

SEASSI Khmer Beginning Syllabus

Languages and Cultures of Asia 313/314 is a year-long equivalent (two-semester) sequence designed to bring students up to “survival level” in standard spoken and written Khmer. We will spend about 60% of our time on speaking and listening, and 40% on the writing system. Class will mostly consist of activities in which Khmer must be used to accomplish specific tasks relevant to the topical matter of the Unit, thus giving practical experience in using and hearing Khmer. There will also be lectures (in English) on various cultural and grammatical issues in Khmer, with a focus on how these issues relate to English and American culture). There will be lectures on the writing system and on common pronunciation problems as well. There will also be lots of “focused listening” practice, games, and songs. A playful and creative approach will be encouraged in the learning and practice of all four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) in Khmer, as well as Khmer culture.

While many of the teaching techniques used in this course have their origin in the West, a strict Khmer classroom culture will be maintained. Students must show appropriate respect for their instructors and for their fellow students. Failure to do this will hurt one’s grade just as much as not doing homework or not showing up to class. Khmer, like all languages, is inextricably bound with the culture of the people who speak it as a native language. If you don’t learn how to properly behave in the culture, no matter how well you speak in a technical sense, you don’t really know the language.

Course requirements:

Students will be evaluated according to the following criteria (for each course, 313 and 314, separately):

Overall Class Participation: **50%**

Performance on mid-term (10%) and final exam (15%): **25%**

Weekly Dialog Journal (beginning in Week Two): **10%**

Completion of homework assignments, including use of course multimedia materials: **15%**

In general, students are expected to spend at least one hour per class hour preparing/studying outside of class. If you do not spend this minimum amount of time studying/practicing outside of class, you will not be able to reach the goals (described as “At the end of this Unit, students will be able to...”) listed in this syllabus.

Students will not be graded on attendance per se, but note that if you don’t attend, you can’t participate, and active participation in class activities makes up 50% of your grade. The instructors must always be addressed by the titles you will learn to use with them on the first day of class. Please respect both your instructors and fellow students by coming to class on-time. Laptops/iPads will only be allowed to be used in class to access material in the Textbook currently being read in class. No cellphone activity will be permitted in class, including texting. **Cellphone use--or computer use not directly related to work currently being done as part of the class--will be severely penalized. The first offense will result in a 5% reduction of**

your total grade **for the entire course**. The second offense will result in a 10% reduction of your grade. Every subsequent offense will result in a 20% reduction of your grade. I'm serious about this one, and I keep records for every single day...so when you come to class, don't let yourself be tempted.

Office hours: 2-4 pm Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, or by appointment. 4269 Humanities, 608-890-3307.

Textbook:

“*Muk Khmae*” by Frank Smith (download-only). Includes videos, audio tracks of vocabulary and structures and clickable alphabet chart. Available for \$40 from <http://www.studykhmer.com/textbooks/beginning.html>.

No physical dictionary is required for the course, but students may wish to purchase the *Hippocrene Cambodian-English/English-Cambodian Dictionary*. It's not perfect (and note that the Khmer words in it are handwritten, which confuses some students) but it's small, cheap, and goes in both directions. Usually available on amazon.com. Students are encouraged to use the free online dictionary at <http://www.sealang.net/khmer>. Note that this dictionary requires that Khmer Unicode fonts are installed on one's computer. See the instructor for more info on this.

Daily Assignments:

Class assignments will all be given on the Course Blog, located at <http://seassikhmer2016.blogspot.com>. Students are responsible for checking this blog at least once a day; twice is better. After 7:00 am and 5:00 pm are recommended times to check.

Course Content:

LCA 313

Week One: Introductions and Pleasantries

Topics covered in this unit include polite and colloquial greetings and farewells, talking about basic everyday actions and activities and commonly used kinship terms. Students will also learn to count to 10 in Khmer. Students will begin to learn the basics of the Khmer writing system from day one in class. No phonetic transcription will be used. At the end of the week, students will be familiar with about 1/4 of the Khmer consonants and 1/2 of the vowels in Khmer script, and will have memorized at least nine important Khmer “sight words”. Students will be able to write simple sentences in Khmer mirroring to some extent their current command of the spoken language.

