

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Department of African and African American Studies

Afaan Oromoo Y1S2

Meets: MWF 4:00 – 5:00PM

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Oromo language is a Cushitic language spoken by more than about 50 million people in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Egypt and is the 3rd largest language in Africa. There are more Oromo speakers abroad than the resident population in Ethiopia. In different United States, Australia, Canada and different Europe cities people are taking Afaan Oromoo courses as community level and teach their kids and foreigners those interested communication in Afaan Oromoo. In Oromia it has the status of an official language. It has its own script and it can be written with Latin script. The oral tradition is very rich and nowadays there are enough literary works written in Oromo; modern arts like music and folk arts. This course will offer many opportunities for students to develop the basic elements of Oromo philosophy and culture, by creating rooms for interaction in Oromo language. It will be better to follow it up with more advanced courses in the language.

Afaan Oromoo is designed to build a learner's ability to communicate in the basic language in different social and professional settings. The course will focus on developing the student's competence in listening, speaking, reading and writing. This course will emphasize training students to communicate in everyday situations and to understand "learner-friendly" Afaan Oromoo. By doing this, students will be able to improve their proficiency in *Afaan Oromoo*. An important component of the *Afaan Oromoo* language is that it incorporates important cultural aspects through the variants that the students will be exposed to and the dialects as well as that of east African philosophy and cultures.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- Acquire the basic skills in learning, listening, speaking and reading
- Provide insight into the culture and customs of Afaan Oromoo speakers
- Note the differences and similarities share common goal with the west countries
- Understand basic structures and vocabulary of Afaan Oromoo
- Acquire basic communication skills in Afaan Oromoo for everyday life
- Develop knowledge that builds awareness of personal academic development
- Acquire basic knowledge of linguistics, literature, and language skills in general and Afaan Oromoo in particular
- Acquire basic professional knowledge, concepts and skills which enable engagement in various Oromo community settings,

GOALS OF PROFICIENCY

Communication

- Greetings
- Self, i.e., self-introduction, place of origin and residence, work, school & hobbies
- Family, Friends, and Colleagues
- Inquire about other people's names, homes, places of origin such as city, suburb, street, county, state/province, country
- Make simple requests and commands
- Count numbers (cardinals and ordinals)
- Tell time of day, and divisions of the day
- Name the days of the week, months, years

Vocabulary

- Meeting/Describing People; Making Appointments; Telephoning
- Language for Tourists
- Oromo Names, Titles, Societal Ethics
- Time and Clock
- Weather
- Family and Relations
- Professions
- Relationships
- Human Body
- Animals
- Oromo Unique Culture, Gada System, Food,
- Theater, Musicology, and Photography
- Household, Food, Clothing, Shopping
- Jokes/Telling Stories
- Travel; Transportation
- Swimming
- Education, Business, Politics (Terms)
- Essential Verbs
- Useful Words, Phrases, Expressions, and Responses
- Apologizing; Expressions of Emotion; Expressing Condolence; Warning; Discussing Problems/Challenges
- Holiday Greetings
- Sharing
- State of Mind/Feelings
- Talking about Life, Sleep, Marriage

Grammar

- **Prepositions:** used to link words to other words.

The following is a list of the most used prepositions in Oromo:

and/fi,above/gubbaa or gararraa, under/jala or gajjallaa, before/dura, After/booddee or booda, in front of /fuulleesaa or fuulleeshee or fuulleesaanii, behind/dudduuba or dugduuba, far from/irraa siqee or irraa fagaatee, near/bira, in/keessa, inside/keessa, outside/ala, with/wajjin, without/malee, about/waa'ee, between/gidduu, but/garuu, for/f,from/irraa or ittii, to/ittii

- **Negation in Oromoo:** *No, I can't, I don't.*

I do not understand you/sihubachaa hinjiru, do not leave me/nagattee hindeemiin, no problem/homaa miti or rakkinni hinjiru, I cannot/hindanda'u, I do not come/hindhufu/ and etc.

