

South Asia Studies

AN INTERDEPARTMENTAL MAJOR
AND MINOR

Director: *Sabin (English)*

Assistant Professor: *Shukla-Bhatt*

Visiting Lecturer: *Bard*

Affiliated Faculty: *Candland^A (Political Science), Kodera (Religion), Marlow (Religion), Patel^A (Women's and Gender Studies), Radhakrishnan (Sociology), Rao^A (History), Sabin (English)*

The major and minor in South Asia Studies are designed to equip students with a set of methods and scholarly approaches for study of South Asia. The region includes Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka (the members of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation). Majors and minors gain knowledge of an important region of the world and develop facility in three significant methods:

language; aesthetic, cultural, and literary interpretation; and behavior and social analysis.

Goals for the major and minor are to expose students to exemplary models of interdisciplinary learning and critical inquiry in the arts, humanities, and social sciences; provide a broad understanding of South Asian cultures and societies and their complex interrelationships; delineate the influence and impact of South Asia beyond its borders; enable students to make connections among disciplines in sharp and critical ways; and offer students the opportunity to become critical thinkers, cogent writers, and skillful researchers on a range of questions in South Asian life, through course work, independent study, and honors work.

HNUR 101-102 Elementary Hindi/Urdu

Shukla-Bhatt

An introduction to the most widely spoken language in the South Asian subcontinent, which is also used extensively for interregional and international communications. Learning this language provides a linguistic passport to things South Asian. The language—often referred to as “Hindustani”—is written in two different scripts: the Perso-Arabic based Urdu, and the Sanskrit based Devanagari (Hindi). Students will learn to converse in the language and to read and write in both scripts. Conventional teaching materials will be supplemented by popular songs and clips from contemporary Indian cinema and television, the two internationally popular media that use this language. *Each semester earns one unit of credit; however, both semesters must be completed satisfactorily to receive credit for either course.*

Prerequisite: None. Not open to students who have taken the course as SAS 101-102.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring

Unit: 1.0

HNUR 201-202 Intermediate Hindi/Urdu

Bard

Intermediate Hindi/Urdu will build on the reading, writing, and speaking skills acquired in Introductory Hindi/Urdu (HNUR 101-102). The readings, drawn from simple literary texts as well as from social and journalistic writings, will reinforce the grammar learned in the introductory course and introduce new grammar topics. The writing exercises—mainly in essay formats—will stress usage of idioms and sentence constructions by students. The class will be conducted in Hindi/Urdu with a part of every class dedicated to conversation on the theme of the day in the language. *Each semester earns one unit of credit; however, both semesters must be completed satisfactorily to receive credit for either course.*

Prerequisite: 101-102 or equivalent. Not open to students who have taken the course as SAS 201-202.

Distribution: One unit of Language and Literature for 202

Semester: Fall, Spring

Unit: 1.0

SAS 211/REL 281 Sacred Arts of South Asia

Shukla-Bhatt

Cultural life in South Asia is vibrant with aesthetic expressions of religion in its diverse traditions—Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Jain, Sikh, and Christian. This course introduces students to one of the most powerful avenues for transmission of religious knowledge in the traditions of South Asia—the aesthetic experience derived through a variety of forms. In addition to visual messages sent through architectural motifs and paintings, teaching of religious doctrines through narratives in drama, dance, and musical performance is common across religious boundaries. The course will introduce theories of aesthetic experience and religious knowledge from the subcontinent and relate them to contemporary theories of performance. *Students may register for either SAS 211 or REL 281, and credit will be granted accordingly.*

Prerequisite: None

Distribution: Arts, Music, Theatre, Film, Video or Religion, Ethics, and Moral Philosophy

Semester: Spring

Unit 1.0

SAS 251/REL251 Religions in South Asia

Shukla-Bhatt

An examination of the religions of South Asia as expressed in sacred texts and arts, religious practices, and institutions in a historical manner. Concentration on the origins and development of Hindu traditions, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism, as well as integration of Islam and Christianity in the religious landscape of South Asia. Interactions among the diverse communities of the region will also form a major theme. *Students may register for either SAS 251 or REL 251, and credit will be granted accordingly.*

