

Applied Sanskrit Grammar

All Programs

Course Category: [Foundation] **Schedule of Offering:** [Semester 2]

Course Credit Structure: [4]

- **Lecture:** [3]
- **Tutorial:** [1]
- **Practical:** [0]

Contact Hours per week: [4]

1. Introduction

In this course, we are building on what we covered in the course entitled *Sanskrit for Eternal Use*. After being exposed to the multifarious Sanskrit literature from different fields of study, such as Āyurveda, Mathematics, and Yoga, we take a bird's eye view of Sanskrit grammar, the central feature of the BA Sanskrit-Vyākaraṇa program and a basic necessity for all other programs. This is essential for striding forward into the vast realm of Sanskrit literature, from which the student will learn to mine knowledge that can be applied today, from the most mundane of subjects to the deepest philosophy, and everything in between.

1. Course Objectives

- Enable students to be able to access texts in Sanskrit independently.
- Help the student gain awareness of various disciplines that utilize the principles of Sanskrit grammar, including literature, linguistics, and natural language processing.
- Guide the student in thinking about the various possible applications of Sanskrit in their lives.

2. Pre-requisites

Sanskrit for Eternal Use

3. Readings

- Module 1
 - *The Wonder that is Sanskrit* - Sampadanand Mishra
 - *Sanskrit and the Evolution of Human Speech* - Sampadanand Mishra
 - *Devavāṇīpraveśikā* (Introduction) - Robert Goldman
- Module 2
 - Selections from *Aṣṭādhyāyī Sahajbodh* (Volume 1) - Pushpa Dikshit
 - Practice from *Abhāsapustakam* (Sanskrita Bharati)
- Module 3
 - *Sandhi* - Samskrita Bharati
 - *Kārakam* - Samskrita Bharati
 - Selections from *Aṣṭādhyāyī Sahajbodh* (Volume 1) - Pushpa Dikshit
 - Readings from George Cardona
- Module 4
 - *Natural Language Processing: A Pāṇinian Perspective* - Akshara Bharati
 - *Linguistics: An Introduction* - Andrew Radford
- Module 5
 - Selections from *Racanānuvādakaumudī*
 - *Is That a Fish in Your Ear? Translation and the Meaning of Everything* - David Bellos

1. Module-wise topics

Module 1 -- Introduction to language study (5 sessions)

1. Introduction to linguistics (bhāṣā-vijñāna-prastāva)
2. Introduction to vyākaraṇa (vyākaraṇa-paricaya)

Here we will introduce the subject of language study. In this introduction, we will make students familiar with the study of linguistics in general, which is the scientific study of language, including syntax, grammar, and phonetics. Students will be introduced to a systematic approach to studying language and its various applications in life. Following this, students will be introduced to the study of language that is native to Sanskrit, known as vyākaraṇa, and its particular effects on our minds.

Module 2 -- Word formation (16 sessions)

1. The practice of active and passive verbal conjugation (lakāra-vyavahāra)
2. The recognition of nominalized verbs (kṛdanta-anuprayoga)
3. The comprehension of nouns and derived nouns
(subanta-taddhita-avabodha)
4. The science of expressing numbers (saṅkhyā-pratipatti)
5. Modifiers (viśeṣya-viśeṣaṇa-bhāva)

This module will explore the formation of words, according to the three great derivational methods (prakriyās) available in Sanskrit grammar. Here, we begin with the recognition of verbal forms (lakāra-vyavahāra). Once the student can recognize a verb, the various relations, direct or indirect, to that verb can be recognized in a sentence (to be covered in the next module). Nominalized verbs are a common formation in Sanskrit; therefore once the student can recognize verbal forms, we will explore nouns based on those verbs (kṛdanta-anuprayoga). Having explored verbal forms and nominalized verbs, the student moves on to understanding nominal forms and derived nouns (subanta-taddhita-avabodha). This way, all types of words can be recognized by the student. As icing on the cake, we explore compound words (samāsa-viniyoga-vijñāna).

Module 3 -- Sentence formation (16 sessions)

1. The concept of splitting and joining compounds (samāsa-viniyoga-vijñāna)
2. The notion of splitting and joining letters (sandhi-viccheda-vijñāna)
3. The syntax and semantics of Sanskrit (kāraka-vibhakti-svarūpa-bodha)
4. Particles

In this module we will learn to recognize, split, and join various phonemes that are combinations of letters within and between words. This helps us to recognize individual words independently, which is essential for parsing sentences. For example, तत्रैव -- here, we have two words pretending to be one. तत्र + एव = तत्रैव . Learning to recognize this morphological change and split words accordingly is the practice of sandhi.

We will also learn to recognize syntactic conventions and semantic relationships between words. Without this necessary knowledge, meaning cannot be extracted from a sentence. The contextual meaning of a word depends upon its direct or indirect relationship with a verb through the use of markers within the word. Analyzing and understanding these relationships and markers will be a key focus of this module.

Module 4 -- Applications of SG (12 sessions)

1. Linguistics (bhāṣā-vijñāna-vimarśa)

2. Natural language processing (NLP) (prākṛtika-bhāṣā-adhigama)

Now that we have explored various grammatical principles of Sanskrit, we move further into dimensions normally left unexplored. Here we have the opportunity to dive into the study of other fields that utilize Sanskrit grammar in ways that go beyond simply textual reading. We will explore the study of Natural Language Processing (NLP), a method of processing a language that utilizes the grammar of that language, in order to create an interface for interaction with a computer. We will also take a deeper look at the study of linguistics, a topic that was initially introduced — but with the skills we have gained from the previous modules of this course, we can now appreciate the depth and beauty of this discipline.

Module 5 -- The art of translation (11 sessions)

1. Transliteration methods (akṣarāntara-jñāna)
2. The art of translation (bhāṣāntara-kalā)

Having been exposed to various aspects of Sanskrit grammar, textual readings, NLP, and principles of linguistics, we are ready to approach Sanskrit literature as active participants, rather than passive readers. Here we will apply what we have learned actively through the art of translation. We will learn basic principles of translation and the limits of artistic license. We will see the various ways people have translated texts in the past, and assess their approach (literal vs poetic) and value (what are the goals of translation, etc.).

2. Pedagogy

Along with what we learn here, in lecture or discussion format, we will be applying directly in the conversational Sanskrit that students have been developing over the year. Mostly this class is made up of interaction between the students and a text, exploring the rich geography of Sanskrit grammar, presented in a particular order, for the sake of developing confidence in the student when accessing a Sanskrit text. We will conclude with several lectures and demonstrations exploring different applications of Sanskrit grammar outside the textual domain, finishing with a totally student-driven process of translating various passages from Sanskrit.

3. Evaluation Pattern

• Assignments:	15 Points
• Group Project:	25 Points
• Mid-Semester Exam:	25 Points
• End-Semester Exam:	35 Points
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Total:	100 Points