Chinese Program Description

The Chinese Program in the University of Washington's Department of Asian Languages and Literature has a long and rich tradition, and is recognized today for the world-class quality of its faculty and degree programs. The faculty specialize in such research areas as Classical Chinese literature and literary history, philology and textual criticism, origin of the Chinese script, modern and pre-modern vernacular literature, historical linguistics, and Chinese dialectology.

The Chinese Program offers B.A, M.A., and Ph.D. degrees, with specialization at the graduate level in literature or linguistics. For undergraduates, the program focuses on developing advanced proficiency in Chinese with the goal of carrying out linguistic or literary studies. The Chinese language curriculum is one of the largest and strongest in the country, and serves not only departmental majors and minors but also students in such diverse fields as history, business, international relations, anthropology, linguistics, and comparative literature. Many of our undergraduate majors are double majors, combining their training in Chinese with a degree in another field. While achieving proficiency in Chinese, undergraduate majors are exposed to the major works of Chinese literature ranging from classical texts of the earliest periods to recent works of modern fiction, as well as to the linguistic approach to analyzing and understanding the features of the Chinese language. Undergraduate majors are encouraged to place their literary and linguistic training in a broader context by taking classes in Chinese history, society, and politics.

The graduate program in Chinese is renowned for its ability to provide students with rigorous training in both literature and linguistics, and to combine these disciplines in their approach to the analysis and interpretation of texts. Graduate students will achieve a solid competence in and sensitivity to language and text, and will acquire the literary, linguistic, and cultural theory appropriate to the study of those texts. The Department of Asian Languages and Literature has close links with many other departments on campus, and its students regularly take courses in academic units such as American Ethnic Studies, Anthropology, Art History, Comparative Literature, Comparative Religion, English, History, the Jackson School of International Studies, Linguistics, and Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies. The Department sponsors many lectures and colloquia, some in conjunction with other units on campus. The library system at the University of Washington boasts one of the most extensive collections of Chinese materials in the country. The University of Washington also has a thriving China Studies Program, which unites China-related programs across the University, and is home to the Simpson Center for the Humanities.

Seattle's location on the Pacific Coast provides opportunities for travel to China and other parts of Asia. The city itself boasts an active and vibrant Asian community and is the site of many China-related cultural events. Seattle is the home of the Seattle Asian Art Museum and the Seattle International Film Festival, which regularly screens films from China and other Asian countries.

See degree requirements for Chinese: Major || Minor || M.A. || Ph.D.