

## Language Documentation and Description in Africa (A003810)

**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)

Dutch, English

Gent

**Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027**

de Schryver, Gilles-Maurice

LW21

lecturer-in-charge

**Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027**

[Bachelor of Arts in African Languages and Cultures](#)

**crdts**

5

**offering**

A

[Exchange Programme African Languages and Cultures](#)

5

A

[Linking Course Master of Arts in African Studies](#)

5

A

[Preparatory Course Master of Arts in African Studies](#)

5

A

[Elective Set African Studies](#)

5

A

[Elective Set Linguistics](#)

5

A

**Teaching languages**

English, Dutch

**Keywords**

language endangerment, language death, language revitalization, language documentation, culture documentation, language description, archiving, dissemination, Bantu, Africa

**Position of the course**

This course provides a broad introduction to language documentation and description, a recent sub-discipline within linguistics, with special attention to the African languages. An international handbook is being used as guide (Boerger *et al.* 2020); during the classes the examples are taken from the experiences of the BantUGent research group.

**Contents**

Part 1: Theory

Lesson 1 – Language endangerment, language death and language revitalization: What?

Lesson 2 – Language and culture documentation: What?

Lesson 3 – Themes, motivations and ethical aspects

Part 2: A language and culture documentation project

Lesson 4 – Planning of a documentation project

Lesson 5 – The documentary corpus and archive

Part 3: Equipment and software

Lesson 6 – Equipment

Lesson 7 – Software

Part 4: Fieldwork

Lesson 8 – Data management and elicitation

Lesson 9 – Hands-on fieldwork I

Lesson 10 – Hands-on fieldwork II

Lesson 11 – Hands-on fieldwork III

Part 5: Post-fieldwork processing

Lesson 12 – Archiving, description, publication and dissemination

**Initial competences**

Secondary school.

### **Final competences**

A good understanding of what language documentation and description in Africa entail.

### **Conditions for credit contract**

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

### **Conditions for exam contract**

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

### **Teaching methods**

Seminar, Lecture

### **Extra information on the teaching methods**

Lessons 1 to 8, and Lesson 12: Ex-cathedra lecture

Lessons 9 to 11: Hands-on seminar

### **Study material**

Type: Handbook

Name: Boerger et al. (2020)

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : English

Online Available : Yes

Type: Slides

Name: own PowerPoint presentations

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : English

Available on Ufora : Yes

Type: Audiovisual Material

Name: own audio, photos and videos

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : English

Available on Ufora : Yes

Type: Other

Name: own equipment and software demonstrations

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : English

Available on Ufora : Yes

Type: Other

Name: BantUGent examples

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : English

Available on Ufora : Yes

### **References**

Boerger, Brenda H., Sarah R. Moeller, Will Reiman & Stephen Self. 2020. *Language and Culture Documentation Manual*. <https://leanpub.com: Leanpub>.

### **Course content-related study coaching**

Possibility to ask questions during and after class, via e-mail, and through Ufora.

### **Assessment moments**

end-of-term and continuous assessment

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

Written assessment

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

Written assessment

**Examination methods in case of permanent assessment**

Presentation

**Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment**

not applicable

**Calculation of the examination mark**

continuous assessment based on active participation during the three fieldwork classes (25%) + written assessment on all theory during the examination period (75%)

**Facilities for Working Students**

Instead of being physically present during class, self-study of the handbook, in combination with the materials which are uploaded to Ufora following each lesson. Participate in the written exam like the regular students.