

## **Beginning Nepali**

### NEPA 1503 J Term Course

### (3 Credits)

#### Nepal: Intensive Nepali Language

*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.

Building on the language learnt during the online summer course or previous Nepali language experience, immersed training in Nepali begins immediately after arrival in the country, and throughout the program, students are encouraged to apply their language skills in all facets of the program experience. 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. Focusing on communication skills, the language learning is designed to help students be able to participate in the local content for cultural immersion.

### **Language Levels and Placement**

Students are placed into appropriate language course levels based on oral proficiency interviews conducted during orientation in Nepal.

### **Learning Outcomes**

The SIT Nepal language course encompasses 45 class hours (3 credits). Upon completion of the Nepali Language course at SIT Nepal, students will be able to:

- Communicate effectively in Nepali in a variety of speaking situations.
- Demonstrate comprehension of Nepali in a variety of listening situations.
- Understand most native speakers when they speak clearly on familiar topics.
- Express feelings, opinions, and emotions using a simple vocabulary.
- Converse in Nepali with host family members about immediate needs and communicate effectively on a daily basis.
- Discern and compare cultural similarities and differences.

## Course Requirement

### Methodology

In terms of language teaching approaches, methods and techniques, we utilize multiple approaches based in experiential learning. During the course, students attend 3 hours of language class five days a week. Since our main focus is language acquisition, we do not allow our learners to speak other languages in the classroom. However, we sometimes deal with grammar and other issues related to Nepali language learning in English.

**Language Pledge:** Speaking Nepali throughout each day, with classmates, teachers, homestay families, and community members will solidify student confidence, enhance fluency, and motivate deeper engagement in the cultural life of Nepali communities.

### Textbook and course materials

Rana, M., C. Rana, S. Pokhrel, and D. Putnam. 2015. *Nepali the SIT Way: Basic and Intermediate Nepali for Multicultural Competency and Fieldwork*. Lalitpur: Jagadamba Press. ISBN: 978 – 9937 – 2 – 5654 – 4

Rana, M., C. Rana, and S. Pokhrel. 2014. *Nepali the SIT Way: Language Workbook*. Kathmandu: SIT Nepal.

Rana, M. 2012. *Let's Learn Devanagari: Nepali Script*. Kathmandu. SIT Nepal English-Nepali Pocket Dictionary

### Class Schedule

Students will have at least 45 class hours. During our Kathmandu stay, the class schedule is Monday-Friday 8:30am- 11:30 am. Language class hours and timing may be different during our excursions. 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, 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 course, 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.

The Academic Director, based on the language teachers' final evaluation, determines the final course language grade. Although not part of grade, students will be given an ACTFL oral proficiency interview by a certified tester at the conclusion of language study to gauge students' language acquisition.

## **Methods of Evaluation**

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**

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 %)

    Mid-term exam (15 %)

    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 course. Course grades usually, but not always, reflect performance in the Oral Proficiency Interview.

**Score Description for Major Speaking Proficiency Level**

	<b>Functions</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Accuracy</b>	<b>Text Type</b>
<b>Superior</b>	Discuss topics concretely/abstractly, handle a linguistically unfamiliar situation, support/object opinion, hypothesis.	Verity of concrete & abstract topics	Formal & informal	Rare errors that never interferes with meaning	Extended discourse
<b>Advanced</b>	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
<b>Intermediate</b>	Creates with language, simple conversations, ask & answer, can handle simple social transactional situations. Can mostly answer in advanced level, but not all the time.	Daily routine, familiar surroundings, routine travel needs	Some informal settings & a few transactional situations	Understood with some repetition by speakers used to dealing with foreigners	Discrete sentences
<b>Novice</b>	Formulaic utterances and lists, but shows no functional ability	Objects, numbers, body parts, colors, days, family members, food, etc	Most common informal settings	Very difficult to understand	Below sentence level

**Sublevels of Each Major Speaking Proficiency Level**

	<b>Quantity and Quality at the floor</b>	<b>Function at the next level</b>
<b>High</b>	Excellent. Performance exceeds the requirements for the level	Almost always, with breakdown. Patterns of weakness. Cannot sustain the functions of the level above consistently.
<b>Mid</b>	Good quantity and quality. Performance is strong, with ease, fluency, and confidence	A little, but not most of the time
<b>Low</b>	Minimal. Performance is weak but without breakdown into level below. Great effort to sustain the functions of the level. Poor control of the details of the functions at the level, lack of accuracy and fluency	No development of the functions of the level above.

**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 both SIT, Peace Corps, and other programs. It might be tough, but we have seen the tremendous results of our course.

**Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad handbook** for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process. Also, refer to the specific information available in the Student Handbook.

**Disability Services:** Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at [disabilityservices@sit.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@sit.edu) for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational experience. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services, including a link to the online request form, can be found on the Disability Services website at: <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices>.