

Programme specification 2012/2013

School of Oriental and African Studies

The following information forms the programme specification at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. It gives definitive information relating to a programme of study and is written for a public audience, particularly prospective and current students. It is also used for other purposes such as initial programme approval, and is therefore produced at the start of the programme development process. Once approved, it forms the base-line information for all statements relating to the programme and is updated as approved amendments are made.

CORE INFORMATION

Programme title	BA Burmese and...
Final award	BA Honours
Intermediate awards	n/a
Mode of attendance	Full-time
UCAS code	Burmese may be combined with: Development Studies TLJ9 BA/DVSSEA Economics TLJC BA/ECSEA Geography TLJR BA/GESEA ** History VTCJ BA/HSEA History of Art/Archaeology VTJ3 BA/HAASEAS Law TMJC BA/LWSEA Linguistics TQJD BA/LGSEA Music WTHH BA/MSSEA Politics TLH2 BA/POLSEA Social Anthropology TLHP BA/SASEA Study of Religions VTPJ BA/SEASR ** Taught at King's College, London
Professional body accreditation	n/a
Date specification created/updated	April 2011

WHY CHOOSE THIS PROGRAMME?

Why study at SOAS?	SOAS is unique as the only higher education institution in the UK specialising in the study of Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The School also has the largest concentration of specialist faculty concerned with the study of these areas at any university in the world. SOAS is consistently ranked among the top higher education institutions in the UK and the world and it also offers a friendly, vibrant environment for students in a diverse and close-knit community.
What is special about this programme?	SOAS is the only institution where Burmese is taught in the UK, and one of only a handful in Europe (note that for the purpose of this document 'Burma'/'Burmese' and 'Myanmar' may be considered to be interchangeable). BA Burmese and ... is one half of a two-subject degree, studied in

	<p>combination with the disciplines listed above. Burmese courses aim to develop the learner's interest in and understanding of the Burmese language and Burmese society, and to produce graduates who possess a high level of linguistic competence and cultural awareness and sensitivity, and who have a sound knowledge of the country's history, culture and literature. The discipline will normally additionally include courses with a specific South East Asian focus which help to bridge language and discipline, while final year extended essay options also provide potential scope for drawing together the two sides of the degree.</p> <p>BA Burmese and ... may be studied over three years, or over four years if the third year of study is spent studying in Burma. The degree is therefore a three- or four-year programme that strikes an exciting balance between the study of a Burmese language and the cultures of Burma and the South East Asian region.</p> <p>Competence in Burmese language will enable you to come into close contact with authentic material from Burma and help you acquire an understanding of the culture and society of the country.</p> <p>The Burmese-specific syllabus essentially consists of one Burmese language course taken during each year which is spent at SOAS, with additional course options drawn from the Department's and the School's offerings in South East Asian culture, literature, history, politics, economics, linguistics, religious studies, music, art and archaeology, anthropology and others. Burmese language study is the sole focus of the year abroad spent in Burma, if you choose the four-year programme. In the final year, students may make Burma the principal focus of the undergraduate Independent Study Project.</p>
Who would it suit?	<p>The BA Burmese and ... programme prepares you for a career working in, or in connection with, Burma and South East Asia. As the economies of South East Asia continue to expand, linked inextricably to the economies of neighbouring regions, a knowledge of language and culture is an invaluable asset in a number of career paths.</p> <p>This degree is ideal for students who seek the intensive engagement with Burmese language and who may consider spending a year in Burma to acquire a solid foundation in the language coupled with experience of living in Burma and engage with Burmese people in their country.</p> <p>Career paths of our graduates include international development and aid agencies, print journalism and media, local, national and international government agencies, overseas companies, teaching, law, librarianship, arts administration.</p>

