



## **SDLC 110, 111, 112, and 113: General Syllabus for Self-Directed Language Learning Courses**

Professor: Dr. Michael Marsh-Soloway

E-mail: [mmarshso@richmond.edu](mailto:mmarshso@richmond.edu)

Telephone: 804-287-6838 (office)

Office: INTC 225

Office Hours: 3:00-5:00pm on Thursdays and by appointment.

To schedule a consultation: <https://mmarshso.youcanbook.me/>

**Class Meetings: There are no class meetings for this course. Students are expected, however, to hold regular meetings with their SDLAP Language Partner for a minimum of two hours per week.** These sessions must begin by the second week of class. You are encouraged to coordinate with Dr. Marsh-Soloway and Representatives of the Bonner Center for Civic Engagement to help frame interactions with community partners as reciprocal learning activities of mutual benefit.

### **Performance-Review Consultations with Dr. Marsh-Soloway, one in February and one in April:**

To receive updates at established checkpoints, assess linguistic progress, and evaluate feedback on instructional interactions with language partners, students are required to schedule at least two consultations during the semester with Dr. Marsh-Soloway. You can schedule these consultations by selecting appointment times from the following link: <https://mmarshso.youcanbook.me/>

### **What is the SDLAP?**

Established in the spring of 2009, the Self-Directed Language Acquisition Program (SDLAP) provides opportunities for students to pursue less-commonly-taught languages (LCTLs). Students who have completed the COM2 requirement are eligible to enroll in the SDLAP after an introductory consultation with Dr. Michael Marsh-Soloway. The SDLAP is a five-course program, consisting of an introductory half-credit weekly seminar, SDLC 105, along with concurrent or successive full credit units of self-directed study working with a network of community partners in SDLC 110, 111, 112, 113. Students may opt to take as many or as few courses in the program as they choose. Languages routinely offered through the SDLAP include Korean, Persian (Farsi/Dari), modern Hebrew, and Turkish. Aside from these regular offerings, the SDLAP has also supported students pursuing studies in Amharic, Bahasa Indonesia, Bengali, Czech, Dutch, Greek, Hindi, Kannada, Portuguese, Quechua, Sanskrit, Swedish, and Wolof. In the nine years since its inception, the SDLAP has assisted and advised several hundred UR students in their endeavors to acquire new linguistic skills, global knowledge, and cultural sensitivities. Students preparing for or returning from study or service abroad may also use the SDLAP to begin or continue the study of a language not included in traditional course offerings.

The SDLAP, on average, annually produces 1-2 recipients of the U.S. Department of State Critical Language Scholarship (CLS), and enrolled students often pursue academic initiatives that coincide with diverse fellowship awards, including Fulbright, Gilman, Rhodes, and others. Students also tend to pursue diverse degrees in Global Studies, LLC, LALIS, and International Business, and they are encouraged to develop interdisciplinary applications of their language skills. The SDLAP is open to students in all concentrations, and students are encouraged to build applied, task-based objectives in their language studies to promote professional readiness.

In supporting the SDLAP, the Global Studio has endeavored to become both a physical and digital hub for autonomous language learners. Reflection and dialogue are crucial components of community building. In the course, you will document your own the Ning (<http://sdlapur.ning.com/>), an online forum, social network, and archive of student e-portfolio projects exploring diverse topics related to language acquisition, intercultural competence, experiential reflection, and the shared aggregation of helpful tools, strategies, and resources. There are separate syllabi for SDLC 105 and 110. The former is a kind of crash course in applied and theoretical linguistics, whereby students engage the abstract structural components of language vis-à-vis Chomsky's Universal Grammar. By considering questions of systematic composition, perception, culture, and social pragmatics, students will then share specific features of their target languages, and frame their own goals, task-based activities, and learning plans (syllabi) relative to unique interests, skills, and applied concentrations. SDLC 110, correspondingly, stresses the communicative activation of linguistic skills obtained through regular contact with Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistants (FLTAs) and community-based language partners coordinated in conjunction with the Bonner Center for Civic Engagement (CCE). **Students may opt to take SDLC 105 and 110 concurrently or in separate semesters.** The SDLAP emphasizes increased linguistic proficiency, community engagement, and learner autonomy. The students in the program enjoy the intellectual freedom to devise their own syllabi, learning goals, assessment metrics, activities, and content selections.

