

**PRS 601C: INTENSIVE PERSIAN I (41695)**  
**DEPARTMENT OF MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES**  
**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN**  
**FALL 2011**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

PRS 601C or Intensive Persian I is an elementary-level course that is designed to help you start learning Persian and to give you the tools to keep going. This course first introduces the Persian alphabet. The emphasis is on speaking and using the language for communication. The four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) as well as pronunciation and vocabulary are incorporated into the course. Learning a language requires daily practice. For each hour the student spends in the classroom a minimum of two hours review is required outside the class. There is no prerequisite for this course.

**By the end of this course you will:**

1. Have mastered the Persian alphabet and sound system, be able to recognize and pronounce correctly all Persian sounds, and write accurately from dictation;
2. Be able to initiate social interactions, ask for basic information, and be aware of basic cultural aspects of social interaction in Persian;
3. Be able to talk about yourself, your education, and your family with native speakers of Persian accustomed to interacting with learners;
4. Comprehend simple print texts on familiar topics;
5. Comprehend simple audio/video texts on familiar topics;
6. Be able to compose simple paragraphs about yourself and your family and friends;
7. Know about the difference between written and spoken Persian, recognize both registers, and be able to use basic expressions.

**COURSE MATERIALS:**

1. *Persian of Iran Today: Book One* will be available at Jenn's Copy & Binding (2200 Guadalupe Street, Austin, tel: 512-473-8669).
2. *Persian of Iran Today: Book Two* will be available later in the semester. More information will be announced in due time.
3. Accompanying audio/video materials are available online at: [http://www.laits.utexas.edu/persian\\_teaching\\_resources/](http://www.laits.utexas.edu/persian_teaching_resources/)
4. Blackboard: In this class we will use Blackboard—a web-based course management system at <http://courses.utexas.edu>—to distribute course materials, communicate online, post assignments, and post grades. You will receive emails with important course information from your instructor via Blackboard's email tool so be sure to check your email (and spam folder) frequently.

## **GRADE DISTRIBUTION:**

Attendance and Participation: 20%

Homework: 20%

Homework Corrections: 5%

Tests: 25%

Culture Portfolio: 5%

Skits: 5%

Presentation: 5%

Final Exam: 15%

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

### **1. Attendance and Participation (20%)**

Class time will be devoted to **activating** the vocabulary and structures that you have prepared at home through your homework. You should expect to spend at least 75% of class time doing activities in pairs and small groups. Thus, attendance and active participation in class is essential to your making good language proficiency gains and doing well in the class. This part of your grade will be based on a daily “attendance and participation” points assigned by your instructor and TA according to the following criteria:

- 5 points:** You are **actively** engaged in developing your Persian proficiency and communicating **in Persian as much as possible** with your partner/classmates/teachers from the moment you walk into the class until you leave it. Full credit is earned when you,
- i.** arrive to class on time;
  - ii.** are well prepared for the class, which means that you have listened to recorded materials on the accompanying website, learned the new vocabulary, read the grammar explanations carefully and done the homework drills based on these explanations before coming to class;
  - iii.** you submit fully completed homework at the beginning of class;
  - iv.** are alert;
  - v.** participate actively when we are working together as a class;
  - vi.** make maximum use of pair/group work time by,
    - a)** understanding the learning objectives of tasks assigned,
    - b)** staying focused on those objectives,
    - c)** continuing to work with your partner on the task objectives even if you “finish” an assigned task before the allotted time is up. (Ask your TA or instructor for additional instructions if you aren’t sure what to do next.)
- 4 points:** You are present but lacking in one of the above criteria for full credit.
- 3 points:** You are present but lacking in two of the criteria.
- 2 points:** You are present but lacking in three of the above criteria.
- 1 point:** You are present but lacking in more than three of the above criteria. For instance, you come late to class, submit incomplete homework, use English to say something that you could say in Persian and are not focused on the assigned task during group work.
- 0 points:** Absent

**Attendance Policies:**

- If you are absent from class you will receive a "0" for that day's attendance and participation grade. Your lowest 3 grades for attendance and participation will be dropped for purposes of grade calculation.
- More than ten absences—whatever the reason—will result in an "F" for the course.
- Please inform us by email of absence as soon as possible *before—not after*—the class you will miss. This helps us considerably in planning for daily class activities.

