

## Precolonial India, 1200-1750

**HIS 364G (#39100)**

Spring 2019

Instructor: Prof. Cynthia Talbot  
email: [ctalbot@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:ctalbot@austin.utexas.edu)  
phone: (512) 475-7229

**ANS 372 (#32242)**

TTH 12:30-2 pm, GAR 1.126

Office: GAR 3.406  
Office Hours: Tuesdays 2-4 pm  
& by appointment

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course surveys the 550 years prior to the establishment of British rule in India. The large states which emerged in this period -- the Delhi Sultanate, the Vijayanagara kingdom of South India, and the Mughal empire -- incorporated regions of South Asia that had previously been politically divided and thereby stimulated the circulation of ideas, peoples, and goods throughout the subcontinent and beyond. On the one hand, the diversity of South Asian culture and society increased during the timespan from 1200 to 1750, with the influx of peoples and religions of foreign origin. At the same time, the increased scale of political, social, and economic networks led to greater uniformity and communication. The roots of contemporary South Asia -- an area that is distinctly different from other parts of the world yet also internally divided -- thus lie in the precolonial era.

The first objective of the course is to acquaint students with the basic framework of what happened in the subcontinent between 1200 and 1750. A second objective is to familiarize students with the historiographic issues that are still under debate. Students can expect to enhance their ability to grasp large-scale historical processes and to conduct close analysis of primary source materials from the past. The course format combines lectures by the instructor with active participation by students in group discussion. Students will be exposed to both textual and visual sources from the period.

This course carries the Global Cultures flag. Global Cultures courses are designed to increase your familiarity with cultural groups outside the United States. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one non-U.S. cultural group, past or present.

NOTE that **this syllabus is subject to change**; all changes will be announced in class and on the course Canvas website.

### ASSIGNED READING

- 1) C. Asher & C. Talbot, *India before Europe* (must purchase at Co-op or elsewhere)
- 2) Banarsidas, *Ardhakathanak: A Half Story*, trans. Rohini Chowdhury (on Canvas)
- 3) a variety of short readings, mainly primary sources, posted on Canvas.
- 4) several websites on built environments of Delhi & Vijayanagara, also Mughal art

## REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

Students will read several translations of original sources, in addition to the textbook, and explore websites detailing the architecture of old Delhi and Vijayanagara (Hampi). These literary and visual texts will be discussed at four discussion sessions, at which attendance is mandatory. Every student will take a leading role in one discussion session during the semester, which will entail not only vigorous participation but also the written submission of two discussion questions accompanied by a paragraph-long justification. The assigned readings will form the basis of two short papers (4-6 pages apiece) on topics provided by the instructor. To broaden the range of primary sources covered, we will also have three material culture sessions devoted to religious sites, paintings, and trade-related objects or sites, respectively. Every student will have to contribute to one of the three session by choosing a relevant item (site, painting, or object) to present to the class in a brief written report. In addition, there will be two examinations consisting of both short ID and long essay questions. Attendance and participation will be considered in determining the final grade, as well.

Various aspects of student performance will be weighted as listed below in determining the final grade for the course:

two exams	50%
two short papers (1200-1500 words each)	35%
1 report on site or object (300 words)	5%
discussion questions & justifications	5%
attendance & participation	5%

Grading scale. A 93-100; A- 90-92; B+ 87-89; B 83-86; B- 80-82; C+ 77-79; C 73-76; C- 70-72; D+ 67-69; D 63-66; D- 60-62; F 59 or lower.

## COURSE POLICIES

The course website on Canvas will be used to post readings, assignments, and grades, as well as announcements relating to the course – plan on checking the site regularly. It is your responsibility to maintain a functioning email account linked to Canvas. You are welcome to email me at any time – I will do my best to return your email promptly. However, complex issues (or questions about grades) can be dealt with much more effectively in person.

Smartphones should never be taken out of your daypack, pocket, or purse. Laptop use is allowed, but only for educational purposes. Your attention should be fixed on what is going on in the classroom at all times, especially when your fellow class members are talking. Infringement of these rules is subject to a grade penalty, to be applied at the instructor's discretion.

Please be prepared to complete assignments on the specified days, unless you are ill or have another documented excuse. In order to encourage you to do so, I reserve the right to apply a grade penalty for late assignments (equivalent to approximately one letter

grade per week) as well as for unexcused absences. However, if you are having difficulty with the course or must be absent for a period due to personal issues, please stop by during my office hours or be in touch by email. Don't wait until weeks have passed and it's too late to catch up. **Keep in touch!**

Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class and examination schedules. By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class session with assigned work in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Each student in the course is expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code: "As a student of The University of Texas at Austin, I shall abide by the core values of the University and uphold academic integrity." **Plagiarism is taken very seriously at UT.** Therefore, if you use words or ideas that are not your own (or that you have used in previous class), you must cite your sources. Otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism and subject to academic disciplinary action, including failure of the course. You are responsible for understanding UT's Academic Honesty and the University Honor Code which can be found at the following web address:  
[http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint\\_student.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php)

Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 512-410-6644 (Video Phone) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations. <http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/about/>

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## **SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Pt. 1: India to 1550**

#### **Wk 1 – INTRODUCTION**

Tues. 1/22	Introduction to Course
Thurs. 1/24	India's Diversity: Physical & Cultural Geography

reading: *India before Europe*, chap. 1.

