

SAI

SOUTH ASIA INSTITUTE



**UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG**
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

Master of Arts

South Asian Studies

Program and module descriptions

Approved by the Faculty of Philosophy on December 17, 2025.

Introduction

This handbook, encompassing the program and module descriptions, serves as a comprehensive guide for our current students and prospective applicants

The Faculty of Philosophy holds programmatic oversight for this inter-faculty program. The program itself is offered by the South Asia Institute, a central research institution of Heidelberg University established in 1962.

The MA South Asian Studies program, established in 2011, is a consecutive degree program. It can be pursued on a full-time basis (four semesters) or a part-time basis (up to eight semesters). A total of 120 ECTS credit points (CP) must be acquired for graduation. These credits can be earned either entirely through the major in South Asian Studies or through a combination of a 100 CP major in South Asian Studies and a selectable 20 CP minor from any of the programs offered by Heidelberg University or the Heidelberg University of Jewish Studies. A complete list of study programs is available at:

<https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/en/study/all-subjects>

Admission to the program is possible for both the winter and summer semesters. The online application for admission can be accessed via:

<https://heico.uni-heidelberg.de/>

The primary location for studies is the South Asia Institute, situated on the Campus for Asian and Transcultural Studies in the city center of Heidelberg.

Tuition fees are determined by the university's general fee schedule, which can be found at:

<https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/en/study/management-of-studies/tuition-fees>

ECTS = European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

CP = Credit point; one CP is equivalent to 30 hours of total student workload (including class time, private study, assessment, etc.)

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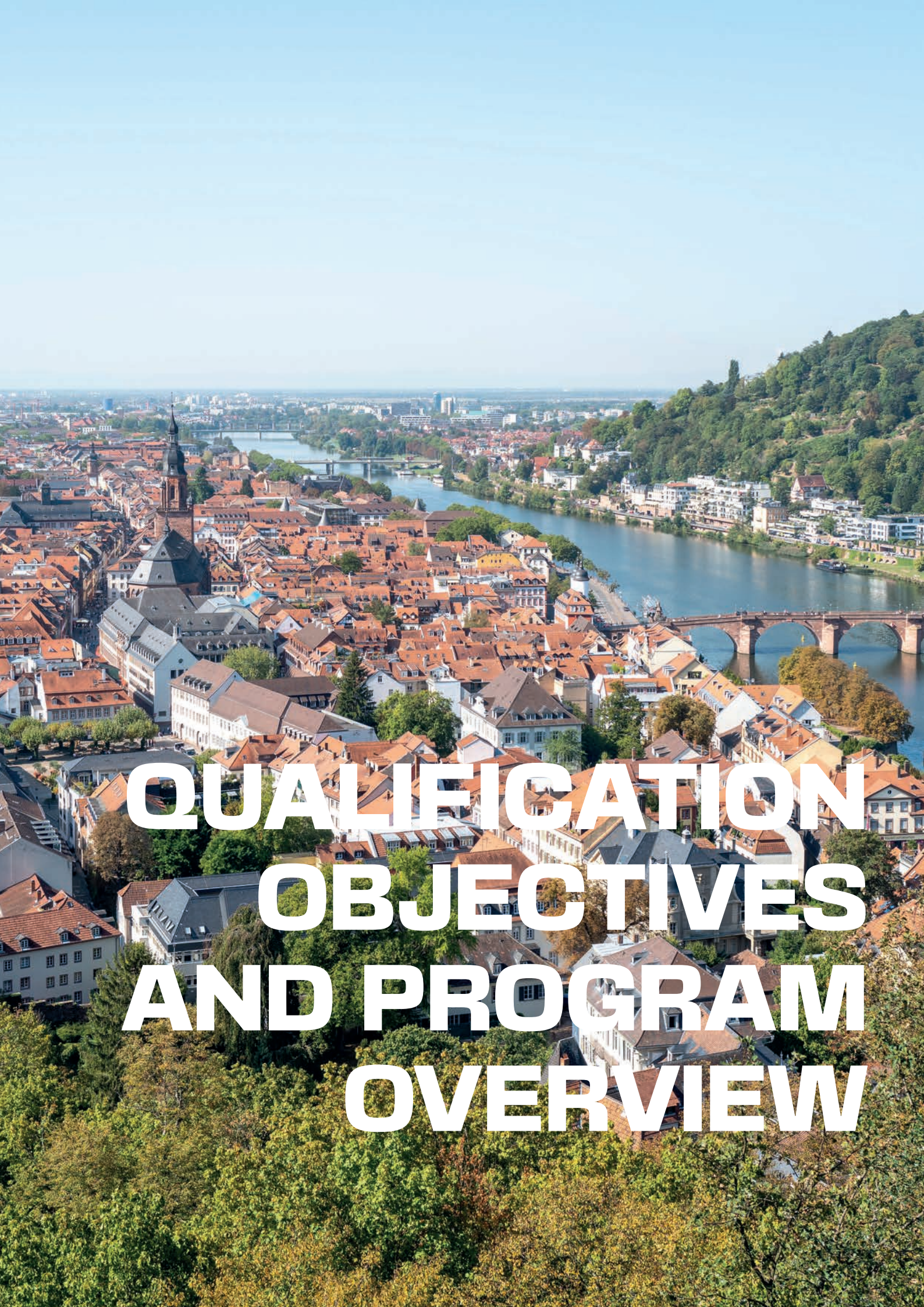
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An aerial photograph of a European city, likely Basel, Switzerland. The Rhine River flows through the center, with a large stone bridge crossing it on the right. The city is characterized by dense, historic buildings with red-tiled roofs. A prominent church spire is visible on the left. The foreground is filled with lush green trees, and the background shows a hilly landscape under a clear blue sky.

QUALIFICATION OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Heidelberg University qualification objectives

In line with its mission statement and the constitution, Heidelberg University's degree programs are based on department-specific, interdisciplinary, and practical goals for comprehensive academic education, focused on students' future careers. The resulting competency profile explained in the module handbooks as a universally recognized qualification and is implemented in the specific qualification objectives, as well as in the curricula and modules of the individual degree programs. These focus on the:

- development of professional competencies with a pronounced research orientation,
- development of competence in trans-disciplinary dialogue,
- development of practical problem-solving skills,
- development of personal and social competencies,
- promotion of a disposition of social responsibility.

Program overview

The Master in South Asian Studies is an exciting degree program drawing on a wide range of disciplines as a means of coming to terms with historical and current societal, political, and economic developments and events, as well as interactions between environment and society, in the context of regional and global change in the countries of South Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

The core aim of the program is to introduce students to multi- and interdisciplinary approaches of studying different fields of the social sciences and humanities, enabling them to work independently and self-reflectively in multicultural environments.

Disciplines →

Students select a primary disciplinary focus (political science, history, anthropology, development economics, or geography) at the time of application for admission. Based on this choice, the admissions committee reviews and decides on the academic qualification of the applicants. In this chosen focus, students acquire advanced academic expertise throughout their studies. A change of the focus discipline is possible during the course of the study, subject to meeting the academic qualification requirements.

The systematic introduction to scholarly working methods, academic writing, and intercultural interaction is supported by courses in each semester that form the disciplinary curriculum. Classes are typically research-focused, with high levels of emphasis on the practical acquisition of skills and knowledge needed for academic research and writing, including digital humanities and archival methods. Students can expect detailed training in the protocols, theories, and methods based on the working techniques of their chosen discipline(s). By their third semester, students will experience immersion in a research colloquium and learn how to develop their own research proposals to plan their thesis, which they write in their final semester.

Unique Resources and Campus Environment

The governments of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka sponsor four guest professorships (Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Professorial Fellowship, Heinrich Zimmer Chair, Allama Iqbal Professorial Fellowship, Sri Lanka Chair) which complement and enrich the curriculum. Additionally, guest lectures by invited professors, writers, visiting scholars, and social and cultural activists are organized throughout the academic year.

The South Asia Institute is located on the Center for Asian and Transcultural Studies (CATS) campus, directly in the heart of Heidelberg. All courses of the MASAS program are taught on this campus, which is co-located with the library for South and East Asia. The library has the most outstanding collection of South Asian books and journals in Europe, housed in a stunning architecturally designed addition to the 19th-century campus. An overview map of the CATS campus can be found on page 59.

Language Options

Students who are interested in learning a South Asian language or continuing language study at an advanced level can combine MASAS as a major with a language-focused minor program: the MA Communication, Literature, and Media in Modern South Asian Languages (MAKLM) or the MA Cultural and Religious History of South Asia (MAKRS). Both minor programs are taught by the South Asia Institute on the CATS campus.

Currently available languages:

- Bengali,
- Classical Tamil,
- Classical Tibetan,
- Hindi,
- Nepali,
- Pali,
- Sanskrit,
- Sinhala,
- Tamil,
- Urdu.

← Visiting professors

← Campus

← Languages



Upon commencement, students select one of the following three enrollment options:

1. MASAS Major (120 CP): Full program of study,
2. MASAS Major (100 CP) + Minor (20 CP): Combination with a minor from another study program,
3. MASAS Minor (20 CP) + Major (100 CP): For students already admitted to a different major program.

Structure - MASAS Major (120 CP)

The first three semesters are dedicated to 90 CP of coursework, followed by the final semester for the Master's Thesis (24 CP) and the final oral examination (FD:E - 6 CP).

The 90 CP coursework is distributed as follows:

- Compulsory modules: 18 CP (i.e., GIR and FD:R modules),
- Focus discipline modules: 24 CP (two modules of 12 CP each chosen from one of the five disciplines),
- Elective modules: 48 CP (four remaining modules of 12 CP each, freely chosen from the available disciplinary modules, excluding the two modules taken for the focus discipline).

