

Syllabus of Lao Language Program Level I

SouthEast Asian Studies Summer Institute 2014

University of Wisconsin-Madison

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Classroom: Humanities Bldg, room 2121 or 2637 (smart room)

Class Hours: Monday – Friday, 8:00 AM – 12:15 PM (Central time of North America)

1st Period: 8:00 – 8:55

2nd Period: 9:05 – 9:55

Break: 9:55 – 10:15

3rd Period: 10:15 – 11:10

4th Period: 11:15 – 12:15

Course Materials:

Students will be provided with weekly and daily hand-outs and other copies related to learning topics, since there are no standard textbooks for the courses. However, the courses will be supported by the textbook written by Frank Smith, **“Road to Lao” accompanied with DVD.**

Dictionary: own a personal dictionary Lao-English, English-Lao is strongly recommended and addition to <http://www.sealang.net/lao/dictionary.htm>.

Course Description

This is an intensive course, equivalent to a one full academic year course, for the first year of learning Lao language and culture. The class is designed for the development of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in standard spoken and written Lao language. About 60% of the learning time will be spending on speaking and listening, and about 40% on writing. The class will consist mostly of communicative, task-oriented or project-based activities which will give students the chance to use spoken and written Lao language in situations that reflect real-life situations both socially and academically. Lectures will be given on Lao grammar, the writing system and the use of final particles and other support materials to indicate nuance of expression and to develop a spoken style. Explanations in English will be given occasionally for the difficult materials or for any clarification.

Students must show appropriate respects for their instructor and for their peers. Students are also expected to use appropriate classroom Lao language at all times both in class and outside the class during the time of learning Lao language and culture courses, including talking to other students. Failure to perform in this regard will hurt one's grade just as much as not doing homework or not showing up to class. A big part of learning the Lao language this summer is culture. It is important to make the classroom a distinctly Lao cultural environment.

Course requirements:

This is an intensive language and culture learning program. It is required that students **come to class on time** from the beginning of the session until the end of the session. Every minute counts and **active participation** both in class and outside class activities is very essential. Completed homework or assignments must be **turned in on time**. In general, students are expected to spend at least one hour per class hour preparing and studying outside the class. To reach the goals that listed in the course objectives, students must spend this minimum amount of time studying or preparing outside the class. **Elective absence** is discouraged in the strongest possible terms. A day of absence reduces the highest possible grade. Illness and death of the immediate family member will be handled on individual basis.

There are a few necessary "rules" that all students are required to follow:

1. Please respect your instructor
2. Please address your instructor by the title that you are learned on the first day of class.
3. Please, no cell phone is used in class
4. No laptop will be allowed to use in class, except for certain group project or when you are taught to type in Lao.

Course Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated according to the following criteria for each course, 313 and 314 separately:

- Class participation 50%
- Independent study 20%
- Homework Assignments 20%
- Exams: Mid-term 5%, Final 5% 10%
- Grades are based on the total of the accumulated points according to the above evaluation criteria.

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|----|----------|----|------------|
| A | 100 - 95 | C | 79 - 75 |
| AB | 94 - 90 | CD | 74 - 70 |
| B | 89 - 85 | D | 69 - 60 |
| BC | 84 - 80 | F | 59 - below |

Criteria of Language Observation and Evaluation:

1. Language Proficiency in Speaking and Listening:
 - **Comprehension:** able to understand words, phrases, and sentences; able to answer to simple questions; able to follow high frequency commands and courtesy formula;
 - **Fluency:** able to use simple words, phrases, and sentences effortlessly in the classroom discussion or conversation;
 - **Vocabulary:** able to use correct words that center on areas of the course objectives and use learned vocabulary to build up conversation skills to the next level;
 - **Grammar:** use word order correctly; able to ask simple questions or make simple statements involving learned materials;
 - **Pronunciation:** able to hear and distinguish between different sounds and tones, and able to use proper sounds and tones.
2. Language Proficiency in Writing:
 - **Vocabulary:** mastery of sight words or word choice and correct spelling;
 - **Letters:** able to legibly copy or transcribe learned words, phrases, and sentences;
 - **Grammar:** able to correctly write simple phrases and sentences.
3. Language Proficiency in Reading:
 - **Attitude:** display confidently understanding learned vocabulary and simple sentence constructions;
 - **Comprehension:** able to recognize characters of the alphabetic syllabic writing system and able to share ideas and insights gained from short reading passages or stories.
4. Proficiency in Culture:
 - **Awareness:** begin to understand cultural expectations and traditions
 - **Knowledge:** begin to build cultural knowledge in the areas of Lao history, traditions, religion, and the ways of life of Lao people in general.

Weekly Schedules and Themes

Week 1: June 16th to June 20th - Greetings and Leave-takings

- Monday - SEASSI Orientation, placement test, and individual interview with instructor
- Wednesday – join with Khmer class for cultural dancing at 11:30 to 12:30

Week 2: June 23rd to June 27th - Family and Home

- Wednesday – join with Khmer class for watching the life of Buddha movie at 11:30 to 12:30 sharing traditional songs
- Friday – **Mid-term test of the 1st semester**
- Saturday – June 28th SEASSI conference

Week 3: June 30th to July 4th - Community

- Join with Hmong class for visiting farmer market @ 8 – 10 a.m.
- Wednesday join with Khmer class for learning about chewing betel and sharing traditional songs at 11:30 to 12:30

Week 4: July 7th to July 11th - Food

- Wednesday – join with Khmer class for learning how to make an Asian sandwich
- Thursday – **Final test of the 1st semester**
- Friday – No class for **the 4th of July Holiday**

Week 5: July 14th to July 18th - Holidays and Traditions

- Week 1 of Independent Project
- Saturday, July 19th – Poetry Night at 7:00 p.m.

Week 6: July 21st to July 25th - Occupations and Times

- Week 2 of Independent Project
- Tuesday – Watch a collection of short Lao films @ 7-9 pm in rm 206 Ingraham Hall
- Friday - **Mid-term of the 2nd semester**

Week 7: July 28th to August 1st - Transportation and Directions

- Week 3 of Independent Project
- Saturday, August 2nd - Cultural Night

Week 8: August 4th to August 8th - Short stories

- Week 4 of Independent Project and sharing your oral presentation
- Friday - **Final test of the 2nd semester**

Independent Study Project of Lao Program 2014

Every student will design and complete a significant independent study project this summer. Please take this project seriously; it counts for 20% of your total grade. You may feel that your Lao language is not advanced or sophisticated right now, but it will be improved dramatically by the time you are scheduled to make your oral presentation of your project in the week 8 of SEASSI.

Also, keep in mind that the level of linguistic sophistication for which you'll be held responsible at any given point in the progress of your work on this project is directly related to your level of knowledge of Lao at that specific point in time. You will be expected to put forth your best effort at carrying out this project, using all of your current abilities in Lao (as those abilities are defined in each week of SEASSI), throughout the course of the summer—no more, no less.

The topic of this project may be just about anything to do with Lao culture, language, society, art, history, etc. that you choose, subject to the instructor's approval. In the execution of the project you should primarily put to use the skill areas of Lao language (speaking, reading, writing) in which you are currently the weakest. All projects, however, must include some written text in the final product, and each student must present her/his project orally in Lao to the class in Week Eight of SEASSI.

The first three weeks of the summer are for design, research, and logistical setup (including making contacts in the local Lao community, if necessary) of your project. Weeks Four through Seven are for carrying out the project. Week Seven (and the weekend and Monday-Tuesday of Week Eight) is also for final writing-up, editing, and, especially, practicing your oral presentation.

You're expected to touch base with me, with progress reports and questions related to your project, *at least* once a week throughout the duration of your project, beginning in Week Four, probably more often than once a week. It is *your* responsibility to initiate and cultivate this contact. How conscientiously you do this will affect your grade.

