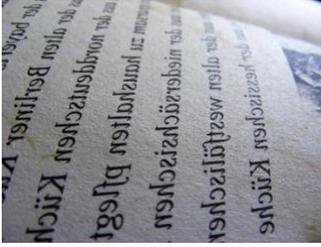


Theological German



McMaster Divinity College
Spring 2023
May 1 – June 15

August H. Konkel
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mcmasterdivinity.ca/faculty/core/august-h-konkel

Course Designation

TH 3XX3

Concentrations

Church History Ministry Studies
Old Testament New Testament
Theological Studies

Course Schedule

Class Sessions **Wednesday 9:00 – 10:50 a.m.**
The course is in an in-person / livestreamed format.

Course Description

The course will provide a systematic introduction to German grammar to enable comprehension of German research in the areas of Bible and theology. Exercises will be provided with the focused goal of learning to read academic German. The course will not include conversational German nor is there an expectation of memorized vocabulary. There is an expectation that the student will know all basic syntagms and be able to analyse, comprehend, and accurately translate German at a complex syntactical level, such as is used in scholarly journals and texts. There are no minimal requirements of knowledge of German to enter the course, but some familiarity with German will assist in maintaining the pace of the course.

The student will be able to pass a German reading exam for the purposes of the Ph.D. program upon completion of the course. Passing the exam will qualify the student for the modern language requirement of their respective Ph.D. programs at McMaster Divinity College.

Students must be prepared to dedicate themselves to learning German during these seven weeks. Learning to read German in seven weeks is a major undertaking. It takes hours of practice to successfully pass a German reading exam.

Course Objectives

Knowing

- German use of cases and word order
- German tense and voice forms and their function (functions are not identical to English)
- German use of subjunctives and imperatives (these are different than in English)
- German use of commas to indicate clause relations

Being

- Awareness of the impact of German theological and biblical research
- Appreciation of German culture and linguistic expressions
- Enjoyment of reading German. *Frisch begonnen ist halb gewonnen!* (A fresh start is half the victory.)

Doing

- Develop German bibliographic research as a resource to use regularly
- Read current German research in areas of particular interest
- Read German for enjoyment, including German novels or newspapers

Course Value

It is challenging to learn to read German without assistance, just as any of the Biblical languages used by students of Bible and theology. There is great benefit in learning together, especially in person in a classroom, as dialogue and comprehension are facilitated much more readily. Classroom experience makes learning German both effective fun. *Wir sollen viel Spaß machen.*

Course Texts

Grammar

Christopher Ryan Jones and Katharina Hirt, *Handbook of Reading Theological German*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2021.

This is the working text for the course and is required by all students. It contains all the basic German grammar and the readings that will be used in class and for the assignments. This text is an excellent introduction to the most influential German theologians.

Auxilliary Text

April Wilson, *German Quickly: A Grammar for Reading German*, revised edition, Peter Lang Publishing, 2007.

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This text has non-technical explanations of grammar with many helpful examples and exercises. Charts and exercises from this text will be used in the class sessions and in assignments. These are all accessed in Avenue to Learn. Students will find it very helpful to have access to this text and many will find it valuable for future reference.

The revised edition will be referred to in class and is considerably expanded. The older editions have the same section numbering and progression and are less expensive. Unfortunately, all editions of this text have typographical errors.

Lexicon

The student must have access to an unabbreviated hard copy German-English lexicon. It will be used as part of class exercises and is required for the exam.

It is critical to learn to use a German – English dictionary. It is important to know how to consult for idioms, unique uses of words, principal parts of verbs, and general abbreviations. Dictionaries vary considerably in how they address these various requirements. Online dictionaries are mostly quick and easy for general lexical equivalents, but much less helpful for learning German.

The text by Wilson provides an evaluation of lexicons which the student may wish to consult before making a purchase. There are numerous variations and individual preferences differ. There are many advantages to the large Cassells in learning to use a dictionary accurately and effectively, as described by Wilson. Reflexive meanings of verbs are distinctly listed, the third person singular for all verbs with a different vowel, past and participial form of irregular verbs in standard order, and most common idioms in bold type. Its main disadvantage is that it has not been revised since 1978, which is disgraceful but not a great disadvantage. It is generally available used at cost-effective prices.

Collins German Unabridged Dictionary, 9th ed., HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., 2019 is the most current and complete unabridged dictionary for advanced students of German and professionals. The ninth edition covers all the latest vocabulary. It can be difficult to find the specific meaning needed in a sentence in this dictionary.

Students will use an online lexicon such as Collins for much of their translation, as it provides for a very quick reference (<https://woerterbuch.reverso.net/>). A requirement for full use of an online German dictionary is a German keyboard to distinguish the marked vowels. It is easy to miss homonyms in an online dictionary, as computers conduct very sequence specific searches.

Resources for Learning German

Readers

J. D. Manton, *Introduction to Theological German: A Beginner's Course for Theological Students*, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1971.

This is a very brief grammar with specialized vocabulary and selections of German readings. It is a nice complement to Wilson for theological students. Some readings for the course will be drawn from this text.

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Helmut W. Ziefle, *Theological German: A Reader*. Baker Book House, 1986.

