German is the language of the third ranked economy in the world, (by GDP, after the US and Japan). With Germany being a major player in the European Union and in global business, German is the lingua franca and most common second language of much of central Europe.

More people speak German as their native language than any other language in Europe. It’s no wonder, since Germany’s 83 million inhabitants make it the most populous European nation. But not only the residents of Germany speak German. It is also an official language of Austria, Switzerland, Luxembourg, and Liechtenstein. And it is the native language of a significant portion of the population in northern Italy, eastern Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, eastern France, parts of Poland, the Czech Republic, Russia, and Romania.

Germany’s economic strength equals business opportunities. Multinational business opportunities exist throughout the European Union and in the Eastern European countries, where German is the second most spoken language after Russian. Companies like BMW, Daimler, Siemens, Lufthansa, SAP, Bosch, Infineon, BASF, and many others need international partners. If you’re looking for employment in the United States, knowing German can give you great advantages. German companies account for 700,000 jobs in the United States, and US companies have created approximately the same number of jobs in Germany.

German students can participate in Hessen Exchange, coordinated through UW-Milwaukee and the Justus-Liebig University in Giessen. It is a broad program with a variety of courses offered among participating institutions throughout Germany. Internships are available for qualified students.

The Modern Language Major
More and more companies are looking for individuals with global intelligence. With only 3-5% of the world being native English speakers, the demand for multi-lingual individuals grows daily. Beyond learning a language, Modern Language students gain the ability to communicate with a variety of people and understand cultural differences. Students learn in diverse settings in and out of the classroom—from community work to travel abroad opportunities.

Students in the Modern Language Department focus on professional development through their language studies. All classes provide an emphasis on professionalism, allowing students to use their language skills in different types of environments. Small class sizes promise individual attention; our proximity to a large metropolitan area gives students the opportunity to participate in cultural events, partnerships, and internships all while enjoying the perks of a small community environment found at UW-River Falls.

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