South Asian Studies Courses (Asian and Slavic Languages and Literature) (SOAS)

This is a list of South Asian studies courses. For more information, see Asian and Slavic Languages and Literatures.

SOAS:1502 Asian Humanities: India 3 s.h.
Introduction to four thousand years of South Asian civilization, through popular stories. GE: Values and Culture. Same as RELS:1502.

SOAS:1550 Sex, Music, and Pop Culture in India 3 s.h.
Exploration of debates and conflicts around gender and sexuality in Indian and South Asian popular culture, particularly music; shifting representations of gender relations, sexuality, gender/sexual identities in Indian music; focus on postcolonial period; how folk music, film songs, and classical music (among other genres) have dealt with issues such as changing conceptions of womanhood or masculinity, “queer” or gender/sexually variant communities and identities; how popular culture has negotiated questions of gender and sexuality in relation to nationhood, globalization, and cultural identity.

SOAS:1620 Bhagavad Gita: Essential Teachings of Indian Religion 3 s.h.
Students read the Bhagavad Gita and discuss its interpretations and use in classical and modern religious, literary, and political contexts; composed around 2000 years ago, it is the best known and most influential religious text in Indian history and concisely addresses war and peace, duty and righteousness, renunciation, devotion, and the nature of the universe; its been read, debated, and discussed by ancient philosophers, modern religious teachers, and political figures such as Mahatma Gandhi, the father of modern Independent India. Same as RELS:1620, TRNS:1620.

SOAS:2901 First-Year Sanskrit: First Semester 4 s.h.
Grammar, basic vocabulary; elementary readings. Offered fall semesters of even years. Requirements: undergraduate standing. GE: World Languages First Level Proficiency. Same as CLSA:2901.

SOAS:2902 First-Year Sanskrit: Second Semester 4 s.h.
Readings in epic and story literature. Offered spring semesters of odd years. Requirements: undergraduate standing. GE: World Languages Second Level Proficiency. Same as CLSA:2902.

SOAS:3448 The Allure of Krishna: Sacred Sexuality in Indian Culture 3 s.h.
For thousands of years, Krishna, the dark-skinned flute-player, has been central to the religious experience of many Hindus; his diverse roles as mischievous divine child, sensual teenage cowherd, and adult statesman, warrior, and philosopher celebrated in poetry and prose, painting and sculpture, music, dance, drama, film, and television; exploration of multiple facets of Krishna’s character through literary and visual sources, performances; focus on Indian interpretations of erotic content prominent in his story and to the figure of Radha, Krishna’s mistress and beloved. Same as RELS:3448.

SOAS:3500 Queerness in South Asian Literature and Cinema 3 s.h.
Debates and conflicts around gender or sexual variance in South Asian cultural spheres; shifting representations of queerness—a broad label for non-normative gender/sexual practices or identities—in literature and films from India and neighboring regions; diverse constructions of gender/sexuality in precolonial India; focus on postcolonial period when regulation of deviant gender/sexuality became tied to colonial administration and emerging national identity; how cultural representations constructed normative or deviant genders/sexualities in relation to class, caste, and nationhood.

SOAS:3644 Gandhi and His Legacy 3 s.h.
In-depth introduction to the life, ideas, and ongoing impact of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948); from his conservative upbringing to his early career as a lawyer, his transformative experiences, and self-transformation into a charismatic mahatma (“great soul”), the pursuit of political and social liberation through non-violent civil disobedience, the assertion of human rights, and the quest for sustainable lifestyles that uphold the common good and protect the natural environment; evolution of Gandhi’s thought and activism and his legacy. Same as HIST:3644, RELS:3644.

SOAS:3901 Second-Year Sanskrit: First Semester 3 s.h.
Readings in epic and puranic texts. Offered fall semesters of odd years. Requirements: undergraduate standing. GE: World Languages Second Level Proficiency. Same as CLSA:3901.

SOAS:3902 Second-Year Sanskrit: Second Semester 3 s.h.
The Bhagavad Gita and related religious/philosophical texts. Offered spring semesters of even years. Requirements: undergraduate standing. GE: World Languages Second Level Proficiency. Same as CLSA:3902.

SOAS:3920 Enlightenment: Cross-Cultural Experiments in Religious Realization 3 s.h.
Enlightenment as one of the most important ideas that feeds contemporary religious and spiritual imagination; exploration of this concept in contemporary religious and spiritual discourse. Same as RELS:3582.

SOAS:4103 Individual Hindi arr.
Readings in medieval and modern Hindi.

SOAS:4201 First-Year Sanskrit: First Semester 3 s.h.
Readings in philosophical and literary Sanskrit. Offered fall semesters.

SOAS:4202 First-Year Sanskrit: Second Semester 3 s.h.
Continuation of SOAS:4201. Offered spring semesters.

SOAS:4802 South Asian Research Seminar arr.
Faculty and student research.

SOAS:5201 Individual Sanskrit for Advanced Students arr.
Research, translation projects. Requirements: fourth-year proficiency.