SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES

Director of undergraduate studies: Harry Blair (harry.blair@yale.edu), Rm. 210, 34 Hillhouse Ave., 432-5687; southasia.macmillan.yale.edu

The program in South Asian Studies combines the requirements of a discipline-based first major with significant course work in South Asian Studies. South Asian Studies can be taken only as a second major. The major is intended to provide students with a broad understanding of the history, culture, and languages of South Asia, as well as the region’s current social, political, and economic conditions. Work in a discipline-based major coupled with a focus on South Asia prepares students for graduate study, employment in nongovernmental organizations, or business and professional careers in which an understanding of the region is essential.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

In addition to fulfilling the requirements of the primary major, a student choosing South Asian Studies as a second major must complete seven term courses in South Asian Studies numbered 200 or above. At least two of the seven courses must address premodern South Asia, and at least two should be seminars. Students may petition the director of undergraduate studies (DUS) to include one relevant course from another department or program; approval may require additional course work on South Asian topics. Students must also complete the senior requirement and meet the major’s language requirement.

Language requirement One South Asian language must be studied at the advanced level (L5). Students who matriculate with advanced proficiency in a South Asian language (excluding English), as demonstrated through testing, are encouraged to study Sanskrit, or to study a second modern language through Yale courses or the Directed Independent Language Study program. Students may request substitution of another appropriate language (e.g., Persian or Arabic) for the core language requirement, and they are encouraged to pursue intensive language study through courses or work abroad.

Credit/D/Fail A maximum of one course taken Credit/D/Fail may count toward the major.

SENIOR REQUIREMENT

The senior requirement may be fulfilled by completion of a seminar that culminates in a senior essay. Alternatively, the requirement may be fulfilled by completion of a one-credit, two-term senior research project in SAST 491, 492, or by completion of a one-credit, one-term directed study in SAST 486 that culminates in a senior essay. The senior essay should be a substantial paper with a maximum length of 8,000 words for one term, and 10,500 words for two terms. The use of primary materials in the languages of the region is encouraged in senior essay projects. The DUS must approve senior essay plans early in the student’s senior year.

ADVISING

The South Asian Studies major permits students to choose courses from a wide range of disciplines. Individual programs should have a balance between courses in the humanities and those in the social sciences. The proposed course of study must be approved each term by the DUS. Students should also identify an adviser from the South Asian Studies faculty in their area of specialization as early as possible.

Two majors Permission to complete two majors must be secured from the Committee on Honors and Academic Standing. Application forms are available from the residential college deans and must be submitted prior to the student’s final term.

Courses in the Graduate School Graduate courses in South Asian Studies are open to qualified undergraduates. Course descriptions appear in the online Graduate School bulletin and are also available in the South Asian Studies program office. Permission of the instructor and of the director of graduate studies is required.

STUDY ABROAD

Up to three course credits from approved study abroad programs may be applied toward the requirements of the major, with permission of the DUS.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

Prerequisites None
Number of courses 7 term courses (not incl senior req or lang req)
Distribution of courses 7 courses in South Asian Studies numbered 200 or above, 2 in premodern, 2 sems
Substitution permitted One relevant course in another dept, and/or up to 3 study abroad credits with DUS permission
Language requirement Study in a South Asian lang through L5 level
Senior requirement Senior essay in sem, or research project in SAST 491, 492, or senior essay in SAST 486

FACULTY ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROGRAM OF SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES

Professors Akhil Amar (Law School), Tim Barringer (History of Art), Veneeta Dayal (Linguistics), Nihal de Lanerolle (School of Medicine), Michael Dove (Anthropology, Forestry & Environmental Studies), Phyllis Granoff (Religious Studies), Robert Jensen (Economics), Mushfiq Mobarak (Economics, School of Management), Kaiyan Munshi (Economics), Rohini Pande (Economics), Kalyanakrishnan Sivaramakrishnan (Anthropology, Forestry & Environmental Studies), Shyam Sunder (School of Management), Steven Wilkinson (Political Science)
South Asian Studies

Associate Professors Rohit De (History), Mayur Desai (Public Health), Zareena Grewal (Ethnicity, Race, & Migration), Kishwar Rizvi (History of Art)

