

German Linguistics: Language Change (A006659)

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

Breitbarth, Anne 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, Old High German, Middle High German, Old Saxon, Middle Low German, Early New High German, historical development

Position of the course

The development of the German language since the beginning of textual transmission, also considering the historical development of Low German (Old Saxon, Middle Low German)

Contents

After a brief introduction to the historical background, the grammar (phonology, morphology and syntax) of each historical stage of High and Low German is discussed, as well as the diachronic processes connecting them. The theoretical and encyclopedic knowledge will be applied and deepened in a small individual research task. Students reading for an educational MA degree can work on the topic "Sprachgeschichte und Schule", for which findings from German language history are used to develop educational material to help understand better e.g. difficult grammatical topics like adjective agreement.

Initial competences

Competencies from the Bachelor degree:
1 Good written and spoken command of German
2 Familiarity with linguistic terminology

Final competences

1 Be able to recognise the structure and features of older stages of High and Low
(Approved)

German

- 2 Describe the language history of High and Low German (language proficiency: orally and written)
- 3 Place the processes of language change in High and Low German in their Germanic context
- 4 Be able to read, understand, and translate also texts that were not previously discussed in class
- 5 Place also texts that were not previously discussed in class in their (language-) historical and transmissional context
- 6 Carry out a small individual corpus research and write about its results according to the scientific standards in the target language (language proficiency aspect: research skills, academic writing skills)

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

Study material

Type: Slides

Name: Slides accompanying the lectures
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : Other
Available on Ufora : Yes

Type: Reader

Name: Reader with texts from the different stages of German language history
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : Other
Available on Ufora : Yes

Type: Handouts

Name: Handouts with grammar tables for older stages of German
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : Other
Available on Ufora : Yes

References

Where applicable, articles and book chapters will be provided through Ufora

Course content-related study coaching

collective and individual supervision

Assessment moments

end-of-term 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

Participation, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

not applicable

Extra information on the examination methods

Post-sessional evaluation: written exam (50%)

In-sessional evaluation: independent exercises & short paper (c. 2000 words) (50%)

Calculation of the examination mark

50% post-sessional evaluation

50% in-sessional evaluation

Important:

If the student does not pass the in-sessional assessment, a second opportunity is offered through a compensatory activity between the first and second exam periods.

If the student does not participate in the in-sessional OR post-sessional evaluation, or has less than 10/20 for one of the evaluations, they can no longer pass the course as a whole. In case the average of the final score is equal to or higher than 10/20, the average is reduced to the highest non-passing grade (=9).

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>)