

# DEVĪ

*Gender & South Asia's Fierce Goddesses*

*Dazzling, Demonic, Divine*



*Specialist Art Short Course Handbook*



**SOAS**  
University of London

## COURSE INTRODUCTION

Goddesses in South Asia have many names and faces.

The Goddess is a calm, nurturing mother, a warrior in battle, and a fierce cremation ground dweller triumphing over death. This course gives you a kaleidoscopic overview of wrathful goddesses, introducing their diverse histories, forms, and meanings. You will encounter the Goddess in multiple ways and follow her rise in the Hindu tradition.

Your encounters will range from the warrior Durgā to the skeletal Cāmuṇḍā, from the shape-shifting yoginīs to the dark goddess Kālī, and expand beyond the Hindu pantheon to include the tantric female Buddhas who share many qualities with their Hindu contemporaries. As ferocious goddesses were frequently seen through a patriarchal gaze this course offers you a detailed exploration of gender and female agency in pre-modern and contemporary India.

We will also investigate how these Goddesses were displayed in different spaces, from their original temples to galleries and museums in and outside of India. How do you curate 'the Goddess'? How have the scattered yoginīs from Tamil Nadu found a place in museum collections worldwide? How can we understand simultaneous visions of ghoulish and divine? Join us for a course that brings together the dazzling, the 'demonic', and the divine.

## COURSE CONVENOR

**Ms Sandra Sattler** is a Senior Teaching Fellow at SOAS and convenes the Arts of India and the Arts of the Buddhist World modules.

She is submitting her PhD thesis, supervised by Dr James Mallinson, later this year on the goddess Cāmuṇḍā in textual and visual sources, most notably the Purāṇas and North Indian temple art between the 8th and 12th centuries.

Sandra has taught widely on Indian religions and art history as well as Sanskrit literature for over ten years. Aside from SOAS, she has lectured at Germany's Goettingen University, the University of Muenster or Hamburg University, Ghent University (Belgium), as well as for the V&A. Sandra is Fulbright Alumna (UC Berkeley) and her PhD thesis was funded by the AHRC.

Her research foci are gender, fierce goddesses, purāṇic literature, and medieval North Indian temple art and architecture.

# COURSE SCHEDULE

Friday 19 May 2023

14.00 – 15.30

***Studying Goddesses and Gender in India***

Ms Sandra Sattler

Friday 26 May 2023

14.00 – 15.30

***Curating Devī: the Fierce, Benign, the In-Between***

Prof Vidya Dehejia

Friday 2 June 2023

14.00 – 15.30

***The Rise of the Goddess: Durgā, the Warrior in Eastern India***

Dr Claudine Bautze-Picron

Friday 9 June 2023

14.00 – 15.30

***With Hollow Eyes and Skull Garland:  
Cāmuṅḍā, Skeletal Protectress and Mother***

Ms Sandra Sattler

Friday 16 June 2023

14.00 – 15.30

***Yoginīs from Tamil Nadu: Scattered Goddesses and their Homes***

Prof Padma Kaimal

Friday 23 June 2023

14.00 – 15.30

***Tantric Buddhist Goddesses of Enlightenment:  
The Cases of Chinnamuṅḍā and Vajrayoginī***

Dr Miranda Shaw

Friday 30 June 2023

14.00 – 15.30

***Kāraikkāl Ammaiṃār: The Fierce Return Gaze***

Prof Karen Pechilis

Friday 7 July 2023

15.00 – 16.30

***New Directions: Curating and Researching Fierce Goddesses***  
Panel discussion moderated by Ms Sandra Sattler

Prof Padma Kaimal  
Dr Imma Ramos  
Prof Karen Pechilis

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