Modern Languages & Literature

In today's increasingly global society, a well-rounded education should include foreign language skill and cross-cultural understanding. The international nature of business, health care, and politics, as well as changing demographics within the United States, have dramatically increased the demand for individuals who can navigate around linguistic and cultural barriers. These individuals will hold increasingly pivotal roles in industry, government, and education.

**THE PROGRAM**

Gonzaga’s Modern Languages and Literature faculty believe that by encountering new cultures, students develop tolerance for difference, an understanding of other cultures and languages, and greater insight into themselves and their own cultures.

Gonzaga’s Modern Languages and Literature Department offers majors in French and Spanish, and minors in French, German, Italian, and Spanish. The department also offers coursework in Arabic, Chinese, and Japanese. Lower-division language courses enable students to attain foreign language proficiency before going on to upper-division courses in literature, film, culture, and linguistics. Gonzaga’s classrooms allow students to learn languages in a multimedia environment. A flexible placement policy allows incoming students with foreign language skills to begin their coursework at the most suitable level.

The **French program** prepares students for professional life in the 21st century. Many French majors at Gonzaga have second majors and have successfully integrated their study of French with degrees in biology, business, public relations, or international studies in order to pursue careers in business, medicine, or law. French majors and minors are strongly encouraged to incorporate study abroad into their course work. Courses taken at the Institut Catholique (Paris) or at the Institute for American Universities (Aix-en-Provence) may be transferred to Gonzaga and applied to the major and minor. The French program also awards the Martin Blum Scholarship to a second-year student who demonstrates outstanding ability in the study of French.

The **German minor** helps students develop grammatical and intercultural competence and achieve oral proficiency. Upper-division courses that coordinate with the International Studies program focus on reading, writing, and speaking skills. Language, literature, and culture classes focus on interactive acquisition of German. Students in the German program may experience Austrian life and culture while studying abroad for one semester or academic year at Karl-Franzens University in Graz, Austria or participate in a five-week summer immersion program in Graz.

The **Italian minor** enables students to reach intermediate proficiency in Italian and a considerable insight into the historical and sociocultural aspects of today’s Italy. Students are encouraged to spend one semester in the Gonzaga in Florence program or in a comparable program in Italy. A successful completion of this minor requires demonstrated mastery of the material covered at the elementary and intermediate level of Italian (Ital 101, 102, 201, 202) and 12 credits at the 300 level and above. All students are therefore required to take four upper-division courses in Italian language and culture.

The **Spanish major and minor** focus equally on Latin America and Spain. Gonzaga students may study in Granada, Spain during the Fall or Spring semesters or attend a summer immersion program in Cuernavaca, Mexico. These immersion programs include coursework in Spanish (Spanish/Latin American literature and films), cultural trips, and a home-stay with a local family. In South America, Gonzaga also offers study abroad programs for Spanish language students in Valparaíso, Chile, and in both Buenos Aires and Córdoba, Argentina.
Students can get a limited number of elective credits through these programs. More than one-tenth of the U.S. population speaks Spanish, and trade with Latin America continues to expand. Spanish language proficiency and an awareness of Hispanic culture have never been more important than they are in today’s job market and global economy.

A major or minor in International Studies, with an Asian Studies concentration, is available through the International Studies program. This concentration requires proficiency in either Arabic, Japanese or Chinese. At Gonzaga, students can take 100- to 300-level Japanese language courses, as well as Arabic language courses (through the 202 level) and then pursue additional language studies through a study abroad experience. Japanese language students may study for a semester or a year at Sophia University in Tokyo or at Akita International University in Akita, Japan. Arabic and Chinese language students may study in the CET Program in Amman, Jordan, or the Beijing Center in China respectively, as well as arranging individualized study with Gonzaga faculty.

OUTCOMES

Mastery of a foreign language noticeably enhances students’ career prospects, especially when combined with study in other disciplines. Graduates have used their language backgrounds in fields such as business, journalism, the travel industry, teaching, sociology, and political science.

Since many students have a strong interest in social justice and a desire to serve others, some language graduates will spend a year or two volunteering prior to attending graduate school or entering the job market. Through programs such as the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, AmeriCorps, and Peace Corps students find their secondary language skills indispensable. Additionally, many students have goals to pursue careers in law, government, and academia; thus, they attend a variety of graduate programs at diverse universities. Below is a sample of schools recent graduates in modern languages have attended or are attending:

- American Graduate School of International Management (Thunderbird)
- Boston College
- Duke University
- Georgetown University
- Monterey Institute
- Sophia University (Tokyo, Japan)
- Stanford University
- University of California, Berkeley
- University of California, Los Angeles

THE PEOPLE

Gonzaga’s Modern Language and Literature Department faculty members offer personalized attention and academic mentoring in the classroom and during individual advising sessions. In addition, all faculty teach beginning and intermediate language classes.
**FACULTY PUBLICATIONS**

**Rebecca Boyer**

**Gabriella Brooke**

**Luis Garcia-Torvisco**

**Torunn Haaland**

**Christina Isabelli**

**Rebecca Marquis**

**Stefania Nedderman**

**Alec Schumacher**

**Benjamin Semple**

**Rebecca Stephanis**
FACULTY CONTACT & SPECIALTIES

Christina Isabelli | Dept. Chair
Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin
Spanish language and culture, applied linguistics
isabelli@gonzaga.edu

Ali Asiri
M.A., Gonzaga University
Arabic language and culture
asiri@gonzaga.edu

Diane Birginal
M.A., Arizona State University
Spanish language and culture
birginal@gonzaga.edu

Kelley Bishop
M.A., North Carolina State University
Spanish language and culture
bishopk@gonzaga.edu

Barbara Boyer
Ph.D., University of Southern California
French language and Francophone literature
boyerb@gonzaga.edu

Gabriella Brooke
M.A., University of Washington
Italian language, culture, and literature
brooke@gonzaga.edu

Arturo Garcia Osorio
M.A., University of Texas at Austin
Spanish language and culture
garcia-osorio@gonzaga.edu

Luis Garcia-Torvisco
Ph.D., Georgetown University
Spanish language, contemporary Spanish culture, film, and literature
garcia-torvisco@gonzaga.edu

Torunn Haaland
Ph.D., Indiana University
Italian cinema, culture, and literature
haaland@gonzaga.edu

Seiko Katsushima
M.A., University of Arizona
Japanese language and culture
katsushima@gonzaga.edu

Rebecca Marquis
Ph.D., Indiana University
20th Century Spanish and Latin American literature
marquis@gonzaga.edu

Stefania Nedderman
Ph.D., University of Oregon
Italian and Spanish language and culture, Italian and Iberian literature
nedderman@gonzaga.edu

Ute Perz
M.A., Graz University (Austria)
German language, culture, and literature
perz@gonzaga.edu

Alec Schumacher
Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison
Latin American literature
schumacher@gonzaga.edu

Benjamin Semple
Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania
French language and literature
semble@gonzaga.edu

Rebecca Stephanis
Ph.D., Princeton University
Late 19th and early 20th Century Latin American literature and film/photography
stephanis@gonzaga.edu