	<p>Graduates from this programme may also choose to pursue Masters' programmes that either focus on particular aspects of Burma or South East Asia, or are linked to professional qualifications in law, development, media, etc.</p>
Programme structure	<p>BA Burmese and ... allows for the study of Burma and South East Asia in a broad context, with the possibility of focusing on culture, history, music, art, literature, politics, economics, law, or anthropology.</p> <p>You will study four course units each year chosen from a wide range of available courses relating to various aspects of South East Asia, including a Burmese language course. Certain courses may, if you wish, be an open option course not related to the degree programme, subject to availability and approval of the Department.</p> <p>The first year features an introductory Burmese language course for complete beginners in the language taught at a deliberately intensive pace. The course aims to equip the student with a command of the script and sound system, and a useful range of vocabulary and grammatical structures. It provides practice in speaking and oral comprehension, with simple conversations and recorded listening material; and in reading and writing, using elementary texts in both the colloquial and the literary style, including personal correspondence. You will also take the courses Introduction to South East Asia and South East Asia on Film, which together provide a foundation in the past and present of South East Asian culture. The other two courses are taken in the other subject of your degree.</p> <p>In Year 2 you will take Burmese Language 2, an intermediate language course designed to develop the language skills acquired in the first year, incorporating the study of a range of contemporary prose texts and recorded audio material. In addition students have regular practice in Burmese language conversation with a native speaker of Burmese. You will also take at least a further half-unit in South East Asian literature in translation, in addition to further courses in your other subject.</p> <p>If you choose to do so, you may spend the third year studying Burmese in Burma. Arrangements vary from year to year to suit your preferences and the situation in the country at the time.</p> <p>In the final year, you will take the advanced language course Burmese Language and Texts, designed to develop language skills and at the same time enhance the student's understanding of Burmese culture and values through the study of a range of contemporary texts and recorded audio material, which can often be selected to reflect your particular interests. In addition students have regular practice in Burmese language conversation with a</p>

	<p>native speaker of Burmese. You will complete an undergraduate dissertation (Independent Study Project) of 10,000 words on a topic of your choice related to Burma. The topic of this project is chosen by you in consultation with your teachers, and may be tailored as far as possible to suit your own interests. You also take one or two courses in your second subject or an open option course.</p> <p>Introductory language courses taught in Year 1 assume no previous knowledge of the chosen language or its script: they start completely from scratch. Courses in modern languages concentrate on all four linguistic skills – understanding, speaking, reading and writing; classes are typically small and interactive, with students being encouraged to use the language actively from the outset. Many of our introductory language courses have been written especially for our needs by members of the Department staff; and intermediate and advanced language courses feature a wide range of ‘real world’ teaching and study materials.</p>
Assessment summary	<p>Assessment for language courses typically involves a balance between classroom tests and/or written coursework during the year, oral exam, and written exam.</p> <p>Assessment for culture courses involves a balance between coursework essays and final written exam; some courses are assessed by coursework essays only. Consult the course convenor or the SOAS website for details of the assessment arrangement for each course.</p>

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

SOAS has general minimum entrance requirements for registration for an undergraduate degree and these can be viewed at <http://www.soas.ac.uk/admissions/ug/entryreq/>

- **A Levels:** AAB
- A Level language preferred
- **IB:** 36 (6/6/6)
- **BTEC:** DDM
- **Scottish Highers:** AAABB
- **Scottish Advanced Highers:** AAB
- **Irish LC:** 340 points from 5 Higher level subjects at grade C1 or above
- **Advanced Placement:** 4 4 5 (Two semesters UCAS Group A) plus US HSGD with GPA 3.0
- **Euro Bacc:** 80%
- **French Bacc:** 14/20
- **German Abitur:** 2.0
- **Italy DES:** 80/100
- **Austria Mat:** 2.0
- **Polish Mat:** 75%

PROGRAMME AIMS

- To provide an excellent and broad-ranging foundational knowledge of the culture of Burma in particular and South East Asia in general;
- A working knowledge of Burmese with an awareness of its cultural context.
- To prepare the student for either working in Burma or in communication with Burma.

PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

Knowledge

- a broad knowledge and understanding of Burmese society and culture, past and present;
- competence in speaking, reading and writing Burmese to a level which will be of practical use when communicating with or working with a native speaker of that language;

Intellectual (thinking) skills

- the ability to devise and sustain arguments, question established views, reassess evidence and weigh up contrasting views in general, and in particular on matters relating to Burma and South East Asia
- the ability to describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research in various disciplines relating to Burma and South East Asia;
- an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge related to Burma and South East Asia, and in particular of conflicting ideas and debates relating to economics, history, language, culture, and politics.
- the ability to manage one's own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources such as research articles and/or original materials related to Burma and South East Asia.

Subject-based practical skills

- Analyse cultural data and make judgements on the basis of conflicting evidence.
- Analyse quantitative data for the purposes of management and finance.
- Assess the validity of different approaches to the same data or ideas.
- Research cultural and economic phenomena through both primary and secondary sources, making appropriate use of library and online resources.
- Comprehend, and communicate in, Burmese — through both speech and writing.

