

German Podcast Transcript

Alex:

Hello and welcome back to ISU's World Language and Cultures podcast program. I'm Alex, and I'm here today to talk to you about the German language program. Did you know that German is the most widely spoken language in Europe? German is the official language of Germany, Austria, and Lichtenstein. It's also widely spoken in Luxemburg and Switzerland. German is the ninth most widely spoken language and there are over 120 million German speakers throughout the world.

Did you know that the German language evolved from Indo-European languages, and that today's standard form is known as High German, or "hock Deutsch?"

Daniel:

In the next thirty seconds, listen to Professor Kevin Amidon introduce himself in standard German and talk about his research interest and where he lived in Germany for some time.

Kevin: [Kevin introduces himself in German]

Alex:

Germany is well renowned for its excellent media industry. Their television, radio, and high quality journalism are not only respected in Germany, but around the world also. German radio and television programs are widely available throughout Europe, and it is quite convenient because twenty-four percent of Europeans speak German fluently, so many people tune in to these German programs.

Did you know that German is the second most popular language on the internet? According to Vistawide.com, a few of the top twelve reasons for studying German include: German is the most widely spoken language in Europe, Germany has the third strongest economy and is the number one export nation in the world, German is required or recommended by many undergraduate and graduate programs, and studying German is great too, because one in ten books in the world is published in German, also according to Vistawide.com.

Knowing German will allow you to utilize more texts and research journals that are in German. Germany has sixteen federated states that together make up a powerful and industrialized nation, and Germany also plays a very important and active role in the European Union. Also, if you speak German, not only will you be able to travel with ease around many parts of Europe, but you may open the doors for great internship or job opportunities in several European countries too.

The ISU World Languages and Cultures Program offers: a German major, minor, and an LCP option. ISU students have the opportunity to participate in the ISEP exchange program in Germany for one semester or an entire academic year. If you are a business or engineering major, you have the fantastic opportunity for a second major option in LCP, Languages and Cultures for Professions. The languages classes for LCP majors are tailored to fit the professional environment for either the engineering or business world.

Mark:

My name is Mark Rectanus, and I'm a professor of German studies, and I direct the Languages and Cultures for Professions program here at Iowa State. The major objective of the program is to make the students globally literate, and to have a greater awareness of the challenges and issues in a global society. The real strength of the program is that it combines the work that they do in their first major in their profession with the knowledge of the culture and the language of the society that they might be working in, and the feedback we get back from employers is that this skill set is increasingly important in a global world where our competitors are not necessarily in Missouri or Minnesota, but they're in countries around the world. So in order to be competitive as a student, but also competitive as a company, individuals and companies need to know more about languages and cultures across the world, because they are their customers and they have to learn how to speak the language of their customers throughout the world. Internships and study abroad are a big part of that. In the case of German, our students have had

internships with BMW, Bosch, we have a regular coop program through the College of Engineering with John Deere, and Sauer Danfoss, both Iowa companies. We also work with universities in Germany, and students in the professional areas as well as the humanities can get study abroad experience in Germany if they wish. Summer study abroad programs, semester, or full year programs, and those are usually more with academic content, where the internships are hands-on work experience.

Alex:

If you don't have time to dedicate a minor, or a major in German, you can also take what is called a short course- an eight work crash course on the German language, and the cultural context of German. For more information about the German short courses, please contact Beth Martin, you can view her contact information on the German podcast website, or email her at bxmartin@iastate.edu.

Instead of me telling you about the German program at ISU, here's some firsthand information about the program directly from students and faculty.

Katie:

My name is Katie Gidlewski, I'm a junior in Chemical Engineering with German and history minors and I went to Ames high school. My mom was a German major in college and had German foreign exchange students live with her in high school, so when we were little she'd say little things to us in German. We went over to Germany when I was twelve, so I decided to take German in high school.

Lori:

So how do you feel about the German program at Iowa State, and, are you involved in any clubs or activities?

Katie:

I've had a really good experience, I've really enjoyed both of my professors, and they've been very helpful. My professor my freshman year was very understanding of the fact that I was coming straight from high school and was really willing to work with me on any questions I had or any concerns. Writing papers was

really scaring coming from not having grammar for a year in high school, and he really made sure I was comfortable and helped me with that. My current professor is also very approachable and easy to talk to about problems or concerns in the class.

Lori:

Do you have any recommendations for students who want to learn a new language or perhaps even German?

Katie:

Get started with it as soon as you get here, because then you can plan better for all four years and what you want to take when. I had a couple friends that just studied in Munich this summer and learned a little bit of German and so he can minimally converse in it and it was like, "Oh I should have gotten a German minor!" but he's an engineer and you can't pull a German minor out in two years with engineering classes if you're starting from the ground. So you need to have your long term plan coming in.

