

Advanced Nepali

NEPA 3003-3503 (3 Credits)

Nepal: Borders, Identity, and Community Resilience

This syllabus is representative of a typical term. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from term to term.

Course Description

From shared beginnings in Peace Corps Volunteer language training to now, there has always been an emphasis on language as a key to cultural learning and to greater international understanding. Thusly, our language courses are suited to in country socio-cultural dynamics, where attention is given to communicative context as well as content and where we attribute value to traditional languages and/or minority languages as well as “official” languages.

The study of Nepali is the first prerequisite for successful entry into the native communities of Nepal. Language training in Nepali begins immediately after arrival in the country, and throughout the semester, students are encouraged to apply their language skills in all facets of the program, especially during their stay in Kathmandu, the village excursion, as well as, the internship or Independent Study Project.

The purpose of language training is communication. Students need to be able to communicate in Nepali to work/stay effectively in Nepal. The course places emphasis on reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. It is designed for students who already have a certain level of language proficiency in reading, writing, listening and speaking Nepali, as determined by previous course work and ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview results.

The approach for this course is tutorial in nature and students will be expected to be more self-directed than usual. The course emphasizes community-contact, self-study and field-based observation. For each module, topics and tasks are identified and designed by the teachers according to the students’ learning styles and capacities.

Language Levels and Placement

Pre-requisites for enrollment are previous Nepali language study completion of beginning and intermediate coursework and/or a score of Intermediate High on an ACTFL OPI test at the time of placement.

Learning Outcomes

The SIT Nepal language course encompasses 45 academic hours, plus additional activities and homework (3 credits). Upon completion of the Nepali language course at SIT Nepal, students will be able to:

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- Converse with native speakers unaccustomed to foreigners using different aspects of major time frames of present, past and future;
- Deal with social situations in which unexpected complications arise;
- Narrate and/or describe events, places, people, etc. with multiple-paragraph-length connected discourse;
- Initiate or participate in discussion on current social issues;
- Demonstrate socio-linguistic skill by using common expressions, idioms, sayings, proverbs and contractions in appropriate contexts;
- Conduct in-depth interviews with native speakers on their research topic;
- Read Nepali newspapers, magazines and literature;
- Interpret and discuss audio/video (songs, dialogues, movies, plays, radio etc.);
- Analyze and discuss contemporary issues with high levels of sophistication and with few errors when speaking about unfamiliar topics;
- Communicate on community, national, international interests

Course Requirements

Methodology

During the semester, students attend 2.5 hours of language class three days a week. In terms of language teaching approaches, methods and techniques, we utilize multiple approaches based in experiential learning. Interviews, observation and reading assignments will be followed by in-depth discussion. However, we sometimes deal with grammar and non-generic vocabularies.

Textbook and course materials

Watters, D. P., N. B. Rajbhandary 2010. Nepali in Context: A Topical Approach to Learning Nepali, Kathmandu, Ekta Books, ISBN 978-9937-1-0094-6

Karki, T. B., 2009, Nepali-English Dictionary: A Compendium of Contemporary Written and Spoken Nepali, Kathmandu, Multi Graphic Press, ISBN 978-9937-2-1702-6

Turner R. L., D. R. Turner, 2009, A Comparative and Etymological Dictionary of Nepali Language, New Delhi, Adarsh Enterprises, ISBN 81-8363-011-1

Class Schedule

Students will have at least 45 class hours. During our Kathmandu stay, the class schedule is Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 9:00am-11:50am. Language class hours and timing may be different during our excursions. Extra individual classes will be provided if students want to work more on language. Students will not be staying in a formal class every day, different language activities (e.g. games, cooking class, assignments, debates) are organized related to language learning.

Assignments

You will have language homework most days. Assignments are given daily after language class ends and are due the next day during class. Assignments are usually reviewed and returned to students before the same day.

