

Syllabus

Elementary Sanskrit (W1401/2)
255 International Affairs Bldg — MW 10:10-12:00

Instructor: Guy Leavitt

Office Hours: TR 10-11 (or by appt.), Knox 311

email: gl2392@columbia.edu

Teaching Assistant: Shiv Subramaniam

email: sks2184@columbia.edu

Materials

- Required course text (available from Book Culture):
 - संस्कृतसुबोधिनी *Samskṛtasubodhinī: A Sanskrit Primer* by Madhav Deshpande (Univ. of Michigan, 1997).
- Highly recommended secondary materials:
 - *A Sanskrit Grammar for Students* (Oxford Univ., 1986) by Arthur A. Macdonell.
 - *The Sanskrit Language: an Overview* by Pierre-Sylvain Filliozat (Indica Books, 2000).
- Course website: <http://introductory-sanskrit.weebly.com/>
- Audio recordings for all exercises may be downloaded from the exercise pages on the course website.
- Audio recordings of the paradigms may also be downloaded from the Course website.
- “Sanskrit Notes” and “Deshpande Notes” handout packets: “Files and Resources” on Courseworks.
- “Samskṛtasubodhinī” digital flashcards for our textbook, downloadable via Anki (<http://ankisrs.net/>)

Course Goals

This course seeks to provide you with a systematic introduction to the language. We will pay particular attention to mastering the fundamentals of grammar and to developing a basic working vocabulary. By the end of the course, you will be able to read (rather than decode) simple narratives, follow and reply to simple spoken Sanskrit, and analyze the grammar of any basic text. And specifically, you will have the tools necessary to begin making sense of original Sanskrit texts, such as the *Hitopadeśa* and *Mahābhārata*.

The Challenge

In this course we are working with one challenge and a couple of constraints. The challenge is that Sanskrit is a highly inflected language, meaning that the language’s grammar is largely conveyed through the many different forms taken by nearly every word (e.g., *tātāya* “for father,” *tātāt* “from father,” *tātasya* “of father,” etc.), rather than (as in English) through a word’s syntax and accompanying prepositions. If Sanskrit were a widely spoken language in the U.S., we could “pick it up” through immersion. But of course, it isn’t, so we can’t. That’s our first constraint—our inability to learn Sanskrit more naturally, through intensive exposure. The second constraint is that the bulk of the grammar must be mastered in the first year if students who wish to pursue advanced study in the language are to have an opportunity to do so. Given these constraints, there is simply no getting around the necessity of committing the language’s forms to memory. Fortunately, that is actually not a difficult task. It’s simply a matter of practice and regular repetition. In fact, Sanskrit is not a difficult language to learn—there is nothing conceptually hard about it—but it does require effort. (If you ever do find it difficult, please come see me immediately so that we can resolve the difficulty.) If you commit yourself to a regular practice of internalizing the language’s forms, you will definitely succeed. If you don’t commit to such a regimen, you will find yourself wasting an extraordinary amount of time looking through grammars and dictionaries in frustration, until—like

myself and countless other students who have made the same mistake—you realize the hard way that there really is no way around systematically internalizing the language's forms. This course is designed to help you do just that.

Coursework, Attendance and Grades

To begin with, there will be weekly quizzes to help you organize your study time and ensure that you're on the right track. But you should not cram for these quizzes. Their primary purpose is not to regularly log a grade or mark your progress (although they are graded and do count toward your final grade). The subject of every quiz is already laid out in full on Courseworks—there are no surprises here and there is no reason (as often happens) that everyone cannot study ahead and get 100% on them. Instead, these quizzes are intended as study aids for you to ensure that you have internalized their material by the time you take them. Please plan ahead accordingly.

There is no right way to internalize the material that will be quizzed, except for regular repetition. If you have 20 minutes every morning that you can dedicate to this task, that should be sufficient. If you have a very irregular schedule, then you should consider doing this work on the fly: e.g., mentally review the forms to be internalized as you're walking to and from and around campus, checking yourself against a hard copy if you get stumped. If you are more of a visual learner, you should write out these forms repeatedly and regularly. If you're more of an aural learner, you should listen to recordings of them on your phone when you're out and about, and on your computer when you're in. It's been shown that the more senses you engage in such learning, the more successful you'll be, so some combination of the practices mentioned above would be best. We will have time for a little of this work in class, but most of our time will be dedicated to using the language, translating it and clarifying its grammar.

