

## LATVIAN AS A NEW LANGUAGE

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

#### Introduction

This course aims to provide a competent reading knowledge of Latvian and basic communicative skills in the language. Students who complete the course successfully will be able to assure both potential employers and academic supervisors that they possess the necessary foundation-level Latvian language skills to work with original Latvian texts and to enable them to undertake study and/or research in Latvia. The course provides an intensive introduction to Latvian grammar, a knowledge of basic vocabulary, practice in the skills of oral communication in Latvian in straightforward situations, translation and information retrieval skills, using Latvian texts on Latvian and international cultural, political and social themes.

The course is designed for beginners, i.e. for students who do not already speak or understand Latvian. It requires intensive study and applicants must provide evidence of language learning ability. Progress is carefully monitored, in particular in the early stages of the course.

#### Key Reference Works

Course materials produced by the teacher will be provided.

Material from the following will also be used in class:

- Christopher Moseley, *Colloquial Latvian* (London, Routledge, 1996)
- Arvils Šalme, Pēteris Ūdris, *Do it in Latvian!* (SI, Riga 1996)

Students will find the following useful for independent study:

- T.Fennell & H.Gelsen, *A Grammar of Modern Latvian* (The Hague, Mouton 1979)

A list of relevant websites and online reference materials will be provided at the start of the course.

Students will require a dictionary at an early stage in the course. The following is recommended:

- Dz.Kalnina (ed.), *Avots English-Latvian Latvian-English Dictionary*, Riga, Avots.

**NB:** Students will be informed at the start of the course which textbooks they should purchase.

### **Course Details**

Title	LATVIAN AS A NEW LANGUAGE
Course Code	SEES GE81
Course Value	40 credits
Duration	Taught in the Autumn and Spring Terms
Availability	Open to students of most SSEES taught postgraduate programmes, including MA and MRes
Prerequisites	Open to students who have no knowledge of Latvian
Course Leader	Mr Christopher Moseley

### **Aims**

The course aims to enable students to:

- develop competence in and use of Latvian to a pre-intermediate level
- develop basic communicative skills of aural comprehension and oral production
- develop the comprehension skills of reading, retrieving key information and translating from Latvian, through the use of a range of stylistically diverse materials, drawn in the main from contemporary sources
- acquire the basic writing skills necessary to facilitate language learning and support a period of study and/or research in Latvia
- develop a knowledge of grammar and syntax, lexis and register, as well as language awareness and language learning skills
- study a wide range of authentic language materials and acquire a deeper knowledge and understanding of Latvian life and culture through the materials studied.

### **Outcomes**

On successful completion of the course students will have acquired:

- a grasp of the basic grammatical structures and vocabulary of Latvian
- comprehension of written Latvian at a pre-intermediate level
- the ability to communicate in Latvian in straightforward everyday and study-related situations
- the ability to retrieve information and translate accurately
- time management skills and the ability to work to deadlines.

## **Teaching**

Classes meet for four hours each week over twenty teaching weeks (80 hours of contact time). Additionally, students will be expected to spend, over the whole teaching year, an average of four hours' independent study per contact hour.

In class, students will be presented with the grammar and vocabulary of Latvian *ab initio*. Communicative, reading and vocabulary building skills will be extended through a range of exercises, work with authentic texts and training in the effective use of a dictionary.

## **Assessment**

### **Coursework**

The regular, punctual and satisfactory completion of weekly assignments is a prerequisite for completion of the course, but does not contribute to the final assessment. Students' progress is monitored by means of regular tests, exercises and home assignments.

Students are also required to compile a portfolio of materials, in Latvian, relating to their individual area of interest. This is monitored by the teacher and its satisfactory completion is a prerequisite for entry to the examination.

### **Examination**

The course is examined by means of an oral test (25% of the overall mark) and a three-hour written paper, normally held in May.

The written examination consists of **two** sections and is worth 75% of the total mark:

#### **Section One:**

- Task A (30% of the overall mark): a text in Latvian of 450-500 words for summary in English in 150-200 words
- Task B (20% of the overall mark): a section (120-150 words) of the Task A text for translation into English.

#### **Section Two:**

- a comprehension and information retrieval task consisting of a passage in Latvian of approximately 400 words, followed by questions in English, to be answered in English (25% of the overall mark).

The use of dictionaries is permitted in the written examination.