**Classroom Conduct Policies:**

- Use of laptops and cell phones is not permitted.
- Please do not chew gum in class.
- If you bring food, proper cultural etiquette dictates that you offer some to others in the room.

**2. Homework Assignments (20%)**

Expect to spend about 2-3 hours on homework for every class session. To prepare for the learning that takes place through practice in class, you will listen, read and study new material at home. This material will not be presented in class. To help you process this material, you will have daily written assignments ***due at the beginning of class on the day designated in the schedule***. The amount of effort you put into your at-home preparation and your homework is an important part of your homework grade. Pay close attention to your instructor's comments on your assignments, and follow up promptly in office hours or after class if you have questions about your homework grade.

Homework assignments will be rated on a **scale of 1 to 5 (5= excellent; 4= good but not your best effort; 3= mediocre; 2= poor; 1= very poor work)**. You will be rated on the overall quality of your work, not merely on the number of correct or incorrect answers. Note that you do not have to have everything 100% correct on your homework in order to get a "5" as long as you have made your best effort. Your lowest 3 grades for homework will be dropped for purposes of grade calculation.

- On each homework assignment:
  1. write your name ***in Persian*** as soon as you are able to;
  2. write ***the homework number*** (from assignment schedule);
  3. ***staple pages together***;
  4. ***leave room for feedback from your instructors on the homework***.
- Failure to do any of the above will lower your homework grade by ½ point.
- Photocopies from the textbook will not be accepted unless noted in the homework schedule.

Late homework assignments will not be accepted. However, if there are exceptional extenuating circumstances that will prevent you from turning in homework on time, contact your instructor to discuss the possibility of getting advance permission to submit late homework.

The first month of class requires an extra time investment on your part while we are doing the alphabet drills. ***Expect to spend up to an extra hour per day on homework during this month.***

This investment will pay off later: learning to connect the sounds and letters well helps you memorize vocabulary better, avoid spelling problems, and communicate effectively with native speakers with clear pronunciation.

### **3. Homework Corrections (5%)**

In the second part of the semester, after we complete *Book One*, you will be asked to make corrections on your written homework. Mistakes are a natural part of the learning process, but you can only truly benefit from them when you take the time to revise your work and correct your mistakes. Your instructors will use a simple code to mark errors in writing/spelling and grammar, and you will correct the errors on the same sheet of paper **using a different color ink**. More information will be provided when we begin using *Book Two*.

### **4. Tests (25%)**

There will be 5 tests over the course of the semester. If you will miss/have missed a test, contact your instructor as soon as you know that you will be missing/have missed it. If you have not contacted your instructor within 24 hours after the test has been given to discuss the possibility of a make-up, you will receive a "0". Requests for make-ups will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The **tentative** dates for these tests are:

Test 1 (5%): Wednesday, Sep. 14

Test 2 (5%): Monday, Oct. 3

Test 3 (5%): Wednesday, Oct. 19

Test 4 (5%): Friday, Nov. 4

Test 5 (5%): Wednesday, Nov. 23

### **5. Culture Portfolio (5%)**

In addition to your language work, you will keep a Culture Portfolio with five entries, each of which reflects an aspect of Persianate culture that you explore outside of class. You can watch a film (film screenings on campus will be announced), attend a lecture on a topic related to Persianate culture, explore websites, or research a topic of interest to you. Some portfolio entry topics will be assigned by the instructors (no later than one week before the due date). Each entry should contain a minimum of 250 words (typed) in English. You are required to **post your culture entry on Blackboard** under the Discussion Board. We hope that you will enjoy reading the Portfolio entries of your classmates.