At the end of Week One, students will be able to:

- greet social peers and elders/teachers appropriately in Khmer
- say farewell appropriately in a variety of social contexts
- count to 10 in Khmer
- ask and respond to very basic questions regarding family, work and everyday activities
- use common verbs (walk, go, come, stay, eat, etc.) in combination with common pronouns and

- names of locations to ask/answer questions concerning simple actions and activities
- be able to use appropriately (as pronouns) the most common kinship terms in Khmer
- know several basic colors in Khmer

Week Two: The Language of the Classroom

Topics covered in this unit include the names of objects in the classroom, recognizing and responding to common teacher commands and questions, and asking basic questions about language ("How do you say _____ in Khmer?" "How are these two words different?" etc.). Students will also learn the names of several body parts, a few selected classifiers in Khmer, and how to describe common physical actions (put, take, give, lift, stand, sit). Students will learn more kinship terms used as pronouns, the rudiments of telling time in Khmer, how to manipulate concepts of time in conversation in a very basic way, and the names of additional important locations and verbs to describe everyday activities. Special attention will be paid to common vowel and consonant pronunciation problems in Khmer in the speech of non-native speakers. In their study of the writing system, students will become familiar with the about 1/3 of the rest of the Khmer consonants and the rest of the Khmer vowels. Students will learn additional Khmer sight words totaling at least 12, and be able to write these in dictation exercises and in the creation of their own sentences.

At the end of Week Two, students will be able to:

- respond appropriately to the most common classroom commands from the teacher
- begin to use several Khmer classifiers appropriately
- ask and give the time of day in limited ways
- increase the complexity of their ability to describe everyday activities and actions begun in Unit One
- respond to commands involving common physical actions, and give a few of these commands themselves
- converse using a wider range of kinship terms as pronouns
- begin to incorporate the notions of time and aspect into their Khmer sentences
- count to 1,000 in Khmer
- recite from memory two Khmer proverbs
- be able to ask basic questions about language and talk in a limited way about language learning

The mid-term exam will consist of two sections: written and oral. The written section will be a short test comprising dictation, fill-in and matching exercises. The oral section will involve a one-to-one meeting with an instructor during office hours, in which a short conversation on topics covered in class will take place.

Week Three: The Family

Topics in this Unit include additional Khmer kinship terms used as pronouns, talking about family, friends and one's personal history (the latter in a very limited way), and the culture and language used in visiting a home in Cambodia. Students will also learn more complex ways of discussing time and aspect, and learn a great many modifiers (adjectives) in Khmer and how to properly use them. More colors will also be learned, as well as the names of important common animals.

In their study of the written language, students will become familiar with the rest of the Khmer consonants, and all of the "second series" vowel sounds. An additional 6-10 sight words will be learned as well.

At the end of this Week, students will be able to:

- conduct themselves appropriately during a visit to a Khmer home
- ask and answer common questions concerning family, friendship and marriage in Khmer
- talk in more subtle ways about time and aspect in Khmer
- talk about common animals in Khmer
- use additional words for eating in Khmer appropriately
- use additional kinship terms and other pronouns appropriately in conversation

Week Four: Food

Topics in this Unit include the names of a wide range of food items in Khmer, including fruits, vegetables, meat and fish, prepared dishes, and condiments. Type of preparation of food will be covered, as well as ways of describing the flavors of food. More subtle, proper ways of talking about food and flavor will also be learned. Students will also learn the basics of bargaining in the market in Khmer, and how to make simple comparisons. Additional important verbs and modifiers will also be learned. In their study of Khmer literacy, students will learn several Khmer diacritics and how they affect vowel sounds, and students will learn at least 2/3 of the Khmer consonant subscripts, and possibly all of them. Students will learn at least 10 additional sight words in Khmer, and be able to write increasingly complex sentences. Depending on the level of the class overall, students may begin to read simple stories in Khmer at the end of this Unit.

At the end of this Week, students will be able to:

- buy a variety of food items in Khmer, using bargaining where appropriate
- discuss money in a basic way in Khmer
- discuss eating and food in general in culturally appropriate ways
- discuss the flavor of food in Khmer
- identify a range of basic Khmer dishes
- recognize and produce the names of common Khmer fruits and vegetables
- make comparisons in Khmer using appropriate modifiers and grammatical structures

The final exam will consist of an oral and a written section. In the oral section, students will act out assigned scenarios in front of the rest of the class in pairs or groups of three. These

scenarios will require the appropriate use of grammatical structures and vocabulary learned throughout the course. Students will be given three days to prepare these skits. The written section of the exam will consist of dictation, translation and fill-in exercises.

Midterm Exam: June 24

Final Exam: July 8

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Week Five: Directions and Transportation

Topics covered in this unit include giving and receiving directions, talking about transportation in Cambodia, talking about the past and future in appropriate ways in Khmer, and introduction to the auxiliary verb “aoy”.

