

Course Handbook: Sanskrit

Faculty of Oriental Studies

Academic Year 2017-18

This handbook applies to students starting the course in Michaelmas Term 2017/Final Honour School in Michaelmas Term 2018. The information in this handbook may be different for students starting in other years.

NOTE: The Examination Regulations relating to all Oriental Studies courses are available at <https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/>. If there is a conflict between information in this handbook and the Examination Regulations, you should always follow the Examination Regulations. If you have any concerns please contact academic.administrator@orinst.ox.ac.uk.

The information in this handbook is accurate as of 1st October 2017. However, it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances. If such changes are made the department will publish a new version of this handbook together with a list of the changes. Students will also be informed.

Introduction

Sanskrit is the key to Indian civilisation, and it is in this spirit that it is taught at Oxford, though the B.A. course necessarily concentrates on giving students a thorough grounding in the language, and the bulk of the teaching proceeds by the reading and explication of classical texts.

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).

Preliminaries (First Year)

The course book for the first year is *Teach Yourself Sanskrit* by M.A. Coulson, which is fairly widely available, and gives good advice on auxiliary material. It is unnecessary to know any Sanskrit before beginning the course (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.

All examinations will be held at the end of Hilary Term.

1. Texts: C. R. Lanman, *Sanskrit Reader*, pp. 1-34, l. 11. *Bhagavad-Gītā* (ed. Belvalkar), Books II, IV, VI, and XI.
2. Grammar: the subject will be studied from M. A. Coulson, *Teach Yourself Sanskrit*; A. A. Macdonell, *Sanskrit Grammar for Students*.
3. General paper.

Final Honour School (Second and Third Year)

The Final Honour School is examined in nine papers, seven in Sanskrit and two in the subsidiary language (see below).

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 Vedic, the oldest form of 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. Several students in recent years have for this dissertation edited unpublished texts from manuscripts or inscriptions.

We also ask students to submit a copy of their dissertation on cd (preferably in pdf).

Remember to write your candidate number and not your name on the dissertation you submit.

The choice of a subsidiary language lies between Old Iranian, Pali, Prakrit, Tibetan and Hindi. 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 Jaina literature and secular creative literature (poetry and drama). Tibetan and Hindi are examined by a paper in prose composition and unprepared translation, and a paper in prepared texts with questions on culture and history. Study of the subsidiary language begins at the start of the second year, and thereafter accounts for about a third of the work.

Sanskrit

1. Sanskrit unprepared translation.
2. Essay questions on the history of classical Indian literature and civilisation. This paper may include questions on the visual arts in ancient India.
3. Indian linguistics.
4. Unprepared translation from Sanskrit texts.
5. Essay questions on the chosen area.
6. A special subject or such other special subjects as may be approved by the board of the faculty.

Either

7. and 8. Two papers on one of the following additional languages: Hindi, Old Iranian, Pali, Prakrit, Tibetan.

And

9. Special Subject.

Or

7. 8. 9. Three papers on Classics (in the Honour School of Classics and Oriental Studies) as an additional language.

Teaching Staff

- Nick J. Allen - Retired Reader, Social Anthropology of South Asia
- Imre Bangha - Associate Professor of Hindi *
- James Benson - Associate Professor of Sanskrit *
- Shailendra Bhandare - Assistant Keeper (South Asian Numismatics), Heberden Coin Room, Ashmolean Museum
- Cathy Cantwell - Research Officer, Buddhist Studies *
- Peter Carey - Laithwaite Fellow and Tutor in Modern History
- David Gellner - Professor of Social Anthropology
- Richard F. Gombrich - Professor Emeritus, Sanskrit
- Tsering Gonkatsang - Instructor in Tibetan Language *
- Georgios T Halkias - Visiting Associate Researcher

