

RELG 457D1: Advanced Sanskrit /
RELG 665: Primary Texts: Sanskrit 1

Kāvya

Fall 2020
McGill University
School of Religious Studies

Mondays & Wednesdays, 10:05 – 11:25 am
Instructor: Hamsa Stainton
Email: hamsa.stainton@mcgill.ca
Office hours: by appointment via phone or Zoom

Note: Due to COVID-19, this course will be offered remotely via synchronous Zoom class meetings at the scheduled time. If students have any concerns about accessibility or equity please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Overview

This is a Sanskrit reading course in which advanced Sanskrit students will prepare translations of Sanskrit texts and present them in class. While the course will review Sanskrit grammar when necessary, it presumes students have already completed an introduction to Sanskrit grammar as well as an intermediate reading course. This iteration of the course will focus on Sanskrit literature (*kāvya*). The first half of the course will centre on the *Harṣacarita* (Deeds of Harṣa), Bāna's seventh-century historical biography in both verse and prose composed in honor of his North Indian patron, King Harṣa. The second half will focus on the *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* (Deeds of Beautiful-throated Śiva), the twelfth-century epic poem by Maṅkha that narrates Śiva's activities and eventual destruction of a terrible demon and also provides unusually detailed historical information about literary and political culture in Kashmir. The course uses close readings of these influential Sanskrit texts as a vantage point to survey the history and historiography of Sanskrit literature. These primary readings will be supplemented by seminal secondary essays on closely related topics.

Readings:

All readings will be made available on myCourses. If you ever have any issues accessing the readings, or there are problems with a PDF, please let me know immediately. The exact reading on a given day will depend on how far we progressed in the previous class.

Assessment and grading:

Attendance:	20%
Class participation based on prepared translations:	20%
Test #1 (take-home):	25%
Test #2 (take-home):	35%

Students who have taken the course before may choose to write a research paper instead of taking the second test. The topic must be developed in consultation with the instructor.

For attendance and class participation, students are expected to have prepared translations of the relevant Sanskrit text. When not able to complete a full translation, students are expected to have attempted to interpret each individual component of the Sanskrit text to the best of their ability.

Suggested resources:

Bronner, Yigal, David Shulman, and Gary Tubb, eds. *Innovation and Turning Points: Toward a History of Kāvya Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Bucknell, R.S. *Sanskrit Manual: A quick-reference guide to the phonology and grammar of Classical Sanskrit*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1994.

Tubb, Gary A. and Emery R. Boose. *Scholastic Sanskrit: A Manual for Students*. New York: The American Institute of Buddhist Studies / Columbia University Centre for Buddhist Studies / Tibet House, 2007.

Meeting schedule:

Week One

Wednesday, September 2: Course overview

Week Two

Monday, September 7: NO CLASS, LABOR DAY

Wednesday, September 9: Selections from the *Harṣacarita* of Bāṇa

Week Three

Monday, September 14: Selections from the *Harṣacarita* of Bāṇa

Wednesday, September 16: Selections from the *Harṣacarita* of Bāṇa; “Introduction,” Yigal Bronner, David Shulman, and Gary Tubb, in *Innovation and Turning Points*

Week Four

Monday, September 21: Selections from the *Harṣacarita* of Bāṇa

Wednesday, September 23: Selections from the *Harṣacarita* of Bāṇa

Week Five

Monday, September 28: Selections from the *Harṣacarita* of Bāṇa

Wednesday, September 30: Selections from the *Harṣacarita* of Bāṇa; “The Nail-Mark That Lit the Bedroom: Biography of a Compound,” Yigal Bronner, in *Innovation and Turning Points*

Week Six

Monday, October 5: Selections from the *Harṣacarita* of Bāṇa

Wednesday, October 7: Selections from the *Harṣacarita* of Bāṇa

Take-home Test #1 available via myCourses

Week Seven

Monday, October 12: NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING

Wednesday, October 14: “On the Boldness of Bāṇa,” Gary Tubb, in *Innovation and Turning Points*

Week Eight

Monday, October 19: Selections from the *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* of Maṅkha

Take-home Test #1 due by the start of class

Wednesday, October 21: Selections from the *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* of Maṅkha

Week Nine

Monday, October 26: Selections from the *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* of Maṅkha

Wednesday, October 28: Selections from the *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* of Maṅkha

Week Ten

Monday, November 2: Selections from the *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* of Maṅkha; “Death of Sanskrit,”
Sheldon Pollock

Wednesday, November 4: Selections from the *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* of Maṅkha

Week Eleven

Monday, November 9: Selections from the *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* of Maṅkha

Wednesday, November 11: Selections from the *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* of Maṅkha

Week Twelve

Monday, November 16: Selections from the *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* of Maṅkha; selections from
“Translation and History: The Development of a Kashmiri Textual Tradition from ca.
1000-1500,” Luther Obrock

Wednesday, November 18: Selections from the *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* of Maṅkha

