**India in Global Perspective – SAST 1600  
Faculty: Richard J. Cohen  
136 New Cabell Hall  
Phone: 434-284-2168 (cell)  
Class Meeting Venue: 364 New Cabell Hall  
Class Meeting Hours: TR 2 – 3:15  
Office Hours: TR 1 – 2 and after class**

**“Only the young can live in the future,  
and only the old can live in the past.”  
Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy***

**“Human collective activity does not proceed according to a plan.”  
Roger Scruton, on the usefulness of government planning**

The course will not be a conventional “introduction” to India which customarily emphasizes cultural history. India is the fourth largest economy, according to PPP index, currently the largest purchaser of military hardware, an established leader in information technology, off-shore business services, implementing aggressive domestic infrastructure projects, and much more. Students will be introduced to a wide range of initiatives taking place in a variety of public and privates sectors, and be encouraged through focused case studies to learn about opportunities for them to discover their own interests, such as studying in India with the UVa semester program (offered in the Spring), or working in an internship during the summer through the UVA global internship program. Through this course, students will develop a sophisticated understanding of India’s past, how it influences the present, and what are the possible trajectories for India in the future.

This course has a broad-based agenda. **Firstly**, as a "gateway" course to understanding India holistically, we will keep in our rear view mirror the history of the "Indian" subcontinent, also called "South Asia" since the end of WWII. Though this is not a typical history course, as the past is palpably experienced no matter where you visit in India, we will sometimes put on our “history lenses” to have a more thorough perspective, prompted by Will Durant’s quote (see above). **Second** on the agenda is to update the current situation regarding the nation-state of India, particularly since the early 1990s, which begins the period of so-called "liberalization" of the Indian economy and related governmental controls and social programs impacting the pace of overall development. To this end, a portion of the readings, plus special lectures from outside speakers will help us to understand the data. **Third**, we will explore the theory of modernity, and ponder to what extent the western idea of modernity has impacted India over the past 200 years, and influenced how Indian civilization has been imagined globally. The conditions through which India's culture(s) are articulated and find expression more often than not challenge our understanding of what it is that constitutes modernity. Can we say at what point India, understood as the nation state of India, qualifies as a “super power” member of the evolving globalized world? India is basically a cultural composite of traditions. By definition, “tradition” and “modernity” are diametric opposites. Due to the fact that India, an ancient civilization with at least a five thousand year track record, experienced a pernicious, destructive form of colonialism between 1757 and 1947, and is now changing exponentially and showing signs of regaining its earlier status as a "go to" global culture, India provides us an opportunity to test certain ideas, answers and solutions to current and future global crises. We will explore the extent to which the nation state remains a viable construct in which to produce laws that protect its citizens, to provide opportunities for the acquisition of education, jobs, build families and careers, prosper economically, maintain good health, live in a safe and secure environment. We will use what we learn about the Indian situation to engage a set of questions that have to do with the future not only of India, but indeed, humanity itself.

Inevitably, we must engage the idea of globalization. Is it really only about economics? Yes, it is about people exchanging goods and services. However, economic exchanges of the international kind have been going on for millennia; and when people exchange commodities, important facets of cultural life are also exchanged. It is naïve to assume that globalization is a recent phenomenon.

**Requirements for the Class:**

**Attendance will be taken. Your presence in class is required. Two absences are tolerated. More than two absences will affect your attendance grade.  
Do not use a laptop or other electronic communication devices in class.**

**Bring a pad and pen/pencil to take notes.**

**Bring an open mind and your ideas.**

**Evaluation will be based on the following:**

* **Attendance (20% of final grade)**
* **Participation in class discussions (20% of final grade)**
* **Quality of in-class presentations (10% of final grade)**
* **Four quizzes (4 x 10% = 40% of final grade**
* **Final Exam (10% of final grade)**

**Grading:**

**98 – 100 (A+), 95 – 97.99 (A), 91 – 94.99 (A-), 87.5 – 90.99 (B+), 83 – 87.4 (B), 80 – 82.99 (B-)  
77.5 – 79.99 (C+), 73 – 77.4 (C), 70 – 72.99 (C-), 67.5 – 69.99 (D+), 63 – 67.4 (D), 60 – 62.99 (D-), below 60 (F). Note that the A- grade begins at 91%, not the usual 90%.**

**Texts to be Purchased: available in the UVa Bookstore, or from other sources.**

1. Rahul Mukherji, *Political Economy of Reforms in India* (Oxford India Short Introductions), Oxford University Press, 2014.
2. Perry Anderson, *The Indian Ideology*, Three Essays Collective, 2012.
3. eww.

**Additional required readings will be available on Collab IN THE “ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS FOR ASSIGNED READING.”**

**Weekly Schedule:**

**January**

**Thursday, 18**Introductions, course description, explanation of the syllabus.  
Thinking about India globally: epistemological and historiographical challenges.

Overview of India’s geography, climate factors, demographics.  
**Browse through the “South Asia Maps” folder in the “Resources” section of the Collab website to prepare for this lecture.  
Reading for class discussion:**From *South Asia in World History*, “Editor’s Preface,” “Preface,” and Chapter 1 “South Asia and the World to 1500 BCE.”

**Tuesday, 23**Lecture and discussion on “Indian Society,” the perspective of how Indians identify themselves and relate to others.  
  