FD:E = Focus discipline:
examination

GIR = General institute
requirements

FD:R = Focus discipline:
research

General institute requirements	12 CP
Anthropology	
Classical debates in anthropology	12 CP
Contemporary debates in the anthropology of South Asia	12 CP
Cultural anthropology in a transcultural lens	12 CP
Development economics	
Fundamentals of development economics	12 CP
Development finance	12 CP
Economics elective	12 CP
Geography	
High mountain areas	12 CP
Development and environment	12 CP
Introduction to GIS & remote sensing	12 CP
Advanced methods & applications in GIS & remote sensing	12 CP
History	
Power and culture in colonial conditions	12 CP
Theory and method in South Asian histories	12 CP
Social and political histories of South Asia	12 CP
Political science	
Theory and method for the study of South Asian politics	12 CP
Comparative politics and policy and South Asia	12 CP
Governance and development in South Asia	12 CP
International relations and global governance	12 CP
Focus discipline: research	6 CP
Focus discipline: examination	6 CP
Thesis	24 CP

Focus discipline and Master's Thesis

Every student must select a focus discipline. The Master's Thesis must be anchored in this field.

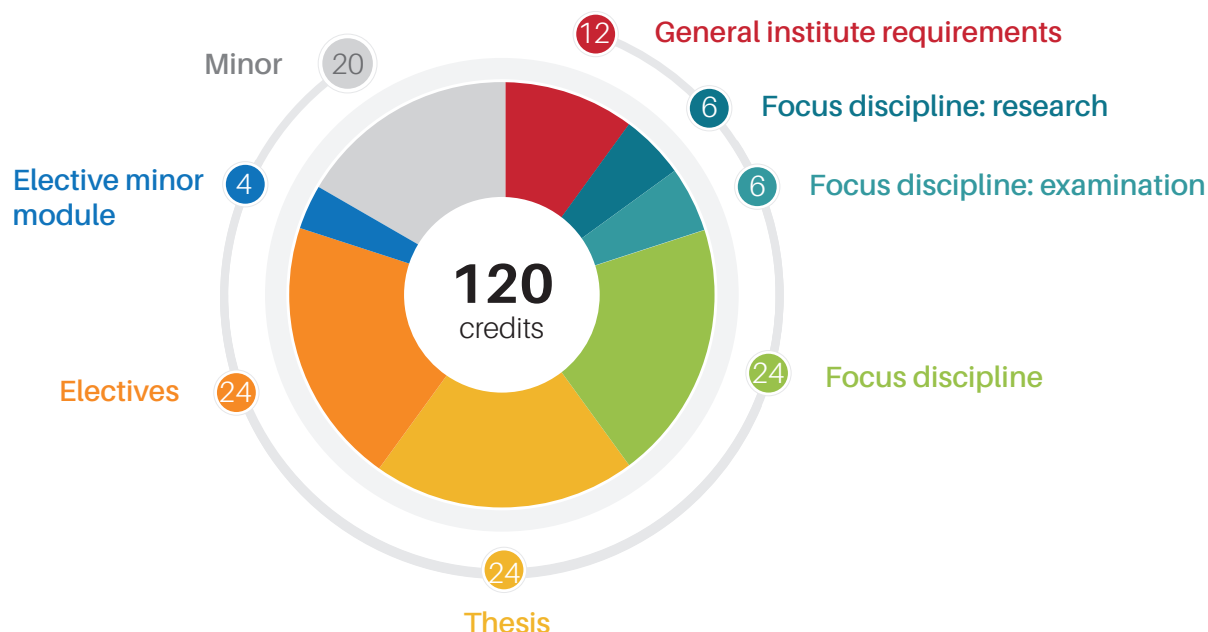
The focus discipline will constitute at least 60 CP (50%) of the overall program, and may be increased through optional modules. It includes at least the thesis (24 CP), two disciplinary modules (2 x 12 CP), the FD:R (6 CP) and FD:E (6 CP) modules.

Modules

Most modules consist of two courses. Full details, including the number of courses per module, can be found in the chapter "Module Descriptions" starting on page 25.

Compulsory modules

All students pursuing MASAS as a Major (120 CP or 100 CP) must take the following modules: GIR, Thesis, FD:R, and FD:E. These modules are not available to Minor students. Students in a combination program (i.e., the 100 CP MASAS Major and MASAS Minor students) are required to take the EEM module.



Structure - MASAS Major (100 CP) + Minor (20 CP)

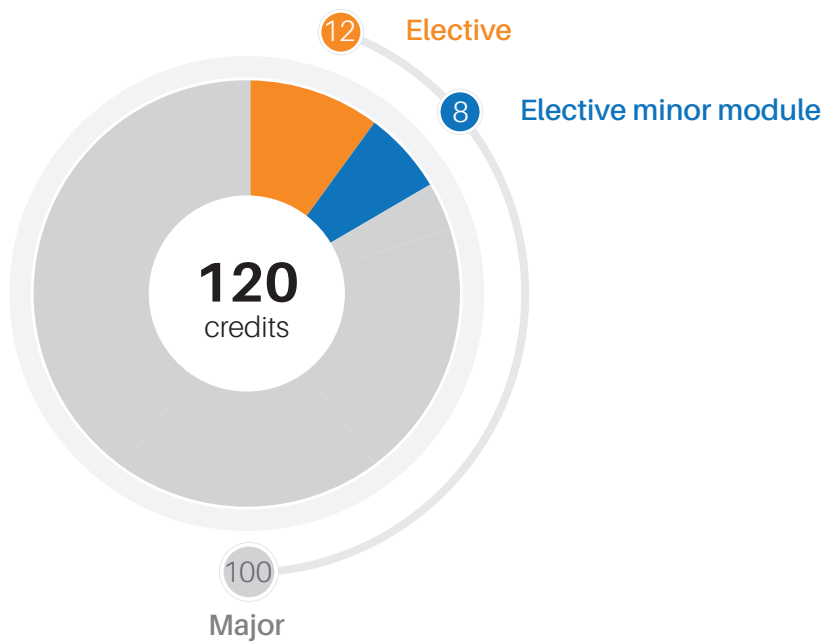
The study program is composed of the MASAS Major with 100 CP and a Minor from the study program offerings of Heidelberg University or the Heidelberg University of Jewish Studies with 20 CP. Please check with the appropriate institute for information on the composition and content of the Minor.

The first three semesters are dedicated to 70 CP of coursework, followed by the final semester for the Master's Thesis (24 CP) and the final oral examination (FD:E - 6 CP).

The 70 CP coursework is distributed as follows:

- Compulsory modules: 22 CP (i.e., GIR, FD:R, and EMM modules).
- Focus Discipline Modules: 24 CP (two modules of 12 CP each chosen from one of the five disciplines),
- Elective modules: 24 CP (two remaining modules of 12 CP each, freely chosen from the available disciplinary modules, excluding the two modules taken for the focus discipline.)

EMM = Elective minor module



Structure - MASAS Minor (20 CP) + Major 100 CP

The program is composed of the MASAS Minor with 20 CP and a Major from another study program with 100 CP. Please check with the appropriate institute for details regarding the composition and content of the 100 CP Major.

The 20 CP MASAS Minor is composed of the following two modules:

- Elective module: 12 CP (one module freely chosen from the available disciplinary modules listed on page 9).
- Compulsory module: 8 CP (i.e., the EMM module).

Core competencies and academic profile

Our graduates independently formulate and investigate academic questions, thereby forging their unique academic profile. They possess a comprehensive and substantive understanding of the South Asia region, coupled with specialized expertise in the topics and advanced research methods of their chosen focus discipline (Political Science, History, Geography, Development Economics, or Anthropology).

Graduates demonstrate advanced applied skills in the methodologies and theories pertinent to these specific fields. They are adept at critically analyzing, interpreting, and synthesizing results-oriented research on complex trans-, inter-, and cross-cultural phenomena within the South Asia region and its broader global context.

Finally, our graduates can rigorously and self-directedly engage with these topics. They are equipped to actively participate in complex research discussions in English and confidently articulate their own advanced academic viewpoints.

Program-specific qualification objectives

Building on these core abilities, graduates of our MA South Asian Studies program acquire advanced, region-specific competencies defined by their chosen disciplinary focus.

Graduates are able to:

- critically analyze and interpret complex socio-political, economic, and cultural developments within specific sub-regions or countries of South Asia, demonstrating a profound understanding of their historical trajectories and contemporary dynamics,
- synthesize theoretical frameworks and empirical findings across the disciplines of Political Science, History, Geography, Development Economics, and Anthropology to construct comprehensive and multi-faceted analyses of South Asian issues,
- design and implement contextually appropriate research projects in South Asia, accounting for local sensitivities, ethical considerations, and the specific challenges of fieldwork in the region,
- evaluate development policies and interventions in South Asia from diverse disciplinary perspectives, assessing their impact on different social groups and proposing evidence-based alternatives,
- trace the historical roots of contemporary challenges and opportunities in South Asia, drawing connections between past events, colonial legacies, and present-day political, economic, and social structures,
- critically assess and utilize diverse forms of data (e.g., archival sources, statistical data, ethnographic accounts, geospatial information) relevant to South Asian studies, applying appropriate analytical methods from their chosen disciplines,
- actively engage with academic and public discourses originating from South Asia, critically evaluating diverse perspectives and contributing to ongoing debates about the region.

These primary competency objectives are further differentiated in the individual modules (see page 25 ff).

General qualification objectives

In addition to program-specific qualifications, our students cultivate essential general professional skills. These particularly encompass interconnected thinking, effective self-organization, and collaborative teamwork, with a strong emphasis on intercultural competence.

Graduates are proficient in:

- Engaging in critical self-reflection and empathetically understanding diverse viewpoints within intercultural contexts.
- Applying knowledge and solving problems in novel and unfamiliar situations, spanning broader disciplinary and practical contexts.
- Analyzing and discussing complex issues sensitively yet critically.
- Making analytical connections competently and creatively.
- Managing time effectively.
- Working independently and goal-oriented at a high level.
- Acquiring and organizing research materials and data efficiently.
- Independently researching new topics and evaluating novel information and developments in relation to various contexts and problems, subsequently drawing practical conclusions.
- Developing effective oral and written communication skills to present complex issues concisely and appropriately, and to act and present themselves confidently in both professional and academic environments.

