

Bhakti-sastri

Teacher Training

Course

Student Handbook

Edition, May 2021

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness
Founder-Acarya: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

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BHAKTI SASTRI TEACHERS TRAINING COURSE SCHEDULE

Session One

Aims of Sastri Study

Lesson 1	BSTTC Overview / Bhakti-sastri Aims	75 mins
Lesson 2	Implicit Delivery & Ethics	45 mins

Session Two

Bhakti-sastri Course Overview

Lesson 4	BS Course Overview & Materials	30 mins
Lesson 5	Lesson Planning Workshop	90 mins

Session Three

Bhakti-sastri Course Assessment

Lesson 6	Bhakti-sastri Assessment Principles	30 mins
Lesson 7	Bhakti-sastri Assessment Workshop	90 mins

BHAKTI-SASTRI TEACHER TRAINING COURSE AIMS

1. To familiarize students with the aims of Bhakti-sastri.
2. To help students appreciate the importance of the Bhakti-sastri program for ISKCON.
3. To familiarize students with an overview of the current Bhakti-sastri materials.
4. To help students write effective lesson plans based on objectives.
5. To help students acquire skills of implicitly delivering aims.
6. To help students appreciate the importance establishing an appropriate ethos in teaching.
7. To equip students with basic skills of effective assessment of Bhakti-sastri courses.
8. To provide students with a network of support for Bhakti-sastri teaching programs.

BSTTC ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION**BSTTC Assessment**

Assessment for the BSTTC will consist of Students submitting a detailed Lesson plan of a Bhakti-sastri lesson. Certification for BSTTC will be according to the following chart:

Marks	Grade	Competence	Status	Out of 10
1 – 57	F	Very poor	FAIL	- 5½
58 – 62	C -	Poor	ASSIST ONLY	6
63 – 67	C +	Fair	ASSIST ONLY	6½
68 – 72	B -	Reasonable competent	PASS	7
73 – 77	B	Competent	PASS	7½
78 – 82	B +	Very competent	PASS (honours)	8
83 – 87	A -	Exceptional/expert	PASS (high honours)	8½
88 - 100	A +	Incarnation of teaching	PASS (highest honours)	9 -

Lesson Plan assessment criteria is explained in the Lesson Plan assessment Handout. Consult with the course facilitator for details of submission.

BSTTC ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION**BSTT Certification**

General qualifications for Formally Teaching Bhakti-sastri:

1.	Bhakti-sastri Course Certificate
2.	Teacher Training Certificate
3.	Bhakti Sastri Teacher Training Course Certificate. (Grade B- or higher)
4.	Chanting sixteen rounds daily, following the four regulative principles, demonstrating sound sadhana and being a devotee in good standing.

AIMS OF THE BHAKTI-SASTRI COURSE

1. To help students memorize and recall the essential knowledge of the bhakti-sastras.
2. To deepen students' understanding of the theology of the bhakti-sastras.
3. To help students personally apply the teachings of the bhakti-sastras in their lives.
4. To enhance students' desire and ability to effectively preach Krishna consciousness based on the teachings of the bhakti-sastras.
5. To help students understand and appreciate the mood and mission of Srila Prabhupada, as revealed in writings on the bhakti-sastras, and to perpetuate that understanding within ISKCON.
6. To help students apply the principles of the bhakti-sastras with Vaisnava integrity and appropriate consideration of time, candidate and country.
7. To help students appreciate, and appropriately apply, Gaudiya Vaisnava culture, etiquette and principles of Vaisnava sanga, as imparted in the bhakti-sastras.
8. To help students imbibe Vaisnava qualities enunciated in the bhakti-sastras.

The chart below shows how the Aims of Systematic Sastric Study are divided into the fundamental categories of learning, as explained in VTE approach to education, of knowledge, skills & values. These aims apply to all four Sastric degrees — Bhakti-sastri, Bhakti-vaibhava, Bhakti-vedanta, and Bhakti-sarvabhauma. These aims are weighted differently for each of the four main courses. Each aim for sastric study is expressed in a few words in the chart below.

Knowledge	Knowledge (Memory and Recall)	Kno
	Understanding	Und
Skills	Personal Application	PeA
	Preaching Application	PrA
Values	Mood and Mission	M&M
	Vaisnava Integrity	VI
	Culture and Etiquette	CE
	Vaisnava Qualities	VQ

BHAKTI-SASTRI COURSE OVERVIEW

The curriculum of the Bhakti-sastri Course is divided into five units covering the four essential Bhakti-sastri books. The following chart shows the five Units.

