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Proposal for an Interdisciplinary Undergraduate Minor in South Asian Studies

1. **Sponsor:** Program in South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
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2. Brief Description

The Program in South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies offers an interdisciplinary minor in South Asian Studies designed for students who seek a basic familiarity with South Asia. The minor is especially suited for students with majors in the Sciences and Letters Curriculum of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and for students in other curricula interested in a South Asian area focus as a complement to their disciplinary study. A minimum grade-point average of 2.75 in South Asian Studies courses is required for completion of the minor.

The 19-20 hours of courses selected by students for the South Asian Studies Minor should form a coherent program of study and must meet the approval of the Director of the Program in South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. The program must include at least 6 hours at the advanced level (300 or approved 200).

The Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences will verify that students have completed the program, on the recommendation of the Director of the Program in South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.

3. Need and Justification for the Proposed Program

In recent years U.S. education has witnessed an explosion of first-generation South Asian American (SAA) undergraduate students. This is specially true at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) whose highly ranked offerings in engineering, commerce, pre-med, and other "professional" programs combine with low-cost tuition to attract large numbers of SAA undergraduates.¹ The great increase of such students presents several challenges. Their interest in exploring their roots challenges us to find new approaches to South Asia-oriented instruction to meet their needs and at the same time, to relate to their experience in the increasingly multicultural United States. An additional challenge is to draw on this interest in order to go beyond "heritage" instruction and to persuade some of the students and also students of other backgrounds to become experts on South Asia, thus meeting the country's needs at a time of rapidly growing business and technological investment in South Asia.

In order to meet these challenges the Program in South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (SAMES) is proposing an Interdisciplinary Minor in South Asian Studies. The Minor further helps implement UIUC's "Framework for the Future" plan of May 1995² which prominently includes a commitment to "(e)ncourage our undergraduate students to broaden the skills and perspectives that will permit them to flourish in an increasingly international world." The Minor also complements the College of LAS undergraduate interdisciplinary international studies minor and major programs, as confirmed by discussions with Dean Stewart of LAS.

Given the general "professional" orientation of SAA undergraduates at UIUC and the high demands of professional programs on students' time, a Minor is the most appropriate approach. Not only is it at this point more realistic than a Major, it also permits students to combine expertise in South Asia with firm professional training for careers in agricultural, high-technology, and other businesses with interest in South Asia.

Like the African Studies Minor, the proposed Minor requires basic familiarity with an area-relevant language, equivalent to two years of college instruction. Beyond its intrinsic academic merit, the requirement makes sense in practical terms for anyone interested in working in South Asia. Even at

¹ According to a fall 1998 survey of UIUC incoming freshmen, SAA students now are the second-largest contingent of students with a home language other than English (at least 240), outnumbered only by Latina/o students.

² See <http://www.oc.uiuc.edu/oc/framework>

South Asian universities such as Jawaharlal Nehru University (Delhi, India), which use English as the medium of instruction in all fields, interaction with non-academic personnel is routinely conducted in the regional language (Hindi, in this case), and the regional language is the preferred medium in informal interactions between students and/or faculty.³


4. Budgetary and Staff Implications

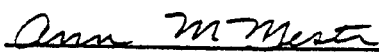
- a. Additional staff and dollars needed: None
- b. Internal reallocations: The proposed program draws on courses in other units (SAMES is not a teaching unit). These units foresee no problems regarding internal reallocations.
- c. Effect on course enrollments in other departments and explanations of discussions with representatives of those departments: No negative effects are foreseen, and representatives of departments on whose courses the Minor draws have agreed to inclusion of their courses in the Minor. (See attached correspondence.)
- d. No direct impact on library, computer use, and equipment is foreseen ("laboratory use" does not apply). In so far as the program will help focus students' interest on South Asia, there may be an indirect impact on the South and West Asian library; however, a well-maintained South and West Asian Library is required independently, to support the growing South Asia faculty as well as graduate students with South Asia focus.

