In late spring, we were dismayed to learn of significant budget cuts that reflect the shortage of funding at state and federal levels. With 20% of our COLA budget slashed and a grievous 46% reduction to our NRC grant, the Institute is struggling to preserve its important programs and personnel. Despite the harsh news, we should not lose sight of the fact that SAI graduates continue to educate our citizenry about a strategically and economically critical part of the world. They serve in foreign embassies, occupy posts in the military, and provide analytical information to our government. The task of the Institute has by no means been completed; our services are perhaps more important than ever. We urge all of you to support us in our lobbying efforts by staying in touch and providing updates of your activities.

Lastly, thanks to the entire SAI staff for making my year as director so enjoyable. Without you, I simply could not have done it!

Respectfully submitted,
Kathryn Hansen
September 2011

Another reason for jubilation was that Fall 2010 marked the forty ninth year of South Asian studies at UT-Austin. When the Center for Asian Studies was established by Edgar Polomé in 1961, Hindi, Telugu, and Sanskrit were taught as well as a handful of culture courses. From those beginnings, the program has grown to include several scores of faculty and an incalculable number of students. We now teach over 100 courses on South Asia every year, and lectures, workshops, and special events crowd the Institute calendar during term.

In recognition of this milestone, the Institute launched a year-long Golden Jubilee celebration, to culminate in September 2011. The inaugural event was an enlightening conversation with Shabana Azmi, the award-winning Hindi film actress, held in the Texas Union Theater before a star-struck audience. A gala music concert with Ken Zuckerman, Swapna Chaudhuri, and our own Stephen Slawek concluded the series in late spring, with myriad lectures and special events in between.

The regular Thursday-afternoon seminar in fall featured UT faculty research on everything from energy in India and Burmese pop music to regional cinema. Many thanks to Heather Hindman who convened the talks and to all the faculty who presented. In spring, Snehal Shingavi organized the seminars around new trends in South Asian writing. Experts spoke on literary works from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Kashmir; among other topics; thank you, Snehal. The Institute also hosted many speakers in collaboration with other colleges and departments: P. Sainath, Rahaab Allana, Mridu Rai, and Gurcharan Das were among the visitors. Alternatives, a brown bag series created for activist and engaged perspectives on contemporary issues, provided another forum.

Our student cohort made a striking contribution to the year. I was particularly impressed by the maturation of a new generation of young scholars: eight SAI grad students presented at the Madison South Asia conference in fall 2010. The Texas Asia Conference, organized entirely by our students with attendees from around the world, was an even more ambitious effort than in previous years. TACO has clearly earned a name as a venue for exciting research in progress. Institute grad students were highly successful in national competitions too. Three earned AIIS awards and two bagged AIPS grants for doctoral research. The Institute made ten FLAS awards during the academic year, seven summer awards, and assisted another ten SAI students in conducting research and attending conferences. Congratulations to each of you for your commitment to the field.

Not least, Rachel Meyer continues to organize imaginative, meaningful workshops for area teachers who must cope with dwindling resources. India and the history of photography were highlighted in the fall workshop, which included a tour of the Gernsheim Collection at the Harry Ransom Center. In spring, “Kashmir: Beyond the Security Paradigm,” exposed participants to the complex religious and cultural heritage of the region. Rachel has built up an extraordinary network of contacts in the education community in Texas, and her work for SAI Outreach is unparalleled. We are all grateful, Rachel.
In December, the South Asia Inst. was well represented at a conference in New Delhi on “Women’s Autobiography in Islamic Societies,” held under the auspices of Delhi University and the India International Centre. Professor of History and Asian Studies Gail Minault gave the keynote address, and Kathryn Hansen and graduate student Asiya Alam gave papers. Gail Minault published an article in South Asia Research (London), Vol. 31, #1 (Feb. 2011), entitled “Aloys Sprunger: German Orientalism’s ‘Gift’ to Delhi College.”

