

Proposal to Establish a
Minor in Persian Studies
Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures
College of Humanities

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1. Introduction

The study of Persian language was introduced at San Francisco State in Spring 2008, principally to bolster the University’s initiative in Middle East and Islamic Studies (MEIS). Beginning in Spring 2009, support from the College of Humanities was augmented by funds from a Department of Education grant secured by the MEIS program, enabling courses in intermediate Persian language and Persian culture to be offered. The ability to develop a true Persian Studies *program* was made possible by SF State’s receipt of a two-year, \$250,000 grant from CSU’s federally-funded Strategic Language Initiative (SLI) in 2010-11. An explicit expectation of this grant was that the University would begin offering a minor in Persian Studies as soon as possible. Among other things, the SLI grant provided funding for a full-time Visiting Assistant Professor to direct the program and teach two-to-three courses per semester in AY ’10-’11, lecturers to teach introductory language classes, a part-time clerical assistant, a first annual intensive Summer Institute in Persian language and culture, and equipment and reference materials for a Persian Study Center/Reading Room. Signaling its commitment to sustain the program over time—ideally, with ongoing support from government and private funding sources—the College of Humanities provided an appropriate program office (HUM 413) and made fundraising on behalf of Persian Studies one of the College’s highest development priorities. Moreover, a search for a tenure line position in Persian Studies was approved by the President and the Provost in September 2010 and was successfully completed, in accordance with established Universities policies, by the end of AY ’10-’11 with the appointment of Dr. Mitra Ara as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. The position was funded by College—as opposed to central University—resources as was the case with the hiring of Dr. Eran Kaplan as an endowed chair-holder in the field of Israel Studies and as would have been the case had our search been successful to appoint a Raoul Bertrand Chair in Classics. In accordance with the position description, leadership of the nascent Persian Studies program and the envisioned minor was entrusted to Dr. Ara, who was expected to work in close concert with an Advisory Committee consisting of the program director and faculty from four departments in three colleges, the Chair of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, and the Dean of Humanities. The structure of these organizational relationships was unaffected by college reorganization, which resulted in the formation of a still provisionally titled “College of Arts & Humanities” effective July 1, 2011.

32 An in-depth knowledge of Iran and at least a rudimentary grasp of the Persian language are invaluable in
33 today's world. Especially in a post-9/11 context, there is an urgent need for members of U.S. society to gain a
34 better understanding of the cultural and ideological forces and counter-forces discernible in present-day Iran,
35 the influence on the Middle East of Iran and peoples of Iranian descent who reside throughout this pivotal global
36 region, and the consequences of the vast Iranian diaspora, both for those who have sought refuge or enhanced
37 life opportunities in liberal democracies and for the nations to which they have emigrated. A proper
38 understanding of contemporary Iran, its impact on the Middle East, and the Iranian diaspora necessitates,
39 among other things, recognition of the extent to which Western European and U.S. economic and political
40 interests have shaped Iranian society, particularly since the early 19th Century. Among those "other things," and
41 at least equally important, is familiarizing students with the languages, cultures, and peoples of the Persian-
42 speaking world—in all its complexity, diversity, and richness—from ancient times to the advent of the modern
43 era. Persian Studies minors will be exposed not only to pre- and post-Islamic Persian cultural, intellectual, and
44 political history, but also to the Persian Empire and Indo-Iranian periods, seminal reference points for the
45 formation of Persian identity in areas that extend beyond the contemporary Iranian nation-state to, e.g., Iraq,
46 Afghanistan, Armenia, Turkestan, Azerbaijan, and western Pakistan. Students will emerge from the proposed
47 minor program with an enlarged understanding of the Persian-speaking world's enormous and lasting impact on
48 languages, cultural practices, and worldviews that developed over millennia in the Middle East, Central Asia,
49 South Asia, China, and Europe. Just as students' stereotypical notions of contemporary Iran need to be
50 challenged, so too do they need to be disabused of falsifying representations of the remote Persian past
51 disseminated in contemporary Western popular culture, perhaps most notably in the woefully ill-informed 2007
52 movie *300*.

