

**INDIAN STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW:
THE CREATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIRST CYCLE
AND SECOND CYCLE STUDY PROGRAMMES (2006 – JUNE 2010)**

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This paper, or rather report, concentrates on discussing in detail the 3-year first cycle (undergraduate, BA) and 2-year second cycle (graduate, MA) programmes of study in the field of Oriental Studies specialising in Indian Studies at the Department of South Asian Studies, Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Warsaw; it specifies their contents and the intended learning outcomes of their graduates, as well as points out problems encountered when creating and implementing them. Additionally, the paper briefly presents the 3-year first cycle and 2-year second cycle programmes of study in the field of Cultural Studies specialising in Intercultural Relations at the Centre for Intercultural Relations, Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Warsaw, which also provide their students with basic information on Indian culture.

The paper may serve as a basis for comparison with study programmes offered by other centres for Indian studies in Central and Eastern Europe.

0. INTRODUCTION

Let me begin by describing the situation in the then Institute of Oriental Studies, University of Warsaw, in the year 2006, when we faced two major challenges: firstly, we had to replace each of our 5-year long cycle programmes of study with a 3-year first cycle programme and a 2-year second cycle programme, in line with the Bologna process; secondly, we were obliged to comply here with the newly-announced strict programme requirements specified for each field and level of study by the Polish Minister of Science and Higher Education, including the educational profiles of graduates and framework curriculum contents.

The latter proved to be an especially difficult, if not impossible, task.

We were sure that we would have felt confined within the field of Philology.

However, we soon discovered that we would not have fitted into the field of Cultural Studies either, which was practically the only other option available to us in the list of the fields of study specified by the Minister, as it was defined as the theoretical study of culture in general, from the perspective of anthropology, sociology, philosophy, etc., with stress laid on contemporary audiovisual culture, and included in its framework curriculum, among other courses, training in the organisation and management of cultural institutions, with their legal and financial aspects, as well as elements of marketing and public relations.

We perceived our educational aims as different from those of these two fields of study, and thus we were convinced that our intended graduate profiles, as well as our curricula contents, should also differ from theirs.

Although we consider an intensive course in one Oriental/African language, and at least a basic course in a second one, as well as reading and interpretation of source texts and lectures on the history of the literature of a given region of Asia/Africa, to be vital components of our curricula, permitting students to master their 1st Oriental/African language at advanced level and their 2nd Oriental/African language at least at elementary level, so that graduates could easily become linguists, language teachers, interpreters, literary translators, literary critics, etc., we are not satisfied with doing nothing but this.

We believe that the essence of our discipline is the study of the cultures of Asia and Africa through their respective languages. In other words, we treat the languages which we teach as tools; indispensable tools, to be sure, but merely tools nonetheless. Thus, we deem it crucial to include in our curricula, besides all the above-mentioned courses, a wide range of lectures on various aspects of a given Oriental/African culture. In addition, we regard it as necessary, especially at the graduate (MA) level, to provide students with a good grounding in the methodology, not only of linguistics and literary studies, but also of cultural studies, religious studies, philosophy, social sciences, historical sciences, political science, etc., as well as to offer them a comparative perspective on Oriental and African cultures.

With educational objectives such as these, we could not possibly have found a place for ourselves in the list of existing fields of study.

Fortunately, according to the Polish Law on Higher Education Act of 2005, a basic organisational unit of a higher education institution may, at the request of the senate of the institution and upon the consent of the Minister of Science and Higher Education, be given, after consultation with the General Council for Higher Education, the right to provide degree programmes in a field of study other than those specified in the list.

Thus, we defined our own field of study, namely Oriental Studies, with twelve forms of specialisation, Indian Studies among them, specified programme requirements for first and second cycle studies for each specialisation, and applied for the consent of the Senate of the University of Warsaw and the Minister.

Our application was assessed as well-grounded and very well prepared, so we were granted permission without any problems and without any suggestions for changes.

In the academic year 2007/2008 we happily admitted the first batch of young people into our first cycle programmes of study. We will start our second cycle study programmes in the next academic year, i.e. in the academic year 2010/2011.

So, let me now discuss in detail the 3-year first cycle programme of study and the 2-year second cycle programme of study in the field of Oriental Studies specialising in Indian Studies at the Department of South Asian Studies, Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Warsaw.

1. FIRST CYCLE PROGRAMME

The intended graduate profile is as follows:

The completion of the 3-year first cycle course of studies in the field of Oriental Studies specialising in Indian Studies at the Department of South Asian Studies, Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Warsaw provides a graduate with substantial knowledge in the fields of:

- history of India
- socio-cultural issues of India
- Sanskrit literature
- Bengali, Hindi or Tamil literature
- Indian philosophy
- Indian art

Additionally, the course of studies provides graduates with general knowledge in the fields of:

- history of philosophy
- cultural anthropology
- theory of culture

Furthermore, graduates will have mastered Bengali, Hindi, Tamil, or Sanskrit at intermediate level, which will permit them to communicate and/or read simple source texts. Graduates will also have mastered a second Indian language (Sanskrit for those majoring in Bengali, Hindi or Tamil, and Bengali, Hindi or Tamil for those majoring in Sanskrit) at elementary level.

