

German Literature: Major Works in 20th-century and Contemporary Literature (A005740)

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

LW22

staff member

Biebuyck, Benjamin

LW07

lecturer-in-charge

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 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

German, literary studies, 20th and 21st century literature, short historical survey of German literature, model analyses, prose, poetry, drama, basic writing and speaking skills in German

Position of the course

Beginning students have little or no knowledge of German literature, and many of them have little or no experience with courses taught in German. The aim of this basic course is to familiarise the students with the most important tendencies in German literature, with a first set of techniques and methods of literary analysis and with historical and thematic aspects of 20th and 21st Century German literature.

This course can be taken up by exchange students. Assignments can be adapted to the expectations of the home university.

Contents

In this course unit, you will familiarize yourself with the basic questions of literary

practice since the beginning of the 20th century and the ways in which to analyze and interpret literary texts (prose, poetry and drama) from this period. We focus on the major canonical authors, such as Kafka, Brecht, Rilke, Grass, Bachmann and Thomas Mann (we make an adapted selection each year), but we also make room for more recent and sometimes less well-known authors. In specific case studies, you will learn about the big questions of the literary imagination of this time: what if we begin to experience language in a drastically different manner, what if warfare takes on industrial proportions, what if the past remains unprocessed, what if individual and collective forms of living are transforming, what if the future seems uncertain? All of these themes are addressed in specific ways in German-language literature of the 20th and 21st centuries. The lecturer will show you how he arrives at a thorough analysis of the selected texts, explaining not only the form and content of the texts, but also their historical background, genesis and reception; as a student, you will try to develop your proper thoughts on the matter and, where possible, participate in discussions, developing your own informed interpretation of the texts.

In the exercise section or "Tutorium" (practicum and guided self-study), you work through a number of short exercises and tests, expanding your (written) language and expression skills and practicing basic literary skills (possibly with digital tools); in this way, you will notice if you are making the desired progress and can prepare for the exam. You also study vocabulary in this context and do several vocabulary tests. All these exercises together form your "portfolio." For these exercises you can receive feedback afterwards from an educational supervisor. A free library visit as part of this course is certainly useful; a guided library visit follows in the second semester.

Outside the lessons, we offer you a leisurely stroll through German music history, from Bach to contemporary rap - for enthusiasts, who feel like and still have room for something more.

The reading list for this course will be announced well before the beginning of the academic year via UGent's electronic learning platform.

Initial competences

Classes and discussions are conducted in German and require great effort from all participants, especially at the beginning of the semester - participants need about 4 weeks to get used to using German as a language of instruction. In those first weeks, it is enough for you to practice understanding what is said. Gradually, you can use more and more of your language skills in German that you also acquire through other subjects. Prior knowledge of German is a bonus, but you can also successfully start the program without any previous knowledge. In that case, you will have to make an extra effort. If in doubt, contact the lecturer. Motivation and commitment are very important. Keep in mind: you will learn the basics of German through other subjects and if you know Dutch (or another Germanic language) well, you will have a great advantage.

The course unit aims to provide a first introduction to German literature and literary tools.

Final competences

- 1 To be able to master and apply a basic knowledge of German (reading: short and medium size German texts with medium complexity; listening: understand a spoken exposition fluently; speaking: to take part in a simple dialogue; writing: to develop autonomously a statement in good German, with limited complexity and by making use of the acquired conceptual apparatus).
- 2 To be able to apply a basic knowledge of German literary traditions while analysing literary texts and
- 3 To have basic knowledge of German literary history and to be able to situate texts in it.
- 4 To be able to put the basics of analysis into practice when investigating German literary texts; to be able to use simple digital tools
- 5 To have a basic scientific insight in the specific characteristics of literary texts and the ways in which literature functions historically.
- 6 To be familiar at a basic level with scholarly methodology (sources, references, quotations, deontology).

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

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Lecture, Practical, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

- lecture: 30h (= weekly lectures of 150 minutes)
- seminar: 7.5h (= six exercises of 75 minutes, in which students make and discuss basic analytical exercises (speaking and writing) in German)
- self-study: 7.5h (students perform assignments on themselves, with personalized feedback from a lecturer, intermediary questions, reflexion, etc.)

Notice: this course entails a total workload of 150h; this encompasses the preparation of the lectures (the reading), the attendance of the lectures and seminars, the preparation and the making of the exam, the exercises and the vocabulary tests; the workload for the exercises can be estimated on 15 to 20h).

Study material

Type: Handbook

Name: Literaturwissenschaft

Indicative price: € 22

Optional: no

Language : Other

Author : Allkemper, Alo (Autor / Autorin) / Eke, Norbert O. (Autor / Autorin)

ISBN : 978-3-82525-756-9

Number of Pages : 361

Online Available : No

Available in the Library : Yes

Available through Student Association : Yes

Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : regularly

Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : one-time

Usability and Lifetime after the Study Programme : occasionally

Additional information: The reading list includes two short stories, two plays, a novella, a novel and some poems. Of the works to be purchased, the total cost is about 77 euros.

Type: Handbook

Name: Intertaal thematische woordenschat Duits

Indicative price: € 47

Optional: yes

Language : Other

Author : Intertaal

ISBN : 978-9-46030-417-0

Online Available : No

Available in the Library : No

Available through Student Association : Yes

Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : regularly

Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : regularly

Usability and Lifetime after the Study Programme : occasionally

Additional information: This book is study material for multiple courses. Of course, you only need to purchase it once.

References

A. Allkemper & N.O. Eke: *Literaturwissenschaft*. (UTB Basics; recentste uitgave); costs 19.90 euro

Course content-related study coaching

Individual and group tutoring; course-specific tutorials (seminar)

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

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

Oral assessment, Written assessment with open-ended questions

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

Oral assessment, Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

Assessment moment

Post-sessional (80%) and in-sessional assessment (20%).

(If the student does not pass the non-sessional assessment, a second chance is offered by means of a compensatory activity between the first and second exam period.)

Assessment form

- Written exam: open book with 4 questions testing insight and comprehension, in a controlled setting; students cannot make use of digital tools.
- Oral exam: 2 knowledge questions (literary history; 20C history) and 1 comprehension question (on the basis of the student's reading).
- Continuous assessment

Reaching the desired level of language proficiency is part of the learning competences of this course. This proficiency is supported by feedback on writing tasks, by self-study and self-testing, and by participation in the tutorials.

Calculation of the examination mark

Post-sessional assessment:

Exam: 80%; the students become a mark with a maximum of 16 on the written exam (which consists of 2 analytical questions (each 1/3 of the mark) and two synthetic questions (each 1/6 of the mark); the oral exam adds to that a mark that varies from -1 (for the worst possible performance) to +1 (for the best possible performance).

In-sessional assessment:

Portfolio (with the assignments and the vocabulary tests): 20% (4 points)

The final mark is the sum of both assessments.

Facilities for Working Students

Facilities for working students:

- 1 Although attendance is highly desirable, working students may be exempted from attendance; students can make use of the recordings of the classes and of additional learning materials (on Ufora). 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.

Extra information:

Participation of the Tutorium is highly recommended; it offers the students the opportunity to train those competences crucial for this course, under the supervision of a lecturer.

For more information contact the monitoring service of the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy: <https://www.ugent.be/lw/nl/student/studiestudentenbegeleiding/trajectbegeleiding.htm>