Assistant Professors Subhashini Kaligotla (History of Art), Sarah Khan (Political Science), Priyasha Mukhopadhyay (English)

Senior Lecturer Carol Carpenter (Anthropology, Forestry & Environmental Studies)

Lecturers Hugh Flick, Jr. (Religious Studies), Supriya Gandhi (Religious Studies)

Senior Lectors Seema Khurana, Swapna Sharma

Lector Aleksandar Uskokov

Language and Literature Courses

* HNDI 110a, Elementary Hindi I  Staff
An in-depth introduction to modern Hindi, including the Devanagari script. A combination of graded texts, written assignments, audiovisual material, and computer-based exercises provides cultural insights and increases proficiency in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing Hindi. Emphasis on spontaneous self-expression in the language. No prior background in Hindi assumed. L1 1½ Course cr

HNDI 120b, Elementary Hindi II  Staff
Continuation of HNDI 110. After HNDI 110 or equivalent. L2 1½ Course cr

HNDI 130a, Intermediate Hindi I  Swapna Sharma and Seema Khurana
The first half of a two-term sequence designed to develop proficiency in the four language skills. 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 Hindi literary traditions. Emphasis on spontaneous self-expression in the language. After HNDI 120 or equivalent. L3 1½ Course cr

* HNDI 132a, Accelerated Hindi I  Swapna Sharma
A fast-paced course designed for students who are able to understand basic conversational Hindi but who have minimal or no literacy skills. Introduction to the Devanagari script; development of listening and speaking skills; vocabulary enrichment; attention to sociocultural rules that affect language use. Students learn to read simple texts and to converse on a variety of everyday personal and social topics. L3

HNDI 140b, Intermediate Hindi II  Seema Khurana and Swapna Sharma
Continuation of HNDI 130. After HNDI 130 or equivalent. L4 1½ Course cr

* HNDI 142b, Accelerated Hindi II  Swapna Sharma
Continuation of HNDI 132. 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. L4

HNDI 150a, Advanced Hindi  Seema Khurana
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 140 or permission of instructor. L5

* HNDI 160a, Modern Hindi Literature  Swapna Sharma
An advanced language course designed to develop overall language skills and to enrich cultural insight through the literature of different genres. Literature is the cultural canvas of a society. Reading modern Hindi literature and translations of vernacular literature from various states in India enhance the understanding of Indian culture and society. Prerequisite: HNDI 150 or instructor permission. L5

* SKRT 110a / LING 115a, Introductory Sanskrit I  Aleksandar Uskokov
An introduction to Sanskrit language and grammar. Focus on learning to read and translate basic Sanskrit sentences in Devanagari script. No prior background in Sanskrit assumed. L1 1½ Course cr

SKRT 120b / LING 125b, Introductory Sanskrit II  Aleksandar Uskokov
Continuation of SKRT 110. Focus on the basics of Sanskrit grammar; readings from classical Sanskrit texts written in Devanagari script. After SKRT 110. L2 1½ Course cr

SKRT 130a / LING 138a, 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, Kathasaritsagara, Mahabharata, and Bhagavadgita. After SKRT 120 or equivalent. L3
SKRT 140b / LING 148b, Intermediate Sanskrit II  Aleksandar Uskokov
Continuation of SKRT 130, focusing on Sanskrit literature from the kāatha genre. Readings include selections from the Jatakas of Aryasura and the opening verses of Kalidasa’s Kūmarasambhava. After SKRT 130 or equivalent. 1.4

* SKRT 150b, Advanced Sanskrit: Readings in Indian Philosophy and Aesthetics  Aleksandar Uskokov
This advanced language course introduces the jargon of the philosophical disciplines (theory of knowledge, metaphysics, philosophy of mind and language, philosophical theology, hermeneutics) and aesthetics in the several systems of learning in ancient and classical India, across the traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. Additionally, the course introduces topics of philosophical significance in foundational texts such as the Upaniṣads, portions of the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas, and the Buddhist sūtra literature. Special attention is given to matters of style, scholastic techniques, and advanced morphology and syntax. The course, thus, combines advanced language instruction with learning intellectual and cultural content, and it facilitates training in primary research in one of the classical languages of South Asia. Prerequisite: SKRT 140 or equivalent, or instructor permission. 1.5

