



International Studies 275: Lead with Languages: Putting Language Skills to Work

University of Wisconsin-Madison

INSTRUCTOR

Lydia Odegard

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Office Hours: By appointment via [Starfish](#)

COURSE INFORMATION

1 credit

Intermediate, counts for Liberal Arts & Sciences credit (LAS)

Requisites: Sophomore standing

INSTRUCTIONAL MODE

This course will meet face-to-face for one 50-minute session per week.

MEETING TIME AND LOCATION

115 Ingraham Hall, Wednesday 11:00-11:50am

We will occasionally meet in other locations to better support specific learning activities. I will communicate this to students in advance.

OFFICIAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

Whether you developed your language abilities at home, abroad, or in an educational setting, learn how to leverage your language skills to maximize potential employment opportunities. Develop an understanding of transferable skills unique to language learners and work toward articulating these skills for resume, cover letter, networking, and interviewing exercises. Connect your enthusiasm for learning languages with your personal interests, skills, and abilities to begin exploring career pathways. Learn from peers, alumni, and other guest speakers with language majors/backgrounds who have succeeded in a variety of careers.

CREDITS

In this one-credit course, we meet for one 50-minute class per week. Expect to spend at least 2 hours each week on out-of-class preparation, including reading, reflection activities, and assignments. If you're spending much more than 2 hours, contact me during office hours to discuss strategies to reduce your workload.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Develop understanding of demand for multilingual talent in a variety of career fields and become familiar with institutions/organizations/companies supporting language and career connections.
2. Identify personal strengths and interest areas related to language skills and utilize campus resources, alumni contacts, and informational interviewing to explore career options.
3. Learn how to articulate and emphasize language and intercultural skills to improve upon online presence, resume, cover letter, and interviewing opportunities.

4. Articulate orally and in writing skills and abilities for self-promotion through direct connection of classroom activity to real world job opportunities.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Assignments	Percentage of Grade
Weekly assignments (14 total)	75%
Attendance & participation	10%
Final project (cover letter/ resume/mock interview)	15%

Grading Scale	
100-93%	A
92-87%	AB
86-80%	B
79-73%	BC
72-67%	C
66-60%	D
59% or below	F

- There is no grading curve.
- Submit all assignments through Canvas. Find detailed instructions for each assignment, including rubrics, on Canvas.
- Late submissions lose one point per day. If you have extenuating circumstances, contact me to discuss your situation and we will find a solution.

Weekly assignments: Throughout the semester, you will submit an assignment most weeks. These include activities such as Canvas discussion posts, reflections, and mock job application materials.

Participation and attendance: In this course, participation means listening, speaking thoughtfully, writing reflectively, and fostering a supportive discussion environment. I'll provide various opportunities for participation and aim to create a comfortable learning space for everyone.

Grading:

- Participation: I will grade and provide feedback three times per semester. See the rubric on Canvas for details.
- Attendance: I will grade attendance weekly. Notify me in advance if you'll miss class for any reason. Excused absences include illness, family emergencies, and religious observances.
- Unexcused absences: If you miss class for an unexcused absence, you can make up for your participation and attendance by attending a career-related event and submitting a reflection about the event. Examples of career-related events include: career fairs, alumni panels, employer panels, workshops on resumes/cover letters/mock interviews, etc. You must approve the event in advance with me. You can do this up to 2 times throughout the semester. See Canvas for details.

Final project: You will create a cover letter, resume, and mock interview portfolio to synthesize the topics we have covered throughout the semester.

COURSE WEBSITE

This course uses Canvas. Access the Canvas site via [this link](#).

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK, SOFTWARE & OTHER COURSE MATERIALS

You can find all readings and materials needed for this course on Canvas.

INSTRUCTOR-TO-STUDENT COMMUNICATION

Please call me Lydia. My pronouns are she/her.

Emails: Email is the best way to communicate with me about brief questions. I will try to answer your emails within one business day (Monday-Friday).

Office hours: Schedule an office hour meeting with me through [Starfish](#). If you prefer a walk-and-talk style of conversation, meet me at my office and we can go from there.