Questions in Oromo Wh-questions

How/akkamittii?, What/Maali?, Who/eenyu?/Why/Maaliif?/ where/eessaa?,

- **Adverbs in Oromoo:** adverbs modify verbs and adjectives.

Now/amma, yesterday/kaleessa, today/har'a, tonight/edana, tomorrow/bor, soon/dhihootti/quickly/dafee, slowly/suuta, together/waliwajjin, very/baay'ee, almost/xinnoo hanqata, always/yeroo hundaa, usually/yeroo baay'ee/sometimes/gaafgaafii, rarely/darbeedarbee/never/matuma and etc.

- **Pronouns in Oromoo:** Used instead of noun.
- **Personal Pronouns in Oromoo:** I/ani, you/ati, he/inni, she/isheen, we/nuhi, they/isaan.

Object pronoun in Oromo-me/ana or na, you/si, him/isa,her/ishee,us/nuu, them/isaan

- **Possessive pronoun in Oromoo:** My/ko or kiyya or tiyya, your/ke or te, his/isaa, her/ishee, our/keenya/teenya, their/isaanii

GOALS OF COMPREHENSION AND CONSTRUCTION

At the end of the semester students will be able to attain the following skill levels in the following areas of Oromo language proficiency:

- Understand simple discourse for informative social purposes;
- Read materials such as announcements of public events, simple prose containing biographical information or narration of events, and straightforward newspaper headlines;
- Understand short conversations about basic survival and some social demands;

- Start developing flexibility in understanding circumstances beyond immediate survival;
- Start to increase spontaneity in understanding;
- Initiate and maintain predictable face-to-face conversations and try to attain accuracy in basic grammatical relations and have consistency;
- Create sentences and short paragraphs related to most survival needs (food, lodging, transportation, immediate surroundings and situations) and some social demand;
- Express fairly accurately present and future time and to produce Afaan Oromoo past-tense verb forms;
- Relate personal history; discuss topics such as daily life, preferences, and family relationships.

Speaking and Writing

- Use appropriate Afaan Oromoo expressions and gestures to greet and take leave of Afaan Oromoo speakers;
- Give and follow simple instructions in Afaan Oromoo in order to participate in classroom activities;
- Share likes and dislikes in Afaan Oromoo with each other or with other Afaan Oromoo speakers via e-mail and telephone calls;
- Play a role in Afaan Oromoo everyday situations, such as buying wares in the market or ordering food at a restaurant;
- Talk about and describe aspects of the Afaan Oromoo speaking culture, such as food, clothing, type of dwellings, personalities, modes of transportation and buildings;
- Ask and answer questions in Afaan Oromoo about topics such as family, school, animals, familiar objects and possessions. These exchanges may be done in person or via notes, e-mail, and Malian media (Radio/TV news/Newspapers);
- Dramatize, in Afaan Oromoo language, songs and skits;
- Prepare and present in Afaan Oromoo short illustrated personal descriptions of topics such as home and family;
- Retell familiar stories or create and illustrate stories in Afaan Oromoo to present in class.

Listening and Reading

- Students follow oral instructions in Afaan Oromoo related to daily classroom activities.
- Students understand oral and/or written statements in Afaan Oromoo on familiar topics, such as numbers, time of day, and weather.
- Students read and/or listen in Afaan Oromoo to descriptions and identify the corresponding pictures or illustrations, such as people, animals, objects, places, common activities, weather and time of day.
- Students understand familiar songs, videos, stories and national Radio/TV broadcast in Afaan Oromoo.
- Students understand brief spoken or written Afaan Oromoo messages on familiar topics, such as personal preferences, family, school, and celebrations.
- Students understand the content of simple Afaan Oromoo -language text, such as picture books, menus, posters or advertisements.

