# Beginning Nepali: Intensive
## NEPA-1506 (6 credits)

## Nepal: Development, Gender, and Social Change in the Himalaya

*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.*

## 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 home stay, the village excursion, and the Independent Study Project or internship.

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.

## Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, 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.
- Describe the Independent Study Project to a variety of audiences.
- Conduct independent research or internship using basic Nepali language.
- Discern and compare cultural similarities and differences.

**Language Levels and Placement**
Students are placed into appropriate language course levels based on oral proficiency interviews conducted during orientation in Nepal.

**Instructional Methods**
SIT's teaching and learning philosophy is grounded in the experiential learning theory developed by Kolb (1984; 2015) and informed by various scholars, such as Dewey, Piaget, Lewin, among others. Experiential learning theory recognizes that learning is an active process that is not confined to the formal curriculum; "knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 2015, p. 49). Learning involves both content and process. Learning is holistic and happens through various life experiences upon which students draw to generate new ways of knowing and being. Learning involves a community and is a lifelong endeavor. Learning is transformational. The suggested four step-cycle of a *concrete experience*, *reflective observation*, *abstract conceptualization*, and *active experimentation* embedded in the experiential learning model is not linear and might not always happen in that specific order, as any learning is highly context dependent. These stages of taking part in a shared experience; reflecting on that experience by describing and interpreting it; challenging their own assumptions and beliefs to generate new knowledge; and ultimately applying new knowledge, awareness, skills, and attitudes in a variety of situations and contexts are important for students to engage in to become empowered lifelong learners.

**Required Texts**
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

**Assignments and Evaluation**

Assignment Descriptions 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 and internship 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 ACTFL oral proficiency interview before the ISP and internship period 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 classmates, creating a 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 %)

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

| | Functions | Content | Context | Accuracy | Text Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Superior** | 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 |
| **Advanced** | 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 |
| **Intermediate** | 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 |
| **Novice** | 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 |

Attendance and Participation
Due to the nature of SIT Study Abroad programs, and the importance of student and instructor contributions in each and every class session, attendance at all classes and for all program excursions is required. Criteria for evaluation of student performance include attendance and participation in program activities. Students must fully participate in all program components and courses. Students may not voluntarily opt out of required program activities. Valid reasons for absence – such as illness – must be discussed with the academic director or other designated staff person. Absences impact academic performance, may impact grades, and could result in dismissal from the program.

Late Assignments
SIT Study Abroad programs integrate traditional classroom lectures and discussion with field-based experiences, site visits and debriefs. The curriculum is designed to build on itself and

progress to the culmination (projects, ISP, case studies, internship, etc.). It is critical that students complete assignments in a timely manner to continue to benefit from the sequences in assignments, reflections and experiences throughout the program.
Example:  Students may request a justified extension for one paper/assignment during the semester. Requests must be made in writing and at least 12 hours before the posted due date and time.  If reason for request is accepted, an extension of up to one week may be granted at that time. Any further requests for extensions will not be granted. Students who fail to submit the assignment within the extension period will receive an 'F' for the assignment.


Grading Scale

| | |
|---|---|
| 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 |


**Program Expectations**
- Show up prepared. Be on time, have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- Respect differences of opinion (classmates', lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). 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, be we have seen the tremendous results of our course.
- Personal Technology Use: Cell phones and other personal electronics can be used for taking notes and other class activities.  Off-task usage is not acceptable. You may be marked as absent for habitually using them for something other than classroom activities.

**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](#), [Accessibility Services](#), [Counseling Services,](#) [Title IX information](#), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) resources.

**Course Schedule**

*Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs*

During our Kathmandu stay, the class schedule is Monday-Friday 8:00am-10:45am. 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.