

Université Libre de Bruxelles fall / spring / academic year ☀

ancient languages and literature / arabic language and literature / archaeology / art history / belgian studies / communications / film studies
french language and literature / germanic language and literature / history / information science / philosophy / religious studies / romance languages and literature
slavic languages and literature



program snapshot

- French-taught courses in the humanities; take classes with Belgian and other European students; join a university club
- Student mentors help students integrate into the university environment
- Field trips to EU institutions, excursions within Belgium and to France, the Netherlands, and Germany, and local cultural activities
- Cultural and educational activities such as visits to the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in the Hague, NATO, and the Museum of Fine Arts

what you'll learn

The Advanced Liberal Arts program has three goals: to provide opportunities for students to fully immerse themselves in a European university while taking classes in French; to offer insight into Belgium and Brussels' unique political, cultural, and linguistic situation in Europe; and to enable students to improve their French language skills.

thoughts from abroad

Bruxelles est une ville que j'adore. C'est l'endroit où l'Europe du nord rencontre l'Europe du sud, où les cultures latines se mélangent avec les traditions anglo-saxonnes et germaniques. Bruxelles s'affirme chaque jour davantage comme capitale de l'Europe. On y trouve différentes institutions européennes, mais aussi l'OTAN et beaucoup de ngo's et entreprises internationales. Mais la ville accueille également des communautés du bassin méditerranéen, de l'Europe de l'Est, de l'Afrique, et de l'Amérique latine. Cette présence multiculturelle se reflète dans le foisonnement de langues, restaurants, festivals, et activités culturelles qui animent les différents quartiers de la ville. C'est une ville idéale pour connaître l'Europe!

— Michelangelo van Meerten, Resident Director

About the Resident Director

Dr. Michelangelo van Meerten holds a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. He joined CIEE in 2001 as a professor of European Integration for the CIEE Study Center and became the Resident Director in the fall of 2002. Dr. van Meerten has researched and lectured in the field of economics and economic history in Groningen, the Netherlands; Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium; Brussels, Belgium; Krakow, Poland; and Barcelona and Madrid, Spain. Michelangelo speaks six Western European languages fluently and has traveled extensively in Europe. His interests and research areas include the history and development of the European continent, transport and communications, European integration, politics, film, and culture.

About the Resident Coordinator

Emily Miller earned her B.A. in Political Science and Journalism from Beloit College in Wisconsin in 2007. There she studied French and spent a semester in Brussels on the CIEE program. Most recently, she worked as an English teacher in China and as an Americorps VISTA volunteer in Chicago. Emily assists the Resident Director with academic, administrative, and day-to-day matters.



about brussels

Brussels has emerged as the "Capital of Europe" in political and economic terms. As the headquarters of the European Union, it is at the forefront of European integration and EU policy. Brussels is also very international; its diversity is reflected in its neighborhoods, restaurants, and languages. While French is the dominant language, Dutch (Flemish) and English are widely spoken.

academics

Academic Program

The CIEE Study Center in Brussels, Belgium was established in 1994 and began its pilot program at the ULB in 2006. The CIEE Advanced Liberal Arts program opened its doors in spring 2009.

The Advanced Liberal Arts program is specifically designed for students with upper-level French language skills who want the challenge of direct matriculation within a European university. The program is particularly well-suited for those with an interest in language, literature, philosophy, and history.

Academic Culture

ULB, like other European universities, offers three-year undergraduate degrees, organized into different faculties. The CIEE Advanced Liberal Arts program is located at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters.

The academic culture of ULB courses follows a traditional European model. Students attend lectures for a semester or year and usually take a single exam at the end of the course to determine their grade. Papers are usually not required for these courses, making the final oral exam that much more important. Some courses may also include presentations or written assignments.

Class size at ULB varies, but is generally much larger than typical U.S. courses. The teaching method at ULB is primarily lecture-style.