Week Thirteen

Monday, November 23: Selections from the *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* of Maṅkha

Wednesday, November 25: Selections from the *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* of Maṅkha

Week Fourteen

Monday, November 30: Selections from the *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* of Maṅkha; “*Stotra as Kāvya*,”
Hamsa Stainton, in *Poetry as Prayer in the Sanskrit Hymns of Kashmir*

Wednesday, December 2: Selections from the *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* of Maṅkha

Take-home Test #2 available via myCourses

Thursday, December 3 (McGill’s formal Monday makeup class): Selections from the
Śrīkaṇṭhacarita of Maṅkha

Wednesday, December 16: Take-home Test #2 due by 5 pm

Policy statements and additional information:

The Lands and Waters on Which We Meet: McGill University is located on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg nations. These nations are hereby honoured, recognized and respected as the traditional stewards of the (unceded) lands and waters on which we meet today.

Academic integrity: McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the “Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures” (see <http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/> for more information). It is your responsibility to educate yourself on this issue. Please do so using the resources here: <http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/publications/>

If you still have questions regarding academic culture at McGill after reviewing these documents, you are urged to consult with the instructor personally. Any student found to have submitted plagiarised work will be referred to the Faculty Disciplinary Officer for further action, as outlined under “Academic Integrity”: <http://www.mcgill.ca/tls/teaching/policies>

Language of Submission: In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives. (Conformément à la Charte des droits de l’étudiant de l’Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l’un des objets est la maîtrise d’une langue.)

Assessment: The University Student Assessment Policy (http://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/files/secretariat/2016-04_student_assessment_policy.pdf) exists to ensure fair and equitable academic assessment for all students and to protect students from excessive workloads. All students and instructors are encouraged to review this Policy, which addresses multiple aspects and methods of student assessment, e.g. the timing of evaluation due dates and weighting of final examinations.

Attendance policy: Class attendance and participation are important elements of this course. Therefore, attendance is linked to your grade in the following way: Students are allowed **one** absence during the term. Subsequent absences will result in deductions from your attendance/participation grade. **Your attendance/participation grade will be lowered 3 points for each absence.** Students also are expected to attend for the entire class period. Students who leave early will be marked absent; those who are tardy (over 10 minutes) more than twice during the semester also will be marked absent.

Of course in certain specific instances an absence can be excused. **Examples of excused absences are verifiable situations that the student could not have prevented, such as jury duty, illness, medical emergencies or the funeral of a family member or friend. Religious observances also are excused absences, however the student must inform the professor of such an absence by email at least two weeks before the observance.** (For McGill's Policy for the Accommodation of Religious Holy Days, see https://mcgill.ca/secretariat/files/secretariat/religious_holy_days_policy_on_accomodation_of.pdf).

In all cases other than religious observances, excused absence requests require written documentation, and it remains the instructor's decision whether or not to excuse an absence, as well as how many absences will be excused (if any) for a particular situation. Please note that if the reason for your absence is not on the list above, it is likely that it will not be excused. This is why students are provided one allowable absence when they find that they must miss class for a reason that is not excused.

While all of the above remains true, I recognize that remote instruction comes with unique challenges. Reasonable accommodations will be made for things like technical difficulties and unstable internet connections. Please be in touch with me sooner rather than later about any concerns regarding attendance, access, and equity and we will work together to resolve any issues that arise.

Copyright and recordings: Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

Video and audio recording of lectures and review sessions without the consent of the instructor is prohibited. Unless explicit permission is obtained from the instructor, recordings of lectures and review sessions may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course.

Equal access and academic accommodations: As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the Office for Students with Disabilities (514-398-6009).

The Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) is the unit that provides support if you feel that difficulties and impairments are hindering your academic performance while at McGill or if you require assistance with access. You should contact OSD regardless of whether the difficulties you are experiencing are

permanent or temporary, and they provide assistance to both undergraduate and graduate students. Various Health and Wellbeing resources are available at <https://www.mcgill.ca/oasis/resources/health-wellbeing>, and the OSD website is at <https://www.mcgill.ca/osd/>

Course evaluations: End-of-course evaluations are one of the ways that McGill works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. You will be notified by e-mail when the evaluations are available. Please note that a minimum number of responses must be received for results to be available to students.

Responsibility for material: Students remain responsible for assigned material in every instance of absence. Generally I do not distribute notes or copies of PowerPoint presentations to students. I believe that note taking is an important part of the educational process, both in terms of conceptual understanding and information retention. Therefore, if you find it necessary to miss a class, it is your responsibility to get the notes from another student, after which I will be happy to review any information with you during office hours. For this reason, it is a good idea to introduce yourself to at least one other person in the class if you do not know someone already.

Schedule of readings and assignments: Reading assignments are to be completed by the class date for which they are listed. The schedule of readings and lecture topics is to be understood as a guide, and it is subject to change based on the progress of the class and the discretion of the professor. Any changes will be announced in class.