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Prerequisite: None
Distribution: Religion, Ethics, and Moral Philosophy or Historical Studies
Semester: Fall Unit: 1.0

SAS 301 Religion in Modern South Asia

Shukla-Bhatt

NOT OFFERED IN 2009-10. In many parts of South Asia, the encounter with modernity coincided with colonial rule. This complex history added to the tension between modernity and religious traditions. This seminar will examine the texts, intellectual discourses, political movements, and social changes emerging from religious phenomena in South Asia from 1800 to the present. Students will not only examine specific historical events, but also reflect on how this historical knowledge can be applied in the areas of development, international relations, and human rights movements.

Prerequisite: Two units at the 200 level in South Asia Studies, or by permission of the instructor.
Distribution: Religion, Ethics, and Moral Philosophy or Historical Studies
Semester: N/O Unit: 1.0

SAS 302 Traditional Narratives of South Asia

Shukla-Bhatt

NOT OFFERED IN 2009-10. This course will explore traditional narratives from South Asia that have had significant cultural impact in the region. We will examine classical epic texts, hagiographical literature of diverse religious traditions, and regional folktales in translations not only as channels for transmission of cultural values, but also as sites of debate and sometimes even conflict through their contested interpretations. Examples of contested texts, such as the epic Ramayana, told in elite Hindu, Dalit, Jain and Buddhist traditions, will be explored. Along with texts, performative traditions of these texts and their use in identity politics will be discussed.

Prerequisite: Two units at the 200 level in South Asia Studies, or by permission of the instructor.
Distribution: Language and Literature or Religion, Ethics, and Moral Philosophy
Semester: N/O Unit: 1.0

SAS 303 South Asian Models of Religious Pluralism

Shukla-Bhatt

NOT OFFERED IN 2009-10. This seminar will explore in a historical manner the development of pluralistic discourses, ideologies, and interactions in South Asia. While remaining focused on South Asia, we will consider more generally the implications of this history for other religiously diverse societies. Readings will range from ancient texts, such as the *Upanishads*, *Dhammapada*, medieval writings of Sufi, Sikh and *bhakti* traditions, to historical documents about policies of Mogul emperor Akbar, and modern writings on pluralism, including Gandhi's. We will also study the relationship of religious diversity to violence, and modern projects, by Diana Eck and others, to promote sustainable models of religious pluralism. Final projects will give students the opportunity to develop their own model for religious pluralism in a specific part of the world.

Prerequisite: Open by permission of the instructor.
Distribution: Religion, Ethics, and Moral Philosophy or Historical Studies
Semester: N/O Unit: 1.0

SAS 250 Research or Individual Study

Prerequisite: Open by permission of instructor and approval of program director to first-year students and sophomores only.
Distribution: None
Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 1.0

SAS 350 Research or Individual Study

Prerequisite: Open by permission of instructor and approval of program director to juniors and seniors only.
Distribution: None
Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 1.0

SAS 350H Research or Individual Study

Prerequisite: Open by permission of instructor and approval of program director to juniors and seniors only.
Distribution: None
Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 0.5

SAS 360 Senior Research or Individual Study

Prerequisite: Open by permission of program director. See Academic Distinctions.
Distribution: None
Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 1.0

SAS 370 Senior Thesis

Prerequisite: 360 and permission of program director.
Distribution: None
Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 1.0

