

SPANISH

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 realization 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

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 all subsequent courses. The department emphasizes the use of the target language in most of its courses because it believes that students can best appreciate another 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 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 as well subsidized field trips to museums and pertinent activities in cities across the country, and in some cases international travel.

Spanish Program Mission

Our mission is to foster the development of cross-cultural communication skills through rigorous intellectual inquiry into a variety of archives from Spanish-speaking societies. By working closely with professors and peers, in and beyond the classroom, students acquire proficiency in critically analyzing the complex issues of today's world.

Spanish Program Vision

Our students become co-learners with each other and us, and competent in intercultural communication and the study of cultural discourses. They engage with a wide range of texts and develop analytic and evaluative skills to be active participants in an evolving world. They connect with the world in multiple significant ways: study abroad, student conferences, guest speakers, extracurricular activities, and community outreach. Our program is a rigorous, intellectually stimulating and fulfilling endeavor, responding to an ever-changing world. It integrates culture, language, and literature through, and across, multiple perspectives and methodologies. It also forges ties with many other departments throughout the university so that our discipline can facilitate research and the acquisition of knowledge across the curriculum.

Goals for the Major

In our courses students acquire functional language abilities and develop knowledge of the cultures and literature of Spanish-speaking peoples. Through historical breadth and depth of inquiry, students analyze issues pertaining to different Hispanophone regions and examine them through a variety of disciplinary approaches. Students develop critical language awareness, interpretative and translation skills, historical and political awareness, social sensibility, and aesthetic perception.

At the linguistic level the Spanish program subscribes to the Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century articulated by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. They include five areas of development in second language education.

Communication

- Interpersonal: Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.
- Interpretive: Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics from diverse media.
- Presentational: Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.

Cultures

- Practices and Perspectives: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied.
- Products and Perspectives: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied.

Connections

- Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the language.
- Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the language and its cultures.

Comparisons

- Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.
- Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own, including the relationship between accepted practices, products and perspectives.

Communities

- Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting.
- Students show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.