

ASIAN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES, B.A.

Human rights in Thailand; literature of the region; and history and politics in Southeast Asia.

The 21st century has been called the “Asian Century”: indeed, many of the world’s most pressing issues cannot be understood without a grasp of the histories, cultures, and languages of Asia. Asia is home to over half of the world’s population. China, Japan, and India are three of the world’s top economies. For decades Asian countries have been leaders in global manufacturing, and Asian universities are renowned centers for literary studies and scientific innovation. Fifty percent of the declared nuclear-weapon states are also in the region. Simply put, Asia matters a great deal.

The Department of Asian Languages and Cultures offers a wide variety of courses on East, South, and Southeast Asia taught by faculty who are specialists in their regions and disciplines. Whether you are taking your first step toward learning about Asia or you bring some background experience, an ALC major will expand your ability to think and work across cultural and linguistic boundaries. Majors may opt to study Asia in a transnational and transhistorical perspective or in a more focused course of study by choosing one of our named options in East Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia.

To take advantage of the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures’ many relationships with other departments and program units across campus, students may choose to double major or enhance their studies in ALC with one of the certificates offered at the university, such as the Certificate in Global Health, the Certificate in Health and the Humanities, or those offered by the area studies centers.

This major is interdisciplinary and offers a wealth of options. Careful planning and consultation with the ALC undergraduate advisor is especially important.

East Asia

The East Asian Studies named option offers a multidisciplinary range of courses that explore the diverse and vibrant cultures, arts, histories, political systems, and literatures of China, Japan, Korea and Tibet. Students in the East Asian option can study Chinese, Japanese, Korean or Tibetan language and linguistics; and explore Chinese ghost stories and classical Chinese literature or poetry; Korean cinema and pop culture; classical Japanese fiction; early modern comedic narratives, manga, anime, and counterculture.

South Asia

The South Asian Studies named option offers a multidisciplinary range of courses that explore the diverse and vibrant cultures, arts, histories, political systems, and literatures of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Tibet. Students in the South Asian option can study Hindi, Persian, Sanskrit, Tibetan, or Urdu language; the roots of Yoga; methods of Buddhist philosophy and meditation; South Asian religion and politics in the past and present of the Indian subcontinent; and medical history in South Asia.

Southeast Asia

The Southeast Asian Studies named option offers a multidisciplinary range of courses that explore the diverse and vibrant cultures, arts, histories, political systems, and literatures of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam. Students in the Southeast Asian option can study Burmese, Filipino, Hmong, Indonesian, Khmer, Thai, and Vietnamese language;