South Asian Languages

The internationally renowned language and degree programs in South Asian languages at UW are systematic and rigorous, as well as tailored to the needs of a diverse student population. These programs equip students with a full complement of skills, including speaking, reading, writing, aural comprehension, translation, and grammatical analysis, in order to meet the needs of students with different interests and goals.

Full programs of instruction, comprising three years of basic instruction plus an array of supplementary courses, are available at both the undergraduate and graduate level for Hindi and Sanskrit. In addition, three years of instruction are available for Urdu and two for Bangla (Bengali). Other languages taught at the graduate level on a more limited basis include Apabhramsa, Avadhi, Braj, Pali, and Prakrit (including Gandhari). Students at the UW have also been able to obtain language training in other South Asian languages (e.g. Malayalam, Panjabi, Tibetan) through the UW's participation in various national and international consortia and language training programs.

Our Programs

- B.A. in South Asian Languages (with concentrations in Hindi or Sanskrit)
- Minor in South Asian Languages (with concentrations in Bengali, Hindi, Sanskrit, or Urdu)
- M.A. and Ph.D. with specialization in South Asian Languages (concentrations in Hindi or Sanskrit)
- M.A. and Ph.D. with specialization in Buddhist Studies
- Other Languages: Pali and the Prakrits
- Upcoming Courses

Why study South Asian languages at the UW?

Our South Asian language programs have a long and rich tradition, and they are recognized today for the world-class quality of the faculty and degree programs. The University of Washington libraries boast one of the most extensive collections of South Asian materials in the country. The University is also the location of a National Resource Center for South Asian Studies, funded through a grant from the United States Department of Education.

The Department of Asian Languages and Literature is the home of the Early Buddhist Manuscript Project, a joint enterprise of the University of Washington and the British Library, which has attracted international attention for its research into the language and texts of the earliest surviving written materials of the entire Buddhist tradition.

Opportunities to participate in South Asian cultural events abound in Seattle, which is home to a significant South Asian population with an active cultural and arts scene. Seattle is the site of many concerts of classical and popular South Asian music, of festivals of South Asian film, and of exhibitions of South Asian art. Seattle is also the home of a vibrant and growing South Asian community, which interacts with faculty and students at the University in numerous ways.
Our Faculty

The faculty in our South Asian languages and literature programs are well known for their research and leading programs in diverse areas, including the following: Sanskrit literature and language; Middle Indo-Aryan languages and literatures; Indian religion; Buddhist studies; epigraphy, paleography, and the history of Indic writing systems; Hindi and Indo-Aryan linguistics; medieval devotional texts and religion; comparative mythology; hagiography, and the description of Indian gods and goddesses throughout the course of South Asian history.

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