

MALAGASY MALA-1002 (2 credits)

Madagascar: Traditional Medicine and Healthcare Systems

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

The Malagasy 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. The course places emphasis on conversational and cultural cues that have practical relevance to students' stay in Madagascar. Using a series of participatory field assignments, students engage with local communities at Ivandry, Antananarivo, Ambatomirahavavy, and Andasibe to gain insights into Malagasy culture and practice their Malagasy. The language provides the medium through which students are able to obtain information from community members and acquire knowledge regarding the contentious relationship between traditional and modern healthcare systems, language, and power in Madagascar.

Learning Outcomes

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

- Demonstrate basic conversational skills in Malagasy and communicate with community members;
- Describe Malagasy culture via the Imerina culture in the Analamanga region of Madagascar.
- Understand and describe the the relationship between language and power in Madagascar; and
- Discuss traditional and contemporary Malagasy values and beliefs as they pertain to healthcare service provision.

Language of Instruction

The course is taught in Malagasy and English by native-speaking Malagasy instructors. Classes are mainly held at the lecture halls of the Laboratoire de Pharmacologie Générale, de Pharmacocinétique et de Cosmétologie (LPGPC) situated at the 'Coline', University of Antananarivo campus at Ambohitsaina, Ankatso. Students also participate in a number of educational excursions to different venues, in and around program base at Antananarivo, and regional locales to engage in activities that focus on specific vocabulary and expressions pertinent to Malagasy cultural and healthcare practices.

Instructional Methods

Emphasis is on oral proficiency and comprehension skills through classroom and field-based instructions and activities. Lessons of each session are divided into four parts (based on a 90-minute duration). The divisions are:

1. An overview of the lesson with defined objectives (10 minutes)
2. Introduction of new vocabulary (15 - 20 minutes)
3. Guided exercises and dialogue (30 - 40 minutes)
4. Cultural notes relevant to session (20 minutes)

The formal instruction is augmented by language practice with host families during homestays and encounters with community members outside classroom sessions and during educational excursions.

Required Texts

The main textbook of the language course is the *Malagasy Language Manual* by N. Quansah and P. Randrianavony (2020), which helps develop students' Malagasy conversational abilities and enables them to attain in-depth insight into various aspects of the Malagasy culture covered in class and during field visits. Sections to be read from the manual for various sessions are indicated by instructors. Each student receives a copy of the *Malagasy Language Manual* in Antananarivo during orientation.

Additional readings below provide information on various aspects of Madagascar including history and ethnic relations, national identity, language affiliation, social stratification, customs and traditions, food taboos, and religious beliefs and practices. These 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 bring them to bear on discussions during language sessions.

Colburn, L. (n.d.). *Culture of Madagascar - history, people, traditions, women, beliefs, food, customs, family, social*. [Www.everyculture.com](http://www.everyculture.com). Retrieved April 18, 2023, from <http://www.everyculture.com/Ja-Ma/Madagascar.html>

World Travel 101. (2010, October 21). *Madagascar Customs and Traditions*. World Travel 101. <https://worldtravel101.wordpress.com/practical-travel-info/madagascar-customs-and-traditions/>

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*

The language course is divided into three modules, covered during the first four weeks of the program duration.

Field sessions for the language course introduce students to terminologies and vocabularies used in traditional medical practice, expose students to aspects of the biodiversity of Madagascar which serve as remedies for traditional medical practice, and enable students to examine Malagasy ethnic groups and cultural commonalities through the ancient Merina monarchy.

Field sessions are to:

- Rova Ambohimanga (King's and Queen's palace)
- Rova Ilafy (Ethnographic Museum)
- "Parc Botanique et Zoologique de Tsimbazaza" (PBZT)
- "Petite Vitesse" Market
- "Parc National Analamazaotra", Andasibe

Module 1: Orientation and Introduction to Malagasy Language and Culture

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

Assigned readings

Quansah, N., & Randrianavony, P. (2020). Introduction and Lessons 1-4. In *Malagasy Language Manual* (pp. 5-17). SIT Antananarivo.

Module 2: Verbs, Malagasy Word Order, Tenses, Question Words, Ordering in Local Restaurants, Market and Shop Interactions

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. 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., & Randrianavony, P. (2020). Lessons 5-13. In *Malagasy Language Manual* (pp. 18-47). SIT Antananarivo.

Assignment: *Family Tree*

Module 3. Directions, Colors, Sizes and Shapes, Health, Body Parts, Healthcare Professionals (doctor / traditional healer), Visiting a 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 during lectures and visits to healthcare centers which take place under the Social and Political Dimensions of Health and Health Care Practice in Madagascar course.

Assigned reading

Quansah, N., & Randrianavony, P. (2020). Lessons 14-17. In *Malagasy Language Manual* (pp. 48-77). SIT Antananarivo.

Assignment: *Andasibe Cooking Project*

Assignments and Evaluation

Instructors are responsible for giving assignments, to provide material for class discussions and evaluate students.

Evaluation is based on two homework assignments, two oral exams, one written exam, participation, and students' use of the language outside of class during the term.

Assignments

1. Family Tree (15%)

This assignment has two parts – A and B - and is meant to help students to get to know their homestay family as they 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 collect information when interviewing a family member to explore your family's structure. Use the answers to draw the family tree of your homestay family.

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

1. Who answered your questions? How was this person 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? If you didn't, 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?

2. Andasibe Cooking Project (15%)

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, practice oral language skills, 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:

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

3. Oral exam 1 (10%)

This is the first of two oral exams to evaluate your ability to communicate in a dialogue with instructors based on lessons taken about greetings, self presentations, the family, days of the week, and time.

4. Written exam – (10%)

The written exam is a multiple choice set of short answer questions that evaluates your understanding and ability to respond in writing on lessons done during the first two weeks of the term.

5. Oral exam 2 (25%)

This is the second oral and final language exam of the term. It evaluates your oral proficiency during the four weeks of learning Malagasy. It's a dialogue between instructors and you on your experiences during your time in Madagascar.

6. Participation (10%)

This includes active involvement in lectures, discussions and excursions based on the following criteria:

- Attendance – promptness to and positive presence in class.
- Active Listening - paying attention in class and during field excursions, asking appropriate questions, showing interest and enthusiasm (this includes body language), and entertaining contradictory perspectives.
- Involvement in Class Discussions - either in small or large groups, sharing knowledge. This means challenging yourself to speak up if you usually don't, and also means allowing others to speak if you are a person who tends to dominate class discussions. Take up your responsibility and allow others to take up theirs.
- Group Accountability – positive participation in the group during field excursions and classes; being punctual, not keeping others waiting.
- Being Polite and Respectful – to peers and displaying culturally appropriate interaction with host families, program staff, lecturers, guest speakers, and community members.

7. Language use outside of the classroom (15%)

This evaluates students ability to interact with people and use their practical communicative language skills and knowledge during excursions, on the street, at the market, at home with families, etc.

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 of individual final projects

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 term. 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 **four (4) days** 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 punctual, 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 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 engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across differences 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, or cloud-based storage. This way your work will always be available to you 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.
- Course Communication: Course documents and assignments will be sent via emails. Although the course calendar provides a broad overview and the general sequence of work and assignments for the course, what we accomplish in class will vary, and revisions to the calendar will be communicated orally and via group WhatsApp page. You are responsible for letting AD know about any network-related problems that prevent you from accessing or submitting assignments.
- Content Considerations: 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.