Hindi’s rich array of autobiographical writing teaches us a lot about past and present lives in India, definitions of “the self”, reflections of our own selves, and the stylistic wonders of Hindi as a highly articulate language. In this class, a series of joyful, sad, comical, tragic, noble, edifying, scurrilous and terrifying readings will entertain and educate us in ways that are to be found only through this “real-life” genre of autobiographical writing. We will examine the literary effects achieved by the authors; and we will investigate how their writing achieves an emotional appeal. There will be a strong emphasis on language acquisition, with class discussion in a mixture of Hindi and English, and plentiful opportunities to acquire, discuss, and use new vocabulary.

Each week we will read carefully selected passages from Hindi autobiography, every page being accompanied by a glossary and extensive explanatory notes in the coursebook. Meanwhile we will also read a sequence of articles in English that will educate us about the genres of “self-writing”, both in India and more generally.

You will be expected to undertake several hours of study in your own time every week. There are two kinds of weekly assignment: preparation of the weekly reading passages, and background reading as specified in a Friday Mail. A short quiz at 9:30 sharp on Tuesdays checks that you are properly prepared. On Thursdays there will be a discussion of a background reading, led by one or more discussants and respondents.

Three graded projects will be undertaken during the semester: an annotated translation, an autobiographical piece of your own in Hindi, and an essay in English. You should plan your assignments carefully, getting advice on drafts well before the submission dates. You will be nagged and reminded about dates, but the responsibility for seeking advice and submitting on time is yours! No final exam; so you can focus all the more on your three projects.

Who is this course for?

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. Questions? Contact rupertsnell@austin.utexas.edu
### ASSESSMENT

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation &amp; discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday quizzes</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annotated translation — March 3</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autobiographical writing in Hindi — March 31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay in English, 2000 words — April 21</td>
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### How to make a success of this class

#### Participation and discussion

Preparing the weekly texts & readings is essential. ‘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 help earn you a good participation grade. When I ask for questions or points of interest, the last thing I want to hear is silence.

#### Tuesday quizzes

At 9:30 p.m. sharp each Tuesday there will be a 5-minute quiz on the readings for that week: one question about the Hindi text, and one about the English-medium background reading. 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

Your choice of text must be agreed by February 11; final submission March 3.

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. (1) The first is to make a good, accurate, sympathetic, and fluent English translation of your chosen Hindi passage (800-1000 words for HIN 330, 1200-1500 words for HIN 384); you have to decide how to negotiate the differences between Hindi and English idiom, and how ‘literal’ to be. You should aim to produce a text that would give the English reader an experience similar to that of the Hindi reader. (2) 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, with a trial run, before you do the formal assignment.
**Autobiographical writing — in Hindi**

**Final submission March 31.**

Here is your chance to get creative! You will write an autobiographical passage in Hindi: 800 words for HIN 330, 1200 for HIN 384. 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. Your writing may be handwritten or typed, as you prefer; either way, be sure to proof-read it very carefully! In presenting your autobiography to the class you may choose to illustrate it with photos and other incriminating documentation.

**Essay — in English or Hindi**

**Your topic must be agreed by March 24; final submission April 21.**

This is to be a critical and analytical essay on a subject relating to our readings, following your own interests. Start thinking about this well in advance; you will be given help on bibliography and the best approach for your chosen subject. A standard ‘lit. crit.’ approach is not necessarily required: think creatively about the form of the essay as well as the subject matter. An appropriate scope and length will be agreed with you depending on your choice of topic.

*You are strongly advised to discuss your progress on the assignments by coming to office hours! Good time management is essential: keep an eye on the schedule ahead, and don’t leave writing assignments to the last minute.*

*All projects: double checked, double spaced, in hard copy please.*
पाठ्यक्रम – SCHEDULE

**WEEK 1**: January 19 & 21 — INTRODUCTIONS and COURSE CONVENTIONS.
Short readings: चन्द्रशेखर, दौलतराम, कौसल्या बैसंत्री, हिरवंशराय बच्चन.

**WEEK 2**: January 26 & 28
More short readings: अमृता प्रीतम, रमप्रसाद ‘विस्मिल’, अलाउद्दीन खान, महात्मा गांधी, मोहनलाल भास्कर.

**WEEK 3**: February 2 & 4
क्रिश्न चंदर — आधे सफ़र की पूरी कहानी
Fun and games: a celebrated Urdu-Hindi novelist and screenplay-writer recalls his childhood.

**WEEK 4**: February 9 & 11
Choose your translation project by February 11
मक़बूल फ़िदा हुसेन — एम.एफ. हुसेन की कहानी अपनी ज़ुबानी
India's most celebrated and controversial modern artist tells of his childhood and his grandfather.

**WEEK 5**: February 16 & 18
सुषम बेदी, चाय के बगीचों में
Not everyone's cup of tea: the social life of a tea-estate near Darjeeling, West Bengal.

