GERMAN 1234

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Office:  BW 105

Office Hours:  10:00 – 11:00 am MWRF and by appointment


Accompanying Student Activities Manual

A preliminary note:  we are all adults, and we will behave like adults.  You signed up for this course because you want to learn something.  I am teaching it because I want to help you to learn.  Learning is an active process.  It doesn’t just happen.  So, be active, study!  “But it’s only a core course,” you might say.  “Yes,” I will answer, “it’s like the dressing on the salad.”  The major you choose will help you become competent in your chosen field.  The core will help you to become an interesting person because it will teach you different ways of seeing the same thing, and it will make it possible for you to speak with folks who are interested in things other than your major.  You do like to talk to people, don’t you, and you do like to know things, don’t you?  Well, here’s a chance.

If you agree that you are an adult, you will turn off your cell phone and any other electronic device you bring with you unless I ask you to use it.

Chapters:  It is my goal to cover chapter 4 through 7.  However, if we encounter difficulties and I decide that it is better to spend more time on a particular point than I had originally planned, or, on the contrary, if you are able to fly through the various concepts, we may end up on an earlier or a later chapter.

Objective:  For all of us to work hard and have a little fun.  At the end of this course, you will be able to converse, write, and read about a limited group of topics using a small but useful vocabulary.  The more adventurous and imaginative you are, the more you will be able to do.  You will be familiar with a limited number of grammatical rules in German; and if your grasp of English grammar should improve during the course, don’t be surprised.

Attendance:  I expect you to be present at every class meeting.  Unless you are so proficient that you don’t need the course to begin with, you will not be able to earn an acceptable grade without attending.  If you have to be absent, I expect you to inform me as soon as you learn of the necessity.  If you miss more than seven meetings, I reserve the right to lower your final grade or to assign a grade of F in the course even if your performance should be excellent - - the possibility of which I would doubt.

Part of your responsibilities is to attend laboratory sessions.  We will cover details in class.

Grading:  Your final grade depends on your performance during the entire term.  Oral as well as written work is taken into consideration.

There will be short quizzes, mostly covering vocabulary.

There will be a written test each time we finish a unit.  Tests will always be announced and prepared in class.  There will be no special mid-term examination.

The final test will cover everything we have learned in the course of the term.
There will be no make-up tests except for utterly extraordinary circumstances. I will decide whether circumstances are “utterly extraordinary.”

Grades depend on the percentage of correct responses. A: 90 - 100%, B: 80 - 89%, C: 70 - 79%, D: 60 - 69%.

The course grade depends on your oral work, which includes participation (1/7); quizzes (another 1/7); the written tests (2/7), and the final (3/7). If it turns out that you are very close to the next higher grade, I reserve the right to give you the higher grade under the condition that your work during the semester provides me with a good reason for it.

For your benefit, let me tell you an idiosyncrasy of mine. I am a very patient and fun loving person. However, I can get angry (1) if you aren’t prepared for class, and (2) if you don’t ask questions. The reason is, of course, that those are the two things most necessary for you to succeed. Therefore, do ask questions in class. I cannot teach you to the best of my ability unless you let me know when you need assistance. Stupid people ask no questions; they think they understand, when, in fact, they don’t.

THERE ARE NO STUPID QUESTIONS!

I remind you of the Student Honor Creed (see the 2010-12 Catalog, p. 19 and the Student Handbook). I trust there will be no need to invoke it. Be assured, however, that if the need were to arise, I would.

Now, let’s talk about what to do when bad weather strikes.

While it is obvious that you need to be in class if you intend to get any benefit out of your attendance at Midwestern, it is obvious as well that there are times when you do well not to attend. I would like to encourage you not to risk life and limb to come to campus in bad weather. You are the one to decide if the weather is bad enough for you to stay home. You are responsible for your learning. I am confident that you will use this policy in a responsible manner.

Whenever classes are canceled, MSU will inform TV and radio stations and put a message on the web. Since many of you live in residence halls, the University will never close altogether but will provide all services to the extent possible.

Finally, if you have now or develop during the semester a physical or a learning disability and you want your instructors to make reasonable accommodations, you must see the Disability Support Service office and provide appropriate documentation unless you have done so in the past. That office will inform all of your instructors each semester you attend MSU unless you ask in writing not to do so.

If you find anything in this syllabus that is not clear to you or with which you would take issue, make your point at the beginning of the course. This syllabus is equivalent to a contract between you and me. It is imperative that we all are clear about what it means.