



## French for Natural Sciences

FREN 2003-2503 (3 credits, 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:  
Madagascar: Biodiversity and Natural Resource Management

**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

The focus of this course is on oral proficiency in the context of the natural sciences, including the critical thematic areas of biodiversity and natural resource management. Language teaching is linked to activities in the thematic and field studies seminars in order to help students work more independently in the field. The objective is to facilitate students' interactions with a range of professionals in the field working to manage resources while promoting development within the local cultural context. This linguistic groundwork helps to enhance students' oral proficiency so that they are better prepared to conduct field research for their Independent Study Project. The French for Natural Science course uses classroom and field instruction to achieve these aims, in addition to improving students' oral, reading, and writing skills. Based on in-country testing, students are placed in intensive and appropriate level classes with further language practice in homestays, lectures, and field visits. Levels of language instruction are based on students' language capacity determined through an oral test done at the beginning of the semester. For intermediate students the aim is to take them to the advanced level where they would be able to handle a large number of communicative tasks, in both formal and informal settings, with ease and confidence. Additionally, students will be able to demonstrate an increased ability to carry out research projects relating to the program theme. Various methods will be used to assess student performance including oral interviews, written tests, quizzes, class participation, and oral presentations.

### Course Objectives

The French for Natural Sciences course has an interdisciplinary and critical focus encompassing 45 academic hours (3 credits). Its main objectives:

- To strengthen skills in written and spoken French to the advanced level;
- To build students' capacity to engage with topics and issues in the natural sciences, biodiversity and natural resource management in the medium of French;
- To prepare students to carry out independent research in a francophone country by increasing their linguistic ability;
- To use French confidently outside the classroom;
- To prepare students for program lectures (vocabulary, expressions and technical terms).

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## Expected Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should have attained the following:

- Enhanced capacity in oral comprehension on themes related to the natural sciences, biodiversity and natural resource management;
- Demonstrable improvement in usage and capacity to understand lectures and conversations in French, including improved grammar, vocabulary and spelling;
- Increased capacity to produce an independent and thematically appropriate research topic and paper in French;
- Increased proficiency in French by two sublevels – i.e., if entry level is determined at “intermediate low”, students successfully completing the course should achieve “intermediate high”.

## 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 aspects discussed in class. They are not necessarily tailor-made for each and every class.

### General Required Readings

Bertrand, Alain. “Le Boisement, le bail, et la législation environnementale à Madagascar.” *African Studies Quarterly, The Online Journal for African Studies* 3.2 (Fall 1999): 61-81. Web. 02 Aug. 2003.

Callamand, M. *Grammaire Vivante du Français*. Paris: Clé International, 1992.

Hansen, J. *Madagascar à Travers Son Histoire Politique, Economique, et Sociale*. Antananarivo: 1998.

O’Connor, Sheila, M. Pidgeon et Z. Randria. “Un programme de conservation pour la Réserve d’Andohahela.” *Madagascar, un Sanctuaire de la Nature*. Ed. Philippe Oberle. Paris: Kintana, 1981. 31-36.

Raevoniaina, Luis Manera. *La Pratique de la Langue Française*. Madagascar: SIT, 2011.

Rakouth, Bakolimalala. “Biodiversité,” “Coevolution Plante-Animale”, et “La Conservation.” Lecture notes, Madagascar: Biodiversity and Natural Resource Management, SIT Study Abroad, 2004.

Ravoavy, Toky. “Gestion des revenus miniers de l’exploitation du sable minéralisé des gisements de Mandena, Petriky et Sainte Luce.” Par auteur, Janvier 2004.

Vasseur, Pierre. “Ecosystèmes Côtiers en Danger dans la Région de Tuléar.” *Milieus et Sociétés dans le Sud-ouest de Madagascar*. Ed. Jean-Michel Lebigre. Bordeaux: CRET: 1997.

**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

Teachers evaluate student performance at each class meeting. Planned lessons are tailored to students grouped according to learning pace and individual strengths and weaknesses. At the end of the semester, students are

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evaluated, taking into account both classroom performance as well as the use of and improvement in language skills over the duration of the class. Students are also evaluated on oral presentations, written work in French and efforts made to use French outside the classroom. In addition, teachers give a second oral proficiency exam to help in assessing student progress over the course of the semester. The Academic Director determines the final semester grade based on a combination of the aforementioned criteria.

Oral Presentation	60%
Written Assignments and other activities	20%
Language use in Biodiversity Seminar and EFSS	10%
Language use outside the class	10%

### **French for Natural Science Assignments**

Timely completion of all 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. Assignments and activities include:

- Oral Presentations
- Grammar lessons and exercises prepared by French teachers
- Reading and listening sessions
- Study of the SIT French Text and exercises
- Debates and discussion of articles on appropriate themes found in newspapers and magazines
- Interactions with Malagasy students
- Usage of new vocabulary learned in seminar lectures
- Homework assignments and class discussions
- Language use outside of class

### **Oral Presentations**

Each student or group will deliver a series of presentations on various program themes. Each presentation will be followed by a question and answer session the goal of which is to clarify the information presented. The length of each presentation will be determined by the selected theme and will be presented to the whole class or in small groups. Each student will be encouraged to ask questions or comment during the discussion sessions that follow the presentation. Your grade will depend on your participation.

### **Oral Presentation Evaluation**

The following will be taken into consideration:

- Clarity of the presentation
- Organization
- Development of theme
- Grammar and syntax
- Use of appropriate visual aids
- Volume and clarity of voice
- Pronunciation and articulation
- Style and fluency

**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+

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74-76% C  
70-73% C-  
67-69% D+  
64-66% D  
below 64 F

### **Grading Criteria**

All grades assigned will 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 Academic Seminar 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. Language instructors meet after each study unit to discuss and assess each student's performance.

*\*All written assignments should be typed or neatly written. Please keep back up files or copies so nothing gets accidentally lost or erased.*

### **Program Calendar**

#### Module 1 – Intermediate Oral Comprehension, Reading and Writing

This unit is designed to improve students' French oral, comprehension, reading, and writing skills by focusing on general pronunciation, intermediate level grammar, intermediate vocabulary acquisition, sentence structure and specific local nuances of French as is spoken and written in Madagascar. In order to reinforce language acquisition and its use in Madagascar, students participate in field exercises and other activities requiring the use of French.

#### Module 2 – French for Natural Sciences (intermediate)

Through a range of methods including class discussions, assigned readings, lectures and appropriate site visits, students increase their capacity to speak, read and write French through its study in the context of the program theme including the study of the natural sciences, biodiversity and natural resource management. In so doing, students build capacity and increased proficiency in spoken and written French to facilitate the ability to handle routine conversations with ease and confidence. Topics covered include terrestrial ecology, marine ecology, conservation and development interventions, natural resource management and conservation, and people and the environment.

### **Student Expectations**

#### **Class Participation**

Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in lectures, discussions, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior.

*PLEASE NOTE: All classes leave ¼ of the scheduled time for the purpose of class discussion of the lecture 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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