

# New language class controversial; who is it for?

By Paula Damke

Consider—you sign up for a preparatory language course, designed for freshmen and students who have not previously taken a language. It is supposed to have about 50 students in it.

**End result—Modern Languages 100.**

Students from all academic levels are taking the course. They are students who have taken a language in high school, are in their fourth semester of language, or who, because of his course, will never take a language at UNL. The class has 235 students in it.

**Confused? You're not the only one.**

Jane Dein, vice chairman of the Modern Languages Dept. said Modern Languages 100 was designed for freshmen who haven't taken a language in high school and who haven't decided which language they want to take.

She said the course counts as one semester of the required four semesters of language. She noted it can be taken prior to 101 (first semester language) or instead of 202 (fourth semester language).

**'Bad feeling'**

According to Dein, "some students have a bad feeling for language because of previous experiences in high school." She said students who took a language in ninth or tenth grade may not remember it and have to

start over.

"Modern Languages 100 will teach the linguistics of a language and prepare them for 101," she said.

Paul Schach, instructor of Modern Languages 100, said "it is the type of course that requires reading ability and an understanding of linguistic terms." He said students are quitting the class because they don't understand the terms.

Under the circumstances, he said, the class is going as well as can be expected.

"Having more students than anticipated and students of unequal background makes it (the class) difficult to teach," Schach said.

Grades on the first test ranged from 100 per cent to 8 per cent, Schach said. He said there were 10 perfect grades.

**Entrance exams**

Schach said he thought one answer to the problem would be entrance exams.

"It would separate students of different abilities," he said. "Some students aren't prepared for college language courses."

Schach placed the blame on a decline of language teaching in high school.

Julie Jorgensen, graduate assistant, whose background includes psychology, German and linguistics, said she believed the problem is student laziness. She said of 82 midsemester reports sent, 45 were F's and 37 were D's.

A freshman could pass the course, she said, but she said ideally it should be taken as the fourth semester of a language.

"Students thought it would be easier than a language and they've found out it isn't," she said.

She noted changes in the second semester course are possible.

"With a smaller class there could be more group discussions."

**Instead of fourth semester**

Jeannie Chandler, senior, has taken Hebrew and French. She said she is taking the course instead of a fourth semester of a language.

"I'm taking it pass-fail and even then it's a lot of work." She said she thinks the class should be for graduate students.

Kurt Wullschleger, junior, said the class is a lot of work.

Kate Graf, a sophomore, took Spanish in high school and is starting Spanish over next semester. She said "I would rather take a language; this is harder."

Lori Libert, freshman, said if she had had two or three years of German, Latin and linguistics it would have helped. She said the course should not be for freshmen.

Marilyn Miller, freshman, said "the language is hard to understand and it should definitely not be a freshman-level course."

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