

SOUTH ASIA STUDIES (SAST)

SAST 0001 Introduction to Modern India

This introductory course will provide an outline of major events and themes in Indian history, from the Mughal Empire in the 16th century to the re-emergence of India as a global player in the 21st century. The course will discuss the following themes: society and economy in Mughal India; global trade between India and the West in the 17th century; the rise of the English East India Company's control over Indian subcontinent in the 18th century; its emergence and transformation of India into a colonial economy; social and religious reform movements in the 19th century; the emergence of elite and popular anti-colonial nationalisms; independence and the partition of the subcontinent; the emergence of the world's largest democracy; the making of an Indian middle class; and the nuclearization of South Asia.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: HIST 0850

1 Course Unit

SAST 0002 The City in South Asia

This interdisciplinary social science course examines key topics, themes, and analytic methods in the study of South Asia by focusing on significant South Asian cities. With one-fifth of the world's population, South Asia and its urban centers are playing an increasingly important role in recent global economic transformations, resulting in fundamental changes within both the subcontinent and the larger world. Drawing primarily on ethnographic studies of South Asia in the context of rapid historical change, the course also incorporates research drawn from urban studies, architecture, political science, and history, as well as fiction and film. Topics include globalization and new economic dynamics in South Asia; the formation of a new urban middle class; consumption and consumer culture; urban political formations, democratic institutions, and practices; criminality & the underworld; population growth, changes in the built environment, and demographic shifts; everyday life in South Asia and ethnic, cultural, and linguistic identities, differences, and violence in South Asia's urban environments. This is an introductory level course appropriate for students with no background in South Asia or for those seeking to better understand South Asia's urban environments in the context of recent globalization and rapid historical changes.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: ANTH 0002, URBS 0002

1 Course Unit

SAST 0003 History, Culture, and Religion in Early India

This course surveys the culture, religion and history of India from 2500 BCE to 1200 CE. The course examines the major cultural, religious and social factors that shaped the course of early Indian history. The following themes will be covered: the rise and fall of Harappan civilization, the "Aryan Invasion" and Vedic India, the rise of cities, states and the religions of Buddhism and Jainism, the historical context of the growth of classical Hinduism, including the Mahabharata, Ramayana and the development of the theistic temple cults of Saivism and Vaisnavism, processes of medieval agrarian expansion and cultic incorporation as well as the spread of early Indian cultural ideas in Southeast Asia. In addition to assigned secondary readings students will read select primary sources on the history of religion and culture of early India, including Vedic and Buddhist texts, Puranas and medieval temple inscriptions. Major objectives of the course will be to draw attention to India's early cultural and religious past and to assess contemporary concerns and ideologies in influencing our understanding and representation of that past.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: HIST 0755, RELS 0003

1 Course Unit

SAST 0004 India's Literature: Love, War, Wisdom and Humor

This course introduces students to the extraordinary quality of literary production during the past four millennia of South Asian civilization. We will read texts in translation from all parts of South Asia up to the sixteenth century. We will read selections from hymns, lyric poems, epics, wisdom literature, plays, political works, and religious texts.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: COML 0004

1 Course Unit

SAST 0006 Hindu Mythology

Premodern India produced some of the world's greatest myths and stories: tales of gods, goddesses, heroes, princesses, kings and lovers that continue to capture the imaginations of millions of readers and hearers. In this course, we will look closely at some of these stories especially as found in Purana-s, great compendia composed in Sanskrit, including the chief stories of the central gods of Hinduism: Visnu, Siva, and the Goddess. We will also consider the relationship between these texts and the earlier myths of the Vedas and the Indian Epics, the diversity of the narrative and mythic materials within and across different texts, and the re-imagining of these stories in the modern world.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: COML 0006, RELS 0006

1 Course Unit

SAST 0007 Introduction to Modern South Asian Literatures

This course will provide a wide-ranging introduction to the literatures of South Asia from roughly 1500 to the present, as well as an exploration of their histories and impact on South Asian society today. How are literary movements and individual works - along with the attitudes towards religion, society, and culture associated with them - still influential in literature, film, and popular culture? How have writers across time and language engaged with questions of caste, gender, and identity? We will read from the rich archive of South Asian writing in translation - from languages that include Braj, Urdu, Bangla, and Tamil - to consider how these literatures depict their own society while continuing to resonate across time and space. Topics of discussion will include the Bhakti poetries of personal devotion, the literature of Dalits - formerly referred to as the Untouchables - and the ways in which literature addresses contemporary political and social problems. Students will leave this course with a sense of the contours of the literatures of South Asia as well as ways of exploring the role of these literatures in the larger world. No prior knowledge of South Asia is required; this course fulfills the cross-cultural analysis requirement, and the Arts and Letters sector requirement.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: COML 0007

1 Course Unit

SAST 0008 India: Culture and Society

What makes India INDIA? Religion and Philosophy? Architectural splendor? Kingdoms? Caste? The position of women? This course will introduce students to India by studying a range of social and cultural institutions that have historically assumed to be definitive India. Through primary texts, novels and historical sociological analysis, we will ask how these institutions have been reproduced and transformed, and assess their significance for contemporary Indian society.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: HIST 0851, RELS 0008

1 Course Unit

SAST 0009 Introduction to Hinduism

This course introduces students to the history, texts, philosophies and rituals of South Asia's oldest living religious traditions, represented today by the term "Hinduism." At the same time, it problematizes the idea of a monolithic "Hindu Tradition", in favor of an approach that recognizes several distinct, dynamic, yet symbiotic Hindu religious cultures. The course also places emphasis on the vitality of today's Hinduism(s), and the various historical, ritual, cultural, and social contexts that they represent and constitute. The course is organized around six modules: (1) Issues in the Academic Study of Hinduism; (2) Sanskrit (textual) tradition; (3) Philosophy; (4) Theology; (5) Ritual; and (6) Modernity and Contemporary Politics.

Fall or Spring

1 Course Unit

SAST 0010 Musical Cultures of Modern India

How can we understand the social, political, and religious dimensions of modern India through its music? This course introduces students to key themes that undergird the history and practice of music India across a range of musical genres and subregions. We explore music on the modern Indian subcontinent as it relates to colonialism, nationalism, caste, class, gender, and religion. Topics include the twentieth-century reinvention of "classical music"; the popular music of Bollywood; Dalit musical traditions; the soundscapes of hip-hop, clubbing culture, and queer nightlife in South Asian contexts and more. We also critically unpack the making of normalized categories such as "folk" and "classical," illuminate marginalized histories of non-elite performers, ask questions about profession and livelihood, and think about the role of the state as patron of the arts. The course involves lectures, interactive engagements with live performance, film screenings, and class discussions and presentations.

1 Course Unit

SAST 0012 Spices, Gunpowder, and Pagodas: A History of Southeast Asia

This undergraduate course introduces students to the history of Southeast Asia from the earliest centuries of the Common Era to c.1950. It introduces students to Southeast Asia as religion, constituent historical societies of the region, and to the major academic literature and debates pertaining to the historical development of Southeast Asian societies and the region. Key themes explored include the origins and character of early civilizations, ideas and ideology about power and prowess, material culture, the transformation of ethnic, class, and gender relations, the impact of the arrival of world religions and early European expansion, and the nature of indigenous responses to the diffusion of new beliefs and ideas and intercultural contact.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

SAST 0018 Climate Change and Community in Indonesia

Climate change isn't fair. Countries and small island states that have contributed little to cause climate change are already confronting the worst impacts. This trend will continue. While wealthy countries in the Global North scramble to respond to sea level rise, drought, extreme weather, and other impacts with technological and infrastructural solutions, countries in the Global South know they won't be able to protect their vulnerable populations in that way. For them, part of the answer lies in social resilience: the ability of a community or neighborhood in a city or region to withstand and recover from climate shocks and stresses. What are the ingredients that promote social resilience? In this first-year seminar, we will take Indonesia, the fourth most populous country in the world, as an example. Classified as a newly industrialized developing country, Indonesia has the capacity to mount some large projects such as the decision to move the government from Jakarta to a newly created capital city on the island of Borneo. At the same time, in Jakarta and all along the coasts of the thousands of islands that make up this archipelagic nation, vulnerable communities must foster resilience within themselves. Participants in this seminar will become acquainted with Indonesia's colonial and recent history, learn about its deep cultural resources, and engage with its current efforts to mitigate emissions and adapt to climate change. Highlights include modules on the plan to protect Jakarta, designing the new capital city, and the use of the arts to increase community resilience in urban and rural kampungs in other parts of the country.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GRMN 0018

1 Course Unit

SAST 0050 Introduction to Indian Philosophy

This course will take the student through the major topics of Indian philosophy by first introducing the fundamental concepts and terms that are necessary for a deeper understanding of themes that pervade the philosophical literature of India – arguments for and against the existence of God, for example, the ontological status of external objects, the means of valid knowledge, standards of proof, the discourse on the aims of life. The readings will emphasize classical Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain philosophical articulations (from 700 B.C.E to 16th century CE) but we will also supplement our study of these materials with contemporary or relatively recent philosophical writings in modern India.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: PHIL 1252, RELS 0055

1 Course Unit

SAST 0057 Planning to be Off-shore

First-Year Seminar. In this course we will trace the economic development of India from 1947 to the present. Independent India started out as a centrally planned economy in 1949 but in 1991 decided to reduce its public sector and allow, indeed encourage, foreign investors to come in. The Planning Commission of India still exists but has lost much of its power. Many in the U.S. complain of American jobs draining off to India, call centers in India taking care of American customer complaints, American patient histories being documented in India, etc. At the same time, the U.S. government encourages highly trained Indians to be in the U.S. Students are expected to write four one-page response papers and one final paper. Twenty percent of the final grade will be based on class participation, 20 percent on the four response papers and 60 percent on the final paper.

Fall

1 Course Unit

SAST 0058 Doing Research: First-Year Seminar

This interdisciplinary course introduces students to qualitative research methods and frameworks in the social sciences and humanities. The goals of the semester will be for each student to develop their own research proposal for a specific project that they could imagine pursuing over the summer or later in their undergraduate career, and to develop a web-based exhibit of one Penn-based research collection of interest. Students will be introduced to a range of textual, archival and media collections and databases available at Penn, with particular attention to South Asia and other specific regions of interest to course participants. The class will visit the Penn Museum object collections and archives, the Art library, the Kislak Center for Rare Books and Manuscripts, Film Archives, and other special collections on campus, and meet with a representative from the Center for Undergraduate Research Funding (CURF). Students will learn how to frame an effective research question, situate it in relation to existing research, select the most appropriate methods for addressing the question, and develop an effective research plan. Each week students will be introduced to a new set of frameworks for analysis, see specific examples of their application drawn from anthropological, historical, and related scholarship and have opportunities to practice applying and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of specific methodological tools. Students will also have the opportunity to identify sources of funding for summer research projects and prepare applications for these opportunities as part of the course. The course is ideal as an introduction to both the excellent libraries and research collections housed at Penn, and to a wide range of intellectual frameworks for engaging with these collections - a great way to kick off your undergraduate experience at Penn!

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ANTH 0058

1 Course Unit

SAST 0059 India, South Asia, and the American University (First-Year Seminar)

This interdisciplinary course uses intersections between India/South Asia, the region's peoples, and the American university (including Penn specifically) to introduce students to archival, anthropological, and oral history research methods. Students will engage with a range of textual, archival, visual, and material collections and databases available at Penn and in Philadelphia, with particular attention to India and South Asia, and will have opportunities to practice using a range of historical and anthropological research methods and materials. Class activities may include visits to the University Archives; the Penn Museum's object collections and archives; the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts; the Fisher Fine Arts Library; Penn's Architecture Archives; other special collections on campus; the Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships (CURF); the Philadelphia Museum of Art; and the South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA). Topics may include the history of Elihu Yale, East India Company trade, and the founding of Yale University; W. Norman Brown, the University of Pennsylvania, and the history of Indian and South Asian Area Studies in the United States; Anandibai Joshee and the history of women's medical education in Philadelphia; Stella Kramrisch, the history of Indian art, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art; Kanji Dwarkadas and Indian labor movements; the history of U.S. immigration policy as it has impacted South Asians; the history of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and the United States; architects Muzharul Islam and Penn professor Louis Kahn and the building of the Bangladeshi National Assembly Building; A. K. Ramanujan and the study of Indian epics and folklore; the Amar Chitra Katha comic books and Indian historical narratives; and South Asian Americans and debates over affirmative action in American universities. Students will also design an archival, anthropological, or oral history project on a topic of their choice as a final project. The course is ideal as an introduction to the excellent libraries and research collections housed at Penn and in Philadelphia, and as an introduction to a wide range of methods and intellectual frameworks for engaging with these collections - a great way to kick off your undergraduate experience at Penn!

Fall

Also Offered As: ANTH 0059, HIST 0059

1 Course Unit

SAST 0060 Modern South Asia and the World

The course approaches the history of modern South Asia as a story of global connections. While the region has long been in contact with geographies, communities, and politics across the world, colonial processes roped the Indian subcontinent into the global circulation of capital, commodities, ideas, and people at an unprecedented scale by the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. An expanding British Empire established connections of unparalleled domination, exploitation, and migration between the metropolis and the colony, as well as cross other colonies. The course explores the history of this contact by studying the political and epistemic technologies of colonial governance, the imperial trade of opium, tea, and cotton, the movement of indentured laborers and Indian soldiers, and the circulation of anticolonial ideas and political strategies across colonies. The course will complement chapters from monographs and scholarly articles with literary genres such as novels, films, and short stories to understand how global historical events shaped social relations, spaces, and the lives of ordinary South Asians.