The knowledge acquired during the above course of studies provides graduates with the understanding of, and ability to discuss, general topics related to both theoretical and practical aspects of Indian culture.

Graduates should be qualified to find employment in cultural institutions (museums, media, publishing houses, etc.), and in offices of national, government and local government administration dealing with foreign affairs, refugee issues, intercultural education, etc., as well as to start second cycle studies.

Accordingly, the curriculum includes:

A. Several courses obligatory for all the students of the University of Warsaw, which I am not going to discuss here.

B. Lectures:

- History of philosophy – 60 hours
- Cultural anthropology – 60 hours
- Theory of culture – 60 hours

C. Specialised lectures:

- History of India – 90 hours
- Socio-cultural issues of India – 60 hours

- Literature and culture of India – 120 hours (Sanskrit literature – 60 hours and Bengali, Hindi or Tamil literature – 60 hours)
- Indian philosophy – 60 hours
- Indian art – 60 hours
- Grammar of the 1st Indian language (Bengali, Hindi, Tamil, or Sanskrit) – 120 hours

D. Practical classes:

- 1st Indian language (Bengali, Hindi, Tamil, or Sanskrit) course – 540 hours
- Grammar of the 1st Indian language (Bengali, Hindi, Tamil, or Sanskrit) – 120 hours
- 1st Indian language (Bengali, Hindi, Tamil, or Sanskrit) texts reading – 120 hours
- 2nd Indian language (Sanskrit for those majoring in Bengali, Hindi or Tamil, and Bengali, Hindi or Tamil for those majoring in Sanskrit) course – 240 hours
- 2 elective courses (chosen from among those offered by the Department of South Asian Studies, e.g. lectures on the Jain religion and philosophy, *Rāmāyaṇa* tradition, Indian classical theatre, Indian folk theatre, Bengali culture, South Indian culture, contemporary socio-political issues of the Indian subcontinent, etc.) – 60 hours
- Proseminar – 60 hours
- BA seminar – 60 hours

2. SECOND CYCLE PROGRAMME

The intended graduate profile is as follows:

The completion of the 2-year second cycle course of studies in the field of Oriental Studies specialising in Indian Studies at the Department of South Asian Studies, Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Warsaw provides a graduate with wide-ranging knowledge which allows him or her to understand and interpret specific phenomena of Indian culture by employing a selected research methodology from the fields of:

- linguistics, or
- literary studies and cultural studies, or
- religious studies and philosophy, or
- historical, social and political sciences.

Furthermore, graduates will have mastered Bengali, Hindi, Tamil, or Sanskrit at advanced level, which will permit them easily to interpret source texts.

The knowledge gained during the above course of studies offers graduates the opportunity to find employment in a wide range of cultural institutions (museums, media, publishing houses, etc.), as well as in offices of national, government and local government administration dealing with foreign affairs, refugee issues, inter-cultural education, etc. Graduates should possess the habit of continuous learning and be qualified to start third cycle (postgraduate, PhD) studies.

Accordingly, the curriculum includes:

A.

- Elective course (chosen from among those offered by the University of Warsaw)

B. Lectures:

- Introduction to academic research – 30 hours
- Logic and semiotics – 30 hours

C.

- Oriental seminar – 20 hours
- Methodological lecture – 60 hours
- Elective course (chosen from among those offered by the Faculty of Oriental Studies) – 60 hours

This interesting and important group of courses, obligatory for all the students of the Faculty of Oriental Studies, is something new in our curricula. Four specialised seminars have been established, one concerned with the languages of Asia and Africa, another with their literatures and cultures (my colleague Prof. Danuta Stasik has been appointed its Head), yet another with their philosophies and religions (our colleague Prof. Joanna Jurewicz has been appointed its Head, so specialists in Indian Studies figure prominently here), and the last one with their history and socio-political issues. The seminars have been conceived of as fora where all our MA students, and our PhD students as well, interested in, and writing their theses on, one of the above-mentioned topics, meet our academic teachers doing research in the same field, and discuss various problems from a comparative perspective (e.g. orature and literature in the cultures of Asia and Africa, or systems and forms of power in Asia and Africa), while receiving a good grounding in the methodology of linguistics, literary studies and cultural studies, religious studies and philosophy, or historical, social, and political sciences, as well as learning the rules and procedures of a scholarly debate. In addition to their regular meetings, which are to take place once a month, one or more methodological lectures will be organised by the Faculty for each seminar (for the next academic year, for example, lectures on general linguistics, cognitive linguistics, interpretation of literary texts, philosophy of religion, introduction to historical research and sociology are planned); however, students can choose a different methodological lecture from among those offered by the University of Warsaw, if they find it more suitable for their purposes and if it is approved by their supervisor.

