

What is the significance of Persian studies?

Persian art, language and culture, which is identified with modern Iran and adjoining regions, is one of the most formidable cultural traditions in the world, going back to the ancient Persian empire of Cyrus the Great, over 2500 years ago.

- Persian is spoken by over 70 million people today.
- Persian was a major language of culture and governance for centuries in the Central Asian regions, the Indian subcontinent, and the Ottoman Empire.
- The modern Persian language for over a thousand years has been a major medium for subjects ranging from philosophy, science, and medicine (Avicenna, Omar Khayyam) to poetry (Ferdowsi, Rumi, Hafez, Farrokhzad) and governance and education (Nezamalmolk, Amir Kabir).
- Persian culture, music, film, art and architecture are a major legacy of world civilization.
- Modern Persian is the Farsi spoken in Iran, and it includes Dari (Afghanistan) and Tajiki (Tajikistan).
- Related Iranian languages include Baluchi, Kurdish and Pashto.
- Iran is one of the most influential countries in the Middle East.
- Iran has been home to multiple religions and a wide range of ethnic groups.
- Post-1979 Iranian migrations mean Persian is spoken around the world (Europe, Americas, Asia).

What is the status of Persian studies at the University of North Carolina?

- Currently UNC-Chapel has three faculty members with international reputations in Persian studies:
 - Professor Carl W. Ernst
 - Professor Charles Kurzman
 - Professor Omid Safi
- Graduate students in several departments work on topics related to Persian studies.
- Undergraduate demand for Persian language courses is strong; UNC has hired a new Persian instructor.
- UNC Libraries have primary responsibility for collecting Persian books in the Duke-NCSU-UNC system. A Middle East/Africa librarian with knowledge of Persian has been hired at UNC in 2010.

Why should I contribute to UNC's Persian Studies program?

- Do you want your children and grandchildren to have serious access to Persian language and culture in the American educational system?
- Do you want other Americans to know something significant about Persian culture?
- Are you willing to give back to the society that has enabled you to have the life and success you now enjoy?

How can I help?

Efforts are being made to strengthen instruction in Persian language and culture with outside grant support. A Persian Studies Gift Fund has been set up at UNC to support the following objectives:

- Teaching Persian language and culture and increasing its profile in the curriculum at UNC
- Expansion of library resources (books and multimedia) relating to Persian language and culture
- Public programs, including lectures, films, and performances

Your tax-deductible gift of any size will make a difference in the preservation of Persian culture in a leading American university at this critical time. UNC is a 501(c)(3) institution. Check to see if your employer will provide matching funds for your donation.

This program has no connection with any political or religious organization, but serves the students of UNC, the people of North Carolina, and the world.

You can send your check, payable to UNC-Chapel Hill, with the note "Persian Studies 8091":

c/o Melissa McMurray, Office of International Affairs

FedEx Global Education Center 1204, UNC, 301 Pittsboro Street, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-5145

Instructions for online contributions are available at <http://persian.unc.edu>

Questions? Contact Prof. Carl Ernst (cernst@email.unc.edu)