Unit 1	Bhagavad-gita Chapters 1-6
Unit 2	Bhagavad-gita Chapters 7-12
Unit 3	Bhagavad-gita Chapters 13-18
Unit 4	Nectar of Devotion
Unit 5	Sri Isopanisad & Nectar of Instruction

Number of Lessons

The number of lessons for each unit will be determined by the course facilitator within the guidelines shown in the table below. The total number of Bhakti-sastri Lessons will be between 54-74 Lessons. The duration of each lesson will be 2-3 hours.

Unit	Content	Number of Lessons
1	Bhagavad-gita Chapters 1-6	12-18
2	Bhagavad-gita Chapters 7-12	10-14
3	Bhagavad-gita Chapters 13-18	8-12
4	Nectar of Devotion	10-14
5	Sri Isopanisad & Nectar of Instruction	12-16

Schedule of Units

The above schedule of units may be completed in any order according to the discretion of the course coordinators.

BHAKTI-SASTRI TEACHERS MATERIALS

The following list shows the resource materials available for teaching your Bhakti-sastri course:

Bhakti-sastri books

- *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*
- *Nectar of Devotion*
- *Nectar of Instruction*
- *Sri Isopanisad*

Bhakti-sastri Course Materials

- Bhakti-sastri Students Handbooks
- Teachers Lesson Objectives
- Srila Prabhupada Quotes Book
- Assessment Marking Keys
- Microsoft Excell Report Sheets

VTE Materials

- VTE Bhakti Sastri Course Materials
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CD Version, First Edition (published December 2000)

Additional Recommended Material

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Surrender Unto Me</i> ▪ <i>Waves of Devotion</i> | <div>Bhurijana Dasa (VIHE Publications)</div> <div>Dhanurdara Swami</div> |
|--|--|

Prepare your lessons for the Bhakti-sastri Course based on Lesson Objectives. The Lesson Objectives are provided in the teachers Materials for each unit. Refer to the sample lesson plan below as a model for writing your lessons.

Sample Lesson Plan:**UNIT 1 LESSON 5 KARMA-YOGA, SUPERIOR TO KARMA-SANNYASA****120 MINS****Objectives:***By the end of the lesson the students will be able to:*

Understanding

- Present an overview of Krisna's responses to Arjuna's question in 2.54 as to the symptoms of a self realized soul. (2.55-72)

Personal Application

- Discuss the relevance of how a *sthita-dhīr muni* regards happiness and distress. (2.56)
- Draw general principles from their experience of *paraṁ dṛṣṭvā*, a higher taste in Krisna Consciousness (2.59)

Preaching Application

- Identify reasons why Karma-yoga superior to Karma-sannyasa, with reference to appropriate verses, analogies and examples from Bhagavad-gita 2.58 - 3.8.
- Discuss the relevance of Karma-yoga being superior to Karma-sannyasa in relation to
 - a. Arjuna's situation on the battlefield of Kurukshetra
 - b. our own practice of Krisna Consciousness

Focused Reading Assignment*Bhagavad-gita* Chapter 2. 54 to Chapter 3.8**Open Book Assessment**

(Personal Application)

Explain the process of sense control by Krisna consciousness with reference to verses, purports, analogies & examples from *Bhagavad-gita* Chapter 2. 54 to Chapter 3.8

How is this relevant for:

- Arjuna's situation on the battlefield of Kurukshetra
- Your own practice of Krisna Consciousness?

Preparation for Lesson:

Print Group exercise slips

Introduction 5 mins

Review of Lesson 4

Brief overview of this lesson - Why Karma-yoga superior to Karma-sannyasa...

Presentation ¹ & Discussion: Symptoms of a Self Realized Soul 20 mins

Overview of Bhagavad-gita Chapter 2 ²

2.54 *Arjuna uvāca.. kim āsīta vrajeta kim* & Translation

Discuss '*sthita-prajñā*' word for word

Overview³ of Krisna's responses to Arjuna's question in 2.54

Discuss *kā bhāṣā*? (What is his language)?

