

Recent American Developments in Content and Language Integration  
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I will focus today on a trend that I have observed among many American universities in recent years and in particular among universities that have recently initiated CLAC programs: the collaboration of faculty members in language departments with faculty members in other disciplines to help students conduct research in a foreign language. In past workshops, as well as conferences that I have attended, I have presented an overview of many other models for content and language integration. Those papers and presentations are available, as this one will be within the next day or two, at [LanguagesAcrossTheCurriculum.com](http://LanguagesAcrossTheCurriculum.com).

I will present findings from two groups: Russian programs, which I researched for a paper that I presented at an MLA conference last November; and members of the CLAC Consortium. Descriptions of the courses and models that I discuss today can be found on the web sites of the respective universities and on the CLAC Consortium web site.

## **I. Russian Programs**

### **Harvard/Yale/Princeton/Brown**

Among the Ivy League schools, the Harvard, Yale, and Princeton Russian programs offer courses called, respectively, “Advanced Russian: Introduction to the Language of Social Sciences and the Media”; “Advanced Russian Conversation through Contemporary Media”; and “Advanced Russian through History and Culture.” Harvard describes its course as an “Introduction to the language of Russian newspapers, journals, and historical writing. Basic vocabulary for such areas as current events,

including politics, history, economics, military issues, society, and the environment.” Descriptions at the other universities are similar. Brown, meanwhile, offers a course called “New Russia and Ukraine: Culture and Politic [sic] in Post-Soviet Space.” The online course list for Spring, 2015 does not list a prerequisite or indicate if Russian will be used. It does say “Politic” rather than “Politics.” It also lists the instructor, Sergei N. Khrushchev, which suggests that students will be able to use their Russian to some extent in the course.

### **UT-Arlington**

UT-Arlington provides a strong example of content and language integration. It has a two-semester sequence of courses on translation. It also has several courses cross-listed in Russian and other departments, including “Political Systems of Eastern and Central Europe” which stipulates that “Students receiving credit in Russian will complete projects using the Russian language”; “Propaganda and Ideology in Soviet Art and Literature,” which notes that “Students majoring in Russian read some texts in the original”; three other Political Science courses with similar Russian requirements; and two Business courses with Russian-language prerequisites.

### **University of Oregon**

The University of Oregon offers a History course called “Soviet Culture: Intellectuals, Ideas, and the Arts from Stalin to Gorbachev,” that lists several possible final paper assignments, including one “for readers of Russian only: a study of one of the major intellectual journals, *Novyi mir*, *Literaturnaia gazeta*, or a specialized journal (history, ethnography, etc.) over the course of a decade or two. Your aim should be to characterize and interpret the changes in content and editorial stance in the period that you have chosen.”

## **UCLA**

UCLA has an extensive list of “Russian for Native Speakers” courses, including courses for “students who speak Russian but have difficulty reading and writing or cannot read and write” and for “students who can speak, read, and write in Russian, and who have reached a high level of language proficiency.” There are established courses on “Literature and Film,” “Russian National Identity,” “Russian for Social and Cultural Studies” (which focuses on history) and “Business Russian.” There is also a “Special Topics and projects” rubric that allows students to design their own courses.

## **The University of Wisconsin-Madison**

Students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison can major in “Russian language and civilization,” which requires them to take a number of traditional Russian courses but also “9 credits in area studies courses in which they use Russian as a research language.” These courses are from virtually every Humanities and Social Science department in the university. The description of the major specifies that “[f]or all these courses, students must write a 10-15 page paper in English in which they use Russian sources and cite them in Russian [...] Students give the paper to the professor of the course to fulfill course requirements and bring a copy of the paper to the advisor for the Russian major for endorsement for the 9-credit area studies requirement. Students who do not bring their papers for endorsement will not get the area studies requirement filled! In addition to the courses listed above, other courses may be available to fill this requirement. Bring a copy of the course syllabus to the Russian advisor for approval.”

## **II. CLAC Consortium Members**

### **Michigan State**

Michigan State University offers CLAC courses within its Residential College in the Arts and

Humanities. Its courses are called Integrated Language Options (ILO). (I would note that this is one of the first American programs to adopt the European term "Integrated Language.") "In an ILO" (according to the program web site) "students use the language to collaborate with each other and their language mentor on a semester-long project." The ILOs

- Are connected to a theme or topic of an RCAH course
- Are led by native or near-native speakers of the language
- Are conducted entirely in the world language
- Meet 2 to 3 hours each week
- Do not require homework assignments
- Are not graded
- Do not affect a student's grade in an RCAH course
- Do not have any prerequisites; students of any proficiency level can participate

To earn a BA in the Residential College of Arts and Humanities a student must earn a Certificate of Language Proficiency, which requires, among other things, that a student take 8 of these ILOs, of which at least 4 must be on the intermediate or higher level. Courses offered recently include "Comparing American and Chinese legal systems," "Serious gaming: Creating the ideal society" [French] and "Understanding the experiences of Cuban refugees: Interviews with Peckham team members".

