

## **Serbian I** SERB-1003 (3 credits)

### **Servia, Bosnia, and Kosovo: Peace and Conflict Studies in the Balkans**

*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.*

#### **Course Description**

Serbian, Bosnian, Croatian, and as of recently Montenegrin, are standardized variants of the Serbo-Croatian, a South Slavic language that belongs to the Indo-European family. The aim of this course is to help students gain beginner's proficiency in the Serbian, which in turn would enable them to develop basic communication skills in the other three mentioned language variants.

In addition to language instruction, the course offers cultural immersion content which ensures more experiential learning. By means of authentic materials and topic-relevant weekly activities in the target language students will have an opportunity to discuss and experience regional food culture, family life, youth lifestyle, worldviews, music, history, literature, folk traditions, beliefs, and legends. Also planned are student projects (group and/or individual) for better grasp of both the language and the culture.

This three-credit course is designed to help students gain a deeper understanding of the language, traditions, and customs of Balkan countries formerly part of Yugoslavia.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate beginner's proficiency in the Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian;
- Show basic comprehension and communication skills in everyday activities;
- Read/write in Latin and Cyrillic scripts and recognize regional variants of Croatian, Serbian, and Bosnian when spoken to them;
- Present basic understanding of the culture, history, customs, and traditions of the region.

#### **Language of Instruction**

Language of instruction at Serbian I level entails a combination of English and Serbian. Students will be encouraged to use and practice novel vocabulary and structures in the target language (Serbian), but will be supported throughout the process in English, and a higher degree of explanation regarding both the language and the culture in English may be expected. However, given the main objectives of the course, every opportunity to speak and write in the Serbian will be used.

### **Instructional Methods**

SIT's teaching and learning philosophy is grounded in the experiential learning theory developed by Kolb (1984; 2015) and informed by various scholars, such as Dewey, Piaget, Lewin, among others. Experiential learning theory recognizes that learning is an active process that is not confined to the formal curriculum; "knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 2015, p. 49). Learning involves both content and process. Learning is holistic and happens through various life experiences upon which students draw to generate new ways of knowing and being. Learning involves a community and is a lifelong endeavor. Learning is transformational. The suggested four step-cycle of a *concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation* embedded in the experiential learning model is not linear and might not always happen in that specific order, as any learning is highly context dependent. These stages of taking part in a shared experience; reflecting on that experience by describing and interpreting it; challenging their own assumptions and beliefs to generate new knowledge; and ultimately applying new knowledge, awareness, skills, and attitudes in a variety of situations and contexts are important for students to engage in to become empowered lifelong learners.

### **Grammatical Content**

- Alphabets: Latin and Cyrillic
- Personal pronouns and possessive adjectives
- Gender of the nouns
- Verbs
- Present, past, and future tense
- Adjectives, adverbs, and basic prepositions
- Numerals

### **Topics:**

- Everyday phrases and greetings
- Introducing yourself / family / friends
- Numbers / prices / time expressions
- Telling time
- Food and drink
- Seasons / weather
- Colors / animals / countries
- Describing everyday activities
- Traditions and customs of the Serbian/Bosnian/Croatian speaking countries

## Assignments and Evaluation

### Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

Students receive feedback from the instructor throughout the course. The language instructor and the Academic Director assign final grades jointly. Apart from Midterm and Final exams, students' vocabulary will be quizzed every week. Evaluation is a reflection of the student's proficiency, participation, engagement, and progress through the weeks of language instruction and during the remaining weeks of the course.

#### 1) Weekly Vocabulary Quizzes – 20%

- Two written quizzes of 10 words/phrases each, covering vocabulary from weeks 1-3 and 4-8 respectively
- Paper-based and delivered in Weeks 3 and 8 (up to 10 minutes per quiz)
- Competences evaluated: retention of key vocabulary necessary to maintain beginner-level communication successfully and effectively

#### 2) Midterm Vocabulary, Phrases, and Comprehension Exam – 20%

- A multiple choice/items matching and short answer quiz of up to 30 everyday phrases and lexical items covered in the first 4 weeks of the course, excluding lexis pertaining to culture, customs, and traditions; a very short text (up to 5 sentences) with the accompanying reading comprehension questions (also multiple choice)
- Paper-based and delivered in Week 4 (45 minutes to complete the exam)
- Competences evaluated: ability to produce commonly used phrases and lexis covered in the first 3 weeks of the course in written form, to respond to everyday questions in the present time reference, and comprehend very short texts on familiar topics

#### 3) Final Exam – 25%

- Written exam that covers grammatical and lexical content of 9 weeks of the course that consists of up to 50 multiple choice, cloze, short answer, and matching questions, excluding lexis pertaining to culture, customs, and traditions; a short text (up to 10 sentences) with the accompanying reading comprehension questions (also multiple choice)
- Paper-based and delivered in Week 10 (60 minutes to complete the exam)
- Competences evaluated: ability to produce commonly used phrases and lexis covered in the latter weeks of the course in written form, to respond to everyday questions in the present and past time reference, and comprehend short texts on familiar topics

#### 4) Before Independent Study Project (ISP)/Internship and post ISP/Internship Oral Exams (Oral Exam and Student Presentation) (25% - 12.5% each)

- Oral exam 1 (5 minutes per student) is set in Week 10 and involves a one-to-one interview where student aims at showing their understanding and fluency in the target language by responding adequately to teacher's questions; this exam takes up 12.5% of the mark
- Oral Exam 2 (5 minutes per student) is set in Week 15 after Internship/ISP and involves a student presentation; in Week 9, students will choose presentation topics to deliver as a group or individually; upon successful performance students can be awarded up to 12.5% of the mark
- Competences evaluated: ability to produce commonly used phrases and lexis covered throughout the course in spoken form, to effectively and accurately respond to questions about usual activities, and present a familiar topic of interest using beginner-level language structures

#### 5) Participation (10%)

- Attendance – promptness to class and positive presence in class;
- Active listening – paying attention in class and during field excursions, asking appropriate questions, showing interest and enthusiasm, entertaining contradictory perspectives, taking notes;
- Self-directed learning – reading the local paper and other materials to follow local perspectives on relevant issues, discussing issues with host families and others;
- Involvement in-class discussions – either in small or large groups;
- Group accountability during field excursions and classes;
- Taking leadership roles – leading and guiding discussions in a productive direction.