Transferable skills

The programme will encourage students to:

- Write and speak with clarity and concision.
- Use a variety of sources as research materials.
- Work to deadlines.
- Develop self-reflexiveness.
- Develop an understanding of the relativity of cultures and “cultural” (or encultured) attitudes.
- Assess the validity of arguments and make judgements on complex situations

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS FOR GAINING AN AWARD

Structure, duration and requirements for gaining an award

SOAS has standard requirements relating to the structure and duration of undergraduate programmes and for the award and classification of these programmes.

Details can be found at

<http://www.soas.ac.uk/registry/degreeregulations/file60378.pdf>

Students take the equivalent of 4 course units each year. In this programme, one unit each year may be an open option course.

Programme structure for this programme.

Lvl	Yr	Course code	Course title	Credit	Status	Notes
4	1	155900910	Burmese Language 1	30	Core	Students with any prior knowledge of Burmese should contact the programme convenor before applying.
4	1	155901320 155901318	Introduction to South East Asia South East Asia on Film	15 15	Compulsory Compulsory	
4	1		Two courses in the other subject / open option at an approved level	60		
5/6	2	155900997	Burmese Language 2	30	Core	
5/6	2	155901316 155901326	War Revolution and Independence in SEA Lit in Translation OR The City and the countryside in SEA Lit in Translation AND a further approved half-unit from list A or B	15 15	Compulsory	The two literature courses run in alternate years.
5/6	2		Two courses in the other subject / open option at an approved level	60		
	(3)		A year abroad in Burma		Optional	Contact the programme convenor for details
5/6	3/4	155900998	Burmese Language and Texts	30	Core	
5/6	3/4	155901243 155901307	Independent Study Project in SEA Studies OR Extended Essay in SEA Studies and a further approved half-unit	30	Compulsory	Students will be expected to write their ISP or EE on a topic relating to Burma
5/6	3/4		Two courses in the other subject / open option at an approved level	60		

The availability of optional/elective courses may vary in a given academic session due to factors such as staff absence and student numbers. For an up to date list of courses running in a given academic session please refer to the degree structures as listed on the SOAS website for the degree programmes taught by each Department.

Course lists - subject to courses being available in a given year: always check with the programme convenor.

For reference - **language units** available (also available as open option courses)

		Level
155900910	Burmese Language 1	4
155900448	Indonesian Language 1	
155901388	Khmer (Cambodian) Language 1	
155901366	Thai Language 1	
155900704	Vietnamese Language 1	
155900997	Burmese Language 2	5
155901022	Indonesian Language 2	
155901367	Thai Language 2	
155900705	Vietnamese Language 2	
155900998	Burmese Language and Texts	6
155901023	Indonesian Language 3	
155901353	Thai Language 3	
155901049	Vietnamese Language and Texts	
155901357	Thai Language 4	6
155901024	Indonesian Language 4	

List A - non-language courses convened within SEA Dept - all level 5/6

155901317	Thailand on Screen (0.5)
155901354	Indonesia on Screen (0.5)
155901319	Sex and the City in South East Asian Cinema (0.5)
155901316	War, Revolution and Independence in South East Asian Literature in Translation (0.5)
155901326	The City and the Countryside in South East Asian Literature in Translation (0.5)
155901308	Cultural Foundations of Indonesia (0.5)
155901309	Indonesian literature: generation of the revolution (0.5)
155901312	Jawi and the Malay manuscript tradition (0.5)
155901313	Pre-modern historical texts of Java, Bali and the Malay World in English translation (0.5)
155901314	Traditional Malay literature: adventure romance in texts and film (0.5)
155901358	Language in South East Asia (0.5)
155901352	Thai Cultural Texts

List B - other SEA-related courses - - all level 5/6

155901307	Extended Essay in South East Asian Studies (0.5)
154900156	Introduction to the art and archaeology of South and South East Asia (0.5)
157400020	An Introduction to Islam
158000110	Buddhism: Foundation (0.5)
158000118	Hinduism: Foundation (0.5)
158000117	Christianity: Foundation (0.5)
158000107	Religions of South East Asia (0.5)
151802048	Ethnography of a selected region - South East Asia
154800232	Introduction to the History of South East Asia
154800237	South East Asia during the Cold War, 1945-1991

