

Student Assessment Plan
German Program
Foreign Language Department
(updated May 2011 by Wayne Oudekerk)

A. Learning Goals and Direct Assessment Tools for Courses Currently Being Taught

The following groupings reflect the varying functions of the different courses within the current German program offerings.

I. Elementary German Courses (German 110 and 120: language skills courses)

Learning goals: the acquisition of the vocabulary and grammatical structures necessary to

- ask and answer a wide variety of questions in German
- express simple thoughts and ideas in short conversations
- converse on a variety of everyday topics such as hobbies, personal interests, and college life
- read a variety of short German texts with relative ease

Direct assessment tools currently used:

- chapter tests and quizzes (7-8 total each semester)
- workbooks (one chapter bi-weekly, 7-8 total each semester)
- journal entries (one for each chapter, 11 total)
- lists of roughly 40 sample questions and answers for most chapters
- comprehensive final exam

II. Intermediate Composition and Conversation (German 210: a content-based language skills course)

Learning goals:

- build student mastery of German grammar through systematic review of important forms and concepts in the language
- increase significantly students' active and passive German vocabulary
- promote acquisition of specific geographical, historical, social, and political insights concerning the German people and their culture

Direct assessment tools currently used:

- chapter tests and quizzes (6 total)
- short essays (4 total)
- oral tests on individual vocabulary lists (5 total)
- comprehensive final exam

III. Masterpieces of German Cultural History (German 230: a culture / language skills course)

Learning goals

- introduce students to a broad sampling of the rich German cultural tradition in art, architecture, music, film and literature
- furnish students with historical, social, political, and philosophical insights which will enrich your appreciation and enjoyment of German culture
- continue student progress in mastering the four basic skills, with a special focus on vocabulary growth and writing skills
- address random grammatical difficulties normally encountered at the fourth-semester level

Direct assessment tools currently used:

- grammar tests (2 total)
- short essays (5 total)
- oral tests on individual vocabulary lists (5 total)
- graded poetry reading
- graded classroom presentation
- graded film critique
- midterm examination
- comprehensive final exam

IV. Advance Composition and Conversation

Learning goals:

- promote the mastery of German idioms and turns of speech
- increase understanding of fine semantic distinctions in the language
- raise confidence in the students' abilities to present content orally in the target language
- improve writing skills and grammatical and semantic accuracy

Direct assessment tools currently used:

- textbook-based vocabulary and structure tests (3 total)
- short essays (4 total)
- oral tests on individual lists of idiomatic expressions (6 total)
- oral classroom presentations (3 total)
- comprehensive final exam

V. Survey of German Literature and Civilization, Parts I and II (German 320 and 330)

Learning goals:

- foster appreciation of a broad sampling of German Literature
- provide students with specific historical, social, political, and aesthetic insights and background information which will enrich your understanding of German culture in general
- help students gain an overview of the major periods of German cultural history
- furnish students with new analytical and research tools for the study of German literature

Direct assessment tools currently used:

- essays (3 total)
- graded classroom presentation
- midterm examinations (2 total)
- comprehensive final exam

V. Contemporary German Civilization (German 395: a study of post-war German society)

Learning goals:

- acquisition of an overview of historical events in Germany from WWI to the present
- rudimentary understanding of key societal institutions in Germany (from the fields of education, economics, the media, politics, religion, the environment, and daily life)
- mastery of the German vocabulary needed to deal with these concepts

Direct assessment tools currently used:

- essays (3 total)
- graded classroom presentation
- midterm examinations (2 total)
- final exam

VI. Senior Seminar in German Literary History (German 420)

Learning goals:

- acquire a thorough overview of German political and cultural history up to reunification
- review key concepts used in literary analysis
- formulate an overview of key literary epochs, with a special focus on those which have hitherto received little attention in the students' other coursework

Direct assessment tools currently used:

- examination on German history
- examination on literary analysis skills
- papers (3 total)
- graded classroom presentation
- examination on German literary history

VII. German Culture through Film (German 490)

Learning goals:

- acquire an increased understanding of 20th century German history and culture through a focused, structured examination of German cinema
- become more critical and aware viewers of German film
- improve our ability to speak and write about film in German

Direct assessment tools currently used:

- papers (2 total)
- research presentation in class ("backgrounder")
- oral and written film critique
- midterm exam
- final exam

B. Plan for Annual Assessment

I. Each year, graduating senior majors take three examinations in German 420: these, along with the results of the Goethe Institute language proficiency test, constitute together the German program senior comprehensive examination.

II. Each semester, one course in the German program will be evaluated with the help of both midterm and final evaluations completed anonymously by the students.

C. Long-term Assessment of the German Major

In the fall of 2009, a comprehensive survey was sent to all Hendrix students who graduated with a major in German over the past roughly 15 years, polling their feelings about the program and how

successful it was in preparing them for their subsequent professional and personal endeavors. Slightly more than half of all graduates responded. The results were overwhelmingly positive, both from those who continue to use German for professional and / or personal reasons and from those who do not.