"well-dressed fool cannot be identified until speaks..." 2.54 purport

Discuss how does a *sthita-dhīr muni* regard happiness and distress? ⁴

"accepts all miseries as mercy of Lord,... when happy gives credit to Lord.." 2.56 purport

Experiential Exercise: param dṛṣṭva 30 mins

Discuss *kim āsīta* - How sit... Analogies: 2.58 Verse & purport

(1) Tortoise (2) senses of Krisna conscious persons

venomous serpents – charm ⁵

Experiential Exercise:

Discuss with partner an example from personal experience when:

You tried to control the senses unsuccessfully. / You forgot about sense enjoyment entirely.

Request volunteers to share their experiences...

Debrief: What **general principles, about sense control**, can you draw from your experience?

How will you **apply these principles** in your future endeavors **to control senses**?

Conclude "*param dṛṣṭvā nivartate*... tasted the beauty of Krisna" 2.59 Verse & purport

Group Exercise: Karma-yoga Superior to Karma-sannyasa 50 mins

Discuss issue Karma-yoga superior to karma-sannyasa ⁶

2.5 *bhaikṣyam apīha loke* - better to live in this world by begging

2.48 *yoga-sthaḥ kuru karmāṇi saṅgaṁ tyaktvā dhanañ-jaya*

5.2 *tayos tu karma-sannyāsāt karma-yogo viśiṣyate*

Group Exercise ⁷

Draw images showing reasons why Karma-yoga is superior to Karma-sannyasa

Include in your drawings:

- Krisna's statements (Sanskrit phrases)
- Prabhupada's statements in the purports
- Examples & Analogies

Paste drawings around the room and view as in Market Place

Debrief:

- How is this relevant for Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra?
- How is this relevant for our own practice of Krisna Consciousness?

Round up 5 mins

Brief Lesson Review (review objectives)

Concluding Quote: "He's captivated all round. The perfection is sure..." ⁸

Endnotes

¹ Use Flip charts or Power Point slides

² Arjuna surrenders	2.1-10
Compassion	Jnana 2.11-30
Enjoyment	Karma-kanda 2. 31-37
Sinful reactions	Buddhi-yoga 2.38-53
	Karma-yoga
	Sthita-dhir muni 2. 54-72

³ Symptoms	→ 55
Speech	→ 56-57
How sit	→ 58-63
How walks	→ 64-72

⁴ Chant Hare Krsna!

⁵ Not restricting a diseased person from certain types of eatables

⁶ Spiritual work by prescribed detached duties, rather than renunciation of work.

⁷ Group Exercise

5 Groups:

2.60-61
2.62-63
2.67-68
3.4-5
3.6-8

⁸ Concluding Quote

So the yogis and other methods, they are trying to control the senses by force. "I shall go to the Himalayas. I shall not see any more beautiful woman. I shall close down my eyes." These are forceful. You cannot control your senses. There are many instances. You don't require to go to Himalaya. You just remain in Los Angeles city and engage your eyes to see Krisna, you are more than a person who has gone to Himalayas. **You'll forget all other thing. This is our process.** You don't require to change your position. You engage your ears for hearing Bhagavad-gita As It Is, you'll forget all nonsense. You engage your eyes to see the beauty of the Deity, Krisna. You engage your tongue for tasting Krisna prasadam. You engage your legs to come to this temple. You engage your hands to work for Krisna. You engage your nose to smell the flowers offered to Krisna. Then where your senses will go? **He's captivated all round. The perfection is sure.** You don't require to control your senses forcibly, don't see, don't do it, don't do it. No. You have to change the engagement...

Bhagavad-gita 2.62-72 Los Angeles, December 19, 1968

CHOOSING SUITABLE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Effective teachers carefully choose learning methods just suitable the Objectives (and the students preferred learning styles). Here are recommendations according to our Aims.

