



Studying German at NUI Galway- Subject Introductory Information

Introduction

A warm welcome to the Discipline of German!

Why should you study German?

Germany and the German-speaking countries are in the heart of Europe.

There are many good reasons to study the language, the cultures and societies of these countries:

- German is spoken by approximately 100 million people as their mother tongue. It is the official language in Austria, Switzerland, Luxembourg and Liechtenstein.
- German provides an excellent preparation for travelling in Europe.
38% of European citizens can converse in German.
- Germany has the fourth strongest economy in the world. It is one of the most important trading partner for almost all European countries – including Ireland.
- Speaking German improves your chances in the job market, both with German companies abroad and foreign companies in German-speaking countries and the European Union.
- Over 250 German companies operate in Ireland, employing approximately 15,000 staff.
- Over 300 000 German tourists visit Ireland every year.
- German is the second most important language in the field of science.
- German-speaking countries offer amazing cultural treasures in the areas of film, music, literature, philosophy and art. Think of Goethe, Brecht and Kafka, of Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart, of Paul Klee and Gustav Klimt. Other famous names include the Grimm Brothers, Karl Marx, Albert Einstein, Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud.
- German culture had and continues to have a central place in the shaping of Europe.
- 18% of all books worldwide are published in German.
- German and English are often similar.
Examples: Fisch = fish; Haus = house; Gold = gold; singen = to sing; bringen = to bring; hart = hard, weise =wise.

Studying German at NUI Galway focuses on learning the German language to a high level. It will develop your skills in speaking, writing and understanding the language and enable you to communicate fluently in German. Studying German also includes an introduction to the literature, culture, history and society of the German-speaking countries. Our BA programmes offer a broad variety of modules on highlights of contemporary and classical literary texts and films, and on topics such as newspaper reading, theatre production, and intercultural communication.

German can be studied at both beginners and advanced levels. No prior knowledge is needed for the Beginners stream. Leaving Certificate German or an equivalent standard is required for the advanced stream.

First Year German involves a comprehensive written and oral language course, complemented by an introduction to contemporary literature, cultural studies and history. Language teaching will take place in small groups and students will be encouraged to use the language actively as much as possible. Learning a language at University level does not mean primarily learning grammar rules by heart. Instead, the focus in our classes is on interaction and on using German as a tool for communication. Many of our lecturers are German native speakers.

Structure of the Programmes

Within the College of Arts German can be studied as part of three different programmes: **BA Joint Honours**, **BA International**, and **BA Global languages**.

Whereas the BA Joint Honours is a 3-year programme, BA International and BA Global languages are 4-year programmes. Students of these two programmes will spend an additional year of study in Germany, with the support of the EU student mobility programme *Erasmus*. Between second and final year they will study both of their subjects at one of our German partner universities in Augsburg, Bamberg, Berlin (Humboldt), Bochum, Dresden, Frankfurt, Freiburg, Heidelberg, Karlsruhe, Kassel, Leipzig, Mainz or Würzburg.

In First Year students of all programmes will choose two additional subjects apart from German. From Second Year on they will continue with German plus one of the two subjects chosen in First Year.

BA Global languages students have to choose either two languages and Global Language Studies or three languages in First Year. In Second Year they will continue with one language major (30 ECTS) and either two language minors or one language minor and the Global Languages minor (2 x 15 ECTS). Third Year will be spent abroad either in a partner university or alternatively on a work placement. In Final Year students will continue with their majors and minors as per Second Year.

In all three programmes a Beginners and an Advanced stream is available. Please note that the Beginners stream is exclusively for students with no knowledge of German. Students with Leaving Certificate German are not allowed to register for this course. Leaving Certificates will be checked.

In all programmes First Year (Beginners) will study two modules: *GR 1101 German Language and Culture (Beginners)*, and *GR 1103 Skills for Studying German*. Both modules consist of two components: *GR 1101 German Language and Culture (Beginners)* has a value of 15 ECTS, the first component, “Beginners German Language I” counts 80% of the total mark for this module, the second component, “German Literary Texts”, counts 20% and takes places in Semester 2 only.

The second module *GR 1103 Skills for Studying German* has a value of 5 ECTS and consists of the components “Skills for studying German” (Semester 1 only) and “Modern German History” (Semester 2 only). Both components count 50% of the total mark for this module.