Associate Professor of History Cynthia Talbot has an edited book Knowing India: Colonial and Modern Constructions of the Past forthcoming from Yoda Press in August 2011. Aside from an introduction, she also contributed the article “‘Contesting Knowledges in Colonial India: The Question of Prithviraj Razo’s Historiocy’” to this collection of essays in honor of Thomas R. Trautmann. “The Society of Kakasita Andhara,” a chapter from her book Precolonial India in Practice, has been reprinted in Rethinking Early History of Pakistan’s left movement. The manuscript for his book on the cultural history of Pakistan’s left movement is in the pipeline.
As we celebrate the silver jubilee of South Asian Studies in 2011, it is unfortunately difficult to ascertain when South Asian studies really started at UT Austin, but Fall 1961 is probably a good approximation. On the University of Chicago website the origin of federal funding is described as follows:

Administrators at the U.S. Office of Education invited research universities to apply in national competition for funding under Title VI of the NDEA to establish “Language and Areas Centers” focused on the nine major world regions identified under the act. At the highest point in this funding history, over 100 such centers for various world regions existed. Six of the original Title VI centers for South Asian language and area studies began as early as 1959-60 and still exist today, at the University of California-Berkeley, the University of Chicago, the University of Pennsylvania, Cornell University, the University of Texas-Austin, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. They are now called National Resource Centers, under the successor act to the NDEA, the Higher Education Act of 1965.

Prior to that time, Winifred P. Lehmann had begun the development of what would later become South Asian studies. Soon after he arrived at UT in 1949, he began teaching Sanskrit and courses in Comparative Linguistics. In 1960 he brought in Edgar Polomé and secured funding under NDEA for a Hindi-Telugu Center and an Arabic Center at UT. Thus courses in Hindi and Telugu became a regular part of the curriculum in 1961. In 1962 the Hindi-Telugu Center became the Center for Asian Studies with Edgar Polomé as Director; Hindi and Telugu were taught by TAs under the supervision of Edgar Polomé and Andreë Sjöberg, respectively. Although federal funding was limited to South Asia, the Center continued to serve all of Asia until the South Asia Institute was formed in 2000. Still, facilities were very limited; both the Center for Asian Studies and Middle Eastern Studies were in one office in Batts Hall. Polomé and his secretary sat on the near side of the office and Walter Leh, the Director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies sat at the far end of the same office.

In the summer of 1964 UT hosted a training program for prospective Peace Corps volunteers going to India and provided language instruction in Hindi and Marathi. One of the Marathi instructors, Indira Junghare, stayed on and taught Marathi and Sanskrit at UT until her Ph.D in 1970.

In the summer of 1965, through a cooperative effort by South Asia and Middle East with federal funding for salaries and student fellowships, there was an Indo-Iranian program with Hindi and Persian courses, a seminar on Avistan and Old Persian, and courses in the Politics of Iran and the Politics of India. The latter course was taught by Jim Roach, who had also played an important role in expanding South Asian Studies from language to other disciplines.

Throughout this period, many of the graduate students studying the so-called critical languages received NDEA fellowships, which provided a stipend of $225 a month (equivalent to $1600 in 2011 dollars) and tuition (which was at the time $50 a semester for Texas residents). There was an additional stipend for dependents. A committee in Washington D.C. selected fellowship recipients in a national competition until the 1966-67 academic year. After that, each federally-funded Center received a number of fellowships and selected the recipients locally, in the same way that these awards, now called FLAS, are given out now. In the first year of this system, 1967-68, UT received an allotment of 9 such fellowships.

In Fall 1965 UT hired the first faculty member in Hindi, Amar Bahadur Singh, a linguist with a Ph.D from Deccan College in Pune. Singh stayed until 1968 and was replaced by Herman van Olphen, who took over the Hindi program in that year. By that time, Linguistics had become a Department rather than just a Program and all the Asian and Middle Eastern languages, as well as the Center for Asian Studies, were housed there in a brand-new building, Calhoun Hall.

UT seemed to be in something of a time warp in 1968-69, as the nation was in turmoil and campus protests were everywhere, the UT campus was tranquil except for daily protest speeches on the West Mall by students from the SDS. Prior to that time, Winfred P. Lehmann had begun the development of what would later become South Asian studies. Soon after he arrived at UT in 1949, he began teaching Sanskrit and courses in Comparative Linguistics. In 1960 he brought in Edgar Polomé and secured funding under NDEA for a Hindi-Telugu Center and an Arabic Center at UT. Thus courses in Hindi and Telugu became a regular part of the curriculum in 1961. In 1962 the Hindi-Telugu Center became the Center for Asian Studies with Edgar Polomé as Director; Hindi and Telugu were taught by TAs under the supervision of Edgar Polomé and Andreë Sjöberg, respectively. Although federal funding was limited to South Asia, the Center continued to serve all of Asia until the South Asia Institute was formed in 2000. Still, facilities were very limited; both the Center for Asian Studies and Middle Eastern Studies were in one office in Batts Hall. Polomé and his secretary sat on the near side of the office and Walter Leh, the Director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies sat at the far end of the same office.

