

Spring 2009
HIST 8430: Seminar in South Asian History
Empire, Economy and Culture in Early Modern South Asia

Instructor: Dr. Ghulam A. Nadri
Day/time: Monday / 5:30 to 8:50 pm
Location: GCB 717

Office hours: Monday, 1:30-2:30 PM and by appointment
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Short description of the course:

This course intends to familiarise students with some major political, economic and cultural issues that have dominated the historiography of early modern South Asia in recent years. We will read a set of books and research articles on the history of the Mughal Empire and on the political ascendancy of the English East India Company in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A wide array of topics such as the nature of sovereignty in South Asia, state-economy relationship, religion and societal interactions, women and gender, cultural diversities, and global connections will be discussed. Students are expected to read the literature and be actively involved in discussions.

Course objective

Our goal is to understand the economy, society, and culture of early modern South Asia and to get familiar with the variety of perspectives on and approaches to the study of South Asian history. This would enable students to insightfully engage in and contribute to major scholarly debates in the region's late pre-colonial and colonial history. Such an understanding is all the more relevant in view of India's recent emergence as a major economic and political power despite impediments and challenges that the region was subjected to in the colonial and post-colonial periods.

Class policies

This is a reading seminar and in the course of the semester we will read about a dozen books. Our weekly in-class activities include presentation of the assigned book/articles, questions, comments, and discussion. Students are

expected to read the text before the class, come prepared with questions and comments and take part in discussions.

Absence from class is NOT appreciated and more than two absences even with prior notice will affect your participation grade. **Cell phones** must either be on vibration or turned off; entertaining calls or text messaging during the class will not be appreciated. **Laptops** may NOT be used without prior permission.

Reading list

1. Alam, Muzaffar, *The Languages of Political Islam: India, 1200-1800* (University of Chicago Press, 2004).
2. Bayly, C. A., *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (The New Cambridge History of India), paperback (Cambridge: CUP, 1990).
3. Dalrymple, William, *White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth Century India* (Viking Penguin, 2003).
4. Dirks, Nicholas B., *Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Harvard University Press, 2006).
5. Eaton, Richard M., *Essays on Islam and Indian History* (Delhi: OUP, 2000).
6. Ghosh, Durba, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India: the Making of Empire* (Cambridge: CUP, 2006).
7. Habib, Irfan, *Essays in Indian History: Towards a Marxist Perception* (London: Anthem Press, 2002): selected chapters.
8. Lal, Ruby, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005).
9. Pearson, M. N., *Pilgrimage to Mecca: the Indian Experience, 1500-1800* (Princeton: Markus and Wiener, 1996).
10. Richards, John F., *The Mughal Empire* (New York: CUP, 1996/paperback).
11. Robb, Peter, *A History of India* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).
12. Sen, Sudipta, *Distant Sovereignty: National Imperialism and the Origins of British India* (New York: Routledge, 2002).
13. Vanina, Eugenia, *Ideas and Society: India between the Sixteenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Delhi: OUP, 2004).

Grade

Participation	=	30 per cent of your total grade
Presentation	=	30 per cent of your total grade
Final paper	=	40 per cent of your total grade

Grades are based on the following numerical scale

A+ = 96-100

A	=	93-95.9	C+	=	77-79.9
A-	=	90-92.9	C	=	70-76.9
B+	=	86-89.9	D	=	60-69.9
B	=	80-85.9	F	=	less than 60

Participation

You are expected to be actively involved in discussions. Present your views, reflections, questions, or comments on the theoretical, methodological, and factual aspects of the text under discussion. Participation grade will be based on your quantitative and qualitative participation in our weekly discussions.

Presentation

Each student will have her/his turn in rotation to present the text assigned for a week. Prepare a 20-25 minute presentation of the book you are reading. This should contain an evaluation of i) the historiographical context, ii) issues and hypotheses, iii) methodology, iv) major arguments, and v) primary and secondary sources used in the book. Send a copy of your presentation to me and provide on time a short handout of your presentation to all participants.

Final paper

Identify a theme of your interest and write a 15-20 page essay (in about 5,000 words excluding footnotes/endnotes). This will be done in two stages. First, you will write a short introductory outline of your paper with a bibliography (10-15 items at least) within two weeks after you have chosen your topic. Second, after discussing the outline with me, you will write the final paper and hand in to me before or on the due date. In the analysis of your subject, you should apply a theoretical/analytical model and/or compare with other empires/societies/cultures. The paper must contain clearly formulated hypotheses and conclusions and should have proper reference to sources in footnotes/endnotes and a bibliography (*see, The Chicago Manual of Style or The Element of Style, latest edition*). (*See the GSU statement on **plagiarism** <http://www2.gsu.edu/~esljmm/methods/honesty.htm>*)

Schedule of classes (deviation may be required)

- Jan. 5, 2009: Introduction; text assignments; have a quick look at the books, volunteer to present the one you like most.
- Jan. 12, 2009 Peter Robb, *A History of India* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).
- Jan. 19, 2009 *Martin Luther King Jr. holiday (no classes)*.

- Jan. 26, 2009 John F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire* (New York: CUP, 1996).
- Feb. 2, 2009 Irfan Habib, *Essays in Indian History: Towards a Marxist Perception* (London: Anthem Press, 2002).
- Feb. 9, 2009 Eugenia Vanina, *Ideas and Society: India between the Sixteenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Delhi: OUP, 2004).
- Feb. 16, 2009 Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam: India, 1200-1800* (University of Chicago Press, 2004).
- Feb. 23, 2009 Richard M. Eaton, *Essays on Islam and Indian History* (Delhi: OUP, 2000).
- March 2, 2009 *Spring break (no classes)*
- March 9, 2009 M. N. Pearson, *Pilgrimage to Mecca: the Indian Experience, 1500-1800* (Princeton: Markus and Wiener, 1996).
- Paper outline due**
- March 16, 2009 Ruby Lal, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005).
- March 23, 2009 William Dalrymple, *White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth Century India* (Viking Penguin, 2003).
- March 30, 2009 C. A. Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge: CUP, 1990).
- April 6, 2009 Sudipta Sen, *Distant Sovereignty: National Imperialism and the Origins of British India* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

- April 13, 2009 Nicholas B. Dirks, *Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Harvard University Press, 2006).
- April 20, 2009 Durba Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India: the Making of Empire* (Cambridge: CUP, 2006).
- April 27, 2009 Review of paper progress, a general discussion.
- April 30, 2009 **Final paper due (late submission will not be permitted)**

Note: Feel free to talk to me if you have any question or problem. Drop by my office during the office hours OR make an appointment by calling on my office number OR, preferably, by email to gnadri@gsu.edu