

Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures
Illinois State University

M.A. in Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

Objectives

The Master's Program in Languages, Literatures, and Cultures permits students to individualize their plans of study by choosing a primary and secondary area from among the following concentrations: culture, linguistics, literature, and pedagogy. The program seeks provide all students with:

1. the opportunity to acquire advanced competency in speaking, writing, listening, and reading the foreign language through study of its linguistic features and the culture and literature of countries where the language is spoken.
2. the critical thinking and analytical skills that enable graduates to be discerning interpreters of cultural material of diverse kinds.
3. the preparation necessary to meet professional and personal goals in a variety of professions or Ph.D programs.
4. the practical skills and intellectual training to function as responsible, knowledgeable, and engaged global citizens.

In addition to the above, objectives for specific areas of concentration include

1. for culture: acquiring the advanced knowledge and skills to interpret a variety of artifacts from high to pop culture within the social, political, and economic context in which they were produced.
2. for linguistics: the study of the history, structure, and organization of language and the cognitive processes that govern its acquisition and use.
3. for literature: the opportunity to read, analyze, discuss, and write critically on literary texts of different periods in their cultural contexts, and to conduct literary research in the target language.
4. for pedagogy: acquiring advanced knowledge of current theory, methodologies, and issues, and competency in the practical application of theory and methods in the foreign language classroom.

Assessment

In order to meet the foregoing objectives, the Master's Program in Languages, Literatures, and Cultures implements a multi-tiered system of assessment that involves both direct and indirect methods.

Direct methods include, but are not limited to, the reviewing of research projects and papers, exams, problem sets, written homework, oral presentations, portfolios, and class discussion for analysis and synthesis of information, critical thinking, intellectual acumen, handling of source material, and knowledge of cultural context. Students have the opportunity to participate in the Graduate Research Symposium, for which they receive evaluations and feedback from faculty and peers. All students receive a first-year evaluation to help them track their individual progress through the program. All students must successfully pass a written comprehensive examination in order to complete their degree.

Indirect methods include annual feedback from current students through meetings with the Chair and the Director of Graduate Studies; contributions by the Graduate Student Representative at Graduate Committee Meetings; written surveys and evaluations of courses and supervisors; exit interviews; and informal alumni tracking.