Fall

1 Course Unit

SAST 0063 East & West: A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Cultural History of the Modern World

Sugar and Spices. Tea and Coffee. Opium and Cocaine. Hop aboard the Indian Ocean dhows, Chinese junks, Dutch schooners, and British and American clipper ships that made possible the rise of global capitalism, new colonial relationships, and the intensified forms of cultural change. How have the desires to possess and consume particular commodities shaped cultures and the course of modern history? This class introduces students to the cultural history of the modern world through an interdisciplinary analysis of connections between East and West, South and North. Following the circulation of commodities and the development of modern capitalism, the course examines the impact of global exchange on interactions and relationships between regions, nations, cultures, and peoples and the influences on cultural practices and meanings. The role of slavery and labor migrations, colonial and imperial relations, and struggles for economic and political independence are also considered. From the role of spices in the formation of European joint stock companies circa 1600 to the contemporary cocaine trade, the course's use of both original primary sources and secondary readings written by historians and anthropologists will enable particular attention to the ways that global trade has impacted social, cultural, and political formations and practices throughout the world.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: ANTH 0063

1 Course Unit

SAST 0070 Masculinities and Politics in Global Perspective

This survey course introduces students to scholarship on men, masculinities, and their politics in global context. Combining academic readings with film, visual artwork and other media, the course will put the politics of masculinities in South Asia— with particular attention to Afghanistan and Pakistan—into conversation with scholarship from Africana Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, and American Studies to compare experiences and contexts across the globe. The course will engage readings from feminist political geography; trans, queer, and sexuality studies; cultural studies; sociology; history; and anthropology. Also Offered As: AFRC 0070, GSWS 0070, SOCI 0070

1 Course Unit

SAST 0104 Beginning Tabla I

An introduction to the tabla, the premier drum of north Indian and Pakistani classical music traditions.

Fall

1 Course Unit

SAST 0106 Beginning Sitar I

This course is an introduction to the repertoire and performance practices of the North Indian sitar. Fundamentals of sitar technique, composition, and improvisation are presented and practiced in class. Class lectures and discussions, audio and video material, and reading and listening assignments on selected topics supplement practice, to provide an overview of the social and historical context and the formal structures of North Indian music in general. There are no prerequisites for the course, but some experience with instrumental or vocal music is suggested. Each student is expected to put in two hours of individual practice per week, and complete reading, audio, and written assignments. The class gives a group performance at the end of the semester.

Fall

1 Course Unit

SAST 0107 Beginning Sitar II

This is the second semester of a performance course in the North Indian sitar. Students who have not taken the first semester but play any musical instrument are permitted to join. Principles of composition and improvisation will be explored in practice and supplemented by readings and listening. The class gives a group performance at the end of the semester.

Spring

1 Course Unit

SAST 0108 Intermediate Sitar I

This is a performance course open to students who have completed both semesters of Beginning Sitar, or to others by permission of the instructor. Students will work with right and left-hand techniques, study three ragas in depth, learn the contours of several other ragas, and work with concepts of tala, composition, and improvisation. Assigned readings and listenings will complement the performed material. A group performance will be given at the end of the semester.

Fall or Spring

1 Course Unit

SAST 0109 Intermediate Sitar II

This is a continuation of an intermediate performance course in the North Indian sitar. It is open to students by permission of the instructor. Students who play other instruments and have had at least a beginning level of training in Hindustani music may also join, with the permission of the instructor.

Spring

1 Course Unit

SAST 0110 Beginning Tabla II

A continuation of Tabla I, also open to beginning students.

Spring

1 Course Unit

SAST 0111 Beginning Hindi-Urdu Online (Startalk)

This introductory, proficiency-based course covers the core content of first-year Hindi-Urdu. It is designed for students with little or no prior exposure to Hindi or Urdu. The course covers all four language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing), but there is a special focus on developing speaking and listening skills. Students will also develop literacy skills in one script of their choice (Hindi or Urdu script). All written materials will be provided in both scripts. All classes are interactive and students acquire the language by using it in realistic contexts. Culture is introduced through various authentic materials including Bollywood songs. This program has a special application process. Please visit our website (<https://www.southasiacenter.upenn.edu/startalk>) for more information on the program and how to apply.

Summer Term

1 Course Unit

SAST 0116 American Race: A Philadelphia Story (SNF Paideia Program Course)

This course proposes an examination of race with a three-pronged approach: one that broadly links the study of race in the United States with a multi-disciplinary approach; situates specific conversations within the immediate location of Philadelphia; and examines the international human rights context of race with Greece as a case study. The broad historical examination advances key concepts of race and racialization, explores key theoretical methodologies, and highlights major scholarly works. Students will engage with the study of race through Africana Studies, Asian American Studies, Urban Studies, South Asia Studies, Latin American & Latinx Studies, and through international human rights law. Readings and methodologies will introduce students to critical issues in education, in literature, in sociology, and with methods in oral history, archival work, and ethnography. Most importantly, this extensive approach highlights the impact of race across multiple communities including Black Americans, immigrant populations, Asian Americans, and international communities that are marginalized to emphasize connections, relationships, and shared solidarity. Students are intellectually pushed to see the linkages and the impacts of racism across and among all Americans and from a thematic and legal perspective. As each theme is introduced a direct example from Philadelphia will be discussed. The combination of the national discourse on race, with an intimate perspective from the City of Philadelphia and travel to Greece, engages students both intellectually and civically. The course will be led by Fariha Khan and Fernando Chang-Muy along with local activists with varied disciplinary backgrounds from local community organizations. Each guest lecturer not only brings specific disciplinary expertise, but also varied community engagement experience. This course is a Penn Global Seminar, which includes a travel component. An application is required. For more information and to apply, visit: <https://global.upenn.edu/pennabroad/pgs>. The course is also supported by the SNF Paideia Program, the Asian American Studies Program and Africana, Latin American & Latinx Studies, Sociology, South Asia Studies, and Urban Studies.

Spring

Also Offered As: AFRC 0116, ASAM 0116, LALS 0116, SOCI 0116, URBS 0116

1 Course Unit

SAST 0511 Global Inequalities: A Comparative History of Caste and Race.

Can we deploy a comparative lens to understand the categories of caste and race better? Does their juxtaposition illuminate new facets of these two structures of 'global inequalities'? The course seeks to explore these questions by systematically studying how both caste and racial institutions, structures, and identities were historically produced, transformed, and challenged through their global circulation from the nineteenth-century to the present. Caste and race have been old co-travelers, and their various points of intersection can be traced at least to the nineteenth century. And so, in this course we will embark upon a historical adventure, one replete with stories of violence, political intrigue, intense emotions, as also episodes of incandescent resistance. Together, we will trace the genealogy of how modern categories of 'caste' and 'race' were systematically composed by colonial knowledge production, orientalist writings, and utilitarian discourse, both in Europe and the colonies. While colonialism and the global hegemony of European modernity were crucial to the co-constitution and the circulation of caste and race, anti-caste and anti-race politics too have historically brought a unique comparative lens to these two categories. And so, this course will also include a close analysis of critical works on caste and race by activists and intellectuals from the nineteenth century to the present from all over the world.

Also Offered As: AFRC 0511, GSWS 0511, SOCI 0511

1 Course Unit

SAST 0519 Benjamin Franklin Seminar: Postcolonial Literature

This course explores an aspect of Postcolonial literature intensively. See the English Department's website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: COML 0519, ENGL 0519

1 Course Unit

SAST 0570 Colonial South Asia, 1700 - 1950

The East India Company established its first trading outpost in India in 1612 and by 1765, was granted the right to collect revenue in eastern India on behalf of the Mughal Emperor. By 1858, Queen Victoria was Empress of India and by 1947, two independent nation states had emerged upon decolonization, India and Pakistan. The course will familiarize students with the outlines of the history of colonial South Asia, while exploring the following themes: How do we know what we know as historians, about the colonial era? What new institutions emerged in India under the British and, more importantly, what older institutions did they replace or modify? What kinds of modernity did South Asians begin to embrace, and what was the role of colonial rule in shaping and constraining these changes? How did different groups of South Asians perceive and respond to colonial rule, and how did this shape the emergence of new political movements in the early twentieth century?

Also Offered As: HIST 0570

1 Course Unit

SAST 0690 Love and Hate

This course focuses on important constants of human life as they are grappled with across religious traditions. Drawing on data across a range of religious traditions (such as Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Mesoamerican Religion), we will explore topics such as sexual identity, politics, religion and the individual in contemporary life; and eroticism, sex and love as they are reflected in religious literature, art and history. Divine love and religious devotion will be examined in relation to acts of violence, including human sacrifice and self-sacrifice in the past as well as the present. Other important questions considered in this course include: how does the body function as the locus in which religion is enacted? What is the conflict between our agency over our bodies and socioreligious claims over individual autonomy? Is violence an integral part of religion? What are religious understandings of the relationship between our agency over our bodies and socioreligious claims over individual autonomy? Is violence an integral part of religion? What are religious understandings of the relationship between love and sex? What does it mean for human beings to love God?

Spring

Also Offered As: RELS 0690

1 Course Unit

SAST 1000 South Asians in the United States

This course investigates the everyday practices and customs of South Asians in America. Every immigrant group has its own history, customs, beliefs and values, making each unique while simultaneously a part of the "melting pot" or salad bowl" of American society. Yet how do people define themselves and their ethnicities living in a diasporic context? By taking into account the burgeoning South Asian American population as our model, this course will explore the basic themes surrounding the lives that immigrants are living in America, and more specifically the identity which the second generation, born and/or raised in American, is developing. South Asians in the U.S. will be divided thematically covering the topics of ethnicity, marriage, gender, religion, and pop culture. Reading and assignments will discuss a variety of issues and viewpoints that are a part of the fabric of South Asia, but will focus on the interpretation of such expressive culture in the United States.

Fall

Also Offered As: ASAM 1000

1 Course Unit

SAST 1110 Media and South Asia

This course examines the historical development of media institutions across the Indian subcontinent, and how media texts have helped to shape post-colonial national/cultural/religious/social identities, nationalism, and geopolitical relations. The course looks at how the post-colonial State in South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka) has interacted with media industries, and the implications of this interaction.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: COMM 2140

1 Course Unit

SAST 1111 Religions of South India: Narratives and Ritual Performance

This course focuses on a diverse set of devotional practices and narratives in South India. We begin with a basic introduction to various texts and ritual practices as related to South India's major religions including Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. We read the primary sources in English translation and perform a close reading of these texts and their historical contexts. We understand how traditions work and their transformations during different periods of history starting with classical, medieval and modern times. This class encourages to engage with the larger interpretive frameworks of religious, cultural and literary studies with an emphasis on the analysis of various core ideas of devotionism.

1 Course Unit

SAST 1112 Religion and Cinema in India

This seminar examines key themes in the study of religion and Indian cinema. The aim of the seminar is to foreground discussions of performativity, visual culture, representation, and politics in the study of modern South Asian religions. Themes include mythological cinema, gender and sexuality, censorship and the state, and communalism and secularism. The films we will be deploying as case studies will be limited to those produced in Hindi, Telugu and Tamil (the three largest cinema cultures of India). No knowledge of any South Asian language is needed for this course however.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 1112, RELS 1112

1 Course Unit

SAST 1115 American Race: A Philadelphia Story (SNF Paideia Program Course)

This course proposes an examination of race with a two-pronged approach: one that broadly links the study of race in the United States with a multi-disciplinary approach and also simultaneously situates specific conversations within the immediate location of Philadelphia, home to the University. The broad historical examination advances key concepts of race and racialization, explores key theoretical methodologies, and highlights major scholarly works. For example, students will engage with the study of race through Africana Studies, Asian American Studies, Urban Studies and through Latin American & Latinx Studies. Readings and methodologies will introduce students to critical issues in education, in literature, in sociology, and with methods in oral history, archival work, and ethnography. Most importantly, this extensive approach highlights the impact of race across multiple communities including Black Americans, immigrant populations, and communities that are marginalized to emphasize connections, relationships, and shared solidarity. Students are intellectually pushed to see the linkages and the impacts of racism across and among all Americans historically and presently. As each theme is introduced a direct example from Philadelphia will be discussed. The combination of the national discourse on race, with an intimate perspective from the City of Philadelphia, engages students both intellectually and civically. The course will be led by Fariha Khan and Fernando Chang-Muy but guest instructors with varied disciplinary backgrounds and guest speakers from local community organizations. Each instructor not only brings specific disciplinary expertise, but also varied community engagement experience.

Spring

Also Offered As: AFRC 1115, ANTH 1150, ASAM 0115, LALS 0115, SOCI 2976, URBS 1150

1 Course Unit

SAST 1116 Music Cultures of North India and Pakistan

A great variety of song and instrumental genres have thrived in the Hindu and Muslim milieus of North India and Pakistan. In this course we examine a selection of urban and rural musics, such as instrumental music in Baluchistan, qawwali in Delhi, the garba of Gujarat, ballad singing of Rajasthan and the urban music of Calcutta. We will explore the sounds, poetry, historical, and social contexts of chosen genres and trace aspects of continuity and adaptation in the changing environment of contemporary South Asia. Readings are supplemented by audio-visual material and live performances.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

SAST 1117 Sounds of Power, Pleasure, and Resistance: Music, Media, and Performance in Modern South Asia

This undergraduate seminar will explore the interplay between music, media, and performance in the making of modern South Asia (c. 1750 to the present). We will study primary source materials including manuscripts, printed texts, sound recordings, films, and video-clips. What can the emergence of print and recorded sound on the subcontinent teach us about modernity? How did authors, entrepreneurs, politicians, and performers across time and space make use of new media and technologies? How did colonial rule and anti-colonial nationalism affect traditional methods of knowledge transmission and communities of hereditary performers? The class is organized along thematic fields that provide exposure to the content, history, and effects of various media and performance practices. Beginning with the function of music and dance at royal courts, we will familiarize ourselves with the transformation of North Indian Hindustani and South Indian Karnatak music under colonialism. We will pay particular attention to the multiple ways in which print, performance, and sound recording and transmission media played a role in the development of colonial institutions, nationalist mass movements, and cultural identities on the subcontinent. We will look at the realm of commerce and technology to explore the impact of lithographic print, the gramophone, the radio, and film on the development of knowledge and the shaping of colonial power and anti-colonial resistance. Finally, we will reflect on new modes of media consumption in the post-colonial nation states of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, and what they tell us about contemporary narratives of South Asian history.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

