

**Department of Modern Languages
Assessment Report for 2005-06**

I. Core Curriculum

A. Mission/Purpose

The Department of Modern Languages supports the mission and purposes of the College through its core-curriculum offerings, minor and major programs, and the strength of its faculty as stated in the following Department mission statement.

The principal academic program of the Department of Modern Languages is its core-curriculum language program. Through a four-semester sequence, the skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking are addressed with emphasis on oral/aural proficiency and effective interpersonal communication. Cultural acumen and literary insight lead to a deeper appreciation of people and institutions, and understanding of cultures of the people who speak French, German, or Spanish is an important aspect of every core course.

Core Curriculum Skills

"Each course, or sequence of courses, which addresses a core-curriculum requirement incorporates, where appropriate, the following skills: written communication, critical thinking, logical reasoning, and resource and reference usage." For each area, please check one response and explain briefly.

Written Communication--

Yes How?

The Department of Modern Languages faculty employ cognitive-code methodology to cultivate four basic skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In both the elementary and intermediate sequences of French, German, and Spanish students are required to write compositions of increasing length and complexity.

No Why not?

Critical Thinking--

Yes How?

Through the cultural component of each lesson in the elementary and intermediate sequences, students come to question the values and norms of our society in comparison with those of other flourishing cultures.

No Why not?

Logical Reasoning--

Yes How?

Through marshaling their faculties to synthesize instantly vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and idiom in coherent response to a simple verbal question, students train their minds to deal with the abstract both inductively and deductively.

No Why not?

Resource and Reference Usage--

Yes How?

Second-language acquisition requires constant use of printed and on-line glossaries, dictionaries, and reference grammars.

No Why not?

B. Expected Results

Upon completion of the elementary and intermediate courses of the core curriculum--101, 102, 201, and 202--the successful student (who earns the grade of C or above in 202) will be functionally proficient in a French, German, or Spanish-speaking country, i.e., able to enjoy a film, follow a lecture for the general public, make himself/herself understood socially, read newspapers and magazines with the aid of a dictionary, write a simple expository composition with the aid of a dictionary and reference grammar, etc. The student who merely "passes" the course with a D will have had some exposure to French, German, or Spanish language and culture and should have gained a better understanding of English grammar.

C. Assessment Tools

The efficacy of teaching in core-curriculum, minor, and major courses is assessed at each level by evaluating student proficiency in targeted areas of skills-acquisition as measured by a battery of existing, rigorously calibrated instruments. The targeted skills are (a) aural comprehension, (b) oral expression, including pronunciation, (c) reading comprehension, (d) composition, and (e) cultural knowledge. The instruments by which student performance in the above areas is measured include sections from written tests (some with embedded questions), formal oral interviews, essays of increasing length and complexity, and daily recitation grades. The instruments are scored by rubric to yield pertinent data for analysis.

D. Assessment Results

With regard to foreign-language placement testing, the numbers of students taking the online placement test before reporting to campus in Aug increased, yet rates of level of placement remained constant. To refine the mechanism, the dean of Humanities and Social Sciences approved last summer the Department's proposal to perfect the placement policy:

A student wishing to take a remedial course may register one level lower than his actual placement. The lower-level course will be taken for no credit and must be passed with at least a C to proceed to the original level of placement. Once the student passes with a C the course into which he was originally placed, he will receive the by-pass credit to which he is entitled. If the student does not achieve at least a C in the remedial course, he must register in the 101-level of a different language to begin the four-semester language requirement.

Exactly four students--two in German and two in Spanish--opted for remedial coursework.

During AY 2005-06 only one tenured/tenure-track member of the French section was in residence; the other two members of the French staff were on one-year appointment. Accordingly, no assessment was undertaken this year in French. Results for German and Spanish assessments are reported here.

This year the German section assessed aural comprehension and oral expression at the second intermediate level (GERM 202, fall 2005) via individual graded responses to daily sets of questions posed to each class member on an assigned reading from Brecht's play *Die Dreigroschenoper*. Students were to have read the assigned passage independently, relying solely on the aid of their Pons German-English dictionary. During each class session in which readings were discussed, the instructor posed oral questions in German that students were then called upon to answer. Each student was called on at least three times in a single class

