

## **Beginning French: French in Cameroonian Contexts**

### FREN 1003-1503 (3 credits)

### **Cameroon: Development and Social Change**

*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**

In Cameroon, French predominates in public spheres and in urban households. This intensive course is designed to prepare students with little or no previous instruction in French to confidently use the language in daily communications in Cameroon. Another major aim of the course is to facilitate access to the Cameroonian host culture, particularly in the urban homestay. Thus, the course emphasizes the development of speaking and comprehension competencies. Reading and writing are also fostered but, mainly, to complement verbal proficiency and speech comprehension. Cultural context is built into the course and introduced through audiovisual materials and experiential activities accompanying the textbook. French in Cameroonian Contexts introduces students to pronunciation and systems of basic grammar, vocabulary and sentence structure. All of the four fundamental communicative skills of speech, comprehension, reading and writing are imparted through traditional classroom instruction, field-based activities, and continuing homestay practice. The course is taught over seven weeks by highly experienced teachers who have specifically designed a reading manual for the learning needs unique to French students in Cameroon.

#### **Language Levels and Placement**

Beginner students with some prior French knowledge are placed into the appropriate language course level based on oral proficiency interviews conducted during orientation in Cameroon.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

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

- Perform greetings and introduce oneself and others formally and informally;
- Ask questions with ease and confidence;
- Identify objects and items in the classroom;
- Count and order entities sequentially;
- Respond to requests and instructions related to teaching/learning activities;
- Respond to requests and instructions appropriately and courteously;

- Name days of the week, significant dates, and months;
- Identify one's nationality and that of others;
- Narrate simple homestay events, including meals and outings;
- Describe the SIT location in Yaoundé;
- Ask and answer questions about weather and seasons;
- Summarize a well-known story or film in French;
- Demonstrate familiarity with Cameroonian French and recognize local differences from standard French;
- Read and understand headlines and basic text of Cameroon's French language press.

### **Language of Instruction**

This course is taught in French and English.

### **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 of Cameroon-specific selections prepared by the program's French instructors, readings for this level include:

- Coffman Crocker (2014) French Grammar. 6th Edition/ McGraw Hill Education
- Alfo (2020) *Djanga n'est pas propre*. Collection Marc Patrice Ecllosion. L'avenir du livre

Supplementary texts include:

- films, television, and other audiovisual materials
- magazines and newspapers

Students will be assigned readings appropriate to their 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 in class discussions. The readings will assist with comprehension, challenge and engage

lecturers, generate questions for class discussions and to deepen your knowledge in key concepts. 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 exercises. Students will also be assigned newspaper and magazine articles and short stories for explication and comment either in class or as individual homework.

## **Assignments and Evaluation**

### Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

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..

#### 1) Grammar and Vocabulary Exam (40%)

This exam will be based on grammar and vocabulary on topics that has been discussed in the first three weeks.

#### 2) Comprehension and Analysis (40%)

The second exam will be based on grammar and vocabulary on topics that have been discussed from week four to six.

#### 3) Use of French Outside of Class (10%)

During field trips in and around Yaounde students will be expected to communicate only in French. These trips are usually referred to as “French day”.

#### 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 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

Grammar and Vocabulary Exam – 40%

Grammar and vocabulary Exam – 40%

Use of French Outside Class – 10%  
Participation – 10%

### 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. To further reinforce intensive language learning, students will be placed in French-speaking host families. Our goal is to help students develop the necessary communication tools to use with their host families, neighbors, and Cameroonians on the street.

### 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.
- 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](#), [Accessibility Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Title IX information](#), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) resources.

## Course Schedule

The different language components have been adapted to fit the needs of students based on their level of communication and understanding ranging from intermediate to advanced. The first week of the program will provide the tools to facilitate students' adaptation in homestays and the community. After this, the program will focus on improving students' written and oral proficiency in development related themes.

<b>L'HABITATION</b>	<b>LES DIRECTIONS</b>	<b>VOCABULAIRE DES ORGANISATION S DE DEVELOPPEMENT</b>	<b>AIDE AU DEVELOPPEMENT ACTIVITE DANS LA COMMUNAUTE</b>	<b>L'HOPITAL</b>
<p><u>Point à étudier :</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lister les parties d'une maison</li> <li>Décrire sa maison au Cameroun/ aux Etats-Unis</li> <li>Le passé-composé</li> </ul> <p><u>Devoir :</u> Les prépositions Lire les pages 70-73, faire l'exercice 1 page 73</p>	<p><u>Point à étudier :</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Les prépositions de localisation dans l'espace</li> <li>S'orienter</li> <li>Indiquer le chemin</li> </ul> <p><u>Devoir :</u> -Lexique sur le développement Lire la liste de vocabulaire sur le</p>	<p><u>Point à étudier :</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Les Tontines</li> <li>Les ONG</li> <li>Les Gouvernements</li> <li>Les entreprises privées</li> <li>Le futur proche</li> </ul>	<p><u>Devoir :</u> Expressions idiomatiques avec « avoir » et « être » Lire page 286-288 et faire exercice 2 page 287</p>	<p><u>Point à étudier :</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Les parties du corps humain</li> <li>Expressions idiomatiques avec « avoir » et « être »</li> </ul> <p><u>Devoir :</u> Expressions idiomatiques avec « aller » et « faire » Lire les pages 288-289, faire l'exercice 5 page 289</p>

	développement et les ONG -Le futur proche : lire la page 173. Faire l'exercice No 234			
<b>L'HOPITAL</b>  <b>Point à étudier :</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lire et comprendre une prescription médicale</li> <li>• Exprimer son malaise</li> </ul>	<b>LE GENRE</b>  <b>Point à étudier :</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• La condition de la femme</li> <li>• L'égalité</li> </ul>  <b>Devoir :</b> <b>L'impératif</b> <b>Lire 137-138, faire l'exercice 139 page 138</b>	<b>L'ART CULINAIRE</b>  <b>Point à étudier :</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rédaction d'une recette</li> <li>• Les ingrédients</li> <li>• Vocabulaire de la cuisine</li> <li>• L'impératif</li> </ul>	<b>REVISION GENERALE ET CONVERSATION</b>  <b>Point à étudier :</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Le passé-composé</li> <li>• Le présent de l'indicatif des verbes modaux</li> <li>• La phrase interrogative</li> <li>• Les connecteurs de discours</li> </ul>	<b>EXAMEN 2</b>

### *Etude des œuvres littéraires*

Students will be assigned a simple story book during French classes. Six or more classes will focus on using the assigned story book to improved students vocabulary, grammar, and understanding of Cameroon's development realities and challenges as well as to increase their written and oral proficiency.

### *Field trips*

- Market: students will learn to identify local markets products, to bargain and to use the local currency.
- University of Yaoundé I: students go to the University of Yaoundé I, meet and discuss with a group of Cameroonian University students.
- Artisanat: students visit an art market in Fouban and Yaoundé.
- Women's day: In the spring semester, students join women from a local organization in the women's day celebrations.

### **Additional readings**

All students are required to read the assigned novels and texts beforehand to facilitate discussions in class. The readings are tailored to each level and will help you deepen your vocabulary and listening skills. At the same time, they provide a base for classroom discussions and exercises with your teachers and classmates.

- Djaili, Amadou Amal *Walaande : l'art de partager un mari.* Editions Ifrikiya, Yaoundé 2010
- Djaili (2015) *Les Lames de la patience.* Edition Proximite