### Course Goals:

The primary goal of this course is to develop your communicative reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills in a language not traditionally offered at the University of Richmond. Additionally, you are expected to gain unique cultural knowledge and insights from interactions with your language partners, research, and conversation tasks. You will be asked to investigate the history of the target language and the culture, and develop understandings of associated regions and peoples. Because technology provides a wealth of resources for both language learning and cultural exploration, you are also expected to learn how to use some of these resources effectively.

This course stresses task-based activities to help students accomplish real-world objectives and connect more meaningfully with others. Students are strongly encouraged to gain exposure to different tasks in community-based partnerships to stimulate interactions in the target language with diverse native speakers. These task-based activities advance linguistic skills and intercultural sensitivities. Communicative ability remains paramount in language acquisition. **In order to learn a new language, you need to speak it!** The Self-Directed Language Acquisition Program (SDLAP) will be working closely with the Bonner Center for Civic Engagement to identify synergies to help you facilitate language exchanges with individuals and organizations in the greater Richmond area and beyond.

Examples of community partners include

- ReEstablish Richmond
- The International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- The Virginia Interfaith Center
- Capital Area Immigrants' Rights Coalition
- Adult Education Courses led by Prof. Sumi Kim and Rev. Hyunchan Bae at the Lord Jesus Korean Church in Bon Air
- Feel free to suggest others!
  - Once you identify prospective community partners, you should research their activities and consult with Dr. Marsh-Soloway and the Bonner Center to discuss how best to bring these interactions to life.

Working with these organizations will encourage you to activate language skills develop interpersonal communication skills, and build both linguistic and cultural sensitivities. You and your community partners should endeavor to overcome problems, work toward your unique learning goals, and contribute to public discourses based on your experiences. You are encouraged to adapt assignments and interactions from the SDLAP into published papers, podcasts, articles, and even short films or digital storytelling projects.

After each meeting with community representatives, students and their partners should come away with knowledge of new words, phrases (collocations), sentence structures, cultural values, etc. The more you use the target language, moreover, the more it will increase your abilities to use the presented linguistic information in other contexts, and contribute to the realization of related structures when applied to other tasks. The nature of these exchanges can be framed in such a way to ground the delivery of linguistic content in real-world challenges. UR students should identify language-based content areas that would be of the most significant benefit to community members, and vice-versa. For instance, these areas could foreseeably include college admissions for first-generation families, career development in the articulation of CVs and cover letters, steps to start a business, or explanations regarding governmental documentation, licensure, regulation, etc. Students would then be tasked with the aspect of explaining these cultural concepts in the target language, which would not only help community partners, but also advance foundational linguistic acquisition efforts. The language exchange model is often a helpful framework to bring about mutually-beneficial learning outcomes for both students and language partners. In this sense, the activities promote mutually beneficial learning outcomes and increased standards of inclusivity and reciprocity. Just as you learn from your community partners, so too, will your community partners learn from you.

**Course Organization:** You are expected to spend approximately 10 hours each week to acquire skills and sensitivities required to increase your level of linguistic proficiency and achievement of tasks assigned by your language partner. How you spend your time depends on your specific learning goals, but here is a suggested plan:

2 hours of required practice with your community language partner

5-6 hours of language learning homework activities, projects, and preparation for assessment and practice sessions

1-2 hours of reflection on your learning progress, combined with the evaluation of available resources and the exploration of the target culture, geography, history, communities, etc.

**Course Materials:** Students identify the learning materials they need based on their own learning goals and plans. The Global Studio does have a collection of resources for student use. A list of these resources will be available through the SDLAP Ning/SDLAP Wiki. Students who identify resources to be acquired by the Global Studio or the Library should e-mail [mmarshso@richmond.edu](mailto:mmarshso@richmond.edu).

## Assignments and Grading Distribution

### 1) Monthly Language Learning Journal on the Ning (20%)

**Submit 4 separate journal entries to your profile on the Ning. Each journal entry should be a minimum of 500 words. The entries are due by 5:00pm on the last Sunday of every month on the following dates:**

- 5:00pm on Sunday, August 31
- 5:00pm on Sunday, September 26
- 5:00pm on Sunday, October 31
- 5:00pm on Sunday, November 28

As a central component of the course, students are required to create bi-weekly language learning journals to document successes, struggles, and intellectual interests. To be a successful self-directed learner, you need to be able to reflect upon your own learning. In SDLC 110 - 113, you are asked to post bi-weekly reflections on your learning activities. These reflections should be informed by the work you are doing / have done in SDLC 105, but should be more specific about how you are learning your target language. Each post should include:

- the task(s) you are working on;
- a statement of what you hoped to accomplish;
- a reflective summary of reciprocal goals and interactions with community language partners;
- the strategies (activities and resources) you used to work on your task(s);
- an evaluation of the effectiveness of your strategies;
- how you will build on what you have learned about the language;
- how you will build on what you have learned about your strategies.

