

Student Comments on the Erasmus Academy German Course Summer, 2015

Among other things, I appreciated that the course included several different learning methods, such as composition, reading aloud, vocab memorization, prepared readings, and sight reading. While each student probably preferred some of these methods over others, the mixture accommodated a variety of learning styles and learning goals. The MP3 files were also helpful, both for the English explanations that supplemented the textbook and class meetings and for the German pronunciation help. I think it was good that we sometimes had the opportunity to check our work before class (e.g., by using answer keys) but not always – and it was good that we had more access to answer keys earlier in the course and more opportunities to test ourselves later in the course. I also found it helpful that we finished the textbook a week or two early and had time to do practice exams.

A little more attention to time management within each class session would be helpful, and if possible it might also be good to simplify the course materials somewhat.

Ron does a good job of explaining and reminding us of the important grammatical structures that we need to know in order to learn German. His emphasis on leading us through the process of how to analyze a German sentence was helpful because it equipped us to go do more work on our own after the course was finished. I could not/ did not keep up fully with the vocabulary, but the concept of learning related words together is also a good one and should help us infer the meaning of new words more easily (e.g., by knowing how nouns are usually formed, etc.)

The class generally had a good tone. I knew one other student in real life, but otherwise most of us didn't know each other apart from our voices during class meetings. That could create awkwardness, but in general I think we respected and supported each other fairly well, which I appreciated. Sometimes people got tired and/or frustrated if we ran way over the time, but I think even then the tone was usually pretty good.

Everyone has different learning styles and goals, but overall I was pleased with how much I was able to learn this summer, particularly given that I wasn't able to devote as much time to the course as I had originally planned to give it.

It was helpful to have both Griesbach and Jannach, as they sometimes explain the same concepts in different ways, which can help if one finds one or the other textbook difficult to follow. The vocab lists were a little overwhelming sometimes but also very helpful.

[The course materials] all had their place, but sometimes it was confusing having so many separate materials to keep track of. What I would really like to have had was a resource with more charts, whether one of those cheap quick-learn charts that you can get off of Amazon (I did buy one eventually) or a book that had more charts. Jannach doesn't have any centralized location to which I could flip to quickly review and compare two verb tenses, etc.

[The online format] worked fairly well in terms of in-class interactions, and it worked very well in terms of my circumstances. I would almost certainly have had to drop out if I had been taking a traditional classroom course this summer. I also appreciated the convenience of not having to get dressed up and drive to campus, especially for a course that ends later in the evening. Going over time would have been way more of a problem if I had to walk to my car and drive home at 10 at night, instead of just logging off of the meeting platform.

Overall, the course was very good, and I learned much more than I would have expected to be able to learn, especially given my circumstances. A little tighter time management and such would be nice, but the basic course is very solid, and I am grateful to have been able to take it this summer. Thanks for your work in our course, Ron!

Julie N. July 7, 2015

The strength [of the course] is the emphasis on reading and translating, which is exactly what I needed....This is my first time taking an on-line course, and I am pleasantly surprised how effective the course has been.

The only thing I would recommend is in the area of vocabulary. The instructor prepared and presented the vocabs well with easy-key and 100 stems. The only issue that I see with the current presentation is the lack of time and the amount of words to memorize. I think it would be helpful to trim down the amount of vocabulary to a more manageable size.

Ron is overall a great instructor. I can tell that he is well experienced in teaching an on-line course and understands how to encourage students. And I know this is not easy having students online, instead of having them in a class. He is very passionate about teaching German, and he uses different methods to drive a point on a critical part of the grammar. I really appreciated his effort.

I did not have a single day that I was not working on the assignment. After 8 weeks of enduring pain, I must say that I sincerely appreciate his effort to drive us. Ron seems to be always looking for a better way to teach us throughout the course, and I think that is a mark of a true teacher.

David P. July 8, 2015

I liked the small class size, the consistent feedback, and the supplementary answer keys to accompany assignments. However, a syllabus with the assignment schedule should be available at the beginning of the course.

The Instructor is friendly with an encouraging demeanor. He has a thorough knowledge of the language and is patient and gracious. A weakness is his timeliness in sending out assignments.

For my personal learning style, I would have greatly benefited from having fewer homework assignments in order to be able to work through them more carefully. In turn, this would allow more time in class for introducing new material and allowing students to ask questions.

Regarding the course materials, it was very helpful to have the MP3 files with the explanations/answers to Jannach, as well as the translation keys for Griesbach. However, it would have been very helpful to have the definite article included with nouns on the 100 Stems so as not to have to look each one up when there was so much other work to do.

It is very nice to have the option of an online course during the summer.

Allison H. July 7, 2015

[The Instructor] understands how to teach to each student according to his level, and help him progress. He helps students in a very gentle way.

I like the online format, because you can take it from everywhere.

Joseph Y. July 8, 2015

[The course] was fast paced, but with comprehensive grammar coverage.

It was hard to get homework done between the Monday and Wednesday classes. Either there would need to be less homework, or the Wednesday class moved to Thursday.

[The Instructor] was very patient and helpful, and provided clear explanations for grammar. He was friendly and approachable. He made me feel like there were no stupid questions. I really liked the Griesbach exercises, it was helpful for me to have the

grammar presented in two different ways. The composition exercises, both prepared and on the spot, were helpful in solidifying grammar and vocabulary. However, our class would end 15-30 minutes after it was supposed to.

Olivia D. July 8, 2015