This course features annotated selections from autobiographical writing in Hindi. Our study of these wide-ranging texts will open new windows onto Indian culture, and will show us a cast of characters whose personal accounts of joyful, sad, comical, tragic, noble, edifying, scurrilous and terrifying moments will entertain and educate us in ways that are to be found only through the “real-life” genre of autobiographical writing. We will look closely at the literary effects used by the various authors, and in so doing we will look under the hood of Hindi stylistics and rhetoric; there will also be a strong emphasis on language acquisition. Weekly preparation of texts to be read in class is essential and will be tested by a 5-minute quiz at the very beginning of each Tuesday class. Students will also produce an annotated translation of one substantial passage, and will write a section of autobiography of their own in Hindi; these assignments will be presented & discussed in class.

Students are strongly advised to plan their assignments carefully and well in advance, getting advice on drafts in plenty of time before the submission dates.

All students with a good reading knowledge of Hindi are welcome; a background in the study of literature is an advantage but is neither expected nor required. Class discussion will use both Hindi and English. Assignments in HIN 384, the graduate version of the course, will be more demanding than those of HIN 330. Please contact rupertsnell@austin.utexas.edu if you have any questions.
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Some guidance on how to make a success of this class

Participation and discussion
Preparation of the weekly readings in advance is essential as a basis for engaged and lively discussion (in Hindi and/or English) in class. ‘Preparing’ the text involves reading it closely and carefully, using the glossary supplied and a good Hindi dictionary — see Bibliography below; you must take a careful note of anything that you don’t understand, or that you think is worthy of comment, and bring it up in class, where everyone will benefit from the discussion. We will all work together in our study of our texts. Don’t rely on your memory to take you back to difficult parts of the text: you must list them, or highlight them in the coursebook; making a good job of this will earn you a good participation grade.

Tuesday quizzes on text preparation
At 5:00 p.m. sharp each Tuesday there will be a 5-minute quiz on the readings for that week. Quiz questions may relate to some English-medium background reading as well as to the Hindi texts themselves. The questions will be easy to answer if you have read the texts carefully, impossible to answer if you have not! It’s as simple as that.

Annotated translation
Translating literary texts is an excellent way of getting really close to the original, and it tells us a lot about the original writer’s style. Your assignment has two aspects. The first is to make a good, accurate, sympathetic, and fluent English translation of your chosen Hindi passage (800-1000 words for undergrads, 1200-1500 words for graduates); you will have to decide how to negotiate the differences between Hindi and English idiom, and how ‘literal’ to be. Your aim should be to produce a text that would give the English reader an experience similar to that of the Hindi reader. The second part of the task is to write a brief commentary, either as footnotes or as a separate passage, detailing the basis for your translation decisions. We’ll discuss this process in class before you do the assignment.

Autobiographical writing, in Hindi
Here is your chance to get creative! You will write an autobiographical passage in Hindi: 800 words for undergrads, 1200 for graduates. The format is up to you, but you may find it easier to write a ‘passage’ from your imagined autobiography (for example, somewhere from childhood, or — fictionally — from a part of your life yet to be lived) rather than trying to summarize your life story from birth. In presenting your autobiography to the class you may chose to illustrate it with photos etc.

Essay, in English
Your choice of subject must be determined & agreed by week 10 — three weeks before the due date.

You are strongly advised to discuss your progress on the assignments by coming to office hours! Good time management is of the essence: keep an eye on the schedule ahead, and don’t leave writing assignments to the last minute.
Week 1: August 29
दौलतराम — दौलत दरबार
A foretaste of a text we’ll be reading in weeks 6 and 7.

Week 2: 3rd & 5th September
अलाउ*ीन खान — मेरी कथा
Memoirs of a master Hindustani musician as he joins the court of the Maharajah of Maihar.

Week 3: 10th & 12th September
कौस0या बसेनी — दोहरा अभिशाप
A Dalit woman’s ‘double curse’ of gender and caste.

Week 4: 17th & 19th September
क्रिष्ण चंद्र — आधे सफ़र की पूरी कहानी
A celebrated Urdu-Hindi novelist and screenplay-writer recalls his childhood.

Week 5: 24th & 26th September
मनू भंडारी, एक कहानी यह भी
Growing up and discovering the world of writing; and an anecdote with a happy ending.