Other aspects of language learning to reflect upon when it's appropriate:

- your emotions about language learning (pride, frustration, enthusiasm, etc.);
- connections between the language you are learning and the culture of where it is spoken;
- experimenting with new learning strategies for listening, speaking, reading, and writing;
- a successful experience in your learning;
- a not-so-successful experience;
- revisions in your task lists and/or short-term and long-term goals.

**2) Four cultural posts with authentic artifacts (10%)**

**Submit at least 4 separate cultural posts with your reactions, impressions, and interpretive understandings of independently selected authentic artifacts to your profile on the Ning. Each post should be a minimum of 500 words. The entries are due on the first Sunday of subsequent months on the following dates:**

5:00pm on Sunday, September 5

5:00pm on Sunday, October 3

5:00pm on Sunday, November 7

5:00pm on Sunday, December 5

Throughout the course, you will be asked to develop cultural posts to explore different traditions, values, and concepts unique to your target language and acquisition efforts. You are free to investigate any cultural dimension that aligns with your interests and curiosities. Four of these cultural posts should contain *authentic artifacts*. These artifacts should be representations of texts, sound recordings, conversation transcriptions, or artistic productions produced by or in tandem with native speakers/representatives from the target language and culture.

**3) Submit Recorded Podcast Interview with your Community Language Partner (15%)**

Submit a podcast-style interview with your community partner(s) and reflect on your work throughout the semester. Your podcasts should be 10-15 minutes in length. Feel free to use the microphones and portable digital audio recorders available in the Global Studio. Your proceedings should predominately occur in English to promote shared reflection, but you are strongly encouraged to provide samples of your conversation skills and practice **Post the audio recording to your profile on the Ning by 5:00pm on Monday, December 13.**

**4) Final Cultural research Presentation Recording Uploaded to Course PanOpto Site (10%)**

**\*\*If you are co-enrolled in SDLC 105, you only need to produce one final research presentation. Your final project will suffice for both SDLC 105 and 110.\*\***

Students will complete a research-based project on a cultural topic of their choosing. The presentations should be at least 10 minutes in length. This project should demonstrate how they have engaged deeper knowledge of this topic by pursuing activities in their learning plans. Students are expected to incorporate at least 10 phrases and expressions from the target language that are relevant to the topic. A rubric appears on the last page of this syllabus. The activity is intended to be interactive, so students should present to classmates or their language partners, and the video recordings should be uploaded to the PanOpto video collection in Blackboard to increase the shared collaborative value of research.

Peer assessment will comprise a component of your final presentation grade. You can find the presentation files in the PanOpto Video collection on the Blackboard course site. Use the following [Google Form](#) to submit assessments and comments of work submitted by your classmates. Each peer assessment that you submit for your classmates will result in one percentage point to your grade for the assignment. This activity is to make the presentations more interactive, and to document discussion points for further investigation and debate.

**Due by 5:00pm on Monday, December 13**

**5) Collaborative engagement with other students in the SDLAP (5%) Due by 5:00pm on Monday, December 13.** Post at least 10 comments or questions on your classmates Ning posts and final cultural presentations. These collaborative engagement posts should be at least 50 words in length. If you are co-enrolled in SDLC 105, you only need to post one set of 10 comments to fulfill this requirement.

**6) Evaluative Feedback Provided by Language Partners (40%)**

Practice sessions with a Language Partner are an essential part of the Self-Directed Language Acquisition Program. Learning a language is all about learning to communicate—and that takes **practice**. A Language Partner is an educated person who speaks (and, in most cases, reads) the language you are learning. Your Language Partner will help you learn to communicate by helping you practice what you are learning on your own. Based on your goals, your Language Partner will also help you to devise homework activities, assignments, and assessments to track your learning. They will prepare topics for practice and help you learn appropriate vocabulary and structures, based on what you are studying on your own. If you are learning to read and write, they will respond to questions and verify your comprehension of texts during part of the practice sessions. You are responsible for establishing your learning goals and creating learning plans to meet your goals.