Our classwork will consist of, or draw from, the following:

- **Video lectures and the short assignments based on them**, both of which need to be completed on time. Late, incomplete and not-turned-in homework will adversely affect your grade.
- **The assignments above will be collected at the beginning of class.** We will go over them together and discuss anything that is unclear.
- We will also regularly break down into groups to practice various constructions and then reconvene to clarify any outstanding issues.
- Once we have had a video on a given lesson and worked through the exercises based on it in class together, **additional exercises will be assigned as homework for the subsequent night(s). These too will be collected at the beginning of the following class.**
- Especially over the weekend and our breaks, we will have the chance to read extended narratives on culturally significant topics (e.g., the Buddha's departure, etc.). **Your translations will be collected at the beginning of the following class.**
- After reading these narratives (and after the short stories I will occasionally tell in Sanskrit), we will discuss the story in very simple Sanskrit in order to inhabit the language more directly.

The videos have been created both to give us more time to practice the language in class and to cut down on the amount of homework required. In our group work, you will find yourself regularly learning from your classmates and vice versa. Our in-class work is therefore an essential component of the course and your attendance is accordingly mandatory. **More than four unexcused absences in a semester will adversely impact your grade.**

Grade breakdown:

- Attendance/Participation: 25%
- Exercises and Translations: 25%
- Quizzes: 25%
- Final Exam: 25%

If you are having trouble understanding anything as we cover it, please arrange to come to my office hours. I am happy to assist in any way necessary—going over the lesson again, doing extra exercises, etc. The time and

effort spent learning the grammar in this one year will be repaid with years of enjoyable reading in the language.

Note:

- MESAAS language courses can only be taken for a letter grade (there is no R / audit / pass-fail option).

THE FOLLOWING SYLLABUS IS PROVIDED ONLY IN ORDER TO GIVE YOU A ROUGH IDEA OF THE PACE OF THIS COURSE. ASSIGNMENTS AND THEIR DUE DATES WILL BE GIVEN ON THE COURSE WEBSITE.

Fall Semester, 2015

MONDAY		WEDNESDAY	
Sep 7th <i>Labor Day</i> <i>University Holiday</i>		9th Introduction Why Sanskrit? ācāryāt pādām (eva) ādatte!	1
14th Sanskrit's insights into how language works Phonology	2	16th Script I Script II	3
21st Quiz 1: Phonology Script III Script IV	4	23rd Script V §2. Class 1 verbs Nom. pronouns	5
28th Quiz 2: Script §2. Class 1 verbs Nom. pronouns	6	30th §3. Nom., Acc. -अ नouns अनुस्वार सन्धि	7
Oct 5th Quiz 3: Nom. Pronouns, P. Present (वद्) §3. विसर्ग सन्धि §4. P. Classes 4, 6, 10	8	7th §4. P. Classes 4, 6, 10 §4. Negation, Connectives, n-retroflexion	9
12th Quiz 4: सन्धि, Classes 1, 4, 6, 10 §5. The Cases	10	14th §6. P. Imperfect, Optative	11
19th Quiz 5: m. -अ (कूपः), P. Impf. (गम्), Opt. (नी) §6. P. Imperative, अपि §7. 1 st and 2 nd Person Pronouns	12	21st §7. 3 rd Person Pronoun, indeclinable correlatives	13
26th Quiz 6: P. Impv. (भू), 3rd Person pron. §8. Feminine -आ, -ई, -ऊ Relative-correlative §8. Relative-correlative	14	28th §8. Relative-correlative §9. m./f. -इ, -उ विसर्ग, स्वर सन्धि	15