Many of these general qualification objectives are concurrently and indirectly acquired within the disciplinary modules. However, some are specifically cultivated through dedicated courses as part of the general institute requirements. Details can be found in the module descriptions on page 26.

Potential employment paths for graduates

The MADESH Master's program qualifies students for research-related and analytically demanding professional activities across a wide range of sectors.

Possible fields of employment include:

International Affairs & Development

- Regional and international development cooperation
- Foreign service (diplomacy)
- Peace and conflict research and work
- Migration and integration services

Policy, Consulting & Civil Society

- Policy consulting and strategy development
- Work in foundations and non-profit organizations
- Diversity management
- Public relations and international communication

Knowledge, Education & Culture

- Intercultural training and competence development
- Adult education
- Documentation, archiving, and librarianship

Academia & Research

- Academic research (e.g., as a research associate)
- Pursuing further academic qualification, such as a doctorate (Ph.D.)

General remarks regarding the modules

Please note that some modules may have specific academic prerequisites and that the disciplinary module offerings are on a rotating basis (usually every other semester) and are subject to availability.

Forms of Teaching and Learning:

Students are actively supervised by professors and academic advisors. The program utilizes various formats of teaching and learning.

Lecture →

A Lecture is characterized by the professor primarily conveying the content in a lecture format, complemented by opportunities for students to study the literature independently and discuss the content further. Parts of a lecture may also be designed as a blended learning session. The course concludes at the end of the semester with a written or short oral examination.

Seminar →

The Seminar is designed through diverse and active forms of learning, such as project work, case work, research-based learning, discussions in plenary or small groups, group work, portfolios, weekly response papers, presentations, and on-line/blended learning elements. Students usually select a topic from the seminar's content, present it in depth using visual aids, and write a term paper about it. Alternatively, the instructor may specify that several short essays on given topics must be written during the course. This format is primarily characterized by significant independent self-study in addition to the joint sessions.

Colloquium →

The Colloquium is a course defined by scientific exchange. This typically takes the form of discussions, literature reviews, or lectures on current research or upcoming publications. While the individual sessions may cover various topics, there can also be semester-specific overarching themes. A colloquium is usually attended by professors, academic staff, doctoral students, and senior students who present and discuss their research topic, often related to their Bachelor's or Master's thesis.

Practical course →

Practical Courses have a practical and application-related focus. Students are taught subject-specific methods and work-

ing techniques, which they practice directly in class through small tasks. Students are also encouraged to independently work out solutions to set questions.

Finally, a Tutorial is a supplementary course that supports another main course by discussing the topics of the main course in detail. A tutorial is typically led by an advanced student or doctoral candidate and offers participants the opportunity to repeat and deepen the learning content.

Course and Exam Registration:

Students register independently for the courses they attend via heiCO before the start of the lecture period. Early registration is advisable due to participation conditions and restrictions.

Students are also responsible for registering for examinations. The deadlines for examinations are found in the individual course descriptions in heiCO. Registration for the examination via heiCO always includes the full set of course assessments specified in the module description.

Completion of Modules:

A module usually consists of two courses. A module is successfully completed when all required courses and assessments have been passed.

All assignments for the individual courses must be passed. Details are listed in the module description (see page 25 ff) and the current course description in heiCO.

There are no separate final module examinations. The module grade is based on the course grades, weighted according to the number of course credit points.

Justification for multiple examinations per module

Our modules typically incorporate more than one examination to comprehensively assess the diverse and heterogeneous skill sets students acquire. This segmented approach provides a more granular and accurate reflection of mastery across all intended learning objectives than a single comprehensive final exam.

← Tutorial

← heiCO

The Heidelberg Campus Online Management System is available under:
heico.uni-heidelberg.de

Reference: Grades

Please also read sect 8 of the examination regulations.

Justification for the module with fewer than 5 credits

A single module with fewer than 5 credits exists as a consequence of combining a 120-credit major with a 20-credit minor (i.e., EMM = Elective minor module). This standalone module was created to accommodate the remaining credit points, thus maintaining the overall credit balance of the combined study program without requiring disruptive reconfiguration of numerous existing modules.

Module Duration

Please refer to the module details section within each individual module description for information regarding the duration (number of semesters) of the respective module.

Rationale for modules spanning more than two semesters

The module's length is required due to the necessary thematic depth and scope. The distribution over two semesters is considered appropriate because, firstly, the contents are highly consecutive, meaning that the instructional materials and topics in later semesters stringently build upon the foundational knowledge of the earlier semester, allowing for an in-depth, intensive analysis. Secondly, the module is designed to profit from the parallel acquisition of specialized foundational knowledge and skills that students gain in other modules during the course of studies. This structure ensures a comprehensive understanding of the advanced contents and facilitates the development of new research questions over time.

Active participation

Students are expected to actively participate in class activities, including weekly preparation (e.g., reading given literature, writing response papers) and discussions.

Focus discipline requirement

The module description indicates if a module is mandatory if you choose the corresponding discipline as your focus discipline. This requirement does not apply to students taking the module as an elective (i.e., those who have not chosen that discipline as their focus discipline).

Recommended curriculums

Major 120 CP

Year 1

1st semester

Focus discipline 12 CP	Elective 12 CP	GIR 6 CP
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2nd semester

Focus discipline 12 CP	Elective 12 CP	6 CP
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Year 2

3rd semester

Elective 12 CP	Elective 12 CP	FD:R 6 CP
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4th semester

Thesis 24 CP	FD:E 6 CP
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Major 100 CP

Year 1

1st semester

Focus discipline 12 CP	Elective 6 CP	GIR 6 CP	Minor 6 CP
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2nd semester

Focus discipline 12 CP	6 CP	6 CP	Minor 6 CP
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Year 2

3rd semester

Elective 12 CP	EMM 4 CP	Minor 8 CP	FD:R 6 CP
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4th semester

Thesis 24 CP	FD:E 6 CP
-----------------	--------------

Minor 20 CP

Year 1

1st semester

Major 24 CP	Elective 6 CP
----------------	------------------

2nd semester

Major 24 CP	6 CP
----------------	------

Year 2

3rd semester

Major 22 CP	EMM 8 CP
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4th semester

Major 30 CP

Tip: Print this page to create your own study plan and keep a clear overview of your progress throughout the program..

Coursework Tracker - Major 120 CP

General institute requirements		12 CP
course title Academic working skills	semester	credits 4
Gender & difference in everyday student life		2
Academic writing		4
Writer's club		2
Focus discipline: research		6 CP
Research colloquium		6
Focus discipline: module 1: _____		12 CP
Focus discipline: module 2: _____		12 CP
Elective: _____		12 CP
Elective: _____		12 CP
Elective: _____		12 CP
Elective: _____		12 CP

Mobility window: student exchange opportunities

In order to promote worldwide student mobility, it is possible to take two modules from the electives via courses from a study period abroad. It is important that the courses (1) are related to the region of South Asia and (2) belong to the disciplines offered at SAI in a broader sense. It is possible to complete these modules with a combination of different disciplines.

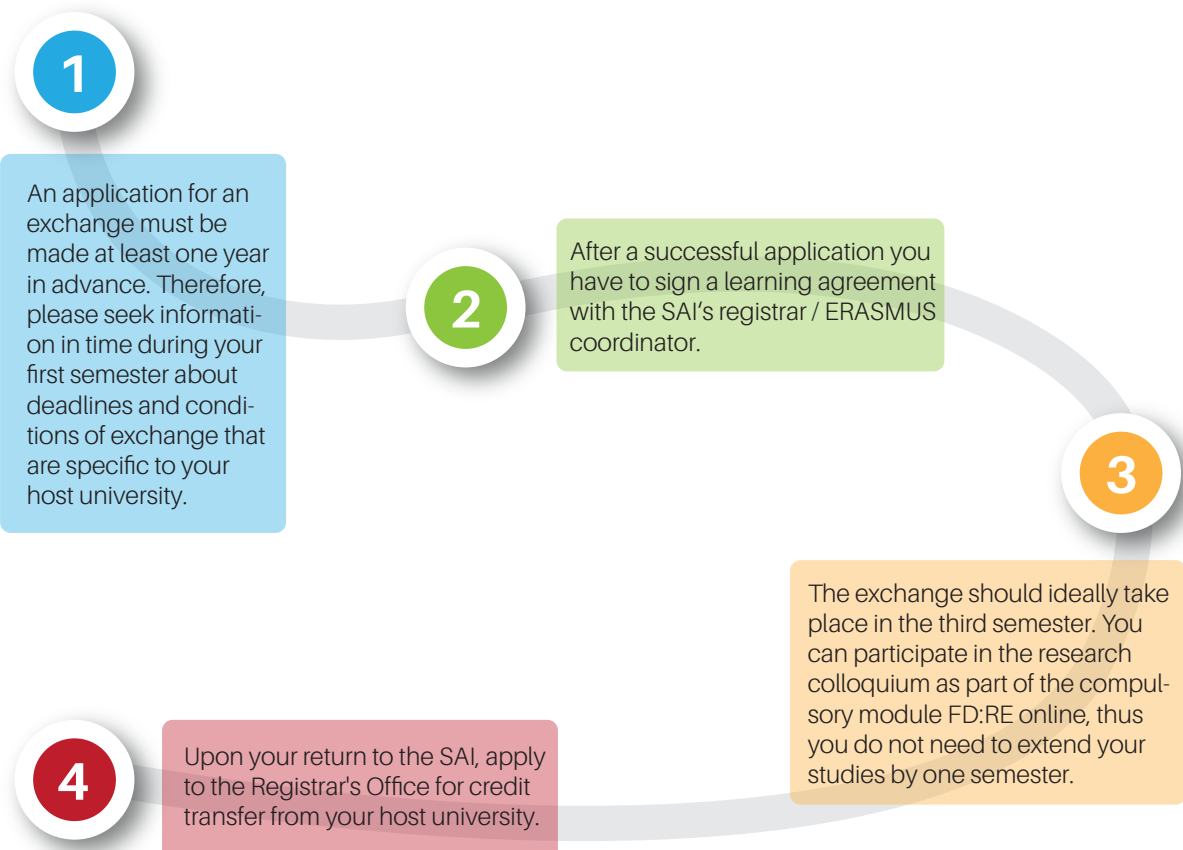
The third semester is the recommended window for an exchange semester. 24 credit points can be earned at the host university via the two modules from the electives area. The remaining 6 credit points in this semester are to be acquired through mandatory participation in the respective research colloquium at SAI in preparation for the master's thesis. In this case, participation in the sessions of the research colloquium takes place online.

