Majors & Minors

We offer five majors and seven minors for undergraduate students. Our alumni, as multilingual professionals with in-demand skills, find an advantage entering business and nonprofit work, STEM fields, graduate programs, and more across the globe. Learn more about the unique opportunities each major and minor provides at the links below.

Asian Languages & Cultures

Students in this program can tailor their studies within the discipline of Asian Languages and Literature to their interests and goals. They have the flexibility to emphasize language courses and other, non-language courses as desired — ranging from ancient Sanskrit epic poetry to Buddhist literature to Korean pop culture. This makes the degree highly versatile and valuable to combine with the study of another Asian language or culture, courses needed for pre-professional studies, or other disciplines.

Chinese

Students who study Chinese with us develop proficiency in the language, literature, and culture of a country with a powerful global reach and a literary tradition dating back more than 3,000 years. They learn to read, write, and converse in Chinese while exploring the major works of Chinese literature—from classical texts to recent works of modern fiction—and analyzing the features of the Chinese language in order to understand its history and use. Students benefit from one of the strongest Chinese language curriculum programs in the country and extensive university resources, including distinctive courses, language-intensive study abroad opportunities, and on-campus resources such as the East Asia Library.

Japanese

By studying Japanese, students learn to read, write, and converse in a language that has been the vehicle for some of the world’s most imaginative, influential storytellers. Acclaimed content produced in modern Japanese pop culture — including books, films, and anime — flourishes on the surface of a literary tradition that spans 13 centuries. Students explore this tradition and analyze the features of the Japanese language in order to understand its use. They benefit from distinctive courses in modern and classical Japanese, language-intensive study abroad opportunities, and on-campus resources such as the East Asia Library.
Korean

Korean is a gateway for students to engage with a culture whose art, music, and technological innovations shape lives around the globe. Students learn to read, write, and converse in Korean through careful and extensive study of Korean literature, popular culture, and linguistics. Distinctive coursework in the major is taught by professors who are leading researchers in their fields. Beyond the classroom, students benefit from language-intensive study abroad opportunities, academic resources such as the East Asia Library, and cocurricular options including a Korean singing and reading club.

South Asian Languages

A major in South Asian Languages combines advanced language study in Hindi or Sanskrit with courses on the literatures and cultures of South Asia. Minors in South Asian Languages may also focus on Bengali or Urdu. Students benefit from the exceptional depth of coursework taught by leading scholars in these languages, and they expand their studies with curriculum in South Asian studies from across the humanities and social sciences. Many students pair this major with a major in a professional field (e.g., engineering, business, informatics, computer science), giving them an advantage in these fields as the importance of South Asian business, entertainment, medicine and technology organizations continues to grow.

Indonesian Language & Culture

Students who earn a minor in Indonesian achieve proficiency in Bahasa Indonesia, the national language of Indonesia, and gain an in-depth knowledge of Indonesian culture. Language is taught using a communicative method, emphasizing not only grammar but also speaking and listening, so students learn to converse, read, and write in real-life situations. Courses emphasize exploring Indonesia's diverse culture, including literature as well as videos, music, and current events.

Vietnamese Language & Culture

A minor in Vietnamese language and culture allows students to achieve proficiency in Vietnamese language beyond the elementary level and also delve deeper into the vibrant and complex history and culture of Vietnam. Students learn to read, write, and converse in Vietnamese while learning skills for real-life interactions. They gain familiarity with Vietnam's historical legacies and vibrant modern life through exploring Vietnamese culture including literature, music, mass media, and more.

Department of Asian Languages & Literature
University of Washington
225 Gowen Hall