SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES (SAST)

* SAST 061a / AMST 095a / ER&M 095a / THST 095a, South Asian American Theater and Performance  Shilarna Stokes

South Asian Americans have appeared on U.S. stages since the late nineteenth century, yet only in the last quarter century have plays and performances by South Asian Americans begun to dismantle dominant cultural representations of South Asian and South Asian American communities and to imagine new ways of belonging. This seminar introduces you to contemporary works of performance (plays, stand-up sets, multimedia events, and more) written and created by U.S.-based artists of South Asian descent as well as artists of the South Asian diaspora whose works have had an impact on U.S. audiences. With awareness that the South Asian American diaspora comprises multiple, contested, and contingent identities, we investigate how artists have worked to manifest complex representations of South Asian Americans onstage, challenge institutional and professional norms, and navigate the perils and pleasures of becoming visible. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program.  HU

SAST 224a / HIST 306a, India and Pakistan since 1947  Staff

Introduction to the history of the Indian subcontinent from 1947 to the present. Focus on the emergence of modern forms of life and thought, the impact of the partition on state and society, and the challenges of democracy and development. Transformations of society, economy, and culture; state building; economic policy.  HU  o Course cr

SAST 261a / PHIL 118a / RLST 127a, Buddhist Thought: The Foundations  Eric Greene

This class introduces the fundamentals of Buddhist thought, focusing on the foundational doctrinal, philosophical, and ethical ideas that have animated the Buddhist tradition from its earliest days in India 2500 years ago down to the present, in places such as Tibet, China, and Japan. Though there will be occasional discussion of the social and practical contexts of the Buddhist religion, the primary focus of this course lies on how traditional Buddhist thinkers conceptualize the universe, think about the nature of human beings, and propose that people should live their lives. Our main objects of inquiry are therefore the foundational Buddhist ideas, and the classic texts in which those ideas are put forth and defended, that are broadly speaking shared by all traditions of Buddhism. In the later part of the course, we take up some of these issues in the context of specific, regional forms of Buddhism, and watch some films that provide glimpses of Buddhist religious life on the ground.  HU

* SAST 302a / ANTH 383a, In Ordinary Fashion  Jane Lynch

Clothing fashions not only our bodies but also our experiences in and claims about the world. It has been used to define the nature and radical possibilities of indigeneity, anti-colonial nationalism, counter-cultural narratives, and capitalist critiques. At the same time, dress—and its social and legal regulation—also creates and reinforces social hierarchies, systems of morality, and forms of exclusion. This course centers these competing social realities and histories using clothing as a way into understanding the poetics and politics of everyday life. Readings include ethnographies and social histories of textiles, fashion, and the manufacture of garments including cases from India, Guatemala, Italy, China, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Trinidad, and the United States.  HU

* SAST 306b / ANTH 322b / EVST 324b, Environmental Justice in South Asia  Kalyanakrishnan Sivaramakrishnan

Study of South Asia's nation building and economic development in the aftermath of war and decolonization in the 20th century. How it generated unprecedented stress on natural environments; increased social disparity; and exposure of the poor and minorities to environmental risks and loss of homes, livelihoods, and cultural resources. Discussion of the rise of environmental justice movements and policies in the region as the world comes to grips with living in the Anthropocene.  SO  o Course cr

* SAST 362b / RLST 321b, Hindus and Muslims in South Asia  Supriya Gandhi

Study of engagements between Hindu and Muslim traditions in South Asia from medieval to modern times. Exploration of historical case studies of Hindu-Muslim relations and the formation of religious identities, as well as how memories of the past intersect with modern discourses on religion and politics.  HU

* SAST 474a / ENGL 368a / HIST 341Ja, The Novel and the Nation: Reading India in Vikram Seth's A Suitable Boy  Priyasha Mukhopadhyay and Rohit De

This course pairs two interconnected phenomena: the rise of the Indian Republic and the birth of the postcolonial novel. Over the course of the semester, we read a single primary text: Vikram Seth's A Suitable Boy (1993). Set in the 1950s in the aftermath of India's Independence and Partition, Seth's encyclopaedic novel is the story of four families brought together by a mother's search for a "suitable boy" for her daughter to marry. In the process, it builds a microcosm of an Indian society coming to terms with postcolonial statehood and weighing the aftereffects of British colonialism. Entwined in its plot about marriage, love, and relationships are some of the most urgent cultural and political concerns facing the new nation: legislative changes and land reforms, the violent aftermath of the Partition, secularism tainted by communal tensions, the disintegration of courtly forms of sociality, the reconstruction of city life, and the fate of the English novel in the postcolonial classroom. We read A Suitable Boy as literary critics and historians, pairing close readings of language and literary form with historical scholarship. Over the course of our discussions, we address the following questions: what is the relationship between the nation, the novel, and identity in the postcolonial world? How do we read narratives of “nation building” as literary and cultural constructions? What do we make of “literature” and “history” as disciplinary categories and formations? The seminar introduces students to methods of literary criticism and textual studies, and teaches them how to read a range of primary sources, from legislative debates, bureaucratic reports, newspapers, poetry, cinema, and radio.  HU
* SAST 486a, Directed Study  Staff
A one-credit, single-term course on topics not covered in regular offerings. To apply for admission, a student should present a course description and syllabus to the director of undergraduate studies, along with written approval from the faculty member who will direct the study.

* SAST 491a, Senior Essay  Staff
A yearlong research project completed under faculty supervision and resulting in a substantial paper. Credit for SAST 491 only on completion of SAST 492. ½ Course cr