53
54 Although the Persian Studies minor would be based in the Department of Foreign Languages and
55 Literatures and although many of its proposed core and required elective courses are interdisciplinary in nature,
56 it is best construed as a multidisciplinary program that will draw extensively on the expertise of a remarkably
57 talented group of recently hired faculty—in History, International Relations, Political Science, Music,
58 Comparative and World Literature, Humanities, and Philosophy—who are conversant with traditional Persian
59 and/or modern-to-contemporary Iranian literature, art, architecture, music, philosophy, religion, history,
60 politics, economics, and more. Persian Studies affiliated faculty represent a large subset of the MEIS faculty, and
61 while many of the courses they will contribute to the program are options for MEIS students, a good number of
62 the courses they have offered and are eager to develop would have specific relevance to a minor in Persian
63 Studies.

64
65 Over the last three years, a significant number of SF State students, the majority of them heritage
66 learners, have demonstrated a keen interest in studying the Persian language and taking courses offered by the
67 aforementioned group of faculty—this despite the fact that in many instances they are not earning GE credit for
68 these courses and that the courses do not fulfill requirements for a major or a minor they are pursuing.
69 Students of Iranian descent in particular have profound personal reasons for learning more about their heritage
70 and what it means to be an Iranian-American at this historical juncture. Once created, the Persian Studies minor
71 would add to similar existing programs in Africana Studies, American Indian Studies, Asian American Studies,
72 Jewish Studies, Latino/Latina Studies, MEIS, Modern Greek Studies, Pacific Asian Studies, and South Asian
73 Studies. Noteworthy in this regard is that the Persian Studies program has already forged strong links to many
74 of the Bay Area's large Iranian and allied communities, whose roots can be traced back to the turn of the 20th
75 Century. Of the more than 3 million people of Iranian descent in the U.S., 56% live in California and roughly half
76 of them live in Northern California.

80 **2. Persian Studies and Allied Faculty** (* indicates member, Persian Studies Advisory Committee)

81

82 Mitra Ara*, Assistant Professor, Foreign Languages and Literatures; Ph.D. UC Berkeley

83 Mohammad Azadpur*, Associate Professor, Philosophy; Ph.D. University Virginia

84 Maziar Behrooz*, Associate Professor, History; Ph.D. UCLA

85 Carel Bertram, Associate Professor, Humanities; Ph.D. UCLA

86 Shirin Khanmohamadi, Assistant Professor, Comparative and World Literature; Ph.D. Columbia University

87 Hafez Modirzadeh*, Professor, Music; Ph.D. Wesleyan University

88 Mahmood Monshipouri*, Associate Professor, International Relations; Ph.D. University of Georgia

89

90

91 **3. Proposed Program of Study**

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93 *At least one course must focus on pre-Islamic periods (indicated by *) and at least one course must cover post-*
94 *Islamic periods.*

95

96 **Core Courses**

12-14 units

97 *PRSN 101: First Semester Persian (5)*

98 *Prerequisites: None.*

99 First semester elementary modern Persian, designed to develop proficiency in the fundamental skills of

100 listening, reading, speaking and writing Persian. Exploration of the geography, history, culture, and religion of
101 the Persian-speaking world. GE

102 *Note: PRSN 101 will be waived for students who can demonstrate proficiency in the fundamental skills of*
103 *listening, reading, speaking and writing Persian.*

104

105 *PRSN 260: Persian Cultures and Civilization in English (3)* (will be proposed for GE)*

106 *Prerequisite: First Year Composition or equivalent or consent of instructor.*

107 Exploration of major themes in the development of Persian cultures and civilization from antiquity to present
108 including, but not limited to, religions, languages, ethnicities, arts, traditions, and customs. Taught in English.
109 (Formerly PRSN 401)

110

111 *Students who have completed PRSN 101 will choose two courses from the following list of three courses; students*
112 *who have tested out of PRSN 101 are required to complete all three courses.*

113

114 *PRSN 290: Introduction to Persian Literature in Translation (3) (will be proposed for GE)*

115 *Prerequisite: First Year Composition or equivalent.*

116 Examination of history, cultures, traditions, and religions as major themes in contemporary literature of Persian
117 writers. Taught in English. (Formerly PRSN 510)

118

119 *PRSN 450: Religious Traditions in Iran (3)* (will be proposed for GE)*

120 *Prerequisite: Second Year Composition or equivalent.*

121 Investigation into religious traditions of Iran from the inception to the present-day. Taught in English. (Formerly
122 PRSN 601)

