



MA in South Asian Languages and Cultures

Ghent University (online)

WELCOME TO SOUTH ASIAN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

Ghent University offers a two-year master's program in South Asian Languages and Cultures. The program draws on the expertise of the faculty and researchers from the 'South Asia Network Ghent Research Group'. From the academic year 2021-2022 onwards, the courses of the program's research-oriented track ('academic proficiency') will be offered completely in English and online, allowing students to obtain the degree from anywhere in the world. This research-oriented master focuses especially on the study of **Jainism and its languages**, preparing students for further studies in fields such as Religious Studies, Linguistics, History, Philosophy, and Literature, in addition to Indology or South Asian Studies. Furthermore, the program includes the possibility of spending a semester abroad at one of our partner institutes (in India or Europe through Erasmus).

WHY STUDY JAINISM?

Jainism is an ancient South Asian religious tradition that centers on the ideals of nonviolence and asceticism. Though the Jains have been a minority community throughout much of their existence, the mark they have left and continue to leave on South Asian history and culture is undeniable, and yet often overlooked by scholars. With its distinct ideology of 'non-absolutism' Jainism helped shape the complex landscape of Indian philosophies and religions. In addition to Jain authors composing great literary masterpieces themselves, the Jains are known as important guardians of the literary heritage of India, commenting, copying, and preserving texts of all inclinations in their *bhandars*. Today, its austere tenets including nonviolence, truthfulness, and non-possessiveness have much to offer to contemporary global debates on ecology and business ethics.

JAIN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE@UGENT

Though Prakrit (in addition to Sanskrit and Hindi) was already on the curriculum since the 1950s, the study of Jainism at Ghent University was initiated in the 1970s by Jozef Deleu, who taught and published on the Jain canonical texts. He was succeeded in the 1990s by Frank Van Den Bossche, a specialist in Jain philosophy. Since 2010 Eva De Clercq has been continuing the tradition of Jain studies, editing, translating, and studying texts from the

rich Jain literary heritage. Central to our teaching and research philosophy is the conviction that, to become a true expert in any ideology, culture, etc., one must study that ideology or culture through its own language. The research of the 'South Asia Network Ghent Research Group' is therefore firmly rooted in the use of primary sources. Hence, our master's program is centered around the languages of Jainism, including Prakrit, Apabhramsha, Sanskrit and (Old) Hindi.

In addition to Jain studies, Ghent University also boasts a tradition of research and teaching in Historical and Comparative Linguistics, including, for instance, Tocharian (W. Couvreur, E. Moerloose), and, at present, Kashmiri and other modern Indian languages by Saartje Verbeke. As a result, the classes on Prakrit, Apabhramsha, Sanskrit, and varieties of Hindi also form a solid base for students interested in pursuing research in Linguistics.

Due to the historically close interaction of Jainism with Buddhism, students with a background of or interest in Indian Buddhism will also find this MA program worthwhile. The 'South Asia Network Ghent Research Group' collaborates intensively with the 'Ghent Centre for Buddhist Studies'.

Moreover, as the little-studied literature of Prakrit, Apabhramsha, and older varieties of Hindi forms the basis of Hindi literature, our MA program is a good foundation for research on the history of Hindi literature.

OUR MA IN SOUTH ASIAN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES:

- Centers on 'Language, text and context' courses, which include:
 - introductory course in Prakrit (grammar + reading)
 - introductory course in Apabhramsha (grammar + reading)
 - introductory course in Old Hindi (grammar + reading)
 - Jain Sanskrit texts (reading)
 - variants of modern Hindi (grammar)
- Focuses on developing advanced academic research skills:
 - Research Seminar
 - Culture in Perspective
 - Critical Global Theories
 - Research internship
- Includes a tailor-made semester abroad

ABOUT UGENT AND THE CITY OF GHENT

Ghent University is a top-level institution, one of the major universities in Belgium, and was recently ranked 66 in the Academic Ranking of World Universities (Shanghai Ranking). UGent boasts outstanding expertise in Asian Languages and Cultures. It is home to a vibrant community of junior and senior scholars dedicating themselves to the study of India's languages and cultures, past and present.

The city of Ghent is one of the unique selling points of Ghent University. The medieval city center, its lively art scene, and a fair number of world-class museums have turned the city into an important attraction. Ghent is truly a student city, with more than 70,000 university and college students. It is one of the cultural hotspots of Belgium and a center of innovation, especially for digital technologies.

For more: www.visitgent.be/en/home

TUITION FEES AND FUNDING

Tuition fees range between around €900-€2000, more detailed information can be found here:

<https://www.ugent.be/student/en/administration/tuition/tuitionmasterteacher.htm>

Funding opportunities are available:

- Within the framework of the Erasmus program or bilateral agreements with partner institutions (for exchange students)
- Through Flemish scholarship programs (for degree students), see: www.studyinlanders.be/en/scholarship-programmes

ADMISSION

Admission to the master's program requires a bachelor's degree in Indology, South Asian Studies, Indian Studies, Hindi, Sanskrit, or equivalent: the student must be able to prove having passed academic courses in Sanskrit and/or Hindi, minimally up to the intermediate level.

Immediate admission is only for Belgian students holding the degree of Bachelor in Oriental Languages and Culture (India). For students holding a

non-Belgian diploma, there is an admission procedure (please note the deadline of March 1st, 2021): www.ugent.be/admission

The required level of English proficiency is B2 of the European Reference Framework.

Students who already have a relevant master's degree may qualify to complete the program in one year.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Visit our websites:

www.india.ugent.be, www.jainastudies.ugent.be



For questions related to the program, email the director

Prof. Dr. Eva De Clercq (ev.declercq@ugent.be)

For administrative questions, contact UGent international admissions desk at www.ugent.be/csa

Please do not litter.

V.U.: Universiteit Gent, faculteit Letteren en Wijsbegeerte, vakgroep Talen en culturen, afdeling India, Blandijnberg 2, 9000 Gent.