

**Indiana University**  
**Summer Cooperative African Language Institute (SCALI)**  
**June 18 – August 4, 2006**  
**Elementary Somali**  
**Course Syllabus**

This course is an elementary level Somali intended for students who have had no or little exposure to the Somali language and culture. The course will introduce students to the Somali language as well as the Somali oral tradition and culture. The course will focus on spoken Somali but will also develop reading and writing skills. During this intensive summer course, we will cover the basics of the language to make the students proficient enough to function at the survival level. The goal is to provide a comprehensive, interactive, and enjoyable learning experience for students.

Active participation in class, homework and lab activities will serve as the basis for developing communication. Exercises and structured conversations will allow students to develop the skills that they need in everyday situations.

**Objectives**

This course is intended to achieve a certain level of proficiency in Somali, where students can speak and engage in short conversation and read authentic Somali materials on their own. Students are expected to achieve basic speaking and listening skills in Somali and to be able to engage in reasonable conversations.

**Proficiency Goals:**

At the end of the course, students are expected to understand main ideas and most details of connected discourse on a variety of topics in the language. They also should be able to narrate and describe with some details, and communicate facts and talk casually about topics of current public and personal interest, using general vocabulary. They should be able to read longer prose of several paragraphs in length. In addition, they should be able to write simple social correspondence and join sentences in simple sentences of at least several paragraphs in length on familiar topics.

**Grading**

In addition to a final examination, quizzes will be given periodically to evaluate student progress throughout the course. Student attendance, preparation and active participation in class will also count in the final grade. This includes timely completion of all assigned exercises, participation in conversations and discussions about readings, and taking part in any group work that is done by the student.

**Grading scale:**

Letter Grade	%	Letter Grade	%
A	95-100	C	74-76
A-	90-94	C-	71-73
B+	86-89	D+	68-70
B	83-85	D	65-67
B-	80-82	D-	60-64
C+	77-79	F	59 & below

**Grading Criteria**

- Attendance and Participation 10%
- Quizzes and homework 20%
- Midterm 20%
- Final 50%

**Textbooks and course materials**

**Textbooks:**

1. Let's Speak Somali  
By Abdullahi Sheikh Abdinoor
  
2. Colloquial Somali  
By Martin Orwin

**References:**

- Somali textbooks  
By David Zorc and Abdullahi Issa
  
- Somali reference grammar  
By John Saeed
  
- Somali  
By John Saeed
  
- Somali websites

## **Course Calendar**

### **Week I: June 19-23**

#### **Monday, June 19**

- Placement test (written and oral proficiency)
- Interviews with students with special cases in language fluency.
- Orientation to get to know each other better.
- Distribution of course materials and textbooks.
- Introduction to the Somali language, the people who speak it and the region in which it is spoken.

#### **Tuesday, June 20**

##### Introduction

- The alphabet, sound system and writing system.
- Pronunciation practice.
- Simple statements and questions (ma nabad baa?)

#### **Wednesday, June 21**

##### Social Interaction and Greetings.

##### Functions:

- Various forms of greetings and good-byes
- Apologizing, permission seeking and thanking.
- Asking simple questions and making simple requests
- Introducing other people

##### Grammar:

- Imperatives
- Definite article
- Personal pronouns

##### Cultural note: Handshakes, personal titles, etc.

#### **Thursday, June 22**

##### Family

##### Functions:

- Speaking about one's family
- Asking simple questions about people and things
- Describing qualities about people and things
- Understanding classroom instructions

##### Grammar:

- Simple sentences
- Possessive pronouns
- Demonstrative pronouns
- Numbers 1-10

##### Cultural note: Common Somali names

#### **Friday, 23 June**

##### Nationality and identity

##### Functions:

- Talking about identity
- Talking about one's country and people
- Talking about jobs and professions

- Telling time

Grammar:

- The verb to be (ah)
- Focus markers (waa, waxaa, baa, ayaa)
- Past tense
- Subject pronouns
- Days of the week
- Question words (maxaa, yaa, xaggee, meeqaa, etc.)

