




Term 1 2025-2026

Course Code & Title:	GERM1100 Germany Today	
Language of Instruction:	English	Units: 3

Course Description

Germany was a once divided nation with complex historical background and rich culture which continuously attracts international interest. This course investigates trends and developments in contemporary German culture and society from a cross-cultural perspective, taking into consideration the historical events of different generations in Germany. Students will be encouraged to compare and critically analyze the reflections about Germany and their own society. The course content will be presented by up-to-date audiovisual materials. No knowledge of German is required.

Learning Outcomes

The aim of this course is to let students explore different aspects of German culture and society and make them think about the source of behavior, customs and attitudes, while comparing with Hong Kong and Chinese behavior. The famous German poet Goethe included in his concept of culture clothing and food, history and philosophy, art and science, children's games and sayings, climate and landscapes, economy and literature, political and private life. Although the course cannot cover all aspects, it will give students an idea about German mentality and ways of thinking and refer them back to their own background. One needs to be aware of one's own background to discover the identity of the other. After taking this course, students are expected to have an understanding of Germany in regards to:

- (1) The perception of Germany & Germans (at home & abroad)
- (2) Geography
- (3) Holidays & Festivals
- (4) Women and Family
- (5) Education
- (6) History

Course Content (subject to change)

Topics		
1	Perception of Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Stereotypes- Cross-cultural differences- Dos and don'ts in Germany vs HK / China
2	Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Geographical properties and landscapes- Federal states and major cities and landmarks
3	Holidays, Customs & Festivals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Major religious and secular and festivals observed- Spread of certain holiday customs to countries abroad
4	Women and family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Opportunities and status of women in German society,- Modern families, Women and language
5	Education System	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- From pre-school to secondary education- Post-secondary education: vocational training & higher education
6	History	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Medieval times to the German Empire under the emperor Wilhelm I; 20th century history: WWI & WWII- Rebuilding Germany after WWII; split & re-unification of East and West Germany, Anthem

Learning Activities							
Interactive classwork [1]		Extra-curricular activities		Web-based teaching		Homework / Self-study	
(hr/day)		(hr/course)		(hr/day)		(hr/day)	
in / out class		in / out class		in / out class		in / out class	
3		3		0.5		3	
M		O		M		M	

M = Mandatory / O = Optional

[1] Interactive classwork focuses on student-centered activities as pair work, group work, role-playing and student-teacher interaction.

Assessment Scheme		
Task nature	Description	Weight
Participation and oral expression	Participation includes preparing for class, arriving on time, attending lessons and making active contributions during class.	10%
Presentation	Students present a chosen topic individually or in groups of two or three students. A list of available topics is provided below, and students may also suggest their own topics. A draft of the presentation must be submitted 1 week in advance.	35%
Written assignment	Reflection Paper on a topic discussed in class.	35%
Final Test		20%

Notes: You are required to arrive on time.

You are required to attend at least 75% of the class. Treat 75% attendance as the minimum, not the maximum.

The success of your own learning will highly depend on your attendance.

Should you miss more than 25% of the class, you will automatically fail the course.

Unauthorised absence from any assessment will result in grade F for that assessment.

If you are unable to attend, get informed about what content and homework you missed and make it up yourself.

Grade descriptors					
	A	B	C	D	F
General	Outstanding performance in all learning outcomes and meeting all specified assessment requirements.	Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, or high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.	Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.	Barely satisfactory performance in a number of learning outcomes.	Unsatisfactory performance in a number of learning outcomes and/or failure to meet specified assessment requirements.

Learning Resources	
Course Reading	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information provided by the German Government: http://www.tatsachen-ueber-deutschland.de • Bernstein, Eckhard: Culture and Customs of Germany. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004. • Lewis, Derek: Contemporary Germany. A Handbook. London: Oxford University Press, 2001. • Fraser, Catherine C, Hoffmann, Dierk O. Pop Culture Germany! Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006 • Please refer to the Moodle site for GERM1100 for further material. 	
Course website: Moodle@Keep	
https://moodle.keep.edu.hk/	

Suggested Topics for Student Presentation

Technical developments in Germany (e.g., German Cars); Energiewende Deutschland (energy transition in Germany, from coal to wind etc); Fine Arts in Germany (e.g. expressionism; contemporary media artists, the Biennale in Berlin, etc) ; Music in German speaking countries (Germany & Austria): Classical / Modern / Pop / Techno, etc.; Religion in Germany; German design and architecture; The Berlin Wall; Tourism in Germany (e.g., German Fairy Tale Route; Castles on the River Rhine; etc.); History (e.g., King Ludwig II of Bavaria and his 'Disney' castles; the Iron Chancellor: Otto von Bismarck, etc); the social security net in Germany; German theatre; German media; German philosophy; German cinema (e.g. Neuer Deutscher Film; film schools in Germany, etc); Germany in the European Union; Museums in Germany (e.g. Berlin, Munich, etc); Flüchtlingskrise 2015 (refugee crisis); Abgasskandal (Dieselaffäre – and many more.