A learning agreement must be signed before the study abroad begins. The crediting of an internship (e.g., work placement) is not possible within the framework of this research-oriented master's program.

MWM 1 & MWM 2 = Mobility window modules 1 and 2: see page 33

For more information about study abroad opportunities visit:

<https://www.sai.uni-heidelberg.de/en/study-at-sai/>







MODULE DESCRIPTIONS

GIR

Module details

Credit points: 12
Taught in: winter & summer
Duration: two semesters
Attendance: compulsory

Module components and assignments

Academic working skills course

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP

Workshop on gender & difference in everyday student life

- in-class time: 10 h
- active participation: 1 CP
- small project: 1 CP

Academic writing course

- in-class time: 10 h
- online-class time: 14 h
- active participation: 1 CP
- small project: 1 CP
- individual study and group reflection: 2 CP

Writers' club

- in-class time: 24 h
- active participation: 2 CP

General institute requirements

Academic working skills course

In this course, students learn and consolidate the basic practices and methods of academic working. This includes in particular the critical and analytical analysis of academic texts (e.g. writing academic reviews, undertaking critical textual analysis), preparing and giving academic presentations, and the comprehending the protocols of academic writing (correct citing and paraphrasing, referencing sources, creating a bibliography, structuring a text, writing style, and formatting).

Workshop on gender & difference in everyday student life

All SAI students are required to attend this workshop in which they discuss the practice of tolerant, respectful, and constructive approaches to human diversity in their university and professional lives. This course is closely aligned to the academic working skills course in terms of content and learning and therefore must be taken together.

Academic writing course

Writing is central to the work of academic scholarship. Writing can be a productive and rewarding part of scholarly life, but it does not necessarily come naturally. In this component, students are trained how to write for academic contexts, to ensure that their papers, essays, publications, reports, and grant applications are well planned, align with the scholarly literature, identify openings for an intervention, are soundly argued, and clearly formulated.

This blended learning course is offered by heiSKILLS, the Competence and Language Center of Heidelberg University, and is meant for all advanced students working with collected material or data for their seminar term papers or thesis. The course will guide participants through the process of academic writing and introduce them to practical tools and methods for 'scaffolding' written assignments and generally improving their writing practice. Course participants will learn to practically apply the basic principles of effective academ-

ic writing to their own dissertation, proposal, or prospective publication. The aim is that students will leave the course with their own draft of an academic text.

Writers' club

In this course, students are provided with the infrastructure – the consolidated time, space and resources – to practice academic writing. Led by experienced writing mentors, students will have the opportunity to refine their skills learned in the above course by utilizing writing techniques that are essential for starting the writing process, receiving individualized feedback on their drafts, and producing actual texts for their assessment tasks. The SAI writers' club aims to improve the academic writing skills of students by offering a constructive space for interaction with texts, peers, and experts. Both courses, academic writing and the writers' club, include critical discussions of AI based language models and how to approach those during the process of writing.

AI = Artificial intelligence

Objectives and learning outcomes

Academic working skills course

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- prepare and give written and oral presentations and apply the fundamental rules of academic work, including how to avoid plagiarism
- assess sources, data, and media of various kinds (e.g. literature, statistical data, audio or video materials) and evaluate them critically and apply them effectively in their own academic work.

Workshop on gender & difference in everyday student life

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- engage respectfully with human diversity in academic,

professional, and research contexts in a constructive and reflexive manner.

Academic writing course

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- comprehend writing as a process and explain how this model will help them improve their own writing by using various writing techniques, such as writing to prompts and mind-mapping,
- describe the structure of any academic text by identifying the function of each part in order to use this knowledge strategically in their own writing,
- read academic texts more efficiently,
- develop a consistent story from their own data/material
- describe the characteristics of academic language and apply this knowledge to peer review so that they can produce engaging texts.

Writers' club

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- write academic texts according to the standards of their discipline,
- develop their writing skills practically through meaningful techniques (incl. feedback) and expert guidance in order to refine their texts,
- evaluate critically the implications, opportunities, and risks of AI language models for the writing process.

Focus discipline: research

In preparation for writing the master's thesis in the fourth semester, in the third semester students attend the research colloquium of their focus discipline. During the research colloquium, students are familiarized with current research topics from the discipline on the one hand and, on the other hand, they are given the opportunity to develop their own research project under guidance and to present it to representatives of the faculty. At the end of the semester, students are expected to put together their research project in the form of a written research proposal, similar to a formal funding proposal to the German Research Foundation.

Objectives and learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- formulate and practically apply the most important working techniques and methods of their focus discipline,
- develop a complex research project independently and prepare a formal research proposal that meets disciplinary standards,
- demonstrate familiarity with and critically analyze the current research topics, theories, and methodologies of their focus discipline,
- present their research proposal and preliminary findings effectively in a scholarly setting and defend their approach during an open discussion.

FD:R

Module details

Credit points: 6

Taught in: winter & summer

Duration: one semester

Module components and assignments

Research colloquium

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- 30 min presentation: 2 CP
- 3.500 words research proposal: 2 CP

FD:E

Module details

Credit points: 6
Taught in: winter & summer
Duration: one semester

Module components and assignments

Oral examination

- 45 min oral exam: 6 CP

Focus discipline: examination

The final oral examination is intended to show that the candidate recognizes the correlations of the examination area and can contextualize individual topics accordingly. Furthermore, it is to be assessed whether the examinee has a broad fundamental knowledge as well as in-depth expertise in specific topics of the examined discipline.

Objectives and learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- critically analyze topics and issues from their focus discipline and verbally present their own arguments and opinions in a structured and scholarly manner,,
- demonstrate a comprehensive and systematic knowledge of the core principles, major theories, and significant findings of their focus discipline,
- connect and contextualize specialized research topics with the broader field of study, thereby articulating their academic relevance and potential impact.

Thesis

The thesis is intended to show that the candidate is able to develop an argument based on original research and independently work on a problem from the chosen focus discipline using scientific methods within a given timeframe.

Objectives and learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- identify a suitable topic for research, based on disciplinary debates and knowledge,
- combine and compare the most important working techniques and methods of their focus discipline and select and apply them practically for their own research,
- identify and collect original data relevant to the topic,
- synthesize disciplinary knowledge alongside the new data, to make an original scholarly contribution, in accordance with the rules of proper citation and other academic norms and standards.

MAT

Module details

Credit points: 24
Winter & summer
Duration: one semester

Module components and assignments

- 20,000 word thesis

Registration

In addition to the information found in the examination regulations (Sec. 17 to 22), it's highly recommended that you discuss the specifics of these rules and registration procedures with the Registrar at least one month before the registration period starts. This will ensure you have all the necessary information and can complete the registration process without any issues.

EMM

Module details

Credit points:

- 4 for MASAS major 100 CP students
- 8 for MASAS minor students
- not available for MASAS 120 CP students

Taught in: winter & summer

Duration: one semester

Module components and assignments

Course(s)

- the details depend on the course(s) chosen. Please check in heiCO and with the lecturers for participation requirements before starting

Elective minor module

The course(s) can be freely chosen from the valid MASAS course offerings. MASAS 100 CP major students choose one course for 4 CP and MASAS minor students choose one course for 8 CP or two for 4 CP.

The content depends on the courses but always includes the regional focus on South Asia.

Objectives and learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- describe relevant theories and methods from MASAS disciplines other than their own,
- evaluate the relevance of inter- and transdisciplinary perspectives in South Asian Studies,
- develop ideas to work in interdisciplinary settings.

Further learning objectives and competencies taught depend on the chosen courses. Please check the course catalog beforehand and feel free to contact the lecturers or the registrar if you have any questions.

8 CP - gelernt schriftlich über eine ausführliche Arbeit zu präsentieren / erörtern

Mobility window modules 1 and 2

These two modules are only available to students taking courses at a foreign university during an exchange semester. The course(s) can be freely chosen from course offerings of the host university.

The content depends on the courses, but must have some relation to the disciplines offered at SAI, must clearly reflect the regional focus of South Asia, and must not substantially overlap with courses already taken.

Objectives and learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- critically examine and successfully apply methodological and disciplinary knowledge acquired at the South Asia Institute in Heidelberg to make it fruitful within a contrasting international or scientific culture.
- navigate and effectively function within unfamiliar intercultural settings and academic environments, adapting their communication and work processes accordingly.
- critically reflect upon new competences and insights gained from cross-cultural engagement and integrate them into their personal scholarly canon to sustainably advance their studies and research profile..

Further learning objectives and competencies taught depend on the courses. Please check the course catalog beforehand and contact the lecturers or the exchange coordinator at the host university if you have any questions.

