

The African Language Program

The philosophy behind the African language program is that any serious understanding of Africa begins with language study.

African language courses are designed to help students work toward both communicative and cultural competence.

The overall aim of the program is to help students gain the linguistic skills necessary to function on in all areas of practical need, and prepare them for advanced study of history, culture, and literature.

Regular classroom instruction is offered in four languages: Pulaar, Swahili, Wolof, and Zulu. Yoruba is offered via Distance Learning.

Swahili: Spoken principally in Kenya and Tanzania, Swahili also serves as a regional lingua franca throughout Eastern and Central Africa.

Wolof, the main lingua franca of Senegal and The Gambia is spoken as a first or second language by the majority of populations in those two countries in most social contexts. It is also spoken by a significant minority in Mauritania.

Zulu: The dominant language in KwaZulu-Natal, the largest province in South Africa, Zulu is the language with the largest number of speakers in the country, and is also spoken by populations in Malawi, southern Swaziland, and Lesotho.

Pulaar: The most geographically widespread language in Africa, Pulaar is spoken in various areas from the westernmost point of the African continent (Senegal) southward to Sierra Leone, and eastward across Mali to Sudan. The prominent role played by Pulaar people in West African history is reflected through their rich written and recorded heritage

COURSES

Elementary I, II

These elementary level courses offer an integrative approach to the four language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Students learn to recognize all contrastive sounds and distinguish question and answer intonation, express basic feelings and needs, as well as ask and answer questions related to these needs and feelings. At the completion of the second semester students will be able to communicate using basic structures, express basic courtesy, correctly spell, read, and interpret written text in areas of practical need, and begin to develop cultural insight.

Intermediate I, II

These course focus on further developing students' awareness and understanding of the languages and cultures, as well as improving mastery of grammar, writing skills, and oral skills. Course materials Incorporate various types of text including tales, cartoons, as well as multimedia such as films, videos, and audio recordings. Students will be able to understand, and interpret both written and spoken language in a variety of situations, elaborate on descriptions, and discuss likes and dislikes, comprehend speech on familiar topics, discuss opinions, and cultural differences, recognize various types of spoken and written language, and expand cultural knowledge.

Advanced I, II

These courses focus on further developing students' linguistic competence in a wide variety of social context, and written text. Students will be able to create detailed descriptions using complex sentence structures, narrate events, understand, and interpret complex culturally charged language such as that generally found in tales, and historical narratives. Students will acquire the necessary skills to present an analysis of authentic oral or written text to an audience, respond spontaneously to questions, and formulate and defend a position, and gain further knowledge into the histories, politics, and social settings of the speakers of the language of concern.

Contacts

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FALL 2020 AFRICAN LANGUAGE COURSES

Wolof

SENEGAL, GAMBIA,
MAURITANIA

Elementary Wolof I
Intermediate Wolof I
Advanced Wolof I

Instructor: Mariame Sy
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Swahili

KENYA, TANZANIA, ZAMBIA,
MOZAMBIQUE, SOMALIA,
UGANDA RWANDA, BURUNDI,
MALA WI

Elementary Swahili I
Intermediate Swahili I
Advanced Swahili I

Instructor: Abdul Nanji
agn6@columbia.edu

Pulaar

SENEGAL, GAMBIA, MALI, MAURITANIA,
GUINEA, CAMEROON, BURKINA
FASO...SUDAN

Not offered
Instructor: Mariame Sy

Yoruba

Via Distance Learning
through Cornell

Elementary Yoruba
Intermediate Yoruba

Contact LRC Director
Stephane Charitos
sc758@columbia.edu

Zulu

SOUTHAFRICA MOZAMBIQUE
ZIMBABWE, ZAMBIA
Via Distance Learning
through Yale
Elementary Zulu I
Intermediate Zulu I
Advanced Zulu I

Contact LRC Director
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 **COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

The African Language Program

Swahili, Wolof, Zulu, Pulaar, and Yoruba

