

Foreign language course enrollment rising quickly

Contributed by [NOONA OH](#)

Published , January 28, 2005, 06:00:01 AM EDT

The number of University students studying a foreign language has seen a steady increase over the last five years.

Since fall 2000, the number of students pursuing a foreign language major increased 74 percent while the number of language minors has jumped 116 percent, according to the Office of Institutional Research.

Senior Academic Adviser Rebecca Baggett said she has noticed more incoming students who are interested in Asian languages, classical languages and the linguistics major, which concentrates on more than one language of study.

Following Sept. 11, Baggett said, she has seen an increase in students interested in Arabic.

"I think that there are ideas and thoughts expressed in a different language that cannot be expressed in another foreign language," she said.

The University offers 17 language degrees and courses in many lesser taught languages such as Hindi, Vietnamese, Scandinavian and Zulu.

Spanish is the most popular language with a total of 102 majors and 406 minors. French, German and Japanese are next on the list.

Sara Blaylock, a sophomore from Dallas, Texas, is majoring in advertising and minoring in Spanish and psychology. Blaylock grew up in an area where Spanish was many people's primary language.

"I did it a lot in high school, so I wanted to continue it," she said. "I always wanted to be fluent in a second language. It would give me more of an advantage when you look at careers."

Jason Aldrich, director of employer relations in the Career Center, said in the last 10 years he has seen a definite trend in job postings requesting bilingual and multilingual language skills.

"There are some companies that look for language skills right out of school," he said. "If you are bilingual or multilingual, that can be a benefit in the long term over the course of one's career. It can open up doors."

However, Aldrich said, simply having strong language skills will not necessarily make you more valuable.

Regardless of major, he said, the most important thing for students is first to gain excellence in core business functions and find a way to be a contributing member of the organization.

Learning a different language is not only valuable as a career advancement skill but allows students to explore other cultures as well.



Instructor Fei Zhang shows Chinese currency to Tina Rudberg, a sophomore from Sweden, and other students in his Chinese 1002 class in Joseph E. Brown Hall Thursday afternoon. (Kendrick Brinson - The Red & Black)

Julia Thomas, a junior majoring in Japanese language and literature and minoring in Chinese language and literature, said she finds it encouraging that there are so many different people in China who speak hundreds of dialects and yet they are all accepted as the same people.

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