Course Syllabus

Arts, Identities, and Urban Cultures in Senegal
AFRS-3000 (3 Credits / 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Senegal: National Identity and the Arts

Course Description
The Arts, Identities, and Urban Cultures in Senegal course is a thematic, interdisciplinary course taught mostly in French, exploring Senegalese arts, identities and urban cultures through nationalist and cosmopolitan/afropolitan lenses. Through formal lectures, site visits in the field, assigned readings, group discussions and processing sessions, students critically examine the evolution of Senegal's post-colonial history vis-à-vis artistic production as it has evolved from the early independence period up until the present time. To support this objective, course materials are also devoted to providing the necessary historical, cultural and socio-political foundations in Senegal for students to provide them with the requisite foundational understanding of the Senegalese context and the capacity to engage with the other course materials and program components. Lecturers and other invited speakers are drawn from a variety of institutions including Universite Cheikh Anta Diop (University of Dakar), the Senegalese Ministry of Culture, Media Centre of Dakar, The Réseau Africain du Développement Intégré (RADI), and the Centre Culturel Blaise Senghor.

Course Objectives
The Arts, Identities, and Urban Cultures in Senegal course encompasses 45 academic hours (3 credits) and its main objectives are as follows:

- To provide students with a foundation in Senegal’s cultural milieu and socio-political history;
- To critically examine Senegalese artistic and cultural forms from an evolving perspective of post-colonial nationalism to modern notions of cosmopolitanism/afropolitanism and identity;
- To interrogate the mobility of Senegalese identity between urban and rural, global north and global south through popular arts and cultures;
- To provide students with critical perspectives of Senegalese arts, identity and culture for the purposes of developing an independent research topic;
- To enhance students’ knowledge of Senegalese aesthetic-symbolic forms of expression and identity.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the course, students should have attained the ability to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the core issues and features of Senegalese cultural, social and political history;

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• Articulate the evolving interplay between culture, the arts and identity in Senegal since the independence period;
• Evaluate visual and performing arts as expressions of culture and identity while articulating their impacts in a local context; and
• Apply knowledge of Senegalese arts and cultures in the selection and development of a compelling research topic related to the broad themes of arts, identities and urban cultures for the purposes of independent study.

Course Requirements

Readings
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 lecturers, to generate questions for class discussions, and to deepen your knowledge of particular topics or issues discussed in class. They are not necessarily tailor-made for each and every session. Additional readings may also be assigned over the course of the semester when necessary.


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**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**

**Arts, Identities, and Urban Cultures in Senegal Assignments:**

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Timely completion of all assignments is expected. Late hand-ins will be penalized. Please see grading criteria below for more information. All assignments are evaluated according to organization, analytical quality, depth of understanding, argumentation and presentation of evidence.

Urban Arts Exploration (Presentations/Projects)  25%
St. Louis Exercise (Presentations/Projects) 25 %
Ethnic Minorities Study (Presentations/Projects)  25 %
Effort and Participation  25 %

**Urban Arts Exploration**

**Objectives**

- To allow in-depth exploration of some element of the arts and cultures in Dakar;
- To broaden your understanding of what constitutes artistic expression;
- To increase your purposeful interactions with the Senegalese people outside your homestay situation;
- To allow you to pursue individual interests within a broad topic;
- To provide situations to practice language and communication skills;
- To provide you with the opportunity to practice field study techniques such as observation and note taking.

**Assignment**

You will spend at least one afternoon out-and-about town discovering as much as you can about one aspect of arts, identity, and urban culture in Dakar. Think broadly and creatively about what might constitute “arts, identity, and urban culture.” Everyone should be prepared to discuss his/her first exploration during the seminar corresponding to the due date. Think about the following questions:

1. What topic did you choose and why?
2. What did you find out about your subject? - descriptions, techniques, materials, traditions, facts and opinions of locals, etc.
3. What significance do you attach to your findings within the context of the culture? How does your topic reflect larger themes in Senegalese society, at least those you have observed so far?

You are free to select whatever methods you would like, but the goal is to experiment and use as many different methods as possible. Some examples are: interviewing, observation, participant observation, and drawing on media resources.