GR 1101 German Language and Culture (Beginners) Credits: 15 ECTS <i>Module Components</i>	<i>Semester</i>
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Beginners German Language I (80%)	1 and 2
German Literary Texts (20%)	2

GR 1103 Skills for Studying German Credits: 5 ECTS <i>Module Components</i>	<i>Semester</i>
Skills for studying German (50%)	1
Modern German History (50%)	2

First Year (Advanced) students will study two different modules: *GR 1100 German Language and Culture (Advanced)* has a value of 15 ECTS, its first component, “Advanced German Language I” counts 67% of the total mark for this module, its second component, “Introduction to German Literature”, counts 33%. Both components take place in Semesters 1 and 2. The second module is *GR 1102 Skills for Studying German (Advanced)* which has a value of 5 ECTS. It consists of two components, “Skills for Studying German” (Semester 1) and “Modern German History” (Semester 2). Both components count 50% of the total mark for this module.

GR 1100 German Language and Culture (Advanced) Credits: 15 ECTS <i>Module Components</i>	<i>Semester</i>
Advanced German Language I (67%)	1 and 2
Introduction to German Literature (33%)	1 and 2

GR 1102 Skills for Studying German (Advanced) Credits: 5 ECTS <i>Module Components</i>	<i>Semester</i>
Skills for Studying German (50%)	1
Modern German History (50%)	2

Detailed course descriptions are available on our website.

- First Year German (Beginners):
<https://www.nuigalway.ie/media/collegeofartssocialsciencescelticstudies/schools/languages/german/German-1st-arts-beginners-course-description-2020-21.pdf>
- First Year German (Advanced):
<https://www.nuigalway.ie/media/collegeofartssocialsciencescelticstudies/schools/languages/german/German-1st-arts-advanced-course-description-2020-21.pdf>

Online Learning and Teaching

The Covid-19 situation confronts both students and staff in the Discipline of German with unprecedented challenges. New forms of teaching and learning will complement the traditional ones. All modules taught in Semester 1 will include both online teaching and teaching in the classroom. For all classes attendance is obligatory, no matter whether they take place online or on campus.

In some cases it will be necessary to split up classes into smaller groups to do language exercises, train pronunciation or discuss literary texts in a classroom. Further details will be announced by the lecturers during the Orientation Week.

Blackboard, our Virtual Learning Environment for all your course related material, will play a key role during the forthcoming academic year. It is therefore important to familiarise with this website as soon as possible. The module component “Skills for Studying German” will introduce students to effective methods of self-learning.

While we are committed to teach in classrooms as much as possible, the health and safety of students and staff will always be our priority. Students should always follow the Covid-19 guidelines and maintain social distance on Campus.

Comprehensive information about Covid-19 and what you can do to minimise the risk of an infection for yourself and for others can be accessed here:

<http://www.nuigalway.ie/alert/healthhygienetravel/>

Assessments

In the language classes assessment will be based on coursework evaluation, online tests and end-of-term exams. Students will be given weekly assignments covering grammar, reading comprehension, writing on paper as well as on Blackboard. There will also be an aural exam / pronunciation test.

Assessment in other module components is mainly by in-class-tests. In the course “Skills for Studying German” students have to submit a Learning Journal at the end of the term.

Further details on how courses will be assessed can be found in the respective course descriptions.

Due to the Covid-19 situation it is our priority to conduct all assessments safely.

Live Introductory Question and Answer Session

Live Introductory Lectures and Question and Answer Sessions will take place on Wednesday 23rd September from 12 pm to 1 pm and on Friday 25th September from 10 am to 11 am. Professor Hans-Walter Schmidt-Hannisa, Head of German and First year co-ordinator, will speak about the structure of the programmes, the modules taught in First year, the lecturers that will teach you, the timetables that are relevant for you, and all other practical information needed to commence your studies successfully.

Important Links

- Discipline Webpage:
<https://www.nuigalway.ie/colleges-and-schools/arts-social-sciences-and-celtic-studies/language-literatures-culture/disciplines/german/>
- Course descriptions and timetables for First Year students: <https://www.nuigalway.ie/colleges-and-schools/arts-social-sciences-and-celtic-studies/language-literatures-culture/disciplines/german/undergraduate-courses/ba-joint-honours-international/>
- First Year Student Handbook:
https://www.nuigalway.ie/media/courses/downloads/NUI_Galway_Undergraduate_Prospectus_2020.pdf
- University Video on how to approach online learning - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INqXGzCp9A>
- James Hardiman Library Presentation:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL9oT8OP695c_DaV2SCclJ9zu9B2WOOtuU