

## University of Bristol – School of Modern Languages

### Department of German

#### PREPARATION FOR YOUR FIRST YEAR

Congratulations on your place to study German at Bristol. We look forward to seeing you here in September. Many of you will wish to do some preparatory reading before then, and we certainly recommend it. The books listed below are all available in Bristol libraries for reference, but given how frequently you will need them throughout your course you would be well advised to have your own copies. If you cannot find them in your local bookshop, you may need to order them before your arrival from an online bookseller. If you need books from Germany, try a site such as [www.buch.de](http://www.buch.de), [www.libri.de](http://www.libri.de) or [www.amazon.de](http://www.amazon.de). Some German books are also available, priced in sterling and with cheaper postage, from [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk).

Your degree course at Bristol will comprise courses on practical language skills and on cultural, literary, linguistic, and historical subjects. For your **language** work we suggest you use:

- A good large English-German / German-English dictionary of approximately 200,000 entries. The smaller ones, often called 'concise' or 'gem', will not be adequate in the long term so we recommend that you invest in a larger one from the off. The *Collins German Dictionary* or *Oxford Duden German Dictionary* are particularly useful.
- A 'German-German' (monolingual) dictionary. *Wahrig: Deutsches Wörterbuch* in paperback (published by DTV) is the least expensive option. The *Duden Deutsches Universal-Wörterbuch* or *Der Sprach-Brockhaus* are also recommended. A CD-ROM version is also available.

If you are new to formal grammar, start with a pocket-size grammar book (there are versions published by Oxford University Press and Collins, amongst others). In class we shall be using *Essential German Grammar* (new edition, 2001) by Martin Durrell, Katrin Kohl and Gudrun Loftus (published by Arnold, ISBN 9780340741894). **You will need access to this book each week during the first year**, and it will be a useful reference tool in later years of the course as well.

As you progress through the course, you will also find *Hammer's German Grammar and Usage*, revised by Martin Durrell (fifth edition, 2011), extremely useful. It is the standard work for university students, but we recognize that it is not always easy to use, especially at first-year level. The companion volume, *Practising German Grammar*, by Durrell, Kohl and Loftus, also provides useful exercises for self-help work. Finally, a very useful book for advanced learners like yourselves is Durrell's *Using German*, published by Cambridge University Press.

You will certainly need to continue to expand your German vocabulary, and for this purpose we recommend Paul Stocker's *Wort für Wort* (Hodder & Stoughton, **5th edition**, 2010, ISBN 9781444109993) – **it is important that you use this edition** to avoid confusion when homework is set from this book. Harrap's *German Vocabulary* is also a good starting point.

If you are beginning German from scratch as an *ab initio* student, you will need access to the three books which comprise *Themen aktuell 1*, all from the Max Hueber Verlag: the *Kursbuch* (by Hartmut Aufderstrasse et al, 2009, ISBN 9783190016907; the workbook (by Heiko Bock et al, 2007, ISBN 3-19-251690-9); and the *Glossar* (2009, ISBN 9783190816903). They will be used every week in class. You will also need continuous access to a copy of *Essential German Grammar* (see details above).

Apart from language classes, you will be attending lectures and seminars on the history, linguistics, literature and culture of German-speaking countries.

For **German history and modern politics and society** one or more of the following will be useful:

- Mark Allinson, *Germany and Austria 1814-2000* (London, 2002)
- Mary Fulbrook, *A Concise History of Germany* (Cambridge, 2004)

In **German linguistics** you will be studying the history of German and the principle of language change. The required reading for this is

- Joseph Salmons, *A History of German* (Oxford, 2012)
- Herbert Schendl, *Historical Linguistics* (Oxford, 2001)

and you will need to ensure you have continuous access to these books throughout the semester.

There is no better preparation for studying **German literature** than the habit of reading for pleasure, in any language. For the literary components of the first year programme you should wait until September to obtain set texts, as the precise works you study will depend on the seminar group to which you are allocated. All students (except those taking German *ab initio*) will take a lecture course on Germany poetry from the seventeenth century to the present day, which aims to provide you with a broad overview of developments in German literature and with practice in close textual analysis. You will find Judith Ryan, *The Cambridge Introduction to German Poetry* (Cambridge, 2012) extremely helpful for this part of the course. *Ab initio* students will study Franz Kafka's *Die Verwandlung* in English translation; the set edition is *The Metamorphosis and other stories* translated by Joyce Crick and edited by Ritchie Robertson (Oxford: Oxford World Classics, 2009). Amongst the useful introductions to German literature that you should consider using as reference works throughout your degree we recommend the following:

- Eda Sagarra and Peter Skrine, *A Companion to German Literature* (Oxford, 1997)
- Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly (ed.), *The Cambridge History of German Literature* (Cambridge, 1997)
- Nicholas Boyle, *German Literature: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2008)

You may also find it helpful to dip into David Lodge, *The Art of Fiction* (London, 1992). This is a collection of short, accessible articles on key terms in literary study, illustrated mainly with excerpts from British and American authors. In addition, C.S. Lewis, *An Experiment in Criticism* (Cambridge, 1961; reissued 1992) is a brief, engaging reflection on reading literature.

If you still have time over the summer, a visit to Germany or Austria, speaking lots of German, will help! So too will acquiring word-processing skills.

University study is different from school, and in preparing for it you may find it helpful to read at least the first chapter of Stella Cottrell, *The Study Skills Handbook*, 3rd edn (Basingstoke, 2008). This book covers all the key skills you will need at university (and beyond) and would be a valuable resource throughout your degree.

This seems a large amount of reading, but it is a good habit to acquire and an important part of any university degree. The better you prepare now, the easier you will find the beginning of your life as a student. But do not despair — we do not expect you to have read all these books by September.

A final note: we are proud to have a thriving student society in our department, German Soc. You will find them a good source of help during your first year and we hope that you, too, will get involved in the society's activities.

Wir freuen uns, Sie im September begrüßen zu dürfen und wünschen Ihnen  
eine sonnige und entspannte Ferienzeit bis dahin!

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