SAST 1120 Community, Freedom, Violence: Writing the South Asian City

The South Asian city—as space, symbol, and memory—is the subject of this course. Through a range of readings in English and in translation, we will gain a sense for the history of the city and the ways in which it is a setting for protest and nostalgia, social transformation and solitary wandering. We will see reflections of the city in the detective novels sold in its train stations, the stories scribbled in its cafes, and films produced in its backlots. Readings will attempt to address urban spaces across South Asia through a range of works, which we will examine in the context of secondary readings, including histories and ethnological works that take up life in the modern city. Students will finish this course prepared to pursue projects dealing with the urban from multiple disciplinary perspectives. This course is suitable for anyone interested in the culture, society, or literature of South Asia, and assumes no background in South Asian languages.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: COML 1121, ENGL 1191, URBS 1120

1 Course Unit

SAST 1124 Narrative Across Cultures

The purpose of this course is to present a variety of narrative genres and to discuss and illustrate the modes whereby they can be analyzed. We will be looking at shorter types of narrative: short stories, novellas, and fables, and also some extracts from longer works such as autobiographies. While some works will come from the Anglo-American tradition, a larger number will be selected from European and non-Western cultural traditions and from earlier time-periods. The course will thus offer ample opportunity for the exploration of the translation of cultural values in a comparative perspective.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: COML 1025, ENGL 0039, MELC 1960, NELC 1960,

THAR 1025

1 Course Unit

SAST 1135 Introduction to South Asian Linguistics

This course introduces students to the phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and other linguistic aspects of South Asian languages. The course will help students understand the historical connections between South Asian languages and Sanskrit, and appreciate the common features they share with Sanskrit including sound systems, word structures, and the construction of sentences. In addition, the course will also survey topics related to sociolinguistics with respect to South Asia including language attitudes, bilingualism, language change, language contact, language variation, and other topics crucial to understanding the status of and relationships between languages in contemporary South Asia. The course is appropriate for those interested in expanding their knowledge of linguistics or those learning or interested in South Asian languages, offering scientific insights that help make unfamiliar linguistic structures more logical and easier to acquire.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

SAST 1144 Modern Islam and Poetry

This course focuses on a basic question: How and why a modern poem turns into a narrative device to debate contemporary Islamic discourses? We begin exploring this question by taking note of how a 12th-century Persian poet Rumi became - as described by Time magazine - "the best-selling poet in the US today," and then introduces students to poems and various social, cultural and religious moments that were key in the making of modern Islam. Although the course primarily emphasizes the study of poetry produced and circulated among various Muslim communities world-wide, it also covers a diverse set of secondary readings from the field of religious studies, anthropology and literature to outline more clearly the contours of contemporary Islam. Readings begin with internationally famous Rumi and then include poets emerging from Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and several vernacular literary cultures in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

SAST 1160 Democracy and Development in India

This course introduces students to the complex issues surrounding questions of political and economic development in India, the world's largest democracy, and home to a large chunk of the globe's low-income population. Not surprisingly, the successes and failures of India are tremendously important to the study of democracy and development. The experiences of countries in this region have given rise to influential theories of development. The policy prescriptions these theories have produced have in turn been applied back onto India, with spectacular results- both positive and negative. Over the course of the semester, we will use the concrete experiences from the past seven decades in India to ask and answer fundamental questions about development, including: Does democratic politics help or hurt prospects for economic development? Why are some poor countries like India able to maintain democracies, while equally poor countries in the region, such as Pakistan, are not? How did British colonialism shape the nature of post-colonial development? Should the state or the market play a dominant role in the economies of newly independent nations? How can we best measure poverty, and what have been the challenges to reducing it in the developing world? What are the challenges and opportunities produced by rapid international migration to rich countries? The course is divided into four thematic units, which build upon one another. Within each theme, we draw from a wide array of source materials, reading scholarship in political science, economics, sociology, and anthropology, journalistic non-fiction, and even film. While empirically focusing on India, we will also read about the experiences of other countries in South Asia, and also from East Asia, Latin America, and sub-Saharan Africa in specific weeks. This will help students place the experiences of South Asian countries in broader comparative perspective.

Also Offered As: PSCI 1160

1 Course Unit

SAST 1169 Merchants, Saints, Slaves and Sojourners: the Worlds of the Indian Ocean

Do oceans serve to divide and demarcate distinct cultures and regions? Or do they facilitate exchange, connection and cosmopolitanism? This course will explore the manner in which the Indian Ocean has played both roles throughout history, and how the nature of those divisions and connections has changed over time from the ancient to the modern world. We will reconstruct the intertwined mercantile, religious and kinship networks that spanned the Indian Ocean world, across the Middle East, East Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia and China, illuminating the histories of Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam, while also considering the role of successive imperial political formations, from Rome to Britain. Throughout the semester we will seek to understand the Indian Ocean through the people who lived and worked in its milieu - from consuls and military commanders, to traders, brokers, sailors, prisoners and slaves. Course materials will draw on a variety of disciplines (anthropology, archaeology, material culture, religious studies) to construct the cultural, economic, and environmental history of the Indian Ocean.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ANTH 1169

1 Course Unit

SAST 1171 Devotion's New Market: Religion, Economics, and the City

This graduate and undergraduate level course introduces students to the new forms of devotion as circulated in various urban centers in South Asia with a focus on growing market economy and urbanization. This course will particularly discuss case studies of how different modes of Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and other minor religions operate in an urbanized middle-class and educated communities. We will read theoretical and ethnographical works of contemporary research in religious studies and anthropology that deal with the questions of modernity, reformism and economic developmentalism. Throughout the semester, we focus on 1) how does religious forms such as sainthood practices, private and public rituals, narrative modes and everyday life evolve in the background of growing politics of development; 2) we discuss the tensions between classical notions of devotion and their new transformations in the city life, and finally 3) theoretically, we analyze concepts such as reformism, fundamentalism, recent discourses on identity politics and gender implications as connected to urban religious life.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ANTH 1171, RELS 1640

Mutually Exclusive: SAST 5571

1 Course Unit

SAST 1189 Islam and the West

How did Muslims and modern South Asia interact with the West? What Islamic idioms, orientations and movements emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries? Was South Asia a prominent global center of Islam? What kinds of Islamic educational institutions developed in modern South Asia? How did Muslims appropriate technologies? What materials were printed by Muslims? Were Muslims part of the British army? What was jihad in modernity? How did Muslim 'modernists' and 'traditionalists' respond to the challenges of colonialism and modernity? What was the nature of Sufism in modern South Asia? What was the nature of political Islam in South Asia? How did some Muslims demand a Muslim State? What was the Partition? How has Muslim history been remembered in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan? This is an introductory course, and aims to introduce students to a facet of the long history of Islam, Muslims, and the West.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: RELS 1189

1 Course Unit

SAST 1190 Introduction to Postcolonial Literature

English is a global language with a distinctly imperial history, and this course serves as an essential introduction to literary works produced in or about the former European colonies. The focus will be poetry, film, fiction and non fiction and at least two geographic areas spanning the Americas, South Asia, the Caribbean and Africa as they reflect the impact of colonial rule on the cultural representations of identity, nationalism, race, class and gender. See the English Department's website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: AFRC 1190, CIMS 1190, COML 1190, ENGL 1190, GSWS 1190

1 Course Unit

SAST 1400 Asian American Gender and Sexualities

This course explores the intersection of gender, sexuality, and race in Asian America. Through interdisciplinary and cultural texts, students will consider how Asian American gender and sexualities are constructed in relation to racism while learning theories on and methods to study gender, sex, and race. We will discuss masculinities, femininities, race-conscious feminisms, LGBTQ+ identities, interracial and intraracial relationships, and kinship structures.

Spring

Also Offered As: ASAM 1400, GSWS 1400

1 Course Unit

SAST 1410 Asian American Women: Nation, Self and Identity

This course examines the literary constructions of Asian American Women's identity in relation to the U.S. nation state. How have the figures of the tiger mother, the Asian nerd, the rice queen, the trafficked woman, the geisha, the war bride, emerged to represent Asian American women, and how have Asian American feminists responded to these problematic racial stereotypes? How does the scholarship on such racialized representations illuminate historical and contemporary configurations of gender, sexuality, race, class, nation, citizenship, migration, empire, war, neoliberalism and globalization as they relate to the lives of Asian American women? In exploring these questions, this course examines Asian American histories, bodies, identities, diasporic communities, representations, and politics through multi- and interdisciplinary approaches, including social science research, literature, popular representations, film, poetry and art.

Spring

Also Offered As: ASAM 1410, GSWS 1410

1 Course Unit

SAST 1430 Introduction to Islam

This course is an introduction to Islam as a religion as it exists in societies of the past as well as the present. It explores the many ways in which Muslims have interpreted and put into practice the prophetic message of Muhammad through historical and social analyses of varying theological, philosophical, legal, political, mystical and literary writings, as well as through visual art and music. The aim of the course is to develop a framework for explaining the sources and symbols through which specific experiences and understandings have been signified as Islamic, both by Muslims and by other peoples with whom they have come into contact, with particular emphasis given to issues of gender, religious violence and changes in beliefs and behaviors which have special relevance for contemporary society.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: MELC 0550, NELC 0550, RELS 1430

1 Course Unit

SAST 1540 Religion and Politics in South Asia, c. 1000-2000

This lecture course will examine the relationship between religion and politics in a region which has seen renewed conflicts in the name of religious communities over the past thirty years: South Asia. The course will cover the history of such conflicts between 1000 and 2000 C.E., and the genealogy of present-day conflicts, whether rooted in the recent past or in the distant past. The emphasis will be on political patronage of religious shrines and its converse, iconoclasm; on religious conversions; on clashes that were perceived as clashes between religious communities; on doctrinal and legal reforms of religious traditions and on popular religious movements and their appeal at particular historical moments. We will explore the politics of religion and of religious affiliation from the eleventh to the twentieth centuries by reading primary sources and reviewing the rich historiography. No prior knowledge of South Asia is expected.

Also Offered As: HIST 1540

1 Course Unit

SAST 1560 Economic Histories of Modern South Asia, c. 1600 - Present

Courses on the economic history of South Asia typically begin circa 1750, when European Company produced data series legible to economic historians first become available. This course departs from that trend, by beginning with the expansion of the Mughal empire and its deeply bureaucratized revenue system, along with the arrival of the British and Dutch East India Companies in the early seventeenth century. The course ends not in 1947 (with the decolonization of the subcontinent), but rather with the liberalization of independent national economies in the late twentieth century, which significantly altered the commercial landscape by permitting the entrance of foreign direct investment. We will analyze numerous economic and socio-political phenomena that played into commercial development and change across the subcontinent during this period, including: the organization and influence of colonial joint-stock companies; systems of land tenure; the role of ecology in affecting economic production and consumption; industrial growth and the rise of economic urbanism; labor organization and the significance of kinship and patronage; and the immense influence of the informal (i.e. "shadow" or "black") economy, comprising some three-fourths of the South Asian labor force. The course will also introduce students to some of the theoretical literature in economic history scholarship. No prior knowledge of south Asia or economic history is required.

Also Offered As: HIST 1560

1 Course Unit

SAST 1615 Migration and the Middle East

This reading-and discussion-intensive seminar examines the phenomenon of migration into, out of, within, and across the Middle East and North Africa. We will focus on the period from the late nineteenth century to the present, and will emphasize the cultural (rather than economic) consequences of migration. Along the way we will trace connections between the Middle East and other regions-- notably the Americas, sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, the Caucasus, and Western Europe. Readings are interdisciplinary and include works of history, anthropology, sociology, medical research, literature, political science, geography, and human rights advocacy. As students develop final projects on topics of their choice, we will spend time throughout the semester discussing tactics for research and writing.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ASAM 2010, MELC 1615, NELC 1615

Mutually Exclusive: MELC 6615

1 Course Unit

SAST 1730 Introduction to Buddhism

This course seeks to introduce students to the diversity of doctrines held and practices performed by Buddhists in Asia. By focusing on how specific beliefs and practices are tied to particular locations and particular times, we will be able to explore in detail the religious institutions, artistic, architectural, and musical traditions, textual production and legal and doctrinal developments of Buddhism over time and within its socio-historical context. Religion is never divorced from its place and its time. Furthermore, by geographically and historically grounding the study of these religions we will be able to examine how their individual ethic, cosmological and soteriological systems effect local history, economics, politics, and material culture. We will concentrate first on the person of the Buddha, his many biographies and how he has been followed and worshipped in a variety of ways from Lhasa, Tibet to Phrae, Thailand. From there we touch on the foundational teachings of the Buddha with an eye to how they have evolved and transformed over time. Finally, we focus on the practice of Buddhist ritual, magic and ethics in monasteries and among aly communities in Asia and even in the West. This section will confront the way Buddhists have thought of issues such as "Just-War," Women's Rights and Abortion. While no one quarter course could provide a detailed presentation of the beliefs and practices of Buddhism, my hope is that we will be able to look closely at certain aspects of these religions by focusing on how they are practiced in places like Nara, Japan or Vietnam, Laos.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: EALC 0501, RELS 1730

1 Course Unit

SAST 1770 1947-49: British Empire and the Partitions of South Asia and Palestine

The partitions of South Asia and Palestine marked the end of the British Empire in those regions. British colonial rule in India ended in 1947 with the emergence of not one, but two nation states, India and Pakistan. Decolonization was marked by mass migration and ethnic cleansing along their borders. An estimated million people died in the violence in less than a year, and 12.5 million people migrated from their homes. The British Empire also gave up its claims to Palestine in 1947, exhausted by the two nationalisms of Zionists and Palestinians. This partition set up the declaration of the state of Israel, and the War for Palestine. By 1949, almost a million Palestinians found themselves displaced over many borders, some also within the borders of Israel. This comparative course is organized around three themes - the prehistories of these cataclysmic events, the role of Empire in catalyzing them, and the afterlives of these events that continue to haunt us into the present, seventy-five years later. It explores the political history - and the collapse of politics - that led to violence on a scale that was without precedent in the history of the Indian subcontinent. It examines the political, social and cultural events that led to decades of war and exile, and shaped the lives of generations of Palestinians, Israelis and the wider Middle East. Primary sources will help to explore the perspectives of ordinary people whose lives were turned upside down in both places.

Also Offered As: HIST 1770, MELC 1650, NELC 1650

1 Course Unit

SAST 1781 Silk Road: From the Mediterranean to the Pacific

A journey along the overland and sea routes that connected China, India, Iran, and Rome from 200-1000 CE and served as conduits for cultural exchange. Precursor and successor routes will also be taken into consideration. The lives of merchants, envoys, pilgrims, and travelers interacting in cosmopolitan communities will be examined. Exploration of long-known and newly discovered archaeological ruins, along with primary sources in translation, will be studied.