Knowledge	Lecture, Memory keys, Drawing exercises, Mind maps, Quizzes, Group-work (recall exercises), Card-games, Brainstorming, Personal reading/study, Musical recitation (live or tape).
Understanding	Discussion (e.g. of apparent contradictions), Question & Answer sessions, Lecture, Analysis of Sanskrit word-meaning, Portfolio (e.g. list of all analogies/metaphors)
Personal Application	Individual and intra-personal exercises (reflective, contemplative, etc.), Keeping personal journal, Writing poetry, Sharing in pairs, Mentoring and personal tutoring/counselling, Role-playing.
Preaching Application	Role-play (preaching/counselling situations), Book-distribution simulation, 'Devil's Advocate', Debate, Portfolio (collecting arguments against specific philosophies) Writing letters, feature articles and academic essays, Interview simulations, Dissertations, Discussion, Listening and commenting on topical radio-discussions, newspaper editorials, etc. Exploration of topics from various viewpoints (e.g. scientific),
Mood and Mission	Playing SP lectures, Reading SP quotes, Research into SP's books, Group-work (e.g. identifying from scripture the principles which SP applied in his life), SP quotes, Videos of SP and ISKCON, Research into ISKCON's history.
Vaisnava Integrity	Mentoring and personal tutoring/ counselling, Personal reflection, Written exercises, Discussion on inner life issues. Responses to simulated epistemological questions, Role-play, Personal reflection, Vedabase research, Discussion groups Case Studies, Conundrums, Research tasks focusing on principles.
Culture and Etiquette	Writing and Reading Appreciations, Verse Selection Exercises, Discussion, Vaiñëava Songs & Poetry. Guided visualization, Word association games, Personal experience exercises, Case Studies. Histories
Vaisnava Qualities	Research, Projects, Own reading (specifically if directed by questions centred on Aims/Objectives). Personal experience exercises Nature walks, Exercises with literature/books of famous quotes, Case Studies.

IMPLICIT DELIVERY

Aims and Objectives are delivered not only through specific learning experiences/methods but in more subtle ways related to the teacher's style, the mood he/she creates within the classroom and modelling appropriate behavior.

Examples of behavior which can help us to implicitly deliver our aims:

Knowledge (Memory and Recall)

- recite from memory many slokas, including Sanskrit

Understanding

- promote a mood of open and honest enquiry
- Explain points in your own words
- allow students to formulate and express their own opinions
- admit ignorance when you don't know something, do research and share the results
- acknowledge learning something new from students
- speak and teach as far as possible from your own realization

Personal Application

- be exemplary in character and conduct
- use examples from your own life and experience to illustrate points of sastra

Preaching Application

- be enthusiastic in relating preaching stories
- refer regularly to the latest news (if appropriate) and to topical issues

Mood and Mission

- personally demonstrate a strong sense of purpose and mission
- display within the classroom pictures of Srila Prabhupada and/or the Seven Purposes of ISKCON

Vaisnava Integrity

- demonstrate application of sastra with integrity

Culture and Etiquette

- demonstrate appropriate Vaisnava Culture and Etiquette

Vaisnava Qualities

- treat Srila Prabhupada's books with great respect
- demonstrate ideal Vaisnava qualities

BHAKTI-SASTRI ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

Principles behind Effective Assessment

1. Consistency

Assessment procedures must accurately measure what we've identified as the desirable learning. In other words, they are consistent with our Aims (and Objectives). All too often in poor education, procedures implicitly and unnecessarily assess other skills and values, such as the student's ability to write legibly, to perform under pressure, to memorise, etc. It is most important that the means of assessment is consistent with the Aims and Objectives.

2. Reliability

By reliability we mean that if the same student performed a similar assessment procedure on a different occasion, the results would be similar. Reliable assessment is not, for example, significantly affected by 'good' or 'bad' days.

3. Equity

A paper marked by different local teachers from various ISKCON centres should receive the same marks and grades. *Equity also suggests "fairness" and relates to the next principle.*

4. Transparency

Transparency suggests that students should know clearly what is expected of them in the formal assessment. They should not feel tricked or otherwise let down. Furthermore, they should understand and appreciate the Aims and Objectives of the course (which should not remain the closely guarded secret of the facilitator). This relates to our own Bhakti Sastri Aim of "Responsibility for Learning".

5. Improvement

Assessment procedures should help students to improve and identify their strengths and challenges. This suggests other principles (*as follows*).

6. Positive Orientation

This implies highlighting the good rather than the bad and focusing on the student's strengths. It also suggests that the criteria for full marks or a top grade may not be simply "a lack of overt mistakes" but the demonstration of exceptional skills, use of initiative, etc. Assessment procedures should encourage all students to improve and not demotivate them.

7. Focus

Assessment should point out exactly where and how students need to improve. This suggests categorisation of assessment targets and an appropriate balance between qualitative and quantitative methods.

8. Accessibility

Results must be clearly understandable to all students.

