

Oriental Literature: South Asia (A005203)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0

Study time 150 h

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2025-2026

A (semester 2)

Dutch

Gent

independent work

Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026

De Clercq, Eva

LW21

lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2025-2026

crdts

offering

Bachelor of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures(main subject China (China Track))

5

A

Bachelor of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures(main subject China (UGent Track))

5

A

Bachelor of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures(main subject India)

5

A

Bachelor of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures(main subject Japan)

5

A

Micro-credential Literatures of Africa and Asia

5

A

Elective Set Languages of Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe

5

A

Elective Set Literature

5

A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

Oriental literatures, South Asia

Position of the course

India is often imagined as a land of stories, about heroes, demons and gods. This introductory course presents a chronologic overview of the most important genres and sttyles of Sout Asian textual traditions, both of the classical period (Vedas, the epics, classical belles lettres and theatre, narrative and scientific literature), and for the more modern age (Hindi and its antecedents). We discuss how that what we call 'literature' is conceptualized in South Asia, and how it relates to Western concepts. Students learn to explain South Asian literary traditions within their different religious, political and socio-cultural contexts.

Contents

Using extracts from the compositions of classical poets the concept of 'literature' and the languages of literary production are discussed, especially the evolution from the three classical literary languages (Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhramsa) up to the vernacular languages. The students independently read a number of works from the South Asian English literary repertoire.

Initial competences

Basic knowledge of English

Final competences

- 1 Being able to clarify the concept of 'literature' in the South Asian context, especially with regard to the chosen language.
- 2 Being able to read and analyse South Asian literature critically within its specific context.

- 3 To be acquainted with the different literary genres and their most significant representatives. Being able to describe their socio-literary background.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Seminar, Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

Lectures: the teacher discusses the different phases of "literature" in South Asia chronologically.

Seminar: excerpts of the texts discussed in class are discussed.

Project: the student writes a paper with analysis of a selected text fragment, following the example of the classes and under the guidance of the teacher.

Individual work: the student reads a number of books by South Asian writers composed in English.

Study material

Type: Syllabus

Name: Oriental literature: South Asia
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no

Type: Other

Name: God of Small Things
Indicative price: € 7
Optional: yes

Type: Other

Name: The Inheritance of Loss
Indicative price: € 11
Optional: yes

Type: Other

Name: A Fine Balance
Indicative price: € 11
Optional: yes

Type: Other

Name: The Guide
Indicative price: € 13
Optional: yes

Type: Other

Name: Midnight's Children
Indicative price: € 9
Optional: yes

Type: Other

Name: Last Man in Tower
Indicative price: € 15
Optional: yes

References

Gonda, J. (ed.). 1987-. *A History of Indian Literature*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz

Pollock, S. (ed.). 2003. *Literary Cultures in History*, Berkeley: University of California Press

Pollock, S. 2006. *Language of the Gods in the World of Men*. Berkeley: University of California Press

Course content-related study coaching

The staff is at the disposal of the students at fixed hours for additional guidance. Interactive support via Ufora (forums, email) and MS Teams

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Written assessment open-book

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Written assessment open-book

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

Open book exam (PE):

- Identification of terms and names discussed in class
- identification of literary texts (based on translations) discussed in class

Paper (NPE):

- The student writes a short paper in which s/he analyses a selected text fragment, following the examples discussed in class, under the guidance of the teacher.

Participation:

- The student cooperates and thinks along in the analyses of the textual fragments during the class

Calculation of the examination mark

exam: 70%, paper: 20%; participation: 10%

Students who do not take part in the assessment of one or more parts of the course evaluation or obtain a mark of less than 10/20 for one of its parts cannot pass the course evaluation. Should the average mark be higher than 10/20, the final mark will be reduced to the highest non-pass mark (= 9).

Facilities for Working Students

1. Possible exemption from educational activities requiring student attendance
2. Possible alternative examination on a different time in the same academic year
3. Alternative time for feedback: possible through email, telephone, or upon appointment