Also Offered As: EALC 1781

Mutually Exclusive: EALC 5781

1 Course Unit

SAST 1800 Psychology of Asian Americans

Using a cultural perspective, this course is intended to provide knowledge of Asian American personality, identity, and its relationship to mental well being; analyze psycho-social research pertinent to Asian Americans; and develop critical thinking skills on Asian American issues through experiential learning/discussions.

Spring

Also Offered As: ASAM 1800

1 Course Unit

SAST 1999 Independent Study

Directed Study for Undergraduates

Fall or Spring

0.5-1.5 Course Unit

SAST 2120 Cities and Temples in Ancient India

The wooden architecture of ancient India's cities is represented in relief carvings from Buddhist religious monuments of the early centuries A.D. and replicated in remarkable excavated cave cathedrals. This lecture course will trace that architectural tradition, its transformation into a symbolic vocabulary for a new structure, the Hindu temple, and the development of the temple in India from ca. 500-1500 A.D.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 2120

1 Course Unit

SAST 2200 Creating New Worlds: The Modern Indian Novel

Lonely bureaucrats and love-struck students, Bollywood stars and wayward revolutionaries: this course introduces students to the worlds of the Indian novel. From the moment of its emergence in the 19th century, the novel in India grappled with issues of class and caste, colonialism and its aftermath, gender, and the family. Although the novel has a historical origin in early modern Europe, it developed as a unique form in colonial and post-colonial India, influenced by local literary and folk genres. How did the novel in India—and in its successor states after 1947—transform and shift in order to depict its world? How are novels shaped by the many languages in which they are written, including English? And how do we, as readers, engage with the Indian novel in its diversity? This course surveys works major and minor from the past 200 years of novel-writing in India—with surveys both into predecessors of the Indian novel and parallel forms such as the short story. Readings will include works in translation from languages such as Hindi, Bangla, Urdu, Telugu, and Malayalam, as well as works written originally in English. Students will leave this course with an understanding of the Indian novel, along with the social conditions underlaying it, especially those relating to caste and gender.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: COML 2200

1 Course Unit

SAST 2208 Doing Research: Qualitative Methods and Research Design

This interdisciplinary course introduces students to qualitative research methods and frameworks in the social sciences and humanities.

Students will learn how to frame an effective research question, situate it in relation to existing research, select the most appropriate methods for addressing the question, and develop an effective research plan. Each week students will be introduced to a new set of frameworks for analysis, see specific examples of their application drawn from anthropological, historical, and related scholarship and have opportunities to practice applying and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of specific methodological tools. The goals of the semester will be for each student to develop their own research proposal for a specific project. Students will be introduced to a range of textual, archival and media collections and databases available at Penn, with particular attention to South Asia and other specific regions of interest to course participants. Students will also have the opportunity to identify sources of funding for summer and/or thesis research projects, and submit applications for these opportunities as part of the course. The course is ideal for freshmen, sophomores, juniors, or seniors considering summer or independent research, an undergraduate thesis, or an application to the Fulbright or other research program following graduation.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ANTH 2208

Mutually Exclusive: ANTH 5208

1 Course Unit

SAST 2211 Sex, Sexuality and Sexual Science in South Asia: Perspectives from the Past and Present

This course will introduce students to the problems of sex, sexuality and sexual science in South Asia over the centuries. Its central problem will be how sex, society and knowledge about sex have been transformed in South Asia under the conditions of colonial and postcolonial modernity. It will consider how a multitude of indigenous practices and knowledges, from the famous Kamasutra and its allied knowledges to the transgender communities, from the Lazzat-un-Nisa to concubinage and the sexual norms of elite households, were framed and reframed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries through the agency of a variety of institutions, groups and individuals. The course will also show how South Asia played a crucial role in the global evolution of sexual knowledge. Topics will include the varieties and functions of traditional sexual knowledges, colonial sexology, changing sexual identities and practices, the relation of psychiatry and medicine to sex, queer and transgender sexualities, and the complex and shifting role of the state and civil society to all of these topics.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: HSOC 2211

1 Course Unit

SAST 2217 CU in India - Topics Course

C.U. in India is a hybrid, domestic/overseas course series which provides students with the opportunity to have an applied learning and cultural experience in India or South East Asia where students participate in 1) 28 classroom hours in the Fall term 2) a 12-day trip to India or South East Asia with the instructor during the winter break visiting key sites and conducting original research (sites vary) 3) 28 classroom hours at Penn in the Spring term and 4) a research paper, due at the end of the Spring term. Course enrollment is limited to students admitted to the program. For more information and the program application go to <http://sites.sas.upenn.edu/cuinindia> This is a 2-CU yearlong course DEADLINE TO REGISTER IS MARCH 31st

Two Term Class, Student must enter first term; credit given after both terms are complete

Also Offered As: ARTH 3170, COML 2217, GSWS 2217

1 Course Unit

SAST 2218 Media and Culture in Contemporary Iran

This course offers a comprehensive introduction to the culture and media of modern Iran, with a critical perspective on issues such as identity formation, ethnicity, race, and nation-building. It focuses on how these issues relate to various aspects of modern Iranian culture – such as religion, gender, sexuality, war, and migration – through the lens of media, cinema, and literature.

Fall or Spring

1 Course Unit

SAST 2219 Social Inequalities: Caste and Race

Can we deploy a comparative lens to understand the categories of caste and race better? Does their juxtaposition illuminate new facets of these two structures of 'global inequalities'? The course seeks to explore these questions by systematically studying how both caste and racial institutions, structures, and identities were historically produced, transformed, and challenged through their global circulation from the nineteenth-century to the present. Caste and race have been old co-travelers, and their various points of intersection can be traced at least to the nineteenth century. And so, in this course we will embark upon a historical adventure, one replete with stories of violence, political intrigue, intense emotions, as also episodes of incandescent resistance. Together, we will trace the genealogy of how modern categories of 'caste' and 'race' were systematically composed by colonial knowledge production, orientalist writings, and utilitarian discourse, both in Europe and the colonies. While colonialism and the global hegemony of European modernity were crucial to the co-constitution and the circulation of caste and race, anti-caste and anti-race politics too have historically brought a unique comparative lens to these two categories. And so, this course will also include a close analysis of critical works on caste and race by activists and intellectuals from the nineteenth century to the present from all over the world. Taking our key question about the comparative study of caste and race as our point of departure, the course will interrogate this juxtaposition by closely studying some crucial analytical grounds commonly shared by the two structures in question. We will explore the intersections, exchanges, and divergences between caste and race by approaching them from the perspective of violence, colonialism, Slavery and Abolition, mid-twentieth century writings in American and South Asian politics, experience and testimonios, and subaltern international solidarities.

Also Offered As: AFRC 2219, GSWS 2219, SOCI 2970

1 Course Unit

SAST 2225 Imagining New Futures: Science Fiction and the Fantastic in South Asian Literature

This course examines the many ways in which writers have imagined the future, the past, and the unreal in South Asia. Rather than view science fiction as an isolated, modern genre, we will situate it alongside a range of genres and approaches to the fantastic. Although literature called science fiction is today a dynamic genre across South Asian languages, with a literary history in the twentieth and nineteenth centuries, writers draw from a range of other South Asian literary and cultural traditions, including Hindu mythology, Persian Qissa story cycles, and Sanskrit literature. In this course, therefore, we will explore the many genealogies of contemporary South Asian literature. Science fiction, and fantastic literature more generally, often functions as a means to depict social and technological change, the perception of the larger world, and contemporary politics. How did writers use amazing stories of brilliant inventions, dreams of a woman-led utopia, or dark conspiracies of disease to explore a range of questions. We will also consider how popular literary genres, such as the detective story, intersect with these other genres. Students will leave this course with a knowledge of the dynamic history of South Asian science fiction as part of a long history of imaginative literature, as well as well as a deeper understanding of genre and the social history of literature.

Also Offered As: COML 2225, ENGL 2161

1 Course Unit

SAST 2229 Dalit and Black Literatures: Caste, Race and Representation

The aim of this course is to study the historical conversations and comparisons between caste and racial oppression and the forging of categories of caste and/as race in the Dalit and African American literatures. Beginning with a brief survey of the historical conversations between the Black Panthers and Dalit Panthers, the course introduces some selected scholarly and literary debates on caste and/as racial discrimination, history of Afro-Dalit solidarity, literary representation of identities of caste and race and themes of freedom and equality. Selections of seminal texts and debates from the Dalit and African literary and cultural movements are included for discussion and analysis.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: AFRC 2229

Mutually Exclusive: AFRC 5229, SAST 5229

1 Course Unit

SAST 2231 The Sanskrit Epics

Ancient India's two epic poems, originally composed in Sanskrit and received in dozens of languages over the span of two thousand years, continue to shape the psychic, social, religious, and emotional worlds of millions of people around the world. The epic Mahabharata, which roughly translates to The Great Story of the Descendants of the Legendary King Bharata, is the longest single poem in the world (approximately 200,000 lines of Sanskrit verse in the 1966 Critical Edition) and tells the mythic history of dynastic power struggles in ancient India. An apocalyptic meditation on time, death, and the utter devastation brought upon the individual and the family unit through social disintegration, the epic also serves as sourcebook for social and political mores and contains one of the great religious works of the world, The Bhagavad Gita (translation: The Song of God), in the middle of its sprawling narrative. The other great epic, The Ramayana (Rama's Journey), though essentially tragic and about the struggles for power in ancient India, offers a relatively brighter narrative in foregrounding King Rāma, an avatar of the supreme divinity Viṣṇu, who serves as an ideal for how human beings might successfully negotiate the challenges of worldly life. Perhaps the most important work of ancient Asia, the Rāmāyaṇa also provides a model of human social order that contrasts with dystopic polities governed by animals and demons. Our course will engage in close reading of selections from both of these epic poems (in English translation) and scholarship on the epic from the past century. We will explore the Sanskrit epic genre, its oral and textual forms in South Asia, and the numerous modes for interpreting it over the centuries. We will also look at the reception of these ancient works in modern forms of media, such as the novel, television, theater, cinema and the comic book/anime.

Also Offered As: COML 2231

Mutually Exclusive: COML 6631, SAST 6631

1 Course Unit

SAST 2239 Adivasis/Indigenous Peoples & British Colonialism in India

Modern Western colonialism impacted the world in many ways. However, each country and community has had a different encounter and experience with colonialism. For the Adivasis (indigenous peoples) of India, it was catastrophic and marked a new phase in their history. The pre-colonial symbolizes a period of freedom in the hills and forest, whereas the colonial era symbolizes state coercion, eviction from land and the end of free movement in the forest. The proposed course discusses Adivasis' encounters with the British colonial state. The course examines Indian history from the perspectives of Adivasis and contrasts these with dominant paradigms of Indian history. In this way, the course allows students to understand India from a different perspective. Under British colonialism, the diverse ethnic self-governing communities were imagined as primitive, uncivilized, barbaric, violent, backward and childlike people. The course discusses how such constructions impacted Adivasi social life and development. It traces how the expansion of the colonial state in forests and hills put an end to self-rule and induced massive migration from the plains of India and asks how Adivasi areas were integrated into the colonial economy. How did the colonial state use revenue and forest policies and regulations to bring these areas under its control? How did commercialization of agriculture and forest conservation work to further marginalize Adivasis? The course also examines how Adivasi knowledge of cultivation and forest conservation were viewed by the colonial state and asks why the colonial state encouraged caste-Hindu peasant migration into Adivasi areas. Finally, it traces the ways that colonial intervention has resulted in a series of contestations, acts of resistance, and insurgencies by Adivasi groups? Tracing forms of Adivasi resistance, the course puts these into conversation with intellectual history, emphasizing the role of rumours, myths, and orality, which provided the basis for the new insurgent consciousness that spread throughout Adivasi communities. Adivasi resistance movements have been documented and analyzed by colonial rulers and anthropologists. Colonial discourses were successful in criminalizing Adivasi politics. Ironically, many colonial-era discourses concerning Adivasis have been perpetuated within the post-colonial academy. The anti-colonial struggles of Adivasis were constructed as sporadic, spontaneous, unorganized and apolitical. The inauguration of the Subaltern Studies Project has reversed such arguments and attempted to provide ideological integrity to Adivasi politics. Students will be introduced to important literature on Adivasi anti-colonial insurgent consciousness and will be encouraged to think critically about the concepts and theories of subaltern politics. Assigned readings include texts by James Scott, Ranajit Guha, David Arnold, David Hardiman, Ajay Skaria, Dhanagare, Ramachandra Guha, Biswamoy Pati, Alpa Shah, Crispin Bates, Jangkhomang Guite and Bhangya Bhukya. One aim of the course is to sensitize the students to how the political and cultural mobilizations by subalterns have contributed to the shaping of democracy.