You may also present other topics of your own choice about Germany, Austria or Switzerland. All topics need to be approved by the course teacher.

Schedule (Subject to change):

Week	Date	Remarks	Content
1	Sep 1-7	Sep 1 (Mon) Inauguration Ceremony for Undergraduates (classes suspended until 1:30pm)	1 Perception of Germany
2	Sep 8-14	E-add/drop on CUSIS 8-14 Sept (Mon-Sun)	1 Perception of Germany
3	Sep 15-21	Special add/drop at department 15-19 Sept (Mon-Fri)	2 Geography of German speaking countries Reading: Geography, Population, Language
4	Sep 23-29		2 Geography of German speaking countries <i>Student Presentation</i>
5	Sep 29-Oct 5	Oct 1 (Wed) Public holiday – National Day	no class
6	Oct 6-12	Oct 7 (Tue) The day following Mid-Autumn Festival Oct 9 (Thu) German Night 🏰 Oct 11 (Sat) Info Day for Undergrad Admission	3 Holidays, Customs & Festivals Reading: Holidays, Customs, Leisure <i>Student Presentation</i>
7	Oct 13-19		3 Holidays, Customs & Festivals <i>Student Presentation</i>
8	Oct 20-26		4 Women and Family Reading: Women, Marriage and Education <i>Student Presentation</i> Reflection Paper
9	Oct 27-Nov 2	Oct 29 (Wed) Public holiday - Chung Yeung Festival	5 Education System Reading: Structures of Education <i>Student Presentation</i>
10	Nov 3-9	Nov 6 (Thu) 95th Congregation (all classes suspended)	5 Education System <i>Student Presentation</i>
11	Nov 10-16	Nov 10 -Nov 21 Course registration for second term	6 History Reading: TBC <i>Student Presentation</i>
12	Nov 17-23	Nov 19 (Wed): German Christmas Night 🎄	6 History Reading: Modern German History <i>Student Presentation</i>
13	Nov 24-29		Final Test

Lecturers' contact details:

Class	Time	Classroom	Week	Teacher	Email
GERM2100	Wed 14:30-17:15	ERB 712	12	Ms. Annette Frömel	annettefromel@cuhk.edu.hk

General Contacts:

Contact	Telephone	Email	Office
Coordinator	39437699	annettefromel@cuhk.edu.hk	G31, Leung Kau Kui Building
General Office	3943 9836	lin@cuhk.edu.hk	G17, Leung Kau Kui Building Office Hours: <u>Monday to Thursday:</u> 8:45am to 1:00pm, 2:00pm to 5:30pm <u>Friday:</u> 8:45am to 1:00pm, 2:00pm to 5:45pm

Feedback for Evaluation

Our language programme highly values students' feedback and comments and is happy to use them for reflection on our teaching and improvement. Students are very welcome to provide comments and feedback on the course at any time to their course teacher or the course level coordinator through email or in personal conversation. In addition, students' feedbacks will be collected in the middle of the term through an open-ended questionnaire and the teacher will discuss the feedbacks in class and make improvements if necessary. The course will also follow the university's course evaluation exercise at the end of the term, and students' feedbacks will be used for future course planning and teaching.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>.

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures.

- In the case of group projects, all members of the group should be asked to sign the declaration, each of whom is responsible and liable to disciplinary actions, irrespective of whether he/she has signed the declaration and whether he/she has contributed, directly or indirectly, to the problematic contents.
- For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment.
- Students are fully aware that their work may be investigated by AI content detection software to determine originality.
- Students are fully aware of the AI approach(es) adopted in the course. In the case where some AI tools are allowed, students have made proper acknowledgment and citations as suggested by the course teacher.

Assignments without a properly signed declaration will not be graded by teachers.

Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

The submission of a piece of work, or a part of a piece of work, for more than one purpose (e.g. to satisfy the requirements in two different courses) without declaration to this effect shall be regarded as having committed undeclared multiple submissions. It is common and acceptable to reuse a turn of phrase or a sentence or two from one's own work; but wholesale reuse is problematic. In any case, agreement from the course teacher(s) concerned should be obtained prior to the submission of the piece of work.

The copyright of the teaching materials, including lecture notes, assignments and examination questions, etc., produced by staff members/ teachers of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) belongs to CUHK. Students may download the teaching materials produced by the staff members/ teachers from the Learning Management Systems, e.g. Blackboard, adopted by CUHK for their own educational use, but shall not distribute/ share/ copy the materials to a third-party without seeking prior permission from the staff members/ teachers concerned.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools in Teaching, Learning and Assessment

All use of AI tools is prohibited

In any kind of learning activity or assessment that will be counted towards the final course grades (or used for evaluating attainment of the desired learning outcomes), students are not allowed to submit work which is produced with the collaboration of or supported by the use of any AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT).

Improper/unauthorized use of AI tools in learning activities and assessments will constitute acts of academic dishonesty and will be handled according to the University's Procedures for Handling Cases of Academic Dishonesty.

In case of queries, students should seek advice from the course teacher.

For more information about our German programme, please join us on Instagram!

