

German 701S

Introductory German for Grad Students in Engineering

Spring 2026

Instructor: Maya von und zur Mühlen (she/her)
E-Mail: maya.vonundzurmuhlen@duke.edu
Time: Fri 3:05 - 4:20pm
Location: Zoom / Old Chem 119, Duke West Campus
Office Hours: By appointment. Zoom or in Old Chem 116, Duke West Campus

Course Description

German 701S is a half-credit course designed as an introduction to German language and culture, intended for students preparing to attend a graduate level summer engineering program in German.

Course Objectives

By the end of this semester you should be able to:

- participate in basic verbal interactions in German
- understand basic written and oral information in German
- navigate everyday life in Germany with a keen awareness of cultural norms

Class Materials

There is no required textbook. All participants will benefit from free access to the online platform Der, Die, Das.

Grading and Assignments

Preparation and Participation	70%
Final Pair Presentation	30%

Participation means to come prepared to class and to be engaged in in-class exercises.

Preparation and Participation: Every week, I will list the exercises to complete for the following week, as well as vocabulary to learn.

Presentation: Cultural Group Presentation

On the last day of class which will take place in person, everyone will present in groups of 2 on a topic of their choice pertaining to German culture. The presentation should be on an aspect of German culture that is particularly interesting to you (food, habits, stereotypes, transportation, music, literature etc.). On the day of the presentation, you will present for about 5 minutes on your chosen topic. You will then lead the discussion for about 10 minutes, with some questions for the class or even activities if you wish. You are welcome to bring in creative aspects to the

presentation e.g. bringing food, playing music etc. depending on the theme. Try to find a topic you both find interesting and have fun with it! The group presentations will take place on April 10th. A detailed handout about the presentation is available on canvas.

Syllabus

Week	Topics
Week 1: January 9th	Willkommen im Kurs
Week 2: January 16th	Topic 1: Small talk Language focus: subject pronouns + present tense verbs + <i>haben</i> and <i>sein</i> present tense + basic word order + W-questions and yes-no questions
Week 3: January 23rd	<i>First in-person meeting. Old Chem 119. Followed by coffee at Perk Café.</i> Topic 2: Public transportation in Germany Language focus: telling time + <i>wo</i> and <i>wohin</i> + prepositions
Week 4: January 30th	Topic 3: Daily routines Language focus: genders and cases (nominative, accusative)
Week 5: February 6th	Topic 4: Shopping and ordering, Politeness in Germany Language focus: modal verbs + <i>gern</i> + du vs Sie
Week 6: February 13th	Topic 5: Food and Eating out Language focus: definite and indefinite articles + negation
Week 7: February 20th	Topic 6: Healthcare Language focus: possessives + dative
Week 8: February 26th <i>Thursday class at 4-15-5:15pm</i>	Topic 7: East and West Germany. Historical background and today Language focus: <i>haben</i> and <i>sein</i> past tense + conversational past
Week 9: March 6th	Topic 8: German cities and geography Language focus: general grammar review, adapted to student needs
March 13th: Spring Break	No Class

Week 10: March 20th	Topic 9: German politics: political parties, current debates, keywords Language focus: general grammar review, adapted to student needs
Week 11: March 27th <i>Class at 4:15-5:30pm</i> <i>Dinner at 6pm</i>	<i>Second in-person meeting. Old Chem 119. Followed by dinner at Guglhupf.</i> Topic 10: German linguistic diversity Language focus: spoken German, dialects, slang, <i>Denglisch</i> , <i>Jugendsprache</i>
Week 12: April 3rd	<i>Third in-person meeting. Duke Gardens.</i> Topic 11: Ice Breakers & spontaneous conversation practice Language focus: practice past tenses (discussing spring break) + practice orientation + learn descriptions (colors, shapes)
Week 13: April 10th	<i>Fourth in-person meeting. Old Chem 119.</i> Group Presentations

Resources for Learning German

Useful Links

- Language learning tools: [Duolingo](#), [Memrise](#), [Transparent Language](#)
- Grammar explanations: [Dartmouth](#), [German in Review](#) (library)
- Online dictionary: [Pons](#) (for translations), [Duden](#) (for German definitions) [Leo.org](#) (for verb conjugations)
- Bilingual search engine: [Linguee](#)
- German news: [Deutsche Welle](#), [Tagesschau](#)
- Podcasts: [Deutsch lernen](#), [Langsame Nachrichten](#), [Slow German](#)

Tutoring

The German Studies Department offers free tutoring! The tutor, Joseph Lund (joseph.lund@duke.edu), offers sessions in Old Chem 116, walk ins welcome every Tue 11-12pm (zoom); Thurs 12-2pm (in-person), and by appointment.