9. Self-comparison

Students should not be assessed against each other but against themselves. This promotes an understanding of actual achievement (i.e. in terms of how much the individual has progressed). This should be kept in mind even when assessing them against fixed standards

- which has some value, but may neglect to measure the individual's improvement.

10. Proximity

As far as possible, students should be assessed by local teachers, i.e. those with whom they have developed a trusting relationship (though external examiners may also be used).

11. Self-evaluation

Assessment should promote the student's ability to be self-reflective and introspective – an essential skill for responsible learners and spiritual aspirants.

12. Practicality

Effective assessment, based on the above principles, is not easy to administer. Care should be taken that in being student-friendly it should not place too much pressure on the teacher.

Closed-book Assessment & Verse Memorization

Teachers should prepare their own Closed-book tests, consisting of approximately 10 -15 questions and analogies, drawn from the preliminary self-study questions given in the *Purva-svadyaya* section of each unit. Closed-book tests can be given at the end of each unit. Closed-book tests should not be returned to the students; however their test results appear on the Overall Unit Result Sheet (See sample on next page).

Verse memorization assessment will be held at the end of each unit.

Closed-book Assessment Standards from ISKCON Board of Examinations

1. Only devotees who are following the four rules and are chanting 16 rounds per day are allowed to sit for the examination.
2. Examinees must not refer to books or notes during the Bhakti-sastri examination.
3. Cheating in any form requires mandatory failure.
4. All rules must be explained to the examinees before the examination commences.
5. Examination centers must not allow old exam question papers or graded answer papers to circulate.
6. Examination centers must retain completed answer papers with grading information for three years from the date of announcement of the results.

Open-Book Assessment

Open-book assessment answers must be submitted before the submission deadline at the end of the unit. Students may consult together, and with the facilitator, for compiling their answers, however students found to be copying answers from each other will be awarded a zero grade. Time extensions may be given at the discretion of the facilitator.

Open-Book Assessment Marking Keys

Open Book Assessment Marking Keys are provided in the Teachers Materials in both Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excell formats. The Microsoft Excell sheets help to expedite calculations of student's results.

The following table shows an example of an Open Book Assessment Marking Key.

Explain the process & result of following Varnashrama-dharma with reference to appropriate verses, & statements from Prabhupada's purports to Bhagavad-gita

Open Book Assessment (Understanding)	Points	Value	Marks
Selects verses & statements from Prabhupada's purports appropriate to the topic from Bhagavad-gita.	4	0.4	
Accurately explain the process & result of following Varnashrama-dharma	8	0.6	
			Total

Open-Book Assessment Marking Keys (Cont.)

Use the following scale when marking the respective components of each open book paper.

10	Absolutely Brilliant
9	Exceptional
8	Very Good
7	Competent
6	Below Average
5	Marginal pass
4	Poor
3	Bad
2	Awful
1	Absolutely Terrible

Unit Assessment

Students should receive detailed feedback concerning their achievement for each unit, highlighting their specific strengths and weaknesses. Unit assessment should be both qualitative and quantitative.

Qualitative Unit Assessment

The assessor should comment on the students open book papers indicating where the student has done well and where the student needs to improve. Students' papers, with the assessor's comments, are then returned to the students. Students' open-book assessment may be resubmitted if their marks are below pass grade.

Overall Unit Result Sheet

Quantitative Unit Assessment is returned to the students in the Overall Unit Result Sheet. Overall Unit Result Sheets are provided in Microsoft Excell format in the Teachers Materials.

The following table shows the percentages of Overall Unit Result Sheet.

Open-Book Assessment	65%	Pass Mark 65%
Closed-Book Assessment	20%	Pass Mark 65%
Memorization of Verses	10%	Pass Mark 65%
Attendance at Temple Program (Sadhana sheets)	5%	Pass Mark 50%
Class Participation (Punctuality, Attendance, and General Attitude)	Moderation Considered in marginal cases	

Bhakti-sastri Certification

A pass in each unit is required for an overall course pass. Students should also be given an overall course grade (i.e. 75%), calculated from the aggregate of their respective units. Certified teachers may then forward the names of the students, along with their overall course grade in a Microsoft Excell format, to the ISKCON Examinations Board Secretary who will forward the respective student's certificates. The necessary diplomas are printed, signed by a Board official, then supplied to the Certified teachers for second signature and issue to the successful candidates. Centers are required to pay a fee of US \$1 per successful candidate.

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