MPhil/MSt in Modern South Asian Studies

CORE COURSE

THE HISTORY AND CULTURE
OF SOUTH ASIA

Readings and Classes

General Reference Works
Crispin Bates, Subalterns and Raj: South Asia since 1600 (2007)
B and T Metcalf, A Concise History of India (2002)
Catherine B. Asher and Cynthia Talbot, India Before Europe (2006)
D. Kumar & M. Desai eds. Cambridge Economic History of India vol 2 (1983)

Journals
Modern Asian Studies
Journal of Asian Studies
Indian Economic & Social History Review
South Asia
Economic and Political Weekly
JSTOR: online archive for articles
The Hindu online, especially Frontline fortnightly magazine.
WEEK 1: EARLY MODERN SOUTH ASIA: CONTEXTS

Questions
(i) What significant changes marked the coming of the ‘early modern’ in India?
(ii) How far was ‘early modernity’ in South Asia reflected in new literary genres and intellectual frameworks?

Primary source

(i) Societies and economies

(ii) Intellectual histories
Sheldon Pollock, ‘New Intellectuals in seventeenth century India’ in Indian Economic and Social History Review, 38, 1, (2001): 1-31
Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Indo-Persian Travels In The Age Of Discoveries, 1400-1800 (2007), Introduction

WEEK 2: EMPIRES AND STATES IN EARLY MODERN INDIA

Questions
(i) Did the success of the Mughal state rest on the common frameworks that it imposed, or on the degree to which it was able to accommodate cultural difference and regional identities?
(ii) How far did Indian political elites share a coherent theory of ‘virtuous government’ in early modern India?
(iii) Is it meaningful to talk about ‘religious community identity’ in early modern India?
(iv) How far does the study of the body and of norms for comportment amplify our understanding of Mughal political culture?

Primary sources
* Akbar’s Dasturu’l ‘amal (A circular enumerating the Duties of Officers) addressed to the Ummal and Mutasuddis of the Empire, 21 March 1594, in Mansura Haidar, Mukatabar-i-Allami (Insha’l Abu’l Fazl) (1998): 79-88

(i) The Mughal Empire and Regional Societies
_____. *Kingship and Authority in South Asia* (1998): ch 7, ‘Rajput Loyalties during the Mughal Period’

(ii) Political thought and intellectual cultures

(iii) Religious relations and identities
Cynthia Talbot, ‘Inscribing the Self, Inscribing the Other: Hindu-Muslim Identities in Pre-Colonial India’ in Richard M. Eaton. *India’s Islamic traditions, 711-1750.* (2003): 84-117

(iv) Gender, household and social norms
_____. ‘Manliness and Imperial Service in Mughal North India’ in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient,* 42, 1, 1999.

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**WEEK 3: COSMOPOLITAN AND VERNACULAR LANGUAGES**

**Questions**
(i) How far and in what ways did the ‘cosmopolitan’ languages of early modern India facilitate the process of vernacularisation?
(ii) ‘The development of regional states, rather than the communicative needs of devotional traditions, drove on the process of vernacularisation in early modern India’. Discuss
(iii) In what senses were vernacular languages ‘languages of place’?

**Primary source**

(i) **Interplays between cosmopolitan and vernacular languages**


Yigal Bronner and David Shulman, ‘A Cloud Turned Goose: Sanskrit in the Vernacular Millennium’ in Indian Economic and Social History Review, 43.1:1-30


(ii) Regional states and vernacular languages


________. ‘Inscribing the Self, Inscribing the Other: Hindu-Muslim Identities in Pre-Colonial India’ in Richard M. Eaton. India's Islamic traditions, 711-1750. (2003): 84-117

(iii) Vernacular languages and devotional traditions


K. Schomer and WH McLeod (eds), The Sants: Studies in a Devotional Tradition of India (1987)

AW Entwistle, Braj: Centre of Krishna Pilgrimage (1987)

John Stratton Hawley, Songs of the Saints of India (1988)
WEEK 4: REGIONAL STATES AND SOCIETIES c. 1660-1800

Questions
(i) How were effectively did the regional states of eighteenth century India come to terms with their new commercial and military environments?
(ii) Why did modes of history-writing emerge as such a prominent literary genre in later pre-colonial India?

