SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES COUNCIL

The MacMillan Center
210 Luce Hall, 203.436.3517
http://southasia.macmillan.yale.edu

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Acting Chair
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Senior Lecturer Carol Carpenter (School of the Environment)

Senior Lector Swapna Sharma (Hindi)

Lector Aleksandar Uskokov (Sanskrit)

Students with an interest in South Asian Studies should apply to one of the University’s degree-granting departments, such as Anthropology, History, Political Science, Economics, or Religious Studies. The South Asian Studies Council is part of the MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies. It has been organized to provide guidance to graduate students who desire to use the resources of the departments of the University that offer South Asia-related courses.

The South Asian Studies Council aims to bring together faculty and students sharing an interest in South Asia, and it supplements the curriculum with seminars, conferences, and special lectures by scholars from Yale as well as visiting scholars. It provides information concerning grants, fellowships, research programs, and foreign study opportunities.

Language instruction is offered in Hindi and Sanskrit. Students planning to undertake field research or language study in South Asia may apply to the council for summer fellowship support.

For information and program materials, contact the South Asian Studies Council, Yale University, PO Box 208206, New Haven CT 06520-8206; or visit our website, http://southasia.macmillan.yale.edu.
COURSES

**HNDI 510a, Elementary Hindi**  Swapna Sharma
An in-depth introduction to modern Hindi, including the Devanagari script. Through a combination of graded texts, written assignments, audiovisual material, and computer-based exercises, the course provides cultural insights and increases proficiency in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing Hindi. Emphasis placed on spontaneous self-expression in the language. No prior background in Hindi assumed.

**HNDI 530a, Intermediate Hindi I**  Swapna Sharma
First half of a two-term sequence designed to develop proficiency in the four language skill areas. Extensive use of cultural documents including feature films, radio broadcasts, and literary and nonliterary texts to increase proficiency in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing Hindi. Focus on cultural nuances and various Hindi literary traditions. Emphasis on spontaneous self-expression in the language. Prerequisite: HNDI 520 or equivalent.

**HNDI 532a, Accelerated Hindi I**  Swapna Sharma
Development of increased proficiency in the four language skills. Focus on reading and higher language functions such as narration, description, and comparison. Reading strategies for parsing paragraph-length sentences in Hindi newspapers. Discussion of political, social, and cultural dimensions of Hindi culture as well as contemporary global issues.

**HNDI 550a, Advanced Hindi**  Swapna Sharma
An advanced language course aimed at enabling students to engage in fluent discourse in Hindi and to achieve a comprehensive knowledge of formal grammar. Introduction to a variety of styles and levels of discourse and usage. Emphasis on the written language, with readings on general topics from newspapers, books, and magazines. Prerequisite: HNDI 540 or permission of instructor.

**HNDI 598a, Advanced Tutorial**  Swapna Sharma
For students with advanced Hindi language skills who wish to engage in concentrated reading and research on material not otherwise offered by the department. The work must be supervised by an adviser and must terminate in a term paper or its equivalent. Prerequisites: HNDI 540, and submission of a detailed project proposal and its approval by the language studies coordinator.

**SAST 556a / RLST 690a, Introduction to Pali Language and Literature**  Aleksandar Uskokov
The purpose of this course is to introduce Pāli, the canonical language of Theravāda Buddhism practiced across South and Southeast Asia, and to provide an overview of Pāli Buddhist literature. The course is focused on readings from Pāli in several genres. In terms of language instruction, it proceeds primarily by way of tracking phonetic changes from Sanskrit, providing grammar overview in comparison to Sanskrit, and introducing the characteristically Buddhist jargon. While all Pāli texts are read in their original, an overview of Pāli literature is provided through select secondary sources. One year of Sanskrit (i.e., SKRT 120/520 or equivalent) is required for enrolling in this course.

**SAST 570a / HSAR 550a, Early Indian Afterlives**  Staff
This seminar combines close looking and reading with writing imaginatively. With the help of an array of texts and visual material we explore how early South Asians
thought about death, dying, and the afterlife. Students are encouraged to react to these primary sources in order to develop their writing muscles and incorporate a range of ekphrastic stances into their writing. Students write weekly creative texts that culminate in a final longer work, which can take the form of a literary essay, a poem sequence, short story, film, or a mixed media project. Topics of discussion include the moment of death and the kinds of death valorized by social groups; rituals of mourning, grief, and remembrance; the iconography of death; conceptions of afterworlds and their inhabitants; and such Indic concepts as rebirth, karma, and nirvana. We read literary, political, religious, and art historical texts, and consider Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain perspectives as well as contemporary prose and poetry such as Joan Didion’s The Year of Magical Thinking, Mary Jo Bang’s Elegy, and Marie Howe’s What the Living Do. Visual examples run the gamut: memorial buildings, relics and reliquaries, prints capturing the rewards and punishments of the afterlife, mandalas and cosmological maps, and the striking portrayals of the god of death and ghosts and ghouls on temple walls, paintings, and textiles.

SAST 837a / HIST 897a / HSHM 762a, Environment, Medicine, and Science in South and Southeast Asia  Sunil Amrith

This graduate seminar explores the cutting edge of scholarship in histories of environment, medicine, and science in South and Southeast Asia. The course draws examples from both South and Southeast Asia--among our aims is to examine who in their field has challenged or reimagined the conventional boundaries of area studies. The class is designed to serve as preparation for qualifying examinations across a range of fields and as a starting point for students who envisage dissertation projects that engage with these areas of scholarship. Our focus, throughout, is on archives, approaches, and methodologies (including new approaches to research that have been necessitated by the pandemic). Readings and topics are tailored to the interests of the students in the class. Students have the choice of writing a historiographical paper or producing an original research paper.

SKRT 510a / LING 515a, Introductory Sanskrit I  Aleksandar Uskokov

An introduction to Sanskrit language and grammar. Focus on learning to read and translate basic Sanskrit sentences in the Indian Devanagari script. No prior background in Sanskrit assumed. Credit only on completion of SKRT 520/LING 525.

SKRT 530a / LING 538a, Intermediate Sanskrit I  Aleksandar Uskokov

The first half of a two-term sequence aimed at helping students develop the skills necessary to read texts written in Sanskrit. Readings include selections from the Hitopadesa, Kathasaritasagara, Mahabharata, and Bhagavadgita. Prerequisite: SKRT 520/LING 525 or equivalent.

SKRT 560a, Advanced Sanskrit: Readings in Poetry and Drama  Aleksandar Uskokov

The purpose of this course is to introduce the jargon of classical Sanskrit literature, specifically the interrelated genres of mahā-kāvya or court epic; nāṭaka or drama; and hagiography or carita. Special attention is given to matters of style and advanced morphology and syntax. Additionally, the course introduces scholastic techniques of text interpretation. Finally, the course looks at the phenomenon of retelling stories from Vedas, the epics, or the Buddhist sūtras in classical Sanskrit literature, thus combining advanced language instruction with learning cultural content. Prerequisites: previous terms of Sanskrit to L4 or equivalent.