

Intensive Language Study: Beginning Wolof (Online Course)

WOLO-1003-1503 (3 credits)

Senegal: Wolof Language

This syllabus is representative of a typical 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

The role of the introductory Wolof language training is to provide students with basic tools needed for entry into Senegalese cultures and language communities. The language training is organized by a language coordinator and carried out by a teacher experienced in teaching Wolof to non-native speakers. Language study consists of 45 hours of formal instruction including experiential sessions on shopping, Senegalese cooking, and music, etc. Language study is reinforced through various online learning tools and through interactive assignments. Language study will prepare students to do an optional three-week J Term course in Senegal.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Develop a basic understanding of Wolof to allow day-to-day usage in typical contexts (culturally appropriate greetings, introductions, market interactions, relating everyday experiences, asking directions, etc.)
- Demonstrate an understanding of Wolof in the Senegalese culture using the local language; and
- Execute basic language skills in order to communicate effectively and independently in Senegalese environments.

Module 1: Greetings and other useful expressions for beginners

This first module introduces students to the most basic but useful Wolof expressions. It opens gates to the Senegalese culture and allows for a quick adjustment. Through this module students can acquire basic words useful for starting some conversations with local people, especially the homestay families students will be staying with during the on-site course. The module is divided into the following sessions:

Session I:

Wolof alphabet

Though Wolof uses almost the same alphabet as English or French, the pronunciation of letters is completely different.

Generality: Wolof alphabet (Spelling and pronunciation).

Grammar: Pronoun conjugation (not verbal), Aspect (not tenses), Gender.

Greeting expressions

Greeting is highly valued in the Senegalese culture and before starting any conversation or asking for any service, a person must start with a greeting. In order to comply with this cultural norm, students learn all Wolof greeting expressions, their meanings and pronunciation, as well as related grammatical norms.

- Basic greetings, formal and informal greetings, leave taking, seasonal greetings, useful phrases for beginners, additional vocabulary
- **Cultural notes:** Importance and length of greetings, respect, body language, greetings during prayer time, greetings as security items
- **Homework:** written exercises

Session II:

Self-Introduction

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to introduce themselves and someone else (friends or relatives)

- Identity, question words, nationality, ethnicities and gender, professions...
- Assignment: Interview someone and present it to your classmates
- **Grammar, conjugation,** subject pronouns, present of active verbs object emphasis (asking and answering to questions)
- **Cultural notes:** passivity in introduction, last names

Role plays

Students will use the knowledge of greetings and self-introduction to present themselves to their classmates and to their professor.

Session III:

Questions with active verbs through a virtual tea session

Students will engage with active verbs while learning how to make Senegalese tea, *attayah*.

First quiz

Interview using greetings and simple present.

1. Students work in pairs and compose a dialogue about the “first meeting” with somebody.
2. Students are given a homework assignment to find at least 10 new words/vocabularies that are useful while interacting with people for the first time.

Module 2: Virtual Going out and shopping

Session I:

Basic conjugation and grammar

As students learn new expressions and vocabularies, they learn how to conjugate some basic verbs such as to be, to have, to stay, to study, to go, to come among others. Students will learn to observe some grammatical rules related to plural, gender, negative forms, etc. This session

introduces them to that basic conjugation and grammar.

Practice: Written and oral exercises

Names of different materials/items

This session helps students to learn and memorize some names and words that are useful while navigating markets, supermarkets, shops, and restaurants and host family interactions. Students memorize the names of different food items, drinks, snacks, clothes, cleaning products, and more.

Assignment: Use flash cards to memorize the new vocabulary

Session II:

Locations/whereabouts

Under this session, students learn how to read and write the names of different neighborhoods in Dakar city and even outside the city. They also learn how to handle public transportation (for example how to direct a taxi driver to one's host family or any other place).

Assignment: Use flash cards to memorize the new vocabulary

Getting around and asking for help

In this session, students learn how to politely ask for help in case they need it, either in the homestay or elsewhere. This may include asking for directions to some places, excusing yourself before interrupting people to ask for something, and clarifying that you don't know enough Wolof and would like to know if anyone speaks French or English.

In addition to that they learn the imperative forms of some verbs more often used.

Activity: Students pair up and ask for the direction of one place.

Session III:

Wolof numbers and how to read the local currency

In this session students learn Wolof numbers and how to use those numbers while shopping. This also includes learning to read prices of different items.

This module focuses on enhancing students' ability to navigate the city, visit different places and be able to do some shopping in Wolof.

Practice in class: numbers and money

Shopping techniques / bargaining

During the semester, students visit local markets to buy different things and this involves a lot of bargaining. This session teaches students to politely negotiate prices before paying. They learn different expressions that can be used to avoid being overcharged.

