

Intensive Language Study: Chichewa CHWA-1003 (3 credits)

Malawi: Sustainable Development Practice

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 course aims to provide you with basic communication skills in the language of Chichewa, focusing upon communicative language abilities. Language is best studied alongside analysis of the cultural context, and as such, this course will serve as a gateway for your entrance into and exploration of Malawian society. Emphasis is on basic conversation and cultural cues with practical relevance to your stay in Malawi. As such, language skills needed in “real world” situations are emphasized, e.g., shopping at the local market, transportation, greetings, speaking about oneself and asking questions, etc.

For you to succeed in your study of Chichewa, you will need to cultivate an attitude of active experimentation; have fun with the language, and use it whenever you can – in your homestay, during travel, in talking with program staff, etc. Do not worry if you are starting off with only a phrase or two, as your attempts to speak the language will open doors and make your experience in Malawi much more enjoyable and meaningful. It is up to you to make as much as you can of the many opportunities available to you for practicing Chichewa. If you have young children in or near your homestay, they will almost always be happy to teach you their language (you can even ask them to teach you to sing a song or two). Watching TV or listening to the radio in Chichewa can also be beneficial. The course is based primarily in Lilongwe, though we will have many opportunities to speak Chichewa while on excursion.

Learning Outcomes

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

- Use basic language skills to participate successfully in Malawian culture
- Demonstrate grammatical structures that facilitate the practical and functional use of the language
- Develop a broader awareness and understanding of Malawian culture

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English, but students will be encouraged to use their developing language skills in daily life and on excursion.

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

The textbook used in the course will be designed by the instructor specifically for foreign Chichewa-language learners. Any required supplemental handouts will be available in class. It is also advised that students purchase a small Chichewa-English dictionary early in their stay in Malawi.

Additional readings and articles as assigned.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

1) Classwork and quizzes (40%)

Classwork and quizzes provide continuous assessment and feedback to allow students to track their progress.

2) Written and oral work and assignments (30%)

These will take the form of various class assignments as well as a final exam.

3) Language use outside of class (20%)

Language use outside of class will be assessed on a continuous basis, taking into consideration students' efforts in speaking Chichewa on excursion and in the community. The emphasis is not on reaching an advanced or 'fluent' level of speech, but on continuous improvement and willingness to communicate.

4) Participation (10%)

Your participation grade will be determined by your positive efforts to speak Chichewa both in and outside of class, e.g., while on excursion, as well as through your positive presence in class using the following criteria:

- 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 (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 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.
- Displaying Respect – culturally appropriate interaction with hosts, SIT program staff, SIT lecturers and communities.

Assessment

Classwork and quizzes - 40%

Written and oral work - 30%

Language use outside of class - 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.

Example: 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.
- 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.

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*

The course will be taught utilizing both classroom and field-based activities. Classwork will involve student conversations and dialogues, narratives, and role-playing. Field activities will include assignments, homework, and independent practice to be completed in the field.

Module 1: Basic Introductions and useful expressions

The first module introduces Chichewa for those with no prior experience. Students learn basic greetings, pronunciation, and useful terms for daily conversation.

Topics include:

- Greetings
- Cultural conversation norms
- Introduction (talking about oneself, and one's family)
- Buying and selling
- Transportation (modes of transport)
- Daily activities at home

Module 2: Daily Life

The second module focuses on enhancing students' ability to navigate daily life and describe the world around them.

Topics include:

- Telling time, date, weather, days of the week and seasons
- Numbers
- Asking and giving directions
- Health, illness, and treatment
- Recreational activities

Module 3: Typical Needs

This module covers some more complicated situations in which students can use their language skills, such as attending local events or using local businesses. This module also addresses cultural expectations around behavior.

Topics include:

- Making cell phone calls

- Changing money, using an Internet café
- Guests, visiting, and sightseeing
- Religion and naming customs