

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (with majors in French and Spanish)

The Monmouth College Mission Statement identifies our institution as “an undergraduate liberal arts college” in its first sentence. The American Heritage Dictionary defines the liberal arts as: “Academic disciplines, such as languages, history, and philosophy, that provide information of general cultural concern, as distinguished from more narrowly practical training, as for a vocation or profession” (The American Heritage Dictionary, Houghton Mifflin, Boston 1985, p. 727). By definition, then, the study of languages is central to the liberal arts education.

The Mission Statement further states that at Monmouth “we strive to create and sustain an environment that is value-centered, intellectually challenging, aesthetically inspiring, and culturally diverse.” Understanding cultural diversity is the very heart of learning foreign languages; those of us who teach other languages feel strongly that learning to **value** diverse cultural expressions is not only indispensable as we enter the 21st century, but is the path to **intellectual challenges** and to **aesthetic inspiration** through the literature, philosophy, and art forms of other cultures. Indeed, our Mission Statement goes on to declare that Monmouth helps “our students explore multiple perspectives on the human condition and prepare themselves for rich personal and professional lives ... for leadership, citizenship, and service in a global context.” There is no more direct tool to these goals than the command of the languages, and of the language-based cultural expressions, of the citizens of our globe.

Philosophy. Goals and Structure for the French and Spanish Majors

The French and Spanish majors seek to provide students with a linguistic and cultural tool which can then be used toward further education in French studies, in the Spanish language and literature, or in Latin American studies, or can be implemented in professional careers.

The design of the French major indicates our commitment of an integrated program in literature, history and general culture which can satisfy a variety of students with diverse goals. Both the content and format of the courses offered reflect the impact of critical theory (theoretical approach to textual analysis) and cultural studies (postcolonial *Francophonie*/France), as well as an international perspective (European Union), on the study of French as we approach the 21st century.

The present design of the Spanish major is traditional to the discipline. Since the major is in language, the cultural emphasis is on literature, the most refined use of language; nonetheless, cultural education is inclusive the graphic arts, *artesanía*, music, religion, food, and many other cultural aspects, both classical and popular, and cultural education specific to the language includes the study of gestures and body language, and of relationships between sexes, generations, and races and how those relationships affect communication.

Modern foreign language majors use their linguistic and cultural knowledge in pursuit of higher education in language and literature, and/or as a tool in their careers, which have included international environmental policy, international business, personnel management in national businesses that employ native speakers of other languages, teaching and research at all levels, diplomatic service, civil service, social work, law, and medicine.

Objectives of a Modern Foreign Language (French or Spanish) Major

A. Oral/aural skills

Advanced proficiency level in the target language, as described by the **ACTFL OPI** exam: **The Advanced level** is characterized by the speaker's ability to:

Converse in a clearly participatory fashion;

Initiate, sustain, and bring to closure a wide variety of communicative tasks, including those that require an increased ability to convey meaning with diverse language strategies due to a complication or an unforeseen turn of events;

Satisfy the requirements of school and work situations;

Narrate and describe with paragraph-length connected discourse

B. Literacy skills (reading and writing)

Ability to read and comprehend periodicals, narrative fiction (short stories, novels), essays, biographies, poetry, and history in the target language (not necessarily comprehending every word or expression, but understanding the essence of the written work, with nuances clarified through further study/dictionary).

Ability to write a well-organized, thesis-centered essay in standard French or Spanish, including the ability to put together coherent paragraphs of complete sentences with subject-verb agreement, noun-adjective agreement, proper tense sequencing, and other grammatical elements that render the written work effective in its communicative value.

C. Comprehension of the origins, development, and role (uses, power) of the language within its culture.

D. Knowledge of trajectory of French and Francophone, or of Spanish and Hispanophone literature and of the history of those cultures, and of other cultural attributes both as seen through and in addition to its literature; understanding and ability to apply textual criticism.

E. Ability to apply knowledge within a specialized field, or ability to enter further training and/or education to the end of applying foreign language knowledge within a specialized field:

1. Public school teaching
2. Communication skills/marketability in private enterprise
3. Graduate school toward specialized careers: international law, international relations, international tourism and/or hotel management, international research in biology, geology, environmental studies and/or law
4. Graduate school toward career in postsecondary education and research in foreign language(s) and literature(s)

Assessment of Major Goals

Goals of the French and Spanish Majors	Most Relevant Courses	Means of Assessment
From a no functional ability to an ability to communicate minimally with learned material		
- Provide with basic functional level in the target language. - Development of speaking and listening comprehension. Introduction to reading and writing.	101, 102	- videos, films - role playing - interviews, - exams (oral and written)
- Further develop functional proficiency in the four skills (Listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing).	102	
From satisfying the requirements of basic communicative exchange (relying on learned utterances) to minimal creation with the language (combining and recombining learned materials)		
- Emphasis on the development of oral-aural skills, speaking and listening. - Development of reading and writing - Reinforcement of grammatical structures previously acquired - Systematic introduction of new structures as well as the consolidation of the four skills.	201	- videos, films, audio tapes - role playing - interviews, - exams (oral and written)
<u>Oral expression:</u> from the ability to handle a limited number of interactive, task-oriented and social situations to the ability to successfully handle most uncomplicated, basic and communicative tasks and social situations.		
<u>Written expression:</u> from the ability to write simple description and linear narration to the ability to narrate with paragraph length within the essay form, sustaining opinions, showing a strong grasp of grammar and vocabulary.		
- Integration of acquired knowledge of target language into regular reading and writing practice and into oral-aural exercises.	210 (Spanish)	- films, audio tapes, radio broadcastings
- Distinction among different levels of communication: colloquial, proper, literary, etc.	210/220 (French)	- short stories - news magazines articles - interviews, examinations
- Furthering the development of written and oral expression. - Becoming acquainted with milestones of French, Francophone, Spanish and Hispanophone histories and understand how they shaped various aspects of contemporary cultures: values, beliefs, attitudes, etc.	252	- videos, films - documents - discussion, research paper - examinations

