

Modern and Classical Languages

July 1, 2020

I. Short Description

Modern or classical language competency enables students to perform foundational linguistic activities, to demonstrate cultural awareness, to express the impact of language learning on their Christian faith, and to continue to grow in these areas.

- Foundational communication activities in modern languages (Chinese, French, German and Spanish) include listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- In classical languages (Classical Greek, Classical Hebrew and Latin) these foundational linguistic activities include reading and grammar analysis.

II. Core Competency Learning Outcomes and Interpretation

A. Students will be able to...

Students of modern languages will be able to . . .

1. speak and comprehend in the target language at an intermediate level
2. interpret texts in the target language at an intermediate level
3. write an essay effectively in the target language at an intermediate level
4. express an awareness of the differences and similarities between the target cultures and their own culture
5. articulate how modern language learning informs their Christian faith

Students of classical languages will be able to...

1. identify meanings of select lexemes and grammatical features
2. interpret classical texts in the original language
3. express an awareness of the differences and similarities between the target cultures and their own culture
4. articulate how classical language learning informs their Christian faith

B. Expansion and interpretation of the outcome statements

Guidelines for defining modern language proficiency

Wheaton College assesses students' proficiency on the basis of the following Modern Languages Proficiency Guidelines, adapted from the *American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines 2012*. For complete text, please see: <https://www.actfl.org/>

ACTFL designates five proficiency levels: novice, intermediate, advanced, superior and distinguished. The first three of these levels contain low, mid and high sublevels. All students will be expected to reach ACTFL-Intermediate Low in all four skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

Speaking: Intermediate Low

Speakers at the Intermediate Low sublevel are able to handle successfully a limited number of uncomplicated communicative tasks by creating with the language in straightforward social situations. Conversation is restricted to some of the concrete exchanges and predictable topics necessary for survival in the target-language culture. These topics relate to basic personal information; for example, self and family, some daily activities and personal preferences, and some immediate needs, such as ordering food and making simple purchases. At the Intermediate Low sublevel, speakers are primarily reactive and struggle to answer direct questions or requests for information. They are also able to ask a few appropriate questions. Intermediate Low speakers manage to sustain the functions of the Intermediate level, although just barely.

Intermediate Low speakers express personal meaning by combining and recombining what they know and what they hear from their interlocutors into short statements and discrete sentences. Their responses are often filled with hesitancy and inaccuracies as they search for appropriate linguistic forms and vocabulary while attempting to give form to the message. Their speech is characterized by frequent pauses, ineffective reformulations and self-corrections. Their pronunciation, vocabulary and syntax are strongly influenced by their first language. In spite of frequent misunderstandings that may require repetition or rephrasing, Intermediate Low speakers can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors, particularly by those accustomed to dealing with non-natives.

Listening: Intermediate Low

At the Intermediate Low sublevel, listeners are able to understand some information from sentence-length speech, one utterance at a time, in basic personal and social contexts, though comprehension is often uneven. At the Intermediate Low sublevel, listeners show little or no comprehension of oral texts typically understood by Advanced-level listeners.

Reading: Intermediate Low

At the Intermediate Low sublevel, readers are able to understand some information from the simplest connected texts dealing with a limited number of personal and social needs, although there may be frequent misunderstandings. Readers at this level will be challenged to derive meaning from connected texts of any length.

Writing: Intermediate Low

Writers at the Intermediate Low sublevel are able to meet some limited practical writing needs. They can create statements and formulate questions based on familiar material. Most sentences are combinations of learned vocabulary and structures. These are short and simple conversational-style sentences with basic word order. They are written almost exclusively in present time. Writing tends to consist of a few simple sentences, often with repetitive structure. Topics are tied to highly predictable content areas and personal information. Vocabulary is adequate to express elementary needs. There may be basic errors in grammar, word choice, punctuation, spelling, and in the formation and use of non-alphabetic symbols. Their writing is understood by natives used to the writing of non-natives, although additional effort may be required. When Intermediate Low writers attempt to perform writing tasks at the Advanced level, their writing will deteriorate significantly and their message may be left incomplete

Guidelines for defining classical language proficiency

Classical language proficiency is met by taking and passing with a C- or above a semester-long (four-credit) course in classical language (GREK, HEBR, and LATN) at Wheaton at the intermediate level (201 [HEBR 401]) or above (upper division, 300-level).

