

## **Serbian II** SERB-2003 (3 credits)

### **Serbia, Austria, and Hungary: Comparative European Perspectives on Conflict & Democracy**

*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, as well as 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 proficiency at intermediate level in the Serbian, which in turn would enable them to develop 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 shared Southeast Europe's 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 much deeper understanding of the language, traditions, and customs of Southeast European countries.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

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

- Maintain communication in the Serbian with intermediate proficiency;
- Demonstrate considerable comprehension and communication skills;
- Use the language confidently in everyday situations;
- Show understanding of the culture, history, customs, and traditions of the region.

#### **Language of Instruction**

Language of instruction at Level II Serbian is Serbian, with English used to a lesser degree. Students will be required and encouraged to use and practice new vocabulary and structures in the target language (Serbian), and supported in English when and where necessary, therefore some 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 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**

- Present, past, and future tense of verbs and modal verbs – review and practice
- Cases – concept, singular and plural forms of nouns, pronouns, and adjectives
- Comparison of adjectives and adverbs
- Agreement of nouns with cardinal numbers and quantifiers
- Aspect of verbs (general concept of aspect and its role in the language)
- Sentence structure and introduction into different types of sentences (simple, compound, complex)

### **Topics:**

- Describing everyday activities using more complex language
- Describing a person, a book, or a movie etc. in detail
- Reading comprehension: simpler texts (e.g., news and short stories written in standard language)
- Expressing likes and dislikes, expressing personal opinions on common topics
- Traditions and customs of the Serbian/Bosnian/Croatian speaking countries

### **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) Weekly 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 7 (up to 10 minutes per quiz)
- Competences evaluated: retention of key vocabulary necessary to maintain intermediate-level communication successfully and effectively

### 2) Midterm Exam (20%)

- A multiple choice/items matching and short answer test 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 short text (up to 10 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 4 weeks of the course in written form, to respond to everyday questions in the present time reference, and comprehend short texts on familiar topics

### 3) Final Exam (40%)

- 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 15 sentences) with the accompanying reading comprehension questions (also multiple choice)
- Paper-based and delivered in Week 9 (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, past, and future time reference, and comprehend short texts on familiar topics

### 4) Before Independent Study Project (ISP)/Internship and post ISP/Internship Oral Exams (10% - 5% each)

- Oral exam 1 (5 minutes per student) is set in Week 9 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 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 8, students will choose presentation topics to deliver individually; upon successful performance students can be awarded up to 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 intermediate-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% / 10% per quiz

Midterm Exam – 20%

Final Exam – 40%

Before Independent Study Project (ISP)/Internship and post ISP/Internship oral exams – 10% / 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 its ties with the Austro-Hungarian Empire.  
Review of writing systems, reading, and spelling rules

### **Week 2:**

Useful everyday expressions  
Reading, Listening, Speaking theme: free time and youth lifestyles in the region and your country  
Grammar: tenses, modals, and word order review  
*Cultural immersion*: Hospitality in the region, styles and modes of address, family life

### **Week 3:**

Reading, Listening, Speaking theme: dress and personal style in different countries  
Grammar: cases of Serbian (nouns and adjectives)  
*Cultural immersion*: Traditional dress of the region, meanings of patterns – a visit to the Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade  
Vocabulary Quiz 1

### **Week 4:**

Reading, Listening, Speaking theme: food and drink  
*Cultural immersion*: Food-related cultural practices and traditions; a visit to farmer's market/a breakfast at traditional food restaurant

### Midterm written exam

### **Week 5:**

Grammar: noun and verb agreement with quantifiers and numerals

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

*Cultural immersion:* Film, music and entertainment in the region – watching a film/documentary in the Serbian

**Week 6:**

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

*Cultural immersion:* folk traditions and beliefs of different communities

**Week 7 :**

Reading, Listening, Speaking theme: developing presentations and making reviews in the Serbian

Grammar: verbal aspect

Vocabulary Quiz 2

**Week 8:**

Choosing topics for the student presentations (group or individual)

General review and preparation for exams

*Cultural immersion:* Literary traditions in the Serbian/Bosnian/Croatia, a visit to the Belgrade Book Fair/ Krokodil Literary Association

**Week 9 :**

Final written exam

Oral exam 1 (individual interview)

**Weeks 10-14: Internship / ISP**

**Week 15:**

Oral exam 2 (student presentations)