154900148	Arts of the Buddha in South East Asia (0.5)
154900149	Contemporary Arts in South East Asia (0.5)
153400022	South East Asian Government and Politics
153400012	Economic development of South East Asia

List C - language possibilities - various levels; other languages may additionally be available as open option courses

155901303	Sanskrit Language 1
155901202	Arabic 100
155900948	Basic Pali
	A second SEA language at an appropriate level - see table above (Burmese, Indonesian, Thai, Vietnamese, Khmer)

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Knowledge

- A broad knowledge and understanding of Burmese and South East Asian culture, in its historical and contemporary developments is taught through a pair of core half-unit courses Introduction to South East Asia and South East Asia on Film which together survey the present and past cultures and societies of the region through a combination of lectures, films and tutorials. These are assessed through coursework essays and unseen exam;
- The detailed knowledge of Burma will be developed through the combination of language learning, essay-questions and the ISP related to the area.
- Basic competence in speaking, reading and writing in Burmese achieved through a progression of language courses taught in small groups that will develop and test all four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing); assessment will consist of classroom tests, written coursework, oral presentations and written and oral exams. Intermediate and advanced language courses and text courses will use a wide range of “real world” cultural texts; the Year Abroad in Burma will give students an understanding of the Burmese in its native cultural setting, and allow them to work at a more advanced level of linguistic competence when they return for the fourth year of study.

Intellectual (thinking) skills

- The ability to describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research in the discipline of choice, with particular focus on Burma and South East Asia, will be developed through readings for lectures, tutorials, and oral presentations, and through classroom discussions and essay-writing;
- The appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge related to Burma and South East Asia will be developed through the discussion of the conflicting ideas and debates relating to economics, history, language, culture, and politics in lectures, tutorials, classroom discussions and questions set for coursework and exam essays.
- The ability to manage one’s own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources such as research articles and/or original materials related to Burma and South East Asia will be developed by encouraging students to choose their own topics for coursework essays in years 2 and 3 and for the Independent Study Project.

Subject-based practical skills

- The ability to analyse cultural data and make judgements on the basis of conflicting evidence will be fostered through course readings from year 1 onwards;
- The ability to research cultural phenomena through both primary and secondary sources, making appropriate use of library and online resources, will be fostered in particular in the written essays, oral presentations and Independent Study Project.
- The ability to comprehend, and communicate in, Burmese through both speech and writing will be fostered in the language courses; the optional year abroad in Burma is an opportunity to reach a good level of linguistic competence

Transferable skills

The programme will encourage students to:

- Write and speak with clarity and concision by giving setting clear guidelines and giving detailed feedback to essays and presentations from year 1 onward;
- Use a variety of sources as research materials in their essays, oral presentations and Independent Study Project. This is particular exhilarating for students in their final year, who find they can write on quite original topics using materials that no one has used before;
- Work to deadlines, with clear deadlines for essays and penalty for late submission.
- Develop self-reflexiveness through classroom discussion, feedback on essays and presentations, and course assessment.
- Develop an understanding of the relativity of cultures and “cultural” (or encultured) attitudes, particularly through classroom discussion.
- Assess the validity of arguments and make judgements on complex situations, in particular in essays and presentations.

REFERENCE POINTS

The following reference points were used in designing the programme:

- School Learning and Teaching Strategy
- Staff research
- QAA framework for higher education qualifications
- QAA subject benchmark statement Languages and related studies (2007)

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

SOAS has internal procedures to assure the quality of provision to be offered to students and to enhance the quality in the light of experience following delivery, taking into account the input of external experts and students. The procedures are set out in the School’s Quality Assurance Handbook and can be viewed at (<http://www.soas.ac.uk/add/qualityassurance/quality-assurance-handbook/>).

SOAS is also subject to periodic external review from bodies such as the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education and relevant professional and statutory regulatory bodies.

The procedures described in the Quality Assurance Handbook are in place to provide a high quality student experience for those choosing to study at SOAS, and student

input and evaluation of their experiences is greatly valued. Students make an input to the ongoing development of their programmes, and the environment in which they operate, in a number of ways, including:

- formal student evaluation as part of the annual programme review;
- student representation on School committees at various levels (through the Students' Union) where many relevant issues are discussed.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- [SOAS Vision and Strategy Statement](#);
- [Undergraduate Handbook](#);
- [Quality Assurance Handbook](#);
- [UCAS website](#);
- [QAA website](#).