

Language Study
at **USC Dornsife**
College of Letters,
Arts and Sciences

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Language informs everything we do. It is the medium through which we express ourselves, the form in which we embody ideas and the framework within which we view the world.

What if you learned a new language or two? What if you perfected the languages you've already studied? Speakers of English have an advantage in using a language dominant around the world in many areas of culture, from the sciences to entertainment and business. But using only English (or any one other language) limits how we use our minds.

The world is multilingual.

Large parts of it think and communicate in languages other than English. Each language potentially embodies a unique way of understanding reality and can be likened to the genetic diversity of wild versus agriculturally cultivated species of plants in which medicinal and other benefits lie waiting to be unlocked.

A key pathway to a broader understanding of the world — which is what a university education is all about and the best skill one can acquire ahead of a professional career — lies in the study of a specific language or languages beyond our native tongue. The most pressing problems in the world today are global: climate change, pandemics, terrorism, regional tensions, food shortage, mass immigration, cyber security, trade wars, etc. Language learning enables us to bridge the communication and cultural gaps between human societies and find viable solutions to some of these global issues.

The most obvious practical benefit to knowing a second — or third — language is that it will give you a distinct advantage in any area of culture, business, science or technology that deals in parts of the world where English is not the dominant language — which, in fact, is most of the world. In the field of international diplomacy and security, the U.S. Department of State designates seven of the languages taught at USC as being of strategic value and provides scholarships for their study: Persian, Arabic, Korean, Russian, Portuguese, Chinese and Japanese. Spanish is the second (or even first) language of many communities in the United States, while French, Italian and German, along with Ancient Greek and Latin, remain powerful tools for understanding essential contributions to human culture and thought.



Significant evidence exists that employers regard proficiency in another language as an advantage in hiring because it indicates that the candidate has demonstrated an ability to master an alternative system of thought and can be considered adept in new situations and capable of rapid professional development. An app such as Google Translate might see you through a brief transaction, but for extensive communication, especially anything involving negotiation, what leads to success is an ability to perceive nuance and understand the cultural context of the language.

Research also suggests that there are cognitive benefits even while you are studying a language, before you have acquired proficiency. The American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages points to studies showing that language learning improves or enhances problem-solving skills, verbal and spatial abilities, memory function; and capacity for creative thinking. Research suggests that these benefits even extend to improved vocabulary in English, higher reading achievement and standardized test scores, and higher performance in general at the college level.

Beyond these advantages also lie the pleasures that any one proficient in another language can attest to: the ability to step outside ourselves and our specific upbringing, to see the world differently, even to be, in a way, a different person when speaking another language or being immersed in another language setting. The mind-expanding delights of reading *Don Quixote* by Miguel Cervantes in his original Spanish, *The Stranger* by Albert Camus in French, Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* in Italian, the poetry of Anna Akhmatova in Russian, the Quran in Arabic, the poet Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* (the Book of Kings) in Persian, *The Analects of Confucius* in Chinese, or *1Q84* by Haruki Murakami in Japanese cannot be reduced to what comes through even in a good translation.

The fields of linguistics (dornsife.usc.edu/ling) and philosophy of language (dornsife.usc.edu/phil) — both of which are strongly represented at USC — deal with the structure and function of language, and with its relation to thought.

Here are the language programs at USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Science that are eager to broaden your mind through the teaching of particular languages.

Arabic



Arabic is an official language of the United Nations and the fifth most common language in the world, with 420 million native speakers. Studying Arabic will give you the opportunity to gain critical language skills applicable in 22 countries and to participate in the active economic growth of the Arab world. Despite the importance of the Middle East in international affairs, there is an extreme shortage of workers in the West who are versed in Arabic language and culture. As less than 1% of U.S. college students study Arabic, you will distinguish yourself as having important linguistic skills, no matter your professional field.

A minor in Arabic provides opportunities for research and communication from Northwest Africa to Iraq, the Persian Gulf and beyond, and opens the door for work in a variety of fields such as foreign service, journalism, business, education, finance and banking, translation and so much more. The small student to professor ratios in the Arabic program will allow you to develop more advanced language skills as we tailor our courses to better serve our students' interests.

dornsife.usc.edu/mdes/arabic/

Chinese



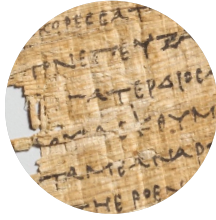
The rising economic and political importance of China is fueling interest in the study of Chinese language, history and culture. As the official language of China and Taiwan, and an official language of Singapore and the United Nations, Mandarin is spoken by over a billion people. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, enrollment in Chinese language studies has skyrocketed over 8,000% nationally in the last 30 years. In fact, according to the U.S. Government, Mandarin is one of the critical languages for trade, security and diplomacy.