Assessment of Major Goals — French Major

Goals of the French Major	Most Relevant Courses	Means of Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Furthering the development of written and oral expression. - In depth study of French grammar to provide necessary ground to WRITE advanced papers in French. 	FREN315	-Texts, examinations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Furthering the development of written and oral expression. - Introduction to textual analysis of selected literary works. - Develop awareness of creative process and understanding of style 	FREN321	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Texts - Discussion, research paper, - examinations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Furthering the development of written and oral expression. - Acquire professional vocabulary. - Understand the functioning and characteristics of the French business world. 	FREN325	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Texts - Discussion, examination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Furthering the development of written and oral expression. - In depth analysis of literary works in French. 	FREN332 FREN323 FREN324	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Texts - Discussion, research paper Examination

Assessment of Major Goals — Spanish Major

Goals of the Spanish Major	Most Relevant Courses	Means of Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of literary trajectory/texts (short stories, a novel, drama, poetry, essays) in Spanish - Introduction to literary analysis - Further development of oral expression and written expression 	SPAN310	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Class discussion of the literary texts - Papers and exams with written analysis of the texts studied
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Furthering the knowledge of Spanish history, art, and culture through its literature of the Golden Age - Continuing study of textual analysis - Growing development of oral expression and written expression 	SPAN321	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Class discussion; videos; tapes - Papers and exams with written analysis of texts studied
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Furthering the knowledge of Spanish history, art, and culture through its literature of the 19th century - Continuing study of textual analysis - Growing development of oral expression and written expression 	SPAN322	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Class discussion; videos; tapes - Papers and exams with written analysis of texts studied
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Furthering the knowledge of Spanish history, art, and culture through its literature of the 20th century - Continuing study of textual analysis - Growing development of oral expression and written expression 	SPAN323	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Class discussion; videos; tapes - Papers and exams with written analysis of texts studied
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Furthering the knowledge of Hispanophone history, art and culture through its literature of Spanish America, from the conquest to the present - Continuing study of textual analysis - Growing development of oral expression and written expression 	SPAN324	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Class discussion; videos; tapes; occasionally the production of a play - Papers and exams with written analysis of texts studied
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Furthering the knowledge of Hispanophone communication and culture through the concentrated study of a special topic, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Spanish (addresses the specific forms of business correspondence; trade histories; cultural customs, relationships, and vocabulary specific to commercial situations); Hispanophone drama (addresses communication taken from the written page to the stage;; growing development of oral 	SPAN326	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Class discussion - Videos - Tapes - Papers - Exams

expression, cultural knowledge, Hispanophone history, politics).

Assessment of Student Learning in the Major

With the addition of a tenure-track position in French and the subsequent arrival of Professor Descas (1995), we have created a new French major that reflects some of the most recent developments in postsecondary foreign language concentrations. These include (as noted above) recent critical theory, postcolonial *Francophonie*, and an international approach to French and French studies.

Following the establishment of the French major, the department members have held several discussions regarding the possibility of changing and/or adding to the Spanish major. Included in these discussions are several suggestions for adding mid-point and end-point assessment instruments to gauge the progress of our students in both the French and the Spanish programs, and the success of the programs themselves. Any changes in and/or additions to our program are always problematical, for two reasons: two of our three and a half Spanish positions are non-tenure track, with consequent higher-than-average turnover in these positions; we have had very little support in the past for students to study abroad. These problems notwithstanding, we hope to move forward with at least some of the suggestions listed below.

End Point Assessment of Seniors — Sources of Data

- student teaching (in place)
- state examination for teachers (in place)
- final exams in senior level courses (in place)
- final papers in senior level courses (in place)
- comprehensive examinations (projected)*
- portfolios (in discussion)*
- mandatory immersion - internship, or study abroad (in planning stages)*
- formal presentations/projects (in discussion)*

Assessment of Mid-point scholars — Sources of Data

- administration of ACTFL (or similar) examinations (in planning stages)*

*The department members have all agreed upon the idea of comprehensive examinations, so it remains to draw up reading lists for entering majors and minors, to create the exams, and to place statements in the College Catalogue and the Advising Manual.

With the college-wide discussion of implementing the use of portfolios (1996-97), the MFL Dept. began to consider them as a departmental measure as well. Members are in agreement that the idea is useful.

The Department Chair has held discussions with the Dean of Students Office to begin the arrangement of immersion internships and/or local residencies with Spanish-speaking families for majors or minors. If this can be arranged with French-speaking families, as well, we will pursue it.

We have begun discussions on making study-abroad a requirement of the major, and/or an immersion experience a requirement of the major or minor. We note that those students who have studied abroad always achieve higher scores in the culture category on the state-mandated teacher examinations in Spanish.

We have only begun discussion of any kind of final presentation or project, so much remains to be explored and accomplished in this area.

A year and a half ago three department members attended a conference to receive instruction on the administration of the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) OPI (Oral Proficiency Interview) exam. We are beginning discussions of implementing this exam, or its equivalent, and possibly the written equivalent as well, to students at the mid-point of their major/minor (probably following Spanish 210 or French 210/220). We may also consider using it as an end-point measure.