MODERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

About the Department

The Department of Modern Languages and Literatures offers a variety of programs in languages, literatures, linguistics, and cultures. Its broad aim is to explore the linguistic, cultural, and textual forms by which human beings have constructed and interpreted reality and fictional forms.

The Department prepares students to develop expertise in the following areas: literatures of the world, literary studies, cultural studies, visual culture, intercultural theory and communication/translation, eloquentia perfecta (theater, performance, writing, and public speaking), linguistics and bilingualism/multilingualism, and humanitarianism (anthropology/political science/international studies). Our students demonstrate a commitment to collaborative leadership in community-engaged learning, contact zones, and language cultures (business, health, social justice, translation).

The department offers language courses in Arabic, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Russian, and Spanish; majors in the following languages and literatures and area studies: French, German, Italian, Spanish, and minors in Arabic, French, German, Italian, Linguistics, Mandarin Chinese, Russian, and Spanish.

Courses at the 2000 level normally concentrate on advanced language, communication, linguistics, and cultural studies. Courses at the 3000 level normally concentrate on in-depth analysis of literature and artistic productions, intercultural theory, cultural and humanitarian studies, and linguistics. Courses at the 4000 level include Interdisciplinary Capstone Core courses, Senior Values Seminars, and courses that provide students with the opportunity to pursue faculty-mentored research either in the form of an individualized thesis, in our neuro-linguistic or sociolinguistic laboratories, or in the social innovation project on water and migration in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Modern Languages and Literatures also offers a variety of hands-on Community Engaged Learning Courses that enable students to use their linguistic and cultural skills as they work with local New York City communities on a variety of social justice minded issues in addition to MLAL courses taught in English on a myriad of subject matters. The majority of our majors are double majors in a wide variety of fields of specialization including among others: communication and media studies, comparative literature, English, humanitarian studies, integrative neuroscience, international political development, international studies, philosophy, psychology, political science, and visual arts.

Program Activities

The department offers a broad range of activities for undergraduates and the broader Fordham community including weekly conversation cafés in the various languages, cultural nights and concerts, literary journals such as Le Bélier, sponsored film screenings, master classes with some of the most preeminent creators in the industry, Fordham Reads Dante, the Bronx Italian American History Initiative (BIAHI), and numerous other interventions. Invited speakers offer formal lectures, informal talks, seminars, and workshops either designed for or open to undergraduates. The French section’s Concours d’élégance in partnership with the French Office of Cultural Services offers Fordham students the opportunity to compete both internally and against students from Columbia, CUNY, and NYU.

The students studying abroad at Fordham’s center in Granada, Spain, publish the journal Por Granada, which collects the term papers completed in the course Spain in Context. Students taking the MLAL course “Berlin Tales,” which includes a study tour to Berlin over spring break, publish their research papers in the journal Kiez Kieken.

Awards and Scholarships

Each year the department bestows a number of awards and scholarships on Fordham students for excellence in the study of foreign languages, literatures, and cultures, and for outstanding commitment to promoting foreign language learning and foreign culture awareness at Fordham and in the larger community. Awards and scholarships include:

- Francis R. Favorini Italian Achievement Award (FCRH)
- French Achievement Award (FCRH)
- German Achievement Award (FCRH)
- Anthony and Cecilia Guardiani Award (FCRH)
- Heydt French Award (FCRH)
- Heydt Spanish Award (FCRH)
- Istituto Italiano di Cultura Award (FCRH)
- Russian Award (FCRH)
- Fernand and Santina Vial Scholarship (FCRH, FCLC, GSB)

In addition, honors are awarded to the student with the highest GPA in each of the minors and majors our department offers at FCLC. Students who excel in their German classes will receive a Certificate of Achievement from the German government.

Internships

Students who wish to pursue an internship and receive college credit for it should contact their major adviser and Career Services to identify internship opportunities relevant to their field of study and professional interests. Credits for internship tutorials will be granted depending upon the type of internship, the extent to which the relevant language is used in the work environment, and the significance of the experience for a student’s course of study. The number of credits is contingent on the fulfillment of various requirements, such as regular meetings with the adviser, weekly written reports, and completion of a substantial final project, among others.

Below is a sample of organizations at which some of our students have done internships in past years:

- Alliance Française of New York (FIAC)
- Bayern München (the soccer club’s NYC office)
- Cultural Services of the French Embassy (CALEC)
- German-American Chamber of Commerce
- Goethe Institute
- Hermès
- Kino Lorber
- Le Figaro (sports division)
- Met Cloisters
- Morgan Library and Museum
- National Organization of Italian American Women (NOIAW)
- New Sanctuary Coalition
- New York African Film Festival
- One Week/Un Acte

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Contribution to the Core

A 2000-level course in a modern language other than English fulfills the language requirement. In order to achieve this level of mastery of a foreign language, a mastery that will allow students to comprehend a text of average sophistication in its oral and written form and to comment on it orally and in writing in a coherent and grammatically correct manner, the 2000-level course provides a critical analysis of selected cultural and literary texts, with composition, conversation, and review of pertinent grammatical structures.

Language skills preparation: One to three courses. Students who need preparation before taking the required 2000-level course have:

- Four entry points in French and Spanish, depending upon their prior knowledge of the language:
  - 1001-Introduction I
  - 1002-Introduction II
  - 1501-Intermediate I
  - 1502-Intermediate II
- Three entry points in Arabic, German, modern Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, and Russian:
  - 1001-Introduction I
  - 1501-Intermediate I
  - 1502-Intermediate II

All those beginning a language at the most basic level take an intensive one-semester course worth five credits in order to accelerate their progress. Other students begin with the course in which they are placed by the department and progress to the 2000-level course. Spanish-heritage speakers, who place out of levels 1001 through 1502 of the language, will take SPAN 2301 Spanish for Heritage Speakers instead of 2001 or 2201 to fulfill the language requirement. Students with advanced skills will take SPAN 2500 Approaches to Literature. Incoming students seeking a substitution/waiver for the foreign language core through the Office of Disability Services must complete this process by the end of the fall semester of their sophomore year.

Exemptions: B.S. and B.F.A. students, B.A. students in PCS, and those majoring in natural science will not have a language requirement unless required for their major.

In addition, the department offers courses that fulfill the American Pluralism, Global Studies, Eloquentia Perfecta 2, 3, and 4, Advanced Literature, Interdisciplinary Capstone, and Senior Values core requirements. It also offers Community Engaged Learning Courses that integrate coursework with service in the diverse and multilingual context of New York City.

Study abroad is an integral part of the study of foreign language, literature, and culture. Students are highly encouraged to study abroad in a foreign-language-speaking country for a semester or a year.

All courses counting towards the core language requirement and the major or the minor in a modern foreign language, literature and culture must be taken for credit and a letter grade. When AP or IB credits are awarded as equivalent to the 1502 level in a language, these credits will be applied toward the core language requirement and, as elective credits, toward graduation, but they will not be applied toward the major or the minor in that language.

For more information
Visit the Modern Languages and Literatures department web page.
Programs

Majors
- Chinese Studies Major
- French and Francophone Studies Major
- German Language and Literature Major
- German Studies Major
- Italian Language and Literature Major
- Italian Studies Major
- Spanish Language and Literature Major
- Spanish Studies Major

Minors
- Arabic Minor
- French and Francophone Studies Minor
- German Minor
- Italian Minor
- Linguistics Minor
- Mandarin Chinese Minor
- Russian Minor
- Spanish Minor