



**Online Academic Summer School 2020**  
SOAS University of London

**South Asia: Contested Histories, Uncertain Futures**  
Course Handbook

**Mode of Attendance:** Full-time, Online

**Duration:** 2 weeks

**SOAS Accredited:** This course is worth 15 UK credits

**Programme Description**

How should we go about studying the political aspirations and agency of almost two billion people in South Asia, governed by contradictory and unstable regimes, where religion, language, caste, class, gender, and other identities unite and divide such vast populations? What does it mean when the world's fastest growing regional economy, also has the largest number of people living in abject poverty? Why do South Asia's borders remain contested, even after seventy years? Today's burning questions of borders, identity, development and democracy can only be understood if we listen to the voices of South Asia, echoing through the ages to the present day. From the philosophies of the heroes of anti-colonial and independence movements including Gandhi, Nehru, Jinnah and Mujib ur Rehman, to the divisive but enduring ideologies of religious and ethnic nationalists including Savarkar and Maulana Maudoodi, this course introduces students to the ideas and philosophies that emerged and evolved within South Asia, and that continue to shape this exciting and turbulent region. This course is an exciting opportunity to learn about South Asia's politics, society and relationship with the world, through South Asia's own ideological and philosophical traditions. The course is divided into three parts. First, we will introduce students to the ideas and thinkers that have shaped the region's past and present. Second, we will examine how these ideas and thinkers continue to mould contemporary social and political debates surrounding South Asia's major political questions. Finally, we will extend our intellectual journey beyond the questions that divide South Asia, to those that define the region and its relationship with China, US, Europe, and the wider world. This unique approach is firmly inter-disciplinary, drawing on the best of South Asian political theory, history, security studies, anthropology, economics, art and film studies. The course will include visits to museums, film-viewings and history walks through the South Asian nationalist landscapes of London. Such engagements will allow students to trace connections between the material discussed in seminar rooms and the city that surrounds them. This summer school at SOAS is one of its kind in the UK. It is directed and taught by leading scholars who take pride in innovative and enthusiastic teaching.

**Programme Schedule and Topics:**

- The Ideas of South Asia
- Conflict and Security: In Retrospect and Prospect
- Great Power Politics, Small State Interests

**Learning Outcomes**

On successful completion of the module, students should be able to:

- Critically engage with South Asia's unique ideologies, philosophies, and intellectual giants
- Understand the questions of identity, security, development and nationalism that drive South Asian politics and define the relationship between state and society in this region
- Draw connections between South Asia's intellectual history and its contemporary social and political debates and discord
- Understand the distinct challenges that South Asian states must face collectively
- Consider South Asia's relationship with the wider world from a local perspective

### **Assessment**

Each course is assessed by two online assessments ('e-tivities'\*) comprising of 30%, the remaining 70% is formed of a 2,500 word essay. The e-tivities provide formative and summative feedback to students as a means of monitoring their progress and encouraging areas in which they can improve. On successful completion of the assessments, students will receive a transcript confirming the credit awarded. Students that do not require credit are strongly encouraged to take part in the e-tivities, but are not required to complete the assessments.

\* An 'e-tivity' is a framework for online, active and interactive learning following a format that states clearly to the students its 'Purpose'; the 'Task' at hand; the contribution or 'Response' type; and the 'Outcome' (Salmon, G. (2002) *E-tivities: The Key to Active Online Learning*, New York and London: Routledge Falmer.)

### **Course Convenors**

Dr Yasser Kureshi and Dr Simona Vittorini

### **Introductory Readings and Sources**

- Bose, S., Jalal, A. 2013. *Modern South Asia. History, Culture, Political Economy*. New York, Routledge
- Brass, Paul. 2009. *Routledge Handbook of South Asian Politics: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal*. Routledge
- Dasgupta, S. 2019. *Awakening Bharat Mata. The Political Beliefs of the Indian Right*. New Delhi, Penguin
- Devji, F. 2013. *Muslim Zion: Pakistan as a Political Idea*. London, Hurst
- Khilnani, Sunil. 2003. *The Idea of India*. London, Penguin
- Jaffrelot, C. 2007 *Hindu Nationalism: A Reader*. Princeton, Princeton University Press.