

THE CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES

Fall Semester 2008

Course Description and Syllabus

German 101 – Beginning German - Professor Orendi

Rhodes Tower 1627, Office Hours M/W/F 1:30 to 2:30

Some Information on our Textbook, other Materials, Procedures, Required Tasks, and Testing / Grading.

What is *Fokus Deutsch*?

Fokus Deutsch introduces students to the study of German language and culture through mini-dramas, contemporary and historical documentaries, and interviews with speakers of German. Embedded within are the stories of everyday people, who provide us with glimpses of German life and culture as they struggle with issues and problems familiar to us all.

The half-hour programs in the **Fokus Deutsch** series, along with the coordinated print materials and audiocassette program comprise a college-level introductory German language telecourse. The first 12 Chapters (Level 1) address vocabulary, topics, and structures for basic communication in German. They present German language study through mini-dramas combined with comments from guest speakers of German and archival and contemporary film and video footage. [The more advanced second-and-third-year chapters continue many of the topics presented in the first level with a more in-depth focus]. The initial programs present interviews and historical and contemporary documentary footage organized around topics such as leisure time, food, youth, the world of work, economics, lifestyles, schools, university, health care, and the women's movement, among others.

Each half-hour program in the **Fokus Deutsch**-course is divided into two fifteen-minute episodes and contains time codes on the videos which make it easy to find specific segments. After every third episode there is a 15-minute review so that students are presented with manageable segments of German language material.

The Program's Objectives and Methods:

The **Fokus Deutsch** series develops a simple concept as its framework: A young German student (Marion Koslowski) comes to the United States to help an American professor develop a contemporary German language course that focuses on historical and cultural studies. Together, through the videos, they teach German language and culture, as they present a variety of issues important to German-speaking people today and offer insights into the historical concepts of these topics.

The mini-dramas making up the series are presented in the form of a relay, in which a character from one mini-drama appears in the next series of stories, taking the viewer through various cultural scenarios.

In this series, learners focus on the “Five C’s of Foreign Language Education:”

1 and 2) **Communication and Cultures**: learners communicate in German in meaningful contexts that explain German-speaking cultures

3) **Connections**: the various learning activities encourage students to connect their language studies with other disciplines and their personal lives.

4) **Comparisons**: **Fokus Deutsch** helps students realize the interrelationship between language and culture and to compare the German-speaking world with their own.

5) **Community**: the program offers many opportunities to relate to communities of German-speaking peoples through a variety of interactive resources, including the Internet.

Classroom Procedures, Testing and Grading:

As is obvious from the program description above, German 101 is a course where the development of various skills is the predominant objective. A skill can be learned and perfected only with a “hands-on” method. This means that students have to be in class to develop the skills needed to learn a foreign language: understanding, speaking, reading, and writing are the major skills students begin to master in beginning language courses such as GER 101. In order to learn in the most efficient way, students have to be exposed to hearing, listening, speaking, reading and writing in the target language German as much as possible. This occurs consistently during the 65 minutes of class time in which the participants view visual materials (videos), practice grammar lessons, complete oral and written exercises, and communicate in the target language. The tasks required of students are the following: imitate the initially foreign sounds of the words to practice good pronunciation, memorize the spelling of words (German words frequently sound like English ones, but their spelling is different), understand and memorize the complex grammatical structures of the German language, and understand and converse about information on German culture, i.e. German history, the arts, politics, food, and traditions and customs.

To obtain as much contact with German as possible, students are expected to be in class every time; attendance is mandatory, and more than three unexcused absences result in lowering of the course grade. Even with perfect attendance, students do not have sufficient exposure to the language to guarantee good learning results. This is where the audio materials and the language laboratory come in: students are expected to spend a minimum of two hours a week in the lab (located on the third floor of University Library) and work on the exercises in the lab manual that accompanies their textbook **Fokus Deutsch**. All pages of a lesson --containing grammar, listening/comprehension, and writing/pronunciation exercises—are to be filled out by the time the chapter test is administered. Students then hand in completed work, and the instructor grades and returns the materials. At the end of each lesson, a comprehensive exam, consisting of written and oral parts is administered (in the syllabus the date for the exam would be the last day listed for each particular lesson).

Instructors may also choose to quiz students orally or in writing at the beginning of class to check on assigned tasks such as memorization of vocabulary, grammar structures, etc.

The final course grade takes into account: attendance, participation in class, quality of written homework, specifically the lab sheets, quiz and lesson test grades, and the grade received in the comprehensive final exam (a two-hour test).

Here is a Brief Overview of Work to be done in GER 101 during the Fifteen Weeks of Fall Semester 2008:

Week I: August 25 :

Einführung (Introductions to sounds, alphabet, initial vocabulary, etc.)

August 27: Orientation Session to IMS (Instructional media Lab) Students please come

Directly to Library Room 301; do not come to regular classroom; this session is mandatory.

August 29: Complete “Einführung”

Week II and III: September 3 to 12 (N.B. Monday, 09/01 NoClass; Labor Day)

Lesson 1 “Arbeitslos” (Unemployed) We meet the Koslowskis, learn about family relationships, study plurals, write descriptions, facts about German cities.

Week IV and V: September 15 to 26:

Lesson 2 “Kein Geld” (No Money) Life in a German family, their leisure time.

Colors, leisure activities, possessive pronouns, writing a letter in German.

Week VI and VII: September 29 to October 10

Lesson 3 “Wie geht es Papa” (How is dad?) Marion copes with the family’s move to Cologne. Names of rooms, negations, Concepts of “Heim” and “Heimat”.

Week VIII: October 15-17 (No Class October 13; Columbus Day)

“Wiederholung” (Review)

Review vocabulary, grammar structures and cultural information of previous three chapters/lessons.

Week IX and X: October 23 to 31:

Lesson 4 “Der Umzug nach Köln“ (Moving to Cologne) Asking Questions, dates, ordinal numbers, writing e-mails in German, more about Cologne.

Week XI and XII: November 3 to 14:

Lesson 5 “Das Karnevalsfest” (Mardi Gras in Germany)

Names of holidays, talking about weather, German poetry, favorite festivals.

Also: Course Evaluations.

Week XIII and XIV: November 17 to 26 (N.B. Friday, 11/28 No Class)

Lesson 6 “Der Unfall” (The Accident) Marion winds up in the hospital. Names of parts of the body, talk about hospitals and doctors. Tips for better health as practiced in Germany and Austria.

Week XV: December 1 to 5:

Wiederholung 2 (Review 2)

Final Exam: Monday, December 12, 8:30 – 10:30 am