session. Based on the student's multiple responses, a daily "participation grade" was assigned. The three possible grades were A, C, and F. The A grade was assigned if the student understood the question, gave the correct answer, and framed the answer in a grammatically correct complete sentence. The C grade indicated that the student understood the question, answered wrongly, but provided a grammatically correct wrong answer. The F grade denoted that the student failed to understand the question, answered wrongly using incorrect grammar, or failed to answer at all. To insure that students took participation seriously, the participation average over the semester counted as much as the final exam (14.28%) in the course grade. Analysis of graded responses confirms that initially students had little difficulty understanding the questions (posed using grammatical structures and vocabulary with which they were familiar from the readings), that they typically knew the correct answer but had difficulty making the transition from *passive* to *active* knowledge by giving a complete, grammatically correct answer. They realized within weeks though that correct responses are formulaic, i.e., they borrow on the pattern of the question and provide the variable. At that point all students realized what they needed to do to earn the top mark, and each student in the class earned the top mark repeatedly; the most successful students, however, performed *consistently* in class participation. Success, then, was driven by rigorous self-discipline rather than ability--results wholly consistent with decades of research in foreign-language acquisition. Precisely those students who enjoyed the most success became interested in the outcome of the play and wanted to improve their skills: three of the thirteen members of the section registered for an advanced German course spring semester.

The Spanish section assessed writing skills of approximately a hundred students at the end of the second intermediate level of Spanish (SPAN 202, spr 2006) through an in-class composition embedded in the final exam. Instructors based their assessment tools on the controversial topic of the presence of illegal Hispanic immigrants in the U.S. and focused on the students' accurate use of a variety of verb tenses (including the ever-important subjunctive mood) and the overall agreement of subject-verb and adjective-noun combinations, grammar points repeatedly addressed during the semester. Hispanic culture was also tested regularly throughout the semester and was a fundamental component of this assessment.

No books nor dictionaries were used during the exam, and students were required to write between 200-250 words. Expectations were that 70% would write substantive comments with acceptable diction and grammar, but approximately 65% did so, a figure consistent for two different professors teaching the same course--a testimony to the accuracy of the assessment mechanism employed and the consistent method of interpreting the results. 25% of the students wrote superior compositions with well developed ideas, accuracy in syntax, and correct use of the subjunctive and vocabulary.

E. Assessment Conclusions

Last year's assessment report documented the obstacles to effective placement testing here at The Citadel, including a pervasive institutional culture of coddling freshmen academically and appeasing parents rather than fostering independent thought and action in young adults, the traditional practice of allowing students to reject their objectively determined language placement and begin at the entry level of a language they had studied for up to four years in high school, the conscious repudiation of academic standards in favor of increased enrollment and attendant financial viability, and the approach to learning-disabilities education as a business proposition and recruitment tool, resulting in weak secondary students being enticed to enroll with intimations of LD modifications and exemptions in language courses. This year the associate provost sought to void the policy, approved by the dean of SHSS, of allowing students to take remedial coursework for no grade. The Department regards as inscrutable the repeated attempts by a responsible College official to dismantle the very policies that insure academic standards and accord with national best practices.

On the basis of assessment of aural comprehension and oral expression skills at the second intermediate level, the German section determined that its methodology for teaching these skills is entirely appropriate.

The Spanish section was pleased with assessment results because they are not only consistent with the satisfactory results reported in 2003-04 but also reflect the accuracy of the Department's universal, binding, online placement mechanism (the students' success at the 202 level is partially due to their correct placement). Although the final percentage of students meeting our expectations for writing was 5% below our goal, this was not a significant deviation. Moreover, the students who did meet expectations were those

who either did not take 202 immediately following SPAN 201 (a critical procedure that Modern Language has advocated adamantly to students and the College for decades) or whose efforts during the course of the semester were unsatisfactory, thereby hampering the acquisition of satisfactory writing skills (shockingly poor out-of-class preparation is a widespread problem for students in our core-curriculum courses at The Citadel). Because in previous years nearly 70% of students in all elementary and intermediate Spanish courses have consistently demonstrated satisfactory writing skills on these end-of-the-semester composition exercises, the Spanish section has determined that its methodology for teaching writing is suitable and that no change is necessary.

It must also be noted that for several years we have required students to complete SPAN 202 before we approve their transfer credit for upper-level Spanish courses taken in prestigious semester-abroad programs such as Wake Forest's in Salamanca and the University of Virginia's in Valencia. All of our past students participating in these programs performed well above average, which bespeaks the efficacy of our core-curriculum sequence.

II. BA Program in French, German, and Spanish

A. Mission/Purpose

Through majors in French, German, and Spanish the Department enables students to approach the degree of linguistic sophistication necessary to communicate effectively with native speakers. In addition, language majors acquire a broad knowledge of the civilization and literature that are manifestations of the language they have chosen. The major provides excellent preparation for students pursuing careers in various professions and/or attending graduate, business, law, or medical school. The curricula also provide sufficient flexibility to enable the student to explore other areas of academic interest.