USC Dornsife's Chinese language program aims to equip students with communicative, literary and cultural competency. Students gain these skills by studying conversational Chinese in our introductory level courses and by deeply examining stimulating issues such as the environment, public health, economics, politics and diplomacy at our advanced level. Whether students major in the humanities, the sciences or the professional schools, studying Chinese provides them with unique cultural insights on their subjects of study and affords them opportunities for cultural exchange, jobs and a well-rounded global perspective.

dornsife.usc.edu/ealc/chinese-program/



Classical Greek



Study of classical Greek opens up exciting vistas of discovery on the ancient Mediterranean world. Within just three semesters, students can begin to read the works of Homer, Sappho, Plato and much else in their original form. Our earliest works of tragic drama were composed in Greek, as were influential works from antiquity in the areas of philosophy, rhetoric, history, political thought and the sciences. With the spread of Greek culture in the era of Alexander the Great, Greek became the language of administration and intellectual life in communities across the Aegean world and much of the Near East; for instance, in Jewish literature of the second temple period and much early Christian thought.

Study of Greek and Latin in each case provides valuable tools for understanding languages generally, with benefit both for learning new foreign languages and for deepening understanding of one's own language with improved clarity and precision. Students learn to read texts closely and analytically, and to situate them culturally and historically. Attention to the rhetorical and aesthetic features of texts helps students to develop written and oral communication ability, and study of the languages generally helps students to cultivate tools of critical thought and problem-solving skills. Students with knowledge of Greek and Latin also have been shown to perform exceptionally well on graduate entrance exams such as the LSAT and GRE. dornsife.usc.edu/clas/

French



French is a global language, spoken by over 200 million people on five continents, and the second most useful non-English language for conducting business around the world. An official language in 32 countries from Africa to Asia, French is also an official language of the United Nations, the European Union, UNESCO, NATO, the International Olympic Committee, and the international courts.

Studying French opens doors to a Francophone world of literature, film, art and thought of extraordinary richness and influence. Considering that France is the world's fifth biggest economy and the third most important destination for foreign investment worldwide, proficiency in French opens career doors in a wide range of sectors in France, Francophone countries and multinational industries all over the world: retail, luxury goods, aeronautics and automobile industry, finance, entertainment and hospitality industry, medicine, music, law, international relations, business, the environment and renewable energies, etc.

Twenty-first century careers require culturally-competent critical thinkers with strong communication and language skills, and a major or minor in French prepares students to succeed in our diverse, multilingual, globalized world. dornsife.usc.edu/fren-ital/

German



SAP, Trader Joe's, BioNtech, BMW/DAIMLER/VW, Lufthansa, Siemens, T-Mobile, Allianz, Adidas are just some of the more than 3,000 German majority-owned companies in the U.S., making Germany one of America's largest foreign employers, with more than 674,000 U.S. workers and the largest foreign investment into R&D. Germany is an economic powerhouse, with the largest population in the EU and the fourth-largest economy in the world. German is also an official language of Switzerland, Austria and Be/Lux/Lie, and a regional ethnic minority language in 42 countries around the world.

If you are pursuing a career in the sciences (where German is the second most used language), engineering, business, tourism, music, history and more, knowledge of German language and culture will give you the edge you need. Not only will the ability to speak German make you more competitive in the global job market, it is an asset in academia, essential for many majors. It will allow you to take advantage of free tuition for international students in Germany, position you well for the many scholarships Germany offers and help you explore your "roots." (More than 45 million Americans claim German heritage.) Learn to speak the language of innovators, major thinkers, writers and creative minds.

dornsife.usc.edu/usc-german-studies-program/

Hebrew



With a history that reaches back thousands of years, Hebrew remains an essential language of discovery, innovation, creativity and beauty. Its roots in tradition and prayer found new expression with its redevelopment and renewal; after a long period of religious use, contemporary Hebrew became the national language of the state of Israel and has nearly 9 million speakers worldwide.

Today, Israel has a thriving tech economy, cutting-edge agricultural and sustainability research and globally recognized poets, novelists and journalists. The Israeli diaspora — Los Angeles has one of the largest ex-pat communities — has popularized Hebrew language music, television and film representing a vital arts and cultural footprint. Hebrew literature explores and examines the joys and conflicts of modern and contemporary experience, history and religion. Study Hebrew at USC Dornsife and gain access to Hebrew as both a spoken and written language. A sequence of four semesters of Hebrew courses will have you speaking, reading and writing as you model life in a Hebrew immersive environment. You will learn not only how to order food and shop at a market, but how to open yourself to the deep complexities of Israel and the interrelationships between cultures, expectations and aspiration.

dornsife.usc.edu/jewishstudies/hebrew/

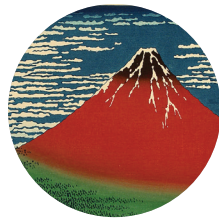
Italian



Italian unlocks some of the richest cultural and artistic legacies that have shaped the world. Across the centuries, Italy has played a role in the intersection of the arts, music, literature, medicine and science. Behind every discovery by an Italian scientist, every haute couture fashion and every advancement in robotics is a conversation connecting Italian traditions and values with change and innovation.

