

Beginner French FREN-1003 or FREN-1503 (3 credits)

Madagascar: Biodiversity and Natural Resource Management

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 is intended for students who have little or no prior experience with the French language and are preparing to use it effectively in everyday situations in Madagascar. The main goal of the course is to help students engage with the local Malagasy culture, especially during their urban homestay. Therefore, the course primarily focuses on developing speaking and listening skills, with reading and writing as secondary components to support verbal communication and comprehension. Throughout the course, students will also be exposed to the cultural context through audiovisual materials and text book that will cover pronunciation, basic grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure. The course covers all four key communication skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing, which will be taught through traditional classroom lessons, field activities, and continuous practice during the homestay experience.

Language Levels and Placement

Beginner students with some prior French knowledge are placed into the appropriate language course level (FREN 1003 or FREN 1503) based on oral proficiency interviews conducted during orientation in Antananarivo.

Learning Outcomes

The "French in Malagasy Contexts" course adopts an interdisciplinary and hands-on approach. By the end of the course, students will have acquired the skills to accomplish the following linguistic tasks:

- Utilize oral language to effectively communicate in everyday situations such as greetings, leave taking, and other simple tasks;
- Apply language skills to achieve basic needs in homestay and village stay situations;
- Express cultural competence through language, such as the importance of hospitality, food, taboos, music, ceremonies, and social and familial structures;

- Demonstrate cultural sensitivity and local participation by making efforts to learn the local language as well as understand the role of Francophone influence in Madagascar.

Required Texts

In addition to a Reading Packet of Madagascar-specific selections prepared by the program's French instructors, readings for this level include:

Allain Bruno Solofomiarana Rapanoël. Les problèmes de la langue d'enseignement à Madagascar : les dysfonctionnements de la loi 94-033. Kabaro, revue internationale des Sciences de l'Homme et des Sociétés, 2008, Interethnicité et Interculturalité à l'île Maurice, IV (4-5), pp.153-171. fahal-03484900

Ranaivoson, D. (2007). La langue Malagasy et les politiques linguistiques. Études littéraires africaines, (23), 6–12. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1035446ar>

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

Students receive feedback from the instructors and Academic Director throughout the course. Short presentations are given frequently. Instructors evaluate the students on vocabulary, grammar, accent, and attitude. Final grades reflect the extent and quality of students' participation during the course. The instructors prepare final evaluations, and students are evaluated through direct oral assessment. The Academic Director assigns final grades in collaboration with French language instructors, based on the following assignments:

1) Homework (25%)

Homework will reinforce language literacy skills. Specific topics will be given, for example your homestay family way of life or your journey at the local market; you should provide a succinct and clear description of the topic. Students increase their knowledge of grammatical structures and improve control of using those structures in speaking and writing.

2) Language use in seminars (25%)

Language use in seminars should be formal, meaning that it should not sound conversational or casual. You should particularly avoid colloquial, idiomatic or slang, in favor of precise vocabulary. Language teacher will make a weekly evaluation through oral presentation.

3) Final Evaluation by Language Instructors (40%)

Evaluation will be done at the end of the semester by assessing your evolution writing and oral production in French. This will include oral presentations and grammatical writing.

4) Participation (10%)

This includes active involvement in lectures, readings, discussions, and excursions 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 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

- Homework – 25%
- Language use in seminars - 25%
- Final Evaluation - 40%
- Participation - 10%

Attendance and Participation

Due to the nature of SIT Study Abroad programs, and the importance of student and instructor contributions in 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.

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*

Beginner Oral Comprehension, Reading, and Writing

In this course, students will acquire the reading and vocabulary skills necessary to comprehend a beginning level text. A focus on word study and specific reading strategies will be taught. Through interaction with other students and the text, students will receive opportunities to communicate orally and in writing regarding their readings in class. Students participate in field exercises and other activities requiring the use of French.