MWM1 & MWM2

Module details

Credit points: 12 each

Taught in: winter & summer

Duration: one semester

Module components and assignments

Course(s)

- the details depend on the course(s) chosen. Please check with the exchange coordinator and the lecturers at the host university for participation requirements before starting

Mobility window regulations

Please refer to the notes and regulations on studying abroad on page 23.

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ANTHROPOLOGY

Classical debates in anthropology

This module, consisting of two seminars, is primarily aimed at first-year Master's students with the objective of introducing them to the classical debates and theories that have shaped and informed the discipline of anthropology.

With a focus on South Asia, a wide range of topics such as social theory, social change, modes of production, village studies, caste, tribe, and religion will be discussed allowing students to familiarize themselves with seminal anthropological scholarship. The contributions of prominent scholars such as Malinowski, Evans-Pritchard, Mead, Geertz, Levi-Strauss, Sahlin, Srinivas, and many others will be discussed extensively in relation to the debates on structure-function, praxis-ideology, feminism, representation of culture, and so on.

Based on a critical reading of relevant literature, students will be encouraged to analyze exemplary theoretical presuppositions underlying such classical anthropological debates.

Objectives and learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- analyze and categorize the core arguments and classical theorizations that define the field of anthropology,
- evaluate and articulate the discipline's historical development, its epistemological shifts, and its current critical challenges,
- formulate precise, focused anthropological research questions and justify their relevance within the current disciplinary landscape,
- contribute to professional discussions by synthesizing classical arguments with contemporary theoretical perspectives and methods,
- apply classical debates and scholarly works to critique and contextualize contemporary anthropological inquiries and case studies.

ANT1

Module details

Credit points: 12

Taught in: winter

Duration: one semester

Module components and assignments

Seminar

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- 30 min presentation: 2 CP

Seminar

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- 30 min presentation: 2 CP
- 7,000 word essay: 4 CP

Focus discipline requirement

no

ANT2

Module details

Credit points: 12
Taught in: summer
Duration: one semester

Module components and assignments

Seminar

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- 30 min presentation: 2 CP

Seminar

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- 30 min presentation: 2 CP
- 7,000 word essay: 4 CP

Focus discipline requirement

no

Contemporary debates in the anthropology of South Asia

This module provides the students with in-depth theoretical, analytical, and applied knowledge of current themes related to the anthropology and ethnography of contemporary South Asia. The major goal is to analyze theoretical frameworks and questions at the hands of contemporary ethnographies from different regional contexts of South Asia.

The topics of the seminars offered vary each semester and include themes of contemporary relevance, ranging from questions of postcolonialism, religious nationalism, the environment, migration, and globalization to issues of caste and indigeneity as well as gender and embodiment.

Objectives and learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- critically describe and evaluate contemporary theories, intellectual debates, and anthropological research methods,
- conduct literature research on theories, methods, and contemporary ethnographic themes,
- present learning material analytically, both orally and in writing,
- produce a supervised written paper with academic standards at the end of the module.

Cultural anthropology in a transcultural lens

This module aims at introducing students to the ways in which a transcultural approach to and in anthropology helps us stretch beyond binary oppositions like 'traditional' and 'modern', 'center' and 'periphery', or 'global' and 'local'. Recent works in anthropology and critical area studies have responded to the need to consider South Asia as deeply and historically entangled with other regions in Asia or Europe, something that urges us to rethink compartmentalized 'Cultures'. Moreover, ideas or concepts often fixed in place, or 'mindset' must be critically recalibrated in light of transcultural entanglements.

The key foci of the classes taught in this module will thus be on mobilities, migration, and urban placemaking as well as on gender, media, or social movements. Of particular interest are cities in South Asia, identity politics and media mobilization, heritage, art and activism, or urbanisation, diaspora, and inequality. Research-based elements are part of this module.

Objectives and learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- orient themselves in the interdisciplinary domain of transcultural studies by identifying and approaching key concepts and methods for anthropological studies in South Asia,
- differentiate debates in critical area studies, mobilities, urban, or migration studies,
- develop small case studies and exploratory projects with a focus on or from South Asia.

ANT3

Module details

Credit points: 12

Taught in: winter & summer

Duration: one semester

Module components and assignments

Seminar

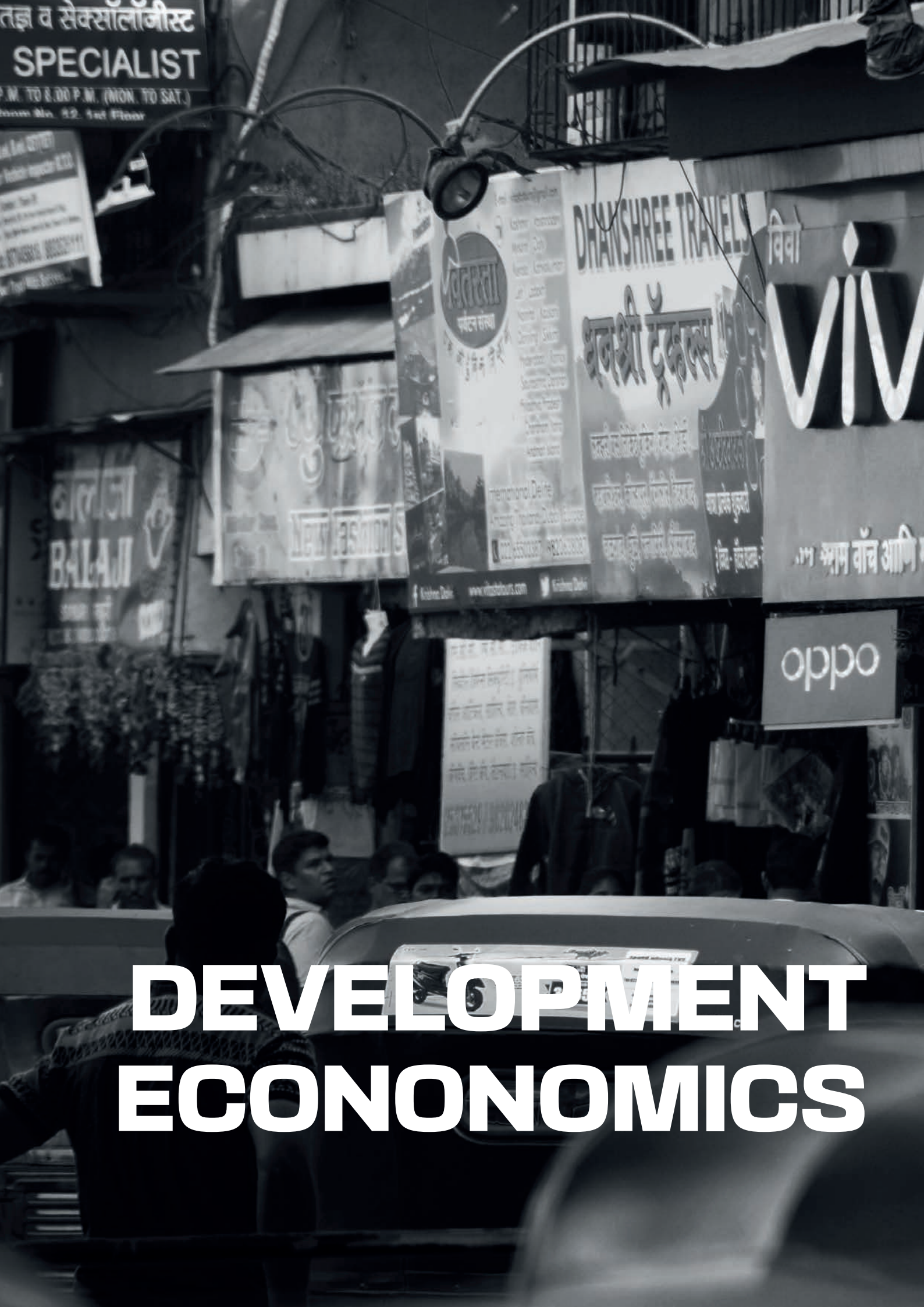
- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- 30 min presentation: 2 CP

Seminar

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- 30 min presentation: 2 CP
- 7,000 word essay: 4 CP

Focus discipline requirement

no



DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS

Fundamentals of development economics

This module covers basic aspects of development economics, which is the subfield of economics that deals with particular features of low and middle-income countries. The focus is on the measurement of inequality and poverty and on micro-economic analyses of rural economies, which provides the livelihood for the vast majority of the world's poor. In addition, the module addresses India's development experience since independence in some detail. The module also provides an overview of analytical methods commonly used in development economics.

Objectives and learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- master common methods to analyze various economic aspects and problems of developing countries,
- assess strengths and weaknesses of common summary measures of inequality and poverty,
- evaluate economic policy in the context of developing countries,
- describe and analyze with economic peculiarities and the economic history of India.

ECO1

Module details

Credit points: 12

Taught in: winter & summer

Duration: two semesters

Module components and assignments

Lecture "Development economics"

- in-class time: 4 h/w
- active participation: 4 CP
- written exam: 2 CP

Seminar

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- 30 min presentation: 2 CP
- 3,500 word essay: 2 CP

Focus discipline requirement

yes

ECO2

Module details

Credit points: 12
Taught in: winter
Duration: one semester

Module components and assignments

Lecture "Microfinance"

- in-class time: 4 h/w
- active participation: 4 CP
- written exam: 2 CP

Seminar

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- 30 min presentation: 2 CP
- 3,500 word essay: 2 CP

Focus discipline requirement

yes

Development finance

The idea that Muhammad Yunus had in 1976 was simple: to give people who are not served by traditional banks access to credit. Ever since its beginnings as group lending to rural women, the simple idea of microfinance has developed further. Today, it covers a wide range of financial products and a broad spectrum of clients and is seen by many as a cure for poverty. While microfinance covers not only aspects of credit but also insurance, savings and payment services, this module aims at understanding the economics behind microfinance, in particular microcredit. Why do credit markets fail and what are possible interventions? How can market imperfections be overcome? Are the poor credit-constrained? What is the role of savings and insurance? And finally, what do we know about the impacts of providing microcredit and other financial services?

