

**ELEMENTARY TAMIL (LCA LANG 365/366)**

**Classroom: 479 Van Hise Hall, 8:30 am-1:00 pm**

**SASLI 2017, UW-Madison**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Nikola Rajic

**INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFO:** nino77@gmail.com

**OFFICE HOURS:** MTWTH, 4-5 PM; Lakefront Café, Memorial union

Tamil is an ancient language, spoken today by some eighty million people in south India, Sri Lanka, and a large diaspora that includes Malaysia, Singapore, Fiji, South Africa, Paris, Toronto, and many other sites throughout the world. This language is attested from at least the first century B.C., though its roots go back much farther into the past. Among the South Asian languages, Tamil is perhaps the only case of a very ancient language that still survives as a vibrant mother-tongue for tens of millions of speakers.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

At the end of the first semester (first four weeks), the students will have mastered the Tamil script and its transcription, basic vocabulary (greetings, kinship terms, words for everyday objects, basic verbs, words for periods of time), and basic grammar (equational sentences, impersonal verbs, non-nominative forms of nominal stems, pronouns, verb tenses, negative conjugations, finite and non-finite forms of verbs and the related sequence of verbs). The students will also be able to distinguish between honorific and non-honorific registers of the language, i.e. be able to discern which grammatical and lexical forms should be used depending on their interlocutors. The students will also be introduced to the basic distinction between the written and spoken varieties of Tamil.

At the end of the second semester, the students will have further developed their speaking and writing abilities allowing them to handle a variety of communicative tasks such as describing daily activities, interests, personal and social needs such as food, travel and lodging with ease and confidence. In order to do so they will have been familiarized with complex verb forms and syntactical ordering (infinitive clauses, verbal participle clauses, conditional clauses, reported speech, complementizing verbs, reflexivity of verbs, and so on), and will have considerably expanded their vocabulary. The students' linguistic quality and quantity will be similar to the level described for Intermediate High Level speakers by ACTFL (American Council for Teaching of Foreign Languages).

**SCHEDULE AND CLASS DESCRIPTION:**

This being an intensive course, we will meet M-F for four hours/day. The first few days will be dedicated to the learning of the Tamil script and its Roman transcription, and to the

familiarization with the instructional tools. These days excluded, our regular schedule will look as follows:

	1	2	3	4
Monday	Lesson	Grammar	Oral Presentation	Conversation
Tuesday	Lesson	Grammar	Listening (Lab)	Vocabulary drill
Wednesday	Lesson	Grammar	Tamil media (reading)	Conversation
Thursday	Lesson	Grammar	Listening (Lab)	Tamil media (viewing)
Friday/ Test Friday	Test/ Exam	Lesson/ Exam	Grammar/ Lesson	Review/ Grammar

**Lesson:** From the textbook. Students will practice reading with comprehension. The instructor will ask questions, explain vocabulary, and point to new grammatical concepts.

**Grammar:** The instructor will introduce new grammar topics based on the lesson. Grammar exercises will be provided.

**Oral Presentation:** Students will be assigned topics for each week and deliver 5-minute oral presentations in order to develop confidence in their speaking abilities.

**Conversation:** A class combining listening and speaking skills. The topics will be assigned and students will be expected to prepare vocabulary for each topic. Particular emphasis will be given to the practice of non-written forms of Tamil, in view of the language's diglossia.

**Listening (Lab):** Listening practice based on a CD which will be provided in the lab. Designed to develop the skill of understanding spoken Tamil.

**Vocabulary drill:** Many Tamil words sound very similar to non-native speakers. Exercises for this class are designed to gain confidence in distinguishing them and successfully using them.

**Tamil media (reading):** Familiarizing students with the style of Tamil newspapers and magazines. Passages will be carefully selected to mirror the topics covered in class and students' skills. We will commence with the titles and very short passages and move on to slightly larger units.

**Tamil media (viewing):** Students will be exposed to carefully selected excerpts of spoken Tamil from Tamil TV, films and songs. Vocabulary will be provided.

**Test/Exam:** Tests will be an overview of the materials covered in a particular week. There will be two exams, midterm (July 14) and final (August 11). Reading, writing, listening and speaking skills will be tested on both tests and exams.

## **COURSE MATERIALS:**

### **Required Textbooks:**

1. Kausalya Hart, *Tamil for Beginners* (Centers for South and Southeast Asia Studies, University of California at Berkeley, 2005)
2. E. Annamalai, *The Jim and Raja Conversations* (Tamil Language Study Association: Evanston, 1980)

### **Dictionaries:**

1. *Kriyavin Tarkala Tamil Akarati* (Tamil-Tamil-English) available online at: <http://www.crea.in/>
2. A. Chidambaranatha Chettiyar, *Oxford English-English-Tamil Dictionary* (University of Madras: Madras)

### **Materials to be provides:**

1. *Jim and Raja* audio materials
2. Various handouts

## **CLASS EXPECTATIONS:**

Students will be expected to attend all the classes, come to class on time, prepare for classes needing preparation (see Schedule and Class Description), and write their homework daily. Due to the intensity of the course and the heavy load, students are advised to dedicate 3-4 hours every day to class preparation.

