Course Syllabus

Beginning French:
French in Tunisian Contexts
FREN 1000-1500 (3 Credits / 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Tunisia: Emerging Identities in North Africa

Course Description
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 Tunisia. Another major aim of the course is to facilitate access to the Tunisian host culture. 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 Tunisian 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 9 weeks by highly experienced teachers who have specifically designed a reading manual for the learning needs unique to French students in Tunisia.

Language Levels and Placement
Non-beginning participants 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
French in Tunisian Contexts has an interdisciplinary and experiential focus, encompassing 45 class hours (3 credits). Its main objectives are to:

- Develop emergent proficiency in spoken and written French;
- Improve the ability to use French confidently and effectively in everyday situations;
- Develop and reinforce the language skills needed to use French academically;
- Acquire insight into the role of French within Tunisian life and culture.

*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.*
Learning Outcomes
By the end of the program, 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 – meals, outings, mint-tea ceremonies
- Describe the SIT location environs in Sidi Bousaid
- Ask and answer questions about weather and seasons
- Summarize a well-known story or film in French
- Demonstrate familiarity with Tunisian French and recognize local differences from standard French
- Summarize an FSS journal entry in French
- Read and understand headlines and basic text of Tunisia’s French press: La Presse, Le Temps, etc.

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 Tunisia-specific selections prepared by the program’s French instructors, readings for this level include:


Supplementary texts include:
- Films, television, and other audiovisual materials
- Magazines and newspapers

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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
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 test 10%
Written skills in “rédaction” test 10%
In-class “dictée” 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.

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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:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>19 or 20/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>17 or 18/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>15 or 16/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>13 or 14/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>12/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>11/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>6/20</td>
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*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 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 FSS 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.

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.

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