

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 baseline information for all statements relating to the programme and is updated as approved amendments are made.

CORE INFORMATION

Programme title	BA South East Asian Studies (including year abroad)
Final award	BA Honours
Intermediate awards	n/a
Mode of attendance	Full-time
UCAS code	T301 BA/SEAS
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?	<p>SOAS is the only University in the UK with a Department focusing solely on the study of the Languages and Cultures of South East Asia, complemented across the School by broad multi-disciplinary expertise in the region.</p> <p>BA South East Asian Studies is a four-year programme that strikes an exciting balance between the study of a South East Asian language (Burmese, Indonesian, Thai or Vietnamese) and the cultures of the region. Competence in a South East Asian language is developed as a tool for exploring the culture for which that language is a vehicle. Your language skills will enable you to come into close contact with authentic material from the region to help you acquire an understanding of the culture and society of the region. An introductory course in Khmer is also available.</p> <p>The syllabus introduces its subject through the broad media of</p>

	<p>language, culture, literature and cinema with options also to gain knowledge of South East Asian history, politics, economics, linguistics, religious studies, music, art and archaeology, anthropology and others.</p>
<p>Who would it suit?</p>	<p>The BA South East Asian Studies (including year abroad) prepares you for a career working in, or in connection with, 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.</p> <p>This degree is ideal for students who not only seek the intensive engagement with language demanded by a four-year degree, but also are able to leave the UK to study abroad for a year, and seek to acquire a working knowledge of a South East Asian language to enhance their engagement with the diversity of South East Asian culture.</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>Many of our graduates choose to pursue Masters' programmes that either focus on particular aspects of South East Asia, or are linked to professional qualifications in law, development, media, etc.</p>
<p>Programme structure</p>	<p>The BA South East Asian Studies (including year abroad) degree allows for the study of 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. In each year, one of your 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 the core 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. All students must take a course in a South East Asian language at a suitable level, normally starting as complete beginners, and one or two first-year level courses relating to South East Asia.</p> <p>In Year 2 you will take at least one half-unit in the literature of South East Asia, in addition to further intermediate courses relating to South East Asia or a continuation of the language you started in Year 1.</p>

	<p>You will spend Year 3 of the degree in South East Asia, undertaking intensive language courses, following the Year Abroad programme specified for the language you are studying. In most cases, this involves attending a university or similar institution in the South East Asian country.</p> <p>In Year 4, the final year, you will complete an undergraduate dissertation (Independent Study Project) of 10,000 words on a topic of your choice related to South East Asia. 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 will also take two further course units relating to South East Asia at an intermediate or advanced level and a final unit of language study in your chosen language.</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 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> <p>Students who do not wish to spend a year in South East Asia may apply for or transfer to one of the three-year programmes in South East Asian Studies or a South East Asian language. Please contact a member of the South East Asia department or consult the SOAS website for further details.</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 South East Asia;
- A working knowledge of a South East Asian language with an awareness of its cultural context.
- To prepare the student for either working in or in communication with a South East Asian country.

PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

Knowledge

- a broad knowledge and understanding of South East Asian culture, past and present;
- a detailed knowledge of a selected country of South East Asia (Burma, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam)
- competence in speaking, reading and writing a South East Asian language 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 South East Asia
- the ability to describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research in various disciplines relating to South East Asia;
- an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge related to 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 South East Asia.

Subject-based practical skills

- Analyse cultural data and make judgements on the basis of conflicting evidence.
- Assess the validity of different approaches to the same data or ideas.
- Research cultural phenomena through both primary and secondary sources, making appropriate use of library and online resources.

- Comprehend, and communicate in, a South East Asian language — 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		A SEAsian Language at a suitable level (Burmese, Indonesian, Khmer, Thai, Vietnamese)	30	Core	Typically Level 1 of the language chosen
4	1	155901320 155901318	Introduction to SEAsia SEAsia on Film	15 15	Compulsory Compulsory	
4	1		A unit from List B	30	Option 1	
4	1		A unit from List B or an open option course	30	Option 2	
5/6	2		Continuation of year 1 SEA language	30	Core	Typically level 2 of the language chosen
5/6	2	1559013161 55901326	War Revolution and Independence in SEA Lit in Translation OR The City and the countryside in SEA Lit in Translation AND a further half-unit from list A	15 15	Option 1	The two literature courses run in alternate years.
5/6	2		Courses to the value of one unit from Lists A or B or C at an approved level		Option 2	For students learning Thai, Option 2 will

						normally be Thai Cultural Texts 155901352; for students learning Indonesian, Option 2 will normally be Cultural Foundations of Indonesia 055901308.
5/6	2		A unit from List B at an approved level or an open option course		Option 3	
	3		A year abroad in Thailand, Vietnam, Burma or Indonesia		Compulsory	Contact the convenor of each language for details of the each Year Abroad programme.
5/6	4	155901243	Independent Study Project in SEA Studies	30	Core	
5/6	4		Continuation of year 3 SEA language OR courses to the value of one unit from Lists A or B at an approved level	30	Option 1	Typically level 4 of the language chosen
5/6	4		Courses to the value of one unit from Lists A or B at an approved level	30	Option 2	
5/6	4		A unit from List B or List C at an approved level or an open option course	30	Option 3	Students may take an introductory course in a second SEA Language as their open option course, subject to approval

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:

		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 Unit)
155901354	Indonesia on Screen (0.5 Unit)
155901319	Sex and the City in South East Asian Cinema (0.5 Unit)
155901316	War, Revolution and Independence in South East Asian Literature in Translation (0.5 Unit)
155901326	The City and the Countryside in South East Asian Literature in Translation (0.5 Unit)
155901308	Cultural Foundations of Indonesia (0.5 Unit)
155901309	Indonesian literature: generation of the revolution (0.5 Unit)
155901310	Indonesian literature: women's writing (0.5 Unit)
155901312	Jawi and the Malay manuscript tradition (0.5 Unit)
155901313	Pre-modern historical texts of Java, Bali and the Malay World in English translation (0.5 Unit)
155901314	Traditional Malay literature: adventure romance in texts and film (0.5 Unit)
155901358	Language in South East Asia (0.5 Unit)
155901352	Thai Cultural Texts

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

155901307	Extended Essay in South East Asian Studies (0.5 Unit)
154900156	Introduction to the art and archaeology of South and South East Asia (0.5 Unit)
157400020	An Introduction to Islam
158000110	Buddhism: Foundation (0.5 Unit)
158000118	Hinduism: Foundation (0.5 Unit)
158000117	Christianity: Foundation (0.5 Unit)
158000107	Religions of South East Asia (0.5 Unit)
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 Unit)
154900149	Contemporary Arts in South East Asia (0.5 Unit)
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 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 a selected South East Asian country (Burma, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam) will be developed through the combination of language learning, essay-questions and the ISP related to the area.
- for students who choose to pursue language work, basic competence in speaking, reading and writing a South East Asian language will be 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 will give students an understanding of the language in its native cultural setting, and allow them to work at a more advanced level of linguistic competence on cinematic, literary or cultural texts 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 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 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 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 analyse quantitative data will be developed in lectures and assignments;
- The ability to assess the validity of different approaches to the same data or ideas within the same discipline will be fostered through essay questions and classroom discussions;

- The ability to research economic and 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.
- For students who pursue language study, the ability to comprehend, and communicate in, a South East Asian language through both speech and writing will be fostered in the language courses; the compulsory year abroad in South East Asia 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](#).