In the summer of 1964 UT hosted a training program for prospective Peace Corps volunteers going to India and provided language instruction in Hindi and Marathi. One of the Marathi instructors, Indira Junghare, stayed on and taught Marathi and Sanskrit at UT until her Ph.D in 1970.

In the summer of 1965, through a cooperative effort by South Asia and Middle East with federal funding for salaries and student fellowships, there was an Indo-Iranian program with Hindi and Persian courses, a seminar on Avistan and Old Persian, and courses in the Politics of Iran and the Politics of India. The latter course was taught by Jim Roach, who had also played an important role in expanding South Asian Studies from language to other disciplines.

Throughout this period, many of the graduate students studying the so-called critical languages received NDEA fellowships, which provided a stipend of $225 a month (equivalent to $1600 in 2011 dollars) and tuition (which was at the time $50 a semester for Texas residents). There was an additional stipend for dependents. A committee in Washington D.C. selected fellowship recipients in a national competition until the 1966-67 academic year. After that, each federally-funded Center received a number of fellowships and selected the recipients locally, in the same way that these awards, now called FLAS, are given out now. In the first year of this system, 1967-68, UT received an allotment of 9 such fellowships!

In Fall 1965 UT hired the first faculty member in Hindi, Amar Bahadur Singh, a linguist with a Ph.D from Deccan College in Pune. Singh stayed until 1968 and was replaced by Herman van Olphen, who took over the Hindi program in that year. By that time, Linguistics had become a Department rather than just a Program and all the Asian and Middle Eastern languages, as well as the Center for Asian Studies, were housed there in a brand-new building, Calhoun Hall.

UT seemed to be in something of a time warp in 1968-69, as the nation was in turmoil and campus protests were everywhere, the UT campus was tranquil except for daily protest speeches on the West Mall by students from the SDS. Students did protest “irrelevant” requirements, such as the foreign language requirement in the Colleges of Arts and Sciences and Communications. John Silber, the powerful Dean of Arts and Sciences, developed a program of intensive language courses, which allowed students to absolve the entire requirement in one summer. The 604 and 612 courses still on the books are relics from that era.

The tranquility of the UT campus ended abruptly in the 1969-70 academic year. Every few weeks there were class boycotts by students and frequent divisive faculty meetings with the President and the Deans. Everything went awry in May after the Kent State shootings. Students began camping out on campus and every piece of grass was covered with tents and sleeping bags.
After an anti-war march through downtown Austin with more than 10,000 participants, students left for the summer. At a May 1970 faculty meeting Dean Silber warned that the election of a radical student body president might have dire consequences for the University at the next legislative session. Silber was fired by the Chairman of the Board of Regents a couple of months later and UT went back to tranquility with no more boycotts or widespread protests in subsequent years.

For unclear reasons the escalation of the Vietnam war coincided with a boom in enrollment in South Asia courses. Hindi enrollment went from less than 20 in 1968 to over 100 five years later and other courses in South Asia also gained in popularity. There was new South Asia faculty in several disciplines: Robert Hardgrave, Jr., had joined Jim Roach in the Government Department in 1967 and others came in the early 1970’s, such as Gail Minault in History, Ray Owens in Anthropology, and Tom Jannuzi in Economics.

Several administrative changes affected South Asian Studies. First of all, in 1970 the Department of Oriental and African Languages (DOALL) with Edgar Polomé as first Chair became the home Department for the languages and cultures of the Middle East and Asia, including South Asia. In 1971 the Department moved to a former sorority house at 2601 University Avenue and the Center for Asian Studies moved next door in a former apartment building. In the summer of 1972 the two entities cooperated in a federally-funded Indian Summer. In addition to courses in Indian film and Indian literature, several South Asian languages, such as Tamil and Kannada, were taught at UT for the first time. The program brought in faculty from other institutions and also provided scholarships to undergraduates studying South Asian languages.

