

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 related to both modern and traditional Khmer culture, including farming culture and traditional social hierarchy, the function of the monarchy, the role of geography in shaping Khmer world view, traditional marriage, and the struggle of women in Khmer society. 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, and the formal, eloquent expression of theories and opinions in educated debates.

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. Heritage students, 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. Material studied will include traditional folk tales in written form, oral accounts of folk tales told by Khmer elders (and captured on video), and modern short stories and novel excerpts. 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 use of Khmer Unicode on the computer from the beginning of the course.

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”. 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 personal 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 before the first day of class, or by previous familiarity with the student. 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, with the understanding that such students will have to put in extra work in the early stages of the class in order to catch up.

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 three times before the class officially begins, on the following Mondays (for only 50 minutes each time):

September 8
September 15
September 22

Course requirements:

Students will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Class Participation: 50%

Three page term paper: 25%

Final oral presentation: 25%

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 50% 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(ត្រី)**. 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 50% of your total grade for the course. No cellphone activity will be permitted in class, including texting. 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 in-person or over Zoom, Meeting ID 536 352 7405 (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 29)**

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

Unit Two: Khmer Folk Tales and the Expression of World View and Explanation of Geography and History (October 6 - October 27)

After a review of the more basic Khmer “trickster” folktales familiar to students who have taken Khmer 100A, we’ll study in-depth two “epic” Khmer folk tales which present complex themes of gender relations, geography, world view, and history. Students will write a three-page paper at the end of the unit comparing and contrasting some aspect of these two 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 and ecclesiastical vocabulary
- express arguments related to analysis of the above folk tales in Khmer, in a three-page term paper

Unit Three: Modern Khmer Fiction and Society (October 27 – November 17)

By reading two modern Khmer short stories and a chapter from a classic novel, we'll look at the ways 20th and 21st Century Khmer authors approach themes of gender, arranged marriage, medical belief, and social structure.

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

- discuss, using appropriate "educated vocabulary," several key social issues in contemporary Cambodia, including gender roles, the contemporary family, sex work, social hierarchy and individual expression, marriage, and traditional vs. Western medicine
- write about the above issues, including expressing one's individual opinion and viewpoint regarding them

Students will finish the course with a presentation on same aspect of Khmer social structure or culture as expressed in one or more of the short stories and novel chapter read. If enrollment in the class is greater than 3, these presentations will be done in pairs/groups.

Three page term paper due: November 12

Final oral presentations: December 1