Syllabus  
History of South Asia 1  
Course number 21:510:280  

Fall 2017, Rutgers University-Newark  
Tuesday/Thursday 10:00 am – 11:20 am, HIL-101  

INSTRUCTOR  
Audrey Truschke  
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:30 am -12:30 pm (through mid-November) and by appointment  

GRADER  
Labiba Ali  
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Office Hours: By appointment  

COURSE DESCRIPTION  
This course covers the history of the Indian subcontinent from the Indus Valley Civilization until 1500 CE. We proceed chronologically and cover some of the major political, social, religious, and cultural developments in premodern India. Students will be exposed to primary sources, written by a diverse array of people and translated from numerous languages, as well as the politics of history in the present day. Students will also learn about the practice of history more broadly, including how to read primary and secondary texts and how to conduct basic research.  

LEARNING OBJECTIVES  
Students can expect the following through successful completion of this course:  

Acquire basic knowledge of South Asian history through the mid-second millennium CE, including major political, social, religious, and cultural developments.  

Learn strategies for approaching and making sense of primary historical sources.  

Learning to understand and evaluate scholarly arguments.  

Formulate historical questions and identify the means of investigating those queries.  

Learn how to assess different types of historical evidence and posit a grounded thesis.  

Appreciate the role of history and historical memory in present-day debates.
REQUIRED TEXTS


*Alternative editions of Thapar’s *Early India* are acceptable if published *after* 2002.


All other readings and links are available on Blackboard.
Both required books and numerous others are on reserve at Dana Library.

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

Your grade is based on four components:

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**Class Attendance:** You are required to attend all classes. Your attendance grade includes the map quiz and periodic pop quizzes (these quizzes cannot be made-up if you miss class for an unexcused reason). Everyone gets one unexcused absence per term, and beyond that your grade will suffer.

- **Excused Absences:** Recognized grounds for absence include illness requiring medical attention, curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty, and recognized religious holidays. You must contact the professor or grader, in advance where possible, or absences will be counted as unexcused.

- **Extended Absences:** Any student who misses eight or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw to avoid getting an F.

**Class Preparation:** You should come to class having carefully read all listed readings for that day. There are three types of readings: (1) secondary texts, (2) primary sources, and (3) present-day connections. These three types of materials require different critical reading skills, and all are important for making sense of South Asian history and its relevance today.

**Midterm and Final:** The midterm is worth 15% of your grade, and the final is worth 20% of your grade. Both exams are cumulative and draw upon lectures and readings. Dates:
- Oct. 24: Midterm
- Dec. 21: Final
Writing Assignments: There are four writing assignments in the course. Due dates:
Sept. 25: Primary Source Analysis 1 (Mahabharata)
Oct. 16: Primary Source Analysis 2 (Ashokan edicts)
Nov 1: Primary Source Analysis 3 (Kamasutra)
Dec. 8: Wikipedia Entry Assignment
All assignments are due at 11:59 pm via Blackboard. The primary source analyses are each worth 5% of your grade, and the Wikipedia assignment is worth 15% of your grade. The primary source analyses develop the skills necessary to read and make sense of primary sources. The Wikipedia-style entry allows you to try your hand at producing your own account of a particular person or event in Indian history, thus putting to use your critical reading skills and knowledge developed through this course.

Class Policies

Absences: If you miss class or arrive late, you are absent. Everyone gets one free unexcused absence (save this for an occasion when you may truly need it; this cannot be used on the days of the museum visit or the library visit). Do not contact the professor or grader about the content of missed lectures. It is your responsibility to find out from classmates about subjects discussed in your absence.

Electronics in Class: No electronics are permitted; this ban includes laptops. Please silence and refrain from using cell phones.

Late Work: All late work incurs a penalty of one letter grade for every 24 hours late.

Academic Dishonesty: If you plagiarize, cheat, or are otherwise academically dishonest, the professor will come down on you like a ton of bricks, to the full extent permitted by Rutgers University policy. Avoid this scenario by not cheating. http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/

Please include the Rutgers honor pledge on all major course assignments submitted for grading: “On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment).”

Week 1

September 5  Introduction to India, South Asia, and “South Asia”

September 7  Sources, Evidence, and the Practice of History
Thapar, Early India, excerpts of chapter 1, 1-29
Vinay Lal, “History and Politics” introduction

Recommended Reading: Thapar, Early India, introduction and chapter 2
Week 2

September 12  Indus Valley (Harappan) Civilization
Thapar, Early India, excerpts of chapter 3, 69-71, 79-88
Primary Source: Archaeological Evidence. Spend 20 minutes perusing images on “Around the Indus in 90 Slides”
*Map Quiz (in class)

September 14  The Politics of Harappa: Language and Forgeries
“Write Signs for Indus Script?”
Present-Day Connection: Witzel and Farmer, “Horseplay in Harappa”

Week 3

September 19  Vedic India 1: The Beginning of Text-Based Indian History
Thapar, Early India, excerpts of chapter 4, 98-117, 122-126
Primary Source: Rig Veda, trans. Doniger, 29-31, 89-92, 289-90 (hymns 10.90, 1.162, 10.145)