The due dates for posting the Culture Portfolio entries on Blackboard are the following:

<b>Culture Portfolio</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Entry #1	Friday, Sept. 9
Entry #2	Friday, Oct. 7
Entry #3	Friday, Oct. 28
Entry #4	Friday, Nov. 11
Entry #5	Friday, Dec. 2

### **6. Skit: (5%)**

You will be asked to prepare two skits with a partner and present them in class together. Skits provide you with the opportunity to show what you have learned and what you can create with

the language. Further information about the skit's format and method of evaluation will be provided before **the first skit (3-5 minutes) is due on Thursday, Sept 29. The second skit (4-6 minutes) is due Tuesday, Nov. 15.**

**7. Presentation (5%)**

Additionally, you will be asked to make a video recording (3-5 minutes long) of yourself presenting on any topic(s) of interest to you. The presentation must be submitted via a CD or DVD, YouTube, or a USB flash drive (which will be returned to the student). Students may borrow a camcorder from the Fine Arts Library. Further information about the presentation's format and method of evaluation will be provided before **the presentation is due on Wednesday, Nov. 30.**

**8. Final Examination (15%)**

The final examination will be comprehensive and will test the following skills: reading, writing, and listening in addition to vocabulary and grammar. The final exam will tentatively take place on December 12, 2-5PM.

**FINAL GRADE CALCULATION AND GRADE POLICIES:**

Number/letter grade equivalents are:

Number	Letter	Number	Letter	Number	Letter	Number	Letter
93 - 100	A	87 - 89.9	B+	77 - 79.9	C+	67 - 69.9	D+
		83 - 86.9	B	73 - 76.9	C	63 - 66.9	D
90 - 92.9	A-	80 - 82.9	B-	70 - 72.9	C-	60* - 62.9	D-

\*(below 60=F)

- Grades on the border between two letter grades (89.9 for instance) may or may not be rounded up to the next higher letter grade, at the instructor's discretion.
- Quiz grades are usually a good indicator of how you will do on the final. If you are not doing well on quizzes, talk to your instructor to get suggestions for strategies to improve your performance.
- In order to continue to the next level of Persian, you must have a grade of C- or better. If you take the course pass/fail, you may not register for the next level of Persian.
- No incompletes will be given for this course.
- Auditing is not permitted.

**HOW TO DO WELL IN THIS CLASS:**

**This class is a group effort!** We can make much more progress as a class than as individuals by creating an Persian-speaking community, of which you will be a fully participating member. The following suggestions will help you get the most out of the course:

1. **Be an active learner.** The approach we use here at UT depends on you learning new material at home, and encourages you to use analogy and logical thinking to master grammar a little bit at a time. You will learn better and remember more when you are able to answer your own questions. Active learners often have questions that reflect their

engagement of the material. Take initiative in class and on homework: this effort will be rewarded both in your grade and in your language ability. Feel free to write us questions on specific language features in your daily homework—just remember to be specific.

2. **Put yourself out there.** Language learning requires you to make mistakes, both in your assignments and in front of your peers. In this class, you will never be penalized for a mistake that you make when trying something new. You will be corrected in class. Feedback from your instructors is intended to support you as you develop your language proficiency, and not as criticism.
3. **Personalize vocabulary.** You will remember vocabulary when you “own” it. Make words relevant to your life by thinking of what you can say about yourself with them. Write extra sentences that are meaningful to you so that the vocabulary becomes “yours” and expresses something about your world.
4. **Prepare for active participation in class by anticipating what you will do.** You should soon be able to predict what kinds of activities will be performed and how. As you study new material and complete assignments before each class, think about how you will use the new material. This will help you to prepare for the activities we’ll be doing in class.
5. **Develop your memorization skills.** Experiment with different techniques, combining listening, speaking and writing together as much as possible. Cross-train: Try the following and find what combination of techniques works best for you:
  - Listening to words and repeating them aloud—not once but ten or twenty times, until the word is easy for you to pronounce
  - Using flashcards—but without English definitions, and make yourself say the word aloud and use it in a phrase or sentence
  - Writing out vocabulary over and over—but remember to pronounce it out loud while you write!
  - Putting the words in sentences or a paragraph or story
  - Studying in groups and quizzing each other
  - Using word association techniques
6. **Study out loud, and repeat new words many times.** The only way to train your brain and your mouth to speak this language is by doing it aloud. Certain muscles need to be strengthened before they’ll be able to produce some Persian sounds correctly; studying aloud and exaggerating these sounds will help your muscles develop! Pronounce new vocabulary words at least fifteen times, until you can say them easily and it feels natural.
7. **Guess.** Think about how you acquired your native language: you did not use a dictionary. Rather, you learned new words by guessing their meaning from context, and you learned how to produce sentences by imitating and using patterns. As adult learners, we can take some shortcuts, but guessing skills remain central to language acquisition. Do not leave blanks on the homework, but do not allow yourself to become frustrated; give it your best shot, and move on. If you are not sure you have understood a sentence in the homework, you may write a translation or a question on your homework for us to check or answer.