Italian also provides the opportunity to engage deeply with a culture, not as a tourist, but from within. As a leader in design, fashion, food, engineering, aerospace and medicine, Italy holds a vital role in today's global economies. Exploring Italy through its language provides an understanding of Italian cultural differences that expand horizons and enhance experience. Sprezzatura, bella figura, and campanilismo: Learn from the culture behind the Sistine Chapel, the poetry of the *Divine Comedy*, the engineering of the Lamborghini, the good, clean and fair of the Slow Food movement, and the architecture of London's Shard. In the third millennium, Italy is a multicultural nation, with one of the top 10 economies in the world. The Italian language, literature and culture provide an invaluable perspective on culture, the modern world and Europe in an ever-evolving global reality. dornsife.usc.edu/fren-ital/

Japanese



Japanese is one of the most popular languages among USC students. As soon as they start Japanese I, students begin to recognize the words familiar from anime, games, J-pop and restaurant menus. Advancing to the higher levels enables practical fluency, which can bring further opportunities for students who major in engineering, business, interactive media, architecture and many other subjects.

Many USC alumni have been hired by the Japanese government through the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program before advancing to graduate schools or starting their career. A number of our alumni are successfully working in Japan in the fields of academia, game production, finance, pharmaceuticals, consulting, entertainment, etc. Japan is full of opportunities for young entrepreneurs, too. There are also numerous job opportunities in Los Angeles, the home to the largest Japanese community in the U.S. More than 100 Japanese companies come to the annual career forums in the U.S. to recruit Japanese-English speakers.

Scholarships are available to support study abroad in Japan, and USC students have received competitive and prestigious scholarships such as the U.S. Department of State's Critical Language Scholarship, the Boren Scholarships, the Bridging Scholarships and the Japanese government's MEXT Scholarship. dornsife.usc.edu/ealc/japanese-prog/

Korean



No matter what the reason — you want to sing along with your favorite K-pop bands; you would like to watch Korean movies or numerous TV shows without subtitles; you want to talk with your Korean friends or family; you would like to travel or work in Korea; you are a huge fan of Korean BBQ; or you would just like to learn a new language — Korean classes at USC Dornsife can help you achieve your goal. Located near the center of the biggest Korean community outside of Korea, the Korean language program at USC Dornsife aims to construct a strong foundation for students who intend to pursue academic research or careers involving Korean language and culture by emphasizing communication and content-based learning. Learning materials not only include the language itself, but also literature, history, popular culture and mass media. Students can develop linguistic and cultural competence in a four-year Korean language program in a small group learning environment by developing their own interests into projects using the language. In addition, the study-abroad program can enhance opportunities for students to use the language in an immersed environment and to enrich their cultural understanding of Korea. dornsife.usc.edu/ealc/korean-prog/

Latin



Latin is the language of the ancient Roman world and all that it produced. With its wide geographic reach in the Roman empire and lasting legacy in the political, religious and cultural traditions of Europe and beyond, Latin has remained a fixture of world languages and cultures for more than two millennia. Latin is the basis for modern Romance languages spoken by nearly a billion people across the world and has influenced the history of English considerably. Language and ideas inherited from Latin continue to shape how we see the world and interact with one another in many areas of society, such as politics, law, religion and science.

Study of Latin provides students direct access to a rich literary and cultural tradition that includes the poetry of Vergil and Ovid, the comic plays of Terence and Plautus, and philosophical, rhetorical and historical works by figures like Cicero, Seneca and Tacitus. Latin was the language of administration and law for a vast space of habitation in the western portion of the Roman Empire and later in the Christian world. In intellectual life, Latin framed debate over church teaching and drove medieval scholarly culture, and along with the inheritance of classical culture generally, fueled the momentous transformations of the European Renaissance. dornsife.usc.edu/clas/

Persian



For more than a thousand years, Persian has been one of the most important languages of Asia, and it is a major language in the Middle East today. It is the official language of Iran and Tajikistan, and one of two official languages in Afghanistan. With nearly 100 million native speakers around the world, Persian is the language of poetry, literature, the sciences, philosophy and mysticism. The Persian language is of an Indo-European origin and has one of the simplest sound systems with just six vowels. Its grammar is very similar to that of English, with no grammatical gender. Persian is written from right to left using a variant of the Arabic script with some pronunciation differences and four additional symbols.

