

**Advanced Khmer ( Khmer 101A )** is a one semester course, the highest level Khmer class offered at UC-Berkeley, designed to continue and refine the goals of Khmer 100B by bringing students well beyond intermediate-level Khmer to a level of speaking, listening and reading, writing proficiency which allows them to communicate in a fairly sophisticated fashion with educated native speakers on a variety of topics, including religion, traditional village culture and the rice-farming cycle, and news and public information ( including speeches and advertising ). In the area of speaking and listening, special attention will be paid to two areas: colloquial, informal expression of feelings and subtle nuance in everyday storytelling ( for non-native speakers ), and the formal, eloquent expression of theories and opinions in educated debates ( for all students ).

The development of spoken proficiency relative to these topics is linked throughout the course with written material. Students will also spend a good deal of time honing their listening skills, involving “focused listening” of video and audio recordings of both colloquial and formal native speaker speech. Native speakers, while they will in no way be required to “give up” their colloquial, home-dialect way of speaking Khmer, will learn to conform to standard Khmer pronunciations and polite forms of verbs and other vocabulary appropriate for conversation in an academic/professional setting.

Only authentic Khmer texts--texts written by native speakers for native speakers--will be used as reading material in the course. The texts used this course will in many cases overlap with those used in Khmer 100A, but the level of analysis of and student engagement with the text will be far more detailed and rigorous than what students attempt in that course. Students will also read some advanced texts covering the same topics as in 100A, but written at a higher level of difficulty. Special attention will also be paid to coherently developing arguments and expressing opinions in writing, using clear, standardized modern writing style. All students are expected to demonstrate intermediate to advanced proficiency in the the use of Khmer Unicode on the computer.

The class will consist mostly of communicative, task-based or project-based activities which will give students the chance to use spoken and written Khmer in situations which mirror real-life social or academic situations. Lectures will also be given on Khmer grammar, the writing system and the use of final particles and other material to indicate nuance of expression and to develop a spoken “style”. Except for short explanations in English of difficult material from time-to-time, these lectures will be entirely in Khmer. Students are expected to use appropriate classroom Khmer at all times in class, including when talking to other students.

***Course prerequisites:***

This course is intended for students who, through completing courses such as Khmer 100A-B, self-study, or family experience, have attained a solid “intermediate” level of spoken and written Khmer proficiency. The level of students’ spoken proficiency will be determined in an informal interview with the instructor on the first day of class. The course assumes a clear knowledge of the basics of written Khmer, including instant recognition of all written consonants, vowels, subscripts and most diacritics, and the ability to write these during dictation. Students whose spelling exhibits many mistakes will still be admitted, as will students who have not formally learned all of the vowel sound change and vowel governance “rules” of written Khmer.

A large number of common sight words should also be recognized by students entering this course. Students should be able to read, with little difficulty, basic folk tales in Khmer, and be also able to read, though with some difficulty, newspaper articles and novel excerpts. It is strongly recommended that prior to beginning this course, students will have read at least one classic Khmer novel in its entirety, although this is not a strict requirement for entry into the course. Students should be able to relate events and express basic opinions in written Khmer, even though that writing may show a good deal of grammatical errors. Students should be able to perform a number

of basic spoken tasks using educated vocabulary, such as expressing opinions on current events, talking with monks, and explaining the basics of their research or work interests.

Keep in mind that what is “advanced” in a given Khmer class is relative to the level of proficiency of the majority of the students, considered in comparison to the same semester’s Intermediate class, so all of the above prerequisites are open to interpretation by the instructor and flexible.

NOTE: This course will be offered at UC-Irvine and UCLA. Because those two schools are on the quarter system, we won't begin the regular class until they're in session, on Oct 1. However, UC-Berkeley students will meet four times before the class officially begins, on the following Thursdays:

August 26

September 2

September 9

September 16

***Course requirements:***

Students will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

**Class Participation:** 40%

**Three page term paper:** 20%

**Final group PSA project:** 20%

**Midterm exam:** 15%

**Dialog journal** ( comprising one page of writing on an assigned topic ): 5%

In general, students are expected to spend at least one hour outside of class for each

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 55% of your grade. If you do miss class, it is *your responsibility*--by checking with the instructor or fellow students--to find out what you missed and cover the necessary material in time for the next class. You may utilize office hours to make up for material missed because you didn't attend a class, but only within reason...in other words, you can't use office hours to make up for class time you choose to miss on a regular basis or to an excessive amount.