In Fall 1972 Edgar Polomé had stepped down as Director of Asian Studies (he was after all also Chair of DOALL), and Tom Jannuzi became the new Director. During his tenure B.A. and M.A. degrees in Asian Studies were created and in 1976, for the first time, a librarian, Merry Burlingham, was hired for the South Asia collection. Under the PL 480 program UT had acquired a large collection of books in many languages and this collection had languished in storage for all these years. Finally the collection was catalogued and later moved to the main library. Also during this time a second faculty member in Hindi was added, Richard Williams, who was completing his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago.

The late 1970s were not a good time for South Asian studies. Federal funding became less reliable and the UT Center even lost its funding for a few years. With hard economic times student demand was for courses, such as those in the Business School, which would help them get a job. As a result, Hindi enrollments dropped back to below 20 and even the gateway Introduction to South Asia attracted less than 10 students in 1979. In addition, UT had decided to concentrate State funds on priority areas, which included Latin America and the Middle East.

When Richard Williams, who had taught most of the Sanskrit courses since his arrival, left in 1980, DOALL with much support of the Dean of Liberal Arts (Robert King) decided to recruit a new Sanskrit faculty member. Sanskrit had always been taught by faculty whose primary field was another, so this was an important step. Thus in Fall 1982 Richard Lariviere arrived at UT to take up his Sanskrit teaching duties.

In 1984 Herman van Olphen became Chair of DOALL and in 1986 Richard Lariviere became Director of the Center for Asian Studies. At this time UT established the first Malayalam program in UT with the hiring of Rodney Moag. In a permanent faculty position. By 1990 it had become clear that DOALL with Asian and Middle Eastern faculty in one Department was no longer viable. Thus the Department was split and in 1994 the new Department of Asian Studies and the Center for Asian Studies moved to new quarters in the Hogg Building. Both entities were headed by Patrick Olivelle, a Sanskritist, who had come to UT in 1990. Richard Lariviere became Vice President for International Affairs and later Dean of the College of Liberal Arts. In 2000 the South Asia Institute was established with Kathryn Hansen, a Hindi scholar, as Director. Thus with the dawning of the new century, South Asian studies had reached a new level of visibility; for the first time, there were two tenured faculty teaching Hindi and with the hiring of Akbar Hyder at the same time, there was an autonomous Urdu program for the first time.
Seminars and Workshops

The Texas Asia Conference (TAC) 2011, held at the University of Texas at Austin on February 11th and 12th, drew over 100 participants and featured two faculty keynote speakers and 31 student panelists from nearly a dozen universities (including universities in India, Canada, and Norway). The Texas Asia Conference is a biennial event coordinated by and for graduate students who wish to present their original research from various disciplines and across traditional academic divisions of Asia. In the past, many panelists have also submitted their conference papers for publication in SAGAR—the South Asia Graduate Research Journal sponsored by UT’s South Asia Institute. The coming issue of SAGAR features one successful paper submission from a TAC 2011 panelist.

Rather than focusing on one unifying theme, TAC 2011 was structured around 8 distinct theme-based panels, which addressed a wide range of issues including urban change and development, visual culture, nationalism, gender, and sexual interpretation. While each panel cohered remarkably well—providing a space for panelists to present alongside others in their respective fields of study—the most productive aspect of the conference was the opportunity to engage in dialogue across disciplines. Many panelists also displayed interdisciplinarity in their own research. UT’s own Roanne Sharp, a graduate student of Comparative Literature, presented a paper on the “Precursors to the Joyceean Movement in South Asian and Latin American Fiction.” Sharp’s paper, which shared a panel with others working on “Literary Oralities and Aesthetics” in South Asia and China, explored the ways in which aesthetic developments, as well as economic and political ones, were responsible for making South Asian and Latin American literature popular in the English-language world market. Further pushing conference participants to think beyond traditional academic boundaries, Dr. Lisa Mitchell of the South Asia Studies department at the University of Pennsylvania, gave one of two keynote addresses entitled “Not Your Great-Grandparent’s Philology: Method and Interdisciplinary in the 21st Century.” Using examples from her research on Telugu grammars of the 19th century and the practice of rokos in south India as “democracy in action,” Dr. Mitchell reinforced the need to properly historicize studies of linguistic and communal identity in order to avoid approaching both disciplinary and local categories as innate, but rather as contingent upon shifts in historical and cultural contexts.

