

# South Asia Studies

AN INTERDEPARTMENTAL MAJOR AND MINOR

Directors: *Sabin (English), Candland (Political Science), Patel<sup>A</sup> (Women's Studies)*

Affiliated Faculty: *Candland (Political Science), Koderia (Religion), Marlow (Religion), Patel<sup>A</sup> (Women's Studies), Radhakrishnan (Sociology), Rao (History), Sabin (English)*

Assistant Professor: *Shukla-Bhatt*

**The major in South Asia Studies** is designed to acquaint students with the many facets of South Asian civilizations through an interdisciplinary study of the languages, literatures, histories, religions, arts, social and political institutions, and cultural patterns of South Asia, the region defined as including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and the South Asian diaspora.

The major in South Asia Studies requires 9 units, including 2 units of elementary Hindi/Urdu (or demonstration of its equivalent), SAS 210 (or its equivalent), at least 4 additional units above the 100-level, and 2 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. At least one course must be taken in an area other than the concentration.

Advanced study of Hindi/Urdu (or of 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 another institution. Majors devise their own 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 course offerings, students are encouraged to take courses for the major at neighboring institutions such as M.I.T., Olin, and Brandeis. *Majors are also encouraged to spend at least one semester at an approved academic program in South Asia.* Courses taken at other institutions for credit in the major must be approved, in advance, by the student's advisor and the program director.

**A minor in South Asia Studies** consists of 5 units, of which at least one should be at the 300-level (excluding 350). A program for the minor must include SAS 210; 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.

### **SAS 101-102 Elementary Hindi/Urdu (I and II):**

*Shukla-Bhatt*

An introduction to the most widely spoken language in the South Asian sub-continent, which is also used extensively for inter-regional 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 also 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 1.0 unit of credit; however, both semesters must be completed satisfactorily to receive credit for either course.*

Prerequisite: None

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 1.0

### **SAS 201-202 Intermediate Hindi/Urdu**

*Staff*

Intermediate Hindi/Urdu will build on the reading, writing and speaking skills acquired in Introductory Hindi/Urdu course (SAS 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

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 1.0

### **SAS 210 Introduction to South Asia**

*Shukla-Bhatt*

South Asia, home to one-fifth of humanity, is a vast region of varied landscapes, long history, tremendous cultural and religious diversity, with varied political systems and rapidly growing economies. This introductory course will focus on intellectual, cultural, political, economic, and social developments at four important moments in its history: sixth century BCE, sixteenth century CE, early twentieth century, and our contemporary era. Guest speakers will bring their special expertise to broaden perspective on these complex subjects.

Prerequisite: None

Distribution: Religion, Ethics, and Moral Philosophy or Historical Studies

Semester: Fall Unit: 1.0

### **SAS 211 Aesthetic Expressions of Religion in South Asia**

**NOT OFFERED IN 2008-09.** 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 sub-continent and relate them to contemporary theories of performance.

Prerequisite: None

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

Semester: N/O                      Unit 1.0

### **SAS 301 Religion in Modern South Asia**

*Shukla-Bhatt*

**NOT OFFERED IN 2008-09.** 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 day. 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 SAS, 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 2008-09.** 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 SAS, 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*

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: Spring 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  
**\*ANTH 305** Ethnographic Film  
**\*ARTH 240** Asian Art  
**\*ARTH 247** Islamic Art and Architecture  
**ENG 277** Modern Indian Literature (in English)  
**ENG 284** Outside England: South Asia: Fiction of Empire and its Breakup  
**HIST 272** Political Economy of Development in Colonial and Postcolonial South Asia  
**HIST 273** South Asian Civilizations  
**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  
**HIST 383** Seminar. 1947: Partition in History and Memory in South Asia  
**\*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 332** People, Agriculture, and the Environment  
**\*POL3 351** Global Governance  
**\*REL 108** Introduction to Asian Religions  
**\*REL 253** Buddhist Thought and Practice  
**\*REL 260** Islamic Civilization  
**\*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 Travellers

**\*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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