**Readings for class discussion:**The file is called “Kakars’ Reading on Being Indian.pdf.” This reading is on Collab in the “Resources” folder.  
Also read two short pieces from “Santosh Desai” folder in “Resources”:  
 “Mere Paas Ma Hai”  
 “Hierarchies Unlimited”

**Thursday, 25**Introducing the CONCEPT OF MODERNITY.

**Readings for class discussion:**

1. The term “modern” as defined by Raymond Williams. Reading on Collab in “Resources” folder. You’ll find it in the folder called “Raymond Williams Key Terms…the file is called “RW on Modern.pdf.” **Be prepared to voice your opinion on the meaning of the term “modern” in relation to “India in Global Perspective.”**
2. *South Asia in World History*, Chapter 2, “The Vedic Age 1500 – 500 BCE.”

**Tuesday, 30**Thinking about India and the idea of the “nation state.”  
  
**Before** class, screen the video segment of Prof. Vinay Lal of UCLA addressing a conference in Tehran, Iran on “Academic Imperialism.” Here is the URL:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C713wUjxuDo>

**Readings for class discussion:**

**First**, we’ll discuss Prof. Vinay Lal’s presentation at the “Academic Imperialism” conference held in Tehran, Iran. He unpacks such crucial terms as “nation state,” “modernity,” “development,” and “the textbook,” among other important concepts which have relevance for our course on India in the globalizing world.

**Second**, we’ll discuss Raymond Williams’ definition of “nation” and “nationalism.” Read the file on Collab: “RW on Nationalist” in the “Resources” folder called “Raymond Williams Key Terms.”  
**Third**, we’ll consider the question, “Does India have a Classical Age?” Read Chapter 3 from *South Asia in World History*: South Asia’s Classical Age 321 BCE – 711 CE.

**February**

**Thursday, 1**Another view of India’s Position as a Globalizing Power. John Elliot, contributor to the *Financial Times*, based in Delhi in the 1980s*: Implosion: India’s Tryst with Reality* challenges us to consider what’s going in India – economically and development-wise. From time to time, we will also consider the views of a leading Indian journalist/social commentator, Santosh Desai, expressed in his book *Mother Pious Lady: Making Sense of Everyday India*.

**Readings for class discussion: ON COLLAB IN RESOURCES/ELLIOT/DESAI.**

1. From Elliot: “Introduction” and Chapter 1 (“India’s Master Plan,” “Fixes and Frugal Benefits,” and “Fault Lines”)
2. From Desai: “Introduction,” “The Dhania Factor,” “Sharing Scarcity,” “Stainless Steel Memories.”

**Tuesday, 6**From Medieval to Modern  
  
**Readings for class discussion:**

1. *South Asia in World History*, Chapters 4 & 5 (“Islam in South Asia 711 – 1556,” and “The Great Mughals 1556 – 1757”).
2. View video “1600 – The British East India Company” (30 mins.). Access through Virgo

**Thursday, 8**Antecedents to the Indian State  
 **Reading for class discussion:**

1. *South Asia in World History*, Chapter 6 & 7 (“From Company State to Crown Rule, 1757 – 1877,” and “Toward Freedom, 1877 – 1947”).

**Tuesday, 13**

The Birth of the Indian State

**Readings for class discussion:**

1. *The Indian Ideology* (“Foreword” and Chapter 1 “Independence”)
2. Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech in Parliament, August 15, 1947. On Collab in Resources/Nehru folder.

**Thursday, 15**Partition and Its Meanings

**Reading for class discussion:**

1. *The Indian Ideology*, Chapter 2 (“Partition”).

**Tuesday, 20**

The Indian Republic – The Early Years and Now

**Reading for class discussion:**

1. *The Indian Ideology*, Chapter 3 (“Republic”)
2. *South Asia in World History*, Chapter 8 (“South Asia and the World, 1947 to the Present”)

**Thursday, 22**Beginning to Understand the Indian Economy

**Reading for class discussion:**

We begin our study and discussion India’s economy with Rahul Mukherji’s *Political Economy of Reforms in India*. This is an important book that provides an overview of the economic policies that the Government of India (GOI) has pursued from 1947 onwards, but particularly since the liberalization of the economy from 1991.

1. “Introduction.”
2. Chapter 1 (“Political Economy of Growth”**).**

**Tuesday, 27**

Debates Around Indian Economy Since Liberalization

**Readings for class discussion:**

1. “When Did the ‘Hindu’ Rate of Growth End?” by Baldev Raj Nayar, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 41, No. 19, 2006. On Collab in Resources/Articles and Book Chapters for Assigned Reading.
2. “Opening Up and Openness of Indian Economy,” by Baldev Raj Nayar, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 36, No., 37, 2001. On Collab in same folder as above.

March

**Thursday, 1**India and Globalization.

**Readings for class discussion:**

1. Mukherji, Chapter 2, “India’s Economic Globalization.”

**Tuesday, 13**

**I am leaving the remaining dates unscheduled for now, as I need to see when our guest speakers will be scheduled. Updates will follow before Spring Break.**

**Thursday, 15**

**Professor John Echeverri-Gent of the UVA Politics Department will lecture on the current political climate in India.**

**Tuesday, 20**

**Thursday, 22**

**Tuesday, 27**

**Thursday, 29**

**April**

**Tuesday, 3  
Thursday, 5  
Tuesday, 10  
Thursday, 12  
Tuesday, 17  
Thursday, 19  
Tuesday, 24  
Thursday, 26**

May 1, Tuesday, last class