

The Department of English, Germanic and Romance Studies

Modern languages at UCPH in the 21st century

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UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN



The Department of English, Germanic and Romance Studies

- Research and Study programs in the major Western European languages (as they are spoken on a global scale) and their associated literatures, cultures, and societies.
- Historical and contemporary topics within each language area
- Interdisciplinary as well as cross-linguistic research collaborations on topics such as languages and cultures in education, translation studies, transnational literary relations, international history, and linguistic globalisation.
- Movement from national philology towards more complex transnational and transcultural objects of inquiry.



A few facts (June 2023)

Faculty Staff

- 41 tenured staff (Professors, Associate professors, Assistant professor)
- 12 Postdocs
- 16 PhD students

Programs

- Five BA programs: English, French, German, Italian and Spanish/Latin American Studies
- Corresponding MA programs: English, French, German, Italian and Spanish/Latin American Studies
- + A sixth MA program in Intercultural Market Studies (joint degree with Copenhagen Business School)



What the programs lead to



What the programs do not lead to (directly)



Context of foreign language studies in DK

Supra	Macro	Meso	Micro	Nano
<p>Global megatrend towards English</p> <p>English perceived (and used) as <i>the</i> language of research, culture, travel, coolness... everything!</p>	<p>Political and societal level in DK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Constant, uncoordinated and poorly-informed reforms •Promotion of STEM disciplines •General societal discourse on English as the most (only?) relevant foreign (?) language → •Loss of prestige 	<p>University</p> <p>Funding based on market logics (numbers) harmful to less demanded programmes</p> <p>Continuous phasing out of foreign languages other than English in disciplines other than modern languages</p>	<p>Department</p> <p>Fewer students and high drop out rate</p>	<p>Students</p> <p>The Danish <i>numerus clausus</i> system shows that students with the highest grade point average often choose other degrees;</p> <p>Loss of prestige</p>

Small openings

- Establishment of NCFF → more informed policy discussions
- Extra government funding to strengthen undergraduate students' language skills in German and French in HE
- Documented need for language teachers in upper secondary school (NCFF report)
- Perceived need for interpreters : (Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SoMe campaign))
- But ...where do we start?

Rethinking Modern Language Studies at UCPH

Where and how do ML graduates contribute to society?

Where and how do ML graduates make a difference in the labour market?

What does ML mean as an academic field of inquiry?

Which research agenda in the twentyfirst-century university is a Modern Languages department particularly well positioned to take up?

How do we deal with the different 'turns' (transnational, digital) in designing the curriculum?