General Courses in South Asian Studies

* SAST 057a / RLST 015a, Gods and Heroes in Indian Religions  Phyllis Granoff
The basic doctrines and practices of India’s three classical religions, Buddhism, Jainism, and Hinduism, explored through close reading of texts in translation. Lives of the founders, great monks, nuns, and lay followers of Buddhist and Jainism; myths of the major Hindu gods; heroines and goddesses in the three traditions. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program.  HU

* SAST 058a / RLST 018a, Yoga in South Asia and Beyond  Supriya Gandhi
The history of yoga practice and thought from the earliest textual discussions of yoga until the present day. Topics include the body, cosmology, cross-cultural interactions, colonialism, and orientalism. Enrollment limited to freshmen. Preregistration required; see under Freshman Seminar Program.  HU

* SAST 059a / ENGL 025a / LITR 023a, Modern South Asian Literature, 1857-2017  Priyasha Mukhopadhyay
Exploration of literary texts from South Asia, 1857 to the present. Close reading of literary texts from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, alongside political speeches, autobiographies, and oral narratives. Topics include colonialism, history writing, migration, language, caste, gender and desire, translation, politics and the novel. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration is required; see under First-Year Seminar Program.  WR, HU

* SAST 060a / HSAR 015a, Ten Indian Objects  Subhashini Kaligotla
A 5000-year-old stone seal, a 20th century comic book, an emperor’s painted portrait, a processional bronze god, a miniature temple, an inscribed pillar, a rock crystal reliquary, a serene Buddha, an animated film, and a towering female figure. Through rigorous explorations of these ten objects from South Asia this seminar teaches close looking, vivid writing, and narrating history through things. It considers both the biographies of the objects and their involvement in the wider social, political, artistic, and cultural histories of the Indian subcontinent. Students engage some of the most exciting scholarship in the field of South Asian art, and observe, draw, and write about things in museums and art collections on a weekly basis. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program.  WR, HU

SAST 210b / ANTH 276b, South Asian Social Worlds  Staff
Study of a series of texts that introduce anthropological and critical approaches to South Asia’s peoples and cultures while questioning the historical and political possibility of understanding such a diverse region.  WR, SO

SAST 260a / HSAR 142a, Introduction to the History of Art: Buddhist Art and Architecture, 900 to 1600  Mimi Yiengpruksawan
Buddhist art and architecture of East Asia, Southeast Asia, and Tibet from the tenth century to the early modern period. Emphasis on cross-regional engagements including the impact of Islam.  HU

SAST 281b / ECON 325b / EP&E 321b, Economics of Developing Countries: Focus on South Asia  Zachary Barnett-Howell
Analysis of current problems of developing countries. Emphasis on the role of economic theory in informing public policies to achieve improvements in poverty and inequality, and on empirical analysis to understand markets and responses to poverty. Topics include microfinance, education, health, agriculture, intrahousehold allocations, gender, and corruption. Prerequisites: introductory microeconomics and introductory econometrics.  SO

* SAST 306a / ANTH 322a / EVST 324a, Environmental Justice in South Asia  Staff
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

* SAST 323a / HIST 313a, British Raj and the Indian Nation (1757-1947)  Staff
Drawing on a wide genre of primary sources, this seminar explores the consolidation of British rule over the Indian subcontinent; the transformations brought about by colonial policies; the subsequent rise of resistance movements; the growth of mass nationalism and partition and independence.  WR, HU
* SAST 344b / PLSC 377b / WGSS 397b, Political Economy of Gender in South Asia  Sarah Khan
This course focuses on the political and economic underpinnings and implications of gender inequality in South Asia. We draw on evidence from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India to guide our theoretical and empirical inquiry into the following broad questions: What is gender, and what approaches do social scientists use to study gender inequality? How does gender inequality manifest in different social, economic, and political spheres e.g. the household, the labor market, the electorate, the government? What are the cultural and structural drivers of gender inequality? How effective are different approaches to tackling gender inequality in South Asia? Previous course work in statistical data analysis is helpful, but not required.  

* SAST 362a / RLST 321a, 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.  

* 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.  

Senior Essay Courses

* SAST 491a and SAST 492b, 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 per term