## **History of the German Language**

## Prof. Laura Balbiani

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The Course aims to retrace the evolution of the German language, from Luther to the present day, through the reading and commentary of texts and documents, with a focus on the relationship between the history of language and the *Kulturgeschichte*.

At the end of the Course, students will be able to understand the history of German and describe its turning points, identifying some evolutionary trends that are still under way; also, they will be able to place linguistic phenomena in their historical-cultural context, in order to get a better understanding of German in its European context.

***COURSE CONTENT***

Starting from the evolution of specific text types, the course will examine some of the most significant moments of the history of the German language. The linguistic-historical approach will be combined with a historical-cultural perspective, which considers language as a manifestation of the typical mindset and the world view of the different historical periods, allowing to put German and its history in relation with the history of the European culture as a whole.

In particular, the course will explore the following topics:

* Luther and his translation of the Bible, the emancipation of German from Latin, the reflection upon language and translation;
* the problem of foreignisms, the influence of foreign languages on German;
* the ‘language of reason’, the Enlightenment, and the codification of the language;
* the brothers Grimm and the linguistic and philological approach, new ideas on the origins and the evolution of language;
* the 20th century: features and trends of contemporary German.

***READING LIST***

S. Bosco Coletsos, *Storia della lingua tedesca*, Rosenberg & Sellier, Turin, 2004.

T. Roelcke, *Geschichte der deutschen Sprache*, Beck, München, 2009.

Further information on the reading list will be made available during classes.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The Course will take place in semester 2 and coincide with the ‘Communicative Strategies of the German Language’ course, that will analyse also diachronic aspects (in particular during the practical activities). It will include classroom lectures (held in German), supported by the use of slides, and guided practical activities, either individual or in groups, based on the active participation of students. The teaching material will be made available on *Blackboard* on a regular basis.

The students who already have the ‘Communicative Strategies’ course in their Degree Curriculum will be allowed to define an individual learning path with the lecturer.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Oral exam in German. During the exam, students will be assessed on the knowledge acquired during the course, and the ability to contextualise linguistic phenomena and explain their arguments.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Students are invited to check on a regular basis the communications and the teaching material that will be made available on *Blackboard*; further information will be provided during classes.

Students should have good receptive and productive skills in German; knowledge of history and general linguistics can be useful, but is not essential.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.