

SOUTH ASIA REGIONAL STUDIES, PHD

South Asia Studies is an interdisciplinary field focusing on the history, languages, society, literature, and art from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, and Bhutan. America's oldest and most distinguished South Asia program, faculty work in multiple disciplines and offer study in nearly 15 South Asian languages.

The Department of South Asia Studies (SAST) offers PhD and MA degrees, attracting exceptional students from around the world. Candidates for the PhD develop a deep familiarity with the history, methodology, and practice of a chosen discipline relevant to the study of South Asia, and a broad knowledge of allied disciplines. Additionally, our PhD candidates will show a demonstrable proficiency in at least two relevant research languages as detailed in the department requirements.

In addition to the completion of coursework and language requirements, PhD candidates are expected to act as Teaching Assistants and/or teach their own classes. PhD candidates, through the course of their time in the department, are expected to make two presentations to the South Asia Colloquium and to successfully pass their Qualifying and Candidacy Exams.

For more information: <http://www.southasia.upenn.edu>

University PhD Benchmarks

In addition to Program requirements, the following milestones must be completed:

Code	Title	Course Units
	Qualifying Evaluation	
	Candidacy Examination	
	Dissertation Defense/Oral Exam	
	Dissertation Deposit	

For more information view the University's Academic Rules for PhD Programs (<http://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/academic-rules-phd/>).

Curriculum

A minimum of 12 course units must be taken at the University of Pennsylvania.

Code	Title	Course Units
Core Requirements		
<i>Disciplinary/content courses</i>		
	Select 10 course units (including at least 6 content courses taught by 6 different SAST standing faculty) ¹	10
<i>Advanced Language Requirement</i>		
	Select 4 advanced-level courses in a language of concentration	4
<i>Intermediate Language Requirement</i>		
	Select 2 intermediate-level courses in a research language ²	2
<i>Electives</i>		
	Select 4 course units ³	4

Additional Requirements

Teaching Requirements

Four semesters of teaching assistantships are required

Language Requirement

Students must demonstrate proficiency in two languages

Dissertation Proposal Preparation

Total Course Units

20

- ¹ At least six courses (NOT including language courses and independent studies) must be taken with six DIFFERENT core Faculty of the South Asia Studies department and members of the South Asia Studies Graduate Group in the first two years. These professors include: Prof. Daud Ali, Prof. Kashi Gomez, Prof. Greg Goulding, Prof. Ketaki Jaywant, Prof. Lisa Mitchell, Prof. Daves Soneji.
- ² Candidates who demonstrate advanced knowledge in their language of concentration and/or advanced knowledge of a second research language may be excused from part of these requirements. Candidates who satisfy language requirements at the South Asia Summer Language Institute or other summer courses, or in advanced language programs abroad may likewise be excused from taking additional language courses. Any CUs not required for language study may be reallocated to electives. The exemption from further language study does not result in a reduction of the total number of 20 CUs required for the degree.
- ³ 1 elective CU may be used for research connected with the preparation for third year Candidacy Exams (formerly 'Preliminary Exams') and a dissertation proposal. This is typically an independent study.

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The degree and major requirements displayed are intended as a guide for students entering in the Fall of 2025 and later. Students should consult with their academic program regarding final certifications and requirements for graduation.

Sample Plan of Study

Code	Title	Course Units
Year 1		
	Complete at least one language requirement	
<i>Fall</i>		

Select 4 courses
<i>Spring</i>
Select 4 courses
<i>Summer</i>
Language study (depending on prior language competencies)
Year 2
Complete remaining language requirements
<i>Fall</i>
Select 3 courses
Teaching Assistantship
<i>Spring</i>
Select 3 courses
Teaching Assistantship
PhD Qualifying Exam (Pre-Prospectus research paper)
<i>Summer</i>
Preliminary PhD research
Language study (if necessary)
First PhD research grant applications are due
Year 3
*Optional one-year abroad language study as needed
<i>Fall</i>
Select 3 courses
Teaching Assistantship
PhD Candidacy Exam Preparation and Defense
Complete PhD research grant applications
<i>Spring</i>
Select 3 courses
Teaching Assistantship
Prospectus Preparation and Defense ¹
PhD Candidacy Exams
<i>Summer</i>
Years 4 and Beyond
Dissertation research and writing

¹ May register for Exam Prep in lieu of one course.