

## AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND AFRICAN STUDIES

### SOMALI 101-104

The courses in Somali is intended to broaden our African languages program currently taught by the Center for African Studies and the Department of African-American and African Studies, and to offer students an additional option for the fulfillment of the General Education Curriculum (GEC) Foreign Language requirement. The goal of this requirement is to enhance our students' awareness of, and respect and appreciation for, the global interdependence of the modern world and the cultural diversity of the world community, and therefore the importance to understand and communicate across ethnic, ideological, cultural and national boundaries. The assumption is that cultural mores and concepts are closely reflected in language, which can, therefore, provide one vital access to that understanding and lead to the potential of real communication. Thus, elementary and intermediate study of language can reveal much about the patterns of thought and cultural principles of another people as well as of one's own. Access to the literature and comparable artistic achievements of another culture enhances one's consciousness of the creativity and aspirations of many others in a diverse world. The careful study of Somali, therefore, including general attention to critical thinking, will provide our students a desirable, practical, and necessary resource for their personal and professional development within and outside of national boundaries.

Somali belongs to the Cushitic group of African languages, spoken by over 20 million people worldwide. It is the national language of Somalia and is the second language of large segments of the population in Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Kenya. With the recent immigration of Somali to other countries, the language is now spoken widely in other parts of the world, including the United States, and is broadcast over the major broadcasting networks, including the BBC and Radio Moscow. It is the language of parliament, the media, commerce and official communication in Somalia, and it is a modern language functioning at all levels of society and culture from market bargaining, popular songs, literary composition and folklore. Somali has a rich body of written literature dating back to the advent of Islam, and reflects Somali's historical use in Africa's contact with other cultures. Because of the wide geographical area where Somali is spoken, and the diverse groups of clans that speak the language, Somali language has two major dialects: Af Maay (or Maay Maay), which serves as the lingua franca, and Al Maxaa which has become the written variety. In 1973 the Somali government decreed that Somali would be written in the Latin alphabet.

**Description:** Elementary Somali 101 to 102 courses are designed to enable the acquisition and development of basic language skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing, with the additional goal of introducing a student to the cultural context that has produced the language and in which it is used. Intermediate Somali 103 to 104 courses will continue the acquisition and development of skills and further enhance the understanding of the culture. The courses will follow a competency-based approach that is intended to develop the four basic skills in the language, and promote the appreciation and use of the linguistic, para-linguistic, and non-linguistic modes of communication in

their socio-cultural context. The student will learn the relationship between language and culture in order to foster the ability to understand people and how they express themselves. The presence of a large Somali community in the university and Columbus neighborhood will be maximally utilized, and opportunities will be provided for students to practice using the language in a range of contexts relevant to the environment of the students and the target culture, and creative language practice will be encouraged throughout the course. The class size will be limited to 25 students, maximum, for pedagogical effectiveness.

The department will hire a lecturer or language instructor who is a native Somali speaker and conversant with language pedagogy and linguistics, to teach Somali quarter-to-quarter. The initial funding for this position is Title VI, but the department will take over responsibility after the initial three years the way it has done with other language courses, depending on student demand. The offering of Somali will enable students to fulfill the foreign language requirement. In addition, it will also address the needs of heritage learners, i.e., students who want to learn the Somali language because they are emotionally connected to the Somali culture because they are descendants of Somali immigrants, or because they have Somali neighbors (or neighborhoods) with whom they want to interact. The method used for the course puts emphasis on speaking using live conversation and pre-recorded materials. The instructor will be there to help students pronounce and engage in group and individual conversations, as well as introduce students to writing and reading materials in Somali. At the end of the course, students will have developed various language ability skills, such as the ability to correctly pronunciation of Somali words (especially difficult sounds like X, C, Kh, and Q), make sense of different basic grammar rules (such as pronouns, tenses, and singular/plural), comprehend class discussions and short conversations, build a working amount of Somali vocabulary, and attain a good language usage (spoken and written).