

**A14** Martine / France / History

Interaction partner(s): German female student  
Moment of enquiry: WS 08/09  
Experience of difference: Social conventions in lectures and courses

Martine, a French student of history, is spending an Erasmus semester in Germany. She feels more comfortable with the German university system than with the French one. She is envious of the German students, as they seem to live a carefree life and their studies don't seem that challenging. In seminars, for example, they are often allowed to sit together and discuss in groups unlike in France, where students have to write down every one of the lecturer's words and memorise them. Martine thinks that is much harder than learning the subject by discussing it. Her German fellow student Elsa is surprised when she hears Martine talking about the German university system of study and strongly disagrees with her. Elsa finds the French system much easier, as one only has to listen and take notes without having to do any thinking.

1. Why does the French student find the German system much easier than the French one?
2. What is the fundamental difference in the French and German university studying and teaching styles?