Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Term 1 2026-2027

Course Code & Title:	**SOUNDS OF GERMAN**
Language of Instruction: German / English	**Units: 3**

Course Description
This course is an introduction to the phonetic system of the German language. It is primarily designed to help students who are learning German to improve their understanding, speaking and reading skills. Although theoretical content on the subject of German phonetics will be provided, students must conceive this course as a workshop rather than a lecture. Constant practice through pair work, games, interactive activities, recordings will be included and active participation from the students is therefore expected. Prerequisite GERM 2000 equivalent competence.

Learning Outcomes
After taking this course, students are expected to: (1) generally improve their reading, listening and speaking skills in German; (2) understand and produce the rhythmic groups, intonation patterns and stress of German. (3) understand and describe some basic articulatory features of German speech sounds; (4) be able to use the German IPA symbols provided in dictionaries; (5) understand the relationship between the German pronunciation and writing system.

Course Syllabus	
ALPHABET	**Spelling (revisions) & syllables**
GERMAN SPEECH SOUNDS	*German IPA symbols & basic articulatory features of German vowels and consonants.*
RHYTHM, STRESS & MELODY	*- word stress* *- sentence stress & rhythm* *- pause & melody*
EXAMPLES OF TOPICS COVERED	
Greetings & introductions; place of living; food; shopping; family; numbers etc. *Games, poems and songs will also be used.*	

Course Components
Teaching Mode
On-site face-to-face interactive classwork: 100%

Learning Activities							
Interactive classwork[1] (hr) in / out class		Extra-curricular activities (hr) in / out class		Web-based teaching (hr) in / out class		Homework / Self-study (hr) in / out class	
3			2		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 Type		
Task nature	**Description**	**Weight**
Participation and homework	Active participation in class activities and homework.	20%
Quizzes	Quiz 1: Perception and Production of Vowels and Diphthongs. Quiz 2: Perception and Production of Consonants. Transcription.	15% 15%
Recording	Self-recording about a given topic	25%
Performance	Reading and performance in groups	25%

Notes:
- Students are required to arrive on time.
- Students are required to attend at least 75% of the class. Treat 75% attendance as the minimum, not the maximum.
- **Should a student miss more than 25% of the class, he/she will automatically fail the course.**
- If a student is unable to attend, he/she should review the content and homework that are missed and make them up him/herself.
- **For missed tests, make-up tests will not be arranged unless the student can provide an official supporting document, such as a medical certificate.**

Assessment Rubrics	
Grade Descriptors	
A	Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.
A-	Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.
B	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.
C	Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.
D	Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.
F	Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, or failure to meet specified assessment requirements.

Learning Resources
Course Materials
Handouts will be provided by the teacher.
IT Resources
• Sounds of German and Interactive International Phonetic Alphabet Chart: http://www.coli.uni-saarland.de/elaut/Languages_Sites/sampaDeutsch.htm • Sounds of German with formation information: https://soundsofspeech.uiowa.edu/german • **Moodle course webpage**

Reading & Library Resources
Recommended materials: • A bilingual German/English dictionary with information on pronunciation provided in IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/german-english/ • Prof. Dr. Kerstin Reinke (2012): *Phonetiktrainer A1–B1*, Ernst Klett Sprachen, Stuttgart • Ursula Hirschfeld, Kerstin Reinke, Eberhard Stock (2007): *Phonetik intensiv: Aussprachetraining*, Langenscheidt, Berlin und München

Course Schedule (Subject to change):

NEU

Week	Date	Remarks	Assessment	Content
1	Sep 7-13	Sep 7 (Mon) Inauguration Ceremony for Undergraduates (classes suspended until 1:30pm)		Introduction & alphabet
2	Sep 14-20	E-add/drop on CUSIS 14-20 Sept (Mon-Sun)		German vowels
3	Sep 21-27	Special add/drop at department 21-25 Sept (Mon-Fri)		
4	Sep 28 - Oct 4	Oct 1 (Thu) Public holiday – National Day		
5	Oct 5-11			
6	Oct 12-18	Oct 8 (Thu) German Night 🏰		
7	Oct 19-25	Oct 19 (Mo) Public holiday - The day following Chung Yeung Festival	***Test 1***	Stress, rhythm & melody
8	Oct 26 - Nov 1		***Recording***	
9	Nov 2-9			German Consonants
10	Nov 9-15	Nov 12 (Thu) 97th Congregation (all classes suspended)		
11	Nov 16-22	Nov 16 - Nov 27 Course registration for second term		
12	Nov 23-29	Nov 25 (Wed): German Christmas Night 🎄		
13	Nov 30 – Dec 6		***Quiz 2***	
	Dec 7-13	Schedule for oral exam as agreed with course Lecturer	***Performance***	

Learning Resources
Required Readings and Course Materials
provided by the teacher

Course website: Moodle@Keep
https://moodle.keep.edu.hk/ Announcements over the Blackboard site GERM0000
Online Resources
• PONS Dictionary https://en.pons.com/translate • Collins Dictionary: https://www.collinsdictionary.com/ • Pronunciation Website UIowa: https://soundsofspeech.uiowa.edu/german
Recommended Readings & Library Resources
• Reinke, Kerstin (2012) Phonetiktrainer A1-B1. Stuttgart: Klett • Niebisch, Daniela (2014) Praxisbuch Phonetik: Aussprachetraining für Deutsch als Fremdsprache. Berlin: epubli

Class sections and teacher's contact details:

Class	Time	Classroom	No. of weeks	Teacher	Email
GERM2020	Tue 9:30-12:15	YIA410	13	Mr. Bernd ESCH	berndesch@cuhk.edu.hk

For further information and enquiries, you are welcome to contact:

Contact	Telephone	Email	Office
Mr. Bernd Esch	3943 1546	berndesch@cuhk.edu.hk	Rm G24, Leung Kau Kui Building (KKL)
General Office	3943 7110	lin@cuhk.edu.hk	Rm G17, Leung Kau Kui Building **Office Hours:** Monday to Thursday: 8:45am–1pm and 2pm-5:30pm Friday: 8:45am-1pm and 2pm-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!

@CUHK_GERMAN