



## FUNCTIONAL TAMIL

### FALL 2017 SYLLABUS

**Instructor** : Dr. J. Arun Raja Selvan, BSc (special Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics), MA (Linguistics), PhD (Linguistics), BL (Law), PGDCM (Computer Science), PGDJMC (Journalism and Mass Communication).  
Email: [arunrajaselvan@hotmail.com](mailto:arunrajaselvan@hotmail.com)

**Course Timings** : Initially 3 hrs/day during first two weeks of the program followed by 3 classes per week schedule in the subsequent weeks.

**Course Objective:** The course has the following five major objectives:

- Introducing the structure and sounds of Tamil
- Enabling the learners to carry out day-to-day conversations in spoken Tamil
- Helping them learn and understand basic Tamil grammar
- Introducing Tamil syllabic writing system and Tamil script thereby making them to read and write in Tamil
- Making the learners feel competent in performing a variety of communicative tasks in Tamil and making them communicatively and functionally competent at this level.

**Course Description:** The course will attempt to make the learners functionally competent to understand and speak basic, simple, compound and a few complex sentences in Tamil. Conversation drills will be extensively given in the classroom to equip the learners deal with different situations they will encounter in their day-to-day activity. Though the four language skills - speaking, listening, reading and writing - will be taught in the class, primary focus will be on developing speaking and listening abilities in order to make the learner communicatively competent. Home work sheets and assignments will be given frequently. Using language outside the classroom will be stressed and encouraged. This course is designed for beginners and thus doesn't expect any written or spoken knowledge of Tamil. But it does expect interest, cooperation, positive attitude and commitment from the students!

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **1. Class attendance:**

Learners' active participation is necessary for their own learning experience as well as that of everyone participating in the class. Their energy and enthusiasm is highly expected in the classroom for all activities. They must attend all classes and come prepared reviewing the structures, vocabulary, grammar learned in the previous classes and also come well prepared with oral presentations, homework assignments, etc., whenever asked by the instructor.

Eating and drinking in the classroom is not permitted. Questions to the instructor are encouraged. They are expected to be on time for the class and only medical absences are accepted. Unless they have a medical emergency, they are not expected to leave the classroom.

### **2. Homework:**

They should submit their homework neatly and legibly written on time. Oral presentation and Conversation drills require good preparation and presentation. They should try to be creative while developing oral presentations and their ability to sound-like and speak-like native speaker will add extra weight in determining the grade.

### **3. Assessment:**

The students' progress will be assessed throughout the semester in various ways. Major assessment categories in the course include:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Date Scheduled</b>	<b>Percent of Final Grade</b>
a. Assignment/Homework	Every work!	10 %
b. Participation	Every class!	10 %
c. Oral Presentation & Language use	Every day!	10 %
d. Field visit & Functional Tamil Component	Every week!	10 %
d. Quiz	2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> , 6 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> weeks (tentative)	10 %
e. Test-I	4 <sup>th</sup> week – 01 Sept 2017	20 %
f. Test-II (Final Test)	8 <sup>th</sup> week – 05 Oct 2017	30 %

### **Assignment and Homework:**

Assignment and homework are crucial components for learners overall language development. Assignments can require them to prepare for some oral presentation, translation exercise and a conversational piece to practice language. Drill to review grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, structures will also become an integral part of homework.

**Participation:**

Daily attendance and active participation in class are necessary and expected. Learner's active participation and creativity is very crucial for language development and will be assessed on a daily basis. The following criteria will be used to determine the grade

10 Always well-prepared; is attentive and volunteers often; tries to use Tamil with classmates and instructor; makes most out of each activity; shows resourcefulness and imagination in using the language; responds to and engages classmates in a respectful manner; remains open-minded towards target culture; very highly motivated and never tired of using language; smiling and flexible

08 Usually well-prepared; is attentive and volunteers occasionally; tries to use Tamil with classmates and makes some effort to engage fellow students; completes exercise with some imagination and resourcefulness; shows some development of cultural sensitivity; motivated and not often tired of using language

06 Adequately prepared and attentive and often waits to be called upon; needs to be reminded to use Tamil outside and with classmates; responds and completes exercises with minimal imagination; does not engage in language use beyond the minimum requirements for an assignment

04 Not adequately prepared and completes assignments just for the sake of doing it; often needs to be reminded to use language outside; completes exercise with no imagination; shows low energy and laziness in using language

02 Usually unprepared; makes little effort to participate or complete exercises; rarely tries to use Tamil outside of class and with classmates; sluggish and shows no interest; complains a lot

00 Makes no contribution to class whatsoever; is not on task; looks 'blind' in class; yawns, talks, appears irritated and hostile

**Oral Presentation and Language Use:**

About a bunch of oral presentations are to be given during the course of this class and will be digitally recorded for assessment. The students are expected to put sincere and original effort to develop presentations and should aim for native speaker-like pronunciation, intonation and stress. The presentations should be creative, natural, unhampered, smooth and substantial. Grading will be done largely based on the scheme mentioned in the previous section.