Spring

Also Offered As: ANTH 2109, HIST 0853, SOCI 2974

Mutually Exclusive: SAST 5239

1 Course Unit

SAST 2249 Re-enchanting Modernity: A Guide to Sufism in South Asia

This undergraduate level course introduces students to Sufism in modern South Asia, with a particular focus on how Muslim 'mystics' and their 'mystical' methods interacted with modernity, colonialism, technological developments and globalization. This course is divided into three parts. In the first part of this course, students are provided with an overview of the theological and historical background of the dominant expression of Islam that came to be identified as 'Sufism' or 'Islamic mysticism', the historical development of Sufi institutions and spaces in South Asia, and the historical emergence of South Asia as a prominent global center of Sufism. The second and main part of this course introduces students to a range of anthropological and historical works that are revelatory about how Sufi in modern South Asia were and remain intimately connected to modern political and technological developments. Providing students with an overview of Sufi re-enchantments of modernity from the 19th to 21st century, this section of the course focuses upon Sufi movements and masters who perpetuated or defended customary Islam through sophisticated appropriations of technologies and print networks, and negotiations with non-Muslim rulers and societies. Moreover, students will be introduced to anthropological and historical scholarship on religious worlds in modern South Asia that were and remain steeped in 'customary Islam' and Sufi performances and interpretations of Islam. These sources reveal how 'mystical' methods of performing Islam through ecstasy and spiritual restoration, and interpretations of dreams and visions, have regularly interacted with contemporaneous technologies. The third part of this course introduces students to the globalization of South Asian Sufism in North America, Europe and Southeast Asia. Herein, students will be encouraged to engage with anthropological and literary works pertaining to itinerant South Asian Sufi masters and their devotional cults, and introduced to active South Asian Sufi centers in Philadelphia.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

SAST 2250 History of Hinduism

This course will explore the history of the religion(s) designated by the term 'Hinduism' from their earliest articulations down to the rise of modern reforms in the nineteenth century. The study of Hinduism is perhaps unique among the scholarly traditions on world religions in that it has to date had no serious connected account of its historical development, as scholars have preferred to take structural, sociological, phenomenological, and doctrinal approaches to the religion. The course, after a brief review of scholarly approaches to Hinduism and their interpretive legacies, will seek to develop a historical sense of the religion through attention to shifts in liturgy, ritual, theology, doctrine, sacral kingship, and soteriology. The course will include the reading of primary sources relevant to understanding these changes as well as highlight both modern and premodern traditions of their interpretation. It will also consider and assess some of the key interpretive ideas in the study of Hinduism, including, Sanskritization, Great and Little Traditions, cult formation, regional and popular religious movements, and canon formation. There will also be sustained consideration of the question of religion and socio-political power as well as relations between Hinduism and other religions like Buddhism and Islam.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: RELS 2250

1 Course Unit

SAST 2251 Muslim Sainthood Practices

This course aims at introducing various classical, popular and modern Muslim saints in South Asia. We will read the life stories of these saints and focus on their contribution to various religions in South Asia. We will read the life stories of these saints and focus on their contribution to various religions in South Asia. We will learn about the major concepts initiated and circulated by these saints and their distinctive ways of dealing with spiritual aspects. While focusing on their sainthood practices, we also study the nature of the dialogue which addresses the questions such as pluralism, localism, and a new paradigm of spirituality that continually interacts with diverse modes of everyday life in South Asia. In order to understand their impact on visual and media cultures, we also watch two documentaries and compare these visual sources with sainthood literature and practices.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

SAST 2260 Women and the Making of Modern South Asia

This course on women in South Asian history has four objectives - 1. To acquaint ourselves with the historiography on South Asian women. 2. To gain an understanding of evolving institutions and practices shaping women's lives, such as the family, law and religious traditions. 3. To understand the impact of historical processes - the formation and breakdown of empire, colonialism, nationalism and decolonization - upon South Asian women between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries. 4. To become familiar with some of the significant texts written about and by women in this period. We will read a wide variety of primary sources including a Mughal princess' account, devotional verse authored by women, conduct books, tracts, autobiographies and novels.

Spring

Also Offered As: GSWS 2601, HIST 3500

1 Course Unit

SAST 2262 The Making of Medieval India

This course will provide an in-depth understanding of South Asia in what is often called its 'medieval' period—from the rise of the great temple kingdoms until the end of the Delhi Sultanate in the sixteenth century (c. 500 CE - c. 1500 CE). This millennium is arguably one of the most transformative in South Asia's history, a period when many of its most distinctive social and cultural features evolved. The course will provide both an overview of the period as well as an introduction to major interpretations and types of sources (textual, visual, and archaeological). The focus throughout the course will be on the heterogeneous development of states, societies and cultures with special attention to long-term processes of transformation. One set of themes explored will be largely social and economic, focusing on the development of agrarian and peasant societies, aristocracies and intellectuals, as well as the role of mercantile, pastoralist, nomadic and forest-living groups. Another set of themes will explore cultural transformation, including the development, transformation and interaction of religious practices, the emergence of cosmopolitan and regional literary cultures, and the rise of distinctive urban, courtly, and rural world views. Special themes of discussion may include violence and manners, material cultures, religious conflict, devotional religion and gender relations.

Not Offered Every Year

Mutually Exclusive: SAST 6262

1 Course Unit

SAST 2293 Caste & Class in South Asia

This course will explore the reality of caste and class in South Asian society, and the theories, classical and modern, that attempt to explain it. We shall survey a wide sweep of sources, from the earliest evidence for a division into caste-classes in the Rig-Veda to reports in modern media of caste-related social problems; from orthodox Hindu normative texts justifying and upholding a rigid hierarchical division of society to voices, in Sanskrit and in vernaculars, criticizing the caste system. Our goal is to gain a nuanced and many-sided insight into a deeply pervasive phenomenon that has shaped South Asian society, culture, and religion in general (Muslim, Sikh, and Christian castes) from ancient time up to the twentieth century.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

SAST 2324 Sanskrit Literature in Translation

This course will focus solely on the specific genres, themes, and aesthetics of Sanskrit literature (the hymn, the epic, the lyric, prose, drama, story literature, the sutra, etc.) and a study of the history and specific topics of Sanskrit poetics and dramaturgy. All readings will be in translation.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: COML 2324

1 Course Unit

SAST 2334 A Survey of Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Classical Tamil Literature in Translation

This course will cover most of the genres of literature in South Asia's classical languages through close readings of selections of primary texts in English translation. Special focus will be given to epics, drama, lyric poetry, satirical works, and religious literature.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: COML 2334

1 Course Unit

SAST 2350 Eastern Christianities

The history of Christianity is often told from the perspective of its spread westward from Israel to Rome. Yet, in the first millennium, there were more Christians living in the East, in places as far away as Persia, Yemen, India, China, and Mongolia, than in the West. Spread across the Asian continent, these Christians were actively involved in local and imperial politics, composed theological literature, and were deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of their host societies. This course traces the spread of Christianity eastward, paying particular attention to its regional developments, its negotiations with local political powers, and its contact with other religions, including Buddhism, Manichaeism, and Islam. Readings will cover a broad range of sources, including selections from classical Syriac literature, Manichaean texts, Mesopotamian magic bowls, the so-called "Jesus Sutras," and the Quran. All readings will be provided in English, and no background is presumed.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: MELC 3260, NELC 3260, RELS 2350

1 Course Unit

SAST 2452 Urdu Literature in Translation

This course will look at Urdu-Hindi expressions of resistance to militant fundamentalism trends, as well as literature resisting the influence of liberal progressive thought. Through comparisons of these divergent trends, we will explore the real intersections, comfortable comprises and contradictions that are internalized by people on the ground in developing societies. The historical and linguistic roots of resistance poetry will be studied, contrasting South Asian Urdu-Hindi poetry and prose (original and translated) with resistance movements from other parts of the world. This course provides students with the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of Urdu culture, literature, and society while expanding and refining their Urdu language skills. We will explore various social, political, and cultural issues through authentic sources such as journalism and media, prose literature and poetry, and film and music. The course is designed to be flexible to address students' needs and interests. It targets students with two years of Urdu study or the equivalent proficiency. Prerequisite: Intermediate reading, writing and speaking skills in Urdu are recommended but contact the instructor if you are unsure of your eligibility and want to discuss further.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

SAST 2462 Urdu Topics Course

Urdu literature in translation. Topics vary by semester.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

SAST 2550 Modern Southeast Asia

This first-year friendly course provides a broad introductory overview of modern Southeast Asia, surveying the region's extraordinary diversity and ongoing social, economic, and political transformations. Centering on the nation-states that have emerged following the second World War, we will assess elements of Southeast Asian geography, history, language and literature, cosmologies, kinship systems, music, art and architecture, agriculture, industrialization and urbanization, politics, and economic change. We will remain particularly attentive to the ways Southeast Asians negotiate and contend with ongoing challenges with modernization, development, and globalization.

Also Offered As: ANTH 2550

1 Course Unit

SAST 2551 Media and Religion in South Asia

This course will look at the ways that religion intersects with media in South Asia—exploring how the medium is the message. The class begins with a discussion of how it is difficult to define "religion" and "media" in the Global South, specifically in South Asia. We will analyze how religion and media are inextricable, and also how news media has gone about the business of turning religion into news. The class will familiarize students with a variety of media forms aside from the obvious sources of internet, TV and newspaper—these include traditional architecture, devotional texts, devotional poetry, music, visual-sensorial worship, modern film, recorded music, clothing, and live performance. We will conclude with a look at religion in forms of contemporary media, with particular attention to new media (TV, radio, internet). The course also offers students lectures providing a foundation of knowledge on a few of the primary religious traditions that will be central to the regions under discussion: Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, and Christianity. There will be guest speakers and a visit to Penn Museum. While much of the course will be immersed in the history and the past, we will conclude by considering contemporary contexts, both globalized and local. There is no prerequisite for the course. All students are welcome.

Fall

Also Offered As: RELS 2550

1 Course Unit

SAST 2554 Religion and Resistance in South Asia

In this course, we focus on various medieval and contemporary devotional forms of Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam in South Asia. Several definitions try to tie the idea of devotion to classicism and traditionalism with a set of conservative ideas. However, this course introduces the students to a diverse and pluralistic understanding of Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam that also has a history of resistance and protest beginning with poets such as Kabir and others from the Bhakti movement, and Sufi devotional contexts in South Asia. We read about the histories of these rebellious poets and their interventions into the traditional practices of devotion. We also discuss about how these medieval trends find their way into contemporary times enriching the discourses of Dalit, Muslim and Feminist movements.

Not Offered Every Year

Mutually Exclusive: SAST 5554

1 Course Unit

SAST 2600 Asian American Food

You are what you eat. Asian American Food explores the history, politics, and ethnic identity of food through a cultural lens. Growing food, eating, and sharing meals serve as intimate expressions of self and community. By examining the production and consumption of food, the course investigates the ways that Asian Americans navigate traditions, gender norms, religious dietary laws, food habits, and employment as they create lives in the United States. The course overviews the history of Asian American foodways, but has a particular focus on Philadelphia's Asian American communities.

Spring

Also Offered As: ASAM 2600, URBS 2600

1 Course Unit

SAST 2610 The Asian Caribbean

Although Asians have lived in the Americas for centuries, the Asian American community and experience tends to be defined by the post-1965 wave of immigration to the United States. In an effort to correct this narrative this course will explore the histories, experiences, and contributions of some of the forgotten Asians of the Americas. In particular, we will focus on the earlier labor migrations of Chinese and South Asian individuals to the Caribbean and the United States. The experiences of these individuals, who built railroads, cut sugarcane, and replaced African slave labor, complicate our understandings of race today. By examining the legal and social debates surrounding their labor in the 19th century and exploring how their experiences are forgotten and their descendants are rendered invisible today, we will complicate what is Asian America and consider how this history shapes immigration policies today.

Spring

Also Offered As: ASAM 2610, GSWS 2610, LALS 2601

1 Course Unit

SAST 2661 Introduction to Marxist Historical Concepts: Traditions and Debates

This course will introduce students to the main currents, themes, and debates in Marxist historical writing, with a focus on the European and Anglophone traditions with some consideration of forms of Marxist thought and historical practice in the postcolonial world. Though it cannot hope to provide a comprehensive outline of Marxist historiography and its intellectual foundations, it will cover major concepts integral to the Marxist tradition as well as wider historical and social science concepts to which the Marxist historical tradition has made serious contributions. In this capacity the class will cover such topics as mode of production, world systems, primitive accumulation, the rise of capitalism, economism, ideology, culture, articulation, hegemony, imperialism, and nationalism. Beyond the exploration of key concepts, the course will explore different modes of Marxist historical writing, from the analysis of working class history, rural rebellion and peasant movements to debates about origins of capitalism, the analysis of precapitalist economies, and the rise of anti-colonial nationalism. The course will also provide exposure to some of the social scientific and philosophical interactions that Marxism as a historical discipline has had with related fields like analytical philosophy, structuralist and post-structuralist philosophy, and cultural studies, in addition to interaction that Marxist historical writing has had with political vectors and movements and historical traditions like the New Left, labor history, anti-colonialism, feminism, race, and queer theory.

Mutually Exclusive: SAST 6261

1 Course Unit

SAST 2680 Art and Empire in India, 1750-1900

This course surveys transformations in visual culture between the Mughal and British empires in India from the mid-eighteenth through the nineteenth centuries. We shall consider changes in artistic production, patronage, publics, and viewing protocols in the contexts of the court and bazaar. We shall examine the emergence of new technologies and its impact on visual forms, media, and genres, focusing on the interplay of photography, print, and painting. We shall explore the role of institutions -the art school, the museum, and the archeological survey- and the professions and practices they engendered. We shall analyze how architecture and urban planning created new built environments and social relationships in colonial India. We shall view objects first-hand in the Penn Museum, Penn Libraries, and Philadelphia Museum of Art. This is a reading- and writing-intensive course. Students with a background in related disciplines such as literature, history, religion, anthropology, and South Asian Studies are welcome.

Also Offered As: ARTH 2680

Mutually Exclusive: ARTH 6680, SAST 6680

1 Course Unit

SAST 3120 Indian Art Seminar

This seminar addresses topics in the art of India from antiquity to the present emphasizing global connections and comparisons. Topics vary from year to year and might include the arts of the book in South Asia; Indian painting, 1100-now; history and theory of museums in the colony, 1750-1950; photography, cinema, and performance art in South Asia; and art, ecology, and environment in South Asia. We shall explore objects in area collections and incorporate special excursions and programs when possible. A background in South Asian studies or languages is not required. Students from related disciplines such history, anthropology, literary studies, religious studies, feminist studies, cinema and media studies, and architecture are welcome.

Fall

Also Offered As: ARTH 3120

1 Course Unit

SAST 3650 Themes of Indian Philosophy: Yoga and the Bhagavad Gita

Yoga is a classical school of Indian philosophy that consists of a unique metaphysics epistemology, and ethics. Yoga in the contemporary context usually refers to a system of physical and spiritual exercises that draw from this philosophy. In this course, we will read the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali in English translation from the original Sanskrit, with commentary. We will go over all central concepts, technical terms, and historical developments in the philosophy of Yoga. We will also discuss the philosophy of Hatha Yoga in the context of its historical and practical developments. No prior knowledge of Indian philosophy is required for this course. Alongside this, we will also look at the philosophy, religious significance, and history of the Bhagavad Gita – a major conspective statement of Indian philosophy which draws together the insights of the early Vedic tradition (including Yoga), Buddhism, Jainism, and effectively becomes a foundational work of classical Hinduism.

