

Course Outline: South Asian Literature

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH | FALL/WINTER 2026-2027

Note for students: This short course outline is provided for planning purposes only. Course information is tentative and subject to minor changes; the final syllabus will be available by the first day of classes.

Course Code

AP/EN 3430 6.0A (Y) – South Asian Literature

Course Description

This course is a curated introduction to major works of literature from South Asia (present-day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal). We will read widely, across genres and languages – from ancient Sanskrit hymns to Sufi songs of love and longing, from memoirs by former Untouchables to stories of migration and resilience. Some of the questions we will ponder together include: How did colonialism shape modern South Asian literature? What makes Islam in South Asia different from Islam in the Middle East? Why is South Asian poetry obsessed with romantic love, despite the prevalence of arranged marriages? Does the global diaspora – in places as far apart as Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, or north America – have anything in common, besides shared ethnic roots? No prior knowledge of South Asia or any South Asian language is required, and all readings will be in English or in translation.

AP/EN 3430 provides an overview of major themes in South Asian history and culture. Students will develop a familiarity with the key literary genres, religious traditions, and historical events that have shaped South Asia over the centuries. Their work in this course will provide students with a solid foundation for further literary study or for their own creative writing.

Course Delivery

Delivery Mode: SEMR

When: Wednesdays, 11:30 AM to 2:20 PM

Where: AWC 306

How: This course is designed as an in-person seminar, and learning will be generated through active and enthusiastic participation in classroom discussion.

Course Materials

Note: Most of the assigned reading material for this course will be uploaded to the Course website (eClass). The only texts that you need to purchase from the bookstore or borrow from the library are listed below.

Fall term:

Intizar Husain, *Basti*, tr. from the Urdu (New York Review of Books)

Winter term:

R.K. Narayan, *Malgudi Days* (Penguin)

Daya Pawar, *Baluta*, tr. from the Marathi (Speaking Tiger – I recommend the eBook)

Grade Breakdown

Fall Term:

Short Assignment 1: Deep Time (1-2 pages)	Take-home	10%
Fall Term Essay (1000 words)	Take-home	15%
Fall Term Test	In-person	15%

Winter Term:

Short Assignment 2: Prose Narratives (1-2 pages)	Take-home	10%
Short Assignment 3: Poetry (1-2 pages)	Take-home	10%
Winter Term Essay (1000 words)	Take-home	20%
Winter Term test	In-person	10%

Cumulative:

Active, informed participation	In-person	10%
--------------------------------	-----------	-----

Additional Information

Category:	C
Historical Requirements:	N/A
Open To:	Yr 3, 4 (EN, ENPR, CRWR students only)