Here are some examples of conversations we can have in office hours:

- Additional career advising guidance beyond class activities
- Discussing different ways to participate in class
- Engaging more deeply with a topic that interested you during our class session
- Discussion of feedback I have provided on your assignments

COURSE SCHEDULE AND CALENDAR

Week	Topic	Learning Objectives	Preparation	Assignments Due Before Class	Guest Speaker
Sept 3	<i>Introductions & Lead with Languages</i>	Review syllabus; course overview & expectations. Reflect on personal goals for language and career development	<i>Read the syllabus</i>	Discussion post on Canvas: Introduction Pre-assessment survey Syllabus quiz	NA
Sept 10	<i>Future Readiness Skills & Workforce Skill Gap</i>	Discuss MLOB Report; analyze and reflect on connection between Roadmap research and NACE competencies and employability for multilingual students	“What are Employers Looking for When Reviewing College Students’ Resumes?” Making Languages Our Business Transferable Skills: Definition, Examples, and How to Build Yours	Discussion post on Canvas: NACE competencies reflection (150 words)	NA
Sept 17	<i>Reflecting on Identity</i>	Explore how social identity plays a role in career development	Reflecting on Social Justice: Social Identity Understanding Social Identity to Lead in a Changing World Identity at Work		NA
Sept 24	<i>Define Your Strengths & Purpose</i>	Articulate individual strengths, values, and purpose to build connections and explore between language-related career paths.	None		<i>Career Exploration Center staff members to facilitate activity on finding purpose</i>

Oct 1	<i>Personal Branding & Storytelling Basics</i>	<p>Reflect on personal experience related to language abilities.</p> <p>Discuss and practice self-promotion of language skills through storytelling.</p>	<p><u>How to Answer "Tell Me About Yourself" in an Interview</u></p> <p><u>Big Interview: Behavioral Interview Questions</u></p>	<p>Discussion post on Canvas: reflection on your purpose statement (150 words)</p> <p>Good Time journal exercise</p>	NA
Oct 8	<i>What can I do with this major?</i>	<p>Apply Planned Happenstance Theory to wandering map exercise.</p> <p>Identify and engage in industry exploration through the lens of language-related roles.</p>	<p><u>Planned Happenstance: Constructing Unexpected Career Opportunities</u></p> <p>Career exploration databases (see Canvas)</p>	<p>Practice building your personal brand and record an elevator pitch (2 minutes)</p>	NA
Oct 15	<i>Exploring Areas of Interest</i>	<p>Learn how to gain professional and relevant experience using language skills through campus and community involvement.</p>	<p><u>Career Readiness Competencies (NACE)</u></p> <p><u>The Co-Curricular Connection</u></p> <p><u>Wisconsin Experience</u></p>	<p>Discussion post on Canvas: Planned Happenstance theory and Wandering Map activity reflection (150 words)</p> <p>Industry Exploration Assignment</p>	<i>Virtual Alumni Panel with language alumni from different industries</i>
Oct 22	<i>Job/Internship Search Tools</i>	<p>Evaluate job/internship postings for interest, fit, and qualifications. Discuss how to use language in a professional context, and how language and related transferable skills show up in postings.</p>	<p><u>International Internship Program</u></p> <p><u>Handshake</u></p> <p><u>GoinGlobal</u></p> <p><u>Navigating Identity in the Job and Internship Search</u></p>	<p>Discussion post on Canvas: Alumni panel reflection (150 words).</p>	NA
Oct 29	<i>Building and structuring resumes</i>	<p>Highlight key language skills in resume and structure resume to emphasize language-related experiences. (Ex: Study Abroad &</p>	<p><u>SuccessWorks Resume & Cover Letters Canvas Module: Resumes section</u></p>	<p>Discussion post on Canvas: Assessing your skills against a job description</p>	NA

		<p>Language Classroom experience).</p> <p>Engage in language self-evaluation tools and formal language proficiency evaluation.</p> <p>Draft descriptive lines for resume related to language proficiency and skills.</p>	<p>ACTFL Can Do Statements</p> <p>UW-Madison AI Career Toolkit</p>		
Nov 5	<i>Writing an Engaging Cover Letter</i>	<p>Understand components of a cover letter and how to articulate the value of language abilities to a prospective employer. Draft a cover letter for a language-related job of interest.</p>	<p>SuccessWorks Resume & Cover Letters Canvas Module: Cover letters section</p> <p>We Asked ChatGPT to Write Cover Letters. Here's What It Got Right and Wrong</p> <p>Generative AI toolkit: cover letters</p>	Upload resume draft to Canvas	NA
Nov 12	<i>What is Social Capital? Outreach through LinkedIn</i>	<p>Learn how networking plays a key role in finding a job/internship and practice virtual networking and in-person networking with UW-Madison language alumni.</p> <p>Define and discuss social capital, its impact and potential as it relates to career development and leveraging language skills in a career.</p>	<p>What is the hidden job market?</p> <p>TED Talk: The Social Capital Gap</p>	Upload cover letter draft to Canvas	NA
Nov 19	<i>Speed Networking</i>	<p>Meet and interact with campus and local recruiters who use their language background in their current role.</p>	<p>SuccessWorks tips for Career Fairs</p> <p>Career & Internship Fair Preparation</p>	Start to think about who you will be conducting your informational interview with.	<i>Representatives from campus units and outside organizations</i>