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Assessment

Teachers plan lessons and evaluate student performance at daily meetings. Students are then regrouped according to learning pace and individual strengths and weaknesses. At the end of the semester, teachers collectively compose a final evaluation for each student, taking into account classroom performance and the use and development of language skills in the host community.

Through periodic and ongoing experiential evaluation students are graded in each of the following areas according to the criteria set out in the syllabi: grammar, vocabulary, oral and reading comprehension, fluency, pronunciation, motivation, attendance, progress, Devnagari and language usage outside of classroom. In addition, there are two written tests during the semester (e.g. short question/answer, fill in the blanks, correcting word order, etc.) and final written and oral exams before ISP starts.

The Academic Director, based on the language teachers' final evaluation determines the final semester language grade. Although not part of grade, students will be given an oral proficiency interview before ISP by an outside assessor at the conclusion of language study to gauge students' language acquisition.

Evaluation Criteria

Students will be evaluated on the following criteria in their learning and work in target language:

Grammar

Grammar is the integral part of the language; it governs the composition of word order, conjugation, tenses etc. It is evaluated under assignments, class activities and presentation, exams.

Vocabulary

At least 20-30 new words are taught in class. Students are highly encouraged to acquire extensive vocabulary from the homestay family, books and on their own. Vocabulary is evaluated under assignments, class activities and presentations, and exams.

Intelligibility/Pronunciation/Fluency

Students are expected to be intelligible and clear in their writing, reading, description, discussion in terms of grammar, pronunciation, smoothness of conversation flow. This criteria is graded under class activities and presentations, assignments, and exams.

Attendance/Participation (10%)

Students are expected to attend each and every language class and the activities scheduled by teachers.

If students get sick or have important appointments they should inform to the teacher and director ahead of the class. 'Just being in class' cannot be considered 'good participation'. Being motivated in learning, encouraging and being helpful to their classmate, creating Nepali speaking environment inside and outside class, showing respect to language, host-culture without being defensive or distracting are also important. It is graded under attendance/participation, class activities and presentations, and assignments.

Devanagari

Students' fluency and accuracy are graded in Devanagari reading and writing. It is graded under assignments and exams.

Final grades are calculated as follows:

Assignments (20 %)

Class Activities and presentations (20 %)

Attendance/Participation (10 %)

Exams (50 %)

1st exam (5 %)

2nd exam (10 %)

Final exam (20 %)

Devanagari exam (15 %)

Grading Scale: The grading scale for all classes is as follows:

94-100%	A
90-93%	A-
87-89%	B+
84-86%	B
80-83%	B-
77-79%	C+
74-76%	C
70-73%	C-
67-69%	D+
64-66%	D
Below 64	F

Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) Test

Final oral proficiency interviews are conducted toward the end of the semester prior to ISP in order to provide a measurement of students' overall linguistic progress. Course grades usually, but not always, reflect performance in the Oral Proficiency Interview.

Score Description

	Functions	Content	Context	Accuracy	Text Type
Superior	Support opinion, hypothesis, discuss topics concretely/abstractly, handle a linguistically unfamiliar situation	Verity of concrete & abstract topics	Formal & informal	Rare errors that never interferes with meaning	Extended discourse

Advanced High	Narrate, describe, explain, compare, discuss in past present & future time/ major aspect frames. Can mostly answer in superior level, but not all the time.	Concrete topics going beyond self, family, community & work	Most formal & some informal settings	Generally comprehensible to all	Paragraph length speech
Advanced Mid	Narrate, describe, explain, compare, discuss in past present & future time/ major aspect frames. Strong for the level	Concrete topics going beyond self, family, community & work	Most formal & some informal settings	Generally comprehensible to all	Paragraph length speech
Advanced Low	Narrate, describe, explain, compare, discuss in past present & future time/ major aspect frames. Minimal, weak but without breakdown into level below.	Concrete topics going beyond self, family, community & work	Most formal & some informal settings	Generally comprehensible to all	Paragraph length speech

Expectations and Policies

Class attendance is mandatory and unexcused absences will reduce the language grade (see attendance policies in the front matter of the syllabus).