B. Expected Results

Upon completion of the major a student will be practically proficient in a French, German, or Spanish speaking country, i.e., able to converse intelligibly with native speakers on a range of topics in formal as well as informal settings, read literary works with the aid of a dictionary, digest a radio news broadcast, follow a university lecture; write correspondence and expository pieces grammatically, etc.

C. Assessment Tools

The efficacy of teaching in core-curriculum, minor, and major courses is assessed at each level by evaluating student proficiency in targeted areas of skills-acquisition as measured by a battery of existing, rigorously calibrated instruments. The targeted skills are (a) aural comprehension, (b) oral expression, including pronunciation, (c) reading comprehension, (d) composition, and (e) cultural knowledge. The instruments by which student performance in the above areas is measured include written tests (some with embedded questions), oral interviews, essays of increasing length and complexity, daily participation grades, and formal certification examinations.

Assessment of core and major programs in French, German, and Spanish utilizes "composite assessment" drawing on existing measurements, embedded questions, and, in the case of German, the Goethe Institut's Zertifikat Deutsch fuer den Beruf examination, taken by select majors studying business language.

D. Assessment Results

During AY 2005-06 only one tenured/tenure-track member of the French section was in residence; the other two members of the French staff were on one-year appointment. Accordingly, no assessment was undertaken this year in French. Results for German and Spanish assessments are reported here.

This year the German section assessed cultural knowledge via the final exam discussion question from the seminar course Siegfried Lenz' *Deutschstunde* (GERM 450, spr 2006), formulated to gauge student ability

to relate Lenz' novel to its historical context: civilian life during the Third Reich and its collapse. The seven students in the section, all German majors, addressed the question:

In no more than 500 words, explain the lesson(s) of *The German Lesson*.

Essay scores ranged from 75% to 98%. Drawing on knowledge of Nazi Germany gained from German courses prerequisite to the senior seminar, from material learned in courses in other departments recommended to all German majors (such as HIST 481: Hitler and National Socialism), and from outside reading, all essayists noted the pernicious influence of a hegemonic ideology grounded in racism and chauvinism on the intellectual and artistic life of the nation. All essayists evinced a clear understanding of the work's central theme and the author's message and demonstrated critical thinking on moral issues. The most successful essayists explicated the logical inconsistency and fundamental absurdity of the Nazi campaign against Expressionist painting as "cosmopolitan, Jewish, Bolshevist art," citing the conflict between the novel's protagonist, the painter Nansen, and his former friends and neighbors.

In the AY 2005-06, the Spanish section ambitiously assessed its students in various courses.

In SPAN 425 (Contemporary Spanish American Fiction) the assessment tool was a comprehensive final exam focusing on three areas: (1) identification of studied literary texts, (2) knowledge of studied literary movements and authors; (3) competence to compose a critical essay. The instrument was the following two-part essay:

Analyze the general characteristics of Contemporary Spanish American Fiction (*Nueva Narrativa*) contrasting them with the traditional literary trends before the 60s.

Choose two contemporary authors giving specific examples of his/her work in a novel AND short-story. Provide information about the narrator, time and space-montage, point of view, representation of reality (magic realism and fantasy) and innovative literary techniques that are crucial to recognize the Spanish American fiction of the period.

10 of 11 students (91%) demonstrated a superior understanding of Spanish American literature with above-average abilities to express themselves abstractly in Spanish.

In SPAN 305 (Introduction to the Study of Hispanic Literature), a preparatory course for literary studies, provides a comprehensive introduction to literary analysis and equips students with necessary technical vocabulary. The assessment tool was a comprehensive final exam testing knowledge of the three basic genres of narrative, poetry, and drama via the following questions:

What are the principal elements of these genres?

Identify the authors, corresponding literary movements, and the central themes of the literary excerpts.

Analyze two excerpts.

The Spanish section considers the last question the most important since excerpt analysis reflects the students' overall skills. 81% of the class answered question 1 satisfactorily, whereas 24% and 91% dealt satisfactorily with questions 2 and 3, respectively. In treating question 2, students struggled with recalling specific names of authors, but they performed well in identifying literary movements and central themes. Highest student success was exhibited in answer to question 3, which required actual literary analysis and use of technical vocabulary.

