

SOUTH ASIA SUMMER LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

Handbook for Students

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1 – INTRODUCTION & WELCOME

Welcome to the South Asia Summer Language Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and to the city and community of Madison. We are delighted that you have chosen to participate in this nationally coordinated program which offers the best training available in South Asian languages to undergraduate and graduate students from across the US who require language skills for study abroad, research, or professional development. For over forty years, students have come to UW-Madison to study South Asian languages intensively. When the federally funded US centers for South Asian studies recently decided to offer a cooperative language training program in the summer, UW-Madison was pleased to offer its resources and institutional support to host the program. SASLI instantly became and continues to be the go-to place for intensive language courses in the summer.

In this handbook, we want to introduce you to the program, the university and the city, and we want to help you prepare for and make the most of your SASLI experience. Your main concern and source of information will, of course, be your class and your instructor, but this handbook has been created to facilitate your transition into SASLI and to answer general questions you may have about the program. It is intended as a kind of FAQ document, but you are always welcome to contact any member of the SASLI staff about specific questions or concerns you may have.

2 – HOW TO LEARN A LANGUAGE

There is one important thing you should remember about all courses and learning situations, including an intensive language course: **most learning is actually self-instruction.** Of course, there are techniques that your instructors will use on you in class to, in some sense, trick you into learning new skills and cultivate a confident and creative competence in the language. But, what you do outside of class, on your own, will ultimately determine how much you get out of your time at SASLI.

Circumstances may prevent you from sticking to a consistent plan of study everyday, but you should from the beginning set aside a significant part of your non-class day to self-study. Of course, this will involve completing your homework assignments, but if this is all you are doing, then the intensity and pace of SASLI will likely overtake you at some point, particularly at exam time, when cramming is hardly effective in a language course. Your own background, ability, and experience with language will affect how well you take on the challenge of a SASLI course, but **everyone can do it** successfully.

For most people, the best plan of action is to spend every afternoon practicing what you learned in class that morning and completing your homework. If you **approach SASLI like a job**, you will learn the language you came for well. If you treat your course like a chore, a requirement that must complete, it will quickly become exactly that – a tedious burden. Following this plan – class in the morning, self-study/homework in the afternoon (8:30-5 M-F) – will also free to enjoy yourself at night, to discover Madison's great summer activities, to go to Summerfest in Milwaukee, or to veg-out in front of the TV—all guilt-free. If you must work, try to schedule it so that you can at least spend some time in the afternoon working on that day's material. A large gap between class and study time does not reinforce things as well as a minimal gap.

The next thing to remember when learning a language is that **you must make mistakes**. No one ever learned a language without getting things wrong, a lot. There were methods of language teaching in the past that punished errors severely, but those days are long gone. Today we know that communication can occur, even among excellent speakers, even when basic mistakes are present. Think of it this way. If it takes 10,000 honest errors to really learn a language well, how many have you committed so far? The mistakes do have to be sincere or honest to be effective, that is you have to be trying to get it right, but errors help you overcome the very natural nervousness everyone feels at sounding funny or screwing something up. Forget about all that. In one sense, you are in SASLI in order to commit *honest* mistakes in language use. Overcome your fear. Don't let the know-it-all student intimidate you in your right to make your own honest mistakes.

Next, there is something that will inevitably be a part of what your instructors do in class that you can enhance through your own initiative. **Learn to talk about yourself**. Everyone is taking SASLI for a different purpose; everyone has a different major, different interests, different goals, etc. If you study medieval European history at your home school and want to be lawyer, but you are taking Tamil for a study abroad program, then you need to seek out the words for medieval, history, and law in order to describe yourself. And so on with your interests, passions, politics, job, etc. You will be amazed at how many successful conversations you can have just by knowing the basic vocabulary and ways of speaking about yourself.

Finally, something more specific to South Asian languages: Students are too often intimidated by the scripts used to write different languages. Here there is no substitute for mechanical repetition, early and often. You will be assigned to complete some level of script recognition and production in your homework. But if you want to forget about the script (by knowing it cold), then write it out on your own over and over again. Write every initial vowel and every basic consonant, then write every consonant with every dependent vowel. Write every conjunct consonant with every vowel. Fill up page after page with this stuff during the first week of class. Do it while you watch TV. And say the sounds you write every time. If your roommates aren't driven nuts, you haven't done enough. You should strive to complete the whole range of possible script combinations everyday during the first week. Some scripts may not be fully introduced right away, but any effort you make to master the script will serve you well and make you more comfortable in class. If you do this in addition to your assigned work, you will master the script very quickly.

3 – MANAGING STRESS AND EMOTIONS DURING INTENSIVE COURSES

For most SASLI students, the summer flies by without any major obstacle and, at the end, you can converse and communicate in a language you may never have studied before. This section is not for you. Whether it's the intrusions of personal life or the intensity of class itself, a few students do struggle with stress and emotional frustration or despair during the summer. So, if you happen to fall in this category, what do you do or how do you avoid falling in this group?

