

SANSKRIT 621: Introduction to Classical Sanskrit (Fall 2007)

Instructor: Brian D. Joseph (206 Oxley Hall, 292-4981; bjoseph@ling.ohio-state.edu)
Office Hours: M 12:00-1:00, W: 9:00-10:00, or (preferably) by appointment
Classroom: 164 Jennings Hall

Website: A very rudimentary website, basically a web address where documents for the class (syllabus, handouts, etc., essentially for reference and for anyone who might miss a class) will be deposited for downloading (as pdf files), is to be found at www.ling.ohio-state.edu/~bjoseph/Sanskrit621 (note, as of writing this, I am working on using Carmen for a web presence for the class and that may supersede the rudimentary website).

Textbooks:

Required:

H. Craig Melchert *An Introduction to Sanskrit* (a xeroxed manuscript, available from UniPrint, at their Tuttle Garage store (in the vicinity of Central Classroom building);

W. D. Whitney *Sanskrit Grammar* (any version will do, new or used, hardback or paper, published in India or by Harvard University Press – some good deals are available online via Amazon and other vendors; GoogleBooks has the first 200 pages (out of c. 500) as a “preview”)

Optional:

N. Goldman *English Grammar for Students of Latin* (for students with a shaky sense of grammatical terms and concepts)

Class Meetings: The class will begin at 1:30 and is scheduled to end at 3:18, M W F. My intent is to use as much of this time as we can all stand, since in my experience, there are lots of issues that come up in learning the language (especially with so large a class) and the more time we have at our disposal, the better. Depending on various circumstances, we may regularly cut the Friday class short (I will let you know about that) and if we get into a good groove and make good progress with smooth sailing, we may cut back somewhat on the Monday and Wednesday classes. But for the first few weeks at least, count on three full classes each week from 1:30 – 3:18.

Attendance: Attendance in class is **ESSENTIAL**; I cannot emphasize enough the value and importance of the in-class experience for coming to grips with intricacies of Sanskrit grammar. Still, I understand that occasionally you may miss class (indeed, I need to be out of town on at least one class day, for which I will arrange a substitute). I will try to keep everyone updated via e-mail (or as announcements on Carmen if I manage that) as to goings-on in class (and daily assignments), not just for anyone who might miss class but for those in class as well, but still you miss class at your own peril and I cannot guarantee that the make-up measures will afford the same insights as the class presentations themselves. Thus, plan on coming to class (and note below regarding missed quizzes).

Course Goals: The main goal of this course is to introduce students to Sanskrit grammar and vocabulary, by working through Melchert’s lessons, one by one (more or less in sequence), aiming for a pace of (approximately) one lesson per class. The ultimate goal of the Sanskrit sequence (this course together with its follow-up class, Sanskrit 622, in the winter) is to enable students to read Sanskrit texts with the aid of a dictionary and to develop a sense of what is possible grammatically in the language so that one can attack a text without a dictionary if necessary.

Requirements :

1. Homework assignments (translation exercises from Melchert, sandhi problems, worksheets, etc.), all to be turned in; these will be graded on a 10-point scale (6 points for turning them in on time, with points lost for late papers, and up to 4 quality points to be earned). Included in this is your participation in the class discussion of homework assignments, as you are expected to be able to answer questions about the homework as we go over it in class. These assignments will be given out near the end of each class; I will try to make sure that everyone is apprised via e-mail of the assignments, but in the end, it is your responsibility to make sure you have the assignments.

• 40% of final grade

2. Weekly quizzes, to be given every Friday at the beginning of class; these will be very brief (on the order of 5 minutes or so), and are designed to give you a focus for studying the necessary grammatical forms and related material; they will be graded on a 10-point scale (your lowest grade will be discarded, however).

• 10% of final grade

3. Midterm Exam (take-home/open-book; to be handed out by Friday **October 26**, and due in class on Monday **October 29**); note that the exam will be on whatever we have covered to that point and the timing of the exam will not change except by unanimous agreement by all in the class.

• 20% of final grade

4. An oral exam, to be scheduled during the last week of class (November 26 - November 30); this will be a 10-15-minute meeting with the instructor during which you will be asked to sight-read some simple Sanskrit sentences — my interest is in seeing how you go about attacking the translation task, not (necessarily) in your results

• 10% of final grade

5. Final Exam (take-home/open-book; to be handed out the last day of class (Friday November 30), and due in my mailbox in 222 Oxley Hall by noon on Wednesday December 5.

• 20% of final grade

Make-up work: If you have to miss an assignment, you are expected to make it up or else you will lose credit. On the quizzes, if you miss one, that can count as your lowest grade to be discarded but any misses after that will need to be made up by arrangement with the instructor. All homework assignments need to be turned in and they are better turned in late than never (see above under (1) regarding homework policy). Exams can be made up only with a suitable documented excuse (serious illness, death in the family, or some similar catastrophe).

Topic Outline:

1. Introductory remarks on Sanskrit and its place within Indo-European and Indo-Iranian, and on the social setting for Sanskrit in India
2. Devanāgarī writing system; Sanskrit phonological system
3. Overview of Sanskrit grammar: roots, stems, and derivatives; vowel gradation; organization of verbal and nominal systems
4. Grammar in detail (presented through Melchert's exercises, supplemented by handouts, covering verb conjugation, noun declension, sandhi, word formation, and syntax)
5. Reading of actual Sanskrit texts, using materials to be provided by instructor

Academic Misconduct: To state the obvious, academic dishonesty is not allowed. Cheating on tests or on other assignments will be reported to the University Committee on Academic Misconduct. The most common form of misconduct is plagiarism (the representation of someone else's ideas or words as your own, without attribution). For this class, plagiarism per se is not likely to arise but misconduct includes collaborating with other students or getting answers from anyone when it is expressly forbidden — for this class, that means that when working on exams, you **must** not seek the help of anyone other than the instructor nor may you collaborate with anyone. Note that this prohibition only holds for exams — working together on homework assignments is permitted.

Students with Disabilities: Students who need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor to arrange an appointment as soon as possible to discuss the course format, to anticipate needs, and to explore potential accommodations. The Office of Disability Services will be called in for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. Students who have not previously contacted the Office for Disability Services are encouraged to do so (614-292-3307; www.ods.ohio-state.edu).