In addition to the high quality of the panelists’ presentations, the success of the 2011 conference was also due to the large number of UT graduate students from several departments who helped to coordinate the event. The conference planning committee, led by Amy Hyne, Emilia Bachrach, and Kayden Althen, raised all of the funding for the conference and received generous financial and practical support from the South Asia Institute as well as the Center for East Asia Studies, the Department of Asian Studies, POSCO Korean Studies Endowment, the Graduate Student Assembly, the College of Liberal Arts, and the Center for Women and Gender Studies. This support allowed conference planners to provide panelists and faculty speakers with various forms of hospitality including catered meals and a constant flow of much appreciated caffeinated beverages. Over coffee and lunch breaks, conference participants found further time to connect intellectually and socially. As a planning committee member from both the 2008 and 2011 conferences, my simple advice to future planners is this: start early, create a detailed time-line and stick to it, use the resources left by previous planners as a guide, fix your budget as soon as possible (taking into account all spending restrictions), and delegate responsibilities for different aspects of your planning well in advance of the scheduled event. Based on the great success of this year’s conference, the next Texas Asia Conference, set to take place in 2012-2013, promises to carry on the tradition of creating a productive and fruitful forum for graduate students to present and discuss their original research on Asia.

Emilia Bachrach
Graduate School
Asian Cultures and Languages

Shabana Azmi engaged professors and students on October 20th, in the opening act of the Golden Jubilee Celebration of South Asian Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. For the past four decades, Shabana has held sway in the world of acting, while also emerging as one of India’s leading public intellectuals. Her journey as a richly-faceted artist began in 1974, when she starred in Shyam Benegal’s Ankur (Seedling). The film was a fine index of the emerging “parallel cinema,” a visual genre indebted to the Progressive Writers Movement and committed to relaying the struggles of the marginalized. Shabana found a nourishing spirit in her parents, Kaifi Azmi and Shaukat Kaifi, the former had gained renown as a Progressive-Marxist poet especially sensitive to the plight of women and the poor, and the latter graced the socially conscientious theater movement under the auspices of the Indian People’s Theatre Association (IPTA). Shabana basks in provocative roles; perhaps the most notable of these was her performance in Deepa Mehta’s Fire, a film exaggerating the intertwined issues of women’s alienation, sexual desire, and patriarchal religiosity. Shabana fondly recalled Fire as a film in which she made the fewest mistakes; she addressed the controversy that surrounded this film, partly because of its bold homoerotic mien, by implying that the generation of her daughter (rising filmmaker Zoya Akhtar) is much more accommodating of differences in sexual orientation than her own generation has been. She also credited her role in Mahesh Bhat’s Ardh (Meaning) for placing the agency of urban middle class women in a new perspective; in this film Shabana played Puja, a woman who leaves an unfaithful husband and becomes a single parent. A film student was curious to know the actor’s assessment of the new Umrao Jaan (2006), a film in which Shabana plays the role of a head courtesan in eighteenth-century Lucknow, the same role that her mother had played in the 1981 version of the film. Shabana conceded that the earlier version of the film was better, primarily because of the insights of its filmmaker Muzaffar Ali, who is much more attuned to the cultural landscape of Lucknow and its vicinities.

Other related issues were raised with the actor, including those related to India’s linguistic and communal divides and the relationship of activism to art. Shabana’s life in films is contiguous with her sociopolitical activism. She has mounted campaigns against slum demolitions that have displaced Mumbai’s poor, the stigmatization of AIDS victims, and most notably against the withholding of education for women in Mizwan, Azamgarh, the town from which her father hailed. When asked about her particular contribution to India while serving in its parliament, she said that as a nominated member of the Rajya Sabha (Indian Parliament’s upper house), she was able to rescue issues of national importance from partisan squabbles.

