Course Aims

In this course, you will explore ancient and medieval South Asian (c. 3000BCE-1200CE) history from a variety of perspectives. You will engage with a wide range of South Asian literatures and become familiar with theoretical approaches to these sources. In this course, you will take seriously the arguments and narrative frameworks of texts such as the *Vedas*, the *Upaniṣads*, Buddhist literatures, classical Sanskrit poetry, political theory, as well as treatises on aesthetics, sexuality, economics, family and war.

Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Investigate and explain the role of a range of historical processes in the formation of major cultural shifts in ancient and medieval South Asia.
2. Analyze and interpret primary source materials across a wide range of South Asian cultural movements.
3. Utilize secondary scholarly materials to develop evidence-based, well-reasoned arguments about the relationship of primary materials to broader historical trends.
4. Develop historical empathy for the highly pluralistic and cosmopolitan cultural frameworks that characterized ancient and medieval South Asia.

Requirements and Expectations

**Participation - 10%**: You are required to be present and ready to participate in each class, having completed the week’s readings beforehand. However, participation does NOT mean just showing up. You must be prepared for a discussion, which means coming to class, having thought deeply about the texts, and with thoughts to share on the texts you have read. This class is a discussion-based seminar and NOT a lecture. Those who are not prepared to engage deeply with the class through discussion and debate should NOT take this class.

**Weekly Online Submissions - 15%**: Each week, you are to submit online a 500-word analysis of at least one principle theme from the primary or secondary sources discussed. You will submit the analysis 2 days before the class to give other students the opportunity to read through your argument. You will then respond to the analysis on Blackboard to at least 3 students. In these discussions with other students, you will come together to formulate evidence-based, well-reasoned arguments for your interpretations of the sources of that week.

**Essay I (Primary Source Analysis) - 25%**: You will submit a 1500-word essay (due Week 6). The professor will determine the argument of the essay. The role of the student will be to draw upon primary and secondary sources to conceptualize and explain the reasons for the historical process outlined in the argument. This essay is not a research project but, rather, a close reading of one primary source.
(Provisional Syllabus) HH 2011: Ancient and Medieval South Asia
Asst. Prof. Nicholas Witkowski
Mondays 9:30-12:30
Venue TR+112
Email: nwitkowski@ntu.edu.sg
Office Hours: By appointment

Essay II (Research Essay) - 50%: You will submit a 3000-word research essay (due Week 12). This project will consist of three parts. You will submit a (1) research proposal/outline (500 words) (5%) and an (2) annotated bibliography (500 words) (5%) before proceeding to write the (3) research essay (40%).

Course Outline

Week (1)  Course Introduction and Overview

Week (2)  Interrogating Colonial and Modern Scholarly Presumptions about South Asian History

Readings: Lal, Chapter 1; Thapar, pp. 1-29

Week (3)  Early Vedic Patriarchy: Multiple Scholarly Perspectives on Sacrifice in the Vedas

Secondary Sources: Thapar: 98-117; Jay, Chapters 2 and 3; Jamison selections

Primary Sources: Rig Veda passages cited in Jamison

Week (4)  The Two Competing Cultures of the Second Urbanization: King as Enforcer or Renunciant?

Secondary Sources: Singh, Introduction and Chapter 1; Thapar Chapter 5; Samuel, Chapters 3 and 4

Primary Sources: Rāmāyana (selections)

Week (5)  The Rise of Ascetic Movements (I)—A Story of the Individualization of the Body from Corporate Identity

Secondary Sources: Samuel, Chapters 5 and 6; Doniger (2009), Chapter 7

Website: Facebook page of Haṭha Yoga Project (https://www.facebook.com/HathaYogaProject/)