#### Assessment

Weekly Vocabulary Quizzes – 20% in total /10% per quiz

Midterm Written Exam – 20%

Final Written Exam – 25%

Before Independent Study Project (ISP)/Internship and post ISP/Internship oral exams – 25% / 12.5% per oral exam

Participation – 10%

#### Attendance and Participation

Due to the nature of SIT Study Abroad programs, and the importance of student and instructor contributions in each and every class session, attendance at all classes and for all program excursions is required. Criteria for evaluation of student performance include attendance and participation in program activities. Students must fully participate in all program components and courses. Students may not voluntarily opt out of required program activities. Valid reasons for absence – such as illness – must be discussed with the academic director or other designated staff person. Absences impact academic performance, may impact grades, and could result in dismissal from the program.

#### Late Assignments

SIT Study Abroad programs integrate traditional classroom lectures and discussion with field-based experiences, site visits and debriefs. The curriculum is designed to build on itself and

progress to the culmination (projects, ISP, case studies, internship, etc.). It is critical that students complete assignments in a timely manner to continue to benefit from the sequences in assignments, reflections and experiences throughout the program.

Students may request a justified extension for one paper/assignment during the semester. Requests must be made in writing and at least 12 hours before the posted due date and time. If reason for request is accepted, an extension of up to one week may be granted at that time. Any further requests for extensions will not be granted. Students who fail to submit the assignment within the extension period will receive an 'F' for the assignment.

### Grading Scale

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

### **Program Expectations**

- Show up prepared. Be on time, have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- Respect differences of opinion (classmates', lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.
- Storing Your Work: Keep several copies of your work as back up and keep one copy accessible to you through an online forum, such as an attachment in your email, the course learning management system, or cloud-based storage. This way your work will always be available to despite technical issues. Lost files, deleted drives, or computer crashes are not excuses for late, missing work.
- Personal Technology Use: Cell phones and other personal electronics can be used for taking notes and other class activities. Off-task usage is not acceptable. You may be marked as absent for habitually using them for something other than classroom activities.

- Content Considerations: Some texts and activities you will encounter in this course delve into sensitive topics that may be emotionally and intellectually challenging. Our classroom is a space where we can engage with challenging ideas, question assumptions, and navigate difficult topics with respect and maturity. As possible, I will flag content and activities that are especially graphic or intense, so we are prepared to address them soberly and sensitively. If you are struggling to keep up with the work or participate in the course because of the nature of the content and activities, you should speak with me and/or seek help from counseling services.
- Classroom recording policy: To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.]

### **SIT Policies and Resources**

Please refer to the [SIT Study Abroad Handbook](#) and the [Policies](#) section of the SIT website for all academic and student affairs policies. Students are accountable for complying with all published policies. Of particular relevance to this course are the policies regarding: academic integrity, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), research and ethics in field study and internships, late assignments, academic status, academic appeals, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and misconduct, and the student code of conduct.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and SIT website for information on important resources and services provided through our central administration in Vermont, such as [Library resources and research support](#), [Disability Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Title IX information](#), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) resources.

### **Course Schedule**

\*Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs.

#### **Week 1:**

*Introduction:* Slavic languages and the brief history of literacy of the South Slavs; the Serbo-Croatian language and socio-linguistic issues in the former Yugoslavia.

Greetings and basic expressions

Writing systems – Latin alphabet and Cyrillic script

Pronunciation, reading and spelling

#### **Week 2:**

Useful everyday expressions

The verb “to be”, personal pronouns

*Cultural immersion:* Hospitality in the region, styles and modes of address, family life

#### **Week 3:**

Gender  
Possessive adjectives  
Present tense  
Numbers  
Telling time  
Vocabulary Quiz 1

**Week 4:**

Food and drink  
Eating out (restaurants & cafes)  
*Cultural immersion:* Food-related cultural practices and holiday traditions  
Midterm vocabulary and phrases quiz

**Week 5: Kosovo excursion**

Writing a short diary while on excursion

**Week 5:**

Past tense – introduction, practice  
Plural of the nouns and adjectives  
*Cultural immersion:* Film, music and entertainment in the region

**Week 6:**

Seasons/weather  
Colors / animals  
Future tense – introduction, practice  
Choosing topics for student presentations (group or individual)

**Week 7: BIH excursion**

Writing a postcard for the host family while on excursion

**Week 8:**

Modal verbs: likes and dislikes, possibility, obligation  
Countries/ nationalities  
*Cultural immersion:* Beautiful places across the region; folk traditions and beliefs of different communities  
Vocabulary Quiz 2

**Week 9:**

General review and preparation for exams  
Delivering presentations in the Serbian: format and support, choosing topics of interest  
*Cultural immersion:* Literary traditions in the Serbian/Bosnian/Croatian

**Week 10:**

Final written exam  
Oral exam 1 (individual interview)

**Weeks 11-14: Internship / ISP**

**Week 15:**

Oral exam 2 (student presentations)