First, you need to be rested and healthy in order to avoid the most obvious problem faced by students who struggle at SASLI, namely missing class. Remember that **each day of**

SASLI equals a week during the academic year. Miss two or three days in a row due to illness and you can imagine how hard it is to catch up. Only you know how to keep yourself healthy. For some, it may be avoiding late nights and drinking during the week. For others, it may mean exercise and decent eating habits.

Second, even if you make every class, there are times when you may just feel lost in class, just can't seem to figure out what the instructor is saying, and so forth. In such cases, the solution may not be obvious at first. However, the solution is never to skip class just to take a break, no matter how appealing and easy that option may seem. It may be that your study habits should change, that you should work with a classmate in the afternoon, that you should visit your instructors' office hours more frequently, or something else. Always start with your instructor for advice, but do this early, at the first sight of trouble, if possible. In fact, your instructor may approach you if she notices you struggling. If so, listen with an open mind. If you're still struggling, speak to the Academic Director.

4 – CO-CURRICULAR EVENTS

SASLI is more than just individual students learning languages. We strive to make it an enjoyable community experience that nourishes its participants, students and instructors alike, by creating opportunities for people to gather to meet, discuss, and learn from each other. To that end, we organize a series of low-key events that complement the efforts being made in the classroom, but that contribute to those efforts. Basically, there are two kinds of events for you to consider: films and lectures. A schedule of this year's events accompanies this handbook.

5 – EXTRA-CURRICULAR EVENTS

Now, this one is mostly your responsibility. For many SASLI participants, the summer is a work hard/play hard time. The best source for up-to-date weekly information about concerts, groups, movies, etc. is the free *Isthmus* (online at: <http://www.thedailypage.com/>) available at many locations around campus, including in Van Hise hall. Madison hosts a huge fireworks celebration at Warner Park, known as Rhythm & Booms (<http://www.rhythmandbooms.com/index.php>), on the Saturday prior to July 4th. Milwaukee is home to Summerfest (<http://www.summerfest.com/flash/>), a huge 10-day gathering of music, food, and other events just an hour by car from Madison. The Wisconsin Union (<http://www.union.wisc.edu/>) also hosts music and shows on the famous Memorial Union Terrace.

6 – WHAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT FROM US AND WHAT WE EXPECT OF YOU

The people with primary responsibility for your personal SASLI experience are your instructors. They are all experienced language teachers who have undergone thorough pedagogical training and, in some cases, have been teaching South Asian languages to Americans for longer than you've been alive. The point here is that they have the implicit trust of the program directors and **the instructors are ready, willing, and able to help you learn the language**. Instructors control how classes run and have complete autonomy to determine lesson plans, class activities, syllabi, grading, and the like. At the same time, they also have the responsibility to meet students' needs, to attend to the diversity of

students present in class, and to engage students each according to his/her background. The program directors primarily work with instructors to ensure and enable an efficient and enjoyable SASLI experience for everyone. Of course, they also work with students regarding administrative and academic concerns and details. In general, our mutual expectations might look something like this:

What You Should Expect from Us

- 1) Inspiration and encouragement to learn your chosen language
- 2) Well-prepared lessons and class activities
- 3) Respect and empathy for the difficulties of learning a language
- 4) Worthwhile co-curricular films and lectures, as well as social events
- 5) Openness and promptness in dealing with student problems and concerns

What We Expect of You

- 1) Regular attendance in class
- 2) Respect and courtesy toward your instructors and classmates
- 3) Promptness in dealing with administrative matters (registration, payment, etc.)
- 4) Openness to participating in SASLI events

Special Note on Sexual Harassment

SASLI and the University of Wisconsin-Madison take any sexual harassment situation very seriously. If you have any issues that arise during your appointment at SASLI, please come to Laura Hammond, Don Davis, or Mark Kenoyer to discuss the situation. If you are uncomfortable contacting any of us, please feel free to go directly to Equity & Diversity Resource Center (179A Bascom Hall, 263-2378). For a complete University of Wisconsin Policy and informational packet on Sexual Harassment, please consult <http://www.oed.wisc.edu/sexualharassment/>

Special Note on Academic and Non-Academic Misconduct

Cheating and/or plagiarism are obviously not tolerated at SASLI and the UW-Madison. Reports of academic misconduct can result in a variety of penalties. Similarly, non-academic misconduct, including disruptive or threatening behavior towards other students, instructors, or staff, will not be tolerated and may result in sanctions or dismissal. If you have any questions about what constitutes such misconduct in language courses, please consult with your instructor, the Academic Director, or read through the following descriptions:

http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/academic_misconduct.html

http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/non-academic_misconduct.html

7 – COMPUTING AT UW-MADISON

UW-IDs

You will want to pick up your University of Wisconsin Photo ID soon after coming to

Madison. This ID will get you into the campus libraries, help you set up your Net ID, computer labs, recreational facilities, parking facilities, allow you to purchase beer at the Memorial Union, and get your FREE bus pass. You can get your photo UW-ID at Memorial Union, Room 4316, 8:00-4:15PM, Monday – Friday.

