



Five College Center for World Languages

Published on LangMedia (<https://langmedia.fivecolleges.edu>)

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Format

What is the format of the program? How is it different from regular classroom language courses?

What is the Mentored Language Program?

The Mentored Language Program is a vehicle through which Five College students can study many of the less commonly taught languages. The program combines structured independent study with individual tutorial sessions and small group conversation sessions. Weekly preparation is guided by specially designed syllabi, study guides, and multimedia materials. At the end of the course, students have both oral and written evaluations. The oral evaluations are conducted by outside evaluators who are professors of the language at other institutions or by local language faculty.

Why is it called “Mentored”?

The format resembles an independent study more than a classroom course. Feedback and practice are provided through individual and small group sessions. Each student meets one-on-one with a language "mentor" to ask questions and get further explanations about the work covered that week. Students also meet weekly in small groups with mentors and/or native speaking conversation partners for conversation practice.

How are mentored language sessions different from regular classroom sessions?

- There is no large class; instructional interactions are all either one-on-one or in small group sessions.
- There is no teacher presenting a lesson each day; students work independently using the structured study guides and then ask questions and practice using the language in individual and small group sessions.
- A regular classroom course addresses learning issues common to a group of students; all mentored language sessions are student-centered and focus on the needs of individual students or on effective communication in the language among a small group of students.

Why are they called “mentors” and not “teachers”?

- The term "mentor" is used to stress the individualized nature of the course format. A regular classroom teacher presents information to a larger body of students and then leads the class through a set of activities designed to address the common needs of the entire group. A mentor works individually with each student to discover his or her particular needs and then works with the student on those issues and skills.
- Mentors take their lead from the student's questions and from individualized evaluations of a student's progress. The mentors also strive to work with each student to develop good language learning strategies for the student's independent study time and to help each student develop a realistic plan for a successful semester of language study.

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