Culture

- Use appropriate gestures and Afaan Oromo expressions for personal greetings and leave takings and classroom interaction;
- Identify social customs that are of interest to either children or adults, topics, may include traditional foods, aspects of family life, and typical holidays in various Afaan Oromoo speaking regions;
- Identify the similarities and differences between school life in their own region and in Afaan Oromoo speaking regions;
- Identify and recognize products and symbols of the Afaan Oromoo speakers, such as foods, clothing, type of dwellings, modes of transportation, domestic and wild animals, kitchenware and furniture etc.
- Students identify and learn about products reflecting the lifestyle of people in various Afaan Oromoo speaking communities, such as household items, clothing, and foods.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Students are expected to attend class regularly and to have done the assignments for that day. The class participation grade will be based on whether the student is prepared for class or not. Students are encouraged to ask questions, participate in drills and discussions, and volunteer answers. More than **three** absences will lower the class participation grade. Coming late to class will also negatively affect your class participation grade.

QUIZZES

There will be a written or/and oral quiz every week (**30 minutes**) on *a day, which will be communicated to you later*. There will be no make-up quizzes except for unavoidable circumstances, which the student should report as soon as possible.

WRITTEN AND ORAL ASSIGNMENTS

Written and oral assignments will be graded. I will announce when they are due. The best five of such graded assignments will be recorded and count towards 14% of the total grade as indicated above.

MID-TERM EXAMINATION

Your midterm exam includes an Oral Proficiency Interview to assess your oral proficiency level at that stage. It also includes an essay that you will write from home on a given topic. It will include spelling and listening comprehension and reading one paragraph from Afaan Oromoo newspaper online. The midterm test (written and oral) counts towards 18% of your total grade as indicated above.

FINAL EXAMINATION

The final exam includes an OPI (oral proficiency Interview), reading, listening, a final essay that you will write from home on a given topic and a short play that will be performed by the whole class for theater night. The final OPI, the reading and writing activities, the final paper and the play will be 40% of your total grade.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Please do not eat during class time. It is very important that you use Afaan Oromoo at all times in your communication during the class time and out of class whenever you meet. I encourage you also to communicate through **email** and **telephone** calls to me and among yourselves.

TEXTBOOK

The textbook is on process to be published and at the end sold to the students for **\$20.00**. Until the book is finalized, the handouts will be prepared by the instructor and given to your prior to the class meeting to study them.

VERY IMPORTANT:

- ✓ This syllabus is subject to changes depending on student rate of learning progress, and interest/needs of learners.
- ✓ Every learner should have time to meet the instructor at least once a week (by appointment) for consultation.
- ✓ All learners are requested to have anything that may serve the purpose in which they will write important OROMOO expressions they encounter in class or outside the class in it. Please note that this will be inspected from time to time.
- ✓ Get a blank tape or any recording device for your oral assignment.
- ✓ There will be a quiz at the end of two weeks. In any case, quizzes won't be less than 4 in a semester.
- ✓ Learners are required to do 2 assignments per week. In any case, assignments won't be less than 20 in a semester.
- ✓ The learner's will be writing a kind of portfolio about himself.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Quizzes:	Once every two weeks	10-15 minutes
2. Assignments	Two per week	Take-home or/and in class
3. Midterm Written test	Week 6	1hour and 30 minute n exam
Midterm Oral test	Week 6	30 minute exam.
4. Last Day of Classes	May 1	
5 . Final Written exam	Week 13	1hour and 30 minutes exam
Final Oral exam	Week 13	30 minutes exam.
6. Writing about himself	Once every week	30 minutes

NB. Class begins February 10 and ends May 1.

MODE OF ASSESSMENT:

Class attendance (only 3 excused absences are allowed)	02%
CAS Seminars	03%
Weekly report (online)	06%
Homework	14%
Quizzes (written and oral)	10%
Midterm oral Examination	08%
Midterm written Examination	10%
Final oral Examination	15%
Final written Examination	25%
Writing about himself	<u>07%</u>
Total	<u>100%</u>

GRADING SCALE:

93 – 100	A
90 – 92	A-
87 – 89	B+
83 – 86	B
80 – 82	B-
77 – 79	C+
73 – 76	C
70 – 72	C-
67 – 69	D+
63 – 66	D
60 – 62	D-
00 – 59	F

SHORT SURVEY ABOUT AFAAN OROMOO

The overall development of a language is determined by a context in which it is used. For instance, languages like English and French have developed and they have rich literature because of political, economic and socio-cultural reasons. In this connection, both languages are widely spoken and used even as official languages in many countries of the world.