#### **Wk 2 – EXPANSION OF TURKIC POWER**

Tues. 1/29	Beginnings of Muslim Rule
Thurs. 1/31	Delhi Sultanate ca. 1300: Ala al-Din Khalji & His Conquests

reading: *India before Europe*, chap. 2;  
"Qutb Minar complex" on Wikipedia.

### Wk 3 – ASSESSING THE DELHI SULTANATE

Tues. 2/5                      Ibn Battuta, Muhammad Tughluq, and the Deccan  
Thurs. 2/7                      **Discussion #1:** Assessing Sultanate Rule

reading: Mahdi Husain trans., *Rehla of Ibn Battuta*, pp. 118-49 (Canvas);  
Ross Dunn, "Delhi" in *Adventures of Ibn Battuta* (ebook & Canvas).

### Wk 4 – AGE OF VIJAYANAGARA, PT. 1

Tues. 2/12                      Political Change in Peninsular India  
Thurs. 2/14                      **Reports #1:** Religious Sites in India before 1550 (**due Wed. 3 pm**)

reading: *India before Europe*, chap. 3;  
Vijayanagara Research Project website.

### Wk 5 – AGE OF VIJAYANAGARA, PT. 2

Tues. 2/19                      Vijayanagara: Empire & City  
Thurs. 2/21                      **Discussion #2:** Reflections on Vijayanagara

reading: Wheeler Thackston trans., "Kamaluddin Abdul-Razzaq  
Samarqandi Mission to Calicut and Vijayanagar" (Canvas).

### Wk 6 – RELIGIOUS CULTURE OF LATE MEDIEVAL INDIA

Tues. 2/26                      Mirabai and Krishna Bhakti// **paper 1 due by noon**  
Thurs. 2/28                      Sufis & the Spread of Islam

reading: *India before Europe*, chap. 4;  
C.W. Ernst and B. B. Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love*, pp. 70-79;  
J. S. Hawley, *Songs of the Saints of India*, pp. 119-40 (Canvas).

### Wk 7 – THE MUGHAL EMPIRE: FOUNDED & CONSOLIDATED

Tues. 3/5                      The Early Mughals: Babur & Humayun  
Thurs. 3/7                      Akbar in the Illustrated *Akbarnama*

reading: *India before Europe*, chap. 5.

### Wk 8 – OVERVIEW, INDIA TO 1550

Tues. 3/12                      **Exam 1**  
Thurs. 3/14                      Exploring "Going Global in Mughal India" Website

### **PT. 2: INDIA, 1550-1750**

### Wk 9 – HISTORY & ART AT THE MUGHAL COURT

Tues. 3/26                      Biography & History at the Mughal Court

Thurs. 3/28            **Reports #2: Court Painting ca. 1500-1700 (due Wed. 3 pm)**

reading: *India before Europe*, chap. 6;  
Thackston trans., *Baburnama*, pp. 310-93 OR  
Thackston trans., *Humayunnama*, pp. 15-35 (Canvas).

#### Wk 10 – BEYOND THE IMPERIAL COURT

Tues. 4/2            *Ardhakathanak: A Merchant's Life*  
Thurs. 4/4/        Society of Mughal India

reading: Banarsidas's *Ardhakathanak* (Canvas).

#### Wk 11 – COMPARING PERSPECTIVES

Tues. 4/9            Rajputs: Partners in Empire  
Thurs. 4/11        **Discussion #3: Comparing Autobiographies**

reading: *India before Europe*, chap. 7.

#### Wk 12 – BEYOND THE MUGHAL NORTH

Tues. 4/16        Europeans in Mughal India// **paper 2 due by noon**  
Thurs. 4/18        Deccan Sultanates, the Marathas, and the Deccan Wars

reading: Hawkins travel account, *Visions of India*, pp. 59-75.  
Manrique travel account, *Visions of India*, pp. 101-15;  
Tavernier travel account, *Visions of India*, pp. 164-91 (Canvas).

#### Wk 13 – CHALLENGES TO IMPERIAL POWER

Tues. 4/23        Aurangzeb & Aftermath  
Thurs. 4/25        **Discussion #4: Foreign Perspectives**

reading: *India before Europe*, chap. 8.

#### Wk 14 – SHIFTING CURRENTS OF POWER

Tues. 4/30        Decline of Empire  
Thurs. 5/2        **Reports #3: Objects & Sites of Trade (due Wed. 3 pm)**

reading: *India before Europe*, chap. 9.

#### Wk 15 – OVERVIEW, INDIA 1550-1750

Tues. 5/7            Legacies of Mughal India  
Thurs. 5/9        **Exam 2**