



## Intensive Language Study: isiXhosa

XHOS-1003 (3 Credits / 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:  
South Africa: Multiculturalism and Human Rights

**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 Overview

This course aims to provide you with basic communication skills in the language of the Xhosa people, known as isiXhosa, focusing upon communicative language abilities. Language is best studied alongside analysis of the cultural context, and as such, this course will serve as a “gateway” for your entrance into and exploration of Xhosa society. Emphasis is on basic conversation and cultural cues with practical relevance to your stay in South Africa. As such, language skills needed in a number of “real world” situations are emphasized, e.g., shopping at the local market, transportation, greetings, speaking about oneself and asking questions, etc. In order for you to succeed in your study of isiXhosa, you will need to cultivate an attitude of active experimentation; have fun with the language, and use it whenever you can – in your homestay, while waiting for the bus, in talking with the Academic Director (AD) and program staff, etc. Do not worry if you are starting off with only a phrase or two, as your attempts to speak the language will open doors and make your South African experience much more enjoyable and meaningful. It is up to you to make as much as you can of the many opportunities available to you for practicing isiXhosa. If you have young children in or near your homestay, they will almost always be happy to teach you their language (you can even ask them to teach you to sing a Xhosa song or two). Watching TV or listening to the radio in isiXhosa can also be beneficial. The course is delivered primarily in Cape Town, though we will have many opportunities to speak isiXhosa while on excursion, in the Western as well as the Eastern Cape Provinces. Early in the program you will meet the three isiXhosa tutors who will help us to learn and practice the material. The structure of the course will primarily be group lectures in the mornings, followed by tutorial sessions and occasional excursions in the afternoons.

### Course Objectives

- To prepare students to participate successfully in isiXhosa language and culture;
- To develop the fundamental conversational skills in isiXhosa that will allow for deeper cultural engagement;

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- To learn basic grammatical structures that facilitate the practical and functional use of the language;
- To develop a broader cultural awareness of what it means to be “Xhosa.”

## Expected Outcomes

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

- The capacity to express oneself in routine conversational settings using IsiXhosa including self introduction, market contexts, asking for directions, or culturally appropriate greetings;
- The ability to demonstrate understanding of basic linguistic structures in IsiXhosa;
- Increased proficiency in IsiXhosa by two sublevels – i.e., if entry level is determined at “novice low”, students successfully completing the course should achieve “novice 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.

Fischer, Arnold. *English-Xhosa Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Munnik, Anne. *Learn Xhosa with Anne Munnik*. Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter, 1994

**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

### Intensive Language Study: IsiXhosa 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. Class attendance is required and students are expected to be prepared for class and to participate actively. Your participation grade will be determined by your positive efforts to speak IsiXhosa both in and outside of class, e.g., while on excursion, as well as through your positive presence in class. The following breakdown will be used to determine your final grade for the course:

	Percent	Due
Class work and quizzes	40	Continuous assessment
Written and oral work and assignments	30	Various; final exam
Language use outside of class	20	Continuous assessment
Participation	10	At all times

Please note that the criterion of participation, which counts for 10 percent of your IsiXhosa grade, is determined as follows:

- *Attendance:* promptness to class, and positive presence in class.
- *Active listening:* paying attention in class/during field excursions, asking appropriate questions, showing

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interest and enthusiasm, entertaining contradictory perspectives, taking notes.

- *Involvement in class discussions*: either in small or large groups sharing knowledge and information, asking questions.
- *Group accountability*: participation as part of a group during field excursions and classes.
- *Respect*: Engaging in culturally-appropriate interaction with hosts, SIT program staff, SIT lecturers and communities.

**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**

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 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.

### **Program Calendar**

The course will be taught utilizing both classroom and field-based activities. Class work will involve student conversations and dialogues, narratives, and role-playing. Field activities will include assignments, homework, and independent practice to be completed in the field. The mornings begin with a program-wide lecture session, introducing vocabulary and new concepts to the whole group. Later in the day, students will meet in smaller groups with their IsiXhosa tutors for reinforcement and practice of the day's lesson. As the preliminary schedule in the *Program Handbook* outlines, the IsiXhosa-language course runs for approximately five weeks early in the program. The textbook used in the course has been designed by the instructor specifically for foreign IsiXhosa-language learners. Any required supplemental handouts will be available in class. Anne Munnik's *Learn Xhosa* (2003) is available as a reference guide. It is also advised that students purchase a small IsiXhosa-English dictionary early in their stay in South Africa. A limited number of dictionaries are available for reference purposes in the SIT Office.

#### Basic Functions

Greetings

Introduction (talking about oneself, and one's family)

Buying and selling

Transportation (modes of transport)

Daily activities at home

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Telling time, calendar, weather days of the week and seasons  
Asking and giving directions  
Health, illness and treatment  
Recreational activities

#### Daily Needs

Making Telephone calls  
Changing money/ Internet café  
Visitors/visiting  
Religion and naming customs

### **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 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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