

2. Elementary Persian Reading for Iranian Heritage Speakers of Persian designed and taught by Michael Craig Hillmann

- **Elementary Persian Reading for Iranian Heritage Speakers of Persian** is a proficiency-based course of 90 classroom contact hours and 180+ self-study hours **for Iranian heritage university students who have had prior exposure to Persian speaking and listening, but who cannot read or write Persian.**

- The core **course textbook**, *Persian Reading and Writing* (2009), introduces the Persian alphabet through a word-method approach. Students learn to read words by recognizing clusters of letters which remind them of a word and its meaning, which means exposure at the beginning to already familiar English and French loanwords in Perso-Arabic script. Students also learn to make guesses about the meaning of words in context and about the meaning of statements through recognizing words and other Persian-specific signals. Paralleling elementary reading activity, *Persian Reading and Writing* features exercises which develop student skills in writing Persian, first in basic *naskh* and *tahriri* scripts and then in *nasta'liq* script. Students also work with a recent Persian map of Iran and with *The Most Common Words in Persian* (2011, unpublished manuscript), a Persian-English word list with examples that covers the vocabulary over which students need passive control in typical elementary and intermediate Persian courses.

- The bulk of **course activity** focuses on reading (and talking in Persian about) the authentic texts in *Persian Reading and Writing*, texts which present the sorts of written Persian part of everyday life in Iranian-American communities; e.g., advertisements, application forms, announcements, restaurant menus, personal and business notes and letters, short news items, and general newspaper and magazine articles. Students develop scanning, skimming, and gisting skills in engaging in elementary to mid-intermediate reading activities with such texts. Through close and loose imitation, students also develop intermediate skills in Persian composition.

- **By the end of the course**, course participants (who bring to the course at least intermediate Persian listening and speaking skills) have the elementary and intermediate **reading and writing skills** to: (1) locate materials in their language textbooks in response to directions in Persian; (2) take notes on Persian words, phrases, and statements; (3) perform arithmetic functions in Persian (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division); (4) recite the Persian alphabet in order as a skill to facilitate dictionary use; (5) recognize Persian phrase patterns in context; (6) distinguish among the functions and uses of Persian verb tenses and moods in context; (7) describe in writing chief events in their lives (making use of appropriate past tense verb forms); (8) describe in writing their chief daily activities; (9) describe in writing likes and dislikes (making use of subjunctive mood verbs); (10) describe in writing personal and professional plans (using future tense verb forms where appropriate); (11) exhibit in dealing with reading texts on general subjects control over the 1,500+ most common Persian words; (12) read shorter new items, public announcements, and advertisements; (13) read shorter straightforward descriptions of persons, places, and things; (14) read general-audience essays and newspaper articles on subjects of student interest; (15) write a letter or essay on Items 7, 8, 9, and 10 (above); (15) exhibit on a written review test the familiarity with Iranian geography expected of an Iranian 5th grader in Iran; (16) exhibit on a written review test preparedness to maintain and improve Persian reading and writing skills in later self-study; and (17) use efficiently basic Persian-language computer web sites—guest lecturers expert in Persian language computer resources will conduct four class sessions during the semester.

- The course is offered in Austin between September and May each year and elsewhere during the summer to groups of no more than ten students aged 17 and above.