

Intermediate French: French in Tunisian Contexts

FREN 2003-2503 (3 Credits / 45 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:

Tunisia and Italy: Politics and Religious Integration in the Mediterranean

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

This intensive course aims to develop sophisticated skills in speaking, understanding, reading, and writing French, through traditional classroom instruction, field-based activities, and continuing homestay practice. While emphasis is placed primarily upon oral comprehension and developing conversational competencies (i.e. listening and speaking), reading and writing are also highlighted as crucial to the reinforcement of those skills. Thus the course is designed to help the student acquire French language and to grasp cultural practices in the Francophone world. Tunisian and North African cultural context is built into the course and introduced through audiovisual materials and experiential activities accompanying the textbook that has been specifically prepared by SIT language instructors. French skills in Tunisian context are further reinforced through regular communication with members of French-speaking host families, and activities including excursions to local Francophone radio stations, print media facilities, and French instruction classes in local schools. This more advanced language level gives students an in-depth background on everyday life, enabling the mastery of critical language skills necessary for performing a variety of activities. The objective of the course is to review and expand on topics including: travel, relationships, ceremonies, services (especially public administration), speaking about one's career (personal achievements), talking about oneself (autobiography), and cultural and literary subjects specific to Tunisia and North Africa more broadly (including films, books, favorite TV programs).

Language Levels and Placement

Students are placed into appropriate language course levels based on estimated-ACTFL oral proficiency interviews and written exams (placement tests) conducted during orientation in Tunisia.

Course Objectives

Intermediate French: French in Tunisian Contexts has an interdisciplinary and experiential focus, encompassing 45 class hours (3 credits). Its main objectives are to:

- Enhance proficiency in spoken French;
- Develop strong oral/written comprehension and writing skills;

- Employ French confidently and effectively in everyday situations and addressing a broad range of topics;
- Acquire insight into the role of French language within Tunisian and Maghrebi life and culture.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the program, students will have mastered the following linguistic competencies in French:

- Explain in detail what they are studying and their life in general in Tunisia
- Order in a café or restaurant and take a complicated message on the phone
- Speak about themselves and their friends and families
- Use idiomatic expressions spontaneously in connection with specific situations
- Give a fairly detailed description of their hometown and their neighborhood
- Talk about their ISP
- Describe, in a fairly detailed fashion, a public or religious event or ceremony
- Conduct an interview in French
- Understand weather reports and news items on French TV
- Formulate requests to SIT staff and members of host families
- Narrate an event and summarize a film or novel
- Detail an episode from an educational excursion
- Analyze an article from a Tunisian French daily: *La Presse, Le Temps*, etc.

Course Requirements

Students will be placed in small groups according to the results of the in-country placement test. Each group will be assigned specific reading materials corresponding to its 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 to place the classes in context, challenge and engage lecturers, generate questions for class discussions, and 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. In addition to regular communication in French-speaking homestays, outside activities include visits to local Francophone radio stations, print media facilities, and French instruction classes in local schools. 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* prepared by the program's French instructors, readings for the Intermediate French: French in Tunisian Contexts level include:

Bescherelle. *l'Art de conjuguer, Dictionnaire de 12000 verbes*, éd. Hatier Paris, 1980. ISBN : 978-2218048890.

Bescherelle, l'essentiel. *Pour mieux s'exprimer à l'écrit et à l'oral*. Paris, 2002. ISBN: 978-0320080470.
de Saint Exupery, Antoine. *Le Petit Prince*. Paris, 1993. ISBN: 978-0318635767.

Supplementary texts include:

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

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.

Oral Grade

Final oral exam	25%
In-class presentation of field assignments	10%
In-class presentation of assigned readings	10%
Class participation	5%

Written Grade

Final written exam	25%
Written skills in regular class tests	10%
Written skills in <i>rédaction</i> test	10%
In-class <i>dictée</i>	5%

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

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.

Our French instructors prefer to give numerical grades on a scale of 1 to 20. They generally tend to be more conservative in their grade assignments than US teachers. The following chart shows the equivalencies between the instructors' numerical grades and their alphabetical counterparts:

A = 19 or 20/20
A- = 17 or 18/20
B+ = 15 or 16/20
B = 13 or 14/20

B- = 12/20
C+ = 11/20
C = 10/20
C- = 9/20

D+ = 8/20
D = 7/20
D- = 6/20
F = 5/20

*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. Students will be placed with French-speaking host families to further augment formal language learning. Our goal is to help students develop the necessary communication tools which they can use with their host families, neighbors, and Tunisians on the street.

Student Expectations

Class Participation

Class participation reflects regular attendance, punctuality, attentive listening, and active participation in all program activities: lectures, language instruction classes, educational excursions, and field 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, and responsible and sensitive toward the host culture.

Please note that the syllabus, course content, lecturers, and readings may be modified by the academic director in order to better suit the needs of the course and its participants. Should any change of class topics or lecturers be necessary, students will be promptly notified.

Expectations and Policies

- 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 according 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 we engage with on site 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.

Academic Policies: SIT prides itself on providing students with an experientially based program; we hold ourselves, and our students, to the highest of academic standards. Students are asked to refer to the **SIT Study Abroad Handbook** for policies on academic integrity, ethics, academic warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process.

Disability Services: Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at 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>.