Primary Sources: Upaniṣads, selections
Film: *Naked in Ashes*

**Week (6)**

**The Rise of Ascetic Movements (II)—A Story of the Individualization of the Body from Corporate Identity**

**Assignment Due:** Primary Source Analysis (submit on Blackboard by 23:59)

**Secondary Sources:** Wilson; Zysk, Chapter 1

**Primary Sources:** Buddhist *Sūtras* cited in Wilson

**BBC4 Podcast:** Sunil Khilnani’s discussion of the Buddha

**Week (7)**

**War and Wealth in Medieval South Asia: Redefinition of Indian Cultures through Violence and Trade**

**Secondary Sources:** Singh, 95-123 and Chapter 4

**Primary Sources:** *Arthaśāstra*, selections

**BBC4 Podcast:** Sunil Khilnani’s discussion of Kautilya’s *Arthaśāstra* and Aśoka

**Week (8)**

**The Vedic Patriarchy Strikes Back: The Rise of “Brahmanism” against Ascetic Movements**

**Secondary Sources:** Samuel, Chapter 7; Malamoud, Chapter 5

**Primary Sources:** *Law Code of Manu*, selections; *Mahābhārata*, selections

**Week (9)**

**Was there a “Classical” Age in India? Sanskritization as a Centripetal Force in Early Medieval Indian Courts**

**Secondary Sources:** Pollock (2006), Chapter 1

**Primary Sources:** Kālidāsa, selections

**Week (10)**

**Classical Indian Aesthetics**

**Secondary Sources:** Siegel (1987), selections
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Primary Sources: Pollock (2016), selections

Week (11) Tantric Religiosity and Tantric Aesthetics
Secondary Sources: Samuel, chapters 9-12
Primary Sources: White, selections

Week (12) Changing Conceptions of Paradise During the First Millenium in South Asia
Assignment Due: Research Paper (submit on Blackboard by 23:59)
Secondary Sources: Knipe
Primary Sources: Mahāyāna Sūtras, selections

Week (13) The Cosmopolitanism of the Silk Road: Indian Cultures as Change Agents across Asia
Secondary Sources: Liu, chapter 3
Primary Sources: Pure Land Sūtras, selections
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Readings


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Course Policies

(1) General

You are expected to complete all assigned pre-class readings and activities, attend all lectures/tutorials punctually and take all scheduled assignments and tests by due dates. You are expected to take responsibility to follow up with course notes, assignments and course related announcements for seminar sessions you have missed. You are expected to participate in all seminar discussions and activities.

(2) Absenteeism

Absence from class without a valid reason can affect your overall course grade. Valid reasons include falling sick supported by a medical certificate and participation in NTU’s approved activities supported by an excuse letter from the relevant bodies.

If you miss a lecture, you must inform the course instructor via email prior to the start of the class.

(3) Late submission of assignments and extensions

Midterm essay assignments that are submitted past the due date will be deducted 10% off the mark assigned per day that the assignment is late, down to the pass mark (40%). That is, you will not be failed merely on late submission, but there is a significant penalty per day. If you receive 65% and your assignment is 1 day late, your mark will be 55% (a 10% penalty). If you receive 60% and your assignment is 4 days late, you will receive 40% (since I do not deduct below the pass mark).

Extensions: If you require an extension please email me prior to day the assignment is due. Extensions will only be given in cases of illness (in which a student presents a medical certificate) or in serious extenuating circumstances.

Appendix: Course Style Guide

1. Format of all written assignments

1.A. Font

The essay should be in Times New Roman font. The body of paragraphs should be 12 point size. Headings should be 14 point size and footnotes 10 point size.
1.B. Spacing

The body of the essay (including block quotations) should be double spaced. However, footnotes may be single spaced.

2. Elements of style

2.A. Quotations

Double quotation marks should be used. Quotations within quotations should be indicated with single quotation marks. Place commas and full stops inside quotations and other punctuation marks (e.g. colons and semi-colons) outside the quotation, unless they are part of the quoted text.

Short quotes: Short quotations from other sources should be included in quotation marks within the body of the paragraph.

Block quotes: Quotations of four or more lines (before indenting) should be formatted as a block quote. In a block quote, the quoted text should be in a separate paragraph from the main text and indented from the margin. Neither italics nor quotation marks should be used in a block quote unless they appear in the original. The footnote to the quote should be included at the end of the quote, after the punctuation mark. The quoted text should be in double line spacing (like the main text).

2.B. Spelling

The essay should be in the English language. Students may use either American or British spelling, but should be consistent throughout. Quotations should follow the original text precisely, even if there are spelling or grammatical errors in the original. Students should insert “[sic]” after spelling and grammatical mistakes in quotations.

2.C. Italics

Italics should be used for non-English language words. However, words of non-English language origin that are commonly used in English (such as “bazaar”) do not need to be in italics.
Moreover, foreign language proper nouns such as names, places, and organisations (for example, “Guomindang” or “Barisan Nasional”) should not be italicised.

