

# Critical Language Scholarship Program

A program of the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs



# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

## Program Objective:

Broaden the base of Americans studying and mastering critical languages.

- 8- to 10-week summer program
- Intense language study and cultural immersion abroad
- Equivalent to one year of college language study
- Approximately 550 scholarships awarded annually in fourteen languages.



## FOURTEEN LANGUAGES OFFERED

No experience required

- Azerbaijani, Bangla, Hindi, Indonesian, Korean, Punjabi, Swahili, Turkish, Urdu

Some experience required

- Arabic, Persian

Two years of study required

- Chinese, Japanese, Russian

# PROGRAM BENEFITS



- Domestic travel to/from Washington for the required pre-departure orientation
- International travel to/from host country
- Applicable visa fees
- 20 hours of class per week
- Housing and meals
- Cultural activities and group trips in host country
- U.S. academic credit through Bryn Mawr College

# ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- U.S. citizenship
- Enrollment as an undergraduate or graduate student in U.S.-based university degree program
- Be at least 18 years old
- Have completed at least first year of college-level study by beginning of CLS Program
- All backgrounds/disciplines are eligible



# AN OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERYONE



- Open to all fields of study
  - Summer commitment only
  - Offers academic credit
- CLS actively recruits students from groups under-represented in study abroad
- Supportive environment
  - Alumni network and mentor programs
- CLS is fully funded!

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# WHY YOU SHOULD APPLY

- Making rapid gains in language skills:
  - Students complete two semesters worth of coursework
  - Immersive cultural experience
- Advance your career:
  - 45% of U.S. companies give advantage to candidates with language skills
  - Employers are looking for ability to effectively collaborate and communicate with people in cross-cultural settings
- Make meaningful connections in your host country and become part of a vibrant community of State Department alumni
- Supportive environment for first-time and experienced travelers alike

# IN-DEPTH LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

- The CLS Program integrates experiential learning into:
  - Excursions to explore the cultural heritage of the host country
  - Cultural classes and activities
  - Host family and language partners
- Participants develop in-demand skills:
  - Communication
  - Critical thinking
  - Navigating cross-cultural relationships
  - Problem-solving





# TOPICAL CONTENT COURSES

- Specialized courses at some institutes, focusing on topics such as health, climate and energy, business and entrepreneurship.
- Courses incorporate language learning with field-specific opportunities.
- Applicants may indicate their interest to opt-in the second round of selection.



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# TOPICAL CONTENT COURSES

## Chinese

Dalian, China

- Supplementary coursework providing students basic knowledge of China's current energy and environmental policy, the challenges and structural issues of China's energy consumption, and the efforts being made to protect the environment.

## Swahili

Arusha, Tanzania

- A course in Business and Entrepreneurship, taught through classroom lectures and guided field trips, aiming to build knowledge of the fundamentals of entrepreneurship for successful business development.

# CLS IS A “GROUP-BASED” PROGRAM



- Program sites range from cohorts of 5 to 30 students
- Everyone shares the same weekly schedule
  - 20 hours of class with only CLS participants
  - Cultural activities and local excursions
  - Weekend overnight group trips
- CLS is not a research, independent study, or internship program

# WHAT DOES “INTENSIVE” MEAN?

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
9:00AM	Language Classes					Cultural Excursion	Cultural Excursion	
10:00AM								
11:00AM								
12:00PM								
1:00PM								
2:00PM	Cultural Class/Activity	Language Partner	Cultural Class/Activity	Language Partner				
3:00PM								
4:00PM								
5:00PM								
6:00PM								
Evenings	Study/Free	Study/Free	Study/Free	Study for exam/Free				

# PARTICIPANT DIVERSITY SNAPSHOT (2016)



- Over 41% identify as students of color
- Students come from public and private institutions, community colleges, and minority-serving institutions
- Nearly all 50 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico represented
- A wide variety of fields of study, including 15% STEM
- 78% Undergraduate, 22% Graduate

# STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND HEALTH CONCERNS

- CLS does not discriminate on the basis of disability or medical condition.
- Applicants are encouraged to consider the challenges of program ahead of time.
  - CLS institutes are often in remote locations.
  - Public services for persons with disabilities and access to medical resources may be limited.
- Despite challenges, the experience can be extremely rewarding.



# APPLICATION IS AVAILABLE NOW

- Online application at [www.clscholarship.org](http://www.clscholarship.org)
- Deadline is November 16, 2016
- Apply for one language only
  - Not for a specific country or site
- Applicants must prepare:
  - Unofficial transcripts
  - Two letters of recommendation
  - Essay responses
    - Four Short Answer Essays (100-350 words)
    - One Longer Personal Statement (500 words)

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# KEY ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION

- Make a clear connection between **the target language and your future academic and career plans.**
- Be sure to articulate the following:
  - The importance of the language to your goals
  - Your plans to continue studying and using the language

## Essay Questions:

- Why is it important that the CLS Program invest specifically in you with this award?
- What interests you about your chosen target language and the people who speak it?
- How will increased language and cultural knowledge help you achieve your future academic and/or professional goals?



# KEY ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION

## Essay Question:

The CLS Program is an intensive, group-based overseas learning environment. While on the program, you may frequently be exhausted from adapting to a new environment, living without familiar amenities, studying intensively, attending mandatory cultural activities that may not always align perfectly with your interests, building new relationships with people from the host country and your CLS peers, and functioning day-to-day in another language.

- What aspects of the CLS Program do you expect will be the most challenging for you?
- How will you meet these challenges?

- Demonstrate that you are prepared to succeed in an **intensive, group-based program**.
- Discuss how you are:
  - Culturally adaptable and mature
  - Ready for intensive study and cultural immersion
  - Ready for a highly structured, group-based program

# KEY ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION

- Tips for acquiring **strong letters of recommendation**:
  - Talk through your interests and goals with your recommender
  - Share drafts of your essays with your recommenders
  - Letters from faculty or instructors are preferred
  - Ask early for a meeting and be polite



# KEY ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION



- **Start your application early**, and seek on-campus resources to help you improve your essays:
  - Office of Grants, Scholarships, or Fellowships
  - Study Abroad or International Education office
  - Writing tutor
  - Academic advisor, language instructor or other faculty member
  - A friend or peer

# SELECTION TIMELINE

- September 16 – Application Opens
- November 16 – Application Deadline
- November 23 – Letters Of Recommendation Due!
- February/March – Notification

For more information:  
[www.clscholarship.org](http://www.clscholarship.org)  
[cls@americancouncils.org](mailto:cls@americancouncils.org)

For Other Opportunities:  
[exchanges.state.gov](http://exchanges.state.gov)

Stay in touch!



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