### **Binghamton University**

Binghamton (a LAC pioneer) offers a course in the Latin American and Caribbean Area Studies Program called "Library Research on Latin America, the Caribbean and Latin@s in the U.S." The course description says that "Students in LA&C 271 have the option of doing part of their course work

with LxC. With the support of the Languages Across the Curriculum program, interested students will be able to do readings in Spanish or French and to join language-specific study groups led by qualified graduate student Language Resource Specialists (LRSs) to further explore issues related to Mexican History and Art. [...] LxC participants are encouraged to become co-inquirers as they work with the Language Resource Specialist (LRS) to develop an overarching question and curriculum for the LxC section. "

### **Illinois State**

At Illinois College (according to its entry on the CLAC Consortium web site "The Department of Modern Languages has also implemented a special 1-credit research add-on course, where students can add additional credits to any course in the curriculum, provided they use their foreign language skills to conduct part of their research and then present that research to the professor and their fellow students." In Spanish the course is described as follows: "Students enrolled in a course outside the Department of Modern Languages that involves a major research project may earn credit for conducting research in Spanish. The research should be related to a major paper and/or presentation in the other discipline. A student who wishes to conduct research for a project in another field using Spanish language sources will submit a credit request to both the professor of the research related course and to the Chair of the Department of Modern Languages. The course level will be determined upon consultation with the language supervisor and the Chair of the Department of Modern Languages."

### **University of Richmond**

At the University of Richmond students register for English-language courses whose instructors permit students to conduct research in another language as a part of the course. The students then

register for a separate C-LAC course in which they are "guided in their study and discussion of authentic materials in another language relevant to materials in the primary course. Pass/fail grade only." The program is unusual in that it accommodates students with less commonly taught languages, For example an accounting class in the fall of 2015 will permit a Korean-language C-LAC option. The description on the CLAC consortium web site states that "LAC program currently includes LAC courses in Turkish, Hindi, and Czech."

### **Skidmore**

At Skidmore, "[i]n order to participate in Skidmore's LAC, you need to enroll in a LAC class in the language of your choice and connect it with a class in a department other than Foreign Languages and Literatures. There two levels of LAC: one at the intermediate level, a 1-credit 220 LAC course offered in Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese and Spanish, and an advanced 2-credit 340 LAC course offered in French, German, and Spanish." The Chinese intermediate course is described "[a] course designed for students who want to use their foreign language skills in any course taught in English at the college." The Advanced German course description stipulates that "[s]tudents apply and develop their German language skills in conjunction with any course taught in English at the college. Students will read, report, discuss, and write about sophisticated materials in the disciplines, and learn how to translate them to and from English."

### **Wittenburg University**

CLAC courses at Wittenburg are aimed at intermediate level language students. Their web site notes that "CLAC lets students in selected courses in every department on campus complete a one-credit project using their language skills." The Russian and Central Eurasian Studies page notes that students may register "CLAC components offered here. You don't need to be fluent in the language to

exercise this option. In fact, you need only to have completed two credits beyond 112 [second semester] or to be currently enrolled in a course beyond 112. Your work will be guided by your professor and by faculty from the Languages Department. The CLAC module is designed for intermediate level language learners."

**Summary: ideas to consider:**

- An interdisciplinary degree on the Michigan State model that requires not an arbitrary course requirement, but rather significant use of a foreign language in a variety of content courses.
- Courses that allow students at the second-year level to use a foreign language in their research, as does Wittenburg University, or even courses that admit beginners, as is the case at Michigan State University.
- A model whereby language specialists mentor students on an individual basis who choose to exercise foreign language options in a variety of courses. Perhaps a different faculty member could be designated each semester or each year to fulfill this position and could be given a stipend or granted a course release.
- A course on the Skidmore model whereby students meet as in a seminar and report on their findings, but these findings are from a variety of different courses that the seminar members are taking.
- Courses on the Binghamton model that focus on reading and research, rather than communicative, goals.
- Pass/fail or no-credit courses that lead to a certificate or fulfill a requirement of a

certificate, major, or minor.

- Courses on translation or courses that focus on translating from the target language into English.

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