Cultural note: Family lineage/family tree

Listening practice

Weekly quiz

## **Week 2: June 26 – June 30**

### **Monday, June 26**

Daily activities

Functions:

- Speaking about one's daily activities
- Speaking about one's hobbies
- Expressing one's likes/dislikes, needs
- Use of cognitive verbs (jecel, aqaan, og, rab, etc)

Grammar:

- Present habitual tense
- Present progressive tense
- The verb to have (leh, etc.)
- Negative markers
- Conjunction (iyo)
- Numbers 11-19

Cultural note: *Qaat* chewing

### **Tuesday, June 27**

Housing and accommodation

Functions:

- Describing one's house and other types of accommodation
- Household objects
- Asking about where is someone or something is

Grammar:

- Locative verbs for animate and inanimate objects
- Question words for location
- Negative locatives
- Preposition (ku)

Cultural note: Traditional house

### **Wednesday, June 28**

Personalities and age

Functions:

- Talking about people's personalities and age
- Saying how old is someone
- Talking about people's professions

- Common colors

Grammar:

- Adjectives
- Using colors as adjectives
- Comparatives and superlatives
- Preposition (ka)
- Counting 20-100

Cultural note kinship and age, use of colors as names

### **Thursday, June 29**

Travelling and transportation

Functions:

- Narrating an event in the past
- Talking about a future plan
- Calendar: names of months, days of the week

Grammar:

- Past tense (Conjugation 2 & 3)
- Infinitive forms
- Future tense
- Frequency, time and place adverbs
- Relative clauses

Cultural note: Insha-Allah

### **Friday, June 30**

Clothing

Functions:

- Describing how people dress and what they wear
- Buying clothes from shop
- Various ways of saying wear cloth

Grammar:

- Negative of the verb to have (**leh**)
- Conditional verb (**lahaa**)
- Question words (**kee, tee**, etc.)
- Use of (**Marka, Haddii**, etc.)

Cultural note: Traditional attire

Speaking practice

Weekly quiz

## **Week 3: July 3-7**

### **Monday, July 3**

Shopping in different settings

- How to ask for the price of commodities in market
- How to bargain
- Describing different commodities, using shape, color, other qualities

Grammar:

- Negative imperative
- Use (**kala duwan, isku mid**)
- Counting 201-1000

- Object pronouns
- Optative form of the verb

Cultural note: Traditional open markets

### **Tuesday, July 4**

No class

### **Wednesday, July 5**

Time

Functions:

- How to ask what time it is and how to answer
- How to narrate events in the remote past
- Storey telling

Grammar:

- Use of question words (**meeqaa** or **immisa**) in asking about time
- Prepositional phrases
- Past habitual (**jiri jiray**)

Cultural note: Indigenous way to telling time

### **Thursday, July 6**

Food

Functions:

- Talking about food
- Expressing hunger and thirst
- How to order food at a restaurant
- Talking about the kitchen and cooking

Grammar:

- Demonstratives
- Adjectives
- Interrogative adjectives

Cultural note: Traditional Somali food

### **Friday, July 7**

Professions

Functions:

- Talking about different professions
- How to ask people what jobs they do

Grammar:

- Use of **weligaa, weligay**
- Ability auxiliary verbs
- Other auxiliaries

Cultural note: prestigious and mean jobs

Weekly quiz

## **Week 4: July 10-14**

### **Monday, July 10**

Health and wellness

Functions:

- How to complain about illness
- How describe pain

- Common ailments, diseases
- Body parts

Grammar:

- How to use the verb to have (**hay, qab**) to express illness
- Imperative, negative imperative
- Preposition and pronoun combination

Cultural note: word of sympathy (Allah ha ku caafiyo)

### **Tuesday, July 11**

Sports

Functions:

- Describing different types of sport
- Using quantity in numbers and other measurement

Grammar:

- Superlatives
- Prepositions (**ka, ku, u**)

Cultural note:

### **Wednesday, July 12**

Ceremonies

Functions:

- Talking about different ceremonies
- Important occasions

Grammar:

- Combination of prepositions and object pronouns
- Common congratulatory expressions
- Common condolence expressions

Cultural note:

### **Review and final exam for part one**

### **Thursday, July 13**

Daily, weekly and monthly routine

Functions:

- Describing a typical day or week
- Talking about one's normal life and events that affects it
- Division of labor

Grammar:

- Causatives
- Reflexives

Cultural note: Listen to news!