At the University of Texas, Shabana was especially keen to meet Max Bruce and Ramu Kharel, the two students who have received the much-coveted Majaz Literary Award, bestowed by the Aligarh Alumni Association. The award, named in honor of Asrar ul Haq Majaz (one of the most popular Progressive poets of the late 1940s and early 1950s, and the maternal uncle of Shabana’s husband, Javaid Akhtar) is given by Aligarh Alumni to those students who have excelled in the study of Urdu literary culture, especially poetry. In the last two years, Max Bruce, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Asian Studies and a Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) recipient who has adopted the pen-name “Nadir” (rarity), has been a conspicuous presence in Urdu poetry assemblies (mas'ahira) in North America as well as South Asia. The second recipient, Ramu Kharel, is a Nepalese-American undergraduate member of the Hind-I-Urdi Hifajat (HUF) program who will be embarking on studies in medicine in the fall of 2012. Aside from being a devoted student of Urdu poetry, Ramu is the founder of HAPSA (Health Awareness Programs in South Asia), a University of Texas student organization that works with Indian non-governmental organizations dedicated to improving lives in Lucknow’s slums.

Syed Akbar Hyder
Associate Professor
Department of Asian Studies
A Conference to Celebrate 31 Years of Tehrik e Niswan

Tehrik e Niswan would first and foremost like to acknowledge with thanks the kind help and support that AIPS offered to the Tees aur Aik Saal Conference. Without this support the Conference may not have been able to achieve its purpose.

The venue of the Conference was the beautiful premises of the Oxford University Press in Korangi, Karachi. As the guests entered the reception area they were welcomed by the tastefully decorated posters, banners, book stalls and handicraft stalls that had been set up by the volunteers of Tehrik-e-Niswan. As this was also the occasion to celebrate 31 years of Tehrik, there was definitely a festive mood all around. The Conference participants began to arrive on time and a wonderful reception with tea and refreshments was served. The registration of the guests and participants on the opening well exceeded 450 people, many of whom stood throughout the duration while some students found sitting space on the floor. The atmosphere, back ground and the forthcoming book. It was definitely one of celebration and joy that such a conference could actually take place. After lunch the sessions continued with a performance of a short play by Amna Nazli, who was also the subject of Dr. Afs Fakhru’s paper. Other papers were presented and the day concluded with recitation of feminist poetry by Atiya Dawood.

Sunday, Dec. 26: The morning session (10.30am to 1.pm) started with a dance performance followed by the presentation of papers and question and answers. Each paper was presented in shorter version of the original so that a dynamic interactive dialogue could take place. After lunch the sessions continued with a performance of a short play by Amna Nazli, who was also the subject of Dr. Afs Fakhru’s paper. Other papers were presented and the day concluded with recitation of feminist poetry by Atiya Dawood.

The Conference was well covered by the Media and the Press. Many of the TV channels showed the proceedings for many days. It was also very well attended by young and old, students of theatre, and lovers of the performing arts, and it certainly created an interest and dialogue on the state of the performing arts in Pakistan. OUP will publish the papers presented at the Conference in a book that they have agreed to print.

Sheema Kermani
Feb. 16, 2011
Victoria Longoria, teacher at LBJ High School in Austin ISD, partnered with the South Asia Institute (SAI) to develop new curricula based on the SAI’s Spring 2010 K-12 Educator Training Workshop: “The Empire Writes Back: Teaching Postcolonial Literature from South Asia.” She has participated in summer teaching programs in Ghana, South Africa, and China, and received a Fullbright Memorial Scholarship to study education in Japan for three weeks. Here, she shares her vision as an educator and her experiences working with students on course materials that she developed through the SAI’s workshop.

Tell me a bit about yourself as an educator. What courses do you teach? Where have you taught and for how long?

This is my 18th year of teaching. Most of my career has been in spent in east asian schools, but I also taught in Mexico and South Korea in between. Presently I am at LBJ High School and have been there for the past three years. I teach AP English III and Pre-AP English I, though in past years I also taught US History, Speech Communications and ESL.

Describe your goals as an educator. What do you find most rewarding about your work with students?

My goals as a teacher are less concerned with course content, rather than instilling kids with a genuine ability to question the world around them, think and read critically, formulate their own ideas and then effectively communicate them. The AP course I teach largely focuses on non-fiction, which readily enables me to introduce authentic challenging topics. Perhaps the most rewarding element of my job is seeing students inspired to action by something they learned or discussed in class – whether it be a heated debate they extend beyond the classroom, organizing a fundraiser for a social cause, or simply telling other students what they learned.