123

124 *PRSN 550: Topics in Persian Studies in English (3) (will be proposed for GE)*

125 *Prerequisite: Second Year Composition or equivalent.*

126 Introduction to Persian Languages, Literatures, Cultures, Arts, History and Cinema. May be repeated for a total
127 of 9 units when title varies. (Formerly PRSN 600)

128	Elective Courses selected from the following courses upon advisement:	6-8 units
129		
130	CWL 430: Heroic Tales of the Mediterranean* (3)	
131	HIST 604: Islamic World I: 500-1500* (3)	
132	HIST 605: Islamic World II: 1500-present	
133	HIST 606: History of Iran and Afghanistan: 1500-present (3)	
134	HIST 607: Imperialism and Nationalism in the Recent Near East (3)	
135	HUM 361: Cultural Expression in Islam (3)	
136	IR 323: Persian Gulf and International Relations (4)	
137	MUS 530: Music of the Middle East and India (3) (UD GE)	
138	PHIL 436: Islamic Political Philosophy (3)	
139	PHIL 515: Islamic Mysticism (3)	
140	PHIL 516: Islamic Philosophy (3)	
141	PRSN 206: Basic Persian Conversation (3)	
142	PRSN 250: Intermediate Persian (3)	
143	PRSN 350: Advanced Persian (3)	
144	PRSN 411: Persian Media (3)	
145	PRSN 500: Introduction to Persian Literature (3)	
146	PLSI 410: Middle East Politics (4)	
147		
148	Total units for the Minor	18 - 22 units

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151 **4. Furthering the Mission of the University, Department, College, and**

152 **Responding to Student Interests and Needs**

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154 a. The Persian Studies minor is consonant with SF State's aim increasingly to internationalize its

155 curriculum so that, in addition to gaining appreciation and respect for other cultures, graduates of the institution

156 will become informed, engaged, and active citizens in an ever-more interdependent world order. While many

157 geographic and cultural areas of the globe have long been represented in the University's curriculum, until fairly

158 recently there had been a paucity of courses focused on the Middle East and neighboring regions. The Persian

159 Studies minor represents a more highly focused examination of an area and distinctive culture in the Middle

160 East, and its curricular reach extends beyond that region as it is typically defined in the academy and beyond

161 inasmuch as it considers the history and culture of Persian-speaking peoples from ancient times to the present.

162 As with many language and culture courses offered by the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures,

163 the Persian Studies minor, and courses in the minor, will nicely complement—and afford enrichment

164 opportunities for students enrolled in—such major and minor programs as Anthropology, Art, Classics,

165 Comparative and World Literature, History, Humanities, International Business, International Relations, Jewish

166 Studies, Linguistics, MEIS, Music, Political Science, Philosophy, Philosophy of Religion, and Religious Studies.

167 Further, once the new baccalaureate requirements are implemented in Fall 2013, BA students may elect to take

168 Persian language courses to fulfill the Complementary Studies Requirement.

169

170 The Persian Studies minor will also be consonant with SF State's mission to be responsive to the needs

171 and interests of the local communities the University serves. Since the study of Persian language and culture

172 has been introduced, outreach to the Bay Area's large Iranian and Afghan communities has expanded at an

173 impressive rate. In addition to well-attended annual Persian New Year Celebrations held on campus, concerts

174 and performances have been mounted on campus and in community settings, there have been poetry readings

175 (in Persian and English), a mini-course on Iranian Culture through Films (in Persian and English) aimed at

176 community members has been offered, SF State faculty and other scholars have delivered lectures for the
 177 general public in their areas of expertise, an annual lecture series on academic themes and topics of general
 178 interest was inaugurated in 2010-11, and a day-long conference (“A Tribute to Women of Afghanistan”) was
 179 held in March 2011. Additional evidence of community interest is sizeable Open University enrollment in
 180 Persian language and culture courses.

