

Comparative Bantu Grammar (A005573)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings in academic year 2025-2026

A (semester 2)	English	Gent
B (semester 2)	English	Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026

Dom, Sebastian	LW21	lecturer-in-charge
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Offered in the following programmes in 2025-2026

	crdts	offering
Master of Science in Teaching in Languages (main subject African Languages and Cultures)	5	A
Master of Arts in African Studies	5	A
Master of Arts in Advanced Studies in Linguistics (main subject Linguistics in a Comparative Perspective)	5	A
Exchange Programme African Languages and Cultures	5	A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

Bantu grammar; comparative linguistics; language typology; areal linguistics; tense, aspect and mood/modality; verbal derivation; information structure; Niger-Congo; Nilo-Saharan; Khoisan

Position of the course

This is an advanced course in comparative linguistics and language typology that aims at offering students in-depth knowledge of certain grammatical aspects of Bantu languages in contrast with one another and with other African languages.

Contents

This course focuses on various domains of grammar which are of utmost importance for the scientific study of Bantu languages, such as the expression of tense, aspect, mood and modality, grammatical relations (including subjecthood and objecthood), the syntax and semantics of verbal derivation, the interface between information structure, syntax and prosody, and other grammatical ingredients. Through state-of-the-art literature both inside and outside the field of Bantu languages students will be able to familiarize themselves with the latest developments in the field. Through the contrastive study of African languages belonging to either distinct families of the Niger-Congo phylum or to other phyla, students will learn to consider grammatical features of Bantu languages in a broader typological perspective. Their insights into Bantu grammar will also lead to a better understanding of non-Bantu languages. Knowledge of Bantu languages or other African languages is an advantage, but not a prerequisite to follow this course.

Each week students will be asked to read one or more journal articles or book chapters as preparation for the lesson. The contents of these chapters will be discussed during class and put in a broader perspective. Each student will be required to present in class one research article/chapter of his/her choice from a

list provided in advance.

Initial competences

Bachelor in African languages and cultures, Bachelor in Linguistics or equivalent.

Final competences

An advanced knowledge and understanding of African language structures and their typological diversity.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Seminar, Independent work, Peer teaching

Study material

Type: Handbook

Name: The Bantu Languages (2nd edition)

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : English

Author : Van de Velde, Mark & Bostoën, Koen & Nurse, Derek & Philippson, Gérard

Available in the Library : Yes

Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : intensive

References

Apart from the compulsory reading materials, no specific references.

Course content-related study coaching

Feedback in class.

Assessment moments

continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

not applicable

Calculation of the examination mark

40% permanent evaluation (class participation, advance reading of provided literature, class presentation of journal article/book chapter of student's choice).

60% research paper in which the in-depth knowledge of Bantu and non-Bantu grammar that was acquired in this course is applied to one or more Bantu languages of the student's choice, whether or not in comparison with one or more African languages not belonging to the Bantu family (minimum 6000 words, maximum 10,000 words, excluding bibliography and appendix).

Facilities for Working Students

Yes.