Intensive Language Study: Nepali

NEPA-1500 (6 Credits / 90 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Nepal: Development and Social Change

Description
The intensive study of Nepali is an essential 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 homestay, Village Excursion, and the Independent Study Project.

Objectives:
1. To gain proficiency in spoken Nepali.
2. To use Nepali confidently and effectively in a variety of situations.
3. To gain a basic proficiency in reading Devanagari script.
4. To use Nepali confidently outside the classroom and develop further knowledge of the language and communication skills by regular interaction with Nepali speakers.

The purpose of language training is communication. Students need to be able to communicate in Nepali to work/stay effectively in Nepal. We emphasize language acquisition (Natural Approach) for application in real life situations. The successful completion of the language training will give the learner a good foundation for language usage in day-to-day life. For each component, topics are identified; tasks performed under each topic are determined and designed by the teachers according to the students’ learning styles and capacities. Each lesson presents the situation, e.g. eating with host family, and the topic, e.g. food and socializing. Students learn to use a certain “dialogue” appropriate to the topic. Dialogues are used to assist in expressing needs, wants, questions, responding to questions, giving and asking opinions, and interviewing, etc.

After completion of the Nepali Language course at SIT Nepal, the majority of students can communicate confidently on many different subjects in different contexts. These include but are not limited to:
1. Exchanging of greetings and leave taking in formal and informal situations.
2. Asking and answering questions about personal information; e.g. name, age, home, occupation, about the family, etc.
3. Describing food and drink needs and preferences.
4. Purchasing food and other items.
5. Asking about ingredients, cooking utensils and methods of cooking.
6. Asking and giving directions to specific locations.
7. Asking and telling about clothing color, size of items and discussing clothing with a tailor.
8. Naming parts of the body and describing minor ailments.
9. Informing the host family about the intention of going out (field trip, excursion, off days, party, etc.)

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

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10. Describing SIT and coming to Nepal.
11. Interviewing in different fields of interest during FSS, CAD and Independent Study Project.
12. Describing and comparing weather in Nepal and the USA, and other locations.

Methodology
In terms of language teaching approaches, methods and techniques, we utilize the following approaches: grammar-translation method, direct method, audio-lingual method, silent way, community language learning, total physical response, and communicative approach. During the semester, students attend 2.5 hours of language class five days a week. Approaches are employed individually by language trainers in their classrooms (e.g. realia, demonstration, situational, drilling, games, etc.) Since our main focus is language acquisition, we do not allow our learners to speak other languages in the classroom. However we sometimes address grammar and other issues related to Nepali language learning in English.

Class Schedule
Students will have at least 100 class hours. During our Kathmandu stay, the class schedule is Monday-Friday 8:15am-10:45am. Language class hours and timing may be different during our Village and Tarai Excursions. The classes are shuffled and reshuffled according to the learning pace and student number so that students will be familiar with each teacher’s teaching styles and techniques. 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, debate) are organized related to language learning.

Evaluation
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. Students are graded in each of the following areas according to the criteria set out in the syllabi introduction: grammar, vocabulary, oral and reading comprehension, fluency, pronunciation, motivation, attendance, progress, Devnagari and language usage outside of classroom. Three different Nepali language tests are conducted during the semester. The score is taken into account in the final grading as well. 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 two ACTFL oral exams before and after ISP by a certified tester at the conclusion of language study to gauge students’ language acquisition.

Grading
- Grammar 10%
- Vocabulary 10%
- Pronunciation 10%
- Fluency 10%
- Motivation & Attitude 10%
- Progress 10%
- Attendance 10%
- Use outside of class 10%
- Devanagari 10%

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### ACTFL Test

#### Score Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advanced</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Novice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Functions</strong></td>
<td>Unfamiliar situation</td>
<td>Situation with complication</td>
<td>Nonfunctional ability</td>
<td>Listening, react with memorized material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td>Support opinion</td>
<td>Describe and narrate present, past, and future</td>
<td>Memorized phrases</td>
<td>Tangible/visible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td>Abstract topics, professional</td>
<td>Work, recreation, social, and current events</td>
<td>Basic set of things and lists</td>
<td>Surroundings Objects, color, food, numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accuracy</strong></td>
<td>No patterns of errors</td>
<td>Generally comprehensible</td>
<td>Partial control on basis</td>
<td>Barely understood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quantity</strong></td>
<td>Extended speech</td>
<td>Full control of elementary construction</td>
<td>Structures</td>
<td>Words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role</strong></td>
<td>Equal partner, initiate conversation</td>
<td>Full participation</td>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>Predicatable question</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### References:
- Let’s Learn Nepali. Author: SIT Language Teachers, Kathmandu, Nepal 1999
- SIT Language Hand outs

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