181
 182 **b.** The Persian Studies minor will enhance options available for students to undertake serious study of
 183 language and culture in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, which currently offers an array of
 184 B.A., M.A., and minor programs in Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish. As for the
 185 College of “Arts & Humanities” as a whole, there are additional such options in ancient Greek, Latin, Modern
 186 Hebrew, and Modern Greek. As a *language and literature/culture* program, Persian Studies’—as well as its
 187 minor and anticipated major degree programs’—obvious home is the Department of Foreign Languages and
 188 Literatures, where it been located since its inception in 2008. Other programs in Foreign Languages and
 189 Literatures accept or are open to accepting pertinent courses from other areas of the University as counting
 190 toward fulfillment of degree requirements.

191
 192 **c.** A steadily increasing number of Persian and/or Iranian Studies programs (as opposed to more
 193 comprehensive programs [e.g., in Near Eastern Studies] offering courses in Persian language and culture) have
 194 been established at U.S. colleges and universities over the last decade, but still there are just fifteen of them,
 195 only two of which award the B.A. degree, and the only California institution that boasts a self-contained
 196 Persian/Iranian Studies program is UCLA. These programs draw principally, although of course not exclusively,
 197 on heritage learners. In this respect, SF State has a decided advantage over the vast majority of them insofar as
 198 there are many thousands of people of Iranian and allied descent in the Bay Area and environs as well as many
 199 hundreds on our campus. Since two Persian language and culture classes per semester began to be scheduled,
 200 enrollments have totaled close to sixty, and in several instances at least a dozen students seeking admission had
 201 to be turned away even though enrollment limits were exceeded by as much as 50%. Another 250-300 students
 202 per semester have been taking Persian-related courses in various liberal arts departments. Not included in
 203 these figures are a substantial number of students who are members of the campus’ two Persian/Iranian
 204 student organizations, the Iranian Culture Club and I-House: Education in Action!, in part because their majors
 205 allow them few elective options and also because courses devoted to Persian language and culture were not
 206 offered until late in their undergraduate careers. Informal polls conducted by Professor Ara revealed that nearly
 207 all students registered in Persian classes this fall indicated that they would minor in Persian Studies if the option
 208 were available, and fifty-four recent graduates who had taken Persian classes or had been members of
 209 Persian/Iranian student groups indicated that they would have chosen to minor in Persian Studies.

210
 211 The value of a minor in Persian Studies is not limited to heritage learners’ understandable desire, or
 212 profound need, to work through issues of personal and communal identity. The cultural competence fostered
 213 by the minor, especially when coupled with linguistic competence, will enhance students’ competitiveness and
 214 marketability in numerous careers: e.g., in university teaching, businesses of various sorts, international
 215 organizations, government agencies, and diplomatic service. To be sure, today’s heritage learners are not the
 216 sole group of undergraduates who can go on to avail themselves of these opportunities; however, it is difficult
 217 to overstate the extent to which Americans of Iranian and allied descent can contribute to improving the United
 218 States’ understanding of and relations with Iran, the Middle East, and several nations that had been subsumed
 219 within the U.S.S.R.

220
 221 **d.** The combined interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary nature of the Persian Studies minor aligns it with the
 222 approach of the top programs of its kind in the nation (e.g., UCLA, the University of Maryland, and the University
 223 of Arizona). Distinctive features of the proposed program at SF State are its attention to the linguistic and

224 cultural heritage shared by people of diverse ethnicities across a large geographical terrain, its inclusion of these
 225 peoples' experiences and achievements in diaspora, and its commitment to community outreach and service.
 226