Definitions and explanations of disciplinary terms

Faculty members preparing to teach a foreign language course and the Core Curriculum Committee preparing to review such a course should familiarize themselves with these terms.

- **American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).** ACTFL is a national organization whose primary concern is the promotion of the learning of languages other than English and of excellence in the teaching of those languages. Their *National Standards for Foreign Language Learning* serve as the framework for all modern language classes.
- **Lexeme:** A word-like grammatical form intermediate between morpheme and utterance, often identical with a word occurrence; a word in the most abstract sense, as a meaningful form without an assigned grammatical role; an item of vocabulary.

III. Guidelines

A. Expanded area description

None given.

B. Connection between the area outcomes and the Christ at the Core program goals

The primary objectives of general education in a language other than English aim to guide students in developing essential skills needed to use the language they are learning in real-life settings, demonstrate cultural awareness, and cultivate a growing understanding of the impact of language learning on their Christian faith. Over the course of their general education in language other than English, students engage with persons and texts from cultures different from their own, whether classical or modern. Students enhance their consciousness of their own linguistic, cultural and religious heritage while learning to relate with respect and consideration to persons from diverse backgrounds.

In the modern languages, students are expected to develop the ability to listen, speak, read and write at a basic level that will enable them to interact with native speakers. The goal is communicative competence in meaningful contexts rather than simply to display one's knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and phonological accuracy. To understand and appreciate a language, students should also be familiar with cultural particularities associated with the language under study.

In the classical languages, students are expected to develop the ability to read at a level that will enable them to engage meaningfully with original texts. This requires a basic competence in grammar and vocabulary. Beyond technical accuracy, the student should also be familiar with cultural particularities associated with the language under study. Classical languages by definition lack native speakers and a living culture. This lack hampers the learner by withholding corrective and eye-opening interactions so much an essential part of modern language experience. It makes one's own biases and cultural peculiarities more difficult to identify. Facing these hurdles is an important part of understanding and appreciating a language.

Successfully meeting the competency requirement in a language other than English provides opportunity to continue language study while here at Wheaton and to gain a clearer vision of service to Church and to society as students take part in the fostering of constructive communication across times and cultures. It is our hope that students will come to view study of a language other than English as not only a way to bridge linguistic and cultural barriers, but also as a means to participate in the biblical call “to love the stranger”, and to see their time of learning as a way to give and to receive blessing as guests in another culture and to practice hospitality with strangers at home.

Classical and modern language instruction directly advances the following Christ at the Core program outcomes:

1. Christ at the Core, Holistic Learning Goal 4.
2. Christ at the Core, Wisdom Learning Goal 3.

C. Evidence for achievement of the outcomes

Students without classical and modern language competency.

Students at Wheaton College shall demonstrate linguistic proficiency in either a modern or classical language to fulfill the Core Curriculum Language Competency Requirement. This can be achieved by one of the following means:

1. **Language Study**: Students completing the language requirement through study at Wheaton College must take and pass with a C- or above a semester-long (four-credit) course in a modern or classical language at Wheaton at the intermediate level (201, 209) or above (upper division, 300-level) to satisfy the requirement.
 - All undergraduate students who anticipate completing competency via language study must take a placement test and follow the recommendation of the Department of Modern and Classical Languages (MCL) in order to enroll in a modern or classical languages course.
 - For modern languages (CHIN, FREN, SPAN, and GERM), placement tests may be taken online at any time during the academic year. Register online at: <https://www.wheaton.edu/academics/programs/modern-and-classical-languages/language-placement-testing/>
 - For classical languages (GREK, HEBR, LATN), course placement will be determined by a written placement test offered at the beginning of each academic semester. Contact the MCL Testing Coordinator to schedule a placement test in either Greek, Hebrew, or Latin.
 - Language courses that serve as academic preparation for completion of the Language Competency Requirement must be taken for credit and cannot be taken pass/fail.
2. **Transfer Credit**: Students may transfer one intermediate-level (or upper division) modern or classical language semester course (passed with a C- or above) from a four-year accredited college or university or two intermediate-level semester courses (both of which must have been

completed and passed with a C- or above) from a two-year college¹ to satisfy the requirement. Courses taken abroad may also be considered on a case-by-case basis with prior approval by the MCL Dept. (Note: Online modern languages courses are not accepted.)