**You are responsible for letting your Language Partner know both your goals, and less abstractly, what you are planning to learn each week.** If you are meeting with a Language Partner in a small group, you should negotiate learning plans with your fellow learners. Your goals for individual practice sessions should focus on communicative tasks and the cultural behavior appropriate to them. Encourage your Language Partner(s) to help you practice pronunciation through repetition and to create scenarios in which you can practice fluent speech. You may also ask your Partner(s) to verify your listening and reading and writing comprehension. Your responsibilities in the Learner-Partner relationship are:

- to make sure that each practice session fits into your learning plan;
- to be prepared to practice vocabulary and structures you have already studied;
- to communicate regularly with your Language Partner about your goals and plans.

**In your exchanges with your community language partners, you should look to abide by the following guidelines:**

- i) Try to keep English-language usage to a minimum;
- ii) If you don't know something- Ask! Don't hesitate to ask for clarification or repetition;
- iii) Make sure you know the topic, and prepare associated vocabulary, sentence structures you need to participate in the conversation;
- iv) Ask for recommendations on assignments to improve your retention and recall abilities;
- v) Listen and learn as you and partner(s) correct mistakes;
- vi) Seek out opportunities to verify your comprehension;
- vii) Enthusiastically join group activities, excursions, and conversation events;
- viii) Don't hesitate to ask about appropriate cultural behavior;
- ix) Take notes to document your language learning in preparation for your bi-weekly journal entries;
- x) Reflect, adapt, apply, enjoy!

**Attendance and Tardiness Policy**

Regular attendance in weekly meetings with your Language Partners is crucial to your progress. Student absences can have a major effect on grade performance and overall progress in the course. Therefore, regular attendance is required. It is your responsibility to notify Dr. Marsh-Soloway and Language Partner whenever you expect to miss a regular weekly meeting or arrive late. Arriving late to your weekly meetings is disrespectful to your Language Partner and other students. While Language Partners are welcome to set their own policy, as a general guidelines, tardiness (five minutes or more) on more

than two occasions will result in the automatic deduction of half a letter grade, i.e. a grade of A- will be reduced to a B+. Additionally, students who are absent from more than two meetings without prior approval from the Language Partner will be asked to withdraw from the class, or automatically receive a grade of Incomplete. It is imperative that you communicate frequently with your Language Partners, and keep them informed of changes in your lives and pressing scheduling changes.

### **Optional Standardized Proficiency Testing**

Students in the SDLAP are encouraged to seek out standardized proficiency testing across the four skills to uphold the legitimacy and effectiveness of their studies. The STAMP 4S test and Oral Proficiency Interviews (OPIs) can be made available to students by request depending on the availability of resources and funds in the Global Studio. These assessments can be used to obtain credentials and qualifications that are often highly coveted to demonstrate skills to employers in the private sector and different branches of the federal government for civil service.

**Creating an Electronic Portfolio:** All assignments will be compiled and posted to your profile on the Ning. Each student creates an electronic portfolio at the following link: <http://sdlapur.ning.com/>. For work completed in the given semester, your Ning Profile should contain the following components that have been described at length above, but appear in the summarized format below:

- a) the student's learning plan(s)  
\*\*Feel free to adapt and revise if you are continuing from an earlier semester
- b) bi-weekly reflection journal entries documenting learning activities (8 in total)
- c) four cultural posts with artifacts
- d) recorded interview podcast with your community partner(s);
- e) link to final cultural research presentation on PanOpto Videos in Blackboard
- f) discussion comments and questions posed to classmates;

### **Helpful resources**

**Bonner Center for Civic Engagement:** <https://engage.richmond.edu/>

**CAPS:** <https://wellness.richmond.edu/caps/index.html>

**Academic Skills Center:** <https://asc.richmond.edu/>

**Writing Center:** <https://writing.richmond.edu/>

**Speech Center:** <https://speech.richmond.edu/>

**Global Studio:** <https://globalstudio.richmond.edu/>

\*You may send drafts of any and all materials to Dr. Marsh-Soloway for early review. \*

\*\*Extensions may be accommodated pending review of the instructor.\*\*

\*\*\*Any work not submitted by 5:00pm on Monday, December 13 will be marked with a zero and possibly contribute to a final grade of F or Incomplete.\*\*\*