There are variant editions of this reader. It provides a specialized vocabulary with a variety of biblical and theological readings. Word definitions are paraphrased to the meaning in the accompanying text, so the student is not made aware of highly idiomatic uses of some words or expressions. Readings include several Bible translations for basic reading and theological readings of prominent theologians (Barth, Bonhoeffer, etc.).

Resources for Advanced Students

Duden: Das Fremdwörterbuch, 7., neu bearbeitete und erweiterte Auflage, Dudenverlag, Duden Band 5, 2001.

This dictionary lists 53,000 foreign words incorporated into the German language not usually listed in dictionaries. Most words are drawn from English, but they may have unique nuances in German.

Der kleine Duden, Deutsche Grammatik, 5., überarbeitete Auflage, Dudenverlag, 2016.

This is a comprehensive but concise German grammar, easy to consult for all German grammar explanations and clarification. It is most useful for learning German. Though

Duden: Das Bedeutungswörterbuch, 5., neu bearbeitete und erweiterte Auflage, Duden Band 10, Dudenverlag, 2018.

This German dictionary can be especially helpful in ascertaining the meaning of polymorphous words. *Zug* (train) for example has 9 distinct common meanings, with subsets in some of them. This German word is used much like *train* in English, where for example we speak of a *train of thought*. In German *Zug* is commonly used in all writings with senses obliquely related to the referent train. It can be very confusing to differentiate these senses from a dictionary like Collins. The Duden dictionary is clear and concise, invariably the sense required in a context is clear from the Duden dictionary. It only lists 20,000 words, so is very limited in vocabulary range, but its importance is for common words and idioms.

Textbook Purchase

The bookstore is located adjacent to Cullen Hall and always carries a good selection of texts, selected according to those required by syllabi. This is a convenient place to purchase texts.

If the campus bookstore is not open at the time a student is on campus, orders may be placed with the office in Toronto. This works well in many instances.

Read On Bookstore
5 International Blvd
Etobicoke, Ontario, M9A 3C3

Bookstore Phone: 416 620 2934
Cell to text orders: 416 668 3434
Email for orders books@readon.ca

Class Sessions

The course is an in person / livestreamed format. Distance students should be able to participate as readily as those in class. There will also be optional sessions in which students may discuss problems and ask questions. Optional sessions will be arranged according to student schedules and availability.

Class sessions will not be structured according to the ten steps of the Mainz Method used in the text by Ryan Jones and Hirt, because it segregates each aspect of grammar into a single topic. This method will be informally followed in the translations of German texts, but aspects of grammar will not be segmented that way. The first exercises will be simple sentences, not samples from published scholarly texts.

- May 3 Present tense of verbs and case endings of nouns and adjectives
- May 10 Verb prefixes, tenses, and voices (active, passive, reflexive)
- May 17 Modal verbs, conjunctions, and pronouns
- May 24 Adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions
- May 31 Subjunctive mood and clauses
- June 7 Review of assigned translations from textbook and exam preparation
- June 14 Exam

Class Exercises

- Week 1 – Practice and memorization of case endings and present tense verb forms
- Week 2 – Learning and translating verb forms and auxiliaries for tenses and voices
- Week 3 – Learning and translating the forms and function of the six modal verbs
- Week 4 – Class practice translating sentences with complex clause formations (participial and extended adjective constructions)
- Week 5 – Learning and translating the forms and functions of the two German subjunctives
- Week 6 – Comprehensive review through practice in translating assigned sentences

Weekly Assignments

It is imperative that assignments be completed each week, as each successive week builds on the skills learned previously. Translation assignments will begin in the first week with basic sentences (assigned from Avenue to Learn), assigned sentences will focus on the grammar studied in class. Beginning with week three translation assignments will be given from the authors in the text, the length will increase with each successive week. All assignments will be reviewed and returned the same week, but no grade assigned unless the student is doing the course for a class credit.

Avenue to Learn will be an essential resource in this course as it will contain much of the material for instruction and translation of assignments. Dialogue will be set up in Avenue to Learn for questions which will be answered by the instructor and available for all.

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Office Hours

Office hours will be maintained each week for students to have individual time for clarification.

Tuesday: 12:00 – 3:30

Wednesday: 12:00 – 3:30

Students may come individually or in groups for additional help. Times outside of the posted office hours can be arranged as well as zoom calls.

Grading

Ph.D. students in a McMaster program will write the German exam on a pass / fail basis. A pass on the exam given by the department of these students fulfills the program requirement for reading an additional modern language. Assignments for these students will all be corrected but will not be evaluated, as they do not contribute to a grade for the course and the course does not contribute to the grade point average of the program. Any concerns with progress should be taken up with the professor, but students will be advised if they are on a trajectory that will enable them to successfully pass the exam.

For those students wishing to take this course as credit incorporated into a program of study assignments will be graded. The final exam will count for 30% of the course grade. Seventy percent of the course grade will be calculated from the grades of the weekly assignments submitted.

Course Policies

The following course policies are standard at McMaster, but not all are particularly pertinent to learning to read German. Be assured that all writing of exams is monitored, no online help is permitted.

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College.

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty: <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/rules-regulations/>.

Gender Inclusive Language

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and

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you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as the following: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), TNIV (2005), and the Common English Bible (CEB 2011).

Style

All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses: <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/mdc-style-guide/>. Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

Disclaimer: This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes up to and including the first day of class.