CAS/GRS New Course Proposal Form

This form is to be used when proposing a new CAS or GRS course.

This form should be submitted to Senior Academic Administrator Peter Law (617-353-7243) as a PDF file to pgl@bu.edu. For further information or assistance, contact Associate Dean Susan Jackson (617-353-2410; sjackson@bu.edu) about CAS courses or Associate Dean Jeffrey Hughes (617-353-2690; hughes@bu.edu) about GRS courses.

DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM: WLL

DATE SUBMITTED: 9/25/2016

COURSE NUMBER: CAS XL 343 / GRS XL 743

COURSE TITLE: Alexander the Great in the East

INSTRUCTOR(S): Sharma

TO BE FIRST OFFERED:  Sem./Year:  Fall 2017

SHORT TITLE: The “short title” appears in the course inventory, on the Link University Class Schedule, and on student transcripts and must be 15 characters maximum including spaces. It should be as clear as possible.

Alexander

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This is the description that appears in the CAS and/or GRS Bulletin and The Link. It is the first guide that students have as to what the course is about. The description can contain no more than 40 words.

Study of the various narratives about Alexander the Great, also known as Sikandar or Iskandar, as conqueror, philosopher-king, and hero, in medieval Middle Eastern and Asian literatures. Modern filmic representations of the historical figure are also compared.

PREREQUISITES: Indicate “None” or list all elements of the prerequisites, clearly indicating “AND” or “OR” where appropriate. Here are three examples: “Junior standing or CAS ZN300 or consent of instructor”; “CAS ZN108 and CAS ZN203 and CAS PQ206; or consent of instructor”; “For SED students only.”

1. State the prerequisites:

N/A
2. Explain the need for these prerequisites:

CREDITS: (check one)

☐ Half course: 2 credits
☐ Variable: Please describe.
☒ Full course: 4 credits
☐ Other: Please describe.

Provide a rationale for this number of credits, bearing in mind that for a CAS or GRS course to carry 4 credits, 1) it must normally be scheduled to meet at least 150 minutes/week, AND 2) combined instruction and assignments, as detailed in the attached course syllabus, must anticipate at least 12 total hours/week of student effort to achieve course objectives.

The course is designed as a weekly seminar for undergraduate and graduate students and thus is reading intensive in terms of primary and secondary sources to an extent that makes it equivalent to four hours of meeting time. I already use this format for my XL 342/742 course on Travel Writing and the Muslim World.

DIVISIONAL STUDIES CREDIT: Is this course intended to fulfill Divisional Studies requirements?

☐ No.
☒ Yes. If yes, please indicate which division HUMANITIES and explain why the course should qualify for Divisional Studies credit. Refer to criteria listed here and specify whether this course is intended for “short” or “expanded” divisional list.

Expanded list.

This course examines the literary phenomenon of romances about Alexander the Great in Middle Eastern and Asian cultures through the reading of primary texts in translation and supplemented by secondary readings and films. Students will gain a cross-cultural understanding of the reception of a familiar historical-mythical figure through several disciplinary angles: literary, historical, art historical, and cinematic.

HOW FREQUENTLY WILL THE COURSE BE OFFERED?

☐ Every semester  ☐ Once a year, fall  ☐ Once a year, spring  ☒ Every other year  ☐ Other: Explain:

NEED FOR THE COURSE: Explain the need for the course and its intended impact. How will it strengthen your overall curriculum? Will it be required or fulfill a requirement for degrees/majors/minors offered by your department/program or for degrees in other departments/school/colleges? Which students are most likely to be served by this course? How will it contribute to program learning outcomes for those students? If you see the course as being of “possible” or “likely” interest to students in another departments/program, please consult directly with colleagues in that unit. (You must attach appropriate
cognate comments using cognate comment form if this course is intended to serve students in specific other programs. See FURTHER INFORMATION below about cognate comment.)

