

Languages and Cultures, B.A.

B.A. in Languages and Cultures

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<https://www.cmu.edu/dietrich/lcal/>

Overview

The Languages and Cultures major prepares students to navigate an increasingly interconnected and multilingual world. Combining humanistic inquiry with analytical approaches, the program examines how language, culture and power shape societies across global contexts. Students build a shared foundation in cultural studies and sociolinguistics, then apply those frameworks through focused study in a language-culture concentration in one of nine offerings by the department, including Arabic Studies, Chinese Studies, German Studies, Global French Studies, Hispanic Studies, Italian Studies, Japanese Studies, Korean Studies and Russian Studies. Courses may count toward the major starting at any level, allowing students to begin a new language, advance existing proficiency or pursue advanced cultural study.

Designed with flexibility in mind, the major supports a wide range of backgrounds and goals. Students can tailor their path based on interests and proficiency level, and may choose the Comparative Studies concentration that integrates two languages and cultures. This structure encourages exploration while ensuring depth and rigor.

Major Requirements

Curriculum: 108-120 units

I. Core LCAL Courses (3 courses; 27 units)

82-282	Interpreting Global Texts & Cultures	9
82-283	Language Diversity & Cultural Identity	9
82-580	Senior Seminar in Languages, Cultures and Applied Linguistics	9

II. LCAL Elective (1 course; 9 units)

- Any additional LCAL seminar, applied linguistics or culture course outside the Core and Concentration courses, i.e. "Bilingual and Bicultural Experiences in the U.S.," "Japanese Film and Literature," "19th-century Russian Literature," "Introduction to Linguistic Analysis Using R."

III. Language and Culture Concentration Courses (8 courses; 72 units minimum)

Concentration	Minimum # courses in target language	Courses must include
Arabic Studies	At least seven courses taught in Arabic	At least two 300-level courses or above At least one 400-level course or above
Chinese Studies	At least seven courses taught in Chinese	At least two 300-level courses or above At least one 400-level course or above
German Studies	At least seven courses taught in German	At least two 300-level courses or above At least one 400-level course or above
Global French Studies	Eight courses taught in French	At least one of each: 82-303 French & Francophone Cultures and 82-304 French & Francophone Sociolinguistics At least two 400-level courses
Hispanic Studies	Eight courses taught in Spanish	82-342 Cultures of Spain

		82-343 Cultures of Latin America
		82-344 U.S. Latine Cultures
		82-345 Using Spanish in Social Contexts
		At least two 400-level courses
Italian Studies	At least six courses taught in Italian	At least two 300-level courses or above
Japanese Studies	At least seven courses taught in Japanese	At least two 300-level courses or above
		At least one 400-level course or above
Korean Studies	At least six courses taught in Korean	Must complete intermediate Korean II or equivalent At least one 300-level course (Advanced Korean) and one 400-level (content class in Korean)
Russian Studies	At least four courses taught in Russian	82-294 19th Century Russian Masterpieces 82-295 20th Century Russian Masterpieces At least two language courses at the 200-level or above for students with prior experience with Russian
		79-269 or LCAL equivalent
Comparative Studies*	Eight non-English courses; at least three courses in each language**	At least two 300-level courses or above in one of the two concentrations

* For the Comparative concentration, students will likely need to enter with intermediate proficiency in at least one language they wish to pursue, in order to fulfill the 300-/400-level requirement.

** Students can take four courses in each language or three in one language and five in the other.

Curricular Clarifications:

- Students may double count up to three courses taken for the Languages and Cultures major that are also being used to fulfill the requirements of other majors, minors and programs. Double-counting with General Education requirements is unlimited.
- Overall unit requirements for the major may vary depending on the language level with which the student enters, because all elementary and some intermediate (depending on language) courses are 12 units, while some intermediate (depending on language), and most advanced courses are 9 units. A major entering a track at an elementary level will therefore need to complete the same number of courses, but more total units, than a student who has advanced language proficiency upon entry.
- The concentration advisor will work with each student to craft a program that will advance the student's language proficiency given the student's entry level and towards the concentration's particular proficiency goals. Ideally, students will complete the 300-level courses before moving on to the 400-level. However, there will be flexibility based upon what is being offered and after consultation with the advisor. Regarding minimum 300- and 400-level requirements for courses taught in the target language, while the preference is a CMU course fully taught in the language, students may work with advisors on flexible ways to meet the requirements when necessary. Alternate means may include: courses taken at approved study abroad sites, courses taken through the PCHE consortium, culture courses in English where significant work is completed in the target language or

independent studies. Students may also repeat certain courses when the topics rotate each semester.

