

# Course syllabus

## Languages of South Asia

LING 350, Spring 2020, Reed College

**Instructor:** Sameer ud Dowla Khan (he/they)  
**Email:** skhan@reed.edu  
**Phone:** ext. 4018 (off-campus: 503-517-4018)  
**Time & place:** Mon/Wed 1:10–2:30PM, in Eliot 121  
**Office hours:** Wed 3:00–5:00PM, Fri 1:00–2:00PM, and by appointment, in Eliot 101C

### Introduction

The Indian Subcontinent is home to five typologically divergent language families (Indo-European, Dravidian, Tibeto-Burman, Austroasiatic, Tai-Kadai) in addition to at least two language isolates, creating an ideal setting for the areal spread of linguistic features across genetic affiliations, affecting all areas of the grammar, from phonetics and phonology to morphology and syntax. In class, we will take a broad typological view of the languages of South Asia while also making more detailed observations of specific languages representing the diversity of the region. Outside of class, each student will focus on a South Asian language (SAL) of their choice—collecting data from native speakers or available language grammars—to examine its phonetic, phonological, lexical, morphological, and syntactic features, from a synchronic formal perspective as well as historical and sociolinguistic perspectives.

### Requirements and grading breakdown

**Prerequisite:** Introduction to Linguistic Analysis (LING 211) **(required)**

**Textbooks:** Subbārāo 2012. *South Asian languages: a syntactic typology*. **(required, on reserve)**  
Masica 1991. *The Indo-Aryan languages*. **(selected chapters, on reserve)**  
Krishnamurti 2003. *The Dravidian languages*. **(selected chapters, on reserve)**  
Butt, King, & Ramchand 1994. *Theoretical perspectives on word order in SALs*. **(sel. ch.)**

**Participation (5%):** Vocal participation in class discussions is required for proper engagement with the material. Come to class prepared with questions and comments on the readings.

**Presentations (30%):** Each student will present prepared data from the SAL of their choice on the topic covered in the previous lecture. Students will distribute one-page handouts to guide these short discussions, focusing on capturing the relevant patterns of their language and how these fit into the typology of SALs.

**Squibs (40%):** Four short papers will be assigned over the course of the semester, covering the (1) phonology, (2) morphology, (3) syntax, and (4) sociolinguistic features of their SAL.

**Mini-grammar (25%):** For the final submission, the four squibs (updated and edited) will be combined along with an additional topic of each student's choice, to form a mini-grammar of their SAL.

### Policies

Please note that I generally do not accept late work. I am willing to offer partial credit to students who have shown sincere effort and have an extenuating excuse, although this will be the exception rather than the rule.

I have zero tolerance for plagiarism. Each student must abide by the Reed Honor Principle. While students are very much encouraged to work with one another, each student's submitted work must be their own.

If you have a documented disability and will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Disability Support Services at (503) 517-7921 or [disability-services@reed.edu](mailto:disability-services@reed.edu) as soon as possible.

## Class schedule

Reading key: A85 = Abbi 1985, A90 = Abbi 1990 (in VM90), An08 = Annamalai 2008 (in KKS08), Ba94 = Bagchi 1994 (in BKR94), Bh99 = Bhattacharya 1999, B03 = Butt 2003, BKR94 = Butt, King, & Ramchand 1994, CJ03 = Cardona & Jain 2003, D94 = Dayal 1994 (in BKR94), Dn08 = Daniels 2008 (in KKS08), Dw94 = Dwivedi 1994 (in BKR94), H94 = Herring 1994 (in BKR94), Ha02 = Hall 2002, J90 = Jayaseelan 1990 (in VM90), K03 = Krishnamurti 2003, Ke06 = Keane 2006, Kh16 = Khan 2016, KKS08 = Kachru, Kachru, & Sridhar 2008, M91 = Masica 1991, S12 = Subbārāo 2012, Sm08 = Smith 2008 (in KKS08), Sr08 = Sridhar 2008 (in KKS08), Sw71 = Swadesh 1971, VM90 = Verma & Mohanan 1990

