

OXFORD UNIVERSITY LANGUAGE CENTRE

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Language courses in French and German offered by the University Language Centre

Students in the FHS Mathematics and some other subjects may apply to take language classes. In 2011-2012, French and German language classes will be run in Michaelmas and Hilary Terms.

Two levels of French courses are offered, a lower level for those with a good pass at GCSE, and a higher level course for those with A/S or A level. Acceptance on either course will depend on satisfactory performance in the Preliminary Test held in Week 1 of Michaelmas Term (Monday, 17.00-19.00 at the Language Centre). Classes at both levels will take place on Mondays, 17.00-19.00. A single class in German at a lower or higher level will be offered on the basis of the performances in the Preliminary Qualifying Test, held at the same time as the French test. Classes will also be held on Mondays, 17-00-19.00.

Performance on the course will not contribute to the class of degree awarded. However, upon successful completion of the course, students will be issued with a certificate of achievement which will be sent to their college.

Places at these classes are limited, so students are advised that they must indicate their interest. If you are interested please contact Amelia Bliss (bliss@maths.ox.ac.uk) or tel. 01865 615205), Academic Assistant in the Mathematical Institute, as soon as possible.

Aims and rationale

The general aim of the language courses is to develop the student's ability to communicate (in both speech and writing) in French or German to the point where he or she can function in an academic or working environment in a French-speaking country.

The courses have been designed with general linguistic competence in the four skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening in mind. There will be opportunities for participants to develop their own particular interests through presentations and assignments.

Form and Content

Each course will consist of a thirty contact hour course, together with associated work. Classes will be held in the Language Centre at two hours per week in Michaelmas and Hilary Terms.

The content of the courses is based on coursebooks together with a substantial amount of supplementary material prepared by the language tutors. Participants should expect to spend an additional two hours per week on preparation and follow-up work.

Each course aims to cover similar ground in terms of grammar, spoken and written language and topics. Areas covered will include:

Grammar:

- all major tenses will be presented and/or revised, including the subjunctive
- passive voice
- pronouns
- formation of adjectives, adverbs, comparatives
- use of prepositions
- time expressions

Speaking

- guided spoken expression for academic, work and leisure contact (e.g. giving presentations, informal interviews, applying for jobs)
- expressing opinions, tastes and preferences
- expressing cause, consequence and purpose

Writing

- Guided letter writing for academic and work contact
- Summaries and short essays

Listening

- Listening practice of recorded materials (e.g. news broadcasts, telephone messages, interviews)
- developing listening comprehension strategies

Topics (with related readings and vocabulary, from among the following)

- life, work and culture
- the media in each country
- social and political systems
- film, theatre and music
- research and innovation
- sports and related topics
- student-selected topics

Teaching staff

The courses are taught by Language Centre tutors.

Teaching and learning approaches

Each course uses a communicative methodology which demands active participation from students. In addition, there will be some formal grammar instruction. Students will be expected to prepare work for classes and homework will be set. Students will also be given training in strategies for independent language study, including computer-based language learning, which will enable them to maintain and develop their language skills after the course.

Entry

Two classes in French and one in German will be formed according to level of French or German at entry as shown by the preliminary test. The minimum entry standard is a good GCSE Grade or equivalent.

Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes will be based on internationally agreed criteria for specific levels (known as the ALTE/CEFR levels), which are as follows:

Threshold Level (corresponds to ALTE Level 2 "Can-do" statements/Common European Framework B1)

- Can express opinions on professional, cultural or abstract matters in a limited way, offer advice and understand instructions.
- Can give a short presentation on a limited range of topics.
- Can understand routine information and articles, including factual articles in newspapers, routine letters from hotels and letters expressing personal opinions.
- Can write letters or make notes on familiar or predictable matters.

Vantage Level (corresponds to ALTE Level 3 "Can-do" statements/Common European Framework B2)

- Can follow or give a talk on a familiar topic or keep up a conversation on a fairly wide range of topics, such as personal and professional experiences, events currently in the news.
- Can give a clear presentation on a familiar topic, and answer predictable or factual questions.
- Can read texts for relevant information, and understand detailed instructions or advice.
- Can make notes that will be of reasonable use for essay or revision purposes.
- Can make notes while someone is talking or write a letter including non- standard requests.

Assessment

There will be a preliminary qualifying test in Michaelmas Term. There are three parts to this test: Reading Comprehension, Listening Comprehension, and Grammar. Candidates who have not studied or had contact with French or German for some time are advised to revise thoroughly, making use of the Language Centre's French or German resources.

Students' achievement will be assessed through a variety of means, including continuous assessment of oral performance, a written final examination, and a project or assignment chosen by individual students in consultation with their language tutor.

Reading comprehension, writing, listening comprehension and speaking are all examined. The oral component may consist of an interview, a presentation or a candidate's performance in a formal debate or discussion.