227

228 **6. Differing Viewpoints re the Proposed Minor**

229

230 In Spring 2011, some faculty in the department believed that a full complement of elementary and
 231 intermediate language courses should be a prerequisite for the minor, as is the case with all other minor
 232 programs offered by Foreign Languages and Literatures. With some reluctance, the version of the Persian
 233 Studies minor proposed here was approved, in no small part because the original version of the proposed minor
 234 included a second track in Persian Language Studies, with 13 units of language study as a prelude to a 22-24-unit
 235 minor and with required core courses to be taught in Persian. The Dean of Humanities determined that the
 236 track in Persian Language Studies was not practicable at this time. His decision had nothing to do with the
 237 academic merits of the language track, but instead proceeded chiefly from his understanding that the College
 238 could not afford to offer both tracks without hiring a second tenure line faculty member in Persian Studies
 239 and/or lecturers to teach several classes per semester, and that absent sufficient resources it would be
 240 impossible for timely completion of the minor by students selecting either track. Moreover, he objected to
 241 students in the second track receiving instruction from a single faculty member in all or almost all their required
 242 courses taught in Persian. As stated previously, the College *is* intent on securing substantial long-term support
 243 from government and private funding sources. Should fundraising efforts that are under way prove successful,
 244 the minor's language track could be submitted for approval, although it might be preferable eventually to
 245 incorporate intensive language study into a proposal for a B.A. program in Persian Studies, provided that there is
 246 sufficient student interest to warrant such a proposal. It should be noted that in Fall 2011 the coordinators of
 247 Foreign Languages and Literatures' language programs, which serves as the department's curriculum
 248 committee, voted 9-0 to support the current version of the Persian Studies minor and that subsequently the
 249 new "Arts and Humanities" College Council voted 25-0 in favor of the minor. [NB: all of the minor's elective
 250 offerings are in departments represented by Chairs who are members of the College Council.]
 251

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253

254 **7. Program's Relation to GE Requirements**

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256 Two of the Persian Studies minor's core requirements (*PRSN 260 and 290*) are well suited for inclusion in
 257 the Lower Division Humanities component of Area C in the new baccalaureate curriculum ratified by the
 258 Academic Senate and endorsed by the President. In addition, *PRSN 450 and 550* should readily find a place in
 259 the "Human Diversity" or "Enduring Ideas, Values, and Achievements" Topical Perspectives option of Upper
 260 Division GE. Especially since one of the minor's two required electives will doubtless be in the Lower Division
 261 Literature component of Area C and many of the others will be excellent candidates for five Topical
 262 Perspectives, "unlimited double counting" should make it relatively easy for canny students—even those
 263 pursuing high-unit B.S. degrees—to fulfill the requirements for the Persian Studies minor.
 264

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267 **8. Resources**

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269 Given that a tenure-track Assistant Professor has been appointed this year, no additional resources will
 270 be needed to offer the minor *and* to continue regularly offering two courses in Persian language each semester.
 271 That is not to say that additional resources would not be welcome, since *inter alia* they could be deployed to
 offer more than one section of *PRSN 101* or provide lecturer replacement dollars to a department where a
 faculty member would prefer to teach a course focused on Persia/Iran (e.g., *Introduction to Judeo-Persian*)

272 *Language and Culture, History of Shi'ism in Iran, Iranian Music, Women in Iranian and Afghan Societies*), rather
 273 than a course on Middle Eastern culture, religion, music, society, etc. Since Persian has been designated by the
 274 U.S. government as a "critical language," there are many opportunities to garner multiyear grants from the
 275 Departments of Education, State, and Defense to support Persian Studies. Roughly \$100,000 of the \$250,000 SLI
 276 grant awarded last year remains unspent, and an additional \$25,000 has been received from SLI this year. On
 277 top of this, the PARSAs Foundation contributed \$150,000 in May 2011 with a view toward solidifying the minor in
 278 Persian Studies and preparing the way, over time, for the inauguration of a B.A. program. On our list of potential
 279 and likely funding sources are several other foundations in the U.S. and broad, numerous government agencies,
 280 and a good many individuals of Iranian descent in the Bay Area with wealth and philanthropic inclinations,
 281 including SF State alumni and parents of students now taking Persian language and culture courses who have
 282 expressed a wish to minor in Persian Studies. Indeed, we have been invited to submit a full proposal to develop
 283 the proposed minor, to introduce the language track version of the minor, and to build toward the
 284 establishment of a major by the Roshan foundation, and we have been encouraged to submit proposals of a
 285 similar nature to federal agencies. It would be futile to apply for such funding until the minor is inaugurated.
 286 Consider, too, the former College of Humanities' success in receiving multi-year support from the National
 287 Security Education Program (to date over \$780,000) to become one of eight National Flagships in Mandarin
 288 (another "critical language") as well as in securing endowment resources for Jewish Studies and Modern Greek
 289 Studies, the former of which has endowments totaling close to \$6,000,000 and the latter of which has an
 290 endowment in excess of \$800,000—with many more funding sources being actively pursued. Even if, as seems
 291 highly unlikely, no additional support for the Persian initiative is obtained, there will be no difficulty mounting
 292 the current version of the proposed minor. Dr. Ara is capable of teaching all its core offerings. There will be
 293 funds remaining in the SLI grant to fund lecturer costs for delivery of PRSN 101 until at least 2014-15, and when
 294 Dr. Ara was a lecturer at least one of her courses each semester was funded through the former College of
 295 Humanities' lecturer pool.