Kaffeestunde

The German Studies Department holds a weekly Kaffeestunde for students at all levels of German. Undergraduate and graduate students chat in German in an informal setting with

drinks and snacks. This spring, Kaffeestunde will be held regularly in the lobby of Old Chem. Hours will change every month to allow all students to attend. For more information, contact the Language Corridor Advisors, Maya von und zur Mühlen (maya.vonundzurmuhlen@duke.edu) and Achim Schmid (achim.schmid@duke.edu).

Majoring and Minorin

For information about majoring or minorin in German, please contact Prof. Mert Bahadır Reisoglu, Director of Undergraduate Studies (mert.reisoglu@duke.edu).

Study Abroad in Berlin

The Duke Global Education Office (GEO) and the German Studies Department offer a variety of academic programs in Berlin, both in the fall and spring semesters, along with a four-week, one-course summer program. For more information, please contact Andrea Larson (andrea.larson@duke.edu) or Tin Wegel (christina.wegel@duke.edu). See also the following pages on the [Berlin Program](#) and [Berlin Summer Program](#).

Policies

Duke Community Standard

You are expected to understand and adhere to all university policies on academic honesty. Please review the [Duke Community Standard](#).

Attendance

Attendance is expected for all class meetings. If you have any questions or issues, including needing to miss class, please communicate with me. I will be flexible whenever possible. You are permitted **two unexcused absences**. Beyond that, there will be a one-point reduction on your final grade for each unexcused absence.

Your absence is excused in the following cases:

- **You are temporarily incapacitated by an illness** and cannot attend class. You must submit the "Incapacitated Form" via email as soon as possible and no later than the evening of the missed class. Please note that this form should be used sparingly and in accordance with the Duke Community Standard of Academic Integrity. For the university's short-term illness policy and the incapacitated form, please see: <https://trinity.duke.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies/illness>. You may not submit more than three incapacitated forms without permission from your dean.
- **You are participating in a varsity athletic competition.** You must provide your professor with the official letter identifying you as a varsity athlete at the beginning of the semester. At least one week prior to any out of town athletic competition you must submit the "Notification of Varsity Athletic Participation" (NOVAP).

- **You are observing a religious holiday.** Submit the “Religious Observance Notification Form” prior to your absence in order to make arrangements for completion of missed work. For more information, see below under *Accommodations for Religious Observance and Holidays*.
- **Your instructor receives notification from your academic dean.** If you experience a personal emergency or suffer from a long-term or chronic illness that means you will miss class, contact your academic dean and ask him or her to notify your instructor.

Please do not come to class if you have symptoms related to COVID-19, have had a known exposure to COVID-19, or have tested positive for COVID-19. If any of these situations apply to you, you must follow university guidance related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and current health and safety protocols.

Please review [Duke’s Policy on Attendance and Missed Work](#) for further information on excused and unexcused absences.

Academic Accommodations

[The Student Disability Access Office \(SDAO\)](#) is available to ensure that students are able to engage with their courses and related assignments. Students can contact the SDAO to request or update accommodations.

Religious Accommodations

Students are permitted by university policy to be absent from class to observe a religious holiday. Please review [the policy](#) and submit requests for religious accommodations at the beginning of the semester so that we can work to make suitable arrangements well ahead of time.

Mental Health and Wellness

Student mental health and wellness are of primary importance at Duke, and the university provides resources to support students in managing daily stress and self-care. Duke offers several resources for students to seek assistance on coursework and to nurture daily habits that support overall well-being, including [DukeReach](#), [CAPS](#), [TimelyCare](#).