Four hours from an intermediate-level dual enrollment course will be accepted if validated by an ACTFL OPI of OPIc rating of “Intermediate Mid” via LTI testing proctored by the Dept. of Modern and Classical Languages.

3. **Test Score:**

Modern Languages: Students who received a minimum score of 580 on a College Board SAT Subject Test with a reading component, a 3 or higher on an AP Exam, a 4 or higher on an IB Exam (Higher Level [HL]), or who have been awarded the Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy² in an approved language, will have satisfied the requirement. Students whose oral proficiency in a language other than English is assessed at the ACTFL³ “**Intermediate-Mid**” level based on an official OPI (Oral Proficiency Interview) or OPIc (Oral Proficiency Interview-computer) test administered by Language Testing International (LTI)⁴ will have fulfilled the language competency requirement. (N.B. LTI OPI and OPIc testing must be proctored by a faculty or staff member from the Dept. of Modern and Classical Languages.)⁵

Classical Languages: Students of Latin who received a minimum score of 640 on a College Board SAT Subject Test with a reading component, a 4 or higher on an AP Exam, a 5 or higher on an IB Exam (Higher Level [HL]), or who have been awarded the Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy for Latin, will have satisfied the competency requirement. Students of Latin, Ancient Greek, or Classical Hebrew who pass an MCL Department Language Competency Exam will have satisfied the competency requirement.

- Students who are attempting to fulfill the language competency requirement via an LTI OPI or OPIc test (for modern languages) or by departmental competency exam (for classical languages) must do so before the end of the first year after matriculation at Wheaton. The test may be taken only once to satisfy the requirement.
- The Language Competency Requirement must be completed by the end of the junior year.

Exemptions from the Core Language Competency Requirement:

- International students (non-native speakers of English) who have fulfilled the English proficiency requirements for admission to Wheaton <http://www.wheaton.edu/Admissions-and-Aid/Undergrad/Apply/Admissions-Process/International-Students/English-Proficiency-Requirements>

¹ A two-year college or university is defined as an associate degree-granting institution of higher learning (also known as a community or junior college). See the American Association of Community Colleges website (<https://www.aacc.nche.edu/>) for a list of community colleges in the United States.

² State Seal of Biliteracy (SSB) award requirements vary from state to state. SSB insignia awarded to students by other U.S. states will be evaluated and approved on a case-by-case basis. (See <http://sealofbiliteracy.org/state-guidelines>)

³ ACTFL = American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. For ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012, see <https://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012>

⁴ Language Testing International is the exclusive licensee of ACTFL (<https://www.languagetesting.com/>).

⁵ Students will be charged the following fees for LTI testing: OPIc = \$105; OPI = \$159. The ACE (American Council on Education) fee for college credit recommendation and transcribing of the LTI result is \$20. (*N.B. Rates subject to change w/o notice.)

- Students whose entire high school curriculum (all written and oral instruction in every subject), was completed in a language other than English (transcript validation required).
- Students with approved disability exemptions may take 12 hours of Global Perspectives (GP) tagged courses to fulfill the Language Competency Requirement.

Test Scores and Course Credit

Modern Languages		
Language Test Score	Course Credit Received	Competency Requirement Met?
AP = 3	4 hours (201)	yes
AP = 4,5	8 hours (201 + upper-division course)	yes
IB (HL) = 4,5	4 hours (201)	yes
IB (HL) = 6,7	8 hours (201 + upper-division course)	yes
SAT Subject Test = 580-639	4 hours (201)	yes
SAT Subject Test = 640 or above	8 hours (201 + upper-division course)	yes
LTI = Intermediate-Mid	4 hours (201)	yes
LTI = Intermediate-High	8 hours (201 + upper-division course)	yes
*IL State Seal of Bilingualism	8 hours (201 + upper-division course)	yes

Latin		
Language Test Score	Course Credit Received	Competency Requirement Met?
AP = 3	4 hours (102)	no
AP = 4,5	8 hours (201 + upper-division course)	yes
IB (HL) = 4	4 hours (102)	no
IB (HL) = 5,6,7	8 hours (201 + upper-division course)	yes
SAT Subject Test = 580-639	4 hours (102)	no
SAT Subject Test = 640 or above	8 hours (201 + upper-division course)	yes
*IL State Seal of Bilingualism	8 hours (201 + upper-division course)	yes

*State Seal of Bilingualism insignias awarded by other U.S. states will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

D. General Guidelines

None given