Students are advised that due to possible changes in the courses offered each term they should be flexible in course selection. Fall semester ULB courses extend into January, and spring semester courses extend into June. Professors may be willing to administer the final exam earlier than the officially scheduled date, allowing fall students to depart mid to late December and spring students to depart in late May to early June, but CIEE cannot be responsible for arranging or guaranteeing early exams.

Nature of Classes

Students take regular university courses with Belgian students and a limited number of other international students.

CIEE Community Language Commitment

Students take part in the CIEE Community Language Commitment by speaking French at all times (except in emergencies). This fosters a learning community that will contribute to both French language proficiency and understanding of Belgian society.

Grading System

Grades are based on a numerical system of 1–20, with a 10 considered a passing grade. Course grades are usually based on a single, final oral exam.



where you'll study

The French-language Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) was founded in 1834 as an alternative to the Catholic or state universities in Leuven, Gent, and Liège. It now has a student population of 18,000 and is the largest university in Brussels. ULB has several campuses in different areas of the city. The main campus where the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, the library, and University administration are located is known as the Solbosch campus and is located in southeast Brussels.

living**Housing and Meals**

Housing is included in the program fee. CIEE housing is a combination of individual rooms with or without other students and sharing common spaces with landlords. Housing is mainly located in the southeast of central Brussels. An excellent public transportation system makes it easy to commute. All housing placements are made on site at the beginning of the semester.

Meals are not included in the program fee and are the responsibility of the student. Students have access to cooking facilities in order to prepare their own meals and may take meals in University cafeterias and restaurants in the area.

Orientation

Prior to the start of each semester, there is a mandatory three-day orientation organized and conducted by CIEE at a hostel in downtown Brussels. The orientation introduces students to Belgium and Brussels; provides practical information about the host country, daily life, the academic program, housing, cultural and educational differences; and enables participants and staff to get to know one another while participating in structured and informal activities that could include visits to museums, a bus tour, walking tours, and group meals. Ongoing support is provided on an individual and group basis throughout the program.

Internet

Students have access to an on-campus computer laboratory as well as computers in the ULB library. Students are required to open an email account at the ULB which gives them access to computers on campus as well as access to a number of online forums. Wireless connections in the home are as common in Brussels as in many parts of the U.S., though an Internet connection is not guaranteed. Students are encouraged to bring wireless-enabled laptops or use the computer labs or one of the numerous cyber cafés in Brussels.

**eligibility**

- Overall GPA 2.75
- 6 semesters college-level French or equivalent

duration

Fall
19 weeks: early September–mid-December or late January

Spring
20 weeks: late January–late May or late June

Academic Year
39 weeks: early September–late May or late June

culture**Cultural Activities and Field Trips**

Extracurricular activities and occasional group excursions are organized throughout the semester. Day trips may include Bruges, Luxembourg, Ypres, Bastogne, and Aachen as well as weekend excursions to France and Germany. Day trips to the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague, NATO, European Parliament and Commission in Brussels, and the European Investment Bank or the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg may occur. Visits to the Brussels Museum of Fine Arts, and regular visits to French and European films complete program activities. Participants also have access to sports facilities at the ULB and may participate in student clubs and activities.

Mentoring Program

CIEE and the ULB collaborate on a mentoring program for CIEE students. Mentors are available to help students integrate into the University environment and serve as contacts in their classes. The ULB has a very highly developed student network in the classroom as well as online. Mentors serve as a bridge to this network as well as to all aspects of student life.

costs**CIEE Fees**

Fall 2009: \$14,750
Spring 2010: available 8/15/09
Academic Year 2009–10: \$26,550

The CIEE fees for 2009–10 include an optional on-site meet and greet, full-time leadership and support, tuition, housing, orientation, cultural activities, local excursions, field trips, pre-departure advising, comprehensive student handbook, and a CIEE iNext travel card, which includes insurance and other travel benefits.

