GERMAN

Modern Languages Mission Statement

Educated people spend their lives pursuing growth in political, social and intellectual freedom. One kind of intellectual freedom requires us to break away from the notion that our native language is the most natural and apt means of expressing the full range of human experience. An education can start with the discovery that all words are purely conventional devices. They are nonetheless tools that stir emotions, articulate ideas, and establish relationships with others. Learning another language contributes to our education by intimately exploring cultural and linguistic concepts that broaden our understanding of what it means to be human in today's world.

Our basic courses offer the opportunity to begin acquiring the skills and knowledge necessary for the eventual mastery of a language. When students take full advantage of that opportunity, they can use the target language in subsequent courses dealing with the culture and society. The department emphasizes the use of the target language in most of its courses because it believes that students can best appreciate a culture from within its own mode of expression.

With a view toward career opportunities, the department encourages integrating language study with a variety of other academic areas, such as history, philosophy, international studies, environmental studies, biology, economics, politics and public affairs, global commerce, global health, and English. Courses in cultural studies and literature, aside from their intrinsic worth, also present multiple perspectives on other cultures and various areas of intellectual experience.

A student who wants to spend a summer, a semester, or a year abroad with programs approved by Denison should consult members of the department and the Center for Global Programs (see Off-Campus Programs). On-campus opportunities to improve command of the language are provided by language tables, international films, club meetings, and similar activities sponsored by the department. There are also subsidized field trips to museums and pertinent activities in cities across the country, and in some cases international travel.