The instructor will be available for academic consultation during his office hours (see above) four times a week.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY AND CLASS PARTICIPATION:**

Daily attendance and active participation in class are necessary and expected. Learner's active participation and creativity is very crucial for language development and will be assessed on a daily basis. One point will be taken off for each missed class (out of 10). Please schedule your departures so as not to conflict with the final exam dates. If you have a legitimate reason which requires an earlier departure before the scheduled test dates, you must first make your request with the SASLI Director. Early departure petitions require the Director's approval before they can be granted.

The following criteria will be used to determine the participation grade:

**10** Always well-prepared; is attentive and volunteers often; tries to use Tamil with classmates and instructor; makes most out of each activity

**8** Usually well-prepared; is attentive and volunteers occasionally; tries to use Tamil with classmates and makes some effort to engage fellow students

**6** Adequately prepared and attentive and often waits to be called upon; needs to be reminded to use Tamil with classmates

**4** Not adequately prepared and brings in incomplete assignments; shows low energy and laziness in using language

**2** Usually unprepared; makes little effort to participate or complete exercises; rarely tries to use Tamil outside of class and with classmates

### **ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS:**

Assignments for this course will include tests, speaking and listening exercises, and reading and writing assignments in class, including group work; and oral practice, reading, and writing assignments at home. Please note that:

**(a)** there will be four tests in class; **(b)** during the course there will be 2 main tests (Midterm and Final Exam); the Midterm Exam will be given in fourth week and the Final Exam will be given in final week; **(c)** in both, Midterm and Final Exams, students will complete an oral interview and a written exam; **(d)** there will be homework assignments everyday related to topics taught in the class. Assignments must be turned in on time; late submission or failure to submit will adversely affect your grade. The schedule for other assignments will be announced in class; **(e)** checked assignments will be returned on Fridays and Mondays. Each assignment will be graded on a system of points; the total score will be converted to a letter grade. Each student must save the graded written in-class and home assignments for this course, and re-submit all of them in a portfolio at the end of term. This portfolio will be an overall record of your progress during term, and I will review it, along with your final exam, before assigning your final grade for this course.

Homework is an essential component for a learner's language development ensuring a daily review of materials covered in class. Homework will consist of: grammar and vocabulary drills (in the form of exercises designed by the instructor – fill in blanks, or translation of sentences or passages), vocabulary preparation for oral presentations and conversation classes.

### **GRADING:**

Students will be graded according to the following algorithm:

Tests: 5% each, totaling 30%

Exams: 15% each, totaling 30%

Homework: 20%

Class Participation: 10%

Attendance: 10%

Total: 100%

There will be only one final grade based on the following scale:

A: 92-100; AB: 88-91; B: 80-87; BC: 76-79; C: 67-75; CD: 63-66; D: 55-62; F: 54 or less.

### **CLASSROOM ATMOSPHERE:**

SASLI is committed to creating a diverse and welcoming learning environment for all students, and has a non-discrimination policy that reflects this philosophy. Disrespectful behaviors or comments addressed towards any group or individual, regardless of race/ethnicity, sexuality, gender, religion, ability, or any other identity or community are deemed unacceptable in class, and will be addressed by the instructor or referred to the Academic Director.

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. We will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun.

**IMPORTANT DATES:**

**STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT:**

The student Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures for the University of Wisconsin is available on the website listed below:

<http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/misconduct.html>

This document outlines the rules and regulations regarding your student rights and responsibilities while a student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. It states that "Academic misconduct is an act in which a student:

- seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
- uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
- intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
- engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance;
- assists other students in any of these acts."

Please see the website listed above for further information.

**MCBURNEY DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER:**

The McBurney Center is available for all students at the University of Wisconsin. The Center offers a wide array of services for students with Disabilities. If you are in need of any of the services provided by the Center, please feel free to contact the McBurney Center staff directly. For a list of the services provided, please visit the website:

<http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/services/>

Contact information for the McBurney Disability Resource Center:

702 W Johnson Street, Suite 2104  
Madison, WI, 53715  
phone: 608-263-2741  
text: 608-225-7956

fax: 608-265-2998

email: [mcburney@uwmadmail.services.wisc.edu](mailto:mcburney@uwmadmail.services.wisc.edu)

Students with documented disabilities are encouraged to inform the instructor of their conditions at the beginning of the program (first three days), so that the necessary arrangements for attendance, assignments, tests, etc., can be made in advance in consultation with SASLI administration.