As I have said, this is something new in our curricula, so nobody knows whether it will work; we are a little apprehensive at the moment, but really excited as well. We feel that it may not only improve the research competences of our MA and PhD students and the quality of their theses, but also bring together the staff of different departments of our Faculty; hopefully, joint research projects and publications will follow.

D.

- Indian language (Bengali, Hindi, Tamil, or Sanskrit) course – 270 hours
- Source texts reading – 210 hours

- Specialised course – 240 hours (including lectures – 90 hours, practical classes – 120 hours and specialised seminar – 30 hours); this course allows participants to broaden and deepen their knowledge of a particular aspect of Indian culture, such as Indian philosophy, Indian theatre, classical Sanskrit literature, Tamil literature, Bengali literature, the literature and culture of the Hindi speaking area, etc.
- Elective course (chosen from among those offered by the Department of South Asian Studies) – 30 hours
- MA seminar – 60 hours

As we started our first cycle programme of study in the academic year 2007/2008, we will have its first graduates soon; the first BA theses are already submitted and the first BA examinations are planned for the end of this month. In October, the first batch of young people will be admitted into our second cycle programme of study; the admission process has already begun. Thus, this is the right time to rethink, reassess and perhaps modify both of our study programmes.

Three major issues have emerged so far: the overloading of the curriculum of the first cycle programme, problems connected with the mobility of students and apprehension as to admission into the second cycle programme.

The ambitious plan to include in the curriculum of our first cycle programme of study an intensive course in one Indian language, a basic course in a second one, a wide range of lectures on various aspects of Indian culture and several methodological lectures as well, not to mention numerous additional courses obligatory for all the students of the University of Warsaw, has resulted in overloading. Not only our students, but also our academic teachers are struggling – especially, as it turns out, during the 3rd year of the course of study, when the students are required to write their BA theses, which the teachers supervise and review. We cannot really do much about it, as the self-imposed programme requirements for our field of study are quite strict, but there are some things we can do. Sadly, although we have always seen it as one of our greatest assets that our students majoring in one of the modern Indian languages also learn the basics of Sanskrit, and those majoring in Sanskrit learn the basics of one modern Indian language as well, it is the shortening of a second language course from 240 to 120 hours that we consider to be the first step towards lessening the learning and teaching load.

Although the benefits of student mobility need no explanation and we should encourage it by all means possible, it shames me to say that we cannot really afford to do so at the moment. The number of our students is limited, and when some of them spend a period of study abroad, e.g. participating in the Erasmus programme, foreign students do not arrive and enrol in our programmes of study in their place because of the language barrier (all our courses are taught in Polish), and obviously will not come to us until we provide courses in English. This is inevitable and we certainly will introduce courses taught in English at some point in the future, at least for our second cycle study programme, but we do not have any concrete plans at this stage.

The process of admission into our second cycle programme of study has already begun for the very first time. The programme is meant as a continuation of our first cycle programme of study. We admit graduates of first cycle study programmes in the fields of Oriental Studies, Cultural Studies and Philology specialising in Indian Studies, our own graduates among them, on the basis of their final grade and overall grade average. Admission is open to other candidates as well, provided that they know a given Indian language (it is Sanskrit this year) at the required level; thus, an examination is held for them. Obviously, this means that, while some of our graduates will not continue their education and some will inevitably start second cycle studies in another field, practically no new candidates will come to us, perhaps with the exception of some graduates of the first cycle programme of study in the field of Philology specialising in Indo-Tibetan Philology and Modern Indian Philology at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, where no second cycle study programme is being provided for the time being. Thus, we are a little apprehensive at the moment. Admittedly, all the present 3rd-year students of our first cycle programme of study have declared that they are going to apply for admission into our second cycle study programme. We also know that there will be at least one candidate from Poznań, so maybe these apprehensions are groundless, but only time will tell.

3. EVENING PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

Finally, to give you a complete picture of Indian studies at the Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Warsaw, let me briefly present the 3-year first cycle and 2-year second cycle evening (i.e. paid) programmes of study in the field of Cultural Studies specialising in Intercultural Relations provided by our Centre for Intercultural Relations.

The curriculum of the first cycle programme of study includes only a basic course in one Oriental/African language, from among those offered by the Centre, and it is not continued in the second cycle study programme.

The curricula of both programmes of study include a wide range of lectures on various aspects of the numerous cultures of Asia and Africa, Indian culture among them, as well as, from a comparative perspective, those of the West, lectures on migration issues, refugee issues, intercultural communication, intercultural relations, etc., as well as training in the methodology of cultural studies and social sciences.

