



## Malagasy

MALA-I003 (3 Credits / 45 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:  
Madagascar: Traditional Medicine and Healthcare Systems

**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 Malagasy language course equips students with basic Malagasy language oral proficiency skills and explores Malagasy culture as a way to enhance student's adaptation to, and interpretation of Malagasy culture. Using a series of participatory field assignments students engage with local communities in Ivandry, Antananarivo, and Andasibe to practice Malagasy and gain insights about Malagasy culture in engaging and exciting ways. The course places emphasis on conversational and cultural cues that have practical relevance to students' stay in Madagascar. The language course complements the Social and Political Dimensions of Health and the Health Care Practice in Madagascar courses, as it provides the medium through which students are able to obtain insights from local communities regarding the contentious relationship between traditional and modern health care systems, language, and power in Madagascar.

The course is taught by native-speaking Malagasy instructors who are also responsible for giving assignments to provide material for class discussions and evaluate students. Evaluation is based on two homework assignments (see Modules 2 and 3), two oral exams, one written exam, class participation and students' use of the language outside of class during the semester (see evaluation section below for details).

### Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Interact with Malagasy people and use your practical communicative language skills and knowledge;
- Describe Malagasy culture via the Imerina culture in the Analamanga region of Madagascar;
- Explain grammatical expressions and concepts of the Malagasy language;
- Understand and describe the context of the relationship between language and power in Madagascar; and

- Situate Malagasy values and beliefs and how they are changing as it pertains to health care service provision

## Language and Method of Instruction

The Malagasy language course is taught in Malagasy and English by native-speaking Malagasy language instructors. The main textbook of the language course is the revised version of the *Malagasy Language Manual* by Quansah Nat and Randrianavony Patricia (2015). The manual has been developed to ensure students' Malagasy conversational abilities and enable them to attain in-depth insight into various aspects of the Malagasy culture covered in class and during field visits.

Classes are mainly held at the Laboratoire de Pharmacologie Générale, de Pharmacocinétique et de Cosmétologie (LPGPC) lecture halls situated at the 'Coline' University of Antananarivo campus at Ambohitsaina, Ankatso, though students also participate in a number of educational excursions that focus on specific vocabulary and expressions pertinent to those activities.

*NB: Each student receives a copy of the **Malagasy Language Manual** in Antananarivo during orientation time*

## Required Reading

Madagascar <http://www.everyculture.com/Ja-Ma/Madagascar.html>

This reading provides information on various aspects of Madagascar including history and ethnic relations, national identity, language affiliation, social stratification, food taboos, and religious beliefs and practices. This required reading and other assigned readings complement the *Malagasy Language Manual* and are meant to enable students to broaden and deepen their knowledge about Madagascar and to help them prepare to engage in discussions. Students are responsible for these readings and should be prepared to bring them to bear in discussions during language sessions.

## Course Schedule

The Malagasy language course is covered during the first five weeks of the program in classroom and outside classroom sessions. Lessons of each session are divided into five parts (based on a 90-minute class). The divisions are:

1. An overview of the lesson with defined objectives (10 minutes)
2. Introduction of new vocabulary (15 minutes)
3. Grammar instructions (15 minutes)
4. Guided exercises and dialogue (35 minutes)
5. Cultural notes relevant to lesson (15 minutes)

## **Module One (Week 1): Orientation and Introduction to Malagasy language and culture**

The module introduces students to the Malagasy language (the alphabets, pronunciation, and intonation) and the concepts and cultural cues pertaining to family and family relationships, greetings and self-introduction to enable one to self-introduce by name, meet, greet people and take leave.

Field sessions are also organized to Parc Botanique et Zoologique de Tsimbazaza (PBZT), the Petite Vitesse Market and the King's and Queen's palaces (Rovas) at Ambohimanga and Ilafy to introduce students to and provide them with some terminologies and vocabularies used in the traditional medical practice, expose students to aspects of the biodiversity of Madagascar which serve as remedies of traditional medical practice as well as enable students to examine Malagasy ethnic groups and cultural commonalities through the ancient Merina monarchy.

### *Assigned readings*

Quansah N. and Randrianavony P. (2015). *Malagasy Language Manual*. SIT Antananarivo. Introduction and Lessons 1 – 4 (pages 5-17).

