

## **Serbian III** SERB-3003 (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 become proficient in the Serbian, which in turn would enable them to develop advanced communication skills in the other three mentioned languages.

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 deep 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 strong to full proficiency in the Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian;
- Show advanced comprehension and communication skills;
- Present stronger writing skills in the target language;
- Show understanding of the culture, literature and arts, history, customs, and traditions of the region.

#### **Language of Instruction**

Language of instruction at Serbian III is Serbian, with English used only occasionally. Students will be required to use and practice novel vocabulary and structures in the target language (Serbian); however, students may be supported in English when and where necessary,

therefore explanation regarding both the language and the culture in English may also be expected. However, given the main objectives of the course, speaking and writing in the Serbian will be insisted on.

### **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**

**Please note: grammatical content will be modified depending on specific needs of students.**

- Present, past, and future tense of verbs and modal verbs – review and practice
- Cases – review and practice of singular and plural forms of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and numbers
- Complex sentence structure – main and subordinate clauses; conditional, temporal, adversative and cause-effect meanings and forms
- Aspect of verbs
- Word formation

### **Topics:**

- Describing and discussing various professional and academic topics using complex language
- Discussing attitudes, beliefs, opinions, preferences, and ideas using more advanced vocabulary and grammatical structures
- Reading and Listening comprehension: simpler and complex texts (e.g. news and short stories written in standard language and slang)
- Writing styles and formats: letters, articles, essays, reviews
- Regional literature, archaic vs. modern standard vs. slang language
- Traditions and customs of the Serbian/Bosnian/Croatian speaking countries

## Required Texts

Students will be exposed to authentic selected texts by notable former Yugoslav authors (e.g. Ivo Andrić, Meša Selimović, Miljenko Jergović, Miroslav Antić, Borislav Pekić etc.), contemporary, early modern, and traditional poetry and prose, as well as highbrow newspaper and magazine articles. Resource packs and references will be provided at the beginning of the course.

## Assignments and Evaluation

### Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

Students receive feedback from the instructors throughout the course. The language instructor and the Academic Director assign final grades jointly. There will be one Midterm written exam and one Final written exam, as well as two oral exams – one before the ISP and one after it. 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) Written Assignment 1 (20%)

- Writing a short article (up to 250 words) on one of the three offered topics (can include topics discussed in Weeks 1-3)
- To be delivered in Week 3 (up to 45 minutes to complete the task)
- Competences evaluated: ability to adequately apply phrases and lexis covered/reviewed in the first 5 weeks of the course, and to respond to the selected topic observing style, structure and degree of formality the format entails

#### 2) Written Assignment 2 (20%)

- Writing a formal letter (up to 250 words)
- To be delivered in Week 6 (up to 45 minutes to complete the task)
- Competences evaluated: ability to adequately apply phrases and lexis covered in the first 6 weeks of the course in written form, and to respond to the prompt observing style, structure and degree of formality the format entails

#### 3) Final Written Exam (30%)

- Written exam that covers grammatical and lexical content of 9 weeks of the course and consists of up to 50 multiple choice, cloze, short answer, and matching questions, excluding lexis pertaining to culture, customs, and traditions; a medium-length text (up to 500 words) with 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 questions accurately and using more complex structures, and comprehend medium-length texts written in one of the contemporary regional variants of the Serbo-Croatian

#### 4) Post Independent Study Project/Internship Oral Exam (20%)

- Oral exam involves a student presentation (up to 10 minutes per student) where student aims at showing their understanding and fluency in the target language by giving a talk on a topic of interest;
- In Week 9, students will choose presentation topics and deliver them individually in Week 15; this exam takes up 20% of the mark
- Competences evaluated: ability to utilize topic-appropriate phrases and lexis, to fluently present prepared content, engage effectively in brief post-presentation discussion and respond to questions using both simpler and more advanced language structures

#### 5) Participation (10%)

This includes active involvement in lectures, readings, and discussions using the following criteria:

- Attendance - promptness to class and positive presence in class.
- Active Listening - paying attention in class, asking appropriate questions, showing interest and enthusiasm (this includes body language), entertaining contradictory perspectives, taking notes.
- Involvement in Class Discussions - either in small or large groups, sharing knowledge. This means challenging yourself to speak up even if you usually don't, and also means allowing others to speak if you are a person who tends to dominate class discussions.
- Group Accountability – positive participation in the group during field excursions and classes; not keeping others waiting.

#### Assessment

Written Assignment 1 – 20%  
 Written Assignment 2 – 20%  
 Final Written Exam – 30%  
 Post Independent Study Project Oral Exam – 20%  
 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.

Review of verb forms and sentence structure

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

#### **Week 2:**

Case system – review, practice, consolidation

Reading, Listening, Speaking theme: lifestyles and generation gap in the region and your country

Writing: essays and articles

#### **Week 3:**

Reading, Listening, Speaking theme: appearance and attitude, mainstream and subcultural tendencies

Grammar: verbal aspect

*Cultural immersion*: Traditional dress of the region, meanings of patterns and other relevant traditions

Written Assignment 1

**Week 4:**

Reading, Listening, Speaking theme: food and drink

Grammar: word formation

Writing: informal and formal letters

*Cultural immersion*: Food-related cultural practices and holiday traditions

**Week 5: Kosovo excursion**

Selected readings

**Week 6:**

Grammar: types of subordinate sentences and verbal aspect

Reading, Listening, Speaking theme: art/artists of the region

*Cultural immersion*: Film, music, and entertainment in the region

Written assignment 2

**Week 7: BIH excursion**

Selected readings

**Week 8:**

Reading, Listening, Speaking theme: travelling and gaining life experience

Writing: reviews

*Cultural immersion*: Beautiful places across the region; folk traditions and beliefs of different communities

**Week 9:**

Reading, Listening, Speaking theme: seasons/weather/colors/animals/countries and nationalities

Choosing topics for the student presentations (group or individual)

General review and preparation for exams

**Week 10:**

Final written exam

*Cultural immersion*: Literary traditions in the Serbian/Bosnian/Croatian

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

Suggested readings - S/B/C literature, depending on chosen Internship/ISP location and interests

**Week 15:**

Oral exam (student presentations)