This course broadens the range of offerings that bridge the modern and pre-modern, East-West, and study of single national literatures. It will count for the Comparative Literature, MENA and Asian Studies majors, Muslim Studies minor, as well as the newly proposed minor in Persian Cultural Studies. Students in various humanities departments (WLL, Classics, Romance, English, HAA), and in Pardee, COM and CFA will be interested in this topic.

ENROLLMENT: How many undergraduate and/or graduate students do you expect to enroll in the initial offering of this course?

15 students

CROSS-LISTING: Is this course to be cross-listed or taught with another course? If so, specify. Chairs/directors of all cross-listing units must co-sign this proposal on the signature line below.

No

OVERLAP:

1. Are there courses in the UIS Course Inventory (CC00) with the same number and/or title as this course?
   X No.
   ☐ Yes. If yes, any active course(s) with the same number or title as the proposed course will be phased out upon approval of this proposal.
   NOTE: A course number cannot be reused if a different course by that number has been offered in the past five years.

2. Relationship to other courses in your program or others: Is there any significant overlap between this course and others offered by your department/program or by others? (You must attach appropriate cognate comments using cognate comment form if this course might be perceived as overlapping with courses in another department/program. See FURTHER INFORMATION below.)

FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT: What, if any, are the new or special facilities or equipment needs of the course (e.g., laboratory, library, instructional technology, consumables)? Are currently available facilities, equipment, and other resources adequate for the proposed course? (NOTE: Approval of proposed course does not imply commitment to new resources to support the course on the part of CAS.)

N/A
STAFFING: How will the staffing of this course, in terms of faculty and, where relevant, teaching fellows, affect staffing support for other courses? For example, are there other courses that will not be taught as often as now? Is the staffing of this course the result of recent or expected expansion of faculty? (NOTE: Approval of proposed course does not imply commitment to new resources to support the course on the part of CAS.)

N/A

BUDGET AND COST: What, if any, are the other new budgetary needs or implications related to the start-up or continued offering of this course? If start-up or continuation of the course will entail costs not already discussed, identify them and how you expect to cover them. (NOTE: Approval of proposed course does not imply commitment to new resources to support the course on the part of CAS.)

N/A

EXTERNAL PROGRAMS: If this course is being offered at an external program/campus, please provide a brief description of that program and attach a CV for the proposed instructor.

FURTHER INFORMATION THAT MUST BE ATTACHED IN ORDER FOR THIS PROPOSAL TO BE CONSIDERED:

- A complete week-by-week SYLLABUS with student learning objectives, readings, and assignments that reflects the specifications of the course described in this proposal; that is, appropriate level, credits, etc. (See guidelines on “Writing a Syllabus” on the Center for Excellence & Innovation in Teaching website.) Be sure that syllabus includes your expectations for academic honesty, with URL for pertinent undergraduate or GRS academic conduct code(s).

- Cognate comment from chairs or directors of relevant departments and/or programs. Use the form here under “Curriculum Review & Modification.” You can consult with Joseph Bizup (CAS) or Jeffrey Hughes (GRS) to determine which departments or programs inside and outside of CAS would be appropriate.

DEPARTMENT CONTACT NAME AND POSITION: Sunil Sharma

DEPARTMENT CONTACT EMAIL AND PHONE: SHARMA@BU.EDU; 617 358 6253

DEPARTMENT APPROVAL:

Department Chair J. Keith Vincent 11-1-16 Date

Other Department Chair(s) (for cross-listed courses)

Date
CAS/GRS CURRICULUM COMMITTEE APPROVAL:

☐ Approved  Date:
☐ Tabled  Date:
☐ Not Approved  Date:

Divisional Studies Credit:

☐ Endorsed
  ☐ HU
  ☐ MCS
  ☐ NS
  ☐ SS
☐ Not endorsed

Curriculum Committee Chair Signature and Date
Comments:

PROVISIONAL APPROVAL REQUESTED for Semester/Year

Dean of Arts & Sciences Signature and Date
Comments:

CAS FACULTY: Faculty Meeting Date:  ☐ Approved  ☐ Not Approved

Curriculum Administrator Signature and Date
Comments:
In this course we will study the legend of Alexander the Great as conqueror, philosopher-king, and hero, in Middle Eastern (Persian, Arabic, and Turkish) and South and Southeast Asian literary texts. This is different from the usual approach in courses on this topic, which is to compare various versions of Alexander’s life in classical Greek and Latin sources, as well as his reception in medieval Europe, with one session devoted to the Persian Alexander tradition. We will focus largely on the representation of the Eastern Alexander, who is known as Sikandar of Iskandar, in a variety of textual and visual genres, and on how his place in various traditions intersects with various nationalist, religious, and literary concerns. Readings will include selections from a number of primary works in English translation, as well as secondary sources and films. Graduate students will be required to read additional secondary sources as assigned, lead class discussions and make two presentations of readings during the semester as assigned, and write a more substantial final paper (described below).

Students are expected to develop an understanding of cross-cultural literary themes in a historical context, as well as of the reception of this legendary figure in several premodern and modern societies.

Prerequisites: None

Course texts (All readings are in English)

Books for purchase at BU Bookstore:


All other readings will be available on Blackboard.

Grades will be based on:

- Prepared and thoughtful participation (20%). If you are absent or unprepared more than 2 or more class meetings, you will not be able to earn above a B in the course.
- Paper 1: 3-page paper (20%), Topic to be assigned
- Paper 2: 3-page paper (20%), Topic to be assigned
- Final research paper project totaling 40%:
  - 8-page final paper (30% paper, 10% presentation)
Graduate students write only one paper: 20 pages + footnotes and bibliography (70% paper, 10% presentation)

The final paper assignment will require students to choose a modern work of historical fiction from the list below (or one in any other language) based on Alexander’s life and career. The analysis should focus on the way his encounter with Middle Eastern and Asian cultures is described in the work, and how much the narrative draws on the various romances. Class presentations on the final project should be 15 minutes in length. If appropriate, please include visuals in your presentation.

- Helga Moray, *I, Roxana* (1965)
- Mary Renault, *The Persian Boy* (1972)

**Academic Conduct Code**

All your contributions to this course must be your own original work. You are expected to be familiar with the Academic Conduct Code’s contents and to abide by its provisions. The Boston University Academic Conduct Code is available at: [http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/](http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/).

**Schedule of Readings**

(subject to modification)

**Week 1 (September 5): Introduction**
Readings:

**Week 2 (September 12): Conqueror-Hero**
Readings:

**Week 3 (September 19): Islamic Prophet**
Readings:
- *Quran*, Sura 18, verses 83-102.

**PAPER 1 DUE**

**Week 4 (September 26): Persian Alexander Romance 1**
Reading:  

**Week 5 (October 3): Persian Alexander Romance 2**
Reading:  
*Iskandarnamah*, 76-164.

**Week 6 (October 10): NO CLASS (Columbus Day)**

**Week 7 (October 17): Persian Epic Tradition**
Reading:  
Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh*, 564-636.

**Week 8 (October 24): Philosopher-King in Persian and Indo-Persian Traditions**
Reading:  
- Nizami, *Iskandarnama* (selections)  
(http://persian.packhum.org/persian/main?url=pf%3Ffile%3D17602010%26ct%3D0)  

**PAPER 2 DUE**

**Week 9 (October 31): Turkish Folk Hero**
Readings:  

**Week 10 (November 7): In Medieval Europe**
Readings:  
Week 11 (November 14): In Asia
Readings:

Begin reading your historical fiction novel for final project.

Week 12 (November 21): Bollywood’s Version of Alexander
- Film: *Sikandar* (1941), Hindi-Urdu, dir. Sohrab Modi
  (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cr8S5Wb3O-s (with English subtitles))

Due: Proposal for final project (one paragraph summary)

Week 13 (November 28): Hollywood’s Representation of Alexander in the East
- Film: *Alexander* (2004), dir. Oliver Stone

Week 14 (December 5): Documentary on the Memory of Alexander in World Cultures
- Film: Michael Wood, *In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great* (1998), selections from the four episodes

Week 15 (December 12):
Class reports on final papers
FINAL PAPERS DUE