Also Offered As: PHIL 4251

1 Course Unit

SAST 3992 SAST Transfer Credit

This is a course number used to award transfer credit for South Asia Studies courses at the advanced level.

Fall or Spring

1 Course Unit

SAST 4998 UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

This course is required for all senior honors majors, and open to senior majors. Honors majors must, in addition, prepare a research paper.

Fall or Spring

1 Course Unit

SAST 5110 Topics in South Asian Art

This seminar engages topics in the history and theory of South Asian art from antiquity to the present emphasizing global connections and comparisons. Topics vary from year to year and might include the arts of the book in South Asia; Indian Ocean art worlds; and fragments, ruins, and traces in the art of South Asia. We shall explore objects in area collections and incorporate special excursions and programs when possible. A background in South Asian studies or languages is not required. Students from related disciplines such history, anthropology, literary studies, religious studies, feminist studies, cinema and media studies, and architecture are welcome.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 5110

1 Course Unit

SAST 5111 Beginning Hindi-Urdu Online (Startalk)

This introductory, proficiency-based course covers the core content of first-year Hindi-Urdu. It is designed for students with little or no prior exposure to Hindi or Urdu. The course covers all four language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing), but there is a special focus on developing speaking and listening skills. Students will also develop literacy skills in one script of their choice (Hindi or Urdu script). All written materials will be provided in both scripts. All classes are interactive and students acquire the language by using it in realistic contexts. Culture is introduced through various authentic materials including Bollywood songs. This program has a special application process. Please visit our website (<https://www.southasiacenter.upenn.edu/startalk>) for more information on the program and how to apply.

Summer Term

1 Course Unit

SAST 5189 Islam and the West

How did Muslims and modern South Asia interact with the West? What Islamic idioms, orientations and movements emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries? Was South Asia a prominent global center of Islam? What kinds of Islamic educational institutions developed in modern South Asia? How did Muslims appropriate technologies? What materials were printed by Muslims? Were Muslims part of the British army? What was jihad in modernity? How did Muslim 'modernists' and 'traditionalists' respond to the challenges of colonialism and modernity? What was the nature of Sufism in modern South Asia? What was the nature of political Islam in South Asia? How did some Muslims demand a Muslim State? What was the Partition? How has Muslim history been remembered in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan? This is an introductory course, and aims to introduce students to a facet of the long history of Islam, Muslims, and the West.

1 Course Unit

SAST 5208 Doing Research: Qualitative Methods and Research Design

This interdisciplinary course introduces students to qualitative research methods and frameworks in the social sciences and humanities.

Students will learn how to frame an effective research question, situate it in relation to existing research, select the most appropriate methods for addressing the question, and develop an effective research plan. Each week students will be introduced to a new set of frameworks for analysis, see specific examples of their application drawn from anthropological, historical, and related scholarship and have opportunities to practice applying and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of specific methodological tools. The goals of the semester will be for each student to develop their own research proposal for a specific project. Students will be introduced to a range of textual, archival and media collections and databases available at Penn, with particular attention to South Asia and other specific regions of interest to course participants. Students will also have the opportunity to identify sources of funding for summer and/or thesis research projects, and submit applications for these opportunities as part of the course. The course is ideal for freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, and MA students considering summer research, an undergraduate or MA thesis, or an application to the Fulbright or other research program or to PhD programs.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ANTH 5208

Mutually Exclusive: SAST 2208

1 Course Unit

SAST 5229 Dalit and Black Literatures: Caste, Race, and Representation

The aim of this course is to study the historical conversations and comparisons between caste and racial oppression and the forging of categories of caste and/as race in the Dalit and African American literatures. Beginning with a brief survey of the historical conversations between the Black Panthers and Dalit Panthers, the course introduces some selected scholarly and literary debates on caste and/as racial discrimination, history of Afro-Dalit solidarity, literary representation of identities of caste and race and themes of freedom and equality. Selections of seminal texts and debates from the Dalit and African literary and cultural movements are included for discussion and analysis.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: AFRC 5229

Mutually Exclusive: AFRC 2229, SAST 2229

1 Course Unit

SAST 5239 Adivasis/Indigenous Peoples & British Colonialism in India

Modern Western colonialism impacted the world in many ways. However, each country and community has had a different encounter and experience with colonialism. For the Adivasis (indigenous peoples) of India, it was catastrophic and marked a new phase in their history. The pre-colonial symbolizes a period of freedom in the hills and forest, whereas the colonial era symbolizes state coercion, eviction from land and the end of free movement in the forest. The proposed course discusses Adivasis' encounters with the British colonial state. The course examines Indian history from the perspectives of Adivasis and contrasts these with dominant paradigms of Indian history. In this way, the course allows students to understand India from a different perspective. Under British colonialism, the diverse ethnic self-governing communities were imagined as primitive, uncivilized, barbaric, violent, backward and childlike people. The course discusses how such constructions impacted Adivasi social life and development. It traces how the expansion of the colonial state in forests and hills put an end to self-rule and induced massive migration from the plains of India and asks how Adivasi areas were integrated into the colonial economy. How did the colonial state use revenue and forest policies and regulations to bring these areas under its control? How did commercialization of agriculture and forest conservation work to further marginalize Adivasis? The course also examines how Adivasi knowledge of cultivation and forest conservation were viewed by the colonial state and asks why the colonial state encouraged caste-Hindu peasant migration into Adivasi areas. Finally, it traces the ways that colonial intervention has resulted in a series of contestations, acts of resistance, and insurgencies by Adivasi groups? Tracing forms of Adivasi resistance, the course puts these into conversation with intellectual history, emphasizing the role of rumours, myths, and orality, which provided the basis for the new insurgent consciousness that spread throughout Adivasi communities. Adivasi resistance movements have been documented and analyzed by colonial rulers and anthropologists. Colonial discourses were successful in criminalizing Adivasi politics. Ironically, many colonial-era discourses concerning Adivasis have been perpetuated within the post-colonial academy. The anti-colonial struggles of Adivasis were constructed as sporadic, spontaneous, unorganized and apolitical. The inauguration of the Subaltern Studies Project has reversed such arguments and attempted to provide ideological integrity to Adivasi politics. Students will be introduced to important literature on Adivasi anti-colonial insurgent consciousness and will be encouraged to think critically about the concepts and theories of subaltern politics. Assigned readings include texts by James Scott, Ranajit Guha, David Arnold, David Hardiman, Ajay Skaria, Dhanagare, Ramachandra Guha, Biswamoy Pati, Alpa Shah, Crispin Bates, Jangkhomang Guite and Bhangya Bhukya. One aim of the course is to sensitize the students to how the political and cultural mobilizations by subalterns have contributed to the shaping of democracy. Course Requirements: Short writing responses to readings In-class presentations on readings Midterm short essay Final research paper based on primary and secondary sources. (No exams) Instructor's Objectives: 1. Students will understand indigenous perspectives on Indian culture and history 2. Students will be able to situate indigenous movements in relation to Subaltern Studies, dominant schools of historiography, and colonial and postcolonial ethnography 3. Students will be able to analyze primary sources and identify different schools of thought within secondary literature 4. Students will be able to analyze the impact of colonial practices and discourses on indigenous cultures, histories and practices, and the forms of resistance that indigenous groups have utilized

Spring

Also Offered As: ANTH 5239

Mutually Exclusive: SAST 2239

SAST 5410 Religion and the Visual Image: Seeing is Believing

Seeing is Believing engages in a historical, theoretical, and cross-cultural analysis of the place of visuality in religion and of religion in visual culture. We will examine images, buildings, places, objects, performances and events. The geographical, cultural and historical scope of the material is broad, including subjects from Europe, the Islamic World, non-Muslim South Asia, the US and Latin America from the medieval period until the present. Theoretical works will be read in conjunction with representative examples to invite intellectual engagement in a socially and historically grounded way. Important issues to be covered include the relationship of visual to material culture; visual theories versus theories of vision; locating religion in human sensory experience; perception at individual and collective levels; authenticities, fakes and simulacra; iconoclasm and image veneration; aesthetics, use and utility; and things.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: MELC 6560, NELC 6560, RELS 5410

1 Course Unit

SAST 5503 Historical Transitions In Early India

This course will focus on major historical transitions in the South Asian subcontinent until approximately AD 1200. It will focus on particularly on political, social and liturgical philosophical change. It will also introduce students to the major narratives and interpretations of the ancient and early medieval periods as they bear on these questions and will also familiarize students with the sources upon which this history has been based. It will review debates, critical perspectives and recent trends in this historiography with a view toward developing a sensitivity to the theoretical problems that attend the study of pre-modern India. Its persistent themes will be historical continuity and disjuncture in the history of religious practices and ideas, the emergence of political forms and the nature of the 'state' in precolonial india, transformations of society and economy, and the relationship between discursive production and relations of power. It will be of interest to students of history, literature, religion and archaeology.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

SAST 5550 History of Hinduism

This course will explore the history of the religion(s) designated by the term 'Hinduism' from their earliest articulations down to the rise of modern reforms in the nineteenth century. The study of Hinduism is perhaps unique among the scholarly traditions on world religions in that it has to date had no serious connected account of its historical development, as scholars have preferred to take structural, sociological, phenomenological, and doctrinal approaches to the religion. The course, after a brief review of scholarly approaches to Hinduism and their interpretive legacies, will seek to develop a historical sense of the religion through attention to shifts in liturgy, ritual, theology, doctrine, sacral kingship, and soteriology. The course will include the reading of primary sources relevant to understanding these changes as well as highlight both modern and premodern traditions of their interpretation. It will also consider and assess some of the key interpretive ideas in the study of Hinduism, including, Sanskritization, Great and Little Traditions, cult formation, regional and popular religious movements, and canon formation. There will also be sustained consideration of the question of religion and socio-political power as well as relations between Hinduism and other religions like Buddhism and Islam.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: RELS 5555

1 Course Unit

SAST 5552 MLA Proseminar: Philosophy East and West: An Introduction to Indian and Chinese Philosophy

This course will take the student through the major topics of Indian philosophy by first introducing the fundamental concepts and terms that are necessary for a deeper understanding of themes that pervade the philosophical literature of India – arguments for and against the existence of God, for example, the ontological status of external objects, the means of valid knowledge, standards of proof, the discourse on the aims of life. The readings will emphasize classical Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain philosophical articulations (from 700 B.C.E. to 16th century CE) but we will also supplement our study of these materials with contemporary or relatively recent philosophical writings in modern India.

Fall or Spring

1 Course Unit

SAST 5554 Religion and Resistance in South Asia

In this course, we focus on various medieval and contemporary devotional forms of Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam in South Asia. Several definitions try to tie the idea of devotion to classicism and traditionalism with a set of conservative ideas. However, this course introduces the students to a diverse and pluralistic understanding of Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam that also has a history of resistance and protest beginning with poets such as Kabir and others from the Bhakti movement, and Sufi devotional contexts in South Asia. We read about the histories of these rebellious poets and their interventions into the traditional practices of devotion. We also discuss about how these medieval trends find their way into contemporary times enriching the discourses of Dalit, Muslim and Feminist movements.

Not Offered Every Year

Mutually Exclusive: SAST 2554

1 Course Unit

SAST 5560 Modern History of Pakistan

This course is designed as an introduction to the contemporary history of Afghanistan and Pakistan, with an emphasis on the intertwined history of both countries; their other regional neighbors; and global politics. The course focuses on global trends such as empire, nationalism, the Cold War, superpower competition, and transnational Islamism. At the same time, participants will explore how local people viewed their lives amidst these trends, and how local dynamics on this northwestern fringe of the Subcontinent changed the face of global politics. The readings supplement political and economic history with primary sources drawn from popular poetry, oral narrative, and memoir. Finally, we'll be following current events in the region, and placing them in their sociohistorical context. Therefore, there are two main goals for this course: (1) to introduce the specific history of Afghanistan and Pakistan up to present, and (2) to introduce typologies of social institutions and events, assisting class participants to develop their own frameworks for interpreting current events in the region after the end of the course.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

SAST 5571 Devotion's New Market: Religion, Economics, and the City

This graduate and undergraduate level course introduces students to the new forms of devotion as circulated in various urban centers in South Asia with a focus on growing market economy and urbanization. This course will particularly discuss case studies of how different modes of Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and other minor religions operate in an urbanized middle-class and educated communities. We will read theoretical and ethnographical works of contemporary research in religious studies and anthropology that deal with the questions of modernity, reformism and economic developmentalism. Throughout the semester, we focus on 1) how does religious forms such as sainthood practices, private and public rituals, narrative modes and everyday life evolve in the background of growing politics of development; 2) we discuss the tensions between classical notions of devotion and their new transformations in the city life, and finally 3) theoretically, we analyze concepts such as reformism, fundamentalism, recent discourses on identity politics and gender implications as connected to urban religious life.

Not Offered Every Year

Mutually Exclusive: SAST 1171

1 Course Unit

SAST 5781 Silk Road: From the Mediterranean to the Pacific

A journey along the overland and sea routes that connected China, India, Iran, and Rome from 200-1000 CE and served as conduits for cultural exchange. Precursor and successor routes will also be taken into consideration. The lives of merchants, envoys, pilgrims, and travelers interacting in cosmopolitan communities will be examined. Exploration of long-known and newly discovered archaeological ruins, along with primary sources in translation, will be studied.