Primary source

The eighteenth century background

(i) Regional states and their environments
Kate Brittlebank, Tipu Sultan’s Search for Legitimacy: Islam and Kingship in a Hindu Domain (1995).
J.R. McLane, Land and Local Kingship in 18th century Bengal chs 1-4 and Conclusion
S. Gordon The Marathas (1993), Conclusion
J.L. Gommans, The Rise of Indo-Afghan Empire 1710-80 - introduction, chapter 1 and conclusion (a study of the Pathan Muslim-ruled Rohilla states)

(ii) History-writing and intellectual cultures
*Kum Kum Chatterjee, ‘History as self-representation: the recasting of a political tradition in late eighteenth century eastern India’, in Modern Asian Studies, 32, 4, 1998
Prachi Deshpande, Creative Pasts: Historical Memory and Identity in Western India, 1700-1960. (2007) chs 1-2


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**WEEK 5: COMMERCE AND WAR, 1760-1820**

**Questions**
(i) How and why did the East India Company move from trade to political dominion in India, c. 1750-1820?
(ii) ‘British India was created by Indians’.

**Sources**

*(i) East India Company Expansion: debates
C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, c. 1780-1870* (1996), chs. 2 – 4

(ii) Indian society and the Company: accommodations and resistances
Veena Sachdeva, *Polity and Economy of the Punjab during the Late Eighteenth Century* (1993)


_____. *The Felt Community: Commonality and Mentality before the Emergence of Indian Nationalism* (2003).


_____. *Indigenous capital and imperial expansion: Bombay, Surat and the West Coast* (1996)


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**WEEK 6: THE COMPANY’S STATE AND INDIAN SOCIAL CHANGE, c. 1780-1860**

(i) Was there an “Age of Reform” in this period? What if anything was “reformed” in India’s social, economic or political life between 1830 and 1850?

(ii) How far did Indians contribute to the construction of ‘colonial knowledge’?

(iii) Why did print spread so rapidly through Indian society under the Company’s state?

(iv) Why did the East India Company fail in its aim of ‘modernising’ India’s regional economies?

**Sources**

*BC Robertson, The Essential Writings of Raja Rammohan Ray* (1999)

(i) The ‘Age of Reform’


_____. *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion 1770-1870* (2002)


_____. *Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India* (1998)


(ii) Orientalism and colonial ‘knowledge’
*———. Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870 (1996) chs 7-8
David Ludden, ‘Orientalist Empiricism: Transformations of Colonial Knowledge’ in Carol Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer (eds.), Orientalism and the Post-Colonial Predicament (1993), 250-278
Eugene Irschick, Dialogue and History: Constructing South India 1795-1985 (1994) chs 2-3

(iii) Print and the creation of a colonial ‘public sphere’
*CA Bayly, Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870 (1996) chs 5-6
Richard Fox Young, Resistant Hinduism: Sanskrit Sources on Anti-Christian Apologetics in Early Nineteenth Century India (1981)
Veena Naregal, Language Politics, Elites and the Public Sphere: Western India Under Colonialism (Delhi 2001)

(iv) Economy and Society to 1857
WEEK 7: COLONIAL SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS: CASTE, CLASS AND GENDER

Questions
(i) Why after 1800 did the Indian caste ‘system’ survive and even become stronger and more pervasive?
(ii) What did colonial officials /colonial ‘orientalists’ think caste was? Did they ‘invent’ caste?
(iii) Is class a relevant category for understanding Indian history in the colonial period?
(iv) Why did the social condition of India women feature so prominently in public debate over the course of the nineteenth century?

Primary source

(i) Caste
*Susan Bayly  Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age (1999), ch 1 and ch 5.
William Pinch, Peasants and Monks in British India (1996) chs 3-4 and Conclusion, pp. 81-150.
Nandini Gooptu, The Politics of the Urban Poor in Early Twentieth Century India (2001) chs. 1, 6, and 7
Oliver Mendelsohn and Marika Vicziany, *The Untouchables: Subordination, Poverty and the State in Modern India* (1998) chs 1,3

**(ii) Caste and Orientalism**
*___. Imagining India* (1990.)
*___. Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (2001)

**(iii) Class**
*___. Imperial Power and Popular Politics: Class, Resistance and the State in India c. 1850-1950* (1998) chs 2, 9
Tithi Bhattacharaya, *The Sentinels of Culture: Class, Education and the Colonial Intellectual in Bengal* (2005), ch. 1

**(iv) Gender**
*Tanika Sarkar *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation: Community, Religion and Cultural Nationalism* (2001) Intro; ch. 1.6
WEEK 8: EARLY NATIONALISM TO 1914

Questions
(i) Were there any coherent themes in the way that different Indians ‘imagined’ the Indian nation before the First World War?
(ii) What and who did the early Congress represent, and why did it become so much more radical after c. 1890?