5. Guidelines for Undergraduate Education

By its very design, the proposed minor is broad in scope, encourages students to critically examine issues from and in a variety of disciplinary perspectives, and by focusing in depth on the cultures of South Asia, introduces students both to non-western cultural perspectives and to their relationship to the increasingly multicultural nature of the United States.

6. Clearances

	21 Mar 01
_____ Director, Program in South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies	Date

School Approval (if applicable)	Date
	3/23/01
_____ Assistant Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences	Date

Associate Provost	Date

7. Statement for the Bulletin (See attached)

8. Effective Date: August 2001

³ This observation is borne out by H. H. Hock's experience during a Fulbright lectureship at JNU in fall 1987.

Interdisciplinary Minor in South Asian Studies.

Statement for the Bulletin

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The Program in South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies offers an interdisciplinary minor in South Asian Studies. The minor is especially suited for students in a South Asia focus as a complement to their disciplinary study. The structure of the minor provides students a great amount of flexibility; possible areas of emphasis include language and literature, as well as history and social sciences. A minimum grade-point average of 2.75 in South Asian Studies courses is required for completion of the minor. The 19-20 hours of courses selected by students for the South Asian Studies Minor should form a coherent program of study and must meet the approval of an advisor in the Program in South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. The program must include at least 6 hours at the advanced level (300 or approved 200). A student's plan of courses for the minor must be approved by the Program. The Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences will verify that students have completed the program, on the recommendation of the director of the Program in South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.

HOURS REQUIREMENTS

- 4-5 hours fourth-semester course work in an area-relevant language
Courses that meet this requirement and are currently offered on a regular basis are HINDI 304 (5 hours) and SANSK 304 (4 hours)
The requirement may also be met by comparable courses in these and other South Asian and South Asia-related languages, taught at UTUC or at other universities, through online courses (where available), and through a proficiency examination.
- 3 hrs. ANTH 168 Introduction to the Civilization of India = HIST 168 Indian Civilization and Society
- 12 hrs. Courses on South Asian history, language, literature, culture, and society from the following list:*
- ACE 353 Economic Development in India & Southeast Asia = ECON 353
 - ANTH 398 Combined Graduate and Undergraduate Seminar (appropriate sections)
 - AS ST 298 Colloquium in South, Southeast, and Southwest Asian Studies (appropriate sections)
 - C LIT 189 or C LIT 190 Masterpieces of Non-Western Cultures (appropriate sections)
 - ECON 350 The Developing Economies (appropriate sections)
 - HINDI 305-306 Advanced Hindi
 - HINDI 308 Introduction to South Asian Literature
 - HIST 388 India from Colony to Nation
 - L A 218 Cultural Landscapes of South Asia = AS St 218
 - LING 303 Structure of Hindi-Urdu (section)
 - MUSIC 317 Area Studies in Ethnomusicology = ANTH 315 (appropriate sections)
 - POL S 349 Governments and Politics of South Asia = AS ST 349
 - RELST 104 Asian Mythology
 - RELST 123 Islam: An introduction
 - RELST 260 Mystics and Saints in Islam
 - RELST 286 Introduction to Hinduism
 - RELST 294 Topics in Religious Thought (appropriate sections)
 - RELST 303 Women in Muslim Societies = ANTH 303, HIST 303, WOMST 303
 - RELST 308 Islam and Society in the Modern Middle East and North Africa = POL S 339
 - SOC 343 Social Change in Developing Areas = RUR SOC 343

*Other area-relevant courses may be substituted as they are offered, with approval of the advisor. These include courses in languages other than Hindi and independent study courses with South Asia teaching faculty and with appropriate topics, such as the following ANTH 290, HIST 290, LING 290, POL S 290, RELST 290, SOC 290. Students wanting to take such independent study courses need to get permission from the instructor; not more than two independent study courses may be taken to meet the degree requirements.