Also Offered As: EALC 5781

Mutually Exclusive: EALC 1781

1 Course Unit

SAST 5860 History of Islam in South Asia

This class is designed to structure reflection on Islam and Islamic culture in South Asia, including intensive discussions on the placement of boundaries of "Islamic" culture, performance, and identity. We will ask where and how these boundaries have evolved with reference to language, ritual, politics, and nationalism in South Asia. We will position our readings and reflections in the disciplines of Religious Studies and Social and Cultural History. If you already have a solid background in South Asian history, this class is perfect for you. If you do not, you will need to do more work behind the scenes to get the basics in place to participate fully in course discussions. We will structure our study with particular attention to significant urban spaces in South Asia. While studies of what constitutes a public and even a nation have focused on the impact of European models, the particular interaction of Islam with all other identity-constitutive areas of life must be grounded in the South Asian context. To drive this home, each of the topics will be grounded in a particular urban space or set of connected urban spaces; we will also consider the differences between this approach and prominent intellectual history approaches. How are public spaces imagined in South Asia, and how are they linked to identity? This class takes a typological approach to studies of the public in South Asia; namely, instead of the public arriving as a European import, this course assumes that we can observe public formation particular to South Asia and independent from European public characteristics. The class will involve regular consideration of a range of primary sources including amulets in the Penn Museum collection and original documents held in the Special Collections at the University of Pennsylvania and the U.S. Library of Congress. For this class, you must have some background in study of South Asia and/or study of Islam. Aside from guiding reflection on literature key to the history of Islam in South Asia, the course is also designed to help you learn how to do several tasks essential to the work of a productive academic professional. You will learn to: Participate confidently in seminars and scholarly discussions on shared readings. Read effectively and efficiently for seminar discussions. Lead seminar discussions. Design and execute an independent research project relevant to the class. Design, pitch, and present a 20-minute seminar paper

Fall, even numbered years only

Also Offered As: RELS 5860

Prerequisites: Graduate Students Only; advanced undergraduates must obtain professor permission to enroll in the course.

1 Course Unit

SAST 5999 Independent Study

Directed Study for Graduate students only

Fall or Spring

1 Course Unit

SAST 6120 Cities and Temples in Ancient India

The wooden architecture of ancient India's cities is represented in relief carvings from Buddhist religious monuments of the early centuries A.D. and replicated in remarkable excavated cave cathedrals. This lecture course will trace that architectural tradition, its transformation into a symbolic vocabulary for a new structure, the Hindu temple, and the development of the temple in India from ca. 500-1500 A.D.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 6120

1 Course Unit

SAST 6200 SAST Proseminar: History, Methods, and Theories of South Asian Studies

This course aims to provide students with the methodological tools and disciplinary perspectives necessary for the contemporary study of South Asia, while situating that study in the larger history of Area Studies as an interdisciplinary field of study. The course will include both in-depth discussion of the theory and history of Area Studies in the United States and the relation of area-specific study to nineteenth-century fields of philology and orientalism, as well as orientations and case studies in the major fields associated with South Asian Studies. Alongside these thematic concerns, studies will practice skills necessary for further study, including working with sources and archives, field-standard citation practices, and developing familiarity with new methodologies in the digital humanities. Relatedly, this course will deal with the major genres of academic writing associated with South Asian studies, including both departmental milestones such as the proposal and the dissertation, as well as journal articles and grant applications. The course will culminate in a student project which will work with one of these genres to present their own research interests. Completion of this course will prepare students to engage in the diverse conversations that make up contemporary South Asian Studies.

Spring

1 Course Unit

SAST 6207 Reading Caste Critically

This seminar explores trends and shifts in interdisciplinary scholarship on the caste question. It serves as an introduction to foundational texts and debates in the history of critical caste studies in fields like sociology, history, Indology, and political philosophy. The course will also engage various methods, pedagogical tools, and conceptual frameworks that have emerged out of anti-oppressive writings and anti-caste transformative politics. The course draws on primary and secondary source material, from the 19th century to the present, to examine how questions of labor, gender and sexuality, colonialism, socio-religious reform, and Ambedkarite politics have shaped discourse around both caste and the politics of its annihilation.

Also Offered As: COML 6207

1 Course Unit

SAST 6217 CU In India - Topics Course

C.U. in India is a hybrid, domestic/overseas course series which provides students with the opportunity to have an applied learning and cultural experience in India or South East Asia where students participate in 1) 28 classroom hours in the Fall term 2) a 12-day trip to India or South East Asia with the instructor during the winter break visiting key sites and conducting original research (sites vary) 3) 28 classroom hours at Penn in the Spring term and 4) a research paper, due at the end of the Spring term. Course enrollment is limited to students admitted to the program. For more information and the program application go to <http://sites.sas.upenn.edu/cuinindia> This is a 2-CU yearlong course DEADLINE TO REGISTER IS MARCH 31st

Two Term Class, Student must enter first term; credit given after both terms are complete

1 Course Unit

SAST 6251 Muslim Sainthood Practices

This course aims at introducing various classical, popular and modern Muslim saints in South Asia. We will read the life stories of these saints and focus on their contribution to various religions in South Asia. We will read the life stories of these saints and focus on their contribution to various religions in South Asia. We will learn about the major concepts initiated and circulated by these saints and their distinctive ways of dealing with spiritual aspects. While focusing on their sainthood practices, we also study the nature of the dialogue which addresses the questions such as pluralism, localism, and a new paradigm of spirituality that continually interacts with diverse modes of everyday life in South Asia. In order to understand their impact on visual and media cultures, we also watch two documentaries and compare these visual sources with sainthood literature and practices.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

SAST 6261 Introduction to Marxist Historical Concepts: Traditions and Debates

This course will introduce students to the main currents, themes, and debates in Marxist historical writing, with a focus on the European and Anglophone traditions with some consideration of forms of Marxist thought and historical practice in the postcolonial world. Though it cannot hope to provide a comprehensive outline of Marxist historiography and its intellectual foundations, it will cover major concepts integral to the Marxist tradition as well as wider historical and social science concepts to which the Marxist historical tradition has made serious contributions. In this capacity the class will cover such topics as mode of production, world systems, primitive accumulation, the rise of capitalism, economism, ideology, culture, articulation, hegemony, imperialism, and nationalism. Beyond the exploration of key concepts, the course will explore different modes of Marxist historical writing, from the analysis of working class history, rural rebellion and peasant movements to debates about origins of capitalism, the analysis of precapitalist economies, and the rise of anti-colonial nationalism. The course will also provide exposure to some of the social scientific and philosophical interactions that Marxism as a historical discipline has had with related fields like analytical philosophy, structuralist and post-structuralist philosophy, and cultural studies, in addition to interaction that Marxist historical writing has had with political vectors and movements and historical traditions like the New Left, labor history, anti-colonialism, feminism, race, and queer theory.

Mutually Exclusive: SAST 2661

1 Course Unit

SAST 6262 The Making of Medieval India

This course will provide an in-depth understanding of South Asia in what is often called its 'medieval' period—from the rise of the great temple kingdoms until the end of the Delhi Sultanate in the sixteenth century (c. 500 CE - c. 1500 CE). This millennium is arguably one of the most transformative in South Asia's history, a period when many of its most distinctive social and cultural features evolved. The course will provide both an overview of the period as well as an introduction to major interpretations and types of sources (textual, visual, and archaeological). The focus throughout the course will be on the heterogeneous development of states, societies and cultures with special attention to long-term processes of transformation. One set of themes explored will be largely social and economic, focusing on the development of agrarian and peasant societies, aristocracies and intellectuals, as well as the role of mercantile, pastoralist, nomadic and forest-living groups. Another set of themes will explore cultural transformation, including the development, transformation and interaction of religious practices, the emergence of cosmopolitan and regional literary cultures, and the rise of distinctive urban, courtly, and rural world views. Special themes of discussion may include violence and manners, material cultures, religious conflict, devotional religion and gender relations.

Not Offered Every Year

Mutually Exclusive: SAST 2262

1 Course Unit

SAST 6293 Caste & Class in South Asia

This course will explore the reality of caste and class in South Asian society, and the theories, classical and modern, that attempt to explain it. We shall survey a wide sweep of sources, from the earliest evidence for a division into caste-classes in the Rig-Veda to reports in modern media of caste-related social problems; from orthodox Hindu normative texts justifying and upholding a rigid hierarchical division of society to voices, in Sanskrit and in vernaculars, criticizing the caste system. Our goal is to gain a nuanced and many-sided insight into a deeply pervasive phenomenon that has shaped South Asian society, culture, and religion in general (Muslim, Sikh, and Christian castes) from ancient time up to the twentieth century.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

SAST 6324 Sanskrit Literature in Translation

This course will focus solely on the specific genres, themes, and aesthetics of Sanskrit literature (the hymn, the epic, the lyric, prose, drama, story literature, the sutra, etc.) and a study of the history and specific topics of Sanskrit poetics and dramaturgy. All readings will be in translation.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

SAST 6334 A Survey of Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Classical Tamil Literature in Translation

This course will cover most of the genres of literature in South Asia's classical languages through close readings of selections of primary texts in English translation. Special focus will be given to epics, drama, lyric poetry, satirical works, and religious literature.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

SAST 6604 Neoliberalism and the City

Over fifty percent of the world's population now lives in cities. Neoliberalism—the ideology and accompanying policies and practices that champion the shifting of political decision making from the public sector to the private sector—has been widely recognized as having shown dramatic growth worldwide since the 1970s. It has also been widely regarded as a product of globalization. This course traces the history of neo-liberalism in global context with particular attention to neoliberalism's relationship to cities, and examines the role that urban growth has played in spurring neoliberal policies and practices. It asks how policy makers, voters, and private interest worldwide have responded to the growth of urban poverty and slums, challenges within urban public education, unequal resource distribution, environmental pressures experienced within urban sanitation and waste disposal systems, and increased demands for municipal services like water, electricity, and transport infrastructures, and examines the rise of public-private partnerships, gated communities, initiatives to privatized education and municipal services, and efforts to relocate slum-dwellers and beautify cities as explicit strategies for attracting "global capital". The course also asks how the recent rise of neoliberal policies and practices differs from earlier market-driven and private sector led forms of political governance. The British and Dutch East India Companies are two famous examples of joint stock companies that assumed administrative and political roles over their colonies. How did the rise of these colonial relationships differ from current neoliberal shifts. Readings will draw heavily from ethnographic and urban studies, scholarship on South Asia, as well as Latin America, South Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and North America, exploring what each of these specific contexts has to teach us more generally about the relationship between urbanization, global capitalism, public and private sectors, and political processes and decision making.

Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: URBS 6604
1 Course Unit

SAST 6611 Sex, Sexuality and Sexual Science in South Asia: Perspectives from the Past and Present

This course will introduce students to the problems of sex, sexuality and sexual science in South Asia over the centuries. Its central problem will be how sex, society and knowledge about sex have been transformed in South Asia under the conditions of colonial and postcolonial modernity. It will consider how a multitude of indigenous practices and knowledges, from the famous Kamasutra and its allied knowledges to the transgender communities, from the Lazzat-un-Nisa to concubinage and the sexual norms of elite households, were framed and reframed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries through the agency of a variety of institutions, groups and individuals. The course will also show how South Asia played a crucial role in the global evolution of sexual knowledge. Topics will include the varieties and functions of traditional sexual knowledges, colonial sexology, changing sexual identities and practices, the relation of psychiatry and medicine to sex, queer and transgender sexualities, and the complex and shifting role of the state and civil society to all of these topics.

1 Course Unit

SAST 6612 Performance, Politics, and Power in Modern India

This seminar locates performance in modern India – understood here as music, theatre, and dance – in the context of its social production and the production of its value. On the one hand, the course builds on perspectives drawn from Marx, Bourdieu, and others, and on the other, it examines themes of social hierarchy, taste habits, labor and corporeal exertion, and caste to think about the braiding of the arts and politics in modern India. A primary objective of the course is to de-center earlier nationalist-inflected histories about the arts in modern India, and bridge new thinking on performance across diverse forms of knowledge and critical methods. The seminar revolves around a number of significant questions for the study of culture in modern India. How does the modern Indian nation-state mediate and mold taste-habits and hierarchies? How do we historicize the making of the hierarchy of so-called "classical" and "folk" performance in modern India? How can we think of the arts as commodities of exchange and vessels of capital in the context of the majoritarian state? To what extent do late nineteenth and early twentieth-century "reform" and projects of cultural reinvention undergird the contemporary practice of these arts, particularly in the age of the majoritarian Hindu state? How do Dalit-Bahujan and minority religious communities claim their pasts and engage in articulatory practices that stage new modes of identity and resistance?

Not Offered Every Year
1 Course Unit

SAST 6617 Readings in Modern Indian History

This course will introduce students to the major themes and debates of modern Indian historiography. Though the course will not provide a survey outline of events, it will be organized around themes that have a broad chronological sequence. It will touch on key topical themes like the transition to colonialism, the development of the colonial economy, the evolution and significance of colonial knowledge systems, the impact and shape of religious and social reform, the rise of nationalism and communalism, and peasant, labour and subaltern history. The goal of the course will be to provide students with an understanding of the significance of debates around key themes in modern Indian history and a familiarity with the different 'schools' or 'traditions' of historical interpretation, including Nationalist, Marxist, the so-called 'Chicago', and 'Cambridge' schools, as well as the Subaltern collective and post-Subaltern historiography.

Not Offered Every Year
1 Course Unit

SAST 6623 Literary History and Aesthetics in South Asia

This seminar surveys the multiple components of literary culture in South Asia. Students will engage critically with selected studies of literary history and aesthetics from the past two millennia. In order to introduce students to specific literary cultures (classical, regional, contemporary) and to the scholarly practices that situate literature in broader contexts of culture and society, the course will focus both on the literary theories – especially from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – that position South Asia's literary cultures within broader disciplinary frameworks that use literary documents to inform social, historical and cultural research projects. The aim is to open up contexts whereby students can develop their own research projects using literary sources.

Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: COML 6623
1 Course Unit

SAST 6625 PHILOLOGY AND HISTORY: READING SOUTH ASIAN TEXTS

This course provides students with an overview of how South Asian texts have been treated historically and, specifically, the methods employed to read, interpret, and historicize these texts, the mechanics of their production and reception, literary and philological criticism, performance, and overarching theoretical perspectives from classical South Asia and contemporary critical theory. Topics and themes covered include: an overview of the languages of South Asia, trends and debates in South Asian literary history, issues of translation and vernacularization, the politics and poetics of language and hermeneutics, the process of making a critical edition, translation and theories of translation, and the use of literary materials by historians in research contexts.

