



I've always loved China and have studied the Chinese language throughout my life. It had been my dream to study abroad, but I felt that I would not be able to study abroad in China due to the sheer cost of it. At a study abroad fair in the fall 2018, my friend grabbed a flier for me that talked about the Critical Language Scholarship. It almost seemed like a dream come true!

The Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) is funded by the U.S. Department of State. They offer a summer study abroad opportunity for college and university students to learn languages essential to America's engagement with the world. It's part of a bigger government effort to encourage students to

study critical foreign languages. Languages include Portuguese, Russian, Swahili, Chinese, Korean, Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and more! Each language has different previous study requirements, and there are even some that don't have any pre-required study of the language. A complete list of languages can be found on the CLS website, along with the application requirements. The application process includes essay writings and letters of recommendation. CLS looks for a diverse group of students to accurately depict the diversity in America.



The program lasts about 2 months and the housing, flight, and tuition cost of the program is covered completely by the U.S. Department of State. You will either live with a host family, or with native roommates. The goal is to have a complete immersion experience. Any independent travel on weekends has to be paid for yourself. In my experience, the money they provided us to cover lunches during the week was enough to cover some travel expenses, too.



I had the opportunity to study in Dalian, China, and develop my skills in Mandarin. The CLS Program was one of the best experiences of my life! I had a great time with my cohort, I expanded my language skills and interpersonal skills, and I expanded my worldview. Whatmore, the connections and relationships I made from that program I know will last me a lifetime.

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