GHENT UNIVERSITY

Course Specifications

Valid as from the academic year 2026-2027

German: Contemporary Problems (A005747)

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

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 1)	German	Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Benzing, Carolin Juliane	LW07	staff member
Lemey, Ruth	LW22	staff member
Martens, Gunther	LW07	lecturer-in-charge
Breitbarth, Anne	LW06	co-lecturer
Decock, Sofie	LW22	co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027	crdts	offering
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - German)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Applied Language Studies: a combination of at least two languages(main subject Dutch, English, French)	4	A
Bachelor of Arts in Applied Language Studies: a combination of at least two languages(main subject Dutch, English, German)	4	A
Bachelor of Arts in Applied Language Studies: a combination of at least two languages(main subject Dutch, English, Italian)	4	A
Bachelor of Arts in Applied Language Studies: a combination of at least two languages(main subject Dutch, English, Language Technology)	4	A
Bachelor of Arts in Applied Language Studies: a combination of at least two languages(main subject Dutch, English, Russian)	4	A
Bachelor of Arts in Applied Language Studies: a combination of at least two languages(main subject Dutch, English, Spanish)	4	A
Bachelor of Arts in Applied Language Studies: a combination of at least two languages(main subject Dutch, English, Turkish)	4	A
Bachelor of Arts in Applied Language Studies: a combination of at least two languages(main subject Dutch, French, German)	4	A
Bachelor of Arts in Applied Language Studies: a combination of at least two languages(main subject Dutch, French, Italian)	4	A
Bachelor of Arts in Applied Language Studies: a combination of at least two languages(main subject Dutch, French, Language Technology)	4	A
Bachelor of Arts in Applied Language Studies: a combination of at least two languages(main subject Dutch, French, Russian)	4	A
Bachelor of Arts in Applied Language Studies: a combination of at least two languages(main subject Dutch, French, Spanish)	4	A
Bachelor of Arts in Applied Language Studies: a combination of at least two languages(main subject Dutch, French, Turkish)	4	A
Bachelor of Arts in Applied Language Studies: a combination of at least two languages(main subject Dutch, German, Italian)	4	A
Bachelor of Arts in Applied Language Studies: a combination of at least two languages(main subject Dutch, German, Language Technology)	4	A
Bachelor of Arts in Applied Language Studies: a combination of at least two languages(main subject Dutch, German, Russian)	4	A
Bachelor of Arts in Applied Language Studies: a combination of at least two languages(main subject Dutch, German, Spanish)	4	A
Bachelor of Arts in Applied Language Studies: a combination of at least two languages(main subject Dutch, German, Turkish)	4	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - German)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - German)	5	A

Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German - Greek)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German - Italian)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German - Spanish)	5	A
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German - Swedish)	5	A
Exchange Programme Linguistics and Literature	5	A
Linking Course Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German)	5	A
Preparatory Course Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - German)	5	A
Preparatory Course Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - German)	5	A
Preparatory Course Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - German)	5	A
Preparatory Course Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German)	5	A
Preparatory Course Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German - Italian)	5	A
Preparatory Course Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German - Spanish)	5	A

Teaching languages

German

Keywords

Social issues; German-speaking world; interdisciplinarity; project

Position of the course

This course unit is aimed at students from the Language and Literature (language combinations with German) and Applied Linguistics (language combinations with German) programs who do not undertake an Erasmus stay in the first semester of their third bachelor year. The course offers these students the opportunity to approach important societal challenges from an interdisciplinary perspective (and in conversation with German-speaking scholars from other disciplines) on a deeper level. The course is also expressly open to incoming Erasmus students who have a sufficient command of the German language, thus helping to enhance the international and intercultural competencies of all participants.

