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Practical English in the Department of English and American Studies at the Europa-University Flensburg

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Practical English is the foundation upon which our degree programs in English and American Studies are built. Because the majority of our students intend to become teachers of the English language, they must demonstrate an above-average competence in the everyday use of the language itself, apart from their achievements in literature, cultural studies, linguistics, or didactics. While a certain mastery of English is required for a student to enroll in the English BA program, we expect future teachers to act as models for their students, and they should therefore exhibit excellence across oral and written English in areas of both reception and production. To this end, we offer a total of five required courses in practical English, beginning in the first semester. Alongside these required courses, we offer a number of opportunities for students to practice their English in a less formal environment as well, including *English Games Night* and the *Theater in English* group, both hosted within our department. We also highly encourage students to spend a semester abroad in an English-speaking country, to further develop and reinforce their language skills.

Module 2 of the Course of Study for the English BA degree is *Practical English I: Basic Structures*. This module spans the first and second semesters and culminates in an individual oral exam (during the summer term) which evaluates the student's overall oral competence. The course *English Grammar* (BA-1, winter term) begins with the assumption that the student understands the basic rules of written English, and deals primarily with (1) examples of exceptions to those rules; (2) advanced topics of more complex sentence structure, such as the subjunctive, subject-verb inversion, and relative and subordinate clauses; and (3) typical mistakes made by German learners of English due to the differences between German and English grammatical structures. After successful completion of *Grammar*, students enroll in *English Pronunciation* (BA-2) in the summer term. This course has two aims: (1) to help reduce primary-language interference in the students' own oral production, and (2) to introduce students to concepts and exercises that they may then apply as they later teach others appropriate English pronunciation. Within this module is also an *Independent Studies* element, in which the students read and prepare two short stories (a different selection each year) as material for discussion in the module exam, the individual oral exam mentioned above. Successful completion of Module 2 is a requirement for students to continue their studies in the English BA program.

Module 6, *Practical English II: Focus on Language Production*, is typically taken in the fifth semester, and consists of a course in *Oral Communication* and one in *Writing Skills*. The writing course builds upon the concepts covered in the earlier grammar course, including clarity and focus in longer written works. Topics covered include various essay styles, development of an argument in English, and research and citation of sources. We focus on the ways in which typical English academic writing differs from that in German, and give ample practice as well in editing and evaluating one's own work and the work of others. In *Oral Communication*, students have the choice of a variety of different topics designed to practice their active oral reception and production. Sections in the past have included topics such as *Presentation Skills*, *Classroom Communication*, and *Debate*, as well as an annual theatrical production in conjunction with our *Theater in English* group. Module 6 culminates in a writing portfolio consisting of one or more writing samples from the *Writing Skills* course.

In addition to these two practical English modules, students take part in the course *Translation*, the practical portion of *Module 4: TEFL, Transfer and Mediation*. This course offers practice in German-to-English translation and its role in the English classroom, focusing on issues of information transfer, compensation, and equivalency between the two languages.

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