MONDAY		WEDNESDAY	
Nov 2nd University Holiday		4th §9. विसर्ग, स्वर सन्धि, प्रगृह्य §10. Ā. Present स्वर सन्धि	16
9th Quiz 7: F. लता), नदी) वधूः, अनुस्वार सन्धि §10. स्वर सन्धि §11. Ā. Imperfect, Optative, Imperative; Indefinites	17	11th §11. Ā. Imperfect, Optative, Imperative; Indefinites §11. Translations	18
16th Quiz 8: मुनिः/तरुः, गतिः/धेनुः, विसर्ग सन्धि §12. Gerunds, Infinitives	19	18th §13. Agents, Relations in -ञ्च, व्यञ्जन सन्धि	20
23rd Quiz 9: Ā. Pres. (भाष), Impv. (वि-जि) §13. व्यञ्जन सन्धि §14. Neuters in -इ, -उ, -ञ्च, Adjectives	21	25th §14. Neuters in -इ, -उ, -ञ्च, Adjectives §15. उपसर्गाः	22
30th Quiz 10: Ā. Impf. (वृत्), Opt. (लभ), -ञ्च (पितृ, नेतृ) §15. उपसर्गाः §16. Passive, transitive and impersonal	23	Dec 2nd §16. Passive, transitive and impersonal कथा १ – बुद्धकथा	24
7th Quiz 11: N. in -ञ्च (वारि, मधु, गन्तृ) §17. General Future	25	9th §19. 1-stem consonant paradigms	26
14th Quiz 12: व्यञ्जन सन्धि Exam Review	27	16th	
21st Final Exam	28	23rd	29

Spring Semester, 2016

MONDAY		WEDNESDAY	
Jan 18th <i>Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday</i> <i>University Holiday</i>		20th	1
25th कथा २ — शकुन्तलाकथा §21. Ā. present / passive participles	2	27th §21. Ā. present / passive participles §22. Past passive and active participles	3
Feb 1st Quiz 13: अस्मत्, गच्छन्, Pres. ptc. formation कथा ३ — वानरमकरकथा §22. Past passive and active participles	4	3rd §23. Demonstrative Pronouns, 2-stem nouns	5
8th Quiz 14: युष्मद्, PPP./active formation कथा ४ — रामकथा §24. 2-stem nouns, 3-stem nouns	6	10th §24. 2-stem nouns, 3-stem nouns §25. 2 nd Class	7
15th Quiz 15: भगवन्, बलिन्, राजन्, नामन् §26. 2 nd Class	8	17th §27. 3 rd Class §28. 5 th Class	9
22nd Quiz 16: P. Athematic (विद्, वी, इ, अस्) कथा ५ — श्रावणकथा §30. 8 th Class	10	24th §29. 7 th Class §31. 9 th Class	11
29th Quiz 17: Ā. Athematic (ब्रू, सू, आस्, चक्ष्) §32. Compounds	12	Mar 2nd §33. Absolutes	13
7th Quiz 18: Pres. Stem Formation, Compounds कथा ६ — मृगकाककथा §34. Numerals	14	9th §35. Gerundives	15
14th <i>Spring Recess</i>		16th <i>Spring Recess</i>	
21st Quiz 19: Compounds II, इदम्, अदस् कथा ७ — नलदमयन्तीकथा §36. Perfect	16	23rd §36. Perfect §37. Aorist	17
28th Quiz 20: Perfect कथा ८ — कालिदासकथा §37. Aorist	18	30th §38. Conditional §39. Causatives	19

MONDAY		WEDNESDAY	
Apr 4th	20	6th	21
Quiz 21: Aorist, विद्वत् §39. Causatives §40. Desideratives		§40. Desideratives §41. Ditransitives	
11th	22	13th	23
Quiz 22: Causative, Desiderative, लघीयस् कथा ९ – सुकन्याकथा §43. Denominatives		§42. Frequentatives हितोपदेशः / महाभारतम्	
18th	24	20th	25
Quiz 23: Denominative, Frequentative, पति, सखि हितोपदेशः / महाभारतम्		हितोपदेशः / महाभारतम्	
25th	26	27th	27
Quiz 24: सन्धि हितोपदेशः / महाभारतम्		हितोपदेशः / महाभारतम्	
May 2nd	28	4th	29
Exam Review			
9th	30	11th	31
Final Exam			