Frequently Asked Questions

Can I major in Arabic (or Persian, Turkish, Hebrew, or Central Asian languages) in the NELC Department?

Yes. The NELC major requires two years of one language and then other advanced courses or courses in English that focus on the culture of the primary language. The major is not titled “Arabic,” “Persian,” etc., but the NELC major is the equivalent of such a title.

What languages does the Near Eastern Languages and Civilization department teach?

We teach Arabic, Biblical and Modern Hebrew, Persian, Turkish, Uighur, and Uzbek regularly. We also offer Akkadian, Aramaic, Egyptian (Coptic), Ugaritic, Kazakh, and Tajik at various times. For a current listing of courses please consult the course listing.

What degree programs are offered within Near Eastern Languages and Civilization?

- **Undergraduate** students: Major or Minor in NELC
- **Graduate** students: Master of Arts in NELC
- **Doctoral** students: NELC does not have a Ph.D. program. Those seeking study leading to a Ph.D. should consider the Ph.D. Interdisciplinary Program in Near and Middle Eastern Studies

How can I declare NELC as my major?

The Near Eastern Languages and Civilization major has an open declaration for anyone in good university standing (not on probation). Students must meet with the NELC Advisor to fill out the Change of Major form. The advisor can explain the various degree tracks offered within NELC or the student can explore the four options here.

If I took language courses elsewhere, how can I enroll in a course mid-sequence?

All students must be evaluated before they are allowed to enroll in language courses beyond the first quarter, introductory level course. Each language has a different evaluation process, which may include meeting with a professor for evaluation or taking a placement test. Please see the Course Restrictions page and/or contact the NELC Advisor for details about a specific language's evaluation process.

How are the language programs in NELC structured?

Language courses are taught at the elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels, depending on the language. Each level is a made up of a three-quarter course sequence. The first course for each level is taught Autumn quarter. Students with no prior knowledge of the language must begin in the Autumn quarter. All NELC language courses are 400-level courses. The 41x-level elementary language
courses are designed for students without any prior knowledge of the language. Freshmen and sophomores are encouraged to begin language courses early to move through the sequences in a timely manner.

How do I get an add code for a NELC course?

Each course may distribute add codes differently. Check the Time Schedule for instructions to obtain an add code. For courses with “add code only” restrictions, contact the Undergraduate Advisor if the Time Schedule does not indicate otherwise. For courses with a full enrollment please consult the instructor teaching the course.

How do I take a placement exam?

The placement exams are conducted and administered by the University of Washington Office of Educational Assessment (OEA). The OEA is in Schmitz Hall on campus. To find out more about how to get there, and how to register for a test, please click here. Students should check with the Testing Center before going to take a test. For information about specific language placement tests, click here.

If I am a native speaker in a NELC language, may I enroll in and receive credit for language courses in my native tongue?

Native speakers are never allowed to enroll in language courses at the beginning or intermediate levels. Students should meet with the language professor to determine if they may enroll in advanced language courses as each language and situation varies. Native speakers are permitted to enroll in advanced literature courses for their native language.

If I am a native speaker in a NELC language, may I enroll in NELC’s M.A. program and use my native tongue as my primary language of study?

Yes. Native speakers are still required to take an M.A. exam in that language, and the advisory committee will decide what the nature of that exam will be. The exam may involve knowledge of grammar and/or an ability to translate from English into the native language. It also may serve to examine that language in a specific historical period and/or may involve other aspects of language study to be determined by a student's committee. You will be expected to demonstrate more sophisticated skills and responses for the specialization exam.

Can I audit a NELC class?

Auditing of NELC classes is based on the consent of the instructor and space availability. If you wish to audit in NELC, you must have written agreement from the instructor on file in the Department. Please be advised that at this time Arabic language classes (first, second and third-year Arabic) are not accepting auditors. For more information on UW policies regarding auditing, click here.

May I take a class for an S/NS grade?

It is UW policy that students taking courses S/NS (satisfactory/not satisfactory) must achieve the following minimum grade to pass:

   UNDERGRADUATES:  2.0
   GRADUATE STUDENTS :  2.7

Students sign up for S/NS at the time of registration. Note that credits earned with S/NS grades will not fulfill degree or major requirements. For a full explanation on the UW policies regarding S/NS grades click here.
NELC graduate students who wish to receive S/NS must receive approval to do so from the Graduate Program Advisor or the Supervisory Committee Chairperson. The NELC faculty strongly discourages the S/NS option for graduate students.

Does NELC offer tutoring?

The NELC department does not offer tutoring. Please consult Center for Learning and Undergraduate Enrichment for information on language tutoring at the University of Washington. CLUE currently offers tutoring sessions in Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish. We also recommend checking message boards around campus for tutoring opportunities.

Does NELC offer translation services?

The NELC Department does not offer translation services. However, we would happy to forward opportunities for paid translation work to graduate students with the appropriate language skills.

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