Sources
*MG Ranade, Rise of the Maratha Power (1900), ch. 3, ‘How the seed was sown’, 18-26.

The ‘modernity’ of nationalism: debates
*CA Bayly The Origins of Indian Nationality: Patriotism and Ethical Government in the Making of Modern India (1998) 1-18
Rajat Kanta Ray, The Felt Community: Commonality and Mentality before the Emergence of Indian Nationalism (2003), ch. 1, ‘Nationalism and Patriotism’.

(i) Imagining the ‘Indian nation’: early nationalism to 1914
*CA Bayly The Origins of Indian Nationality: Patriotism and Ethical Government in the Making of Modern India (1998) 63-128

Susan Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age*, (1999); ch. 4: ‘Caste and the modern nation: incubus or essence?’ pp. 144-86.


(ii) The politics of early nationalism


J. Gallagher, G. Johnson, A. Seal, eds. *Locality, Province & Nation*, especially chapters 1 & 5

J. McLane, *Indian Nationalism and the Early Congress* (1977)


CA Bayly, *The Local Roots of Indian Politics: Allahabad 1880-1920* (1973) chs 4-5


S. Gopal, *British Policy in India 1860-1914* (1965) ch. on Curzon

Sumit Sarkar, *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, 1903-1908* (1973)

Bipan Chandra, *The Rise & Growth of Economic Nationalism in India*

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**HILARY TERM**

**WEEK 1: COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY IN NINETEENTH CENTURY RELIGIOUS CULTURES**

**Questions**

(i) Has any historian convincingly explained what was new about ‘communal’ conflicts in India under colonialism?
(ii) What if anything was “Hindu revivalism”; who attempted to revive or reform Hinduism during the 19th- and 20th-centuries, and what difference did it make?

(iii) Can appeals to religious community identity during the colonial period be understood outside the context of particular regional cultures? (Answer in relation to one or more examples of your choice)

(i) Religious community identities: debates and theories
Sandria B. Freitag, Collective Action and Community: Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India (1989)
Gyanendra Pandey, The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India (1990), Introduction
Peter van der Veer, Religious Nationalism, Hindus and Muslims in India (1994) chs 1-2, 17-77.

(ii) Reform, internal critique and revival: Hinduism in colonial India
J.T.F. Jordans, Dayananda Saraswati: His Life and Ideas (1978)
Kenneth W. Jones, Socio-religious movements in British India (1989)
Kenneth W. Jones, (ed.) Religious Controversy in British India (chapters by Jones on Swami Dayanand of the Arya Samaj, Metcalf on broad themes)

(iii) Religious community identity and regional cultures
*William R. Pinch, Peasants and Monks in British India (1996) ch. 3
W. Fusfeld, ‘Communal Conflict in Delhi 1803-1930’ *Indian Economic and Social History Review*

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**WEEK 2: NATIONALISM AND ITS CONTRADICTIONS IN INTERWAR INDIA**

**Questions**
(i) Was the Indian National Congress a ‘mass’ movement at any point in the 1930s?
(ii) How far did a coherent vision of national community underlie the thinking of India’s nationalist leadership?
(iii) What have been the strengths and weaknesses of the history writing of the Subaltern Studies’ group?

