The program develops analytical skills and methodologies needed to explore Hispanic, Hispanic-American, and Luso-Brazilian languages and cultures. The department offers two majors (Spanish studies and combined Spanish-Portuguese studies) and two minors (Spanish studies and Portuguese studies).

It is important to note that department majors and minors are not simply Spanish and Portuguese language programs; rather, they are liberal arts programs concentrating on Spanish, Latin American, and/or Luso-Brazilian literary, cultural, and linguistics studies with language skills as the foundation. All major and minor options in this department begin with prerequisite language courses, followed by advanced language skills courses (special arrangements may be made for native speakers of Spanish or Portuguese). These are followed by critical analysis skills courses in Hispanic literature, culture, and linguistics that prepare students to take advanced coursework in specific areas. The major options culminate in the completion of a senior project through a SPAN 5xxx course, or SPAN 3972W.

The department strongly encourages majors and minors to study abroad in a Spanish- or Portuguese-speaking area. Students who wish to complete department program requirements through study abroad must meet with the department advisor prior to departure. Detailed information regarding undergraduate Spanish and Portuguese studies academic issues is printed in the Undergraduate Advising Handbook.

The College of Liberal Arts Advantage: More Than a Major

When you study Spanish and Portuguese Studies 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 prepare students for 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

After the far-right government executed more than 3,000 young civilians, many Colombian mothers have become dedicated social activists. As part of a Grand Challenge Research Initiative grant and the CLA Dean’s First-Year Research & Creative Scholars Program, a trio of undergraduate students traveled to Soacha, Colombia to interview some of these women. Olivia Nortwen, Sydney Provinzino, and Kylie Sievers explore how mothers are transforming the Colombian social landscape. Their research received the award for “Best Scholarly Presentation” at the 2018 Undergraduate Interdisciplinary Conference.

Read more about Olivia, Sydney, and Kylie's story, and learn more about our undergraduate program.

Student Experiences
Learning Abroad: Prepare to Lead in a Global Economy

Learn more about study abroad for Spanish and Portuguese Studies majors.

Internships: Gain Valuable Experience in the Twin Cities and Beyond

Did you know? CLA Career Services has its very own internship reflection course! Students taking an internship can use this course to reflect on ways that their work experience is preparing them for successful careers - and receive credit for the work.

Undergraduate Research: Turn Curiosity into New Knowledge

The Department of Spanish & Portuguese Studies brings together world-renowned faculty whose research and teaching focus on the languages, literatures, cultures, and linguistics of Iberia, Latin America, and Lusophone Africa. The work of our faculty is characterized by an engagement with theoretical analysis and social approaches to a wide variety of cultural productions and phenomena. The diversity of disciplines, cultures, and languages represented among our faculty and graduate student research are united by a desire to foster an interdisciplinary approach that crosses traditional geographic, linguistic, and disciplinary borders.

Student Organizations: Find Friends and Grow as a Leader

- Spanish & Portuguese Across Cultures Organization
- SPRG - Spanish & Portuguese Research Group

Meet Our Faculty

Assistant Professor Mandy Menke connected the research and teaching of second languages to define the term "advanced" through a conference she hosted called
Evolving Perspectives on Advancedness: A Symposium on Second Language Spanish. Read the full article.

Read more about Mandy's story.

Meet Our Alumni

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

Portuguese Studies Minor
Global Studies
Spanish Studies
Associated Careers

Advertising, Marketing, and Public Relations Managers; Community Organizers and Activists; Foreign Service Officers; Interpreters; News Analysts, Reporters, and Correspondents; Public Interest Advocates; Translators

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