

Language Matters

Language Resource Center Newsletter



February 2024

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Have you ever wondered why the LRC logo is a yellow mug? Our mug reflects the heart of the LRC: conversation, hospitality, and connection. Here, authentic language use and face-to-face conversation, in *any* language, are encouraged, which often occurs over a mug of hot tea. The LRC aims to be a point of connection for students of different language and cultural backgrounds where you can find your place in a supportive learning community. **All** Valpo students are invited to make themselves at home in the LRC, not just students taking language classes!

Spring Language Groups

The LRC's informal language groups and conversation tables are led by students. Faculty and staff are welcome to participate, and beginners are invited to all groups, no matter your experience. All are welcome!

[More about groups](#)

Mondays	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ASL @ 5:15• Spanish Table @ 4
Tuesdays	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Japanese @ 4:30
Wednesdays	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inklisk Literary Society @ 4• Korean @ 5• Spanish for Health Care @ 8
Thursdays	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arabic @ 5:30• French Table @ 7 (bi-weekly)
Fridays	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Korean @ 5

Pictured here are members of the Korean language group at their end of fall semester celebration.



Spring Events

More events are in development, with details coming after spring break.

- *Protesting in France* April 9, 6 pm **Core approved**
- *Fête aux fromages* Cheese Fest April 17, 6 pm
- *Valpo Arts & Humanities Day* April 25, all day
The LRC will serve as the Hospitality Suite for the Arts & Humanities Day.

[More about LRC events](#)



Explore the ways language use matters and how language holds meaning in our lives. Listen to a short presentation and join an informal conversation about a language-focused topic. Additional topics will be scheduled after break.

Core approved

- **Lost Words, Broken Ties: Japanese American Trauma Across Generations**
March 21, 7 pm
- **Heritage Piece by Piece: Student Panel**
April 10, 6 pm

Tutors for French, German, and Spanish

Free tutoring in French, German, and Spanish is available to all Valpo students. LRC tutors guide you

in your language practice, whether that's conversation, reading, grammar, or cultural exploration. Conversation practice is a great way to prepare for study abroad. And you don't have to be taking a class to practice with a tutor. [Make an appointment](#)

Sami Jefferson, A Leader in Language Exploration

LRC language groups happen because students are passionate about languages and ready to step up to lead other students in language exploration. In February, we highlight Sami Jefferson. Later this semester, we will showcase Lilly Blanton, leader of ASL!

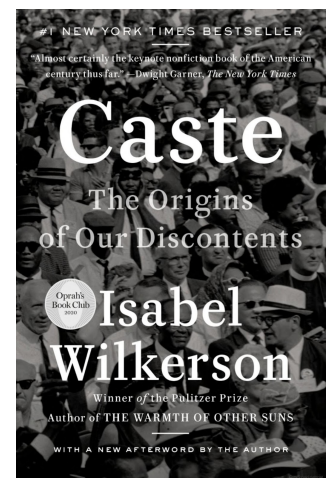


Sami Jefferson '25 is a longtime friend of the LRC. She has been involved in the mahjong players group, has participated in various language groups over the past few years, and is often found sketching or crocheting in the LRC. Sami is pursuing a degree in Digital Arts Media and this fall, she plans to [study abroad at Kansai Gaidai in Japan](#).

This is Sami's second semester leading the [Japanese group](#). Sami initially started learning the language with a future job at Nintendo in mind, and she says she fell completely in love with the language and culture. She took Japanese all four years of high school and has continued to study the language on her own since coming to Valpo. Her passion for learning Japanese is what brought her to leading the group: *"I really enjoy that everyone in my group is enthusiastic and loves to also share what they know so we can teach each other. They teach me just as much as I teach them."* **Japanese meets Tuesdays at 4:30 pm.**

Exploring Caste in America: Recommended Reading & Viewing

When you hear the term "caste," what comes to mind? In [Caste, The Origins of Our Discontents](#), American journalist and Pulitzer Prize winner Isabel Wilkerson examines the concept of caste as a way to understand the origins of American race relations. The author's approach stems from her researched exploration of caste systems in other countries, specifically Nazi Germany and India. Early in the book, Wilkerson offers a startling vocabulary to describe an American caste system, including terms such as *dominant caste*, *middle caste(s)*, and *subordinate caste*. In reading the first few chapters alone, this work of nonfiction has disrupted outdated histories of race while creating space for new lenses and language to confront America's past and present. If you are more inclined to film, consider watching last year's [Origin](#), a powerful movie based on Wilkerson's book (not yet available for streaming). Written and directed by Ava DuVernay, *Origin* is not a documentary, but rather a biographical drama. The film adapts Wilkerson's work as an



imaginative retelling of the author’s journey, both intellectual and geographical, while researching and wrestling with the ideas that eventually make their way to the pages of *Caste, The Origins of Our Discontents*. If you check out the book or watch the film, I invite you to join me for a cup of coffee sometime...the ideas presented in these deeply moving works call for a shared exploration, within community, and in conversation with one another. – C. Goss, LRC Director

LRC Highlights – Las Posadas 2023



On November 29, 2023, the LRC hosted for the first time *Las Posadas*, a walking & singing nativity tradition from Latin and Central America. Spanish tutor Alondra introduced the tradition and taught the Spanish lyrics. About 50 students took a short walk to three *posadas* (inns), ending in the LRC for a small celebration. Special thanks to those who helped make this a memorable and fun event! *Gracias a todos*: Alondra Navarro, Spanish Professors Hoult and Lopez-Martín, Mrs. Padilla, Ms. Kat Peters, Hope Johnson, and the LRC tutors.

“It is astonishing how much enjoyment one can get out of a language that one understands imperfectly.” – Basil Gildersleeve

The LRC is always eager to deepen connections with people and units across campus. For more information about the LRC, or to talk about potential collaborations, contact the LRC Director at carol.goss@valpo.edu.