- Barbara Harriss-White - Emeritus Professor of Development Studies
- Mallica Kumbera Landrus – Keeper, Eastern Art, Ashmolean Museum
- Robert Mayer - University Research Lecturer and Research Officer *
- Christopher Minkowski - Boden Professor of Sanskrit *
- Polly O'Hanlon - Professor in Indian History and Culture *
- Fernanda Pirie - Director of the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies
- Charles Ramble - University Research Lecturer
- Ulrike Roesler - Associate Professor of Tibetan and Himalayan Studies *
- Sarah Shaw - Faculty Member
- Péter-Dániel Szántó - Associate of the Sub-Faculty of Inner and South Asian Studies
- Andrew S. Topsfield - Senior Assistant Keeper, Department of Eastern Art, Ashmolean Museum, Retired
- Elizabeth Tucker - Jill Hart Research Fellow in Indo-Iranian Philology
- David Washbrook - Retired
- Stefano Zacchetti - Yehan Numata Professor of Buddhist Studies *

Compulsory Subjects

Year 1: Texts

This paper requires students to have studied prescribed texts in Sanskrit selected from Charles Lanman's Sanskrit Reader and the Bhagavadgītā. It is taught over the first two terms of the first year, and is examined at the end of Hilary Term.

Year 1: Grammar

This paper requires students to have learned Sanskrit as taught in Michael Coulson's Teach Yourself Sanskrit. It is taught over the first two terms of the first year, and is examined at the end of Hilary Term.

Year 1: General Paper

This paper is based on tutorials, classes, and lectures on aspects of Indian history and culture as these have been presented in Michaelmas and Hilary Terms. It is examined at the end of Hilary Term.

FHS: Sanskrit Unprepared Translation

This paper is based on students' study of Sanskrit over the course of their degree. The texts are unseen, but chosen to reflect generally the type of Sanskrit prose and verse that students will have studied.

FHS: Essay questions on the history of classical Indian literature and civilisation.

This paper is based on the tutorials, classes, and lectures that students will have done over the course of their degree.

FHS: Indian Linguistics

This paper is based on a study of selected rules from Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyī and their interpretation in Indian grammatical scholarship. The relevant material will be presented in lectures offered in the second and third year.

FHS: The Historical Philology of Old-Aryan

This paper will be based on a study of vedic literature, including both verse and prose. The relevant material will be presented in lectures and classes offered in the second and/or third year. The texts set for examination will be seen. This subject is available to candidates offering Hindi, Old Iranian, Pali, Prakrit or Tibetan as an additional language.

FHS: Unprepared Translation from Sanskrit Texts

This paper will consist of unseen Sanskrit texts selected from a student's Chosen Area. There is no fixed list of Chosen Areas, but the following exemplify the range of areas students have chosen from in recent years: poetry, poetics, drama, epic, Indian Buddhism, Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism, Jainism, law (dharmaśāstra), various schools of Indian philosophy, grammar, Upaniṣadic literature. Texts in the Chosen Area are studied in the third year.

FHS: Essay Questions on the Chosen Area

This paper is based on tutorials, classes, and readings in the third year.

Special Subject

This paper is a Special Subject chosen by the student. It may consist in a dissertation. There is no fixed list of Special Subjects. Some examples for special subjects:

- a) Comparative grammar of Sanskrit and Old Iranian.
- b) Indian art and archaeology.
- c) Composition in Sanskrit prose and/or verse.
- d) Practical criticism and appreciation, including translation from the Sanskrit.

Assessment

The latest information on assessments and submission details is listed in the University of Oxford Examination Regulations and can be found here: <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs>

The Exam Regulations are revised and re-issued each year, and you must always consult the relevant issue in force. For example, if you matriculate your studies in Michaelmas Term 2017, for Prelims examinations you should refer to the Examination Regulations for 2017 -2018. For FHS examinations depending on the programme, please see the below:

Year of Matriculation	Prelims Exams	FHS Exams	
		for 3-year programme	for 4-year programme
MT 2017	Prelims Exam Regs for 2017-18	FHS Exam Regs for 2018-19	FHS Exam Regs for 2019-20

Important Deadlines

Monday Wk 9 of Trinity Term	Year 1	Provisional start date of the First Public Examinations.
Monday Wk 6 of Trinity Term	Year 2	Deadline for application for approval for choices in Paper 5 and 6 (as in the Examination Regulations).
Monday Week Wk 0 of Hilary Term	Year 3	Deadline for applications for approval for Special Subject for Paper 7 (as in the Examination Regulations) not listed in the Examination Regulations.
Monday Wk 7 of Trinity Term	Year 3	Provisional start date of the Final Honour School examinations.