8. **Correct yourself.** Good language learners learn from their own successes and mistakes and those of others. Correcting mistakes is an essential part of the learning process. In this class, you will never be penalized for a mistake that you make when trying something new. When your instructors and classmates are speaking, be an active listener by listening both to what they are saying and how they are saying it. Correcting the mistakes of others in your head or in your notebook is also good practice.
9. **Extend language learning beyond the classroom.** Practice Persian as much as possible. Study with classmates: ask each other questions, brainstorm about assignments, go over materials –and do this in Persian as much as possible. Look out for films and cultural activities on campus and around town and go attend them.

### **PRINCIPLES FOR GROUP ACTIVITIES:**

There can be no language without community. In our class community, respect for each other at all times will ensure a positive and fruitful learning experience. We will spend at least 75% of class time in small group or pair activities so that each one of you gets the maximum possible time to participate and practice. During these activities, the instructor plays the role of personal trainer. Learning a language is a lot like going to the gym: the personal trainer guides you, but you have to do the work to get the benefit. Please keep in mind the following principles for group work:

- ✓ Help and encourage your colleagues, and accept help from them: each of you can learn with and from everyone else.
- ✓ Work with different people on a regular basis.
- ✓ Come prepared. Don't be someone who slows down colleagues by not being able to fully participate in the work. If you are not prepared for class let your instructor know beforehand and s/he will arrange for you to learn by listening on that day.
- ✓ Stay focused on the task at hand and do not rush to finish. Most activities are designed to elicit creative play with vocabulary and structures on which we are working. If you do the minimum, you will get only minimum benefit. Take advantage of class time by pushing yourself to be creative and say and write as much as you can.
- ✓ Speak in Persian while you are engaged in the activity. If you feel frustrated, raise your hand and ask for help.
- ✓ When your group finishes the task, raise your hand to let the instructor know.
- ✓ The instructor may call time before everyone is finished. If your group does not finish, you may want to take a few minutes after class to study the rest of the exercise.

### **DEPARTMENTAL PLACEMENT EXAM POLICY:**

You must take the departmental placement exam if you were raised in a Persian-speaking household, were schooled in a Persian-speaking country, or have undertaken any formal study of Persian. ***Failure to do so constitutes a violation of the Honor Code.***

## **IMPORTANT UT POLICIES AND REGULATIONS:**

### **UT Honor Code**

The UT Honor Code is in effect in this class. Submitting any assignment or exam that is not your own, or that you did not participate fully in doing, is a violation of that code. If you have any questions about the Honor Code, please ask.

### **Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who require special accommodations need to get a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). This letter should be presented to the instructor in each course at the beginning of the semester and accommodations needed should be discussed at that time. Five business days before an exam the student should remind the instructor of any testing accommodations that will be needed. See website below for more information:

<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/providing.php>

### **Religious Holy Days**

A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible, so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence.

### **Use of Blackboard**

This course uses Blackboard, a Web-based course management system in which a password-protected site is created for each course. You are responsible for checking the Blackboard course site regularly for class work and announcements. Blackboard is available at <http://courses.utexas.edu>. Support is provided by the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400, Monday through Friday 8AM to 6PM.

### **Use of E-mail for Official Correspondence to Students**

All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html>.

### **Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)**

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

**Q Drop Policy**

The State of Texas enacted a law limiting the number of course drops for academic reasons to six (6). Senate Bill 1231: "Beginning with the fall 2007 academic term, an institution of higher education may not permit an undergraduate student a total of more than six dropped courses, including any course a transfer student has dropped at another institution of higher education, unless the student shows good cause for dropping more than that number."