

## A Whole New World: Languages at Sage

By Grace Koehler

Studying a language can open up doors to a vast array of opportunities, and faculty at Russell Sage have started to help students explore their options.

Dr. Ekaterina Kagan, assistant professor of Spanish at Russell Sage, is the director of the Culture and Language Acquisition at Sage Program. There are a total of five language courses offered online: French, Italian, Russian, Chinese Mandarin, and Arabic. Kagan stated, "The study of foreign languages provides valuable experience and a potential edge for future career development for our students."

The program is online so as to allow students to work at their own pace, especially with the busy schedules of a typical college students. Kagan explained, "We are working in partnership with Rosetta Stone on this exciting new modality for learning a foreign language. The Culture and Language Acquisition focuses primarily on instruction in conversation in culture."

She continued, "Online method of education is a very effective alternative method for those students who want to learn more about new customs and traditions, to discover new worlds, read books in a different language or just find a job in a variety of fields. Foreign languages can complement a variety of degree, including business and finance, education, government, social services, health services, foreign service, law, journalism and many others.

There are currently a handful of students that were enrolled in the program during the Fall 2013 semester, but through word-of-mouth, the program has grown. Jessica Wright, a Sage student studying Arabic said that "[the program] allows you to soak in the words and be able to review and receive help on anything that is troubling you. We also do a cultural blog and with this, we learn about news and important information about the language and people who use it."

Anastasia Belikov, a Sage student studying Russian said, "I speak Russian at home, so this helps keep me up on my practice. Plus I

do learn a lot from the online speaking sessions we have to do."

The program itself is fairly basic. Students use Rosetta Stone to gain total immersion in their language. Kagan said, "The program is interactive, it includes an extensive listening component, and appraises the student of her work (and success) throughout...it allows the student to navigate through a series of situations designed to teach vocabulary and sentence structure."

While the program may seem intimidating at first, students overall are seeing what a difference the broadening of language and culture can do for one's life. If you are interested in taking one of these languages online, you can register for the class at [www.sageadvisor.com](http://www.sageadvisor.com). It's never too late to learn something new!