Show up prepared. Be on time, have your assignments completed and points in mind for clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.

Have assignments completed on schedule and done according to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.

Ask questions in class. Teachers are highly respected in Nepal. Your polite and engaged behavior is expected.

Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).

Respect differences of opinion (classmates', teachers'). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

Trust in the process. SIT has been teaching Nepali for over 40 years and the teachers have a collective 40+ years teaching in SIT, Peace Corps, and other programs. It might be tough, but we have seen the tremendous results of our course.

SIT Policies and Resources

Please refer to the [SIT Study Abroad Handbook](#) and the [Policies](#) section of the SIT website for all academic and student affairs policies. Students are accountable for complying with all published policies. Of particular relevance to this course are the policies regarding: academic integrity, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), research and ethics in field study and internships, late assignments, academic status, academic appeals, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and misconduct, and the student code of conduct.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and SIT website for information on important resources and services provided through our central administration in Vermont, such as

[Library resources and research support](#), [Disability Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Title IX information](#), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) resources.

Module 1:- First 3 weeks (orientation to 1 st excursion phase) Module 2:- 4 th to 6 th weeks (Kathmandu based)	Module 3:- 7 th to 9 th weeks (2 nd excursion & Final Week)
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Module 1

Learning outcomes		Methods of Evaluation				
		Exam	Quiz	Assignments	Presentation	Direct Observation
1	Demonstrate basic grammatical understanding through conversations about daily life	✓		✓	✓	✓
2	Participate actively with native speakers in informal settings on topics of personal and public interest.			✓	✓	✓
3	Interview native speakers about several predictable topics related to daily activities and personal environment.			✓	✓	✓
4	Practice formal and informal phone conversation with a variety of people.			✓	✓	✓
5	Compare people, places, weather, etc.	✓		✓	✓	✓
6	Describe physical symptoms of any sickness					✓
7	Listen to a conversation and identify what is being talked about.			✓	✓	✓
8	Write paragraphs and read children's books in Devnagari script.	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Module 2

Learning outcomes		Methods of Evaluation				
		Exam	Quiz	Assignments	Presentation	Direct Observation
1	Narrate and describe a story, experience and/or future plan with paragraph-length connected discourse	✓		✓	✓	✓
2	Demonstrate socio-linguistic skill by using common expressions, idioms, sayings, proverbs and contractions	✓			✓	✓
3	Describe physical, mental and psychological aspects of any sickness or disorder.					✓
4	Demonstrate informal public speaking skills				✓	✓

5	Express understanding of the main ideas of most speech, conversation, audio or video in	✓		✓		✓
6	Explain their research topic and plan	✓			✓	✓
7	Read Nepali newspapers and magazines	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Module 3

Learning outcomes		Methods of				
Evaluation		Exam	Quiz	Assignments	Presentation	Direct Observation
1	Demonstrate grammatical understanding of language by conversing on conditional and hypothetical	✓			✓	✓
2	Deal with social situations in which unexpected complications arise			✓	✓	✓
3	Narrate and describe things in a coherent paragraph length form	✓		✓	✓	✓
4	Interpret and discuss audio/video (songs, dialogues, movies, plays, radio etc.)	✓		✓		✓
5	Plan and conduct in-depth field study about a village relating to culture, development and social change.					✓
6	Explain the rationale and background of research in greater detail and develop questionnaires for research				✓	✓
7	Listen to the radio or watch TV news and describe and discuss the current news			✓	✓	✓
8	Read a wider variety of texts, such as simple short stories, news items, social notices, personal correspondence, simple business letters, and simple	✓		✓	✓	✓
9	Write routine social and informal business correspondence in simple discourse of at least several paragraphs in length on familiar topics.	✓		✓	✓	✓