



## **Beginning French: French in Cameroonian Contexts**

FREN 1003-1503 (3 Credits / 45 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:  
Cameroon: Development and Social Change

**PLEASE NOTE:** This syllabus represents a recent semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

### **Course Description**

In Cameroon, French predominates in public spheres and in urban households. This intensive course is designed to prepare students with little or no previous instruction in French to confidently use the language in daily communications in Cameroon. Another major aim of the course is to facilitate access to the Cameroonian host culture, particularly in the urban homestay. Thus the course emphasizes the development of speaking and comprehension competencies. Reading and writing are also fostered but, chiefly, to complement verbal proficiency and speech comprehension. Cultural context is built into the course and introduced through audiovisual materials and experiential activities accompanying the textbook. French in Cameroonian Contexts introduces students to pronunciation and systems of basic grammar, vocabulary and sentence structure. All of the four fundamental communicative skills of speech, comprehension, reading and writing are imparted through traditional classroom instruction, field-based activities, and continuing homestay practice. The course is taught over 7 weeks by highly experienced teachers who have specifically designed a reading manual for the learning needs unique to French students in Cameroon.

### **Language Levels and Placement**

Beginner students with some prior French knowledge are placed into the appropriate language course level (FREN 1000 or FREN 1500) based on oral proficiency interviews conducted during orientation in Cameroon.

### **Learning Outcomes**

French in Cameroonian Contexts has an interdisciplinary and experiential focus, encompassing 45 class hours (3 credits). By the end of course, students will be able to complete the following linguistic tasks:

- Perform greetings and introduce oneself and others formally and informally;
- Ask questions with ease and confidence;
- Identify objects and items in the classroom;
- Count and order entities sequentially;

- Respond to requests and instructions related to teaching/learning activities;
- Respond to requests and instructions appropriately and courteously;
- Name days of the week, significant dates, and months;
- Identify one's nationality and that of others;
- Narrate simple homestay events, including meals and outings;
- Describe the SIT location in Yaoundé;
- Ask and answer questions about weather and seasons;
- Summarize a well-known story or film in French;
- Demonstrate familiarity with Cameroonian French and recognize local differences from standard French;
- Read and understand headlines and basic text of Cameroon's French language press.

## Course Requirements

### Readings

Students will be assigned readings appropriate to their level. Readings will serve as the basis for oral presentations in class and written commentary to be submitted periodically to the language instructor. Students are responsible for all required readings, and should be prepared to bring them to bear on discussions in class. The readings will help you place the classes in their context, to challenge and engage lecturers, to generate questions for class discussions and to deepen your knowledge of particular aspects discussed in class. Students will be sent out to perform field-based exercises and activities and will be required to give oral presentations or write detailed narrative accounts of these experiential drills. Students will also be assigned newspaper and magazine articles and short stories for explication and comment either in class or as individual homework.

### Required Texts

In addition to a *Reading Packet* of Cameroon-specific selections prepared by the program's French instructors, readings for this level include:

Amal, D. A. (2010). *Walaande: L'art de partager un mari*. Yaoundé, Cameroun : Editions Ifrikiya.

Camille, N. A. (1999). *L'enfant de la Revolte Muette*. Yaoundé, Cameroun: Editions Cle.

Supplementary texts include:

- films, television, and other audiovisual materials
- magazines and newspapers

\*Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs.

## Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Evaluation takes into account the combined testing results from regular homework assignments, oral tests, and regular oral and written presentations of field activities, and assigned readings. Timely completion of all French assignments is expected. Late hand-ins will be penalized. All assignments are evaluated according to organization, analytical quality, depth of understanding, argumentation and presentation of evidence. Tests will not be repeated for absentees. Only certifiable and verifiable absences from tests will be accepted.

### Assessment

Grammar and vocabulary exam	40%
Oral presentation and written report	40%

Class participation	10%
Use of French outside class	10%

### Grading Scale

94-100%	A	Excellent
90-93%	A-	
87-89%	B+	
84-86%	B	Above Average
80-83%	B-	
77-79%	C+	
74-76%	C	Average
70-73%	C-	
67-69%	D+	
64-66%	D	Below Average
below 64	F	Fail

### **Grading Criteria**

Grades are assigned fairly, rigorously and in accordance with the system charted below. French instructors also take into account the student's efforts expended to achieve specific learning goals and outcomes specified at the start of the semester by the Academic Director, the language instructor and the student. An "A" letter grade reflects superior or exceptional work, indicating mastery of the competencies expected in that particular assignment. A "B" grade demonstrates that the student has some possession of the required competencies, but is not entirely in control of them. A grade of "C" reflects work that is satisfactory, while a "D" reflects insufficiency. In terms of class participation, an "A" grade refers to full attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all discussions, classroom exercises, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior. The level, frequency, and quality of student participation will be monitored and taken into account.

\*Note that all written assignments should be presented in typed format. Assignments submitted by email will not be accepted

### **Additional Information**

#### **Homestays**

As a complement to language classes, homestays provide students with the opportunity to learn from different people and to use their language skills continually in a multilingual learning environment. To further reinforce intensive language learning, students will be placed in French-speaking host families. Our goal is to help students develop the necessary communication tools which they can use with their host families, neighbors and Cameroonians on the street.

### **Student Expectations**

#### **Class Participation**

Class participation reflects regular attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active participation in all program activities and course activities. Any absence will have to be justified. In pursuit of clear academic objectives and learning outcomes, students are expected to be polite, respectful of their teachers and program staff, as well as responsible and sensitive toward the host culture.

- Show up prepared. Be on time, have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.

- Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- Respect differences of opinion (classmates', lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

**Disability Services:** Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at [disabilityservices@sit.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@sit.edu) for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational experience. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services, including a link to the online request form, can be found on the Disability Services website at <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices>.

**Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad handbook** for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process. Also, refer to the specific information available in the program dossier given to you at orientation.