(i) **Interwar nationalism**
B.R. Tomlinson, *The Indian National Congress and the Raj* ch. 3
F. Robinson, *Islam and Muslim History in South Asia* (2001) ch. 9
*R. Chandavarkar* *Imperial Power and Popular Politics: Class, Resistance and the State in India c. 1850-1950* (1998) ch 8

(ii) **Imagining the national community**
Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (1946) ch. 3
*CA Bayly, Origins of Nationality in South Asia: Patriotism and Ethical Government in the Making of Modern India* (1998), chs. 4, 6

(iii) **Subaltern Studies**
R. Guha, ed. *Subaltern Studies*, vol. 1, introduction by Guha; volume 3, chs by Amin and Hardiman; volume 7, ch by Guha, esp. pp. 91-120.
WEEK 3: ISLAM, POLITICS AND PARTITION IN COLONIAL INDIA

Questions
(i) Has any historian convincingly explained the drive of some Muslims to found their own political institutions and organisations in the late 19th-early 20th century?
(ii) Islamic revivalisms in C19th India - one or many?
(iii) Was the Partition of India in 1947 inevitable?

(i) Debates about Muslim Separatism
Mushirul Hasan, Nationalism and Communal Politics, 1885-1930 (1991)
F.C.R. Robinson, Islam and Muslim History in South Asia (2001), chs 8-9

(ii) Reformers and revivalists
Francis Robinson, Islam and Muslim History in South Asia (2001) chs 3-4
David Lelyveld, Aligharh’s First Generation: Muslim Solidarity in British India (1996)
ch. 2, 8

(iii) Religion and Politics from 1924 to Partition
Anil Seal and Ayesha Jalal, ‘Muslim Politics between the Wars’ in Modern Asian Studies, (1981)
M. Hasan, India’s Partition: Process, Strategy and Mobilisation (1993) ch. by Hasan


______. Freedom’s Cry: the popular dimension in the Pakistan movement and Partition experience (1996)

Essays in History Today (1997)

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WEEK4: THEMES IN THE HISTORY OF INDEPENDENT INDIA

1. Politics and the state: India and Pakistan

India

Question
How well has India’s democracy served its citizens?


Ben Zachariah, Nehru (2004)


Partha Chatterjee (ed), State and Politics in India (1997), chs. by Manor and Brass

Atul Kohli, The Success of India’s Democracy (2001)

______. ‘The politics of economic growth in India’ in EPW, April 2006 (2 parts)

M. Hasan, Legacy of a Divided Nation. India’s Muslims from Independence to Ayodhya (1997)


Pakistan

Question
‘Democratic failure in Pakistan is the most enduring legacy of Partition and Independence in 1947’


Ian Talbot, Pakistan: A Modern History (2005 ed.)


2. The Emergence of Hindu Nationalism

Question
What factors have fostered the growth of the parties of the Hindu right in India?

Ratna Kapur and Brenda Cossman, *Subversive Sites: Feminist Engagements with Law in India* (1996) ch. 4

3. Caste, society and politics

Question
Why has caste continued to be such a potent force in independent India?

Oliver Mendelsohn and Marika Vicziany, *The Untouchables: Subordination, Poverty and the State in Modern India* (1998)
Susan Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age* (1998) chs 7-9
Atul Kohli, *The Success of India's Democracy* (2001), ch. by Weiner
4. Environmental movements

Question
What issues have been most important for India's environmental movements, and why?

M. Gadgil and R. Guha, 'Ecological conflicts and the environmental movement in India' in Development and Change, 1994


Gail Omvedt, Reinventing Revolution: New Social Movements and the Socialist Tradition in India (1993) chs. 6, 9

E. Mawdsley, 'Indian Middle Classes and Environment' in Development and Change (2004)


5. Gender and politics

Question
Do women's movements in India share a common agenda?

Leslie J. Calman, Towards empowerment: women and movement politics in India (1992) Chs. 2-5 and conclusion

Bina Agarwal, A field of one's own: gender and land rights in South Asia (1994), ch. 9

Tanika Sarkar and Urvashi Bhutalia (eds), Women and Right-Wing Movements (1995) chs. by Sarkar, Basu and Banerjee

John S. Hawley, Fundamentalism and Gender (1994), chs, by Awn and Hawley

Radhu Kumar, The History of Doing: An Illustrated Account of the Movement for Women's Rights and Feminism in India, 1800-1990 (1993) chs. 6-12

Peter de Souza (ed,) Contemporary India: Transitions (2000) ch by Niranjana


Mala Sen, Death by Fire: Sati, Dowry Death and Female Infanticide in Modern India (2001)

Geraldine Forbes, Women in Modern India (1996)