

Critical Language Scholarship Program Open to St. Norbert Students

By: Gracelyn Giese

While the school year may have just started, a study abroad experience is already opening up for the summer break. Students at St. Norbert College have an exciting opportunity to immerse themselves in a new language and culture through the Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program.

The CLS Program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and American Councils for International Education. The program is represented by the Center for Global Engagement here at SNC.

The program offers students the opportunity to learn 12 different critical languages, some of them without any prior knowledge needed. This includes: Hindi, Indonesian, Persian, Portuguese, Swahili, Turkish and Urdu. One year of study (or equivalent) is required for Arabic, Chinese, Korean and Russian. Two years of study (or equivalent) is required for Japanese.

This program is fully funded for successful applicants as they spend 8-10 weeks abroad and receive eight college credits through Bryn Mawr College. It also has no GPA requirement or need for a letter of recommendation and is open to seniors. Students of all areas of study are encouraged to apply.

Alli Reed, study abroad and off campus programs advisor, provided some insight into where students in the CLS Program would spend their two months of education. "Some critical languages only have one program location while others may have multiple. For example, if you want to study Hindi, you will spend the summer in India, but if you want to study Arabic, you could study it in Jordan, Oman or Morocco."

Reed continued, "While many of the language placements are intuitive, there are often multiple countries where these critical languages are spoken. For example, if you want to learn Russian, you might be studying that critical language in Kyrgyzstan or Georgia instead of Russia."

The CLS Program selects critical languages on the basis of expanding “the number of Americans studying and mastering foreign languages that are critical to our national security, economic prosperity, and engagement with the world,” Reed explained.

She added that the program aims to contribute to the “creation of new knowledge, broader professional perspectives, and personal and intellectual growth through international training, academic exchange, collaboration in educational development and public diplomacy.”

For those who are interested in applying or just curious, there are many opportunities to learn more. The CLS Program is hosting language-specific information sessions throughout October as well as drop-in office hours and application support sessions. Ali Reed also shared that she is available to help and so is the writing center on campus.

Applications for the CLS Program are due Tuesday, Nov 19. For more information regarding the program, visit <https://clscholarship.org/about>.