

Language house: alternative to European trip

Imagine being greeted this summer by fellow students saying *bonjour* over a breakfast of *brioche* and *cafe-au-lait*.

But no money for a trip to Europe? According to former participants, UNL language summer session houses are a good alternative to immersion into another country's culture.

The language houses were started in 1967. According to Donald Allison, chairman of the Modern Languages Dept., the program is designed for students who have completed two years of language in high school or 1-year's study in college.

During the session, German, French and Spanish students live in a fraternity house, Allison said. They attend morning and afternoon classes, have evening activities and eat meals together, he said.

Allison said the staff includes three or four instructors in each language, with one instructor who is a resident.

Although this year's staff has not yet been selected, Allison said selection is made on interest and qualification. Several native speakers are always chosen, he said.

"This program is the closest we can provide to an in-country experience," said Mark Cory, last year's staff director in German. "An intensive session often works better for many because students don't forget the language day to day," he added.

Cory said morning classes, include grammar and pronunciation drills and a reading and discussion session.

In the afternoon, a native speaker conducts conversation classes, he said. Evenings often involve films or concerts, Cory said.

Although the student's day is devoted entirely to language study, Cory said instructors try to make the work fun. For example, afternoons may include a swimming party or a soccer game, he said.

While the session is time consuming for students and teachers, Cory said he enjoyed seeing students' excitement.

"It's difficult to face students turned off by the subject and try to arouse their interest," he said.

Cory said he doesn't think a compact program can provide as much reading fluency as regular classes. However, the student becomes more proficient in

conversation because it almost seems like he's in Germany, he said.

"I think more people would take advantage of the language houses if they knew about them," he added.

Amy Struthers, who lived in the French house last summer, said she found the 5-week crash program better than taking classes every other day.

"We were pretty fluent by the end of the session because we roomed with someone in our own language," she said.

Although Struthers said students worked a lot, she said she enjoyed it.

"If an upper level course were offered I would take it again," she said.

Patty Schuett, a student in the German house, said she thought speaking in German was the best experience of the session. Students don't get as much conversation in class she said.

"Experience in conversation is especially good if you travel because you find out how to say practical things," Schuett said.

Allison said students may register for language houses in March or before the first session of summer school.

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