At the end of Week Five, students will be able to:

- give and receive directions appropriately in Khmer
- discuss the major modes of transportation in Cambodia in a general and basic way
- use the auxiliary verb “aoy” in an appropriate way in a variety of contexts, mostly involved in expressing causation, intention and agency
- specify events in the past and future using common time-marking particles
- continue to read simple stories in Khmer for meaning

Week Six: The World of Work, and “Getting Things Done” in Khmer

Topics covered in this unit include occupations in Cambodia, important grammatical structures and phrases needed in the workplace or while doing research, and in general the socially and linguistically appropriate ways to “get things done” in a Khmer cultural context. Some abstract concepts will be learned as well, and some basic “educated vocabulary”. Students will also have an opportunity to learn terms of their own choosing which are relevant to their major or chosen profession. We will also delve deeper into the complex topic of proper use of the auxiliary verb “aoy” in several new semantic contexts. In a joint activity with the Intermediate students, students will learn vocabulary relevant to politics in Khmer and participate in a class election, including reading campaign literature written by the Intermediate students and formulating questions to ask of the candidates in a debate.

In their study of written Khmer, students will learn to write basic personal letters, read a simple folk tale in Khmer, and learn the basics of typing in Khmer Unicode on the computer.

At the end of Week Six, students will be able to:

- use a variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures necessary for the typical workplace or research endeavor
- use several vocabulary items relevant to their major or chosen profession
- express several basic types of requests and tasks necessary to “getting things done” in Cambodia, and respond appropriately to these types of requests
- use the auxiliary verb “aoy” to express two new semantic senses
- talk about several important Cambodian occupations and fields of study in a basic way

- count into the millions in Khmer
- read a popular basic folk tale in Khmer
- write a simple personal letter in Khmer
- be able to write the Khmer numerals

The mid-term exam will consist of two sections: written and oral. The written section will be a short test comprising fill-in exercises designed to measure comprehension of a short reading passage and the ability to link the read material with spoken material covered in class. The oral section will involve a presentation to their classmates (and an explanation in Khmer) of their individually chosen, work or study-related vocabulary items they have learned outside of textbook material, from their instructors in one-on-one office meetings.

Week Seven: Health, Disease and Religion

This unit covers Khmer ways of discussing states of well-being and illness, including the expression of important emotions. Students will learn the names of major diseases and conditions, including those relative to folk beliefs, and learn basic ways that Khmers treat illness and conceive of treatment. Students will also learn the basics of Khmer Buddhism, and learn to talk to monks appropriately and perform one Buddhist chant from memory.

At the end of Week Seven, students will be able to:

- talk about health and illness in Khmer using various vocabulary terms and special grammatical constructions
- recognize and be able to refer to in a basic way the major ways that Khmers treat illness
- talk about emotions and feelings in Khmer in a general sense
- perform an important Khmer Buddhist (Pali) chant
- talk to Khmer monks using appropriate vocabulary and grammar
- begin to use the “disastrative” verb construction to express negatively-perceived events in Khmer
- read more basic Khmer folk tales (with increasing difficulty)
- follow along with the read lyrics to simple Khmer pop songs
- read selected passages from Khmer middle school primers on the topics of health and religion

Week Eight: Everyday Life in Cambodia

This unit will cover a wide range of topics relevant to living and working in Cambodia: the weather, renting a hotel room or apartment, arranging transportation, clothing and fashion, music and pop culture, and expressing one’s basic needs. The students will also be given an introduction to Phnom Penh Khmer dialect and basic sign and newspaper headline-reading.

At the end of this Week, students will be able to:

- talk about fashion and clothing in a basic way in Khmer, including describing various styles of clothing, both traditional and contemporary
- rent an apartment or hotel room using appropriate Khmer vocabulary and grammar
- talk about the weather in Khmer in a basic way

- talk about features of the natural environment in a basic way in Khmer
- properly use several adverbial constructions in Khmer, and talk about causation in more subtle ways in Khmer
- read a wedding invitation and simple flyers and signs in Khmer
- understand some features of Phnom Penh Khmer dialect

The final exam will consist of an oral and a written section. In the oral section, students will act out scenarios in front of the rest of the class in pairs or groups of three. The topic of these scenarios is open (as is the composition of each group) but should demonstrate the appropriate use of grammatical structures and vocabulary learned throughout the course. The written section of the exam will consist of fill-in questions designed to measure comprehension of a short reading passage similar to material previously covered in class.

Holiday: Monday, July 4

Midterm Exam: July 22

Final Exam: August 5