Weeks 6 & 7: 1st & 3rd October, 8th & 10th October  ANNOTATED TRANSLATION DUE ON 3rd!
दौलतराम — दौलत दरबार
A station master describes some surprising incidents from a life working for Indian Railways.

Weeks 8 & 9: 15th & 17th October, 22nd & 24th October
यशपाल — सिंहावलोकन
A plot to blow up the Viceroy of India’s train in 1929: will it succeed?

Week 10: 29th & 31st October  AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITING DUE ON 31st!
प्रकाशबत्ती पाल — लाहौर से लखनऊ तक
Plotting insurrection against the British Raj with her husband Yashpal.

Weeks 11 & 12: 5th & 7th November, 12th & 14th November
विष्णुप्रसाद गोरेश्वर — अंडाँ देखा गवर
An eye-witness account of the 1857 rebellion, translated from the original Marathi.

Week 13: 19th & 21st November  ESSAY DUE ON 21st!
हम लोग (कथा के सत्तह्य) — हमारी अपनी आत्मकथाएँ!
Presentations & discussions of our own autobiographical writing.

Week 14: 26th November
जावेद अब्ज़र — तरकश
The Urdu poet and screenplay-writer chronicles his early life.

Week 15: 3rd & 5th December
बनारसीदास — अर्धकथानक
Exploring the ‘first autobiography in an Indian language’, written in 1641.
Your TRANSLATION PROJECT is to be based on either (a) a further passage from a
text included in the syllabus above a text from the list below, or (b) a passage from one
of the following texts:

अमृत राय, जिनको याद हमेशा हुरी रहेगी – Recollections of Krishan Chander by Premchand’s son & biographer.

राजेन्द्र प्रसाद, आत्मकथा – India’s first President describes his village childhood in Bihar.

राघेयाम कथावाचक, मेरा नाटक-काल – Reminiscences of a Rāmāyan playwright.

पांडेय बेंचन शर्मा ‘उज्ज’, अपनी खानदान – Scurrilous goings-on in a mohalla of Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh.

अमृतलाल वेगवड़, सौंदर्य की नदी नर्मदा – A hike-cum-pilgrimage on the banks of the Narmada river.

भीमानी भानु, आज के अलौकिक – Incidents from a writer's childhood.

भीमानी भानु, आज के अलौकिक – A future prime minister imprisoned during the Emergency in the 1970s.

भीमानी भानु, आज के अलौकिक – An encounter with fellow-writer Yashpal.

भीमानी भानु, आज के अलौकिक – Hindi’s leading satirist on his career choice.

बॉलिवुड राय बचन, ‘बिभिन्न’, आत्मकथा – Thoughts from a death cell in British India.

बॉलिवुड राय बचन, ‘बिभिन्न’, आत्मकथा – The writer’s son Amitabh Bachchan injured on a film set.

बॉलिवुड राय बचन, ‘बिभिन्न’, आत्मकथा – A future prime minister imprisoned during the Emergency in the 1970s.

बॉलिवुड राय बचन, ‘बिभिन्न’, आत्मकथा – An encounter with fellow-writer Yashpal.

बॉलिवुड राय बचन, ‘बिभिन्न’, आत्मकथा – The world as seen from inside the ‘Russian dolls’ of womanhood.

बॉलिवुड राय बचन, ‘बिभिन्न’, आत्मकथा – An elderly writer reflects on death.

अमृता प्रीतम – अपनी प्रेमचंद घर में – Travels in Assam, and a final curtain.
Bibliography


Dictionaries

Introductions to how to use dictionaries will be given at the beginning of the course. The best Hindi-English dictionary is R.S. McGregor, *Hindi-English Dictionary* (OUP). Using this (or any other dictionary) in book format is a much richer experience than using online dictionaries. Having said that, the following may be useful:

- [http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/platts/](http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/platts/)
- [http://www.cfilt.iitb.ac.in/~hdict/webinterface_user/dict_search_user.php](http://www.cfilt.iitb.ac.in/~hdict/webinterface_user/dict_search_user.php)
- [http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/caturvedi/](http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/caturvedi/)
- [http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/bahri/](http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/bahri/)