

Beginning Vietnamese

VIET-1003-1503 (3 credits)

Vietnam: Traditional Medicine and Community Health

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

This beginning level language course is designed to prepare students for the daily social demands of living in Vietnam and to provide access to the host culture. Students are thus enabled to enrich all aspects of their experience abroad by functioning in the host language during field methods exercises, and when interacting with homestay families and local contacts.

Instruction consists of 45 hours of formal classes spread over a six-week period in Ho Chi Minh City. An additional 10 hours of instruction and guided field practice are integrated during excursions to the Mekong Delta, Da Lat City and throughout the homestay period in Ho Chi Minh City. These language practicum classes take full advantage of the local environment, requiring students to practice their skills outside the walls of the classroom, yet in a structured way with the support of the language instructors.

Classes and field-based language activities are taught by qualified, native-speaking language teachers from the University of Economics and the Vietnam-American Association in Ho Chi Minh City. Students are placed into the appropriate level based on oral proficiency interviews on arrival in Vietnam. These placements may not directly correspond to the student's level at their home institution as SIT courses focus on communicative competence and linguistic functional ability. Homework is assigned daily and active participation in class conversations is essential and required. The course includes weekly quizzes, a midterm test, and final examinations. In class, various teaching methods are employed, including in-class discussion on Vietnamese and American subjects, role plays, recitations for aural comprehension, grammar exercises, as well as out-of-classroom field exercises and social activities with instructors. Every week students also practice their language skills with local students in groups of two to four students for at least two hours. Particular attention is paid to building a vocabulary of terms that will support students during educational excursions.

Language Levels and Placement

Students are placed into appropriate language course levels based on oral proficiency interviews conducted during orientation in Vietnam.

Learning Outcomes

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

- Achieve a solid foundation in conversational Vietnamese;
- Become well-versed in basic pronunciation and grammatical rules of Vietnamese;
- Introduce themselves, sharing pertinent personal information about themselves with others;
- Meet their basic everyday needs in Vietnamese, such as ordering food, going shopping, using public transportation, asking directions, etc.;
- Speak elements of colloquial Vietnamese language (slang, expressions, etc.) used by ordinary native speakers;
- Engage in real (casual) conversation with native speakers;
- Develop intercultural skills to communicate and develop friendships in Vietnamese language environments.

Course Requirements

This course includes daily quizzes and homework, weekly tests, and midterm and final examinations. Students are expected to complete one to two hours' preparation work or homework for every hour spent in class. Four hours are dedicated to each of 10 units in the textbook covered over the course of the term. Students have additional ten hours of practicum or additional instruction on selected topics and one hour of weekly one-on-one tutorial.

Proactive participation in class discussion is essential and required. Students also participate in out-of-class educational excursions. These practicums take full advantage of the local environment, requiring students to practice their skills outside the walls of the classroom, yet in a structured way with the support of the language instructors.

Sample Course Topics

- Phonetics, pronunciation, and intonation
- Introduction to the Vietnamese alphabet
- Basic sentence structure and word order
- Interrogative sentences
- Sentences with a verbal predicative, or an adjectival predicative
- Preposition construction
- The Vietnamese particles

Model Conversational Topics

- Greetings and introduction
- Personal information
- Residence
- Family
- Food and drink
- Time, dates, and numbers
- Exchange currency
- Ordering food at a restaurant
- Shopping and bargaining
- Asking the way, directions

- Taking a taxi, bus, or buying a ticket
- Apologies and responding to apologies
- Talking about weather and colors
- Ability and possibility

Textbooks and Required Materials

Tran Thi Nguyen Thuy, Ho Ngoc Phuong Tram and Duong Van Thanh. 2014. *Basic Vietnamese Language for Pragmatic Competencies and Field Work*. SIT Internal Language Resources. SIT: Vietnam

Nguyen Van Hue et al. Editor. 2008. *Giao Trinh Tieng Viet Cho Ngnoi Nuoc Ngoai. Tap 1 (VLS 1)*. Ho Chi Minh National University Publisher.

Nguyen Viet Huong. 2001. *Thuc hanh Tieng Viet. Volume 1*. Hanoi National University Publisher.

Supplementary Texts

Perfecting Vietnamese Pronunciation. 2004. Vietnamese Language Studies. The Gioi Publisher.

Ngo, Binh, 2003. *Elementary Vietnamese*. Revised Edition. Tuttle Publishing: Boston

Doan, T.T. (2001). *Thuc hanh Tieng Viet*. Ha Noi: The Gioi Publishing House

Daily Class Schedule (minimum of 2.5 contact hours on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, except during excursions):

Classes are scheduled accordingly:

9:00-10:00: Listening and Speaking

10:00-10:30: Grammar and comprehension

10:30-11:30: Exercises with the guidance from language instructors

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Instructors evaluate students' performance based on observation, written exercises, quizzes and exams given throughout the course. Final grades are assigned by the academic director in consultation with the language instructors on the basis of the instructors' evaluation, the students' own self-evaluation, and the academic director's observation of the students' participation in classes and their efforts to use the language outside of the classroom.

Oral Proficiency Interview

Final oral proficiency interviews are conducted toward the end of the semester to provide a measurement of students' overall linguistic progress. Thus, the course grade provides an assessment of students' performance in meeting the requirements.

Methods of Evaluation

Daily Class Participation (10%)

Students are encouraged to stay motivated, active, and maintain their involvement in class activities during the course. Students are evaluated based on their constant involvement and ability to engage in conversations on given topics, to memorize modeled vocabulary, phrases, and structures, to interact with language teachers using formulaic expressions. Attendance is mandatory; failure to attend class or repeated late arrival to class will impact the grade in the course. See Attendance section below for more details.

Daily Homework (15%)

Homework is given daily and it comprises drills and practice exercises in the text book. Students are expected to complete from 80% to 90% of the total homework given after each lesson. There are a total of ten lessons over the language course.

Quizzes and Field Trip Assignments (30%)

Field trip assignments aim at exposing students to real-life communicative settings, promoting motivations and confidence in applying classroom language, developing understanding and sensitivity in a highly contextual environment, and enhancing the awareness of cultural differences. The assignments are subdivided into two small assignments (the first two weeks of arrival) and two larger assignments (the last two weeks of the course).

The quizzes are pre-preparations for the two main tests in accordance with the reviews of practical language accumulated from real-life communicative situations through field trips. There are two main quizzes conducted on the second and the fourth week of six-week course. Each quiz usually contains five written parts and lasts 20 to 30 minutes.

Two Language Tests:

First Test (20%) and Second Test (25%)

The two main tests navigate students' concentration on both academic and real-life contexts. In addition to technical skills of language study, students are expected to develop cultural competence during the course. Therefore, the two main tests are a reflection of students' performance and proficiency in academic and experiential aspects.

The two main tests include both written and oral parts. The written test lasts for 90 minutes and the oral test lasts between 10 and 15 minutes for each pair. Writing: four parts (Pronunciation; Vocabulary; Reading; and Writing); Oral: two parts (Independent talk and pair talk).

The final grade is determined as follows:

Daily class participation	10%
Daily homework	15%
Quizzes and Field Trip Assignments	30%
First test	20%
Second test	25%

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

Expectations and Policies

Show up prepared. Be on time and have your homework completed as instructed. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.

Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all lectures, discussions, educational excursions, assignments and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior. An absent student is responsible for contacting the instructor, the tutor, and/or fellow students to be prepared for the assignments s/he missed and the ones scheduled for the next class.

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