

FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

Foreign Languages and Literatures, College of Arts and Sciences

Foreign languages taught at WIU include Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Portuguese, and Spanish.



Why Study Foreign Languages?

“Even Americans will need to know a foreign language to get along in the 21st Century.” So wrote Jean Seligmann in a Newsweek article, informing us that knowledge of other languages is fast becoming a “survival skill” for Americans in an increasingly global economy. As the late U.S. Senator Paul Simon put it: “Cultural isolation is a luxury the United States can no longer afford.” As the United States struggles to define its role among the countries and cultures of the world, our national interest demands that citizens use second languages. All around us there is ample testimony to the practical value of foreign language acquisition. Students contemplating curricular decisions at WIU can consider the increased opportunities that result from studying a foreign language. Foreign languages taught at WIU include Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Career Opportunities

Financial columnist Sylvia Porter was right on target when she called knowledge of a foreign language “job insurance.” Countless career options are opened to people who have advanced foreign language skills in addition to other areas of preparation.

The federal government is the largest single employer of persons with foreign language skills. Many local governments also need officials and employees who can speak a second language. Here are just a few other examples: personnel of multi-national corporations, banking and financial officers, engineers and technicians with firms manufacturing for export, law enforcement personnel and administrators, security and loss-prevention industries, and a wide range of service agencies from social and medical to tourism and travel.

Employment opportunities also occur in library systems, publishing, journalism, communications, customs, retail sales, and other arenas. In academia, WIU foreign language teaching graduates are currently finding growing opportunities as teachers or as graduate teaching assistants. Graduate schools in a variety of disciplines seek students capable of doing research with primary foreign sources. Whatever your career choice, in addition to the practical value of foreign language study you will undoubtedly find the personal rewards of being able to communicate in the language of another culture equally important. The department of foreign languages and literatures urges students to consider the ethical implications of opening themselves to new worlds of communication through acquired new languages.

WIU Foreign Language Degree Programs

WIU offers the B.A. degree and the B.A. with Teaching Option in both French and Spanish. Minors are available in French, German, and Spanish, and we offer language classes as well in Chinese, Japanese, and Portuguese. The B.A. degree in French or Spanish requires 34 semester hours of coursework, 24 of which (8 courses) must be at the junior / senior level. If you have had four years of high school language study, be sure to ask about eligibility for advanced placement credit.

Students transferring to WIU with a foreign language major and an Associate degree may complete their major requirements with 24 hours of junior / senior level coursework and finish all degree requirements in two years.

Western's Leslie F. Malpass Library is an architectural and visual showplace, as well as a superb learning center.

The library and its five branches house more than one million cataloged volumes, 3,300 current journal subscriptions, and 25 foreign and domestic newspapers. In addition, the library provides computer access to resources worldwide, including 800 other Illinois libraries with more than 22 million volumes. When necessary, interlibrary loans can have materials in student's hands within just a day or two.



Faculty and Facilities

When you enroll as a language major at WIU, one of our most experienced teachers will serve as your academic advisor, helping you with course selection and registration, as well as General Education and graduation requirements.

The foreign language classrooms

and offices are housed on the third floor of Morgan Hall, close to WIU's excellent Malpass University Library. In the language lab students can use a variety of audio / video materials and computer software for practice and review, or watch foreign language television programs.

WIU's Study Abroad Programs

Imagine using and improving your language skills in Tours, France; the University of Laval at Quebec; Salamanca and Castellón, Spain; Guadalajara, Mexico; or the University of Mannheim in Germany; and at the same time earning academic credit applicable to your degree requirements. Be sure to ask your teacher or advisor for more details.

Scholarships and Student Work Opportunities

Freshmen or transfer foreign language majors with a minimum ACT composite score of 25 who rank in the top 25% of their high school class may apply for a WIU Foreign Language Alumni Scholarship. Freshmen or transfer French majors may apply for the Jerry Purdum Scholarship in French. High-achieving foreign language majors with junior or senior standing may qualify for one of several monetary awards granted each year, and other scholarship programs are under development. Every semester the foreign languages department also offers several positions to advanced-level language majors or minors as lab assistants and tutors.

We Are Here To Serve

Western Illinois University is an interactive public university serving more than 13,000 students. Along with its commitment to students, Western recognizes the needs of the region, state, and society; and plays a significant role in cultural, economic, and education development.

Campus Visits

The Admissions Reception Center (Sherman Hall 115) is open weekdays from 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Admissions counselors are available and individual appointments may be arranged in advance with faculty or advisers in academic departments. Campus tours, led by Western students, are given at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays. Group presentations are given daily at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. There may be times WIU is closed due to holiday breaks, campus events, etc. You may schedule a visit or check tour and group session availability at: wiu.edu/admissions/. Then click "On Campus Visits," or you may call 877/PICKWIU or 309/298-3157 to schedule an individual appointment with an admission counselor or to ensure the University is open on the day you plan to visit. The email address for the Admissions Office is admissions@wiu.edu, and the Web site is admissions.wiu.edu.

Western Illinois University is a fully compliant affirmative action, equal opportunity institution. Please let us know how we may accommodate any special needs you have.



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