Related Courses

For Credit Toward the Major

- ***ANTH 203** Indigenous People, Global Development, and Human Rights
- ARTH 239** Art and Architecture of South Asia
- ***ARTH 240** Asian Art and Architecture
- ***ARTH 247** Islamic Art and Architecture
- ARTH 264** Painting in India
- ARTH 347** The Buddha's Biography: Buddhist Narrative Art in South Asia
- ARTH 397** Seminar. Architecture in India in the Post-Mughal Era: 1650–1950
- ENG 277** Modern Indian Literature
- HIST 272** Political Economy of Development in Colonial and Postcolonial South Asia
- HIST 275** The Emergence of Ethnic Identities in Modern South Asia
- HIST 276** The City in South Asia
- HIST 382** Seminar. Gandhi, Nehru, and Ambedkar: The Making of Modern India
- ***PEAC 104** Introduction to the Study of Conflict, Justice, and Peace
- PEAC 324** Grassroots Development, Conflict Resolution, and the Gandhian Legacy in India
- ***POL2 202** Comparative Politics
- ***POL2 204** Political Economy of Development and Underdevelopment
- POL2 211** Politics of South Asia
- ***POL2 307S** Seminar. Women and Development
- ***POL2 309S** Seminar. Ethnicity, Nationalism, Religion, and Violence
- ***POL2 310S** Seminar. Politics of Community Development
- POL3 223** International Relations of South Asia
- ***POL3 323** International Economic Policy
- ***POL3 332S** Seminar. People, Agriculture, and the Environment
- ***POL3 351** Global Governance
- ***REL 108** Introduction to Asian Religions
- ***REL 253** Buddhist Thought and Practice
- ***REL 260** Islamic/ate Civilizations
- ***REL 261** Cities of the Islamic World
- ***REL 262** The Formation of the Islamic Tradition
- ***REL 263** Islam in the Modern World
- REL 354** Seminar. Tibetan Buddhism
- ***REL 364** Seminar. Sufism: Islamic Mysticism
- ***REL 367** Seminar. Muslim Travelers
- ***SOC 221** Globalization
- SOC 233** Gender and Power in South Asia
- ***SOC 234** Gender and International Development
- ***SOC 309** Seminar. Critical Intersections: Race, Class, Gender, and Nation

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Courses with an asterisk (*) also require the permission of the instructor if the course is to be counted for South Asia Studies.

Requirements for the Major

For students entering in Fall 2009, the major in South Asia Studies requires nine units, including to units of elementary Hindi/Urdu (or demonstration of its equivalent), one course in the humanities from among: SAS [210], SAS 211/REL 281, SAS 251/REL 251, and ENG 277 and one course in the social sciences from among: HIST 272, HIST 276, POL2 211, POL3 223 or SOC 233, and at least two additional units above the 100 level, and two units at the 300 level. For students entering prior to Fall 2009, the major requires nine units, including SAS [210] (or its equivalent) and at least four additional units above the 100 level and two units at the 300 level. Students are expected to concentrate in one area of South Asia Studies, defined either in relation to a discipline: such as history; religion; or in relation to a theme: such as international development; cultural expression; gender; ethnicity and identity. The major requires four courses in the area of concentration above the 100 level, including at least one of the required 300-level courses. Advanced study of Hindi/Urdu (or another Indian language) may be substituted for the Hindi/Urdu requirement and may be pursued as either a 250 course, or an approved course at As of 8/10/09

another institution. Majors devise their programs in consultation with an advisor from the affiliated faculty and with the approval of the program director. Courses with an asterisk (*) also require the permission of the instructor if the course is to be counted for South Asia Studies. To supplement Wellesley's offerings, students are encouraged to take courses for the major at neighboring institutions such as MIT, Olin, and Brandeis. *Majors are also encouraged to study at approved academic programs in South Asia.* Courses taken at other institutions for credit toward the major or minor must be approved in advance by the student's advisor and program directors.

Requirements for the Minor

A minor in South Asia Studies consists of five units, of which at least one should be at the 300 level (excluding 350). A program for the minor must include one course in the humanities from among: SAS [210], SAS 211/REL 281, SAS 251/REL 251, and ENG 277, and one course in the social sciences from among: HIST 272, HIST 276, POL2 211, POL3 223, or SOC 233; only one course at the 100 level can be counted towards the minor. Elementary Hindi/Urdu does not count toward the minor.

Honors

The only route to honors in the major is writing a thesis and passing an oral examination. To be admitted to the thesis program, a student must have a grade point average of at least 3.5 in all work in the major field above the 100 level; the department may petition on her behalf if her GPA in the major is between 3.0 and 3.5. See Academic Distinctions.