

German Linguistics: Language System and Language Change (A006657)

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

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 2)	German	Gent	seminar	0.0h
			lecture	0.0h
			independent work	0.0h

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Leuschner, Torsten LW06 lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

	crdts	offering
Master of Science in Teaching in Languages(main subject Linguistics and Literature)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - German)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - German)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - German)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German - Greek)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German - Italian)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German - Scandinavian Studies)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject German - Spanish)	5	A
Master of Arts in Historical Linguistics and Literature	5	A
Exchange Programme Linguistics and Literature	5	A

Teaching languages

German

Keywords

German, language system, language change, patterns and pattern formation in language and communication, grammaticalization, Construction Grammar

Position of the course

This advanced course provides students with a thorough insight into patterns and pattern formation at all levels of the modern German language, and into the diachronic changes that this involves. Grammaticalization theory and Construction Grammar serve as the primary theoretical approach. At the same time, students maintain and expand their academic proficiency in German.

Contents

The course covers patterns and pattern formation at all levels of the modern German language and the diachronic changes at work in them. Relevant phenomena and theoretical interpretations are addressed at an advanced level on a weekly basis, with particular attention paid to the relationship between Construction Grammar and grammaticalization theory. Each weekly topic is introduced by the lecturer, followed a week later by an in-depth presentation by a student (or group of students), based on original research and intended to spark discussion.

Initial competences

Students have acquired thorough proficiency in German and substantial insight into major topics in the synchronic (and partly the diachronic)

linguistics of German. In this course, a selection of relevant issues are explored in more depth at an advanced level.

Final competences

- 1 Linguistically describe and theoretically interpret patterns and pattern formation in the modern German language.
- 2 Linguistically describe and theoretically interpret processes of change affecting modern and historical German.
- 3 To approach the topics under discussion, including the relevant academic literature, with an academic, critical, analytical mindset.
- 4 Critically evaluate theories on the basis of data from modern and historical German (for instance from corpora).
- 5 Ability to use German at an advanced level (writing and speaking proficiency, a well-developed linguistic intuition, a writing and speaking style appropriate to academic contexts), including techniques for adequately collating and referencing sources, potentially involving the responsible use of GenAI

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, Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

The course consists of weekly lectures and interactive seminars (75 minutes each), with active participation by the students expected during the seminars. Each student is also expected to give, or collaborate in, an interactive oral presentation which is then discussed in class. The presentation subsequently forms the basis for a written paper.

This course assumes that students use generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) responsibly. A reflection on the (non-)use of GenAI is mandatorily included in the written paper and may be discussed during the oral exam.

Lessons are not recorded.

Study material

Type: Handbook

Name: Historische Sprachwissenschaft des Deutschen. Eine Einführung in die Prinzipien des Sprachwandels. 4. überarb.u. erw. Aufl. Tübingen: Narr.
Indicative price: € 30
Optional: yes
Language : Other
Author : Nübling, Damaris, Antje Dammel, Janet Duke & Renata Sczcepaniak.
Available in the Library : Yes

Type: Syllabus

Name: Sprachliche Vorgeformtheit
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : Other
Available on Ufora : Yes

Type: Slides

Name: Muster
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : Other
Available on Ufora : Yes

References

The standard references in German linguistics.

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

Oral assessment open-book

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

Oral assessment open-book, Assignment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation, Presentation, Assignment

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

in-sessional: oral presentation, written assignment, participation

post-sessional: oral exam about the written assignment

Calculation of the examination mark

80% in-sessional evaluation

The written assignment (Hausarbeit) accounts for 40% of the extra-sessional evaluation. The remaining 40% consist of 20% for the oral presentation and 20% for general participation in its various forms (incl. preparing and/of leading a discussion of an expert if relevant).

20% post-sessional evaluation

The post-sessional evaluation consists of an oral exam that takes the form of an reflection on the written assignment, including its embedding in the course as a whole.

All parts of evaluation are mandatory in order to pass the course. If a student fails to undergo part of the evaluation and the final mark is nevertheless 10 or more out of 20, the final mark is reduced to 9/20.

For the second examination period, the written assignment is re-submitted in revised form, and the oral exam is taken again.

Facilities for Working Students

1. Possible exemption from certain educational activities requiring student attendance
 2. Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time in the same academic year
 3. Feedback can be given by email, telephone or by appointment
- For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy (<https://www.ugent.be/student/nl/administratie/flexibel-studeren>)