296
 297

298 **9. Consultations**

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300 Given current interest in Iran and the Middle East, and the fact that other programs on campus have had
 301 long-standing investments in a wide range of topics allied to Persian/Iranian Studies, the Library has adequate
 302 historical, cultural, and political material to support the basic needs of students minoring in Persian Studies (see
 303 *Appendix A* for statement by David Hellman). Noteworthy too is that CSU's \$275,000 SLI grants and PARSAs'
 304 \$150,000 provide generous support to purchase Persian Studies reference materials, monographs, textbooks,
 305 and journal subscriptions.

306

307 The only campus academic program that could be marginally affected, whether positively or negatively,
 308 by the introduction of a minor in Persian Studies is the MEIS minor. While a small number of students could opt
 309 to change their minor from MEIS to Persian Studies, students who would be attracted only to a Persian Studies
 310 minor would be required to choose two electives from a list of courses that largely consists of MEIS core and
 311 elective requirements. That seven members of the Persian Studies and Allied Faculty listed in this proposal are
 312 also core MEIS faculty and that five of them serve on the Persian Studies Advisory group indicate that there is
 313 obviously no significant conflict of interest between the two programs. [See *Appendix B* for statement of Nicole
 314 Watts, MEIS program director.]

315

316 All departments whose courses are included among the electives in the Persian Studies minor were duly
 317 consulted in 2010-11.

318

319

320 **10. Program Assessment**

321

322 *Learning Objectives*

323

324 *Language*

325

326 Students who take *PRSN 101* or test out of it will be able to demonstrate beginning level proficiency in the
327 fundamental skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing Persian, using ACTFL (American Council on the
328 Teaching of Foreign Languages) standards of language acquisition.

329

330 *Culture*

331

332 Students will be able to analyze historical, social, political, and economic contexts in which culture viewpoints
333 and productions arise.

334

335 *Critical Thinking*

336

337 Students will be able to analyze complex cultural text using secondary sources and specific theoretical
338 frameworks.

339

340 *Writing*

341

342 Students will be able to write well-informed, coherent, rigorous, and engaging essays on various topics in
343 Persian Studies that conform to, or intelligently challenge, the linguistic standards and rhetorical conventions of
344 academic discourse in the liberal arts.

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Appendix A

-----Original Message-----

From: David Steele Hellman
Sent: Monday, November 08, 2010 2:26 PM
To: Mitra Ara
Cc: David Steele Hellman; Lavonne Jacobsen
Subject: Follow up to Persian Studies consultation

Mitra,

After our conversation I wanted to state that I believe the Library does most likely have enough depth in its collection to provide basic support for most, if not all, of the interdisciplinary aspects of the minor. We can, of course, all turn to other libraries that lend material to us. In terms of historical, cultural, political material, the Library should have adequate coverage in light of current interest in the subject and the fact that other programs/degrees on campus have had long standing interest in aspects of the subject area. Again, most of my concerns are about the overall ability of the Library to sustain its support of the program. I might add that I would have similar concerns about our ability to provide sustained support of any new program in view of current budget constraints.

David

David S. Hellman
*Collection Development Coordinator/Associate Librarian *Collection Access and Management Services /J. Paul Leonard Library - San Francisco State University
/1630 Holloway Avenue San Francisco, CA 94132-4030
voice: 415-405-0686 - fax: 415-338-6940
email: hellman@sfsu.edu - web: <http://www.library.sfsu.edu>
<<http://www.library.sfsu.edu/>>

Estragon: Nothing to be done.
Vladimir: I'm beginning to come round to that opinion.

