

# Sanskrit 182

## Introduction to Sanskrit

University of Hawaii at Manoa  
Spring 2014

**Timing:** The Course will meet for a total of 200 minutes per week.

**Instructor:** Jesse Ross Knutson, PhD  
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**Description:** This course is an introduction to the classical languages of ancient and early medieval South Asia. It covers the entire basic grammar in addition to developing foundational skills in reading Sanskrit texts.

**Office:** Spalding 452A.

**Required Texts:**

1. Goldman and Sutherland-Goldman, *Devavāṇīpraveśikā: An Introduction to the Sanskrit Language*.
2. Macdonnell A.A. *A Sanskrit Grammar for Students*.
3. Lanman, *A Sanskrit Reader*

<http://ia600402.us.archive.org/16/items/LanmansSanskritReader/LanmanSanskritReader.pdf>

**Objectives:**

**Student Learning Objectives (for Sanskrit 181-182):** By the end of this course students will have

1. a mastery of the entire basic grammar
2. basic skills in reading and analyzing texts
3. basic skills in speaking and understanding simple interpretive Sanskrit (it is a useful skill to be able to ask and answer basic grammatical questions about a text in Sanskrit, which in turn helps to internalize some of the interpretive styles of the traditional commentaries)
4. mastery over techniques of formal analysis of nominal compounds (*vigraha*)

In this two-semester course, we cover the entire grammar of the classical language, we develop a working vocabulary, and we practice reading and translating progressively more authentic texts until gradually only reading real texts. When we finish the basic grammar some time during the second half of next semester, we will devote the rest of our time to reading Sanskrit texts, both applying and reviewing what we have learned. We will work simultaneously to hone our knowledge of the multiplicity of forms, as well as our feel for 'how the language works', its styles, idioms, etc. By the end of this course you will be prepared to read Sanskrit texts such as the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*, *Manusmṛti*, basic works of *śāstra*, etc. with the aid of a dictionary. You will also be able to understand and reply to simple interpretive questions in the language. In other words, you will know the language and have a modicum of speaking competence.

Sanskrit has a vast grammar and vocabulary that are inevitably overwhelming for the beginner. On the bright side, it is a 'learner's language', a language that has only been known by academic instruction for well over two millennia; thus it is systematic and logical in a way that no more natural language is: it is tailored to learning.

Still there is no way to make Sanskrit easy. It is extremely challenging. The only way to do it is by investing a lot of time and patience. Anyone can do it, but it takes time, patience, and a lot of studying.

This course will require a considerable investment of time outside of class. Expect to study at least two hours a day alone or in a group. Working together in a study group is in fact a great way to share the challenge of first-year Sanskrit.

Schedule: We will be working primarily from the textbook *Devavāṇīpraveśikā*, at the rate of roughly one lesson per week. (Macdonnel's more exhaustive but less readable grammar will be used as a supplement) Realistically it takes a bit longer to complete some lessons than others, so we will hopefully conclude the first semester somewhere around lesson 12. The exact schedule will evolve as we progress.

### **Evaluation:**

Your grade is made up of the following three components 1.homework/attendance-participation (verse recitation) /quizzes: 50% 2.midterm 20% 3.final exam 30%.

After each lesson, you will be required to complete all the exercises in *Devavāṇīpraveśikā*. You will also be required to grade your own homework using an answer key, which I provide. You will receive full credit 100% for simply completing the homework by the deadline. Since our schedule is slightly flexible, I will announce when the homework is due in class. Do not fall behind on your homework.

There will be 2 or 3 short quizzes in addition to the midterm and final. These are intended to help consolidate your knowledge. Think of them more as a study-aid, than anything else, though they will also give you a chance to perform, to apply what you have learned. Again the dates will be announced in class. The midterm (**tentative date: March 11th**) and final exam (**see online schedule**) will both be cumulative.

**Tentative Schedule:**

**Week 1 (1/14; 1/16) Lesson 13 Nominal-compounding (*samāsa*) continued, Infinitive (*tumannanta*); *bahuvrīhi* compounds**

**Week 2 (1/21; 1/23) Lesson 13 (continued) Nominal-compounding (*samāsa*) continued, Infinitive (*tumannanta*); *bahuvrīhi* compounds; *vigraha* practice**

**Week 3 (1/28; 1/30) Lesson 14 Nominal compounding (*samāsa*) concluded; optative (*vidhi liṅ*)**

**Week 4 (2/4; 2/6) Lesson 15 Present participle; absolute constructions**

**Week 5 (2/11; 2/13) Future system and conditional, gerundive (*kṛtya*)**

**Week 6 (2/18; 2/20) Lesson 17 The Perfect (*parokṣabhūte liṅ*) and Perfect Participle**

**Week 7 (2/25; 2/27) Lesson 18 Secondary Conjugations and the Denominative (*nāmadhātu*)**

**Week 8 (3/4; 3/6) Lesson 19 More Pronouns, numbers, and the Aorist (*adyatanabhūte luṅ*)**

**Week 9 (3/11; 3/13) MIDTERM Lesson 19 continued: Aorist forms**

**Week 10 (3/18; 3/20) Lesson 20 Nominal Derivation (*kṛt* and *taddhita pratyaya*)**

**SPRING BREAK**

**Week 11 (4/1; 4/3) Lesson 22 *Rāmāyaṇa* reading**

**Week 12 (4/8; 4/10) Lesson 22 *Rāmāyaṇa* reading**

**Week 13 (4/15; 4/17) Lanman: *Hitopadeśa***

**Week 14 (4/22; 4/24) Lanman: *Hitopadeśa***

**Week 15 (4/29/ 5/1) Lanman: *Nalopākhyāna***

**Week 16 (5/6; 5/8) Lanman: *Nalopākhyāna***

**ATTENDANCE:** You cannot afford to miss class. Barring a medical or other serious emergency (in which case I will try to help accommodate you) you should never plan to miss class.

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“The Sanskrit language is of a wonderful structure, more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either.”

--Sir William Jones, Third Address to the Asiatick Society of Bengal, 1786

“Sanskrit is a celestial language repeated by great sages.” –Daṇḍin 7<sup>th</sup> century

*saṃskṛtaṃ nāma daivī vāg anvākyātā maharṣibhiḥ /*