

Intensive Language Study: Malagasy

MALA-1003 (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

Introductory spoken Malagasy language classes are designed to give students basic communication skills and a fundamental knowledge of spoken Malagasy. Instruction consists of 45-hours of formal instruction in conjunction with exercises such as market visits, rural stays, excursions, and urban home stays. Malagasy language instructors have developed their own material based on workshops sponsored through SIT's African Languages Project and through local experience.

Learning Outcomes

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

- 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 and sing well-known songs.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English and Malagasy.

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 Readings

Manual for Malagasy Language, SIT Study Abroad September 2010.

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 Malagasy language instructors, based on the following assignments:

1) Homework (5%)

Homework will reinforce language literacy skills. Specific topic 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 be grammatical structures and improve control of using those structures in speaking and writing.

2) Language use in Seminars (5%)

The language use in seminar 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 by doing oral presentation.

2) Language use Outside of the Class (10%)

Language use Outside of the Class will be evaluated from your ability to deal with everyday life such as using public transportation, bargain price with local market. Student have to weekly report (oral) their language use outside of the class to the language teacher.

3) Evaluation by Language Instructors (70%)

Evaluation will be done at the end of the semester by assessing your evolution on the writing and oral in Malagasy language. 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 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

Homework – 5%

Language Use in Seminars – 5%

Language use Outside of the Class – 10%

Evaluation by language Instructors (Including oral presentations) – 70%

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

To support a respectful, engaging, and academically rigorous learning environment, students are expected to approach this program with professionalism, preparation, and openness. Because this is an intensive, field-based program, individual conduct directly shapes the quality of the shared academic experience.

- **Learning Community:** Students are expected to engage respectfully with differing perspectives, including those of classmates, guest speakers, and local partners. Agreement is not required, but attentive listening, intellectual openness, and respectful dialogue are essential.
- **Content Considerations:** Course materials and activities may engage sensitive or challenging topics. The classroom is a space for thoughtful, respectful engagement with complex ideas. When possible, faculty will flag particularly intense content in advance. Students who find that course content affects their ability to participate or keep up with coursework are encouraged to communicate with faculty and seek appropriate support.
- **Participation and Engagement:** Students are expected to come prepared and to engage actively in classes, discussions, and site-based learning. This includes contributing thoughtfully to discussion, asking questions, and engaging respectfully with faculty, peers, and guest speakers. Meaningful participation supports collective learning and is an essential part of the program experience.
- **Flexibility and Adaptability:** Schedules and activities may change in response to local conditions or logistical realities. Students are expected to approach such adjustments with flexibility and professionalism. Adaptability is considered part of meaningful engagement in the program.
- **Academic Integrity:** Students are expected to complete all work honestly and ethically, in accordance with academic integrity standards outlined in course and program policies (see link to full policy below).
- **Managing Academic Work:** Students are responsible for maintaining reliable access to their academic work by keeping multiple copies using secure storage methods (e.g., cloud-based platforms or the learning management system). Technical issues such as lost files or device failures do not excuse late or missing work.
- **Personal Technology Use:** Personal devices may be used for note-taking and course-related activities. Off-task use is not acceptable, particularly during discussions, site visits, or guest presentations, as it detracts from collective engagement.
- **Course Communication:** Course materials, assignments, and updates will be posted on Canvas. While the course calendar provides a general structure, adjustments may

occur based on program flow or site-based learning opportunities. Students are responsible for checking the course site regularly and communicating promptly about access issues.

- **Recording Policy:** To support open discussion, recording of classes or program activities is not permitted without prior written approval from the instructor. Approved recordings are for personal academic use only. Documented academic accommodations may supersede this policy.

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.

Credit Hours: School for International Training (SIT) adheres to the standard that 1 credit hour equals no less than 45 hours of coursework. The calculation is based on the standard 50-minute academic hour. The number of credits each course carries determines how many total hours each course involves in a semester. Of the 45-hours for 1-credit hour, one third is designated for direct faculty instruction. Direct faculty instruction includes all learning activities led by the faculty whether in the classroom or in the field — lectures, guest speakers, site visits, hands-on field activities, etc.

The full policy on credit hours can be found [here](#).

AI Usage: SIT's [policy on Generative AI and Academic Programs](#) is included as an addendum to the academic integrity policy.

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

Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lectures' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs.

Module 1: 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 Malagasy.