401

Appendix B

402

403 **From:** Paul Sherwin
404 **Sent:** Thursday, December 02, 2010 11:08 AM
405 **To:** Alexandra Katz
406 **Subject:** FW: MEIS Support for the Persian Studies Minor

407

408 **From:** Nicole F Watts
409 **Sent:** Wednesday, December 01, 2010 8:19 AM
410 **To:** Mitra Ara
411 **Cc:** Paul Sherwin; Joel Kassiola; Lucia Volk
412 **Subject:** MEIS Support for the Persian Studies Minor

413

414 Dear Mitra,
415 This email is to tell you how excited I am about the new minor in Persian Studies you are proposing to
416 start in the fall of 2011. The minor builds on years of work by SFSU students, faculty in many
417 departments, and, especially, your own extraordinary curriculum development and leadership. It will
418 significantly enrich and expand the curriculum at SFSU in several key ways. Having a minor in Persian
419 Studies will, most obviously, offer an education in one of the most important -- and little understood --
420 parts of the world today (here I am thinking not only of Iran but also other Persian-speaking cultures
421 and countries such as Afghanistan). In this regard, the launching of your minor meets a truly urgent
422 social and political need, and I think the timing of its inauguration could not be better. The minor will
423 also expand the university's language and cultural studies offerings in a way that is both original and, at
424 the same time, practical, given the ongoing student interest in Persian and Persian Studies, as
425 demonstrated by the high level of enrollment in your courses. I see a Persian Studies minor as a
426 complement to the minor in Middle East and Islamic Studies (MEIS), and a much needed next step in
427 the institutionalization of half a decade's worth of cross-disciplinary faculty and college-level efforts
428 undertaken with the support of funding agencies in Washington DC (such as the Dept of Education and
429 the Strategic Languages Initiative). I wholeheartedly endorse the minor, and wish you all the best as
430 you usher your proposal through the requisite administrative procedures for its approval.

431

432 Sincerely,
433 Nicole Watts, Associate Professor and Acting Chair
434 Dept of Political Science
435 Co-Director, Middle East and Islamic Studies
436 SFSU

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Appendix C: Proposed Bulletin Copy

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PERSIAN STUDIES

College of Arts & Humanities

Dean: Paul Sherwin

Persian Studies Program

HUM 413

415-338-3121

Faculty

Assistant Professor Mitra Ara

Program

Minor in Persian Studies

Program Scope

The minor in Persian Studies is a multidisciplinary program for students seeking greater knowledge and understanding of Persian/Iranian language, culture, history, society, and politics from ancient to contemporary times.

Especially when coupled with competence in the Persian language, the minor will be useful to students planning careers in such fields as university teaching, businesses of various sorts, international organizations, government agencies, and diplomatic service.

The minor in Persian Studies consists of 18-22 units. A core of one 5-unit course and three 3-unit courses, or four 3-unit courses, and an elective group of two 3- or 4-unit courses will complete the minor, with at least one course focusing on Pre-Islamic periods (indicated by * in the list of courses below) and at least one course focusing on the Post-Islamic periods.

Program of Study

Requirements

PRSN 101 and 260 are required, though PRSN 101 will be waived for students who can demonstrate proficiency in the fundamental skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing Persian.

Students who take PRSN 101 will select two additional courses from a list of three core courses and students who test out of PRSN 101 will take all three of those courses. Students also complete two courses chosen from the list of elective courses or other courses approved by a minor adviser. At least one course must focus on pre-Islamic periods (indicated by *) and at least one course must cover post-Islamic periods.

