Intermediate French: French in Tunisian Contexts  
FREN2003-2503 (3 credits)

Tunisia and Italy: Politics and Religious Integration in the Mediterranean

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
This intensive course aims to develop sophisticated skills in speaking, understanding, reading, and writing French, through traditional classroom instruction, field-based activities, and continuing homestay practice. While emphasis is placed primarily upon oral comprehension and developing conversational competencies (i.e. listening and speaking), reading and writing are also highlighted as crucial to the reinforcement of those skills. Thus the course is designed to help the student acquire French language and to grasp cultural practices in the Francophone world. Tunisian and North African cultural context is built into the course and introduced through audiovisual materials and experiential activities accompanying the textbook that has been specifically prepared by SIT language instructors. French skills in Tunisian context are further reinforced through regular communication with members of French-speaking host families, and activities including excursions to local Francophone radio stations, print media facilities, and French instruction classes in local schools. This more advanced language level gives students an in-depth background on everyday life, enabling the mastery of critical language skills necessary for performing a variety of activities. The objective of the course is to review and expand on topics including: travel, relationships, ceremonies, services (especially public administration), speaking about one’s career (personal achievements), talking about oneself (autobiography), and cultural and literary subjects specific to Tunisia and North Africa more broadly (including films, books, favorite TV programs).

Language Levels and Placement
Students are placed into appropriate language course levels based on estimated-ACTFL oral proficiency interviews and written exams (placement tests) conducted during orientation in Tunisia.
Students will be placed in small groups according to the results of the in-country placement test. Each group will be assigned specific reading materials corresponding to its level. Readings will serve as the basis for oral presentations in class and written commentary to be submitted periodically to the language instructor. Students are responsible for all required readings and should be prepared to bring them to bear on discussions in class. The readings will help you to place the classes in context, challenge and engage lecturers, generate questions for class discussions, and deepen your knowledge of particular aspects discussed in class. Students will be sent out to perform field-based exercises and activities and will be required to give oral presentations or write detailed narrative accounts of these experiential drills. In addition to regular communication in French-speaking homestays, outside activities include visits to local Francophone radio stations, print media facilities, and French instruction classes in local schools. Students will also be assigned newspaper and magazine articles and short stories for explication and comment, either in class or as individual homework.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the program, students will have mastered the following linguistic competencies in French:

- Explain in detail what they are studying and their life in general in Tunisia
- Order in a café or restaurant and take a complicated message on the phone
- Speak about themselves and their friends and families
- Use idiomatic expressions spontaneously in connection with specific situations
- Give a fairly detailed description of their hometown and their neighborhood
- Talk about their ISP
- Describe, in a fairly detailed fashion, a public or religious event or ceremony
- Conduct an interview in French
- Understand weather reports and news items on French TV
- Formulate requests to SIT staff and members of host families
- Narrate an event and summarize a film or novel
- Detail an episode from an educational excursion
- Analyze an article from a Tunisian French daily: La Presse, Le Temps, etc.

Course Objectives
Intermediate French: French in Tunisian Contexts has an interdisciplinary and experiential focus.
The main objectives of the course are to:
- Enhance proficiency in spoken French;
- Develop strong oral/written comprehension and writing skills;
- Employ French confidently and effectively in everyday situations and addressing a broad range of topics;
• Acquire insight into the role of French language within Tunisian and Maghrebi life and culture.

Language of Instruction
French is used in class. Students are encouraged to use French in class discussions and interactions. Yet, English might be used to explain some grammatical rules, vocabulary, or idiomatic expressions.

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.

Required Texts
In addition to a Reading Packet prepared by the program’s French instructors, readings for the Intermediate French: French in Tunisian Contexts level include:


Supplementary texts include:
• films, television, and other audiovisual materials
• magazines and newspapers

Course Schedule
Three (3) sessions per week at the rate of three (3 hours) per session on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Classes start at 1 p.m.
*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.*

**Additional Information**

**Homestays**

As a complement to language classes, homestays provide students with the opportunity to learn from different people and to use their language skills continually in a multilingual learning environment. Students will be placed with French-speaking host families to further augment formal language learning. Our goal is to help students develop the necessary communication tools which they can use with their host families, neighbors, and Tunisians on the street.

**Assignments and Evaluation**

**Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria**

Individual assignments may include different tasks related to grammar and vocabulary exercises. Students are encouraged to read and write about various topics of their choice or assigned by the teacher and then share their ideas in class in-group discussions paying attention to (narration and description, tenses and vocabulary), and also writing about personal experiences and activities in Tunisia, lectures, audiovisuals, and some current events.

Evaluation takes into account the combined testing results from regular homework assignments, oral tests, and regular oral and written presentations of field activities and assigned readings. Timely completion of all French 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. Tests will not be repeated for absentees. Only certifiable and verifiable absences from tests will be accepted.

**Assessment**

*Oral Grade*
- Final oral exam - 25%
- In-class presentation of field assignments - 10%
- In-class presentation of assigned readings - 10%
- Class participation - 5%

*Written Grade*
- Final written exam - 25%
- Written skills in regular class tests - 10%
- Written skills in *rédaction* test - 10%
- In-class *dictée* - 5%

**Grading Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-93%</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Grades are assigned fairly, rigorously, and in accordance with the system charted below. French instructors also take into account the student’s efforts expended to achieve specific learning goals and outcomes specified at the start of the semester by the Academic Director, the language instructor and the student. An “A” letter grade reflects superior or exceptional work, indicating mastery of the competencies expected in that particular assignment. A “B” grade demonstrates that the student has some possession of the required competencies but is not entirely in control of them. A grade of “C” reflects work that is satisfactory, while a “D” reflects insufficiency. In terms of class participation, an “A” grade refers to full attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all discussions, classroom exercises, field trips, and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior. The level, frequency, and quality of student participation will be monitored and taken into account.

Our French instructors prefer to give numerical grades on a scale of 1 to 20. They generally tend to be more conservative in their grade assignments than US teachers. The following chart shows the equivalencies between the instructors’ numerical grades and their alphabetical counterparts:

- **A** = 19 or 20/20
- **A-** = 17 or 18/20
- **B+** = 15 or 16/20
- **B** = 13 or 14/20
- **B-** = 12/20
- **C+** = 11/20
- **C** = 10/20
- **C-** = 9/20
- **D+** = 8/20
- **D** = 7/20
- **D-** = 6/20
- **F** = 5/20

*Note that all written assignments should be presented in typed format. Assignments submitted by email will not be accepted.

**Program Expectations**

**Class Participation**

Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening, and active engagement in all Arabic language lectures, discussions, educational excursions, assignments, and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior. An absent
Student is responsible for contacting the instructor, the tutor, and/or fellow students to be prepared for the assignments s/he missed and the ones scheduled for the next class.

**Student 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 according 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 we engage with on site 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.

**SIT Policies and Resources**

Please refer to the [SIT Study Abroad Handbook](http://www.sit.edu) and the [Policies](http://www.sit.edu) 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](http://www.sit.edu), [Disability Services](http://www.sit.edu), [Counseling Services](http://www.sit.edu), [Title IX information](http://www.sit.edu), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](http://www.sit.edu) resources.