

Candland_Abstract

South Asia International Conference paper proposal

I propose to give a paper about my experience in developing and offering, since 2012, a full-semester, live videoconference course that connects Wellesley College students with Fatima Jinnah Women University students.

Public opinion of Pakistan in the United States and of the United States in Pakistan is at an all time low. At the same time, security restrictions prevent American students from studying in Pakistan. As in-country exposure is a prerequisite to appreciating and understanding other cultures, we now have an entire generation of Americans who have very limited personal knowledge of Pakistan or personal connection with Pakistanis.

To attempt to counter this, I developed a course, on the politics of human development in Pakistan, which facilitates the building of personal relations between students in Pakistan and the United States. Unlike most online courses, none of this course is pre-recorded; all class time involves real-time interaction. As a result, students have not only learned valuable lessons from Pakistan's experiences in promoting human development, students have also developed lasting personal relations and appreciation for Pakistan's people and cultures.

I would like to present on this initiative, as it seems very much in keeping with the interests of COMSAT's Institute of Information Technology and the SAI conference theme of ingenuity, integration, and inspiration. My hope is that connections made at the conference will enable me to facilitate the adoption of such courses by other Pakistani and U.S. universities.

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