- Students entering CMU with background in the target language, due to previous study or to heritage or first-language status, will inevitably surpass the minimum course requirements at the 300-level and above. They will take all of their track courses at the advanced level, either through 300-, 400- and 500- level courses, or through the alternate means referenced in #3.
- Under extenuating circumstances, such as a course conflict with another major, students can, after consultation with advisors, take another 9-unit LCAL course and complete a capstone project in lieu of the 82-580 Senior Seminar.

- Access, evaluate, synthesize and analyze information from multiple perspectives, using a variety of sources
- Apply appropriate technologies and resources to research, organize, analyze, create and/or communicate information and ideas

Develop Content Knowledge & Cross-cultural Skills

- Build knowledge of historical events, recognizing the impact of and on individuals and societies
- Demonstrate familiarity with current social and cultural trends and issues in target language spaces and how a society's historical, geographical, political and cultural background shapes the mentality, values and perspectives of the individuals living in that society
- Model sensitivity to the need to understand other ways of knowing and thinking in other culture/s
- Identify cultural and social implications of using the target language for communication, including non-linguistic behaviors

Co-curricular Requirements

I. Experiential Learning

Experiential learning is a key component of the major and is defined by Dietrich College as learning that occurs when a student applies their academic learning in authentic contexts. The preferred method for fulfilling this requirement is through study abroad for a summer, semester or year. Consult with the appropriate Study Abroad Advisor and the Office of International Education (OIE) about possible programs.

LCAL guarantees partial study abroad scholarships for all majors and works with students to find additional funding, when necessary, to meet full financial need for participation in study abroad.

While study abroad is the preferred method of fulfilling the experiential learning requirement, students who have curricular or personal reasons that prohibit them from studying abroad should consult with their major advisor to determine a 9-unit approved research or internship experience in an approved community or organization that relates directly to their language concentration and uses their language skills. Students may also reach out to Dietrich College's Director of Experiential Learning (<https://www.cmu.edu/dietrich/students/undergraduate/experiential-learning/>) for assistance. This research or internship may be used to fulfill the Experiential Learning requirement and may also count as an elective course or, with advisor approval, as an advanced language course if the internship requires significant use of the language of the student's concentration.

II. Exit Interview

Complete an oral proficiency evaluation. Taken with a faculty member, this evaluation should take place by the end of the first semester of the senior year; students may also take it by the end of the junior year. Students are permitted to retake the interview.

Apply Program Outcomes

- Adapt the knowledge and skills learned to new experiences and learning opportunities
- Develop an intellectual engagement and reflective sensibility that will contribute to their life-long learning and appreciation of the world around them
- Remain cognizant of the links between contemporary issues arising from past ethical and historical contexts — for example, colonization, racism, globalization and authoritarianism
- View themselves as agents for promoting understanding and dialogue between their own culture/s and the other culture/s by engaging in open-minded discussion with diverse individuals to maintain a collaborative environment, be it work or future studies

Learning Outcomes

Demonstrate Targeted Proficiency in Speaking, Writing, Listening, Reading

- Students will attain the proficiency set by the language and culture group.

Analyze Cultural and Social Developments

- Identify historical, literary, political, filmic, cultural, social, environmental and/or economic issues facing societies and cultures and their reflection in contemporary art and media
- Demonstrate how cultural values evolved and shaped cultural products and practices over time and place in target language culture/s and society/ies
- Apply research, problem-solving and critical thinking skills interdisciplinarily — for example, through cross-linguistic, cross-cultural and/or comparative historical analysis
- Examine issues by identifying and challenging assumptions and biases, including one's own, and by distinguishing substantiated fact from opinion or misinformation
- Draw logical, well-supported conclusions

Conduct Independent Research

- Conduct independent research following accepted academic guidelines on topics related to target language communities' historical and contemporary issues