Objectives and learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- describe and name different aspects of microfinance, how microfinance works in the developing world and how its principles may be applied to the international and domestic financial system,
- critically analyze and evaluate the strategies and impact of the microfinance movement, focusing on business models aimed at poverty alleviation.,
- assess and articulate the scope and limitations of access to finance for alleviating poverty.

Economics elective

In this module students may choose a lecture course and a seminar from the economic department's elective course offerings. Courses that may be taken in this module include, but are not limited to, international economics, political economics, public economics, or behavioral economics.

Objectives and learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- describe and apply analytical methods of economics,
- develop a broader view of economic development and apply it profitably to their own research questions,
- name and critically analyze the arguments of economists in policy discussions.

ECO3

Module details

Credit points: 12

Taught in: winter & summer

Duration: one semester

Module components and assignments

Lecture

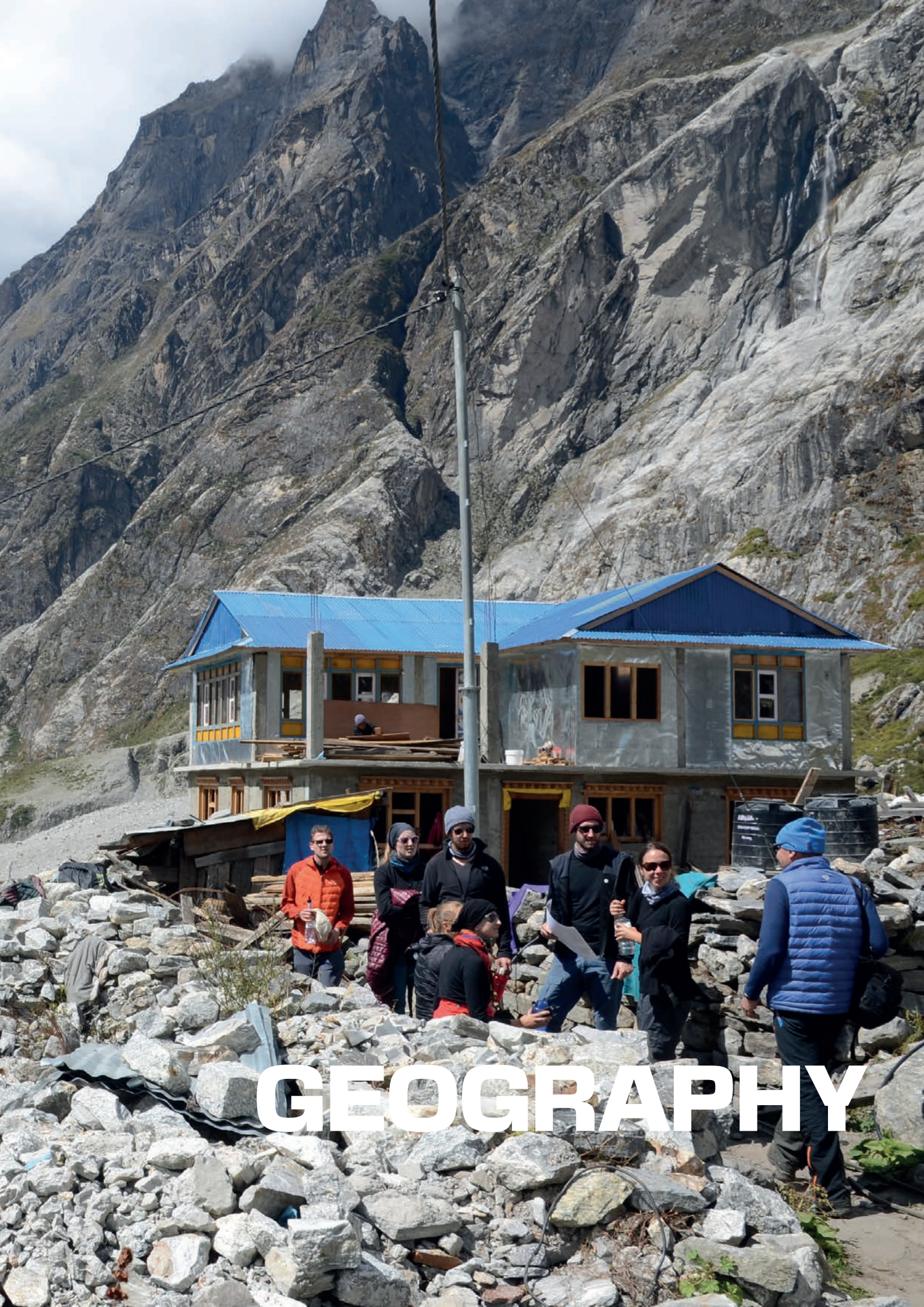
- in-class time: 4 h/w
- active participation: 4 CP
- written exam: 2 CP

Seminar

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- 30 min presentation: 2 CP
- 3,500 word essay: 2 CP

Focus discipline requirement

no



GEOGRAPHY

Development and environment

Environment and development, including climate change, land degradation, and urbanization, are among the grand challenges for all countries of South Asia. The module aimed at first-year master students aims to provide an introduction to knowledge of relevant geographical and spatial dimensions and dynamics of South Asia. Particular focus is laid on integrated research perspectives, including human-environment interactions and geographical development research.

Objectives and learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- demonstrate a solid foundational knowledge of geographical development research and human-environmental interactions, specifically critically analyzing these dynamics within the South Asian context,
- discuss and effectively apply relevant geographical theories, concepts, and analytical frameworks to analyze and interpret diverse development processes and human-environmental interactions across various spatial scales,
- conduct independent scientific literature-based research to address relevant geographical topics, thereby deepening their understanding and analysis of human-environment dynamics,
- present their research findings and complex geographical concepts in a structured and articulate manner, both orally and in writing.

Kathmandu Valley 2011 (M. Nüsser)



Kathmandu Valley 1883 (J.C. White)



GEO1

Module details

Credit points: 12
Taught in: winter
Duration: one semester

Module components and assignments

Seminar or lecture

- in-class time: 2 h/w

seminar

- active participation: 2 CP
- 30 min presentation: 2 CP

lecture

- active participation: 1 CP
- oral exam: 3 CP

Seminar

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- 30 min presentation: 2 CP
- exam or other written assessment: 4 CP

Focus discipline requirement

no

GEO2

Module details

Credit points: 12
Taught in: summer
Duration: one semester

Module components and assignments

Seminar or lecture

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- *seminar*
- active participation: 2 CP
- 30 min presentation: 2 CP
- *lecture*
- active participation: 1 CP
- oral exam: 3 CP

Seminar

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- 30 min presentation: 2 CP
- exam or other written assessment: 4 CP

Focus discipline requirement

no

High mountain areas

Mountain areas are particularly affected by the impacts of global environmental change. These sensitive areas form the habitat for about 10% of the world's population. More than 30% of all people use these areas directly or indirectly as resource areas and/or are affected by environmental hazards that originate in mountains. They also constitute areas of conflict in many regions. The degradation of natural resources, changes in glaciers and permafrost, the expansion of hydro-energy production, the massive infrastructural development, and the socio-economic change are central themes. The module focuses on the high mountain regions of South Asia (Himalaya, Karakoram, Hindu Kush). Based on the concept of comparative high mountain research, specific developments in other mountain regions (Andes, Alps, African mountains) will also be reflected.

Objectives and learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- demonstrate a solid understanding of human-environmental interactions in high mountain regions,
- discuss and critically analyze the particular impacts of global environmental change on mountain environments and societies,
- analyze and interpret various environmental and social processes and changes occurring across different scales within mountain systems,
- conduct independent research on mountain-related topics, synthesizing complex information,
- present their findings and complex concepts related to mountain environments in a structured and articulate manner, both orally and in writing.

Introduction to GIS and remote sensing

Remote sensing data and methods are essential tools for detecting and analyzing land use and land cover changes, including deforestation, agricultural development, glacier dynamics, and urban expansion.

This module provides students with the theoretical knowledge and practical skills in Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and core remote sensing concepts and contemporary methods. A key focus is the introduction to various satellite data sets and their applications. Students will learn to apply remote sensing techniques in the context of different thematic research topics and to present and visualize their results effectively.

Objectives and learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- apply foundational remote sensing and GIS methods to address various geographical applications,
- process and analyze remote sensing and GIS data within the framework of a supervised research project,
- effectively communicate and visualize the results of geospatial analyses.

GEO3

Module details

Credit points: 12

Taught in: winter & summer

Duration: one semester

Module components and assignments

Practical seminar

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- individual study time: 2 CP
- Poster or Project: 2 CP

Practical seminar

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- individual study time: 2 CP
- Poster or Project: 2 CP

Focus discipline requirement

no

GEO4

Module details

Credit points: 12
Taught in: winter & summer
Duration: one semester

Module components and assignments

Practical seminar

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- individual study time: 2 CP
- Poster or Project: 2 CP

Practical seminar

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- individual study time: 2 CP
- Poster or Project: 2 CP

Focus discipline requirement

no

Prerequisite

- knowledge of GIS and/or remote sensing
- experience in the use of GIS and/or remote sensing software

Advanced methods and applications in GIS and remote sensing

Successful completion of the module "Introduction to GIS and remote sensing" is mandatory. Building on foundational skills, students will advance their skills in diverse satellite data sets, professional software packages, and advanced spatio-temporal analysis and GeoAI-driven modelling techniques (e.g., multi-temporal monitoring). Across the two courses comprising this module, students will design, execute, and present independent research projects that address complex, self-defined geospatial research questions.

Objectives and learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- critically evaluate, justify, and implement advanced remote sensing and GIS methods across diverse application contexts, comprehensively assessing their methodological strengths and limitations,
- conceptualize, design, and independently execute a complete research project, demonstrating proficiency in selecting, processing, and analyzing complex spatio-temporal data sets.



