



Mali

Health, Gender, and Community Empowerment

Credits 17

Program Base Bamako

Language Study French, Bambara

Homestay Bamako, 6 weeks

Rural Visit/Homestay Sanankoroba, 1 week

Educational Excursions Djénne, Mopti, Ségou, Markala, Dogon cliff villages, Timbuktu (conditions permitting)

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.

Health, Gender, and Community Empowerment Seminar

AFRS 3000 / 6 credits / 90 class hours

An interdisciplinary course conducted primarily in French, with required readings, examining the links between economic development, community empowerment, and social issues such as gender, religion, and health, in the cultural context of contemporary Mali. Resources utilized in the delivery of course content include the Malian Association for the Defense and Rights of Women, Pivot Santé, the Center Aoua Kéita, and CAFO (Coalition des Associations et ONG Feminines du Mali). Lectures and discussions for this course generally include the following topics:

Malian Social Organization and Cultural Values

Precolonial and colonial history; Mali since independence; ethnic groups of Mali; the educational system and use of language; fables, myths, and stories; contemporary Malian politics; traditional forms of governance and leadership; *griots* and oral traditions; animism, Islam, and Christianity in Mali; history of Dogon country.

Health, Gender, and Community Empowerment

Traditional gender roles in Malian society; grassroots and community development efforts; women's cooperatives; poverty relief programs; local craft production; women, children, and development; stakeholders in Mali's development agenda; HIV/AIDS and public education in Mali; health delivery in urban Mali; access to health care in rural areas; mother and infant nutrition; women's choices in family health care; sanitation and hygiene in formal and informal education; traditional medicine and traditional healers; home-based health care; changing roles in urban Mali; governmental priorities in health and development.

Educational Excursions

To allow students to explore a variety of Malian cultures and ways of life, the program includes visits to the Niger River towns of Ségou, Mopti,

and Timbuktu, conditions permitting, as well as to fabled Djénne and to Dogon villages along the Bandiagara cliffs.

Rural Visit

To afford direct knowledge of Malian rural development issues, participants live for one week in a small Bambara-speaking village near Bamako. Village conditions are basic, frequently with no electricity or running water, and provide an invaluable opportunity to learn from rural Malians.

Intensive Language Study: French

FREN 2000-3000 / 3 credits / 45 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 further language practice in homestays, lectures, and field visits.

Intensive Language Study: Bambara

BAMB 1000 / 2 credits / 30 class hours
Emphasis on beginning oral comprehension skills through classroom and field instruction. Formal instruction is augmented by language practice with host families during the homestay and visits to marketplaces.

Field Study Seminar

ANTH 3500 / 2 credits / 30 class hours
Conducted primarily in English, this is 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 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 Bamako or in another approved location appropriate to the project in Mali. Sample topic areas: women's roles in family health care; literacy and Malian women; feminization of the workplace; traditional healing and birthing practices; nonformal education from mother to child in Sanankoroba; division of labor in Ségou's kitchen gardens; nutrition and health choices in Bamako's marketplace; health care practices among the Dogon; public health education campaigns around Timbuktu; training midwives for rural delivery support; Islam and health in Bamako's Islamic centers.

Homestay

Six weeks in Bamako and a one-week village stay. Other accommodations during the program include hostels or small hotels.

NGO Connections Expand Perspectives

Focusing on the intersection of gender dynamics, health, and development, this program collaborates with many influential nongovernmental associations to share ideas and introduce students to new perspectives. One example is the Malian Association for the Defense and Rights of Women (APDF), which focuses on domestic violence, the fight against female genital mutilation (FGM), and the promotion and empowerment of women. APDF welcomes SIT Study Abroad students as observers or participants in its activities, and APDF staff regularly advise students for Independent Study Projects. Past opportunities for students have included visiting a village as part of an educational outreach program to curb FGM.