SPAN 303 assessed writing and knowledge of the fundamental cultural genesis of Spain and its civilization via a comprehensive bonus essay question covering over two thousand years of history. Student competency was based on knowledge of the defining components of Spanish civilization, particularly within the areas of society, politics, architecture, literature, art, and music. Students were expected to

identify essential historical referents, place them within appropriate movements, and competently construct a narrative binding the elements to a common theme. The essay was the following (translation):

Define what it means to be Spanish utilizing the notion of what the textbook has dubbed as the diversity of "the Spains". Begin with Spain's first origins with the *Iberos*, Celts, Phoenicians, and the Greeks and continue with the Romans, Visigoths, Arabs, and the "Reconquest" of the Peninsula by the Christians. Highlight the "Golden Age" of Spain up through Romanticism, Realism, and the postwar literature of the Spanish Civil War. In your response defend your answer by utilizing historical aspects, literary figures and movements, architectural trends, art, and music.

90% was the average score for all students assessed for writing (in Spanish) and their abilities to construct a fluid, coherent narrative by situating key historical events, aspects, and figures of Spanish civilization within two thousand years of history. The two students scoring lower than 78% wrote half-page responses. These two essays were less developed in syntax and grammar and reflected weaker command in expressing complex ideas. The other sixteen students composed essays of one and a half pages and scored above 83%.

In SPAN 301, Advanced Spanish Conversation, nine students were assessed for their abilities to discuss in pairs and at length (7-10 minutes per debate) a controversial topic in Spanish (e.g., space exploration, the legalization of drugs, the existence of a supreme being, the right to commit suicide, and men vs. women). With an odd number of students, the professor opted to be the debate-companion for the student whom the professor believed to possess the most advanced Spanish conversational skills of the group. Amazingly, the professor determined that all nine students demonstrated acceptable fluidity, impressive improvisational skills for unknown vocabulary, ability to articulate abstractly in the target language, and overall ease (with little hesitation) in countering views posed by their debate partners. Even the students who began the semester with notably weak communication skills (labored conversation on immediate, concrete reality) performed brilliantly in the stressful context of the graded debate. Although the Spanish section would have ideally preferred to see a more pervasive, successful use of the subjunctive in this exercise (only one student demonstrated a convincing command of the subjunctive), most students in general require either extensive upper-level Spanish coursework or a full semester abroad to attain mastery of subjunctive in both written and conversational Spanish. The one student who did demonstrate such mastery is a pleasant anomaly, as he had neither studied abroad nor completed many upper-level Spanish courses at The Citadel.

E. Assessment Conclusions

In consideration of student performance weighed against optimal expectations, the German section judged its methodology for instilling knowledge of culture well suited to the purpose and found that expectations are wholly appropriate for a course at the advanced level.

The Spanish section is extremely satisfied with the efficacy of teaching reading comprehension, composition, conversation, literature, history, and culture at the advanced level. Additional proof of this efficacy is manifest anecdotally in the experience of a graduate from May 2006 who was not in the top 15% of our majors yet was accepted to master's programs at Middlebury, Ohio, and Syracuse. At Ohio he was offered a full fellowship. That a graduate in Spanish deemed just "above average" here rates admission to select MA programs bespeaks the solid preparation imparted by our faculty.

III. Personnel Issues

Dr Gilles Glacet (PhD, Emory) served AY 2005-06 as sabbatical replacement for Professor Toubiana. The unexpected resignations of Maria Rippon and Nirmala Singh-Brinkman in April 2005 necessitated one-year appointments in Spanish and French, for which the Department was fortunate to attract well-qualified applicants in Amrita Das (PhD, Florida State) and Ann McCullough (PhD, Emory).

The two resignations and Professor Staley's retirement prompted international searches for three tenure-track assistant professors. The search committee for all three positions was composed of faculty from each section: Emory (French), Gurganus (German), and Del Mastro (Spanish). Professor Emory chaired the French search, Professor Del Mastro headed the Spanish searches. Position announcements were posted

early fall in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and on the *MLA Job Information List*. Following thorough review of applications, the committee contacted candidates for interviews at the MLA convention in Washington DC the final week of Dec. Four candidates in both Spanish and French were invited to campus for a teaching trial and formal interviews. Cathy Jellenik (PhD, Colorado) was appointed to the position in French. Eloy Urroz (PhD, UCLA), a noted Mexican novelist, was engaged for one of the two positions in Spanish; the second went unfilled and must be readvertised in the fall. Dr Das, already on staff in Spanish, accepted one-year appointment as visiting assistant professor.

Professors Andrade and Gurganus were granted sabbatical leave for AY 2006-07. Professors Skow (chair), Segle, and Andrade were appointed to the search committee for Professor Gurganus' replacement. Following a teaching trial and formal interviews on campus, Susanne Wagner, doctoral candidate at Massachusetts-Amherst, was accorded one-year appointment. Professors Del Mastro (chair), Emory, and Bahk composed the search committee for Professor Andrade's replacement--a search that is still in progress.