Contents

The skills you develop when studying a language have a much broader application than you might first suspect. They also help us to think critically about and actively engage think about and actively engage (project-based) with pressing contemporary social issues, such as poverty, migration, sustainability and ecological diversity, violence, new forms of society, death and mortality, etc. In this course, we therefore bring together targeted students with diverse profiles; we ask them to make their own disciplinary contributions, but also to discover their blind spots through dialogue with other students.
After the general introduction, we invite (via digital means) a number of guest speakers who, in German and in relation to the German-speaking world, will highlight the way in which their specific discipline (e.g., law, criminology, economics, psychology, pedagogy, (animal) medicine, history, moral science, political science, sociology, etc.) approaches the chosen language-related social problem. In preparation, participating students read an accessible introductory text, which helps them engage in conversation with the guest speaker. After this interdisciplinary confrontation, the students engage in a project on their own, under the guidance of a mentor. The exact organization of this project work depends on the number of participants. With a small number of participants, students work sequentially on two (literary and linguistic) or three modules (literary, linguistic and applied linguistics), in which they build on their own training either in an entrepreneurial sense or in a responding sense in which, building on their own training, they become involved in shared project development either in an entrepreneurial or responsive sense. With a larger number of participants, instructors may opt for parallel modules.
In the final lesson, students present their main findings on the selected topical problem and engage in a dialogue about it with each other and with the teachers.
For partim B: applied linguistics students who take this course during the first

semester of the third model track complete a modified program, where they do not have to complete a proportional part of the interdisciplinary part (including the reader) and of the modular part of the course (paper and participation).

Initial competences

Participating students have a good active and passive knowledge of German and are able to demonstrate speaking, writing and conversation skills both prepared and spontaneously. They have a sound basic knowledge of their scientific discipline (literature, linguistics, applied linguistics) and are able (through previously acquired familiarity with methodological questions) to engage in interdisciplinary dialogue.

Final competences

1 To be able to apply advanced knowledge of the (inter)cultural and institutional backgrounds of the contemporary German-speaking world to communicative situations
2 To be able to extract and process information from a variety of written, audiovisual and electronic sources. To be able to draw on scientific results from other disciplines and engage in in-depth conversation with scientists from other disciplines
3 To be able to apply thorough knowledge of German (reading, listening, speaking, carrying on a conversation, writing)
4 To be able to put into practice advanced methods of scientific analysis from their own discipline
5 To be able to work out a project individually or with others and report on it in advanced German in a presentation
6 To be able to write a paper on one's own project in academic German; to handle research techniques independently and creatively, including their application to new data
7 To be able to adequately reflect on social, scientific and ethical problems
8 To be able to use genAI in an advanced and responsible way to write texts

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, Excursion, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

15h seminar
15h group work and peer teaching
10-15h independent work
0-5h excursion.
Given the interactive nature of the seminar, lecture recordings are not made available by default. They need to be requested, but will only be made available as far as possible and as far as allowed by the international guest speakers.

Study material

Type: Slides

Name: slides and digital text files will be distributed via Ufora
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: yes
Additional information: The reading list will be communicated via Ufora. All texts are available in digital editions online. The recommended paper editions are convenient for page references in class and can always be found in the library.

References

Course content-related study coaching

Individual and group tutoring.

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

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

Assignment

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

Presentation, Assignment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Professional practice, Participation, Presentation

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible in modified form

Extra information on the examination methods

Continuous assessment (CA): : group work (group lecture) or individual work (individual lecture), excursion and participation (discussion, opposition group).
ETA: written task of about 2000 words. Achieving the desired level of language proficiency is explicitly among the final objectives of this course. This skill is supported through feedback on speaking and writing tasks, self-study and self-tests at the beginning and end of the end of each semester.

Calculation of the examination mark

Continuous assessment: 60%
Of which 20% for participation and project, and 40 % for the presentation.
ETA: 40% for the paper
A passing grade for the entire course unit is possible only for those who achieve a performance for each of the evaluation components. If not, the student will receive the highest non-passable grade (7/20) as an evaluation.
Students who make an extra effort under the “Bonus Program” (workplace experience, interview) and report on it may acquire an extra point (1/20).

Facilities for Working Students

1 Although attendance is highly desirable, working students may be exempted from attendance. Students can make use of extra learning materials on Ufora or of recordings of classes to reach the course goals. For those classes where active participation is evaluated (e.g., tutorials), you will need to complete a substitute task that demonstrates your attainment of the intended competencies. The substitute task will be communicated to you by the instructors.
2 The exam can be scheduled at a different time within the academic year.
3 You can receive feedback at times other than those designated, preferably through conversations (on campus or online), both during and after office hours, or via email.
For additional information, please contact the responsible instructor or one of the co-instructors.