

Southeast Asian Studies

Summer Institute

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Guidelines for Distance Learning at SEASSI

The purpose of these guidelines is to give you an overview of what it would mean to be a distance learner at SEASSI, and to make sure you understand how distance learners will fit into our student body. In keeping with our commitment to the development of communicative ability, SEASSI online instruction will be **synchronous, intensive, and tightly scheduled**. Rather than individual work, instruction will be classroom-based, that will involve students at different locations working together in a synchronous format. Work and study approaches will differ according to language and level, but all students will have to prepare for each session by completing assigned work and will be expected to participate actively while online. **Classes will be held from 8:00 am to 12:30 pm CST, Mondays through Fridays, during the eight-week summer program.**

There is a **maximum of TWO spots for distance learners available per class**. We anticipate that most students attending SEASSI will do so in person. The distant student will be "present" on a desk in a language classroom via a tablet and will connect to the tablet in the classroom via a desktop or high-quality laptop computer. The distant student will be able to hear the instructor and see the blackboard, and the instructor and the rest of the students in class will be able to hear and see the distant student in real time. Distance education students should expect to spend anywhere from 3 to 5 hours per day on homework assignments. This is the same homework load as that expected of SEASSI students in a traditional classroom setting. Given the intensive nature of the program, students are advised not to take other courses for credit during SEASSI.

Learning a second language in a distance format will always be more challenging than face-to-face in a classroom. We **strongly recommend that students attend SEASSI in person**, rather than online, if at all possible. If you cannot attend SEASSI in person, however, our goal is to make your online learning experience as productive and positive as possible.

Our instructional staff are experts in language teaching, and many of them have decades of teaching experience. They are truly gifted, wonderful teachers! Distance language teaching, however, is a new experience for many of our instructors, and you should expect that teachers may occasionally run into software or equipment problems requiring technical support. SEASSI support staff will assist in resolving such problems as quickly as possible. Students should also expect to occasionally run into software or equipment problems on their end. In the months and weeks prior to instruction, SEASSI support staff will work with each individual distance student to work out as many technical glitches as possible and will similarly assist after classes begin.

Distance students will also need to give careful consideration to the location from which they'll be participating. **Participation from a distant location will require a high speed, wired connection in a location that is free from distractions such as background noise or foot traffic.** A cafe or location with background noise would not provide an appropriate setting, for example. We recommend that distant students utilize the language lab at their home college or university, if possible.

It is **imperative that each distance student be at a wired broadband connection**, so that all audio and video signals are as fast as possible. You will be expected to work with SEASSI support staff, prior to the beginning of classes, to test out your computer equipment and internet connection. It is extremely disruptive to the instructor and classmates when a distance student's signal is weak, choppy, or frozen. The distant student is responsible for maintaining adequate bandwidth and computer speed to ensure smooth, clear audio and video signals. **Distance students who fail to do so will be asked to leave the class until the technical issues are resolved, and no tuition refund will be given to distance students in this circumstance.**

If at all possible, we recommend that students take advantage of the resources available at local college or university language labs. A typical college language lab offers very high-speed internet connections, powerful computers, good-quality headsets, and an environment that is ideal for language learning.

The minimum requirements of your computer system for this mode of instruction are well beneath what most computers are typically capable of:

- 2 GB RAM minimum; more recommended
- 20 MB free disk space
- Sound Card

- Headset with microphone/headphones, or speakers and a good-quality echo-canceling microphone
- Webcam