

Course Title: Introduction to Sanskrit through Classical Texts

Course Description:

This 2-credit summer evening intensive introduces students to Sanskrit through selected classical readings (to be specified later, e.g., simple verses from the Bhagavad Gītā, Hitopadeśa, or Upaniṣads). Students will learn the Devanāgarī script, foundational grammar, chanting basics, and practice reading passages with guided support. The course emphasizes practical skills in pronunciation, grammar, and translation for beginners.

Credit and Hours

- Credits: 2 (30 contact hours)
- Schedule: June 1 – June 28, 2026
- Time: 8:30 pm – 10:00 pm EST (1.5 hrs per session; 20 evenings total)

Instructor: Bhante Derangala Kusalagnana

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Recognize and write the Devanāgarī script.
- Understand the basics of Sanskrit phonetics and sandhi (euphonic combination).
- Identify fundamental grammatical structures (noun declensions, verb conjugations in present tense).
- Read and translate simple Sanskrit sentences.
- Chant and recite basic Sanskrit verses with correct pronunciation.

Course Components

- Script and Pronunciation – introduction to Devanāgarī, vowels, consonants, aspirates, visarga, anusvāra.
- Basic Grammar – cases, numbers, genders; simple present tense verb forms.
- Simple Readings – short verses (e.g., Bhagavad Gītā, Hitopadeśa, Subhāṣitas).
- Chanting Practice – recitation of mantras (e.g., Śānti Mantras), selected stotras.
- Translation Exercises – guided practice with simple prose and verse.

References

1. Coulson, Michael. *Teach Yourself Sanskrit*.
2. Goldman, Robert & Goldman, Sally. *Devavāṇīpraveśikā: An Introduction to the Sanskrit Language*.
3. Deshpande, Madhav. *Samskṛta-Subodhinī: A Sanskrit Primer*.
4. Macdonell, Arthur. *A Sanskrit Grammar for Students*.
5. Primary texts (to be specified): Bhagavad Gītā, Hitopadeśa, Subhāṣita-samgraha, selected Upaniṣads.

Schedule Outline

- **Week 1 (Jun 1–5):** Devanāgarī script, pronunciation drills, vowels/consonants, chanting basics.
- **Week 2 (Jun 8–12):** Grammar foundations – nouns (first & second declensions), simple sentences.
- **Week 3 (Jun 15–19):** Verbs in present tense, subject–verb agreement, simple readings (Hitopadeśa, Gītā verses).
- **Week 4 (Jun 22–26):** Sandhi rules, compound words, short chanting selections (Śānti Mantras).
- **Jun 27–28:** Review, translation workshop, final chanting performance.

Grading and Assessment

- Participation & attendance – 30%
- Script quizzes (reading/writing Devanāgarī) – 20%
- Translation assignments – 30%
- Final chanting & translation test – 20%