



News Release

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[Nancy Livingston](#)

Public Relations

651-779-3222

Fax 651-779-3470

[Century College](#)

3300 Century Avenue North

White Bear Lake, MN 55110

Century Adds Hmong Language Course to Translation and Interpreting Program

This spring, Century College will begin offering a course in reading and writing in Hmong for individuals who speak that language.

The new course is part of [Century's Translation and Interpreting \(TRIN\) program](#), which offers a 30-credit certificate or 60-credit Associate of Applied Science degree designed to educate bilingual students who wish to develop professional interpreting skills and prepare for careers in our increasingly diverse communities.

In addition, people considering a career as a translator or interpreter this spring will have the opportunity to take the program's first fully online course, "TRIN 1000 - Orientation to Interpreting." The course will give people a clearer idea of translating and interpreting as a career, and define the skills necessary to

perform in both activities successfully and professionally. The TRIN program also is expanding to include new courses in interpreting for health care, educational and legal settings.

The new Hmong course will enable students who already have a grasp of Hmong to enhance their reading and writing in Hmong. The course will have both personal and professional benefits for Hmong speakers. Those who aim to be professional translators or interpreters can take this course as a part of the certificate or AAS degree so that employers know they have been through quality training in higher education and are able to perform with accuracy and professionalism in the field. And those seeking personal enrichment can gain deeper knowledge of their culture and their roots through learning the written Hmong language.

“As I grow older, my culture is becoming more and more important to me,” said Xue Lee, 20, a Century student from Lino Lakes. Though she grew up speaking Hmong at home, Lee, a graduate of White Bear High School, said she didn’t have much interest in learning about the Hmong culture when she was young.

Now, however, as she sets her career and life goals, she wants to gain a deeper understanding of who she is by learning about her cultural roots.

“I have become fascinated with my culture,” Lee said, “and I want to know more.” She noted that she is considering a career in nursing, and knowing the Hmong language will help her serve her patients better.

Instructor Anthony Lee said he will teach reading and writing in both the “Green Hmong” and “White Hmong” dialects as part of the new Century course. Currently working as an interpreter/translator at Regions Hospital, Lee earned a certificate as an instructor at the Hmong Language Institute in Fresno, Calif.

“I have a passion for helping my people,” said Lee, who was born in Laos and escaped to Thailand when he was 11 years old. Lee came to America when he was 13 and began learning English. He graduated

from Inver Hills Community College in 1998 and from Metropolitan State University in 2001. “Because Hmong people are an ethnic group that has lost its land and country for many centuries, it is hard for people to understand who we are,” said Lee. “It is very important to keep our language alive and our culture alive so that future generations know who we are.”

Lee said young Hmong people are caught between the world of their parents, and the world of contemporary American culture. “It is hard for them to go back, and it is hard for them to assimilate,” said Lee. “It is a lifelong journey.”

Translators and interpreters were included in the Top 50 Best Careers list in 2011, according to the website of U.S. News & World Report. This area is projected to increase 22 percent between 2008 and 2018 – much faster than the Labor Department’s predicted average for all occupations. Demand is driven by an increasingly global economy, as well as an increasingly large population of non-English speakers in the United States.

For more information, please contact [Cristiano Mazzei](#) at 651.748.2639.



Photos: Anthony Lee and Xue Lee.