

# SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES (SAST)

## **SAST 245b / PLSC 403b, Political Economy of Gender Inequality** Sarah Khan

This course focuses on the political and economic underpinnings and implications of gender inequality in comparative context. We draw on evidence from different cases (with a heavy skew towards the South Asia region) to guide our inquiry. The course introduces a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches, patterns and predictions emerging from empirical research, and context specific lessons. SO

## \* **SAST 259b / MUSI 280b, Music of South Asia** Ameera Nimjee

An introduction to some of the music traditions that hail from South Asia—a region defined by the countries of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Maldives, and their diasporas. “Music” in this course is considered broadly, and refers to performance and ritual traditions in which music, movement, dance, poetry, and theater all figure. The course approaches music from the disciplinary vantage point of ethnomusicology, where music is studied with respect to its complex intersections with culture, daily life, and society. Course content is introduced weekly through a series of analytical lenses, such as gender, sexuality, caste, and migration, through which South Asian music can be understood in their social and cultural contexts. HU

## **SAST 261a / PHIL 118a / RLST 127a, Buddhist Thought: The Foundations** Staff

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 o Course cr

## \* **SAST 262b / AMST 305b / EP&E 247b / ER&M 330b / FILM 298b, Digital War**

Madiha Tahir

From drones and autonomous robots to algorithmic warfare, virtual war gaming, and data mining, digital war has become a key pressing issue of our times and an emerging field of study. This course provides a critical overview of digital war, understood as the relationship between war and digital technologies. Modern warfare has been shaped by digital technologies, but the latter have also been conditioned through modern conflict: DARPA (the research arm of the US Department of Defense), for instance, has innovated aspects of everything from GPS, to stealth technology, personal computing, and the Internet. Shifting beyond a sole focus on technology and its makers, this class situates the historical antecedents and present of digital war within colonialism and imperialism. We will investigate the entanglements between technology, empire, and war, and examine how digital war—also sometimes understood as virtual or remote war—has both shaped the lives of the targeted and been conditioned by imperial ventures.

We will consider visual media, fiction, art, and other works alongside scholarly texts to develop a multidisciplinary perspective on the past, present, and future of digital war.  
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**\* SAST 266a / ARCH 271a / HSAR 266a / MMES 126a, Introduction to Islamic Architecture** Staff

Introduction to the architecture of the Islamic world from the seventh century to the present, encompassing regions of Asia, North Africa, and Europe. A variety of sources and media, from architecture to urbanism and from travelogues to paintings, are used in an attempt to understand the diversity and richness of Islamic architecture. Besides traditional media, the class will make use of virtual tours of architectural monuments as well as artifacts at the Yale University Art Gallery, accessed virtually. HU o Course cr

**SAST 270b / CGSC 186b / PHIL 113b / RLST 186b, Fear, Suffering, Anger, Love: Buddhist Philosophy of Mind** Sonam Kachru

This course introduces students to classical Indian Buddhist philosophy of mind and the reasons why Buddhists pursued it – “the reinvention of ourselves,” or the pursuit of the transformation of persons from unhealthy to healthy ways of being minded. Class materials are drawn from categories and concerns found in theoretical and practical manuals from roughly the first to the fifth centuries C.E., but the topics are salient, including: What is the difference between mind and consciousness? Is there an unconscious? How does one model mental actions, such as attention or categorization? Are our minds structured by primal fear? Or anger? Do we ever have reason to be angry? What is cognitive control? Why do minds wander? Should mental dynamics be merely observed or attenuated or sculpted in some other way? What, if anything, is peace of mind? HU

**SAST 280b / HIST 342b / RLST 180b, Mughal India, 1500–1800** Supriya Gandhi  
Exploration of religion and the state in Mughal India, focusing on the period between 1500–1800. Topics include sacred sovereignty, orthodoxy, Sufism, vernacular literary and religious cultures, and the early colonial encounter. HU o Course cr

**\* SAST 304b / ANTH 358b, Corporations & Communities** Jane Lynch  
Can communities redefine corporations? How do corporations shape everyday life? To whom are they responsible? This course examines the relationship between commerce, society, and culture through a diverse set of case studies that are rooted in both global and local histories. Students learn about Henry Ford’s rubber plantations in the Amazon, family firms in Italy, how the East India Company shaped the modern multinational, the first company town to be established and run by an Indian firm, transnational “stakeholder” arrangements to compensate injured garment workers in Bangladesh, and the rise of “corporate social responsibility” culture. The goal of this course is not to define the relationship between corporations and communities as singular or obvious, but rather, to draw out the variety of factors – economic, historical, social, and cultural – that shape commercial interactions, institutional cultures, and claims about market ethics and social responsibility. HU, SO

**\* 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 358a / RLST 230a, 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. This course is not open to students previously enrolled in RLST 018 or SAST 058. HU TR

\* **SAST 366a / RLST 183a, The Gita: Humanities at World's End** Sonam Kachru

An examination of the Bhagavad Gita in its historical and religious context. Exploration of the major interpretations of this important religious text. All readings in translation. HU

\* **SAST 470b / PHIL 429b / RLST 430b, Indian Philosophy in Sanskrit Literature**  
Aleksandar Uskokov

In this course we focus on issues of philosophical significance in Sanskrit literature of “non-standard” philosophical genres, i.e., other than the treatise and the commentary. Specifically we read from canonical Hindu texts such as the Upani#ads, Mahābhārata, Rāmāya#a, Bhāgavata Purā#a, Bhagavad-gītā, and Yogavāsi##ha; the classical genres of drama and praise poetry; and hagiographical literature, all in English translation. Attention is paid not only to substance but also form. The selection of philosophical problems includes philosophy of mind and personal identity; allegory; the ethics of non-violence; philosophy, politics, and religious pluralism; the highest good; theodicy; philosophical debate; etc. HU

\* **SAST 473b / MUSI 406b, Exploring South Indian Rhythmic Design** Douglass Dineen

In this course, students develop an intimate, working knowledge of South Indian rhythmic design, explore creative applications of its forms and processes, and examine its cultural significances. We approach South Indian rhythm by focusing on metric structures (tā#a), spoken rhythm (solka##u), and the compositional practices that make kar#ā#ak music (and related genres) some of the most rhythmically advanced musics in the world. The semester’s deep investigation of rhythm theory unfolds through musical engagement with traditional materials and in composition, analysis, and experimentation using those materials. Our work is framed by an examination of the social, cultural, and historical contexts of South Indian music.

\* **SAST 475a / AMST 350a / ER&M 319a / THST 350a, Drama in Diaspora: 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) 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. No prior experience with or study of theater/performance required. Students in all years and majors welcome. 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