The American Language Institute (ALI) is SF State’s English program for non-matriculated students, founded in 1961. The ALI’s English for Academic Preparation (EAP) program is designed primarily for international students preparing to enter San Francisco State or another American college or university. The EAP provides a full-time, academically focused curriculum in English as a Second Language that gives students both the language and strategies necessary for academic success in the United States. There are five levels of instruction ranging from low intermediate to advanced. Students must enroll for a full session (12 weeks in the fall and spring, ten weeks in the summer), which involves 22 hours per week of classroom instruction. EAP students are expected to regularly attend classes and maintain good academic standing to continue in the program. Part-time study is not permitted. All applicants must be graduates of a recognized high school or secondary school.

In addition to language instruction, the ALI offers EAP students a variety of student services, including assistance with cultural adjustment, immigration advice, and a regular program of social and cultural activities. The ALI also provides special benefits to EAP students who wish to attend undergraduate programs at SF State: They may meet the university’s English proficiency requirement through successful completion of particular levels of the ALI program and may also take advantage of special application deadlines.

Furthermore, the ALI serves as a training institute for selected students in the SF State English Department’s Master of Arts in English program: Concentration in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Following an intense semester of training, those graduate students become instructors in the EAP under the supervision of the full-time, permanent ALI staff.

In spring and summer, ALI also runs San Francisco Discover, a four-week language and culture program that combines conversational language study at the SF State downtown campus with excursions throughout San Francisco’s colorful and exciting neighborhoods. San Francisco Discover does not require an F-1 (international student) visa.

The ALI office is located on the main SF State campus.

For further information about ALI programs and future session dates, please contact the American Language Institute.

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