The main goal of the Persian language program at USC Dornsife is to develop communicative proficiency and cultural awareness in Persian. Our language learners are immersed from the very beginning and do real-life language tasks while developing basic literacy skills. In Advanced Persian, students develop critical thinking skills by doing dynamic activities and are introduced to Persian literature, history and arts, and explore the social, economic and political life of Persian speakers. dornsife.usc.edu/mdes/persian/

Polish



A country that has long served as a bridge between Eastern and Western Europe, Poland is now home to the largest and most important economy among the post-communist countries of Eastern Europe. Its language is also the repository of one of the richest cultures in the world, with leading figures who range from Copernicus to the scientist who discovered radioactivity, Marie Curie; from the great Romantic poet Adam Mickiewicz to boldly experimental modernist writers like Bruno Schulz and Witold Gombrowich, the absurdist Sławomir Mrożek, the avant-garde theatre director Tadeusz Kantor and 20th-century Nobel laureates Czesław Miłosz, Wisława Szymborska and Olga Tokarczuk — to name only a handful of figures whose work has found wide international resonance. When the Kingdom of Poland was partitioned by its more powerful neighbors Russia, Austria and Prussia in the 18th century, it was the Polish language that preserved the nation's sense of identity even when the country as such had vanished from the map (until it was resurrected at the end of World War I). In the second half of the 20th century under Communist rule, it was Polish culture that continued to sustain a sense of alternative national purpose. dornsife.usc.edu/sll/

Portuguese



Portuguese is a global language spoken not only in Portugal and Brazil, the largest country in Latin America, but also in several African nations, most prominently Angola and Mozambique — and it is even an official tongue in Macau, Portugal's former colony, now again part of China. Learning Portuguese will give you first-hand access to the rich cultural history of the vast and ethnically diverse Lusophone world. You will be able to understand the poetry of Fernando Pessoa, the narrative fiction of Clarice Lispector or the songs of Cesária Évora in the original language, and be uniquely equipped to conduct research in countries that have contributed much to the realms of music, cinema, architecture and sports. If you already happen to know another Romance language, much of your knowledge will transfer, making for an expedited and smooth learning experience. In fact, the Department of Latin American and Iberian Cultures offers two semesters of Accelerated Portuguese. Our Maymester course in Brazil, which takes place in several cities, is a great introduction to the country's heterogenous cultural make-up, while our Spring Recess course in Portugal allows you to experience the vibrant culture of one of Europe's oldest nations. dornsife.usc.edu/latin-american-and-iberian-cultures/about-us/

Russian



Russian is spoken by more than 250 million people across the Russian Federation and in countries that formerly belonged to the Soviet Union. It is the fifth most commonly spoken language in the world, behind Chinese, English, Hindustani and Spanish.

Knowledge of the Russian language opens the door to a fascinating culture that has exerted enormous influence on the rest of the world. Occupying the eastern boundary of Europe, Russia has both shared in and diverged from the rest of that continent. It has undergone a series of dramatic changes over the course of its history. Russia remains a strategic concern — and the U.S. State Department designates Russian as one of a handful of strategic languages the study of which is vital to U.S. foreign and military policy.

But Russian is also the language of a wonderfully rich and beautiful culture, the medium in which some of the most important works in world literature unfold. Its musical and artistic culture experienced a brilliant efflorescence in the 19th and 20th centuries. It is home to some of the most significant developments in the art of the ballet. dornsife.usc.edu/sll/undergraduate/

Spanish



Spoken by some 500 million people around the world, Spanish is the main tongue of most of Latin America and Spain as well as the unofficial second language of California and the United States. By learning Spanish, you will increase your ability to understand the world and gain direct access to such cultural products as the writings of Cervantes, Sor Juana and Borges; the films of Pedro Almodóvar and Lucrecia Martel; the work of important critical theorists; and world-class music and gastronomy. The Department of Latin American and Iberian Cultures is the place to start or develop your Spanish skills. Our language program is the largest on campus, and we also teach multiple courses in literature, cinema, critical theory and food studies, plus courses aimed at the practical uses of Spanish in the health professions, business and law. Our students take Maymester and summer courses in Mexico City and Oaxaca, Mexico; Havana, Cuba; Cusco, Peru; and Madrid and Santander, Spain. For longer stays, the USC Madrid Center welcomes students in the spring term, and you can also enroll in other programs in Argentina, Chile and Mexico. For all these reasons, Spanish may easily become a pleasurable and useful lifelong pursuit. dornsife.usc.edu/latin-american-and-iberian-cultures/about-us/



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