Asia is an increasingly important part of world politics, economics, and culture. The Asian languages and literatures program prepares students to interact with the people and cultures of Asia.

As a student in this program you’ll study an Asian language - Chinese, Hindi and Urdu, Japanese, Korean, or Hmong - as well as methods of literary and cultural analysis. The language study will provide you with advanced spoken and written skills that allow you direct access to the people and cultures of Asia, where more than half the world’s population lives. The analytical courses give a theoretically sophisticated understanding of the rich literary and cultural texts, from the accepted literary canon to popular culture and film.

The major has five sub-plans based on language of concentration: Chinese, Hindi and Urdu, Japanese, Korean, Hmong. Each introduces a broad range of language, literary, and cultural texts. The deeper, concentrated study in upper-level courses leads to the senior project. Study abroad is strongly encouraged and can contribute credit to the major.

The College of Liberal Arts Advantage: More Than a Major

When you study Asian Languages and Literatures at the University of Minnesota, you gain the added advantage of a College of Liberal Arts education. At CLA, the liberal arts mean you get more than just a degree in one major or another; it means you will be exposed to different areas of study, to different ways of thinking and learning. In fact, the liberal arts teach you how to learn—how to ask the right
questions, how to problem solve, and how to innovate. The liberal arts highlight the complexities of our world, because here at CLA you will study not just, say, politics or art but also where politics and art intersect, where science and ethics intersect, where economics and the environment intersect.

Meet Our Students

The Chinese Flagship program gave recent graduate Martin Miller an unexpected start into his career. During his time abroad, he interned at the film production company, Pearl Studio, which guided him toward writing his own pitches for his new TV show.

Read more about Martin's story, and learn more about our undergraduate program.

Student Experiences

Learning Abroad Options in Asian Languages and Literatures: Prepare to Lead in a Global Economy

Read more about Exploring Hmong Culture in China, and learn more about study abroad for ALL majors.

- Study abroad options based on concentration:
  - Arabic Language and Culture
  - Chinese Language and Culture
Japanese Language and Culture
Korean Language and Culture

Student Organizations: Find Friends and Grow as a Leader

- Asian-American Student Union
- University Arabic Language and Culture Club
- J-Cafe Minnesota

Undergraduate Research: Turn Curiosity into New Knowledge

The Department of Asian Languages & Literatures collaborates with a wide range of University of Minnesota departments and programs on course offerings, events, and research. Our professors serve as core or associated graduate faculty in departments across CLA.

Meet Our Faculty

The Mary Griggs Burke Endowed Chair in Asian Studies was created to provide remarkable scholars the resources to pursue advanced research in Japan studies. Professor Paul Rouzer has exciting ideas as the first Endowed Chair.

Read more about Professor Paul Rouzer's work.
“I was immediately drawn to the [ALL] department because of the vibrant, dynamic team of scholars,” shares Nida Sajid. With her expertise in the literary and cultural history of South Asia and focus on Islam and human rights in the Indian subcontinent, Professor Sajid offers a unique interdisciplinary approach to South Asia studies.

Read more about Professor Nida Sajid's work.

Meet Our Alumni

Asian languages and literatures alumnus Eric Lee-Mäder recently visited campus and gave a riveting lecture on satoyama, Japan’s rural landscapes that blur the lines between nature and agriculture. His passion for agricultural biodiversity and pollinator conservation has taken him all across the world, and he attributes many of the successes in his career to his time in ALL.

Read more about Eric's story.
CLA Graduates: Successful Careers and Purposeful Lives

CLA graduates succeed in many different careers — law, health care, medicine, business, government, teaching, advertising, arts and entertainment, international relations, and more — precisely because they understand how to navigate a complex and interconnected world. As our alumni explain below, “Being a good employee means being curious, and continuing to evolve, and learn, and educate yourself, and I can think of no stronger foundation for doing that than a liberal arts education.”

“An education in the liberal arts is a springboard to lifelong career success”
-- Dean John Coleman

You might also explore

Asian American Studies Minor
Art History
Global Studies
History

Associated Careers

Adult Educators, Advertising, Marketing, and Public Relations Managers, Foreign Service Officers, Interpreters, News Analysts, Reporters, Correspondents,
Admission Information

FRESHMAN: Admission information

TRANSFER STUDENTS: Requirements for the College of Liberal Arts

Beyond admission, if you have questions about transferring, the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) has transfer advisors to help. Please feel free to contact them about any of the topics below!

- Course plans before transferring
- Estimated time to graduation
- Career preparation in CLA
- Getting ready for orientation, if admitted
- Connecting with major/minor departments