Our Africa: <http://www.our-africa.org/madagascar/people-culture>

**Module Two (Weeks 2 & 3): Verbs, Malagasy word order, tenses, question words, numbers, the Malagasy currency (Ariary), time, days of the week and months, ordering food and drink in a local restaurant, bargaining and buying things at the market, asking and buying something in a shop**

This module exposes students to the patterns of Malagasy sentences that equip them with the ability to conjugate verbs, build and form tenses, learn and practice various ways of asking a question to get a yes or no answer as well as know how to use question words in different circumstances. Students learn to use demonstratives, which show where a person or an object is in relation to the speaker, and possessives used to show ownership and relationships in the Malagasy context. Students also learn to count and use the Malagasy numbers, get acquainted to the Ariary (the Malagasy currency) and are taught about the times, days of the week, and months. In order to be able to operate in and outside the home situation, students learn how to order food and drink in a local restaurant, how to bargain and buy things at the market and in a shop.

*Assigned readings*

Quansah N. and Randrianavony P. (2015). *Malagasy Language Manual*. SIT Antananarivo. Lessons 5 -13 (pages 18 - 47).

Madagascar customs and traditions

<https://worldtravel101.wordpress.com/practical-travel-info/madagascar-customs-and-traditions/>

**Assignment: Family Tree (see program calendar for due date)**

This assignment has two parts – A and B - and is meant to help you to get to know your homestay family as you learn to devise and practice the use of a questionnaire to gather primary data and to analyse the data.

Part A: Devise a short questionnaire to use to collect information that enables you to draw the family tree of your homestay family. Interview a family member to explore your family's structure and use the answers to draw a family tree.

Part B: After completing part A, reflect on the exercise by answering the following questions:

1. Who answered your questions? How was s/he chosen?
2. Did the responses meet your expectations?
3. What was the most surprising finding?
4. Did you revise your questions as you conducted the interview?
5. Did you use someone to translate? Would it have been better if you had?
6. What was the most difficult part of the exercise?
7. In what ways does your homestay family tree differ from your own family tree?
8. How is it similar?
9. If you were to do this exercise again, what would you do differently?

**Module Three (Weeks 4 & 5): Directions, colors, sizes and shapes, health, body parts, the health care professional (doctor / traditional healer), visiting a healer (doctor / traditional healer), diseases, describing one's illness, typology of traditional medicine, using the telephone, traveling around town**

This module provides students with the appropriate language and communicative tools that prepare and enable them to engage family members and other community members in conversations pertaining to day to day activities and health professionals on health issues as they encounter these professionals during lectures and visits to health care centers which take place under the Social and Political Dimensions of Health and the Health Care Practice in Madagascar courses.

*Assigned reading*

Quansah N. and Randrianavony P. (2015). *Malagasy Language Manual*. SIT Antananarivo. Lessons 14 -17 (pages 48 - 77)

**Assignment: Andasibe Cooking Project (see program calendar for due date)**

You are to learn to cook two Malagasy dishes - one savoury and one sweet – from your rural homestay family in Andasibe. This assignment is to help you integrate more with your homestay family and acquire Malagasy cooking skills.

You should include in your report: the recipes of each dish, the positive and negative experiences you had while learning to cook with your homestay family as well as your observations on the following:

- difference between American and Malagasy food
- differences in implements you use
- differences in cooking methods
- any similarities

**Evaluation and Grading Criteria**

Language instructors evaluate student performance at each class meeting. Lessons are planned and students are grouped according to learning pace and individual strengths and weaknesses. At the end of the course, instructors compose an evaluation for each student, taking into account both classroom performance and improvement of language skills outside the classroom.

Students are also evaluated on two homework assignments, two oral exams, one written exam, and on the efforts made to use Malagasy outside the classroom. In addition, instructors give an oral proficiency test to help in assessing your progress over the course of the semester. The final course grade is determined by the academic director based on the combination of all of the criteria mentioned in this section.

**Evaluation by the Language Instructors includes:**

Homework assignment 1: Family Tree	10%
Homework assignment 2: Andasibe Cooking Project	15%
Oral exam (1)	15%
Written exam	10%
Oral exam (2) Final	25%
Class participation	15%
Language use outside the class	10%

**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 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 language classes, 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.

### **Class Participation**

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

### **Disability Services**

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at [disabilityservices@sit.edu](mailto: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>.

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