World Languages at Wittenberg: Your Gateway to the World

Wittenberg offers distinctive language programs that have been featured nationally as a model for the study of world languages. In 2010, for example, USA Today highlighted Wittenberg’s language programs: http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2010-07-24-IHE_languages24_ST_N.htm.

Language study at Wittenberg is distinctive because it focuses on cultural themes and on helping students make interdisciplinary connections. No matter what your major, language study can provide you with opportunities to enhance your research with resources from different cultures around the world. By moving beyond the basics, you can take advantage of Wittenberg’s Cultures and Languages Across the Curriculum program. CLAC lets students in selected courses in every department on campus complete a one-credit project using their language skills. Employers and graduate schools are seeking applicants who possess “cultural intelligence”, i.e. individuals adept at understanding and working with people from different cultural and language backgrounds. CLAC and language study in general help students develop the habits of mind necessary for encountering cultural diversity empathetically. In April 2012, the National Association of College and Employers listed language majors as one of the highest paid liberal arts majors (http://www.naceweb.org/salary-survey-data/). Another recent survey by the educational consortium IES points to the importance of cultural and linguistic intelligence by suggesting that students who study abroad may tend to get higher paying jobs sooner than students who do not (https://www.iesabroad.org/IES/About_IES/IES_News/Articles/newsArticle0199.html).

As you make your college plans, consider taking additional courses in a foreign language. Wittenberg offers majors and minors in French, German, and Spanish and minors in Chinese and Russian, and advanced courses in Japanese. But you don’t need a major or minor to enrich your undergraduate learning. Take advantage of the CLAC program, pursue language study as a gateway to study abroad, or integrate language and culture study into your major in any department on campus. We look forward to seeing you in the Language Department!

The Language Requirement: FAQs

Do I have to continue in the same language I took in high school?

No, you can start a new language. You must, however, take the online placement test in any language you were learning in high school.

How do I satisfy the requirement?

The easiest way to satisfy the requirement is to complete a language course numbered 112 or higher with a grade of C- or better. The catalog and
schedule list courses that may be used to demonstrate competency with the letter designation F for Foreign Language Requirement.

If you feel confident in your language skills and placed above 112 on the placement exam, you may also take the Competency Examination. If you pass it, you’ve completed the requirement. It’s offered in the fall and in the spring. Watch your e-mail. The exam dates are announced by e-mail the first month of each semester.

Are the competency and placement exams the same?

No. The competency exam is a comprehensive and rigorous test of your mastery of writing, reading, speaking, and listening skills. The placement exam is simply an initial assessment of where you should begin taking language courses but does not test your mastery of skills. Only the competency exam can be used to demonstrate that you have satisfied the language requirement.

What if I want to study a language not offered at Wittenberg?

Wittenberg offers courses in six languages: Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish. To demonstrate competency in languages not offered at Wittenberg, you must take a competency examination. You will need to meet with the Chair of the Language Department who will help you arrange to take a standardized test in that language. You will be responsible for paying any fees associated with the test.

When should I plan on completing the language requirement?

The sooner the better. Language study opens doors and enhances your opportunities to study abroad and to take advantage of Wittenberg’s distinctive Cultures and Languages Across the Curriculum program (described above). It is best if you can address this requirement at the latest by the end of your sophomore year.