South Asian Studies

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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)
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  
  1 ½ Course cr

HNDI 120b, Elementary Hindi II  
  Staff
  Continuation of HNDI 110. After HNDI 110 or equivalent.  
  L2  
  1 ½ 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  
  1 ½ 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  
  1 ½ 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

* PNJB 110a, Elementary Punjabi I  
  Staff
  Introduction to the Punjabi language in its cultural context. Development of fundamental speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills through the application of communicative methods and the use of authentic learning materials. Course taught through distance learning using videoconferencing technology from Columbia University. Enrollment limited; interested students should e-mail minjin.hashbat@yale.edu for more information. Credit only on completion of PNJB 120.  
  L1  
  RP  
  1 ½ Course cr

* PNJB 130a, Intermediate Punjabi I  
  Staff
  The important target of this course is to develop basic Punjabi Language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). This is approached through the theme-based syllabus, discussion in small groups and paired activities on the cultural background of Punjabi or Punjabi culture. As well as, the listening and speaking skills would be developed by using the media such as educational material, Punjabi
movies, music and computer lab sessions. The usage of the textbooks would lead us to learn grammatical rules of the Punjabi language. The students are approached individually, since the class typically consists of students in the various backgrounds. Prerequisite: PNJB 120 or equivalent. Course taught through distance learning using videoconferencing technology from Columbia University. Enrollment limited; interested students should e-mail minjin.hashbat@yale.edu for more information. L3 RP 1½ Course cr

* 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 kavya genre. Readings include selections from the Jatakamala of Aryasura and the opening verses of Kalidasa’s Kumarasambhava. After SKRT 130 or equivalent. L4

* 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. L5

* SNHL 110a, Elementary Sinhala I  Staff
First half of a two-term sequence focusing on all four language skills. Basic grammar, sentence construction, simple reading materials, and use of everyday expressions. Course taught through distance learning using videoconferencing technology from Cornell University. Enrollment limited; interested students should e-mail minjin.hashbat@yale.edu for more information. L1 RP 1½ Course cr

* SNHL 130a, Intermediate Sinhala I  Staff
Further development of speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in Sinhala. Communicative approach to the exchange of ideas and information, with early emphasis on oral skills and reading comprehension. Prerequisite: SNHL 120 or equivalent. Course taught through distance learning using videoconferencing technology from Columbia University. Enrollment limited; interested students should e-mail minjin.hashbat@yale.edu for more information. L3 RP 1½ Course cr

* TBTN 110a, Elementary Classical Tibetan I  Staff
First half of a two-term introduction to classical Tibetan. The script and its Romanization, pronunciation, normative dictionary order, and basic grammar. Readings from Tibetan literature and philosophy. Course taught through distance learning using videoconferencing technology from Columbia University. Enrollment limited; interested students should e-mail minjin.hashbat@yale.edu for more information. L1

* TBTN 130a, Intermediate Classical Tibetan I  Staff
Continuation of TBTN 120. Introduction to more complex grammatical constructions. Further development of reading ability in various genres of Tibetan literature written prior to 1959. Prerequisite: TBTN 120 or equivalent. Course taught through distance learning using videoconferencing technology from Columbia University. Enrollment limited; interested students should e-mail minjin.hashbat@yale.edu for more information. L3 RP 1½ Course cr

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 Buddhism 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.  HU

SAST 219b / 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 143a / RLST 188a, 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 313Ja, British Raj and the Indian Nation (1757-1947)  Rohit De
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 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.  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.

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