

Additional languages

Study of the subsidiary language begins at the start of the second year, and thereafter accounts for about a third of the work. The choice of a subsidiary language lies between Old Iranian, Pali, Prakrit, Hindi and Tibetan and Himalayan Studies.

The first three of these again are examined by an unprepared translation paper and an essay paper. The material in Old Iranian is mainly Zoroastrian literature, in Pali exclusively Buddhist literature, and in Prakrit both Jain literature and secular creative literature (poetry and drama). Tibetan is currently being offered as a two-paper option for students studying for the B.A. in Sanskrit. The course covers the language and literature of Tibet, and focusses on the history and culture of Tibet and Nepal, and the Himalayan regions of northern India. Tibetan is examined by a paper in prose composition and unprepared translation, and a paper in prepared texts with questions on culture and history.



A new elementary Hindi course starts each year in Michaelmas term in mid-October and runs for three terms. Elementary Hindi is primarily intended for students enrolled on the B.A. in Sanskrit.

For more information on the Hindi course visit www.orinst.ox.ac.uk/isa/hindi_language.html

Aside from the B.A. in Sanskrit, elements of South and Inner Asian culture may also be studied as part of the Joint Honours degrees in either Classics & Oriental Studies or Oriental Studies & Theology.

Please visit the Faculty of Oriental Studies website at:
www.orinst.ox.ac.uk

For the latest University prospectus and information on fees and scholarships please contact: Undergraduate Admissions Office, University Offices, Wellington Square, Oxford, OX1 2JD.
Tel. 01865 288000.

email: undergraduate.admissions@admin.ox.ac.uk or visit www.admissions.ox.ac.uk



Sanskrit

at Undergraduate Level

Faculty of Oriental Studies

Sanskrit at Oxford

The study of South and Inner Asia at undergraduate level is largely focussed on classical Indian languages, history, and texts. The B.A. Honours course in Sanskrit allows students to gain a deep understanding of the foundations of Indian language and culture and can be combined with the study of one or more related languages, including ancient languages such as **Pali** and **Prakrit**, alongside modern equivalents such as **Hindi** and **Tibetan**.

Formally, the course is in two parts. The first, of five months, leads to the Preliminary Examination at the end of the second term, in late March. Teaching for this consists mainly of intensive instruction in the rudiments of the language. The second, the Final Honours course, takes seven terms (26 months). The Final Honour

School is examined in nine papers, seven in Sanskrit and two in the subsidiary language. There are only two set text papers. For these Sanskrit language is studied from two contrasting and complementary points of view. The indigenous study of Sanskrit grammar is given a large place in our course, not only because it teaches Sanskrit with authoritative accuracy, but, even more important, because linguistics was the paradigm science in Ancient India. On the other hand, historical and comparative linguistics have drawn western philologists to the study of Sanskrit; the student is therefore introduced to the historical philology of both Vedic (the oldest form of Sanskrit) and to Middle Indo-Aryan (i.e. Pali and Prakrit), the ancient languages derived from Sanskrit.

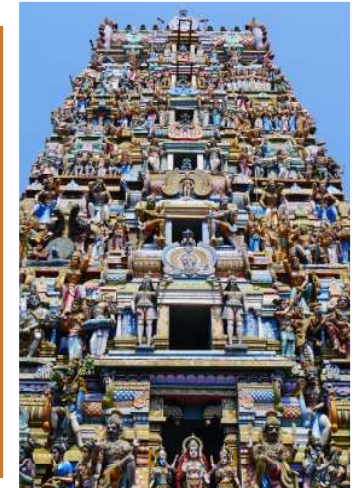
Four more papers in Sanskrit are accounted for by a general unprepared translation paper, a general essay paper on Sanskrit literature and the arts, and an unprepared translation paper and an essay paper in a chosen area of Sanskrit studies, such as literature, religion, philosophy, or even an area more closely defined. The choice of this more specialised area and the materials read in preparation for the examination in it is arranged between teachers and student. The final paper in Sanskrit is in a special subject; for this the student may, if appropriate, offer a short dissertation instead of an examination paper.

Why study Sanskrit?

“Sanskrit is the fascinating language of ancient and medieval Indian religion, literature, philosophy and science. It is one of the world’s oldest languages, and is a vital element in the study of Eastern religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism. Learning Sanskrit means you have the ability to understand in depth classical Hindu religion and philosophy and to read first-hand the great epics of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata and the oldest literature in the world, the Vedas. It is an important member of the Indo-European family of languages to which almost all European languages belong. Sanskrit continues to be spoken and written in India and is one of the twenty three official languages. Before starting the course at Oxford, it is unnecessary to know any

Sanskrit (though students may find it valuable to familiarise themselves with Devanagari, the script in which Sanskrit is usually printed). A basic knowledge of English grammar is however essential. For more advanced students of Indology, ability to read French is virtually essential, and German hardly less valuable, so that the best preparation for this course may well be to acquire a reading knowledge of those languages.”

Dr James Benson
University Lecturer in Sanskrit



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