Also note that if you're having trouble with any of the material in the class, you are expected to come to office hours for help. If you consistently show low grades on exams, inability to keep up with the rest of the class in activities, incomplete memorization of vocabulary, alphabet, etc., and I don't see you seeking help in office hours, then I can only assume that you don't care about doing well in the class, and I will grade you accordingly.

The instructor must always be addressed by the title *លោក(្រី)*. Please respect both your instructor and fellow students by coming to class on-time. Lateness will result in points deducted from your class participation grade--which, remember, is 55% of your total grade for the course. 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. That call or text can wait until class is over. Put your phone on “silent,” and put it away.

**Office hours:** 3-4 Monday and Wednesday, or by appointment. Office hours will be held over Zoom, Meeting ID 417 780 5140 ( password will be provided via e-mail to registered students ).

***Textbook:***

“កម្ពុជាភាសា” by Frank Smith. Includes videos, audio tracks of vocabulary and structures and clickable alphabet chart. Available as a \$42 download from <https://studykhmer.com/textbooks/heritage.html> .

No physical dictionary is required for the course, but students may wish to purchase the *Cambodian Literary Glossary* by Frank Huffman and Im Proum. This book is very small and portable and contains a good deal of educated and poetic vocabulary which we will be using in this course. 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. It is expected that all students will have Khmer Unicode installed on their computers by the end of the beginning of class, and will have acquired intermediate Khmer typing skills by the second week of the course.

***Course Content:***

**Unit One: Review of Khmer Poetic Language and Introduction to Creative Non-fiction Narrative ( September 23 – September 28 )**

Over the course of our first two class meetings, mainly intended as review, we’ll study a Khmer pop song that makes use of poetic language and references the epic poem ទុំទារី,

and read a short narrative expressing an opinion relative to a social/economic issue in a creative style.

### **Unit Two: Khmer Buddhism ( September 30 - October 21 )**

After a review of the basics of Buddhism and the Life of the Buddha covered in Khmer 100A, we'll delve more deeply into both the narrative of the Buddha's life and the differences between the main two divisions or "vehicles" of Buddhism, Mahayana and Theravada. We'll also cover some of the basics of an important Khmer Buddhist festival, and examine a popular folk tale with content related to the monkhood.

#### **At the end of this unit, students will be able to:**

- discuss the major events in the life of the Buddha with educated Khmers
- discuss in a basic way the major tenets of/differences between the two major schools of Buddhism
- recognize important Khmer poetic and royal vocabulary

### **Unit Three: Khmer Epic Folk Tales ( October 28 - November 11 )**

After a review of a well-known Khmer folk tale previously studied in Khmer 100A ( រឿងឆន្ទ្យយុវជន ), we will analyze and memorize several Khmer proverbs and read several advanced folk tales ( ភ្នំសំពៅ និង ព្រះគោព្រះកែវ ) which interact in complex and interesting ways with Khmer geography, ecology, politics and history. We will engage with these folk tales beyond simply the written word, by watching excerpts of film versions of them and interviews with native speakers discussing their significance. We will also learn a basic set of royal vocabulary terms necessary for understanding many advanced folk tales.

#### **At the end of this Unit, students will be able to:**

- read and discuss two quasi-historical folk tales containing a good deal of royal vocabulary, and discuss their significance

-recognize basic royal vocabulary

-express arguments related to analysis of the above folk tales in Khmer, in a three-page term paper

#### **Unit Four: The Language of Public Information ( November 16 – November 30 )**

We will study ways formal Khmer language is used by organizations such as NGOs in presenting information to a mass audience.

#### **At the end of this Unit, students will be able to:**

-understand information broadcast toward a general audience by various Khmer organizations aimed to educate the public on topics such as gender and health

-demonstrate appropriate spoken and written use of several advanced grammatical structures learned from various readings in Units Three and Four

-begin to write text suitable for use in a public service announcement or pamphlet used by an NGO or other organization ( depending on student interests )

Students will finish the course with a ( group ) project creating and performing a “Khmer television public service announcement” ( PSA ) produced with other class members. Each group will design and script a public service announcement using appropriate grammar and vocabulary, and an accompanying pamphlet. More information will be given on this project as the semester progresses.

**Midterm exam:** October 28

**Three page term paper due:** November 30

**Final PSA pamphlet due:** December 7