Core Courses

12-14 units

- 484
- 485 *PRSN 101: First Semester Persian (5)*
- 486 *Prerequisites: None.*
- 487 First semester elementary modern Persian, designed to develop proficiency in the fundamental skills of
- 488 listening, reading, speaking and writing Persian. Exploration of the geography, history, culture, and religion of
- 489 the Persian-speaking world. GE
- 490
- 491 *PRSN 260: Persian Cultures and Civilization in English (3)* (proposed for GE)*
- 492 *Prerequisite: First Year Composition or equivalent.*
- 493 Exploration of major themes in the development of Persian cultures and civilization from antiquity to present
- 494 including, but not limited to, religions, languages, ethnicities, arts, traditions, and customs. Taught in English.
- 495 (Formerly PRSN 401)
- 496
- 497 *Students who have completed PRSN 101 will choose two courses from the following list of three courses; students*
- 498 *who have tested out of PRSN 101 are required to complete all three courses.*
- 499
- 500 *PRSN 290: Introduction to Persian Literature in Translation (3)*
- 501 *Prerequisite: First Year Composition or equivalent.*
- 502 Examination of history, cultures, traditions, and religions as major themes in contemporary literature of Persian
- 503 writers. Taught in English. (Formerly PRSN 510)
- 504
- 505 *PRSN 450: Religious Traditions in Iran (3)**
- 506 *Prerequisite: Second Year Composition or equivalent.*
- 507 Investigation into religious traditions of Iran from the inception to the present-day. Taught in English. (Formerly
- 508 PRSN 601)
- 509
- 510 *PRSN 550: Topics in Persian Studies in English (3)*
- 511 *Prerequisite: Second Year Composition or equivalent.*
- 512 Introduction to Persian Languages, Literatures, Cultures, Arts, History and Cinema. May be repeated for a total
- 513 of 9 units when title varies.
- 514
- 515
- 516 **Elective Courses** selected from the following courses upon advisement: **6-8 units**
- 517
- 518 CWL 430: Heroic Tales of the Mediterranean* (3)
- 519 HIST 604: Islamic World I: 500-1500* (3)
- 520 HIST 605: Islamic World II: 1500-present
- 521 HIST 606: History of Iran and Afghanistan: 1500-present (3)
- 522 HIST 607: Imperialism and Nationalism in the Recent Near East (3)
- 523 HUM 361: Cultural Expression in Islam (3)
- 524 IR 323: Persian Gulf and International Relations (4)
- 525 MUS 530: Music of the Middle East and India (3) (UD GE)
- 526 PHIL 436: Islamic Political Philosophy (3)
- 527 PHIL 515: Islamic Mysticism (3)
- 528 PHIL 516: Islamic Philosophy (3)
- 529 PRSN 206: Basic Persian Conversation (3)
- 530 PRSN 250: Intermediate Persian (3)
- 531 PRSN 350: Advanced Persian (3)

532 PRSN 411: Persian Media (3)
533 PRSN 500: Introduction to Persian Literature (3)
534 PLSI 410: Middle East Politics (4)

535

536 **Total units for the Minor**

18 - 22 units

537

538

539

540

541

Appendix D



College of Humanities
1600 Holloway Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94132

November 15, 2011

Dr. Paul Sherwin
Dean, College of Arts and Humanities
San Francisco State University

Dear Dean Sherwin,

We, the undersigned faculty at San Francisco State University, would like to express our gratitude for your hard work in promoting the establishment of a Persian Studies program in the Arts and Humanities College. We were delighted to learn that the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures hired Professor Mitra Ara as a tenure-track professor of the Persian Studies.

We also eagerly await the establishment of the Persian Studies minor as soon as possible. Our areas of research and teaching are inextricably related to the existence of this program, and its approval would be a great boon to every aspect of our work. Consider, for example, the significance of our Middle East and Islamic Studies (MEIS) program that integrates several disciplines and research foci, while offering a great opportunity to a wide variety of students on our campus, especially to those who are interested in achieving a double major or a minor in this subfield. Needless to say that Persian Studies program contains overlapping offerings (such as IR 323: The Persian Gulf in International Relations) that are crucial to the longevity as well as sustainability of our existing programs. Any support for Persian Studies program is bound to strengthen not only our MEIS program, but also History, International Relations, Political Science, Religious Studies, Comparative Literature, language, and Arts. In short, were the MEIS to become a major or MA program, the Persian Studies program would be an indispensable part of such effort.

Please don't hesitate to call on us should there be a need for further assistance in gaining the final approval of the minor proposals.

Highest Regards,



College of Humanities
 1600 Holloway Avenue
 San Francisco, CA 94132

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'ML Azadpur'.

Mohammad Azadpur, Ph.D.
 Associate Professor
 Department of Philosophy

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maziar Behrooz'.

Maziar Behrooz, Ph.D.
 Associate Professor
 History Department

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shirin A. Khanmohamadi'.

Shirin A. Khanmohamadi, Ph.D.
 Assistant Professor
 Department of Comparative and World Literature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mahmood Monshipouri'.

Mahmood Monshipouri, Ph.D.
 Associate Professor
 Department of International Relations



College of Humanities

1600 Holloway Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94132

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hafez Modirzadeh".

Hafez Modirzadeh, Ph.D.
Professor, School of Music and Dance
World Music and Dance Program