HISTORY

Power and culture in colonial conditions

This module provides the students with a critical understanding of the role of the key dynamics between culture and violence in colonial South Asia. A major focus will be state violence, communal violence, structural violence, epistemological violence, nonviolence, and anticolonial violence in South Asian histories, refracting off contemporary scholarship.

The module consists of a lecture and a seminar. For students without a Bachelor's degree in South Asian History, attendance of the lecture at the beginning of the program is compulsory.

The topics of the seminars offered vary each semester, and revolve around concepts which grapple with and explain violence in state practices in colonial South Asia, as well as the rise of communal violence as a parallel phenomenon, leading to the creation of two nation-states in 1947.

Objectives and learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- critically analyze and apply important theories to understand the dialectics of violence and histories of exceptionalism centered around nonviolence, with particular relevance to South Asia,
- identify and contextualize intellectual currents that engage with and inform South Asian understandings of the colonial predicament,
- explain and critically interpret the key events of South Asian history from the late eighteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries,
- present their understandings of history in a structured manner, both orally and in writing.

HIS1

Module details

Credit points: 12

Taught in: winter

Duration: one semester

Module components and assignments

Lecture

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 1 CP
- oral exam: 3 CP

Seminar

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- 30 min presentation: 2 CP
- 7,000 word essay: 4 CP

Focus discipline requirement

no

HIS2

Module details

Credit points: 12
Taught in: summer
Duration: one semester

Module components and assignments

Practical course "Multisensory Histories"

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- 30 min oral presentation or 3.500 word essay: 2 CP

Seminar

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- 30 min presentation: 2 CP
- 7,000 word essay: 4 CP

Focus discipline requirement

yes

Theory and method in South Asian histories

This module trains students with methodological, theoretical, and analytical tools for understanding, researching, and writing modern and contemporary South Asian Histories. Classes focus on close readings of primary sources, alongside discussions about theoretical interventions.

The practice-oriented course, "Multisensory Histories" introduces students to the interdisciplinary tools needed to independently conduct research and to currents and debates in South Asian historiography. Each class focuses on a method of inquiry, aimed at providing differential ways of listening to archives of the past in various multisensory formats.

The practical course is complemented by a topical seminar on one of a series of revolving themes.

Objectives and learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- demonstrate a critical knowledge of methodologies that are applicable to and workable in South Asian Studies,
- apply these methodologies to their developing research projects,
- practice modes of analysis and demonstrate ability to work with different primary sources,
- contextualize primary sources amid arguments that demonstrate their knowledge of South Asia as well as the current state of the field,
- constructively debate, discuss, and analyze in class discussions,
- identify themes in primary sources, and position them relative to the interdisciplinary field of South Asian studies.

Emerging themes in histories of South Asia

This module provides the students with in-depth theoretical, analytical, and applied knowledge of current themes related to social and political histories of modern South Asia. The topics of the seminars offered vary each semester and include themes of contemporary relevance and perennial interest, with transdisciplinary application, ranging from histories of technologies, photography, formations of knowledge, issues of censorship and sedition, and cultural and political expression, including film. Students are trained in how to identify and work with relevant primary source materials.

In the practical course, students engage deeply in primary source materials, examining the role of intellectual histories in anticolonialism, the formation of colonized positionalities alongside the question of agency, and the ways in which these are informed by colonial, global and cosmopolitan thought.

Objectives and learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- acquire a critical knowledge of important theories pertaining to contemporary debates,
- apply these theories to case studies of their own choosing,
- construct and posit arguments that demonstrate their knowledge of South Asia, as well as the current state of interdisciplinary debates with relevance to historical studies,
- present their results in an elegant and structured manner, both orally and in writing.

HIS3

Module details

Credit points: 12
Taught in: winter
Duration: one semester

Module components and assignments

Practical course

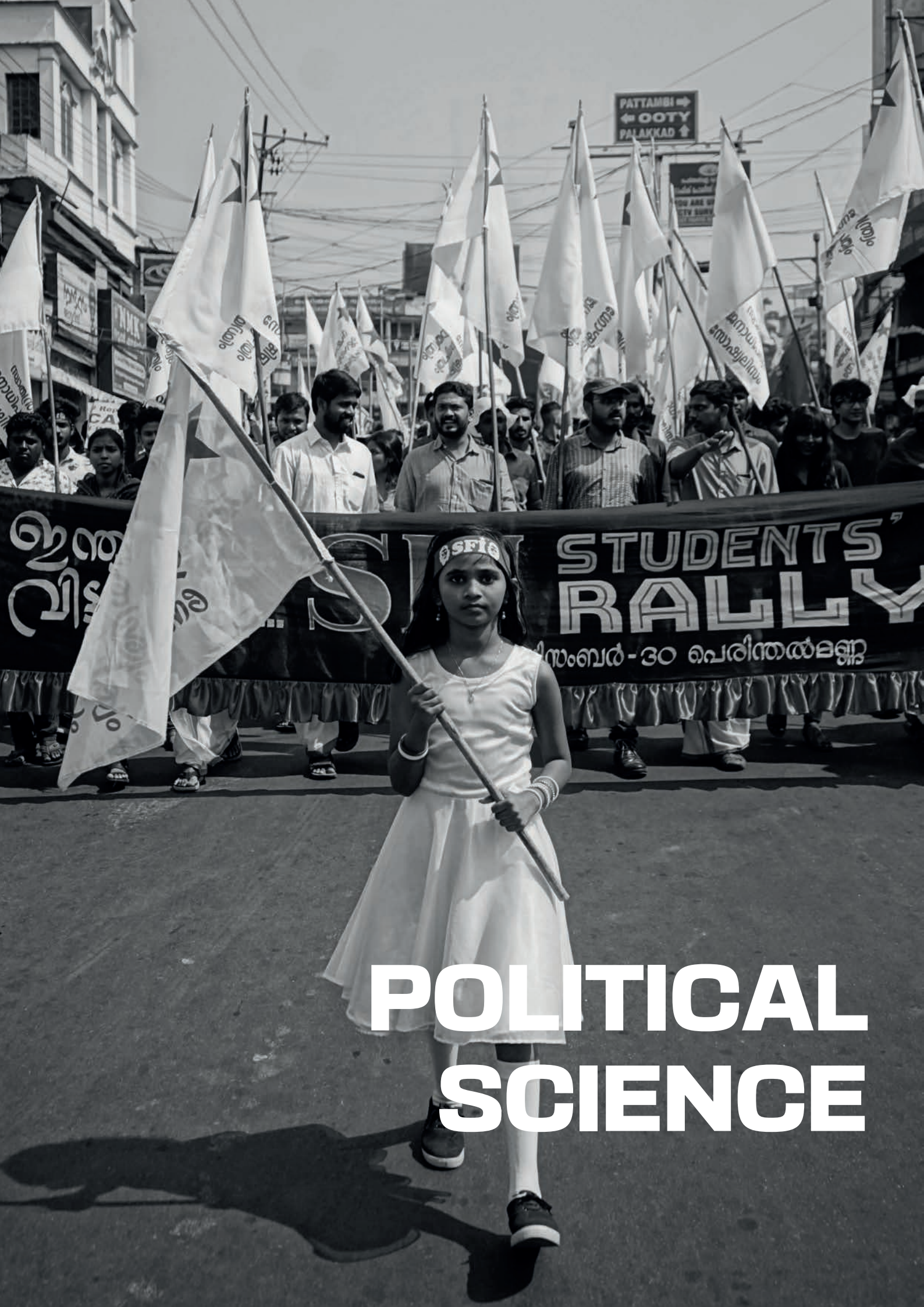
- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- 30 min oral presentation or 3.500 word essay: 2 CP

Seminar

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- 30 min presentation: 2 CP
- 7,000 word essay: 4 CP

Focus discipline requirement

yes



POLITICAL SCIENCE

Theory and method for the study of South Asian politics

This module is essential for students who wish to have political science of South Asia as focus discipline. Students learn to look critically at political phenomena. How can one think theoretically about commonplace social phenomena such as state-building, democratic resilience, human well-being, and ethnic nationalism? How can one move from a world where a lot of material is descriptive to an intellectual environment that seeks to explain the political world?

The module will stress the importance of the qualitative and comparative method that takes history seriously.

This module has two clear learning objectives. First, it will teach students to critique theories and think about a research puzzle. Most powerful theories in the world can turn out to be weak when we judge them on the basis of qualitative and quantitative historical evidence. And second, this module will enable students to design appropriate research designs for their own future research projects.

Objectives and learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- acquire a critical knowledge of different qualitative methods for the study of South Asian politics,
- operationalize and apply different theories for a better understanding of real-world issues in South Asia,
- differentiate between diverse theoretical approaches to similar real-world issues in South Asia,
- evaluate the limitations of one approach over others,
- develop a research plan based on a critical understanding of social theories and case study methodology.

POL 1

Module details

Credit points: 12

Taught in: winter

Duration: one semester

Module components and assignments

Lecture

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- midterm exam: 1 CP
- final exam: 1 CP

Seminar

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- 30 min presentation incl. 2,000 word summary: 2 CP
- 3,500 word essay: 2 CP

Tutorial

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP

Focus discipline requirement

yes

POL2

Module details

Credit points: 12
Taught in: summer
Duration: one semester

Module components and assignments

Lecture

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- midterm exam: 1 CP
- final exam: 1 CP

Seminar

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- 30 min presentation incl. 2,000 word summary: 2 CP
- 7,000 word essay: 4 CP

Focus discipline requirement

no

Comparative politics and policy and South Asia

This module covers substantive topics in comparative politics, such as power, state, institutions, class, civil society, and political processes like transitions to and from democracy. The module also has a comparative orientation. This includes comparisons among countries of South Asia, as well as among sub-national Indian states.