Assignments:

1. Students work in pairs to elaborate a dialogue between a client and a vendor or a waiter (in a restaurant or bar). This allows them to master important words and expressions used during such occasions.
2. Homework about new vocabulary in relation to shopping

Activity: Virtual excursion to the local market and practicing shopping skills

Module 3: Wishes, manners, compliments, family and professions

Session I:

Most important Wolof wishes, manners and compliments

Like in any other culture, Senegalese culture has many wishes, expected manners and compliments. Students are taught most of those wishes, manners and compliments. These include (but are not limited to) what to say and how to behave during different ceremonies such as weddings, funerals, birthday parties, child-naming ceremonies and more.

Conjugation and grammar of stative verbs

Under this session, students learn how to conjugate a wider variety of non-active verbs that are used in Wolof. Those verbs are called stative verbs and they can be used mainly in simple present, simple past, future.

1. Conjugation and grammar related exercises in class
2. Homework on identifying new compliments, wishes and manners and their meanings or contexts in which they are used.

Session II:

Second quiz (using present tense of stative verbs)

Family relations (from small to extended family)

Students learn how to read, write and pronounce family relationships in Wolof from a small family of parents and their children to the larger family that includes grandparents, uncles, aunties, cousins, etc. This allows students to know how to better relate with homestay family members, knowing the relationships they have with them since they are considered children in their host families.

Session III:

Jobs and professions/professionals

In this session, students learn relationships that exist at workplaces and Wolof names for different jobs/professions.

Assignment:

Virtually interview your potential host family and report it to your classmates

ORAL AND WRITTEN EXAM

Sample Course Readings:

The language instructors will provide students with reading materials and assignments throughout the Wolof course. In addition, students should plan to obtain a Wolof/English and/or Wolof/French dictionary for their personal use during their online course.

You are responsible for all the 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 the instructor, to generate questions for class discussions and to deepen your knowledge of particular aspects discussed in class. They are not necessarily tailor-made for each class.

Online Field Exercises and Language Role Play

Through field assignments and interactive scenarios, students enrich their classroom learning experience and their ability to function in real life language situations, assimilate everyday life issues, and immerse themselves in the host culture. Field assignments may be done both individually and in groups. Field exercises may include virtual visits to the following places:

- Markets: doing a virtual tour of Senegalese markets by looking up information online
- Senegalese dishes: research Senegalese dishes and contact local Senegalese restaurants where you live
- Virtual visits of museums, cultural sites and monuments: to learn about historical sites and local areas of importance

PLEASE NOTE: COURSE CONTENTS, LECTURERS AND READINGS MAY BE MODIFIED AS NEEDED. SHOULD ANY CHANGE OF CLASS TOPICS OR LECTURERS BE NECESSARY, STUDENTS WILL BE PROMPTLY NOTIFIED.

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Grades are assigned by the academic director, in consultation with the language instructors, and are based on evaluation of performance on written and oral presentations during the course. The language grade also reflects the instructor's evaluation of student written homework, quizzes given during the class, participation and attendance (including tardiness, absences, and active engagement in class).

Course assignments:

Attendance & Participation:	20%
Oral Exam:	20%
Written exam:	20%
Quiz 1:	20%
Quiz 2:	20%

Attendance & Participation: 20%

Class attendance is mandatory, and absences are penalized by reducing the language grade, except in cases of documented illness, whereby the student is expected to provide a medical certificate. Two unjustified late online arrivals will be counted as one absence. Participation requires active engagement – you are expected to express yourself, ask questions, discuss readings, role play, interact, and use Wolof in and outside class (i.e., in conversations with potential Wolof home stay families, Senegalese students, etc.). Assigned readings must be read in advance of the lesson to: 1. familiarize you with the specific vocabulary and content of the

class, so you are able to follow it more easily and 2. provide the necessary background to participate in class discussions and expand vocabulary.

Oral exam: 20%

An oral exam is scheduled at the end of the program. The choice of subject is decided by each professor. Each presentation is limited to 15 minutes maximum.

Written exam: 20%

Language teachers will provide specific information as to the written exam assignments.

Quizzes: 40 %

Two quizzes are scheduled to prepare students for both the written and online observations. The quizzes review previously covered issues related to grammar, vocabulary, expressions, conversations, listening, reading and writing.

Grading Scale:

The grading scale for all classes is as follows:

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

Grading Criteria

An “A” grade for an assignment entails superior (not just “very good”) performance in terms of structure and organization of assignments, analysis, logical argumentation and consistency, and the provision of factual, numerical and/or historical evidence. In terms of Class Participation, an “A” grade refers to full attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all Academic Seminar lectures, discussions, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior. The level, frequency, and quality of the students` participation will be monitored and taken into account.

Class Participation

Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all Academic Seminar lectures, discussions, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Student Handbook for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic

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