As part of the South Asia Institute’s Spring 2010 K-12 Educator Workshop, “The Empire Writes Back: Teaching Postcolonial Literature from South Asia,” you were awarded a mini-grant to create new curriculum for your AP English course. Describe the project and related field trip to the North Austin Muslim Community Center.

The unit is designed to last four weeks. It is organized into forty-five minute time frames to accommodate both composite and block schedules. Depending on students’ progress, the unit may be lengthened to include broader attention to post 9-11 issues such as racial profiling, documentary viewing or comparative analysis of characters based on contemporary non-fiction readings. Likewise, the unit may be adopted to allow for more in-class reading time. Mohsin Hamid’s, The Reluctant Fundamentalist is an allegorical novel outlining the life story of Changez, a young Pakistani who migrates to the United States to study at prestigious Princeton University. As a post-graduate, Changez is recruited to work for a very competitive consulting firm. His quest to fully assimilate into American society is paralleled by his pursuit of the beautiful but elusive Erica. Changez’ path is further challenged after the terrorist attacks of September 11th. He becomes the target of racial profiling and finds his relationship to the United States changing in a way that questions both his past and future. Fraught with symbolism, dramatic chiasmus, and couched questions of the United States’ alliance with Pakistan in the war on terror The Reluctant Fundamentalist is a provocative study of one man’s journey to a new land and back home again.

To enrich the unit, I organized a student field trip to the university’s South Asia Institute, where they met with department professors who described a range of studies and classes available, the North Austin Muslim Community Center and then a local restaurant where students tried traditional Pakistani food. While visiting the Community Center, students were met by the imam – a very engaging and lively speaker. He demonstrated various customs, including the ritual ablution before entering the mosque and the call to prayer. Students simply asked questions of all kinds, from clarification of Muslim belief to more pointed questions regarding stereotypes, Muslim opinions of 9/11 and terrorists.

What were you hoping your students would learn from the unit?

I wanted my students to have a face-to-face opportunity to honestly confront any misperceptions of Muslims and the Islamic faith. Meeting with the imam gave them a chance to really see that people of all faiths and cultures can have just as many commonalities as differences. Hearing the imam speak, including his own anecdotes of being a high school student right here in Austin, enabled students to humanize the whole idea of a religion and culture different from their own.

What was the biggest take-away for your students?

I think the biggest take-away my students got was relief from stereotypes. I was thrilled to hear students make comments such as, “I used to get freaked out when I saw those people, but that guy was cool…” As simple as it sounds, I believe the experience truly opened students eyes and minds to not jump to conclusions.

What would you do differently when you use the unit with your students next time?

Unfortunately, I taught the unit during the dreaded standardized test season, which seriously compromised the school schedule and time I had to complete all the planned activities. I am adjusting my syllabus to ensure that next time, the class will have ample time to really delve into the analytical aspects of the book.
Contemporary Baluch Art

The small coastal town of Gwadar in Balochistan has been a key site of struggle in the bitter conflict between Baloch nationalist cadres and Pakistani security forces. In its haste to ease the entry of multinationals into Balochistan, the Pakistani government refused to negotiate with tribal elders, Baloch nationalist leaders, and ordinary fishermen over their legitimate concerns regarding the Gwadar Deep Water Port Project. These paintings by local artist Hashim Usman are a window into the lived and felt reality of Gwadar as experienced by its residents living through the insurgency in Balochistan. Hashim has a High School Diploma and works as a part-time employee of Radio Pakistan in Gwadar.

Paintings by Hashim Usman, Gwadar, Pakistan.
Introduction and Translation by Hafeez Jamali, Department of Anthropology.

Title: No Entry
The painting is a play on Gwadar's name as 'Gateway of Winds' (Gwat-Dar). The Evil Eye has the peninsula of Gwadar its sights and a hand emerges insidiously out of the sea to bar entry to the city.

Title: Shahi Bazaar, Gwadar
These old shops and houses with their ornate Jharokas (balconies) on top embody the past glory of Gwadar as a small but important trading port in the long Indian Ocean Trade between East Africa and South Asia. It is an intimate social space which resonates with the energy of encounters, conversations, memories, sights, sounds, and smells.

Title: The War of Satan (Graffiti)
The Evil Eye is a constant presence in this series. It gestures towards malevolent forces over which Gwadar’s residents have no control. Here it is conjuring up a devilish war that has engulfed Gwadar.