The module will encourage students to discover the causes behind social and political phenomena such as state formation, democratic backsliding, religious nationalism, and corruption. Combining a conceptual approach with comparisons helps reveal causal mechanisms that are not easily evident in single case studies.

Students will learn both major theoretical approaches to comparative politics as well as how these may have been applied to South Asian cases. Conceptual and substantive knowledge of South Asia is deemed equally essential.

The module will provide students with tools to understand how public policies and institutions endure and change. It will also address some of the major political challenges of our times.

Objectives and learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- demonstrate a critical knowledge of different theoretical approaches to the comparative politics of South Asia,
- operationalize and apply these theories for a better understanding of real-world issues in South Asia,
- differentiate between diverse theoretical approaches to similar real-world issues in South Asia,
- evaluate the appropriateness of one approach over others.

Governance and development in South Asia

This module uses techniques learned in the methods module to address some of the governance challenges facing South Asia. They include topics in political economy, such as industrialization, agrarian developments, and the challenge of climate change; topics concerning the relationship between social power and backwardness, such as caste, class, and gender; and those directly addressing issues of human development, such as education, employment, corruption, and the like.

This module stresses comparisons among the South Asian states, as well as between the sub-national states of South Asia. This module explores the interaction between politics and economics as a useful way to uncover the processes of governance and development in South Asia. Students will learn to think critically regarding why certain institutions that are related to development in a broad sense endure. How can they change?

The module will provoke students to address real-life political and social challenges by exploring a variety of explanations that have been proffered. They are encouraged to explore state of the art and provide novel ways of dealing with the challenges that confront governance. The focus is largely on domestic-level governance and the skill sets will be relevant for both policy work and further academic research.

Objectives and learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- name and describe different theoretical approaches to governance and development in South Asia,
- operationalize and apply these theories for a better understanding of real-world issues in South Asia,
- differentiate between diverse theoretical approaches to similar real-world issues in South Asia,
- evaluate the appropriateness of one approach over others.

POL3

Module details

Credit points: 12
Taught in: winter
Duration: one semester

Module components and assignments

Lecture

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- midterm exam: 1 CP
- final exam: 1 CP

Seminar

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- 30 min presentation incl. 2,000 word summary: 2 CP
- 7,000 word essay: 4 CP

Focus discipline requirement

no

POL4

Module details

Credit points: 12
Taught in: summer
Duration: one semester

Module components and assignments

Lecture

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- midterm exam: 1 CP
- final exam: 1 CP

Seminar

- in-class time: 2 h/w
- active participation: 2 CP
- 30 min presentation incl. 2,000 word summary: 2 CP
- 7,000 word essay: 4 CP

Focus discipline requirement

no

International relations and global governance

This module engages concepts and theories in international relations and the South Asian region. Key approaches include realism, neo-liberal institutionalism, and constructivism. Conceptual competence and substantive area knowledge are equally privileged. Students engage in debates regarding the nature of the international realm, as well as strategic choices found in game-theoretic approaches such as the prisoner's dilemma. Are states central to understanding international relations? How did they evolve? Are structural approaches such as balance of power to be privileged over the ideational milieu within which foreign policies are made?

Students engage with substantive issues in foreign policy and global governance, such as nuclear weapons, climate change, and ethnic conflict. The roots of international cooperation and conflict are stressed here.

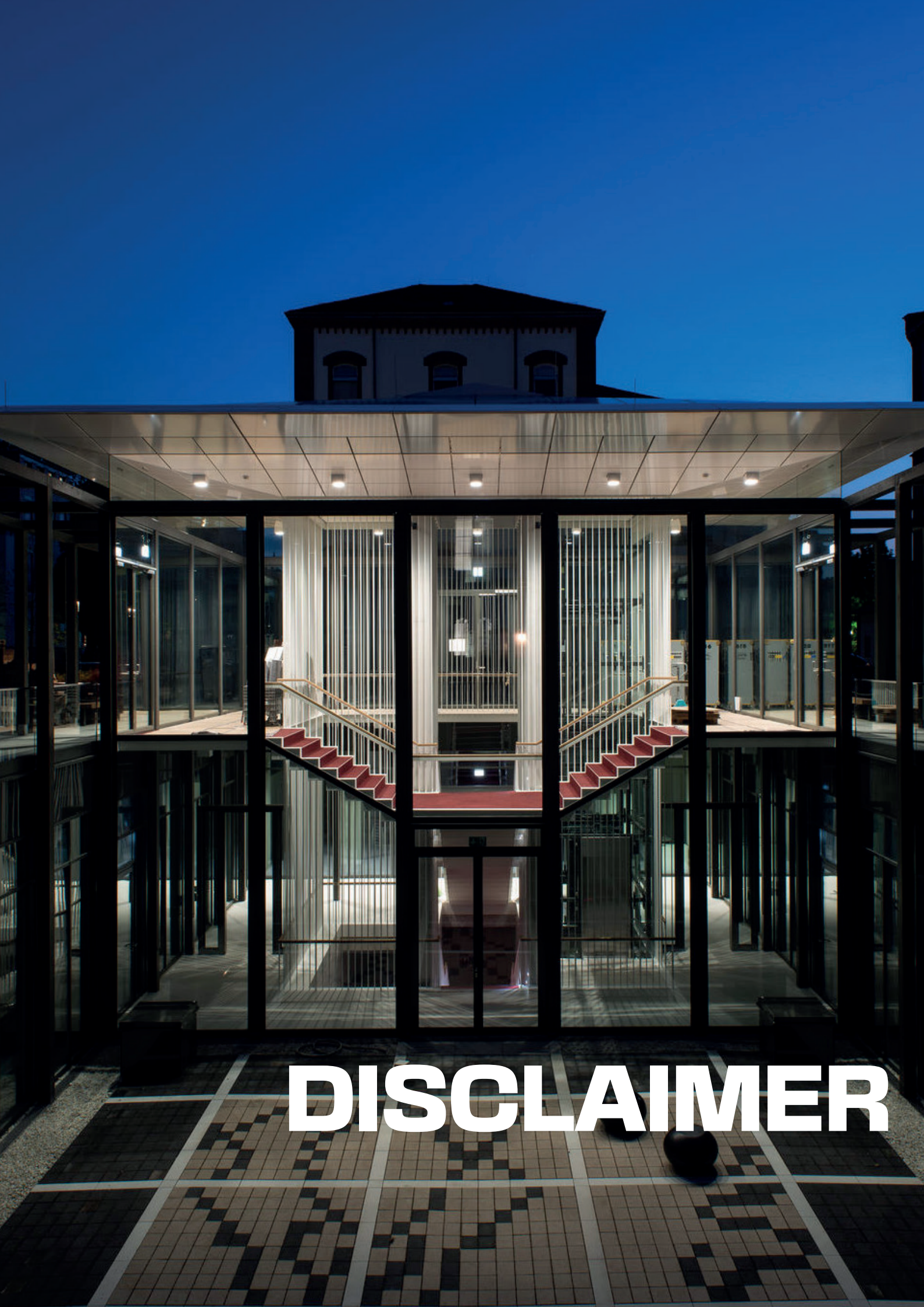
There are three clear learning outcomes. First is an exploration into the roots of foreign policies. How important is the external environment for the making of foreign policy? Do states and the nature of its post-colonial origins in South Asia matter? The second is the issue of global governance. Is global governance just a matter of power play, or do ideas held by states matter? Finally, this competence should lead students to debate issues such as whether large and populous countries such as India have a grand strategy. Does India's aid differ from that of traditional developed country aid? What is the relationship between ethnic nationalism and conflict in South Asia? Can South Asia be characterized as a region where the balance of power dominates the possibilities of cooperation?

Objectives and learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

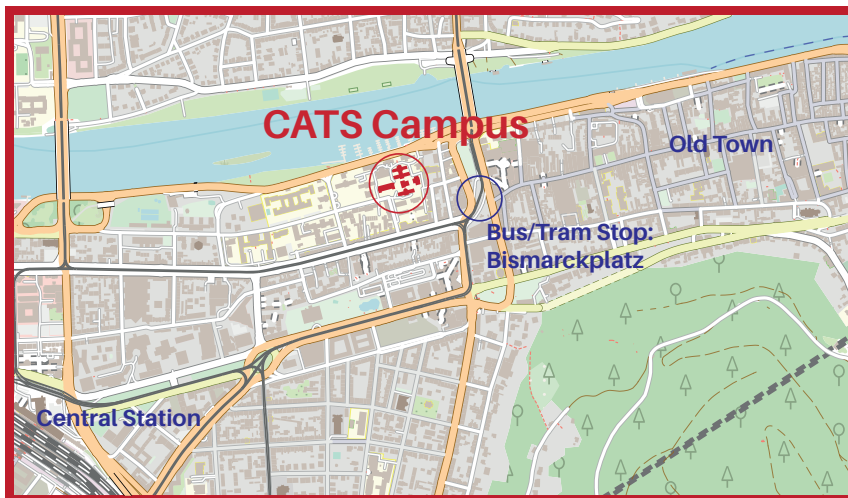
- analyze and critically assess different theoretical approaches to international relations and global governance with special emphasis on South Asia,

- operationalize and apply these theories for a better understanding of real-world issues in South Asia,
- differentiate between diverse theoretical approaches to similar real-world issues in South Asia,
- evaluate the appropriateness of one approach over others.



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showing a woman listening to the radio.
<https://heidicon.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/iiif/2/102652%3A115237>
- page 52 Photo: Arun Anoop.
Unsplash: <https://unsplash.com/@arunanoop>
- page 58 Photo: Susann Henker.
Library at the Centre of Asian and Transcultural Studies,
Heidelberg. CATS: <https://www.cats.uni-heidelberg.de/medien/>
- page 59 Heidelberg city map, data from OpenStreet Map,
modified.