### **Friday, July 14**

Shopping in different settings

- How to ask for the price of commodities in market
- How to bargain
- Describing different commodities, using shape, color, other qualities

Grammar:

- Negative imperative
- Use (**kala duwan, isku mid**)

- Counting 201-1000
- Object pronouns
- Optative form of the verb

Cultural note: Traditional open markets

Weekly quiz

## **Week 5: July 17-21**

### **Monday, July 17**

Languages of Afrika

Functions:

- Talking about different countries and languages of Africa
- Talking about Somali language
- Use of (**aqaan**) know, instead of (**hadal**) speak for languages
- Waxaan ku dhashay/waxaan ku hadlaa

Grammar:

- Use of the preposition **ku** with **hadal**
- Prepositions **ku, ka, u** and **la**, locative **yaal**, use of **ka weyn/ka yar, ka mid ah**

Cultural note: Somali dialects

### **Tuesday, July 18**

Asking and giving directions

Functions:

- Giving directions
- Expressing understanding or lack of understanding of some concepts
- Ma taqaanaa/ma ogtahay/ma ka war qabtaa?

Grammar:

- Use of **marka/kalka** adverbs
- Use of **wada/kala**
- Ordinal numbers

Cultural note:

### **Wednesday, July 19**

University life and school routine

Functions:

- Talking about university life
- Talking about education, courses and degrees

Grammar:

- Use of **waayo, yaqaan/yahan** abstract nouns
- Plural noun declensions

Cultural note: traditional education

### **Thursday, July 20**

Life in the countryside

Functions:

- Talking about life in the rural areas/countryside
- Describing life of nomadic people

Grammar:

- Negative expressions & Negative marker (aan ...)
- Negative imperative.

Cultural note:

Weekly Quiz

**Friday, July 21**

Life in the city

Functions:

- Talking about life in cities
- Somali cities

Grammar:

- Present habitual tense (sameeyaa ...),
- present progressive tense (sameynayaa ...)
- Future tense, (sameyn doonaa ...),
- Past progressive tense, (sameynayey)
- Interrogatives & Question words.

Speaking exercise

Cultural note: chewing qat?

**Week 6: July 24-28**

**Monday, July 24**

Horn of Africa

Functions:

- Narration about a program
- Talking about one's job

Grammar:

- Noun plural declensions 6 & 7
- Past tense (conjugation 2)
- Present progressive tense (conjugation 2)
- Adjectives
- Subject case
- Plural form of adjectives
- The genitive case
- Numbers 0-10
- Different terms for number 1

**Tuesday, July 25**

At the airport

Functions:

- Booking a flight
- Going through passport check

Grammar:

- Verbs that lose vowel
- Irregular plural
- Past tense
- Use of prepositions
- Verbal object pronouns
- Verb conjugation 3
- Ordinal numbers
- Speaking practice
- Cultural note:

### **Wednesday, July 26**

Renting a taxi

Functions:

- Asking and giving directions
- Telling time and date

Grammar:

- Using **maxaa** question word
- Focus markers
- Focusing the object
- Focussing the subject
- Plural imperative
- Verb conjugation 3
- Numbers above ten

### **Thursday, July 27**

At the hotel

Functions:

- Booking a room in the hotel
- Asking about different types of accommodation

Grammar

- The infinitive
- Future tense
- Habitual past tense
- Negative imperative
- Negative past
- Reading practice
- Cultural note:
- Weekly Quiz

### **Friday, July 28**

At the post office

Functions:

- Mailing letters
- Making a phone call

Grammar:

- Past progressive
- Negative present
- Demonstrative suffixes
- Auxiliary verbs **rab**, **kar** and **waa**
- Impersonal pronoun **la**

Reading practice

Cultural note:

## **Week 7: July 31 - August 4**

### **Monday, July 31**

At the bank

Functions:

- Exchanging foreign currency

- Counting money

Grammar:

- Possessive suffixes
- Negative progressive tenses
- Prefixing verbs
- Locative verbs

Reading practice

Cultural note:

### **Tuesday, August 1**

The newspaper

Functions:

- Reading newspapers
- Discussing news reports

Grammar:

- The verb to be **yahay**
- Passive voice
- Subordinate clause forms
- Adjectives and the verb to be **yahay**
- Comparative and superlatives of adjectives and **aad**
- Question words **kee/tee/xaggee/immisa/meeqa/intee/goormaa**
- Collective nouns

Cultural note:

### **Wednesday, August 2**

The radio

Functions:

- Listening to the radio
- Discussing news reports

Grammar:

- Adverbial relative clauses
- Negative verb forms
- Focussing in yes-no questions
- Negative questions
- Optative
- Conditional

Cultural note:

### **Thursday, August 3**

Folktales

Proverbs

Course review

Weekly quiz

### **Friday, August 4**

Group Presentation

**Review and Final Exam for part two**