Sechs postmigrantische Erzählungen über Erholungsversuche und Care-Arbeit in den Ferien</i>. SuKuLTuR, Berlin, 2024, S. 12-29 (= six very short essayistic texts). • 7#Portfolio Assignment: Write an essay on the pros and cons of gender inclusive language, use citations and create a short bibliography.



Week 12	Session 12 FINAL EXAM & SEMESTER REVIEW	

REQUIRED READINGS (provided via moodle)

- Aydemir, Fatma, *Dschinns*, Hanser, München, 2022.
- Aydemir, Fatma: *Ellenbogen. In einfacher Sprache*, Spaß am Lesen Verlag, Münster, 2020.
- Gantenbrink, Nora, „Nadine aus Barmbek-Süd“. In: *Neue Schule für die nächste Generation*. Hrsg. v. Leander Steinkopf, S. 73-86.
- Gümüşay, Kübra, *Sprache und Sein*, Hanser, Berlin 2020,
- [Paál, Gábor: Wie gendert man elegant, ohne dass es auffällt?](#) In: *SWR Wissen*.
- [Reuter, Linh: Sprachbarrieren in Familien: Mein Vater spricht eine fremde Sprache](#). In: *ZE.IT*. 14.09.2023.
- Thoma, Leonard, *Das Idealpaar*. Hueber, Madrid, 2018.
- Thoma, Leonard, *Der Hundetraum und andere Verwirrungen*. Hueber, Madrid, 2018.
- Töpler, Lena, *Novemberfotos*. Hueber, Madrid, 2015.
- Walser, Katharina (Hg.), *(Nicht-)Urlaub. Sechs postmigrantische Erzählungen über Erholungsversuche und Care-Arbeit in den Ferien*. SuKuLTuR, Berlin, 2024.
- Zhitia, Jonë: *Nadryw. Sprache fühlen*. Sukultur, Berlin, 2023.

RECOMMENDED (Scans will be provided via moodle)

Friederike Jin und Ute Voß, *Grammatik aktiv A1-B1*. 2. aktualisierte Ausgabe. Cornelsen, Berlin, 2024.

11/2025