

German 301: Conversation and Composition

Fall 2021

Student Learning Outcomes

1) Students will expand their active vocabulary to better express personal meaning with more nuance and complexity in a variety of contexts and writing genres.

- *Where the outcome is practiced:* students encounter new vocabulary items in each unit and in authentic texts; they are practiced and rehearsed through in-class activities, homework and writing assignments, topical readings, quizzes and tests. Students work in small groups to craft their own definitions of key terms and concepts. Vocabulary expansion in 301 is driven by the cultural topics covered and the requirements of particular reading assignments.
- *How achievement of or progress toward the outcome is evaluated:* in-class discussions allow instructors to assess the degree to which students have understood and can utilize the vocabulary introduced in a reading. Students complete a task (oral or written) or write a brief essay on a topic that requires them to use new vocabulary items in context. Successful students are able to use new vocabulary items accurately to create meaning in a variety of situations.
- *Primary alignment with departmental student learning goals:* language proficiency
- *Primary alignment with mission statement elements:* 2c and 2d (clear written and oral expression)
- *Distribution outcome alignment:* develop linguistic tools

2) Students will be able to employ previously learned grammatical structures accurately in speaking and writing.

- *Where the outcome is practiced:* based on students' oral and written work, the instructor assigns passages from the grammar textbook covering the most pervasive and urgent grammatical structures. Students encounter these grammatical structures again in topical readings and listening exercises. They practice using them through in-class activities, homework, writing assignments, quizzes and tests.
- *How achievement of or progress toward the outcome is evaluated:* students produce writing that employs the grammatical structures in question, which allows the instructor to identify whether they are being used accurately. Students manipulate sentences so that the new sentence employs a certain grammatical structure. Students are given a set of sentence elements and are asked to create sentences that employ a certain sentence

structure. Example: reviewing the simple past in context. What was life like in post-war Germany? How did people acquire food, shelter, fuel, and basic necessities? How did people come to terms with the guilt of the war and the Holocaust?

- *Primary alignment with departmental student learning goals:* language proficiency
- *Primary alignment with mission statement elements:* 2c and 2d (clear written and oral expression)
- *Distribution outcome alignment:* develop linguistic tools

3) Students will be able to read, derive meaning from, interpret, and evaluate longer, more challenging texts.

- *Where the outcome is practiced:* each cultural topic includes readings in a variety of formats and genres – some journalistic, some literary, and so on – that are accompanied by a glossary, comprehension questions, and reflection questions. Students practice reading in class and on their own, and the readings provide a basis for discussions, activities, and assignments. Students regularly write responses to comprehension and reflection questions. Essays and other written assignments require students to reflect on, interpret, and evaluate what they read.
- *How achievement of or progress toward the outcome is evaluated:* comprehension questions allow instructors to identify how well students have understood the information conveyed in the text. Reflection questions assess to what extent students are able to respond to the more general questions and ideas that a text raises. Writing assignments allow instructors to assess how well students can interpret and evaluate texts.
- *Primary alignment with departmental student learning goals:* language proficiency, cultural proficiency, academic skills
- *Primary alignment with mission statement elements:* 2b (critical thinking), 4a and 4b (engaging cultural differences), 5a and 5b (global society), 8b (sensitivity, judgment, compassion)
- *Distribution outcome alignment:* develop linguistic tools, understand elements that distinguish cultures

4) Students will become more competent and confident speakers and writers of German, typically at an intermediate-high to advanced-low level

- *Where the outcome is practiced:* students carry out intermediate-high to advanced-low speaking tasks through in-class activities that ask them to negotiate for meaning with a peer or with the instructor. In class, students use language spontaneously, in unscripted interactions during group or partner work. Students practice writing through homework and writing assignments and writing competence is assessed through test prompts and reflection questions that ask students to produce coherent paragraph-level and essay-level discourse in German.
- *How achievement of or progress toward the outcome is evaluated:* Writing assignments allow instructors to identify how proficiently students can create and convey meaning in writing. Successful students can summarize texts and ideas, narrate in different time frames, express opinions and argumentation, and generate paragraph-level and essay-level discourse while showing evidence of ability to control complex sentence structure and verb forms. In-class interactions allow instructors to identify how proficiently students can convey personal meaning through speech.
- *Primary alignment with departmental student learning goals:* language proficiency
- *Primary alignment with mission statement elements:* 2c and 2d (clear written and oral expression)
- *Distribution outcome alignment:* develop linguistic tools