Many courses are taught jointly by staff members of different departments of our Faculty, and specialists in Indian studies figure prominently here. To give you just one example, lectures on the socio-cultural context of the literatures of Asia and Africa for the second cycle study programme are coordinated by Prof. Danuta Stasik and include, besides lectures on African, Arabic, Japanese and Chinese literature, three lectures on the literature of India, namely two lectures on Sanskrit literature by myself and one lecture on Hindi literature by Prof. Stasik.

Graduates should possess the awareness of, openness towards and regard for other cultures, as well as the understanding of cultural diversity, permitting them to actively participate in the process of collaboration between the East and the West.

FACULTY OF ORIENTAL STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW

Field: Oriental Studies

Specialty: Indian Studies

3-year first cycle programme – curriculum

Course name	Number of hours		Year											
			1st semester				2nd semester				3rd semester			
			1		2		3		4		5		6	
			hours	ECTS	hours	ECTS	hours	ECTS	hours	ECTS	hours	ECTS	hours	ECTS
A.														
1. Foreign language course	120	class					60	2	60	2				
2. Foreign language examination									2					
3. Information technology	30	class	30	2										
4. Physical education	120		30		30		30		30					
5. Safety and hygiene at work				0,5										
6. Intellectual property protection				0,5										
7. Elective course					1		1		1			5		
Total:	270													
B.														
1. History of philosophy	60	lect. ex.	30	1	30	2								
2. Cultural anthropology	60	lect. ex.	30	2	30	3								
3. Theory of culture	60	lect. ex.					30	2	30	3				
Total:	180													
C.														
1. History of India*	90	lect. ex.	30	2	30	2	30	4						
2. Socio-cultural issues of India	60	lect. ex.	30	2	30	3								
3. Literature and culture of India**	120	lect. ex.	30	2	30	3	30	2	30	3				
4. Indian philosophy	60	lect. ex.									30	2	30	3
5. Indian art	60	lect. ex.									30	2	30	3
6. Grammar of the 1st Indian language***	120	lect. ex.	30	2	30	3	30	2	30	3				
Total:	510													
D.														
1. 1st Indian language****	540	class ex.	90	7	90	6	90	6	90	6	90	8	90	6
2. Grammar of the 1st Indian language	120	class	30	3	30	3	30	3	30	3				
3. 1st Indian language texts reading	120	class									60	4	60	4
4. 2nd Indian language*****	240	class ex.			60	4	60	5	60	4	60	5		
5. 1st elective course*****	30		30	3										
6. 2nd elective course*****	30		30	3										
7. Proseminar	60						30	3	30	3				
8. BA seminar	60										30	4	30	4
9. BA thesis														10
Total:	1200													
ECTS credits:				30		30		30		30		30		30
Total number of hours:	2160		420		390		420		390		300		240	
Number of hours per week:			28		26		28		26		20		16	

* 1 examination, after the 3rd semester

** 2 semesters of Sanskrit literature, leading to an examination, and 2 semesters of Bengali, Hindi or Tamil literature, also leading to an examination

*** 2 examinations, after the 2nd and 4th semester

**** 2 examinations, after the 1st and 5th semester

***** 2 examinations, after the 3rd and 5th semester

***** from among those offered by the Department of South Asian Studies

FACULTY OF ORIENTAL STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW

Field: Oriental Studies

Specialty: Indian Studies

2-year second cycle programme – curriculum

Course name	Number of hours			Year							
				1st semester				2nd semester			
				1		2		3		4	
				hours	ECTS	hours	ECTS	hours	ECTS	hours	ECTS
A.											
1. Elective course*				1		1		4			
B.											
1. Introduction to academic research	30	lect.	ex.	30	2						
2. Logic and semiotics	30	lect.	ex.			30	2				
Total:	60										
C.											
1. Oriental seminar	20			10	2	10	2				
2. Methodological lecture	60	lect.	ex.	30	2	30	3				
3. Elective course**	60			30	2	30	2				
Total:	140										
D.											
1. Indian language***	270	class	ex.	90	6	90	6	90	8		
2. Source texts reading	210	class		60	6	60	6	60	6	30	3
3. Specialised course****	240		ex.	60	4	60	4	90	8	30	3
4. Elective course*****	30			30	1						
5. MA seminar	120			30	4	30	4	30	4	30	4
6. MA thesis											20
Total:	870										
ECTS credits:					30		30		30		30
Total number of hours:	1070			370		340		270		90	
Number of hours per week:				25		23		18		6	

* from among those offered by the University of Warsaw

** from among those offered by the Faculty of Oriental Studies

*** 1 examination, after the 3rd semester

**** including lectures – 90 hours, practical classes – 120 hours and specialised seminar – 30 hours; 1 examination, after the 3rd semester

***** from among those offered by the Department of South Asian Studies