**Evaluation**

Choice of Topic and Explanation  20%
Methodology (did you experiment with ways of gathering data?)  30%
Information Gathered (amount, accuracy and interest)  25%
Analysis of Information Gathered 15%
Overall Presentation  10%

**Saint Louis Exercise**

**Objectives**

- To help you become more familiar with your surroundings in St. Louis;
- To increase your purposeful interactions with Senegalese people;
- To provide situations to practice language and communication skills;
- To allow in-depth exploration of the history of an organization or historic site in Senegal;
- To provide you with the opportunity to practice field study techniques such as:
  - observation and description

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- sketching
- map-making
- interviewing
- secondary research (literary, archival)
- data analysis
- working as a team;
- To practice your oral presentation skills in French.

Assignment
1. You will work in teams. Each team will receive the name or a photo of an organization, site, statue or monument. You have to get to the place and describe it physically. Describe it in detail as if to someone who will never see this monument. Draw a sketch of your site representing the qualities you have observed. Once you get a feel for what your site looks like, discover its history. Find out who/what the person/object/organization is, and if applicable, who the artist was. Analyze what this site might represent to the Senegalese, what place does it hold in the community, what does it indicate about Senegalese history and culture?
2. Use any methodologies you can think of but you MUST conduct at least one interview. You must also use a library. You have all week to do your research and prepare your presentation. Use your time wisely.
3. Your team will be responsible for an oral report to the entire group in French on your topic (15 min max).
4. You must also create a map that will help others to find your monument. Make it big enough to use in your oral presentation.
5. Lastly, within your presentation address how you found your information, how you divided the work, what challenges you encountered, how you overcame them. Share your lessons learned during the activity. How would you do it differently if you were to do it again?

Evaluation
Precision of description 5%
Effort evident in sketch 10%
Accuracy and quantity of information discovered 20%
Accuracy, neatness, creativity and presentation of map 10%
Quality of analysis 20%
Use of appropriate and diverse sources 15%
Professionalism in oral presentation 20%

Ethnic Minorities Village Study: Kedougou Field Excursion
Objectives
- To allow in-depth exploration of a minority ethnic group;
- To discover another area of Senegal;
- To allow you to pursue individual interests while keeping your study focused;
- To provide situations to practice communication skills;
- To practice independent rural living skills;
- To put to use your newfound skills in:
  - primary research
  - entering the field / being a guest (with an agenda)
  - ethical behavior
  - observation / participant observation
  - unstructured interviewing
  - note taking in field journals
  - reflection and analysis;

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• To attempt to put all this together to produce a group presentation on your village as well as an individual reaction paper to your experience.

**Assignment**

You will be assigned one ethnic minority group to study. Through primary and secondary research you will uncover as much information as possible about one aspect of this group’s culture and lifestyle.

**Possible ethnic groups to study:**

- **Bedick** in Etchwar and Indar
- **Bassari** in Ibelt Bassari
- **Peul Bande/Pullo Bande** in Boundou Kodi
- **Diallonke** in Afia Baxo
- **Peul Fouta/Pullo Fouta** in Sinthiou Roudji
- **Diakhanke** in Samécouta

During your stay in one of the villages of Kedougou, gather first hand information about both the village and the ethnic group in general. Take a walking tour and ask specific questions about who, what, where, how and why as a helpful way to begin an investigation about your ethnic group. Try to use many different sources (people and other) and consider not only “facts”, but also people’s viewpoints and attitudes, including your own. Keep a record during your time in the area in your field journal. Be consistent about recording dates, times and places you gather your information, as well as relevant biographical information on your informants, and the development of your ideas regarding your project. Take photos when possible and include sketches and other drawings.

If time permits, after our return to Dakar, do some more secondary research to back up or further explain the information collected from your primary sources.

**Format**

**Individual Paper:** Write a 4-5 page reaction paper to your village stay experience which demonstrates your interaction with the community members through observation, participant observation and interviews. You should also discuss what you learned about the village/ethnic group as well as what you have learned about yourself as a cross-cultural learner.

**Group presentation:** Organize with the other students in your village to present as much information about your village and their ethnic group as possible. Use audio and/or visual aids when possible and coordinate the information, material, time and effort equally across the group. Length of presentation: TBD.

**Evaluation**

- Quality of information gathered about village: 30%
- Interpretation and analysis of information gathered: 20%
- Reflection and analysis of cross-cultural learning: 30%
- Professionalism: Written paper: neat, edited, concise, proper format, etc. 20%

**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

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Grading Criteria
All grades assigned take into account the students’ special circumstances and challenges they face as foreign students. 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 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.