Deadlines

Friday, June 27 - By the end of week two @ 12:30 pm, you must hand in or e-mail me a two to three sentence description of your idea for a project. This can be in English, Lao (optional).

Thursday, July 3 - At the end of week three @ 12:30 pm, you must turn in a formal (1 page) proposal outlining your project in detail. As much of this proposal as possible should be written in Lao, but beginning students may write a fair amount of it in English. Intermediate and advanced students should write their proposal in Lao as much as possible. The proposal must describe the goal/purpose of your project, provide a detailed week-by-week timeline describing exactly what you'll do from Weeks 4-7, and specify exactly what products you will produce in your project such as written paper, video, audio, etc. You will be graded on how well you adhere to your timeline and whether or not you turn in the products specified in this proposal.

This proposal will then be approved by the instructor to you for revisions. Either way, you will be notified by Tuesday, July 1st. If you need to do revisions, they must be turned in by *12:30 pm on Thursday, July 3rd*, you must begin working on the main substance of your project on *Tuesday, July 1st*. This means that in Week Three (or earlier) you should already be working on obtaining the source material you'll need and establishing contacts in the community. All preliminary preparations you need to work on your project: contacting people in the community or in other states/countries by e-mail or phone, locating written source materials in either English or Lao, etc., must be completed by *Thursday, July 3rd*, and you must demonstrate this in the meeting you arrange with your instructor that week.

Work on almost all aspects of your project should be completed by *Monday, August 4th*.

Wednesday, August 6, and Thursday, August 7, students will present oral reports (props such as video, etc. optional but encouraged) on their projects in class. Order of presentations will be determined by the instructor, with the aim of keeping a good flow of topics and mixture of “serious” and “fun” presentations.

Oral reports must be done completely in Lao. If your presentation contains a large amount of specialized vocabulary that you don't expect other students to already know, you can prepare a handout with short English definitions of selected terms.

Each oral presentation must be *at least 15 but no more than 20 minutes long*. 10 minutes will be set aside for questions from the rest of the class *following* each presentation. If you do use video, audio, etc., you must still speak by yourself, “live” in class (in Lao) for 10 minutes out of the total 15 minutes of your report. This means that a video, audio recording or any other aid used in your project which takes up time that you are not speaking must not exceed 5 minutes. And yes, you will be timed.

Also—and this is important—this is an ORAL presentation. You may use an outline/notes so you make sure you cover all your points, but if you READ your presentation, your grade on the project will be reduced by HALF. I hate to be so draconian, but the oral presentation is about speaking skills, not reading ability. This is one way to ensure that you are capable of speaking Lao to convey your ideas to people.

Also, your grade will suffer if you do not attend all of your fellow classmates' presentations and participate with thoughtful questions afterward.

Finally, all physical or electronic products associated with your project, which were specified in your proposal, ***must be turned in to me no later than 12:15 pm on Thursday, August 7***. No exceptions or extensions. Of course, you're welcome to turn things in earlier if you want!

Note that I said earlier in this document that you should have completed almost all work on your project, especially the written documents, by Monday August 4th. One of the advantages of this is that if you are done that early, you can submit a draft of your final written product to me for feedback, and I can also flag misspellings you need to correct. Since you're being given this opportunity, if you don't turn in an early draft and just place all your bets on the final product you hand in on August 7, or use a Powerpoint in your oral presentation that hasn't been checked carefully enough for spelling, keep in mind that it will be graded quite strictly and mercilessly for spelling, etc. Take advantage of that early feedback!

If you need help coming up with an idea for your project, please see me. I will make available examples of past students' project proposals and final products for your viewing in the office. You can see videos of successful oral presentations at <http://www.studykhmer.com/videos/lao.html>

 Intermediate student presentation on the life the Buddha and the Vessantara Jataka

 Why The Dog Lifts Its Leg when It Pees

 Dead Within Seven Days: An Episode from the Tales of Xieng Mieng