

Cameroon

Social Pluralism and Development

Examine social, economic, and political development patterns in one of West Africa's most ethnically and geographically diverse countries.

Coursework

Social Pluralism and Development Seminar

AFRS 3000 / 6 credits / 90 class hours

An interdisciplinary course conducted primarily in French with required readings and relevant educational excursions. The course explores issues of social change and development in Cameroon. Lecturers are drawn from institutions such as the University of Dschang, the Center for Development and Research of Ngaoundéré, the University of Yaoundé, and a microfinance institution based in Yaoundé.

Seminar topics typically include:

History

This unit serves as background knowledge to understanding the political, economic, and social realities of Cameroonian society today. The unit begins by focusing on Cameroon before colonization; German, French, and British colonization; and the fight for independence. The second half of the unit focuses on Cameroon after independence and the impact that colonization has had on Cameroonian society today.

Development Theories and Approaches

Students examine different theories and approaches to development using Cameroon as a case study in this unit. They also explore development organizations' modalities of development practice and the efficacy of international aid.

Gender

This unit scrutinizes the roles and places of women and men in Cameroonian society. It examines the characteristics of the traditional woman and her role in the family and society. It also explores contemporary gender roles and the gap that exists between modern and traditional roles.

Minorities

Two case studies illustrate issues of minority groups in Cameroon. The first case study examines the "place" of the Anglophone in Cameroon and the political, social, and cultural prejudices against Anglophones. The second case study explores the culture and traditions of the Pygmies and where the Pygmies are in the context of development.

Art, Tradition, and Cultural Expression

This unit examines the history of the Bamilékés and traditional structures like the Chefferies and the similarities between the Chefferie system and "African" democracy. It also examines Bamiléké traditional ceremonies such as those for marriage, widowhood, burial, and initiations into manhood and womanhood and how these ceremonies mark the passage from one level or status to another.

Islam and Traditional Power in the Grand North

This unit examines Islam as practiced in the Grand North of Cameroon and its impact on the people. It also examines the conflicts that arise between religious Koranic education and nonreligious governmental education. It explores the interaction of traditional authorities, political power, and modernity.

Educational Excursions

The program generally includes two or more visits to northern, northwestern (Anglophone), coastal, and/or southern Cameroon, including western Cameroon. These excursions give students a variety of perspectives on the country by examining its varied regions and peoples.

Intensive Language Study: French

FREN 2000–3000 / 4 credits / 60 class hours
Emphasis on speaking, reading, and writing skills through classroom and field instruction. Based on in-country evaluation, including oral proficiency testing, students are placed in intensive intermediate or advanced classes, with additional language practice in homestays, lectures, and field visits. Students also receive basic oral instruction in Fulfulde and Pidgin English.

Field Study Seminar

ANTH 3500 / 2 credits / 30 class hours
A course in the concepts of learning across cultures and from field experience. Introduction to the Independent Study Project. Material includes cross-cultural adaptation and skills building; project selection and refinement; appropriate methodologies; field study ethics



Credits 16

Program Base Yaoundé

Language Study French

Homestays Yaoundé, 5 weeks;
Ngaoundéré, 2 weeks

Rural Visit/Homestay West province,
2 weeks

Other Accommodations Hostels, private homes, and small hotels

Independent Study Project 4 weeks

Prerequisites Three recent semesters of college-level French or equivalent and the ability to follow coursework in French, as assessed by SIT.

and the World Learning/SIT Human Subjects Review Policy; developing contacts and finding resources; developing skills in observation and interviewing; gathering, organizing, and communicating data; maintaining a field journal.

Independent Study Project

ISPR 3000 / 4 credits / 120 class hours
Conducted in Yaoundé or in another approved location appropriate to the project in Cameroon. Sample topic areas: education in a Cameroonian village; traditional healing; bilingualism and the media; the *makossa* style of music; oral history of the Bamiléké people; a women's village cooperative; influence of oil productions on Cameroonian economy and society.