South Asian Studies

South Asian Studies is an interdisciplinary concentration in which students work across the humanities and social sciences, geographical locations, and time periods. The concentration emphasizes both the diversity of South Asia as a region, as well as the long-term historical connections among people and places in Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. The concentration takes a comparative approach, bringing attention to history, politics, and culture within the region, as well as in the equally vital global South Asian diaspora.

**Course Requirements**

All South Asian Studies concentrators must take and pass 10 courses as approved by their concentration advisor. Students who wish to earn honors must take 12 courses total (see Senior-Year Project below).

- SAST 0700 Introduction to Modern South Asia
- or HIST 1620 Resisting Empire: Gandhi and the Making of Modern South Asia

**Two courses in the Humanities with a majority focus in South Asia, such as:**

- CLAS 0995 India’s Classical Performing Arts
- CLAS 1140 Classical Philosophy of India
- COST 0030 Sound, Song and Salvation in South Asia
- COST 0034 Dharma: A History of Classical Indian Civilization
- COST 0035 Saints and Mystics of India
- COST 0036 Love and War in India
- COST 0037 Sensing the Sacred: Sensory Culture in South Asian Religions
- COST 0140 Food, Religion and Politics in South Asia
- COST 0145 Karma, Rebirth and Liberation: Life and Death in South Asian Religions
- COST 0525 The History and Practice of Yoga in India and Beyond
- COST 0526 This Whole World is OM: Mantras in Indian Religions
- HIAA 0013 Introduction to Indian Art
- HIAA 0023 South Asian Art and Architecture
- LITR 1231K Innovations in Indian Literature
- RELS 0096 The Imaginary Lives of Muslims
- RELS 1510 Islam in South Asia
- RELS 0036 Love and War in India
- RELS 0037 Sensing the Sacred: Sensory Culture in South Asian Religions
- RELS 0526 This Whole World is OM: Mantras in Indian Religions

**Two courses in the Social Sciences with a majority focus on South Asia, such as:**

- HIST 1979D Ruined History: Visual and Material Culture in South Asia
- POLS 1280 Politics, Economy and Society in India
- POLS 1821O Politics of Economic Development in Asia
- POLS 2320 Ethnic Conflict
- POLS 2330 Politics in India
- SAST 0750 Understanding the Indian Economy
- SAST 0725 Political Ecology in South Asia
- SAST 0526 This Whole World is OM: Mantras in Indian Religions
- SAST 0525 The History and Practice of Yoga in India and Beyond
- SAST 0140 Food, Religion and Politics in South Asia

**Language Requirements**

Proficiency in a South Asian language is required for the concentration. Demonstrating proficiency can entail passing a written and oral examination, 4 semesters of formal language study at Brown or another institution, or a high school transcript indicating that the language of instruction for all courses was a South Asian language. Native Hindi/Urdu speakers are encouraged to fulfill the language requirement by taking another South Asian language for four semester, such as Sanskrit or a high school transcript indicating that the language of instruction for all courses was a South Asian language. Native Hindi/Urdu speakers are encouraged to fulfill the language requirement by taking another South Asian language for four semester, such as Sanskrit or another South Asian language at another institution. Up to two language courses can count toward fulfilling the student's elective requirements.

**Senior-Year Project**

Students must complete either a senior capstone project OR an honors thesis.

Capstone projects or honors theses are opportunities for students to creatively synthesize the thinking on South Asia that they have developed during the concentration. The project should exhibit an empirically and
theoretically driven research question or argument about some aspect of South Asian Studies. The senior-year project should involve some research in at least one South Asian language.

All students are encouraged to start thinking about their capstones in their junior year.

**Capstones** can take two primary forms:

1. A research paper of approximately 30 pages on a topic related to South Asia for an existing concentration-eligible course, undertaken with the permission of the instructor.
2. An independent study-based project. The produce and/or process that constitutes this can be artistic, primary or secondary research-based, internship-related, or something else. The project must be supervised by at least one South Asian Studies faculty member* for at least one semester under SAST 1970. This course can count towards the five elective requirement.

At the end of the junior year, each student should meet with the Director of Undergraduate Study (DUS) to review their plan for completing their capstone. If pursuing a capstone project, students will be required to submit, by the end of the shopping period of the fall of their senior year, a short proposal (300 words) that describes how they are going to complete this requirement.

An **Honors Thesis** is a two-semester independent study supervised by a thesis advisor (SAST 1970). These two courses constitute the additional courses needed for honors in the concentration.

An honors thesis can be textual, or it can take other forms (multi-media, visual, artistic, or musical, for example). The form and substance of a non-textual honors thesis must conform to the rigorous regulations set out by the relevant department(s) and the Dean of the College.

**Additional Honors Requirements**

To be eligible for Honors, students will have earned an “A” in the majority of graded courses for the concentration.

Students may graduate with Honors in South Asian Studies by completing an undergraduate Honors thesis under the supervision of at least one reader drawn from the South Asian Studies faculty* and one additional reader from the Brown (or RISD, in the case of Brown-RISD students) faculty community.

**In order to pursue Honors, students must submit the following materials to the South Asian studies Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) by the end of their 6th semester:**

1. A prospectus (3-5 pages, describing the major research questions and methods to be used, complete with bibliography) that has been read and vetted by the student’s intended primary reader.
2. An email from the faculty member who will serve as primary reader to the South Asian Studies DUS noting their willingness to advise the thesis.

In addition, students must:

1. Enroll in a two-semester sequence of independent study [SAST 1970 or under a relevant departmental course code].
2. Designate a second reader by the end of the first month of their 7th semester. Second readers should also confirm their willingness to serve as a reader by sending an email to the South Asian Studies DUS.
3. Be in regular contact with thesis advisor about the progress of the project.
4. Present their research to the Saxena Center community during their final semester.

For **mid-year graduating students**, the topic and primary reader must be identified and confirmed by mid-November of the junior year, and a second reader must be arranged and confirmed by January 30 of the senior year.

* This includes all people listed under the Faculty, Postdoctoral Associate, and Visiting Scholars (limited to those in residence at Brown) tabs on the Saxena Center website.