General: Student's name, date, name of the assignment, and the title of the paper (if applicable), are required. All assignments should be typed hardcopies (double spaced, 12 point font) when possible. Hand written papers in dark blue or black ink will be accepted for certain assignments under special circumstances when done in consultation with the Academic Director. Remember to proofread all assignments for clarity, organization, spelling, grammar, etc., as these are taken into account for the final grade. Assignments can be written in French or English, unless specified. Grammatical errors in French will not affect student’s grades, as long as ideas can be clearly understood, but the papers should nevertheless be proof-read and corrected prior to submission.

Grading Criteria and Procedures: Each individual sets different learning goals for herself or himself; therefore students should personalize their learning experience to the greatest extent possible. To this end, there will be no multiple choice or short answer tests or assignments; all will be open-ended essays. Although objectives for each assignment are clearly articulated in the syllabus, students may further personalize these objectives if they wish, but should state their goals very clearly at the outset of their write-up. Grades are based on the extent to which students realize these objectives and are able to communicate their learning in a clear and concise manner. Individual assignments are generally evaluated according to student choice and definition of topic, methodologies practiced and their evaluation, quantity and accuracy of information gathered, analysis of information gathered, and overall presentation style (written and oral). Students will receive written comments from the Academic Director (AD) on each assignment, and are always encouraged to revise assignments or add comments of their own based on this written feedback. Rewrites must be submitted no later than one week after work is returned with comments. If students re-submit work for evaluation after receiving feedback, their grade will also be re-evaluated. Grades can be improved by a maximum of 10 points or one full letter grade.

Readings: Throughout the semester, various readings will be assigned to complement the material covered in class and on field visits. Students are expected to refer to these readings to add substance to their own research. They must include proper citations for any specific information from readings that students include in the write-up of their assignments.

Participation: Students are expected to participate fully in all program components. This includes participating in classroom discussions, all outside of class activities, excursions, and all group assignments. Students are also expected to observe culturally sensitive behavior at all times and put forward a reasonable effort to use their French and Wolof language skills outside of class time.

Late Assignment Policy: All assignments and papers must be turned in on the due date by 5:00PM. Assignments should be given directly to the instructor. Students each have three passes (called sorry it's late!), which allow students to submit an assignment one day late.
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**Program Calendar**
The Arts, Identities, and Urban Cultures in Senegal course is organized around two interrelated modules, each covering a series of topics areas:

**Module 1 – Senegal in Context**
Critical overview of the foundations and necessary contextual materials to prepare students for intensive study in Senegal, providing a common frame of reference from which to engage with the other course materials and components.

Survey of Senegalese History
L'Islam au Sénégal
Le système éducatif Sénégalais
Gender and Law and Civil Society in Sénégal
Les moyens de transport au Sénégal
Entrepreneuriat Feminin et La Micro-finance au Sénégal
le conflit en Casamance situation et perspectives.
Les défis de l'environnement au Sénégal

**Module 2 – Arts, Identities, and Urban Cultures in Senegal**
Through engaging with a number of artistic forms in Senegal, students gain understanding of the relationship between the arts, identities, and cultures in the country, including its evolution within the post-colonial period since 1960 under Senghor.

La Politique culturelle du Senegal de Senghor a nos Jours.
Le Théâtre Sénégalais
Quelques Propos sur la Littérature et l'histoire de Saint Louis
Sound and Rhythm in Senegalese of Traditional Music
Cinema and Filmmaking in Senegal
History and Development of Senegalese rap and hip hop
Introduction and orientation of Le Village des Arts

**Educational Excursions**
- **Dakar**: Musée de l'IFAN, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Village des Arts, visits to research institutes (West African Research Center, CODESIRIA, Gorée Institute, Baobab Center).
- **Gorée**: Musée de la Femme, Musée de l'IFAN, Maison des Esclaves and an artists’ community.
- **Saint Louis**: Saint Louis’ colonial heritage, National Ethnographic Museum, local social service NGO.
- **Keur Moussa**: Benedictine Monastery
- **Kedougou**: Niokolo Koba National Park, Ethnic minorities village stay, hike to waterfall, Bedick villages: hikes to villages of Iwol and Etchwar.
- **Mbour and Fadjout**: l’Île des Coquillages and the shared Muslim/Christian cemetery.

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Student Expectations

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 NOTE: All classes leave at least ¼ of the scheduled time for the purpose of class discussion of the lecture, activity and/or readings.

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 Student Handbook and the Program Dossier given to you at Orientation.

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