September 21  Vedic India 2: Intellectual Developments and Asceticism
Thapar, Early India, 126-136
Primary Source: Upanishads, trans. Olivelle, 34-36, 46-52, 69-71 (sections 3.1, 3.9, 4.5)
Present-Day Connection: Sen, “Argument and History”

Week 4

*Sept. 25, Primary Source Analysis 1 on Mahabharata (due on Blackboard by 11:59 pm)

September 26  Social and Political Visions within the Mahabharata
Introduction to Mahabharata, Longman, 829-833 (introduction)
Primary Source: Mahabharata, Longman, 850-870 (excerpts of book 5 and book 6)

September 28  Ramayana 1: Social Structures
Introduction to Ramayana, Longman, 878-881
Davis, Global India Circa 100 CE, 45-57
Primary Source: Valmiki’s Ramayana, trans. Pollock, vol. 2, 71-103 (read every other page in order to skip the Sanskrit)

Week 5

October 3  Ramayana 2: Moral Questions
Primary Source: Kamban’s Ramayana, trans. Narayan, 90-105
Primary Source: Valmiki’s Ramayana, Longman, 912-917

October 5  India 600-200 BCE: Political Changes, Alexander the Great, and Classical Sanskrit
Thapar, Early India, first half of chapter 5, 146-164
Present-Day Connection: Sunil Khilnani’s 15-minute podcast on Panini, from “Incarnations: India in 50 Lives”

Week 6

October 10  The Gautama Buddha and the Middle Way
  Thapar, Early India, second half of chapter 5, 164-173
  Sunil Khilnani’s 15-minute podcast on Buddha, from “Incarnations: India in 50 Lives”
  Primary Source: Therigatha, trans. Hallisey, pp. 21, 23, 43-45, 51, 77, 111-15, 197-211
  (read every other page in order to skip the Pali)

October 12  Mahavira and Jain Practices
  Sunil Khilnani’s 15-minute podcast on Mahavira, from “Incarnations: India in 50 Lives”
  Present-Day Connection: Dalrymple, “The Nun’s Tale”

Week 7

*Oct. 16, Primary Source Analysis 2, Ashokan edicts (due on Blackboard by 11:59 pm)

October 17  Mauryan Empire and Ashoka
  Thapar, Early India, excerpts of chapter 6, 174-184, 194-208
  Primary Source: Ashokan edicts, Longman, 874-877

October 19—NO CLASS. Take time to review for the midterm

Week 8

October 24  Midterm (in class)

October 26  India 200 BCE – 300 CE: The Silk Road, Languages, and Dharma
  Thapar, Early India, first half of chapter 8, 245-263
  Primary Source: The Law Code of Manu, trans. Olivelle, 13, 19-20, 43-48

Week 9

October 31  Religious Developments: Buddhism, “Hinduism,” etc.
  Thapar, Early India, second half of chapter 8, 263-279
  Primary Source: Narayan, “Manmata” in Gods, Demons, and Others, 85-95

*Nov 1, Primary Source Analysis 3, Kamasutra (due on Blackboard by 11:59 pm)

November 2  Gupta Era: The Rise of Classical Sanskrit Culture
  Thapar, Early India, first half of chapter 9, 280-302
  Primary Source: Kamasutra, trans. Doniger, 3-21, 48-51 (skip the notes)
Week 10

November 7  India in the World c. 700 CE
    Thapar, *Early India*, second half of chapter 9, 302-325
    Gordon, *When Asia was the World*, (“Xuanzang”) 1-20 (reporting on Primary Source)

November 9  Museum visit
    Thapar, *Early India*, second half of chapter 8, 263-279
    *Meet at the Newark Museum

Week 11

November 14  Temples, Architecture, and Religious Practice in Medieval India
    *Guest lecture by Tamara Sears, Associate Professor of Art History, RU-New Brunswick
    Thapar, *Early India*, 348-362

November 16  Library meeting
    *Class comes in two sections at 10 am and 10:45 am, respectively. Meet at Dana Library

Week 12

November 21 and 23  NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING RECESS

Week 13

November 28  South India Vignettes 900-1300 CE: Cholas, Temples, and Travelers
    Thapar, *Early India*, excerpts of chapter 11, 363-370, 381-404
    Primary Source: *Travels of Marco Polo*, trans. Latham, 260-276

November 30  Mahmud of Ghazni, the Ghurids, and the endgame for Indian Buddhism
    Asher and Talbot, *India Before Europe*, 18-35
    Eaton, “Temple desecration in pre-modern India”

Week 14

December 5  Building the Delhi Sultanate
    Asher and Talbot, *India Before Europe*, 35-52
    Primary Source: Ibn Battuta, *Travels*, 161-172

December 7  Formation, history, and present of the Sikh tradition
    *Guest lecture by Simran Jeet Singh, Assistant Professor of Religion at Trinity University
    Asher and Talbot, *India Before Europe*, 99-114
    Primary Source: Kabir poetry, *Longman*, 18-21

    *Dec. 8, Wikipedia Entry Assignment (due on Blackboard by 11:59 pm)
Week 15

December 12  Vijayanagara: “Sultans among Hindu kings”  
Asher and Talbot, *India Before Europe*, 53-77  
Sunil Khilnani’s 15-minute podcast on Krishnadevaraya, from “Incarnations: India in 50 Lives”

**Final Exam: December 21, 8:30 am – 11:30 am**