

## **(HISTORY\_GENED\_SEM-I)**

### **HIST131 *Understanding Early South Asian Cultures: Themes and Issues***

The aim of this course is to familiarise students from across different disciplines with recent debates in the study of early historical South Asia. The course bridges various disciplinary perspectives (such as History, Indology, Literary Studies, Philosophy, Art History, and Archaeology), and gives particular emphasis to the zones of interaction between ancient pasts and their interpretations and reconstructions in modern discussions. The objective is to build a critical awareness among students about the study of ancient South Asia, which have significant implications and ramifications in contemporary times.

*The exact course content may change from semester to semester, depending on the availability and academic interest of the course instructor(s).*

#### **Swarupa Gupta:**

1. Comparing Civilisations: The Aryan "myth" vis-à-vis other civilisations (e.g. Mesopotamian).
2. Space and Place-Making in Early South Asia: Cartographies of "Aryavarta" and "Dakhyinatya".
3. Social structures of ancient India, and their modern adaptations.
4. Religion and Power: Intersections between the sacred and the secular in ancient Indian cultural and political constellations.

#### **Readings:**

1. N.S. Rajaram, *The Harappan Civilisation and the Myth of Aryan 'Invasion'* (Copyright© Archaeology Online); [<http://archaeologyonline.net/artifacts/Aryan-harappan-myth>]
2. Dorothy M. Figueira, *The Margins of Literature* (SUNY series) (SUNY Press, 2002)
3. Radhay Shyam Chaurasia, *History of Ancient India* (Delhi: 2001)
4. Gavin Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

5. Anne Feldhaus, *Connected Places* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)
6. Diana Eck, *India: A Sacred Geography* (Harmony: 2013)
7. D. Quigley (ed.), *The Character of Kingship* (Oxford: Berg, 2005)
8. R.S. Sharma, *India's Ancient Past* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006)
9. Marie-Caroline Saglio-Yatzimirsky, "India, Culture and Society", IPRI Conference on India, Rio de Janeiro, 28th of August 2008
10. N. Yoffee, *Myths of the Archaic State. Evolution of the Earliest Cities, States, and Civilizations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

**Milinda Banerjee:**

- (1) Art, Theology, and Power: Ancient Indian Discourses and Images
- (2) 'Dharma' in Ancient India
- (3) 'Brahman': Intellectual Histories
- (4) Literature, Government, and the Sanskrit Cosmopolis; Revisiting Kalidasa
- (5) Ancient Piety and its Uses in Modern Non-Brahmin Politics

Readings:

Hiltebeitel, Alf, *Dharma: Its Early History in Law, Religion, and Narrative*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Lubin, Timothy, Davis Jr., Donald R., and Krishnan, Jayanth K. (eds.), *Hinduism and Law: An Introduction*, Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Maxwell, T. S., *The Gods of Asia: Image, Text, and Meaning*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Nicholson, Andrew J., *Unifying Hinduism: Philosophy and Identity in Indian Intellectual History*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.

Pinch, William, R., *Peasants and Monks in British India*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

Pollock, Sheldon, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.

Singh, Upinder, "The Power of a Poet: Kingship, Empire, and War in Kalidasa's *Raghuvamsa*", *Indian Historical Review*, 38 (2) 2011: 177-198.

Willis, Michael, *The Archaeology of Hindu Ritual: Temples and the Establishment of the Gods*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

### **Prabhat Kumar:**

#### **Narrative Traditions in Ancient India**

##### **1. Ramkatha:**

A. K. Ramanujan, "Three Hundred Ramayanas: Five Examples and Three thoughts on Translation" In Paula Richman ed., *Many Ramayanas: The Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South Asia*, Delhi, 1992, 22-49.

##### **2. Mahabharata:**

Iravati Karve, *Yuganta: The End of an Epoch*. Hyderabad, Disha Books, 1974,

##### **3. Jataka:**

Uma Chakravarti, "Women, Men and Beasts: The *Jatakas* as Popular Traditions", *Studies In History*, 9(1) 1993, pp. 43-270.

##### **4. Folk and the Classical:**

A.K. Ramanujan, *Folk Tales from India: A Selection of Oral Tales from 22 Languages*. New York, 1991. Introduction pp. xiii-xxxii.

Romila Thapar, *Shakuntala: Text, Readings Histories*. Delhi, Kali for Women, Chapter 3, pp. 44-82.

David Shulman, "Poets and Patrons in Tamil Literary Legend" In *The Wisdom of the Poets: Studies in Tamil Telugu and Sanskrit*, Delhi, 2001. Pp. 63-102.

### **General Reading:**

Romila Thapar, *Early India*

A.L. Basham, *A Wonder That Was India*

**Method of Evaluation:**

There will be a mid-term assessment (term paper) worth 20 marks, and an end semester sit-in examination worth 30 marks.