Professor Gurganus' appointment as director of the Office of Fellowships, effective Aug 2007 upon his return from sabbatical, creates the need for an additional tenure-track line in German, the ideal candidate for which would also be able to teach elementary French or Spanish.

IV. Achievements

Tenured and tenure-track faculty in Modern Languages enjoyed continued success this year, presenting papers before international, national, and regional forums; bringing to print book chapters, articles, reviews, and commissioned translations; holding invited lectures at other schools, for learned societies, and in the community; and serving as officers in national and regional professional organizations. On sabbatical leave AY 2005-06 Professor Toubiana gathered material in archives in the Czech Republic. Professors Andrade and Gurganus were granted sabbatical leave to pursue research AY 2006-07 in Chile and Germany, respectively. Professor Skow returned from the Fulbright German Studies Seminar on Contemporary Literature, held Jun 2005 in Berlin, Leipzig, and Hamburg, with fresh insights for her courses on postwar culture and popular culture. After completing the language-instructor certification program at Seoul's Yonsei University, Professor Bahk formally launched the language component of the East Asian Studies Minor by offering the corequisite Intensive Introduction to Korean I and II, which met each day of the week for six hours' credit. Professor Mei Chen of Mathematics and Computer Science, a native speaker of Chinese and Grimsley Teaching Award recipient, is registered for language-teaching training programs this summer at Penn and Depaul and will teach the inaugural Intensive Introduction to Chinese I and II spring semester 2007.

The Spanish honor society Sigma Delta Pi sponsored the Lowcountry Spanish Teacher of the Year and the South Carolina Spanish Teacher of the Year awards, presented in separate ceremonies fall semester to Celine Anthony of West Ashley High School and Jennifer Bryant of Eastside High School, respectively. The awards were underwritten by our own Tau Iota chapter of Sigma Delta Pi, Dillard's, Meritage Restaurant, the Francis Marion Hotel, and the law firm of Harvey, Casterline, and Vallini.

For the sixth time in five years a senior in German was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to pursue research in Europe. Andrew Brooks will spend next year at the Universität Köln studying Roman influence on German social class during the late imperial period. Mr Brooks was also awarded graduate fellowships at Georgetown, Indiana, and Penn, which he chose to forgo in order to accept the Fulbright. Spanish major Charles Knisley was awarded a teaching assistantship to begin his graduate work in Spanish at Syracuse.

Three language students were named recipients of the Citadel's Olmsted Cadet Travel and Cultural Immersion Grant. French major John North will study this summer at the Alliance Française in France, German minor Michael Kourkounakis at the Goethe Insitut in Germany, and Spanish major Joe Zoretic at the Academia Latinoamericana in Peru. In response to our application of May 2005, the American Society of the French Legion of Honor agreed to an annual grant of \$15,000 to fund ten scholarships of \$1,500 for French majors and minors participating in our Summer Study in France, beginning summer 2007.

Two German majors are slated summer 2006 for intensive language training at branches of the Goethe Institut in Germany: sophomore major Jeffrey Creech, recipient of the Deutscher Brüderlicher Bund Scholarship, and senior major Robert Murray, recipient of the German Studies Summer Stipend. In preparation for international fellowship applications, senior Andrew Jones was awarded a Citadel Summer Scholarship to take part in a month-long archaeological survey of the Göksu Valley in south-central Turkey conducted by the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara. On grant from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences sophomore history major and German minor Scott Shadday attended 6-17 Jun the 2006 German Script Seminar at the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem PA. Eleven students of Spanish participated in the 2006 Maymester in Bolivia with Professor Staley, thirteen in the 2006 Summer Study in Spain with Professor Segle.

As to the realization of goals for AY 2005-2006, formulated Jul 2005, Professor Segle integrated easily into the life of the Department, established a ready rapport with his students, and passed the first-year review with high praise. Professor Del Mastro was elected and approved as the new Department head, heralding strong leadership for the next five years. The searches for one tenure-track position in French and two in Spanish produced two hires, one in each discipline. Successful mentoring of candidates for graduate admissions and international fellowships continued unabated.

V. Major Goals and Objectives for 2006-2007

Next year the Department aims (1) to embrace the promise and possibilities afforded by new leadership in Modern Languages and the College (2) to nurture our new members in Spanish and French as teachers, scholars, and colleagues; (3) to conduct successful searches for tenure-track positions in Spanish and German; (4) to consolidate the gains of objective, universal, binding language placement; and (5) to continue our successful mentoring of candidates for graduate admissions and international fellowships.