Title: Give Up (Sketch)
The painting comments on the suffocating social and political circumstances facing the youth in Gwadar and rest of Balochistan. The heavy chains of oppression are forcing the youth to give up on their dreams of a beautiful life.
Varun Rai, Assistant Professor of Public Affairs
LBJ School of Public Affairs

Varun Rai earned his Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering from Stanford University in 2008 with specialization in energy systems and technologies. Before joining the University of Texas at Austin in July 2010 he was a research fellow at the Program on Energy and Sustainable Development (PESD) at Stanford University from 2008-2010. He holds a M.S. from Stanford and a bachelor’s degree from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur. His principal research interests are in technological change, innovation and diffusion; economics of climate change/integrated assessment models and energy and development. His research combines energy systems modeling with the political economy of energy markets to understand how changes in energy technologies, market conditions, policies and regulation, and environment could impact energy generation. The emphasis of his research is on interdisciplinary and integrative research in engineering and policy to ensure that the insights from his policy research are rooted in the underlying technical realities. His past research has concentrated on three problems in particular: incentive policies and rates of technological diffusion for carbon capture and storage (CCS); performance and behavior of national oil companies; and strategies for engaging developing countries in global climate change policy.

Jennifer Bussell, Assistant Professor of Public Affairs
LBJ School of Public Affairs

Jennifer Bussell joined the LBJ School of Public Affairs as an Assistant Professor of Public Affairs in 2010. Her research focuses on comparative politics, technology and development policy. Prior to coming to the LBJ School, Bussell received her Ph.D. in political science from the University of California, Berkeley and was a Visiting Fellow at the Center for Asian Democracy at the University of Louisville. She is the author of many articles, chapters, reviews, and working papers, including “Explaining Cross-National Variation in Government Adoption of New Technologies,” in International Studies Quarterly; “Why Get Technical? Corruption and the Politics of Public Service Reform in the Indian States,” (Comparative Political Studies); and “Will Information Technology Reshape the North-South Asymmetry of Power in the Global Political Economy?” (Studies in Comparative International Development, co-authored with Steven Weber). Her book manuscript is titled “Corrupt States: Reforming Indian Public Services in the Digital Age.”

Giving to the South Asia Institute

We invite all individuals who are interested in South Asian studies to support our Institute. Our goal is to facilitate multidisciplinary education and research. Your tax-deductible gift to the South Asia Institute will help us fulfill a number of objectives, including:

• Sponsoring special guest lecturers, conferences and symposia on campus
• Creating student study abroad and summer internship opportunities
• Funding graduate student fellowships
• Supporting the South Asia Research Journal
• Expanding the Institute’s public engagement

Visit https://utdirect.utexas.edu/nlogon/viplogs/WBX?menu=LASA to donate online or return the donation card below.

Yes, I would like to contribute. Please find enclosed my contribution of $_________.

Name on Card:__________________________
Card Number:__________________________
Expiration Date:____/____
Signature:______________________________

I wish for my gift to go toward:

_ Faculty and Student Research
_ Public Engagement
_ Language Programs

_ I have enclosed a check
(Payable to the University of Texas at Austin)
_ Please charge my credit card
   Visa _ Mastercard
   American Express _ Discover

Please update my contact information:
Address:______________________________
Email:______________________________
With over 50 faculty members in a dozen schools and departments, the University of Texas at Austin has one of the most distinguished South Asia programs in the country.

The South Asia Institute was established as part of a university initiative to promote South Asian programs, especially those pertaining to contemporary issues, across the entire university and in the larger community. As a National Resource Center for South Asia funded by a Title VI grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the institute sponsors major conferences, scholarly symposia and a weekly South Asia Seminar. The institute also provides Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships to students pursuing graduate degrees relating to South Asia in any department or school of the University.

Additionally, the Title VI grant also provides resources for outreach programs to K-12 schools, post-secondary institutions, business and civic organizations, and the Texas community at large. Another central mission of the Institute is to promote the study of contemporary South Asian languages in cooperation with the Department of Asian Studies and the Hindi-Urdu Flagship Program. Bengali, Hindi, Malayalam, Sanskrit, Tamil and Urdu are currently taught in the department. The South Asia Initiative underscores the University’s commitment to making the University of Texas South Asia program the best in the country within the next several years.