Estimated Additional Costs (Fall 2009)

Transportation (round-trip based on U.S. East Coast departure)	\$ 1,300
Personal Expenses	\$ 2,450
Meals	\$ 2,250
Books and Supplies	\$ 240
Local Transportation	\$ 300
Visa Fee	\$ 165
Potential Travel to Consulate for Visa	\$ 400
Total Estimated Additional Costs	\$ 7,105

Check our website for current fees.



coursework

Program Requirements

All students are required to take the CIEE/ULB core course in addition to their ULB courses. The number of ULB courses that each student takes will vary, as ULB courses range in credit from 2–7 ECTS each. All participants are required to enroll in the equivalent of 12 U.S. credits (24 ECTS).

Credit

Total recommended credit for a semester is 12 semester/18 quarter hours. Total recommended credit for the academic year is 24 semester/36 quarter hours.

Course contact hours vary, but average 24 contact hours for ULB courses. The CIEE core course is 40 hours each semester. Recommended credit is 3 U.S. credits for the CIEE courses and 1 U.S. credit per 2 ECTS credits earned.

Language of Instruction

French

Faculty

The core course is taught by a member of the ULB faculty in conjunction with the CIEE Resident Director. Regular university courses are taught by faculty from the Université Libre de Bruxelles.

a student's story

I think my favorite thing about living in Brussels has been the diversity of people I've met. There are a ton of Erasmus students from all over Europe who study at ULB. Going to the activities organized by the student group has been one of the coolest experiences yet. I've made friends with students from Bulgaria, Slovenia, Spain, Portugal, and Ireland. I even made friends with the cashier at the grocery store down the street! He's Lebanese, and we had a whole conversation (in French!) about U.S. foreign policy. I've found that Belgians are generally very friendly, which makes it a wonderful and welcoming environment for language learners.

Brussels is a really interesting city, and I loved getting to know it, but it was also very convenient in terms of international travel. It's so easy to go downtown and grab a train to Paris or Amsterdam or Cologne, Germany, all of which I did while I was here. The CIEE program does a terrific job of organizing fun and interesting trips to places you might not otherwise go, like smaller Belgian towns, Luxembourg, various American battlegrounds from World War II, and gorgeous cathedrals in France. I loved the CIEE trips—even if I hadn't done any travel on my own, I still would have seen so much.

I accomplished everything I wanted to during my time in Belgium. My French has improved, but what's more is that I've gained an appreciation for a wonderful, fascinating country that is far too often overlooked. I've grown to love Belgium, and I'll truly miss it when my time here is over.

— Heidi Gretz, Georgetown University

courses

Required Core Course

Students must take the semester core course below. The core courses are regular ULB courses focusing on Belgian history supplemented by seminars led by the CIEE Resident Director.

Fall

HIST 3001 BULB

History of the Contemporary Period

This course is intended to provide a better understanding of the culture, economy, politics, and history of Belgium as well as the different identities of its inhabitants. It supplies a fuller appreciation of the relations Belgium has with the rest of the world and in particular with its neighboring countries. By the end of the course, students grasp the complex evolution of the different cultures that coexist on the Belgian territory and gain a better understanding of the process of European integration at large. In addition to regular course hours, supplemental lectures and an additional written assignment are required.

Spring

HIST 3002 BULB

Political History of Contemporary Belgium

Students learn about the origin of the formation of the Belgian state and its evolution. The extreme importance of the three fracture lines that have traversed Belgian society from its origins: the philosophical, social, and linguistic cleavage, are explored in depth.

ULB French Language Courses

For students who wish to improve their language skills to better follow their regular university courses at the ULB, courses are offered in advanced grammar and composition. Please visit the website for information at www.ulb.ac.be/enseignements/cours-francais/index_6.html.

ULB Courses at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters

Following are examples of course areas offered at ULB. Additional courses in the social sciences may be added. The ULB course areas listed are representative of courses available each year, but CIEE cannot guarantee specific courses are offered each semester. Go to the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters webpage for additional course information at www.ulb.ac.be/facs/philo.

Ancient Languages and Literature
Archaeology
Art History
Belgian Studies
Communications
Film Studies
French Language and Literature
Germanic Language and Literature
History
Information Science
Modern Languages and Literature
Philosophy
Religion Studies
Romance Languages and Literature

