

SDLC 110: Self-Directed Language Learning I

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Office Hours: 3:30 – 5:00 MW, 2:00 – 2:45 T and by appointment

Class Meetings: There are no class meetings for this course. However, students are expected to attend two 50-minute practice sessions with their SDLAP Language Partner each week. Those sessions must begin by the second week of class*. Dr. Scinicariello will also schedule periodic meetings with each student to give feedback on their portfolios and assess the student's progress.

Course Materials: Students identify the learning materials they need based on their own learning goals and plans. The Global Studio does have a collection of resources for student use. A list of these resources will be available through the SDLAP Ning/SDLAP Wiki. *Students who identify resources to be acquired by the Global Studio or the Library should e-mail sscinica@richmond.edu.*

Important Dates: There will be a mid-term assessment of your learning **in October**. A final assessment will take place during the final exam period; the default time is that scheduled for SDLC 105 (Monday, Dec. 17, 9 a.m. - noon). **All coursework is due 7 p.m. Friday, December 14.**

Course Goals: The primary goal of this course is to develop your skills in reading, writing, and speaking a language in an appropriate cultural context. To do this, you will practice the skills of a self-directed language learner that you are learning in SDLC 105. You will also investigate the history of the language and the culture of the areas in which your language is used. Because technology provides a wealth of resources for both language learning and cultural exploration, you are also expected to learn how to use some of these resources effectively.

Course Organization: You are expected to spend 10 – 14 hours each week working on the tasks for this course. How you spend your time depends on your specific learning goals, but here is a suggested plan:

2 hours: required practice sessions with Language Partner*

7 - 9 hours: language learning activities, including preparation for practice sessions

1- 3 hours: reflection on learning and progress; evaluation of available learning resources, exploration of the history and culture of the language (Some of this overlaps with SDLC 105.)

Weekly Assignments: Each week you must reflect on your language-learning activities and on your meetings with your language partner(s) in your learning journal, i.e., your blog on the Ning. **Because the journal/blog is used for both 105 and 110, the titles of your posts should begin with 105 or 110, e.g., 110: Reflection on This Week's Learning.** This weekly report

must include a list of activities and a reflection upon the effectiveness of these activities. For example, if one activity was to watch a video interview on YouTube, you should reflect upon what you learned from this activity. Guidelines for your reflections are posted on the SDLAP Wiki (<https://sites.google.com/site/sdlapwiki/self-directed-learning/guidelines-for-your-reflections>).

In addition, you are expected to create an 'artifact' or complete a cultural posting each week. A general calendar of assignments is posted on the SDLAP Wiki. Specific assignments are designed for novice learners interested primarily in the spoken language; if you have experience in the language and/or specific goals, you must adjust these assignments to match your learning goals.

Working with a Language Partner: Practice sessions with a Language Partner are an essential part of the Self-Directed Language Acquisition Program. Learning a language is all about learning to communicate—and that takes practice. A Language Partner is an educated person who speaks (and, in most cases, reads) the language you are learning. Your Language Partner will help you learn to communicate by helping you practice what you are learning on your own. *Language Partners are not teachers! They will not organize your learning for you. They will not explain grammar.* They will prepare topics for practice and help you learn appropriate vocabulary and structures, based on what you are studying on your own. If you are learning to read and write, they will respond to questions and verify your comprehension of texts during part of the practice sessions. You are responsible for establishing your learning goals and creating learning plans to meet your goals. **You are responsible for letting your Language Partner know both your goals and, less abstractly, what you are planning to learn each week.** If you are meeting with a Language Partner in a small group, you should negotiate learning plans with your fellow learners. Your goals for individual practice sessions should focus on communicative tasks and the cultural behavior appropriate to them. Encourage your Language Partner to help you practice pronunciation through repetition and to create scenarios in which you can practice fluent speech. You may also ask your Partner to verify your listening and reading comprehension. If you are learning to write, your Partner may help you practice that skill. Your primary responsibilities in the Learner-Partner relationship are:

- to make sure that each practice session fits into your learning plan;
- to be prepared to practice vocabulary and structures you have already studied;
- to communicate regularly with your Language Partner about your goals and plans.

Guidelines for your practice sessions are posted on the SDLAP Wiki (<https://sites.google.com/site/sdlapwiki/language-partners>).

Creating an Electronic Portfolio: Each student creates an electronic portfolio on the SDLAP Ning. Each portfolio includes: 1) the student's learning plan(s), 2) reflections on weekly learning activities and meetings with the Language Partner, 3) at least 8 postings on the culture of an area where the target language is used, 4) task-based 'artifacts' which document student progress, and 5) documentation related to the student's cultural project.

Within the Ning, the student's home page is the index of the student's portfolio. Reflections on learning activities are part of the student's blog. To encourage an exchange of ideas, cultural postings are done in the 'Discussions' section of the Ning.

Culture Project: Students must complete a research-based project on one cultural topic. For novice language learners, there is no expectation that the research will be conducted in the target language. However, students are expected to incorporate 10 – 20 words and expressions from the target language that are relevant to the topic. Students beyond the novice level will work with Dr. Scinicariello to determine appropriate language-learning goals for their projects.

Students will identify their topic by the mid-point of the semester and incorporate progress toward the completion of the project as part of their weekly learning activities.

Students will share their cultural projects through brief presentations to the students of SDLC 105 during the last weeks of classes.

Course Grades: Students are evaluated through (A) their electronic portfolio, which will include (1) the learning plans developed in SDLC 105, (2) reflections on their meetings with their learning partner, (3) at least 8 postings on the culture of an area where the language is used, and (4) at least four task-based 'artifacts' which document their progress toward achieving their goals, (5) a research-based cultural project, and (B) an evaluation of their progress in the language by an outside evaluator**.

Links: This course is organized through the SDLAP Ning (<http://sdlapur.ning.com>) and the SDLAP Wiki (<http://sites.google.com/site/sdlapwiki/>), which is linked to the SDLAP Ning. In addition, students are expected to share web-based resources via Diigo. (You will receive instruction on using these resources as part of SDLC 105.)

*If language partners are not immediately available, students will be assigned alternate activities.

**The outside evaluation may be done in the form of an ACTFL proficiency examination or equivalent.