2.D. References to titles in the text

References to the titles of books, pamphlets, films, etc. should follow the referencing style (see section 2 below). Thus, the following titles should be italicised: books; pamphlets; periodicals; plays; and films. The following should be enclosed in quotation marks: titles of articles; book chapters; unpublished works; and theses.

2.E. Brackets

Round brackets should be used in the main text (these are round brackets). Square brackets should be used for insertions in quotations, if an insertion is required so that the quoted sentence makes sense. For example: Washington stated in his 1796 Farewell Address, “The unity of government which constitutes you one people is also now dear to you [the American people].”

2.F. Numbers and dates

Spell out numbers less than ten, except for page numbers and dates, and material in footnotes and bibliography (see section 2 below on referencing style).

For dates, use the following forms: 20 December 1875; 1875–77; nineteenth century; 1870s; 200 B.C. and A.D. 200. Including A.D. is only necessary if non-inclusion would cause confusion. Abbreviations may be used in footnotes, e.g.: 20 Dec. 1875.

The following are examples of correct and incorrect references to decades:
The doctor gave up smoking back in the 1980’s. → Incorrect
The doctor gave up smoking back in the 1980s. → Correct
The doctor gave up smoking back in the ’80’s. → Incorrect
The doctor gave up smoking back in the ’80s. → Correct
3. Footnote and bibliography referencing style

Students are required to use the 16th edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*, which is available on-shelf in the NTU library. Below are examples of footnote and bibliography references taken from the Chicago style guide.

3.A. Footnotes

The first time a work is referenced in the footnotes, a full reference (including full author name, title and publication details) should be used. Subsequent references should be shortened to author’s family name, short title and page number. When the same work is referenced in two consecutive footnotes, “Ibid., [page number]” should be used for the second footnote.

*Book*

One author


[Short reference: Pollan, *Omnivore’s Dilemma*, 3.]

Two or more authors


Four or more authors: List all of the authors in the bibliography; in the note, list only the first author, followed by *et al.* (“and others”):

1. Dana Barnes et al., *Plastics: Essays on American Corporate Ascendance in the 1960s* . . .

Editor, translator, or compiler instead of author


[Short reference: Lattimore, *Iliad*, 24.]

Editor, translator, or compiler in addition to author
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[Short reference: García Márquez, *Cholera*, 33.]

**Chapter or other part of a book**

Book chapter:

Preface, foreword, introduction, or similar part of a book
[Short reference: Rieger, introduction, xxxiii.]

**Book published electronically**

If a book is available in more than one format, cite the version you consulted. For books consulted online, list a URL. Include the year that the book was published, not the date it was put online, or the date you accessed it. If no fixed page numbers are available, you can include a section title or chapter number.


**Periodical**

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In a note, list the specific page numbers consulted, if any. In the bibliography, list the page range for the whole article. If you access a print journal electronically, you do not need to include the URL or DOI (Digital Object Identifier). A DOI is a permanent ID that, when appended to http://dx.doi.org/ in the address bar of an Internet browser, will lead to the source. URL’s and DOI’s are only necessary for journals which are published in electronic format only (see below).


Article in an online journal
Include a DOI if the journal lists one. If no DOI is available, list a URL. Do not include an access date.


Article in a newspaper or popular magazine
If you consulted the article online, include a URL; an access date is not necessary. If no author is identified, begin the citation with the article title.


Book review

[Short reference: Kamp, “Deconstructing Dinner.”]
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Unpublished source

Essay or dissertation


[Short reference: Choi, “Contesting Imaginaires.”]

Paper presented at a meeting or conference


[Short reference: Adelman, “Such Stuff as Dreams.”]

Website

Because website content is subject to change, include an access date or, if available, a date that the site was last modified.


3. “Google Privacy Policy.” [Short reference]


3.B. Bibliography

The bibliography below contains examples of each of the source types listed above. The source type is included in square brackets after the example. You obviously should not include this in your bibliography. The sources should be listed in the bibliography according to alphabetical order (as below).

For journal articles and book chapters, include the page number range of the article/chapter in the bibliography. For other types of books, it is not necessary to include the pages or chapters you consulted.
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Bibliography entries should be indented from the margin from the second line (as below).


Lattimore, Richmond, trans. The Iliad of Homer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951. [Editor, translator, or compiler instead of author]

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