



Beginning Vietnamese

VIET 1003-1503 (3 credits / 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Vietnam: Culture, Social Change and Development

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 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. The goal is to provide students the basic language skills necessary to communicate in the host country language while conducting field work for the Independent Study Project.

Instruction consists of 40 hours of formal classes spread over a 6-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 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 the 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, 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 2 to 4 students for at least two hours. Particular attention is paid to building a vocabulary of terms that will support students during educational excursions and their Independent Study Projects.

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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 are expected to:

- Achieve a solid foundation in conversational Vietnamese;
- Become well-versed in basic pronunciation and grammatical rules of Vietnamese;
- Learn to 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;
- Be able to 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 1 to 2 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 instructions.

Sample Course Topics

- Phonetics, Pronunciation and Intonation
- Introduction to the Vietnamese alphabets
- 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 number
- Exchange currency
- Ordering food at a restaurant
- Shopping and bargaining
- Asking the way, directions

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- 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

Nguyen Van Hue et al. Editor. 2008. *Giao Trinh Tieng Viet Cho Nguoi 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 practiced exercise 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.

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Field Trip Assignments (15%)

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 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).

Quizzes (15%)

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 6 weeks course. Each quiz usually contains 5 written parts and lasts from 30 to 45 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 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: 4 parts (Pronunciation; Vocabulary; Reading; and Writing); Oral: 2 parts (Independent talk and pair talk).

The final grade is determined as follows:

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

Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory and absences are penalized by reducing the language grade, except for illness cases, when the student is expected to provide a medical certificate. In addition, two repetitive and unjustified delays are also counted as an absence and may impact the student's participation grade.

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

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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 student participation will be monitored and taken into account.

Expectations and Policies

Class attendance is mandatory and absences are penalized by reducing the language grade, except for illness cases, when the student is expected to provide a medical certificate. In addition, two repeated and unjustified delays are also counted as an absence and may impact the student’s participation grade.

Show up prepared. Be on time, have your assignments completed and points in mind for clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.

Have assignments completed on schedule, 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. Teachers are highly respected in Vietnam. Your polite and engaged behavior is expected.

Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).

Respect differences of opinion (classmates’, teachers’). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

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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