5) Students explore an array of cultural topics that will deepen their understanding of German, Swiss, and Austrian culture

- *Where the outcome is practiced:* each unit is organized around a primary text dealing with major historical periods in German-speaking culture (e.g., the Weimar Republic, Nazism, the Cold War, and German Reunification) and includes readings, vocabulary, activities, and discussion questions related to the topic. Both the homework assignments and the in-class activities are based on concepts introduced through the readings and are also practiced in essays. For example, after learning about a topic relating to the Weimar Republic era, such as urbanization, political radicalism, conspiracy theories, or female liberation, students will be asked to complete a follow-up activity: e.g., summarize two competing viewpoints, set those viewpoints in a fictional dialogue between two Germans with different political views, draft a letter to the editor of the local paper, or write about integration from a minority community perspective. Students then choose one of these topics to expand upon in an essay.

- *How achievement of or progress toward the outcome is evaluated:* written responses, for assignments and essays, allow instructors to identify whether students have understood the cultural materials, the extent to which they have retained the information in those materials, and their ability to reflect on the questions and issues raised in the materials.
- *Primary alignment with departmental student learning goal:* language proficiency, cultural proficiency, academic skills, contextualization within cultural and intellectual history
- *Primary alignment with mission statement elements:* 2b (critical thinking), 4a and 4b (engaging cultural differences), 5a and 5b (global society), 8b (sensitivity, judgment, compassion)
- *Distribution outcome alignment:* develop linguistic tools, understand elements that distinguish cultures

Distribution SLO Breakdown (approved Spring 2021)

II. Composition and World Languages (2 or 3 credits)

B. World Languages (1 or 2 credits)

Students who successfully complete the World Languages requirement will be able to:

1. develop the linguistic tools to understand and/or communicate in another language;
2. understand elements that distinguish cultures, modern or classical, from one another and be able to compare cultural perspectives

Departmental Student Learning Goals as revised in 2017

1. **Language proficiency:** to enable students to negotiate meaning in a language other than their own.
2. **Cultural proficiency:** to understand and appreciate the experiences, values, perceptions, and behaviors of people from diverse cultural communities, and to become self-aware in the presence of other cultures.
3. **Contextualization within cultural and intellectual history:** to understand the historical development of culture
4. **Literary interpretation:** to interpret and analyze works of literature in the target language

5. Diachronic and synchronic comparisons and connections

Mission Statement Breakdown

1. a. Its mission is excellence in teaching and learning
 b. within a community built on close and caring relationships among students, faculty, and staff.
2. a. Wabash offers qualified young men a superior education, fostering, in particular, independent intellectual inquiry,
 b. critical thought,
 c. and clear written
 d. and oral expression.
3. a. The College educates its students broadly in the traditional curriculum of the liberal arts,
 b. while also requiring them to pursue concentrated study in one or more disciplines.
4. a. Wabash emphasizes our manifold, but shared cultural heritage. Our students come from diverse economic, social, and cultural backgrounds;
 b. the College helps these students engage these differences and live humanely with them.
5. a. Wabash also challenges its students to appreciate the changing nature of the global society
 b. and prepares them for the responsibilities of leadership and service in it.
6. a. The College carries out its mission in a residential setting
 b. in which students take personal and group responsibility for their actions.
7. a. Wabash provides for its students an unusually informal, egalitarian, and participatory environment which encourages young men to adopt a life of
 b. intellectual and creative growth,
 c. self-awareness,

- d. and physical activity.
- 8.
- a. The College seeks to cultivate qualities of character and leadership in students by developing not only their analytic skills,
 - b. but also sensitivity to values, and judgment and compassion required of citizens living in a difficult and uncertain world.
- 9.
- a. We expect a Wabash education to bring joy in the life of the mind,
 - b. to reveal the pleasures in the details of common experience,
 - c. and to affirm the necessity for and rewards in helping others