



**BROOKLYN
INSTITUTE
for SOCIAL
RESEARCH**

68 Jay Street, #308
Brooklyn, NY 11201

[BISR Language Learning and Critique](#) is not simply a language learning program. Drawing on faculty and guest lecturers working in an array of disciplines—from philosophy to literature, political theory to psychoanalysis—BISR Language Learning and Critique integrates intensive formal language acquisition with the critical exploration of the historical and ever-evolving cultural contexts in which languages and texts are read, interpreted, and applied.

Current Offerings:

[Critical Sanskrit](#)



What can the study of Sanskrit teach us about the foundations of ancient Indic thought, from the Vedic hymns to Vedantic teachings, from the *Ramayana* to the *Mahabharata*, and the lasting influence these foundational texts have exercised on everything from popular art to contemporary South Asian politics? In Critical Sanskrit, students will undertake the structural acquisition of Sanskrit [*samskrtam*], with the aim of illuminating, through linguistic study, key principles of Indic philology, poetics, politics, and philosophy. Beginning with the alphabet and basic word structures, we'll proceed to more complex morphologies and grammatical forms, ultimately developing the sophistication and skills for close reading and critical analysis. How do verbal and rhetorical Sanskrit forms participate in the articulation of philosophical principles and sacred practices? How

have these forms and crucial vocabularies developed across changing historical contexts? And how do they continue as living practices, in poetics, philosophy, and politics, into the present?

[Reading Group: Plato's Dialogues](#)



We'll read together a dialogue of Plato, giving close attention to central components and qualities of his diction: word choice and semantic range, word order and hyperbaton, use of discourse particles, "comic" and colloquial speech, as well as use of more "literary" registers; throughout, we'll ask how Plato's unique diction facilitates the making of dialogic form and of philosophical thought. We'll also take a look at some brief comparanda from Aristophanes' comic plays, so as to better understand the making of Platonic prose and the invention of philosophical dialogue. Reading Plato will also offer us the opportunity to review, as necessary, the morphology and syntax of Attic prose.

Critical Ancient Greek



What can the study of ancient Greek teach us about canonical texts, from the *Iliad* to Heraclitus to Plato's *Republic*, that have made the language a recurring touchstone for thinking about poetics, politics, philosophy, and psychology? In Critical Ancient Greek, students will undertake the formal acquisition of ancient Greek, while attending, throughout, to reception history, keywords, and approaches to reading and interpretation. We'll begin with the alphabet and basic morphology, before proceeding to complex grammar and syntax, rhetoric, the history and theory of textual transmission and reception—and, by program's end, the translation of canonical texts. Our aim is not only to learn a language, but also to learn *how to read*: How can we understand the linguistic strategies, keywords, and concepts that structure classical Greek, and that remain central to

philosophical, political, and psychoanalytic thinking today?

Fall/Winter Lecture Series

- Jackie Murray on racecraft in *The Odyssey*
- Olga Levaniouk on Greek and Indic epic
- Lynn Kozak on performing *The Iliad*
- Nancy Worman on Virginia Woolf's *On Not Knowing Greek*
- Mathura Umachandran on Sanskrit and contemporary Indian politics
- Kelly Dugan on Parmenides and Indic monism

Past lectures:

- Bruce King on queer reception of Achilles and Patroclus
- Samantha Hill on Hannah Arendt's use of Greek in political philosophy
- Peter Fenves on Marx's early engagement with the Atomists
- Gregory Nagy on comparative fables
- Leonard Muellner on Indo-European linguistics

Brooklyn Institute for Social Research is an interdisciplinary teaching and research institute that offers critical, community-based education in the humanities and social sciences. Working in partnership with local businesses and cultural organizations, we integrate rigorous but accessible scholarly study with the everyday lives of working adults to re-imagine scholarship for the 21st century.

For more information, please write to info@thebrooklyninstitute.com.