1 Course Unit

SAST 6627 South Asia Literature as Comparative Literature

This course takes up the question of reading South Asian Literature both as a collection of diverse literary cultures, as well as the basis for a methodology of reading that takes language, region, and history into account. It takes as a starting point recent work that foregrounds the importance of South Asian language literatures, and their complex interactions, to an understanding of South Asian literary history, as well as critiques of the concept of world literature that question its underlying assumptions and frequent reliance on cosmopolitan languages such as English. In what ways can we describe the many complex interactions between literary cultures in South Asia, rooted in specific historical contexts, reading practices, and cultural expectations, while maintaining attention to language and literary form? How, in turn, can we begin to think of these literatures in interaction with larger conversations in the world? With these considerations in mind, we will examine works of criticism dealing with both modern and pre-modern literatures, primarily but not exclusively focused on South Asia. Topics will include the concept of the cosmopolis in literary and cultural history, the role of translation, the transformations of literature under colonialism, and twentieth century literary movements such as realism and Dalit literature. Readings may include works by Erich Auerbach, Frederic Jameson, Aijaz Ahmad, Gayatri Spivak, Aamir Mufti, Sheldon Pollack, David Shulman, Yigal Bronner, Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, Francesca Orsini, Subramanian Shankar, Sharankumar Kimbale, and Torlae Jatin Gajrawala. We will also examine selected works, in English and in translation, as case studies for discussion. This course is intended both for students who intend to specialize in the study of South Asia, as well as for those who focus on questions of comparative literature more broadly.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: COML 6627

1 Course Unit

SAST 6631 The Sanskrit Epics

Ancient India's two epic poems, originally composed in Sanskrit and received in dozens of languages over the span of two thousand years, continue to shape the psychic, social, religious, and emotional worlds of millions of people around the world. The epic Mahabharata, which roughly translates to The Great Story of the Descendants of the Legendary King Bharata, is the longest single poem in the world (approximately 200,000 lines of Sanskrit verse in the 1966 Critical Edition) and tells the mythic history of dynastic power struggles in ancient India. An apocalyptic meditation on time, death, and the utter devastation brought upon the individual and the family unit through social disintegration, the epic also serves as sourcebook for social and political mores and contains one of the great religious works of the world, The Bhagavad Gita (translation: The Song of God), in the middle of its sprawling narrative. The other great epic, The Ramayana (Rama's Journey), though essentially tragic and about the struggles for power in ancient India, offers a relatively brighter narrative in foregrounding King Rāma, an avatar of the supreme divinity Viṣṇu, who serves as an ideal for how human beings might successfully negotiate the challenges of worldly life. Perhaps the most important work of ancient Asia, the Rāmāyaṇa also provides a model of human social order that contrasts with dystopic polities governed by animals and demons. Our course will engage in close reading of selections from both of these epic poems (in English translation) and scholarship on the epic from the past century. We will explore the Sanskrit epic genre, its oral and textual forms in South Asia, and the numerous modes for interpreting it over the centuries. We will also look at the reception of these ancient works in modern forms of media, such as the novel, television, theater, cinema and the comic book/anime.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: COML 6631

Mutually Exclusive: COML 2231, SAST 2231

1 Course Unit

SAST 6632 Hinduism and Colonial Modernity

This seminar deals with the question of modernity in South Asia, with a specific focus on the construction, dissemination, and politicization of Hinduism in nineteenth and twentieth century India. It focuses on three central heuristic lenses—namely those of European imperialism, Orientalism, and nationalism—to study modernity and its discontents. What was at stake in the encounter between colonial modernity and India's religions in nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? How did colonial and native discourses on "reform" and "revival" shape Indian religions as we understand them today? How is modern "Hinduism" inextricably hinged to early forms of cultural transnationalism, Orientalism, and incipient forms of nationalism? This seminar approaches questions such as these and others, with an eye to understanding how nineteenth and early twentieth century discourses continue to shape contemporary understandings of Hinduism in deep and highly politicized ways.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: RELS 6632

1 Course Unit

SAST 6634 Realism and South Asian Literature

This course examines problems of realism as a concept in relation to South Asian literature in the 19th and 20th centuries. Realism, both in its broadest sense as mimetic depictions in literature, as well as specific instantiations in art history, literature, and politics, has had a decisive impact on South Asian literary history. Yet as a topic realism presents several unique challenges, not unlike its twin in twentieth-century literature, the equally-protean modernism. In part this may stem from its conceptual and disciplinary range, pulling together problems in the history of science, the politics of art, and aesthetics. With these caveats in mind, we will examine a range of texts, both those specifically dealing with South Asian literature, as well as those considered foundational to understandings of realism at play. Readings in criticism may include Hegel, Marx, Ian Watt, Rabindranath Tagore, Gyorgy Lukacs, Bertold Brecht, Raymond Williams, Frederic Jameson, Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Namwar Singh, Ram Vilas Sharma, WReC, Michael Lowy, and Meenakshi Mukherjee, along with fiction and poetry by Nazeer Ahmed, Tagore, Munshi Premchand, Sa'adat Hasan Manto, Ismat Chughtai, O.V. Vijayan, and Uday Prakash. We will also discuss, when relevant topics relating to art history and cinema studies. This course will be suitable both for those students who wish to investigate realism in South Asian history, as well as those who want a thorough grounding in the theory and literary historiography of realism more generally.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

SAST 6635 Marxist Concepts and Historical Writing

This course will introduce students to the main topics in Marxist historical analysis, with the aim of helping students understand the themes, concepts and debates that have animated Marxist historiography of different kinds. It will focus primarily on writing available in English, but will include work on both Europe and the wider world, particularly the colonial and postcolonial world. It will outline basic analytical traditions within Marxism and their relations to historical writing. Concepts will include economy and society, mode of production, surplus value, bourgeois revolution, imperialism, primitive accumulation, ideology, and hegemony. Themes and debates will include the agrarian and commercial contexts in the rise of capitalism, global dynamics of finance/late capitalism, peasant and worker histories, including class formation and rebellion and resistance. Readings may include excerpts from Marx's writing itself as well as Marxist thinkers like Lenin, Trotsky, Gramsci, Althusser, Adorno, Thompson, Banaji, and Harvey.

1 Course Unit

SAST 6636 The Problem of Vernacularity in Literary Modernity

The vernacular, despite its origins in European empire and later colonialism, and its role in creating inherently oppositional relationships between different languages and literary cultures, persists as a foundational way of thinking categorizing literary cultures throughout the post-imperial and post-colonial world. How does literary history appear from the perspective of vernacularity? What might we see when we privilege literary cultures seen as vernacular rather than metropolitan languages such as English or French? How, in turn, might such a perspective inform our understanding of the larger field, across language, of world literary history during the twentieth century? This course begins with a term that indexes relations of power, hierarchy, and empire as a starting point to rethink crucial debates in twentieth century literary history. The category of the vernacular, in its move from the European post-Latinate to a range of imperial, colonial, and post-colonial configurations, introduces problems of comparison that continue to trouble contemporary disciplinary understandings of literary study. Some of the implications of the vernacular, such as those highlighted by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o refusal to write in English, are obvious in their shift towards literary cultures marginalized in colonial and post-colonial contexts. But the concept of the vernacular also intervenes in ideas of reading publics, orality, and indigeneity such that it can be the basis for a wider range of inquiry into the social conditions of multilingual literary histories. This course uses the inherent tension caused by this difficult word to engage in a number of case studies in contexts including interwar Central Europe, Cold War literatures of the Third World, and Korean literature during the period of Japanese occupation; authors discussed will include Fredric Jameson, Abdelfattah Kilito, Aamir Mufti, and Shu-mei Shih. This course is open to all MA and Ph.D. students regardless of prior knowledge. Advanced undergraduates should contact the instructor to request permission to enroll and should submit a permit request via Path@Penn.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: COML 6636, ENGL 5636

1 Course Unit

SAST 6645 Religion in Modern South Asia

This core seminar introduces graduate students to key themes in the study of religion in modern South Asia, with a focus on debates related to Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity in India from the nineteenth century to the present. Drawing upon a range of methodological and theoretical approaches, the seminar covers themes such as colonial and missionary constructions of religious categories, Orientalism and textual authority, social and religious "reform" movements, questions of caste and gender, and debates about religious nationalisms, democracy, and secularism.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: RELS 6560

1 Course Unit

SAST 6646 Performance, Politics, and Power in Modern India

This course locates performance in modern India – understood here as music, theatre, and dance – in the context of its social production and the production of its value. On the one hand, the course builds on perspectives drawn from Marx, Bourdieu, and others, and on the other, it examines themes of social hierarchy, taste habits, labor and corporeal exertion, and caste to think about the braiding of the arts and politics in modern India. A primary objective of the course is to de-center earlier nationalist-inflected histories about the arts in modern India, and bridge new thinking on performance across diverse forms of knowledge and critical methods. The course revolves around a number of significant questions for the study of culture in modern India. How does the modern Indian nation-state mediate and mold taste-habits and hierarchies? How do we historicize the making of the hierarchy of so-called “classical” and “folk” performance in modern India? How can we think of the arts as commodities of exchange and vessels of capital in the context of the majoritarian state? To what extent do late nineteenth and early twentieth-century “reform” and projects of cultural reinvention undergird the contemporary practice of these arts, particularly in the age of the majoritarian Hindu state? How do Dalit-Bahujan and minority religious communities claim their pasts and engage in articulatory practices that stage new modes of identity and resistance?

Fall

1 Course Unit

SAST 6680 Art and Empire in India, 1750-1900

This course surveys transformations in visual culture between the Mughal and British empires in India from the mid-eighteenth through the nineteenth centuries. We shall consider changes in artistic production, patronage, publics, and viewing protocols in the contexts of the court and bazaar. We shall examine the emergence of new technologies and its impact on visual forms, media, and genres, focusing on the interplay of photography, print, and painting. We shall explore the role of institutions – the art school, the museum, and the archeological survey – and the professions and practices they engendered. We shall analyze how architecture and urban planning created new built environments and social relationships in colonial India. We shall view objects first-hand in the Penn Museum, Penn Libraries, and Philadelphia Museum of Art. This is a reading- and writing-intensive course. Students with a background in related disciplines such as literature, history, religion, anthropology, and South Asian Studies are welcome.

Also Offered As: ARTH 6680

Mutually Exclusive: ARTH 2680, SAST 2680

1 Course Unit

SAST 7110 Indian Art Seminar

This course focuses on art in India. Open to graduate students only.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 7110

1 Course Unit

SAST 7307 Intellectual Histories of South Asia in Global Context: Genealogies of the Present

This graduate seminar explores intellectual histories of contemporary South Asia. Readings will trace selected literary, cultural, political, religious, and linguistic genealogies that have shaped present-day understandings, practices, alliances and categories of thought in South Asia. Particular attention will be placed on 19th and 20th century global influences and interactions, including with England, Ireland, Germany, the Soviet Union/Russia, Turkey and the Arab World, East and Southeast Asia, the United States, and Africa. Topics will include histories of mapping and census efforts, publishing projects (including those funded by the Soviet Union and the United States), international conferences (e.g., the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions at the World's Fair in Chicago, 1955 Bandung Conference, the 2009 Durban Conference), technological influences and exchanges, and educational institutions and practices. The course will also include discussions of methods for carrying out intellectual history projects and would therefore be of use for students conducting research in other regions of the world.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ANTH 7307

1 Course Unit

SAST 7701 Methodology Seminar: Topics

Topics vary

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: ANTH 7701

1 Course Unit

SAST 7704 State, Society, and Culture in South Asia

This interdisciplinary course introduces graduate students to both classic and more recent theoretical frameworks used in understanding and analyzing society, culture, and the state, with particular reference to South Asia. Topics include bureaucracy and the state; power and performance; hierarchy and individualism; caste, community, and domination; money and markets; credit and debt; globalization and consumption; economic liberalization and political transformations; local and trans-local contexts of meaning; the environment, politics, and urban and rural ecologies; and culture and the changing shape of politics. Particular emphasis will be placed on the ways in which recent ethnographic and historical monographs have positioned their interventions in relation to broader debates and scholarship, both within scholarship on South Asia and more generally.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ANTH 7704

1 Course Unit

SAST 7717 Literature in Translation: South Asia and the World

This course primarily introduces how to critically read literature in light of major global developments in contemporary literary theory and aesthetics from the past century (including structuralism, semiotics, reception theory, deconstruction, Marxist approaches to literature, feminist readings of texts, translation theory, etc.). It also draws attention to scholastic practices of textual criticism, paleography, and the preparation of critical editions. In doing so, the course emphasizes specific texts and essays related to South Asian literature, literary theory, and aesthetics from the past two millennia as case studies in order to:

- a) supplement students' knowledge of South Asian cultural production,
- b) frame social and historical questions related to art and aesthetics in contexts that have been otherwise under-explored, and
- c) to inspire debate about the extent to which analytical models and approaches developed within a given cultural setting are translatable to literary materials produced elsewhere.

Students will develop their own projects, workshop what they have already begun, or explore new directions for studying literature and literary culture. Comparative approaches with other literary traditions are welcome and no background in South Asian languages or history is required.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

SAST 7730 Southeast Asian Manuscript Traditions

This is an advanced PhD seminar in which the students will need advanced proficiency in Pali and at least one Southeast Asian Language (Burmese, Thai, Khmer, Lao, Leu, Khmer, Shan, and/or Lanna). Original manuscripts from Penn's collection of Southeast Asian religious, medical, botanical, historical, art, and literary archives will be examined and discussed.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: EALC 7590, RELS 7730

1 Course Unit

SAST 7760 Partition in South Asia

This course examines the ways in which imaginative literature and film have addressed the difficult sociopolitical issues leading up to, and following from, the independence and partition of British India. Looking to theoretical and political debates, novels, short stories, poetry, and some films, this course will acknowledge the continuing role played by the events of Partition in shaping the cultural, social, and political realities of contemporary South Asia.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: COML 7760, ENGL 7760

1 Course Unit

SAST 7762 Women in South Asia

This course on women in South Asian history has several objectives. To comprehend the genres of narratives in which South Asian women between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries have spoken and have been spoken about. To gain an understanding of evolving institutions and practices shaping women's lives, such as the family, law and religious traditions. To understand the impact of historical processes – the formation and breakdown of empire, colonialism, nationalism and decolonization – upon South Asian women between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries. We will read primary sources in addition to familiarizing ourselves with the historiography of women in South Asia.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GSWS 7762

1 Course Unit