In relation to these, issues of language rights have become increasingly prominent in the last decade, and are often raised in the context of more general human rights. Linguists have become involved in this area via diverse pathways e.g., language endangerment, preservation and revitalization; language planning; forensic (legal) linguistics; bilingual education and other school-centered language issues; action research with urban linguistic minorities; work with indigenous peoples, including land claims; refugee and asylum issues, and more.

After heated debates had been made on the use of languages, as factors to determine people identity, international organizations such as UNESCO, especially in 1980's and 1990's, started preserving and promoting languages of the indigenous people. This action put many languages of the world revitalization in the boarder international context of the movement for linguistic human rights. This has also created favorable conditions for many languages of the world to develop from spoken to written form, of which Ethiopia is also part and parcel of this condition. Afan Oromo, as a language of wider communication in Ethiopia, could not get the opportunity to be used as a written language until Abba Gammachis, the prominent Oromo, translated the Bible into Afan Oromo in 1880's. Moreover, Abba Gammachis made efforts to use Afaan Oromo as a medium of instruction. However, this was short lived because the Ethiopian ruling regime of that time banned the use of the language in schools.

Again when Italians invaded Ethiopia in 1935 they used Afaan Oromoo in radio broadcast to disseminate their propaganda. However, when the Italians were defeated and left the country, the use of the language was banned once again.

Moreover, in spite of the persistent struggle of different individuals such as Sheikh Bakri Saphalo (1941-1952), who developed his own script to write in Afan Oromo, the language could not be used for writing purposes.

After the downfall of Haile Sellasie's regime, the Oromo elites came up with the timely question of using Afaan Oromoo in mass media and as a medium of instruction. As a result, the language started to be used in news broadcast on the radio for disseminating the existing government's ideology. Soon after, the weekly newspaper, *Barisa*, was published in Afan Oromo in 1967 E.C. These accomplishments, indeed, laid a firm foundation for the language to be used as a written language in Ethiopia. In addition to these measures, in 1978's different books were printed in Afan Oromo for literacy campaigns to be undertaken. Although the condition was conducive to continue literacy program in the language, the efforts made were not satisfactory.

Ever since the change of government in May 1991, due recognition has been given to the languages of Ethiopian nations and nationalities. The formulation of the New Education and Training Policy of 1994 brought about the use of mother tongues in schools. Using the nations and nationalities languages in different socio-cultural spheres has continued to encourage the language speakers of Ethiopia to use and promote their mother tongues. Similarly, Afan Oromo has had the chance to be used as a medium of instruction in primary schools and as an official language of Oromia regional state. This opportunity has also made the language to be taught as a

subject in Oromia high schools. Moreover, it has become a medium of instruction in teachers' training institutes and has been used as a medium of instruction in colleges in the region. Thus, having qualified personnel in Afan Oromo has become a matter of urgent importance in the region. Therefore, the Government of Oromia Regional State has given due attention to promoting Afan Oromo to the B.Ed degree level in order to meet this demand for qualified professional in Afaan Oromoo. Furthermore, it has also recently been decided to offer Afan Oromo as Post Graduate Program in Addis Ababa University.

Concomitantly, the program was launched at Jimma and Haramaya Universities in the year 2004-2005. Similarly, at Ambo University Afan Oromo has been given since 2006, and in 2008, that the department of Afan Oromo and Literature opened.

Currently, Afaan Oromoo is given at doctoral level at Wollega University, Ethiopia. Addis Ababa and Jimma University are in the process of launching a doctoral program.

– Beekan Guluma Erena