**WEEK 6**: February 23 & 25
मोहनलाल भास्कर — मैं पाकिस्तान में भारत का जासूस था
Jailbirds: an Indian spy describes his experiences and fellow-inmates in a Pakistani prison.

**WEEK 7**: March 1 & 3
दौलतराम — दौलत दरबार – १
A station master describes some…er…surprising incidents while working for Indian Railways.

**WEEK 8**: March 8 & 10
दौलतराम — दौलत दरबार – २
More railway lines from Stationmaster Daulatram.

**WEEK 9**: March 15 & 17 — SPRING BREAK

**WEEK 10**: March 22 & 24
Choose your essay topic by March 24
फणीश्वरनाथ रेणु — आत्म-परिचय
A young Gandhian shows his patriotic colors through schoolboy rebellion.

**WEEK 11**: March 29 & 31
Autobiographical writing due on March 31st
विष्णुभट्ट गोडशे वरसईकर trans. अमृतलाल नागर — आँखों देखा गदर
An eye-witness account of the 1857 revolt, translated from the original Marathi.
**WEEK 13: April 5 & 7**
हम लोग (हमारी कक्षा के सदस्य) – हमारी अपनी आत्मकथाएँ!

Presentations and discussions of our own autobiographical writing. Prepare for fame and glory. Presentations will continue in Week 13 if necessary.

**WEEK 13: April 12 & 14**
यशपाल — सिंहावलोकन

Looking back at a plot to blow up the Viceroy of India’s train in 1929: will it succeed?

**WEEK 13: April 19 & 21**
प्रकाशवती पाल — लाहौर से लखनऊ तक

Plotting insurrection against the British Raj with her husband Yashpal.

**WEEK 13: April 26 & 28**
बनारसीदास – अर्धकथानक

Some very mixed events from the ‘first autobiography in an Indian language’ (1641 AD.)

**WEEK 13: May 3 & 5**
बनारसीदास – अर्धकथानक

Banarasi’s self-assessment of virtues and faults sums up his life (and maybe ours.)

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**TRANSLATION PROJECTS** are to be based on either a further selection from a text included in the syllabus above, or a text from the list below. In either case, please consult for advice.

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

अमृता प्रीतम – अक्षरों के साये: एक अंत्यार्त्रा – A Punjabi poetess, her two soul-mates, and a Russian muse.

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

राजेश्याम कथावाचक, मेरा नाटक-काल – Reminiscences of a Rāmāyān playwright.

पांडेय बेचन शर्मा ‘उग्र’, अपनी ख़बर – Scurrilous goings-on in a muhalla of Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh.

मन्नू भंडारी, एक कहानी यह भी – Growing up and discovering the world of writing.

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

एम.एफ़. हुसेन, एम.एफ़. हुसेन की कहानी अपनी ज़ुबानी – India’s most controversial artist takes up his pen.

मोहनदास करमचंद गाँधी, मैं पाकिस्तान में भारत का जासूस था – An Indian spy languishes in a Pakistani jail.

ब्रज मोहन यास, मेरा कथचिठ्ठा – Confessions of a light-fingered museum director.

गोपालप्रसाद यास, कहो यास, कौन कहीं? – Scenes in the newsroom: Gandhiji assassinated!

मोहनदास करमचंद गाँधी, सत्यके प्रयोग – Mahatma Gandhi’s memoir, translated from Gujarati.
भीष्म साहनी, आज के अतीत – A young boy explores Rawalpindi in the 1920s.
भारतभूषण अग्रवाल, लीक अलीक – Incidents from a writer's childhood.
अमृतलाल नागर, टुकड़े-टुकड़े दास्तान – A novice cyclist collides with a herd of buffaloes.
रामप्रसाद िबिस्मल, आत्मकथा – Thoughts from a death cell in British India.
अज्ञेय, आत्मनेपद – A jailed freedom-fighter catches nightingales by candlelight.
जावेद अख़्तर, तक र् श – The Urdu poet and screenplay-writer chronicles his early life.
हिरवंश राय बच्चन, ’दशद्वार’ से ’सोपान’ तक – The writer’s son Amitabh Bachchan injured on a film set.
हिरशंकर परसाई, हम इक उम्र के वाक़फ़ हैं – Hindi’s leading satirist on his career choice.
जैनेन्द्र कुमार, ये और वे – On first meeting Premchand.
शिषवानी, सोने दे – An elderly writer reflects on death.
शिषवानी, आज के अतीत – A young boy explores Rawalpindi in the 1920s.

You need to buy the following two books:
Arnold, David, and Stuart Blackburn, eds., *Telling lives in India: biography, autobiography, and life history*. Delhi, Permanent Black. 2005. (Currently from $20 to $1,756.65 on Amazon!)

Bibliography (draft)


**Dictionaries**
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 will be useful:

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