Alex:

We have a special treat for you. We talked with Professor Frederick Schwink, who recently achieved an Alumni Achievement award from ISU, and who is currently teaching at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Professor Schwink has some great information about the German language and culture, but we'll let him tell you about it.

Frederick:

My name's Frederick Schwink and I'm from Iowa, originally from Wyoming, but I consider myself an Iowan. I'm currently an associate professor of Germanic Languages and Linguistics in the classics at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. I picked German I think mainly because my sisters were taking French and I wanted to do something different. Then I ended up with the Rotary Exchange going to Germany for a year from 17 to 18, and was just absolutely hooked. I could not get away from it and then finding out things about dialects and more languages.

Here at Iowa State I would come in the morning at eight-o'clock for a Russian class, moved there

immediately to Norwegian, at ten to French and eleven to German, and I'd spend the first ten minutes of each class being quiet just sorting the languages out in my head, but it was great fun. I think it's a beautiful language. I think it sounds beautiful, I love the structure of it, I love to speak it. It just gives me a silly pleasure. It's as aesthetic thing, it's purely personal, but I love the language. Of course there are other important reasons for learning the language; Germany's got a major role in the world economy. In the European Union the Germans are, I believe, the most populous nation, and certainly one of the richer ones, so they have a good deal of influence there. They're a major trading partner with us, and beyond that if you look at their culture, at their literature, they have a very rich culture with a lot to offer us. Both the older music and literature and a lot of the modern things that are innovative and also fun. They're also producing really good films these days, including comedies, not the dark depressing, highly intellectual things of the sixties and seventies, but last year for example. They came out with the most incredible Star Trek parody, which is fun, and there's more like that, they do have a sense of humor.

Lori:

Do you have any advice for students who are learning another language?

Frederick:

I think aside from going there, one of the things I've found most useful is taking a period of time, it can be just half an hour, maybe twenty minutes a day, when you're working with the language, and just making yourself think in it. So if you're going for a walk or you're in the shower, if you're driving in a car or on a motorcycle where no one can tell that you're talking funny, just try to express the thoughts that are going through your head- ideas, things you want to talk about to other people, do it in the language. If you can't say it, find a way to say it; don't let yourself fall into the trap of "well I'll just say it in English." For example, if you're thinking "I'm going to the store and I want to buy some raisins," and I don't know the word for raisins, okay, how about "dried fruit," "dried grapes," so that you go around

it. I find that making yourself think in the language ultimately leads to great results and much increased proficiency. That's my little tip. People will look at you funny if they hear what you're talking about, but that's life.

Alex:

Thanks to the students and faculty, I hope you now have a better understanding of the German program, and how it can propel your education and career options forward. Don't miss out on the opportunity to learn about German cultural history, thought, and literature from 1870 to 2006, which will be taught this spring. German 472 will be taught in English, by Professor Kevin Amidon. Please contact professor Amidon at ksamidon@iastate.edu for more information.

I'm sure you're wondering by now how to really engage yourself in the German language and culture, and what better way than to study abroad? The Study Abroad Center at ISU offers several programs in Germany, and some of them are even tailored to fit specific majors, such as engineering, or business. There's an exciting summer program in Mannheim, Germany for students of engineering, be sure to check out the Study Abroad website for more information.

Did you know that the largest ancestral group in Iowa has German roots? In the 19th Century, a group of little less than one thousand Germans came to Iowa to evade religious persecution. They ended up settling in seven villages in the Iowa River valley. This area became know as the Amana Colonies, in Amana, Iowa.

For all the soccer fans out there, the 2006 FIFA World Cup will be held in Germany in twelve different host cities. Not only would you get to watch the best soccer teams in the world, but you would also get a chance to tour Germany, and the beautiful cities and landscapes there.

Germany is known for its famous musical composers, such as Johann Sebastian Bach, and Johann Brahms. In addition to a rich jazz music heritage, Germany has even a few jazz festivals each year to celebrate jazz music. There's a festival in Stuttgart Germany in April, and another festival in Berlin in November.

Did you know that Germany is also home to The Love Parade, the world's largest music event? The Love Parade is held annually in Berlin, Germany's capital city, and it brings together millions of music fans from around the world to celebrate, freedom, love, and techno music.

Dan:

I'd like to thank you for tuning in to today's program. I hope you've enjoyed the show and the guest speakers. For more information about the German program, please go to www.language.iastate.edu, or contact Elizabeth Rectanus at the Department of World Languages and Cultures. Be sure to tune in next week at this time for our next show. I'm not letting the cat out of the bag and telling you what the program will be about, but you can be sure it's going to be entertaining. Thanks and we'll see you next week.

Alex:

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