Week	Day	Date	Lecture/discussion topics	Due before class
1	Mon	27 Jan	<b>CLASS CANCELED DUE TO ILLNESS</b>	
	Wed	29 Jan	Introduction, classification	Read: S12 §1, M91 §1–2
2	Mon	3 Feb	Swadesh lists, glottochronology, migration	Read: S12 §2, M91 §3, K03 §1, Sw71
	Wed	5 Feb	<b>Presentation: Swadesh list</b> Lexicon: loans, calques, coinages	Handout: Swadesh list Read: M91 §4, K03 §10
3	Mon	10 Feb	Phoneme inventories: retroflexion, voicing, aspiration, breathiness, tone	Read: M91 §5, K03 §2
	Wed	12 Feb	<b>Presentation: Phoneme inventory</b> Reduplication, fixed segments	Handout: Phoneme inventory Read: A85, Ke06 §1–2
4	Mon	17 Feb	<b>Presentation: Syll. structure, reduplication</b> Intonation	Handout: Syll. structure, reduplication Read: Kh16
	Wed	19 Feb	Basic noun morphology: number, gender, animacy, definiteness	Read: M91 §8 (skip §8.4), K03 §6.1–6.2 <b>Squib: Phonology (Fri)</b>
5	Mon	24 Feb	<b>Presentation: Noun morphology</b> Case marking	Handout: Noun morphology Read: M91 §8.4, K03 §6.3–6.8
	Wed	26 Feb	Basic verb morphology: tense, aspect, mood, agreement	Read: M91 §9.1–9.4, K03 §7.1–7.5
6	Mon	2 Mar	<b>Presentation: Verb morphology</b> Complex verbs: copulas, compound verbs, conjunct verbs, negative verbs	Handout: Verb morphology Read: S12 §4.1–4.2
	Wed	4 Mar	Non-nominative subjects: ergatives, experiencers, possessors	Read: M91 §10.1–10.3, S12 §5.1–5.4
7	Mon	9 Mar	<b>Presentation: Non-nominative subjects</b> Experiencers: typology, subjecthood	Handout: Non-nominative subjects Read: A90, J90 (both in VM90)
	Wed	11 Mar	Anaphors: nominal, verbal	Read: S12 §3 <b>Squib: Morphology (Fri)</b>
8	Mon	16 Mar	VP: head-finality, vector verbs	Read: B03
Break	Wed	18 Mar	<b>NO CLASS: Spring Break</b>	
	Mon	23 Mar		
	Wed	25 Mar		
9	Mon	30 Mar	NP in core SALs: head-finality DP in peripheral SALs: head-initiality	Read: Bh99
	Wed	1 Apr	Canonical scrambling: presubject, intermed. Postverbal scrambling	Read: D94, H94 (§10, §6 of BKR94)
10	Mon	6 Apr	<b>Presentation: Head-finality</b> Relative clauses: syntactic structure	Handout: Head-finality Read: Ba94, Dw94 (§2, §5 of BKR94)
	Wed	8 Apr	Relative clauses: typology	Read: S12 §8
11	Mon	13 Apr	Complementizers	Read: S12 §6
	Wed	15 Apr	<b>Presentation: Relative clauses</b> Multilingualism, convergence	Handout: Relative clauses Read: An08, Sr08 (§10, §11 in KKS08)
12	Mon	20 Apr	Language shift, contact languages	Read: Sm08 (§12 in KKS08)

	Wed	22 Apr	Interlocutors: gender, social status	Read: Ha02 <b>Squib: Syntax (Fri)</b>
13	Mon	27 Apr	<b>Presentation: Sociolinguistic situation</b> Numeral system, English	Handout: Sociolinguistic situation
	Wed	29 Apr	Writing systems	Read: Dn08 (§14 in KKS08) <b>Squib: Sociolinguistics (Fri)</b>
Exam			<b>Mini-grammars due</b>	