

Department of Modern Languages and Classics Learning Goals and Objectives

University of Maine students who study in the Department of Modern Languages and Classics are diverse in training and orientation. Some will eventually teach and others will become translators and interpreters. Still others are likely to integrate language in their professional fields of study. As a result, double majors in either French or Spanish and art, biology, business, chemistry, engineering, history, mathematics, music, and psychology make themselves more marketable in their professional fields while acquiring the skills to become sophisticated intercultural communicators. In order to better serve the needs of today's students at the University of Maine, the faculty of each section of the Department of Modern Languages and Classics offers courses within their languages designed to promote literacy in multiple areas.

Functional Literacy in the target language: Students will achieve a level of speaking, listening, writing, and reading which enables them to communicate appropriately in social and in certain, specific employment situations.

Cultural Literacy: All courses train students to move beyond the text to understand patterns of social interactions within communities and acquire the skills to communicate in culturally appropriate ways.

Computer and Technological Literacy: Technology-enhanced course content prepares MLC students to function in virtual communication situations in French and Spanish.

Media Literacy: Using popular culture, film, and other authentic media products enables our students to become both critical and creative media consumers who learn to analyze materials using image, sound, and language.

I. Purposes: MLC's assessment plan seeks to: 1) set outcomes for the teaching and learning of modern languages and classics; 2) help us determine (and demonstrate to ourselves, our students, our peers, and our publics) whether our students are making appropriate progress toward the goals we have set for them and how successful we are in supporting/facilitating their learning, thereby empowering them as learners; 3) help our students become better, more self-reflective learners; and 4) guide us in becoming more effective teachers.

II. MLC Department Mission and Goals:

The Department of Modern Languages and Classics is a community of teacher-scholars with diverse backgrounds in language, literature, culture, and international studies who share a common vision for the study of culture and the acquisition of language. As a department, we are committed to:

- Preparing language teachers and providing support for practicing teachers in order to enhance the study of language and culture in the State of Maine;

- Fostering multilingualism and multiculturalism and furthering the study, understanding, and appreciation of language and culture, particularly the heritage languages and cultures of Maine and the region;
 - Helping students understand how language works, how it is learned, and the critical role it plays in human society;
 - Introducing students to new ways of knowing that, in turn, enhance their ability to think and to write connectedly, critically, creatively, and integratively across disciplinary and cultural boundaries;
 - Introducing students to the world’s literary and cultural traditions through reading texts in the target language;
 - Helping students prepare for active participation, leadership, and service in a diverse nation and a global society through the development of understanding, respect, and appreciation for other cultures in all their aspects: social, historical, political, and aesthetic.
 - Helping students develop progressive communicative competence (the ability to understand and make themselves understood) in the target language and target culture.
1. Students should be able to demonstrate **communicative competence** in the target language. We have established the following goals for our students based on the ACTFL (American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages) Proficiency Guidelines.

Speaking and Writing

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| ● First Year | Novice High or Intermediate Low |
| ● Second Year | Intermediate Mid or High |
| ● ML Minors | Intermediate High or Advanced Low |
| ● ML Majors | Advanced Low, Mid, or High |
2. Students should be able to show a fundamental understanding of most of the following **cultural** concepts as demonstrated in course-specific assessments.
- **An Historic** overview of target culture:
 - People
 - Conflicts
 - Philosophy
 - Art
 - Literature
 - Intellectual movements
 - Major figures
 - History of the target language
 - Social and political institutions
 - A **Contemporary** knowledge of target culture:
 - Governmental and political institutions
 - Educational institutions/structure

- Social institution
 - Philosophy, literature and the arts
 - Media – radio, television, newspapers, magazines
 - Sources of cultural information (media sources, web sources, research tools)
 - Major contemporary figures (arts, politics, etc.)
 - Geography
 - Popular culture
 - Extra-linguistic communication
 - Cuisine
 - Family structures and relations
 - Entertainment, pastimes, hobbies
 - Social codes, friendship, humor
 - Views of individual self vs. society (government, etc.)
 - Health
 - Religion and myths
3. In developing competence in the above areas, students will have developed an awareness of **Cross-Cultural Analysis** and will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the following **Mega-Cultural Concepts**:
- Space
 - Time
4. Students should also be able to demonstrate mastery of the following skills and abilities.
- Critical thinking
 - Knowledge of self as learner
 - Creativity
 - Sensitivity to and respect for other ways of being
 - Integrative thinking
 - The ability to work collaboratively
 - Effective communication skills

IV. **Assessment Strategies.** Members of the faculty are committed to implementing the following assessment strategies to achieve the goals and purposes outlined above:

- Continual assessment of all four skills and periodic rating based on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines
- Performance-based assessment in courses (for example, asking students to generate whole language responses rather than fill in the blank; using grammar “drills” as assignments if needed, but building and evaluating grammatical accuracy primarily through performance and contextualized communicative activities, etc.)
- Assessment congruent with outcomes goals

- Capstone assessment

V. **Senior Year Capstone**

Students exiting from an MLC major will be required to register for 0, 1, 2, or 3 credits of FRE 495 or SPA 495. Working on a regular basis with a faculty advisor, a student develops and conducts a research project which they present in writing to their advisor and share findings orally in the target language at a gathering of peers and members of the faculty. This exercise is expected to demonstrate the cumulative attainment of all the objectives outlined in the first part of this document.