**Field visit and Functional Tamil component:**

This is a very vital component for developing functional aspect in language use. To develop competence and confidence in using the language in real-life situations, the students are asked to prepare appropriate conversational exchanges to function in the given situation. They are then asked to practice the exchanges in the class, do role-plays and are motivated to venture out using the conversational pieces. Probable topics for covering the functional aspect include : (1) Introducing oneself and describing what the student is doing here, (2) Ordering coffee/tea in a tea stall, (3) Appreciating their mother's cooking and learning to make a particular South Indian dish, (4) Speaking with a mechanic and describing a problem in their bi-cycle, (5) Hiring an auto-rickshaw and negotiating the price, (6) Visiting a doctor and describing the health problems, (7)

Visiting the “Farmer’s Market” in Madurai and buying vegetables and (8) Tamil lunch table with ordering food in Tamil. An off-shoot of this module can result in developing a skit in Tamil. Students are strongly encouraged to develop one.

Learners are very strongly encouraged to use the structures and vocabulary they have learned, outside of class, as much as and as often as possible. The more they use, the more it gets reinforced in their mind and more it becomes easy and familiar.

**Quizzes:**

To ensure regular studying of grammar points and vocabulary learned, there will be quizzes almost every week. The students may also get “pop” quizzes in class.

**Tests:**

Tests will contain four components to assess learners’ listening, speaking, reading and listening abilities. The learners have to listen to a few pieces of dialogues and are asked to translate and write the gist of each sentence in English under listening part. The speaking part will cover testing learner’s speaking ability by engaging him/her on a one-on-one Tamil conversation. The reading part will have sentences in Tamil that need to be translated into English and the writing part will have English sentences which need to be translated into Tamil and written using Tamil script.

**4. Grading Scale:**

The following grading scale will be used to determine the final course grade

A+	98+	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69
A	93-97	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62
						F	Below 59

**5. Academic Integrity:**

Greeting one another and the instructor upon arrival in the class contributes to a positive learning environment and is encouraged. Using mobile phones and computers is discouraged. Mute your cell phones during class time. On a related note, you are not allowed to record the class with video or audio devices.

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student’s legal name. Your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun will be gladly honored. Students with documented disabilities are encouraged to inform me of their conditions at the beginning of the program (first three days), so that the necessary arrangements for attendance, assignments, tests, etc., can be made in advance in consultation with SITA administration.

If for some reason you are late to class, please don't be disruptive to other students. Likewise leaving the classroom in the middle of class for restroom use or for other reason without the permission of the instructor is not acceptable. A student, who is chronically late to class, leaves classroom often, disruptive to others and not prepared to participate, will not receive attendance and participation credit.

SITA is committed to creating a diverse and welcoming learning environment for all students, and has a non-discrimination policy that reflects this philosophy. Disrespectful behaviors or comments addressed towards any group or individual, regardless of race/ethnicity, sexuality, gender, religion, ability or any other identity or community are deemed unacceptable in class and will be referred to the Academic Director and/or to SITA board. Incidents of academic dishonesty are required to be reported to SITA administration.

## **6. Learning a Foreign Language:**

Please keep in mind that language learning is a long-term process and necessarily involves making mistakes from time to time. Do not expect it to pop up suddenly in your mind, instead. Initially, you need to put more effort to familiarize yourself with the new (and often alien) structures, formations, vocabulary and sounds and will have to work hard to retain them in your mind. Since you are going to learn a language that is not related to your mother tongue, the differences will be more and so are difficulties. Your instructor is there to help you along the way, but ultimately the effort must come from you to make the experience worthwhile and fun.

Please note that errors are part of the learning process and are to be viewed as natural outcomes of positive encounters with the material learned and acquired in class. Please also be aware that there may be some 'low days' during the learning period where you will find learning becoming difficult and stressful. On the other hand, you will also see some 'high' days where you will feel amazed to see your ability to produce unbelievable amount of target language with very little effort and stress. This swing is very common. Talk to your instructor if you have any concern about your learning.

The structure of the class and the style and method of teaching may not be similar to some of the language classes you might have had elsewhere in your life. Please know that your instructor has been teaching this language for many years and has been successful in producing outstanding students in his carrier. It will be difficult for the instructor to change to new style all of a sudden, even if you want him to change his style and method. His approach may be different but the final outcome will be incredible!