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 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), Nihal de Lanerolle (School of Medicine), Michael Dove (Anthropology, Forestry & Environmental Studies), Phyllis Granoff (Religious Studies), Inderpal Grewal (Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies), Mushfiq
* 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. Credit only on completion of HNDI 120.  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 158b, Writing in Independence and Post-Independence  Seema Khurana
Development of language skills through selected readings in Hindi literature and the study of popular culture of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Focus on the works of Munshi Premchand, Mannoo Bhandhari, Mohan Rakesh, and Amrita Pritam. Debates on political, social, and cultural topics.  L5

* HNDI 198b, 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. Work must be supervised by an adviser and must terminate in a term paper or the equivalent. Permission to enroll requires submission of a detailed project proposal and its approval by the language studies coordinator. Prerequisite: HNDI 150 or equivalent.

* SKRT 110a / LING 115a, Introductory Sanskrit I  David Brick
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  David Brick
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  David Brick
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, Kathasaratntagama, Mahabharata, and Bhagavadgita. After SKRT 120 or equivalent. L3

SKRT 140b / LING 148b, Intermediate Sanskrit II  David Brick
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 Kumaramabhaava. After SKRT 130 or equivalent. L4

* SKRT 150a, Advanced Sanskrit: Dharmasastra  David Brick
Introduction to Sanskrit commentarial literature, particularly to Dharmasastra, an explication and analysis of dharma (law or duty). Discussion of normative rules of human behavior; historical traditions of writing on the Indian subcontinent. Prerequisite: SKRT 140 or equivalent. L5

* TAML 130a, Intermediate Tamil I  Staff
The first half of a two-term sequence designed to develop proficiency in comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing through the use of visual media, newspapers and magazines, modern fiction and poetry, and public communications such as pamphlets, advertisements, and government announcements. Prerequisite: TAML 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

* TAML 150a, Advanced Tamil I  Staff
Improvement of high-level language proficiency. Introduction to the long and continuous literary history of Tamil through the reading of non-contemporary Tamil writings, as well as ancient Tamil literary works. Texts may include various genres. Prerequisite: TAML 140 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. Credit only on completion of TBTN 120. L1

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 freshmen. Preregistration required; see under Freshman Seminar Program. HU

SAST 224b / HIST 396b, India and Pakistan since 1947  Rohit De
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

SAST 260b / HSAR 143b / RLST 188b, 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 267a / RLST 125a, Introduction to Buddhist Thought and Practice  Eric Greene
Significant aspects of Buddhism as practiced mainly in India and South Asia, including philosophy and ethics, monastic and ascetic life, meditation and ritual practices, and the material culture of Buddhist societies. The Mahayana tradition that emerged in the first century B.C.E.; later forms of esoteric Buddhism known as tantra; the development of modern Buddhism in Asia and its manifestation in the West. Readings from Buddhist texts in translation. HU

SAST 278b / ECON 211b / GLBL 211b, Economic Performance and Challenges in India  Rakesh Mohan
India’s transition from being one of the poorest countries in the world to having one of the fastest-growing economies. Economic reform processes, trade and policy implications, and changes within the agriculture, industry, and service sectors. Prerequisites: introductory microeconomics and macroeconomics. SO
* 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 368a / RLST 185a, The Mahabharata  Hugh Flick
Examination of the religious and cultural significance of the world’s longest epic poem within the Hindu bhakti religious tradition. Emphasis on the core narrative, the embedded narratives, and the internal philosophical discourses, including the Bhagavad Gita.  HU

* SAST 456b / LING 111b / LITR 152b, Sanskrit Classics in Translation  David Brick
The chief genres of Sanskrit secular literature set against the background of the cultural history of ancient India. Various literary styles compared with those of other world literary traditions.  HU  TR

* SAST 467a / RLST 127a, Visual Worlds of Himalayan Buddhism  Andrew Quintman
The role of images and imagining in the religious traditions of Tibetan Buddhism. How Tibetan Buddhist cultures produce religious images; ways of visualizing those images to invest them with meaning. Topics include specific modes of visual representation, relationships between text and image, social lives of images, and processes of reading and interpretation.  HU

* SAST 486b, 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