

St. Olaf College OLE Core General Education Curriculum World Languages and Cultures Requirement

Description:

This requirement aims to develop language skills and the ability to use those skills to interpret authentic texts and reflect critically on the connections and differences between one's own experience and the diverse experiences and perspectives of users of other languages.

Administrative Guidelines:

Depending on placement, most incoming students will complete at least one course and a maximum of three courses at St. Olaf in order to fulfill the requirement. Most students fulfill this requirement by:

- completing a 4th-semester or higher course in French, German, or Spanish
- OR
- completing a 3rd-semester or higher course in Chinese, Greek, Japanese, Latin, Norwegian, or Russian
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However, students who begin French, German, or Spanish in the 1st-semester course fulfill the language requirement by completing the 3rd-semester course.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

Students will:

1. Demonstrate understanding of materials made by and for communities that use the language.
2. Compare multiple perspectives on issues of cultural and/or linguistic significance for at least one studied culture.
3. Analyze the diverse experiences and perspectives of users of the language studied.
4. Produce and/or explain language appropriate for the topics and contexts studied.

Course Guidelines:

The speed and depth with which language skills develop vary depending on factors that include proximity of the target language to one's own language(s), duration of language study, and differences in writing systems. National professional associations for language teaching maintain and periodically update learning goals and assessment tools that can help determine language- and level-specific targets.

As examples, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) has drafted "Performance Descriptors for Language Learners" and has collaborated with the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL) to produce the "2017 NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements" to guide learners, educators, and stakeholders in determining targets and assessing progress. Such national standards provide benchmarks that identify appropriate differences between languages and levels.

1. **Demonstrate understanding of materials made by and for communities that use the language.**
Learners must demonstrate their understanding of authentic materials in the target language

produced by and for communities that use the language. “Authentic materials” refers to materials such as texts and other cultural products from real-world contexts, as opposed to materials created or edited specifically for language learners. These materials include a broad range of media, such as texts, videos, advertising, social media posts, etc. “Authentic” does not necessarily mean “native.” Communities that might produce authentic materials include, for example, users of the language in contexts of linguistic minorities, immigration, or a globalized workforce.

- 2. Compare multiple perspectives on issues of cultural and/or linguistic significance for at least one studied culture.**
- 3. Analyze the diverse experiences and perspectives of users of the language studied.**
Analyzing diverse experiences and perspectives includes reflecting on and reframing students’ own experiences.
- 4. Produce and/or explain language appropriate for the topics and contexts studied.**
 - a. Courses must help students apply language skills in functionally and culturally appropriate ways.
 - b. Language functions refer to what students can do with the language (for example, identify main ideas, compare and contrast, describe, narrate, etc.).
 - c. Appropriate use of language skills requires application of cultural knowledge about contexts, register (for example, informal versus academic), cultural practices, etc.
 - d. In the case of modern languages, the development of reading, writing, speaking, and listening are consistent goals. In the case of Latin and Ancient Greek, more emphasis is placed on reading comprehension (the study and analysis of written texts).