Nov 26	Informational Interviewing	Find an industry "expert" who uses language in their current role and facilitate an informational interview. Analyze how this information impacts personal career and language goals. Define next steps for your career exploration.	SuccessWorks guides to networking: "Networking on Your Own" and "Networking at an Event" How to Get the Most Benefit from an Informational Interview	Virtual networking assignment Speed networking reflection: List at least two contacts from the speed networking event and indicate why it was helpful to connect and could be helpful to stay in touch.	NA <i>*No in-person class this week. Asynchronous lecture only.</i>
Dec 3	Post-Graduation Planning: Gap Year/Graduate School and other alternatives	Explore various types of gap year programs that incorporate language skills and reflect upon how this information impacts your post-graduation planning.	Taking a Gap Year Before Graduate School Gap Year Opportunities Gap Year Association Preparing for Graduate Study	Discussion post on Canvas: Informational interview reflection (150 words) Draft a list of personal questions (3-5) that will help guide your decision-making process for your particular situation. There will be an opportunity to pose these questions to the guest speakers in class.	<i>Campus representatives from graduate school and gap year programs</i>
Dec 10	Landing the Job: The Interview	Practice responding to behavioral interview questions as they relate to language experience and study. Simulate and record a virtual interview through the Big Interview program.	SuccessWorks tips for interviewing Video: Big Interview guide to answering behavioral interview questions	Discussion post on Canvas: Describe where you're at in your post-grad planning (150 words)	NA

USE OF CHAT GPT AND OTHER GENERATIVE AI TOOLS

This course focuses on your personal and professional growth. You'll need to think critically about how the class content relates to your experiences and career development. While AI tools like ChatGPT can't do this thinking for you, they can help you improve your career exploration and application strategies.

Policies for Using Generative AI in this Course:

- Sometimes, I will ask you to use generative AI to generate ideas and solicit feedback on your materials. We'll discuss how and when to use it.
- When you use generative AI, you must provide screenshots of your complete interactions with the chat bot.
- If an assignment doesn't mention generative AI, don't use it.

See the UW-Madison [AI Career Toolkit](#) for strategies and ideas for using generative AI tools in your career development.

SUPPORT FOR YOUR LEARNING AND WELLBEING

[University Health Services](#): As a student, you might face issues like strained relationships, anxiety, stress, substance problems, or low motivation. UHS offers free, confidential [mental health services](#) and other support, including check-ups, vaccines, [substance use recovery](#), and [survivor services](#).

Additional Resources for Academic Success

- [Undergraduate Academic Advising and Career Services](#)
- [Office of the Registrar](#)
- [Office of Student Financial Aid](#)
- [Office of Student Assistance and Support](#)

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STATEMENT

I aim to support diverse thoughts, perspectives, and identities (race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability). Our goal is to understand our own and others' perspectives and handle difficult conversations as we learn.

Reach Out:

- We can discuss how to make our class more equitable and inclusive.
- Notify me early if a class or due date conflicts with your [religious observances](#) for alternative arrangements.
- Contact me with any concerns or questions about the course.

Additional Support:

- For issues outside of class or incidents of hate or bias, the [Office of Student Assistance and Support](#) is available for reporting and connecting you with resources.

ACCESS & ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

McBurney Center Accommodations

[The McBurney Center](#) helps with [disability-related accommodations](#). If you have a McBurney letter, notify me by the third week of the semester (or as soon as possible if you start the process mid-semester). We'll work together to ensure reasonable accommodations for this course. Your disability information is confidential and protected under FERPA.

Students without McBurney documentation

I value your success and understand that students learn differently. Whether or not you have a McBurney letter, if you anticipate any issues with the course, please reach out to discuss how we can ensure your full participation and success. If unexpected issues arise, communicate with me promptly to renegotiate deadlines. I respect your privacy and won't ask for unnecessary personal details.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

- [Academic Calendar & Religious Observances](#)
- [Academic Integrity Statement](#)
- [Course Evaluations](#)
- [Privacy of Student Records & the Use of Audio Recorded Lectures Statement](#)
- [Students' Rules, Rights & Responsibilities](#)
- [Teaching & Learning Data Transparency Statement](#)