INFORMATION ON ABOVE SERVICES: <http://www.union.wisc.edu/photoid/>

My UW-Madison

My UW is secure, easy-to-use and web-based. You will need to use your NetID and password to Login at my.wisc.edu. Please login to My UW and take a look at all the features, you may check on your paycheck distribution, print class rosters, E-grading, set up a calendar, and many other options. Please make sure to write down your NetID and your password, you will need to use My UW for your online course. If you have forgotten your NetID and password, please call the DoIT help desk at 608-264-4357. They will be able to reset your password and supply your NetID.

For those of you returning, you can test your NetID and password at:

<https://login.wisc.edu/>

Computer access

If you have brought your own laptop, and have a wireless card, you may connect to the internet via the UW wireless connection. On the link below you can see all wireless hub locations on campus.

To connect to wireless:

1. GO TO: <http://www.doit.wisc.edu/network/wireless/>
2. Enter your University of Wisconsin Net ID
3. Enter your password
4. Once this has been entered, you will get a box that says “Authentication Successful” and you are connected.

Dial-up access:

You have free home dial-in access with your Net ID and password. For information and instructions, please see the website: <http://helpdesk.doit.wisc.edu/page.php?id=4>

Computer labs:

If you do not have a laptop, you can use one of the many computer labs on campus. Hours vary during the summer. The only lab that will definitely have specific language fonts (if not using private software) will be the computer lab in Van Hise. Below is a short list of available computer labs, for a complete listing, please go to:

<http://www.doit.wisc.edu/computerlabs/labs.asp>

1. *Social Science Computer Lab* Room 3218 Social Science, 24 hours, once set up.

You must fill out an application to use the lab. Please go to the desk and ask to fill out an application. You must tell them you are with the South Asia Summer Language Institute in order to use the lab. INFO:

<http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/sscc/infrastructure/labs.htm>

2. *Van Hise Computer Lab*, 262-4575 Room 464 Van Hise Hall, 10:00 – 4:00PM. This computer lab will have fonts set up on the computers. If you have font needs that are not addressed by the computer lab, you can let Laura Hammond know and (if the font is not private software) we can try to work it out. INFO: <http://babel.lss.wisc.edu/facilities/infolab>
3. *Memorial Library Infolab*, 265-3017 Room 140 Memorial Union (on Library Mall), hours vary. INFO: <http://memlab.doit.wisc.edu>
4. *College Library*, 263-9889 Room 2250 College Library, 600 N. Park St. 8:30AM-9:45PM Mon – Thurs (Fridays close at 7:45PM) check for weekend hours. INFO: <http://college.library.wisc.edu>

8 – CAMPUS AND CITY INFORMATION

Parking

It is costly to park on campus. If you are choosing to do this, you must contact the Transportation Office on campus. A good alternative to parking, is biking or using your FREE bus pass! Information: <http://www2.fpm.wisc.edu/trans/>

Bus Pass

Once you have your photo ID, you can pick up your free bus pass (and bus map) at StudentPrint in the basement of the Memorial Union.

MADISON BUS INFO/MAPS: <http://mymetrobus.com/>

Recreational Facilities

With your UW ID, you have complementary use of the UW recreational facilities. You must bring your UW ID every time you use the facilities. For more information on the offerings, please check out their website:

INFO: <http://www.recsports.wisc.edu/>

Campus & Visitor Information

On your first day, SASLI will give you maps and visitor guides. If you would like to visit the University Welcome Center, it is located at 21 N. Park Street.

INFO: <http://www.visit.wisc.edu>

Campus Map: <http://www.map.wisc.edu/>

Campus Tours

A 100-minute campus walking tour is offered for visitors at 3:00PM Monday through Friday and 12:00PM on Saturday and Sunday. These tours leave from the Red Gym at 716 Langdon Street. No reservation is required.

Memorial Union

The Wisconsin Memorial Union is a fantastic place to get information and/or just to hang out. If you like to drink beer or wine while watching the sunset, listen to live music, watch free movies, or if you wish to hang out with your co-students and speak in the target language, it is the perfect place. You UW photo ID is needed to purchase alcoholic drinks from the Union, so it is yet another good reason to get your University photo ID as soon as possible! See the link below for more activities and events surrounding the Union.

Website: <http://www.union.wisc.edu/activities/index.html>

Above all we hope that your time in Madison is fun, enjoyable, and productive. The SASLI staff is here to help you. We are available to you throughout the summer. Please do not hesitate to let us know if there are any issues that you would like to discuss or problems that need to be solved.