

Course Overview

Course title: Modern Indian History (1757–1947).

Level: Undergraduate (second year / BA History)

Mode of Delivery: Open and distance mode.

Duration & credits: 12 weeks (4 credits), flexible pacing with fixed assessment windows.

Delivery setting: National Open University with an online LMS, regional study centers for printed material distribution and face-to-face exam centers. Course materials live on the institutional repository (PDFs, audio, video), a Moodle/Google Classroom hub, optional synchronous webinars and regional tutor support.

Why this context?

An open University model reaches widely distributed learners (working adults, in-service teachers, school leavers) and is realistic for India's scale — it allows printed study-material (SLM) distribution and online support, which fits the ACTION(S) priority that access must be the top concern in distance education.

Learner profile

Age: 18–45 years

Educational background: Secondary schooling, interest in history for degree, teaching or personal growth.

Digital skills: Mixed — some are smartphone-savvy, others limited to low-bandwidth web; many prefer mobile access.

Language: Primarily English/Hindi and regional languages — need for bilingual support (English + one regional language).

Motivation & constraints: Career advancement, exam/credit accumulation, or personal interest; constrained time, intermittent connectivity, shared devices.

Implication: Course Design must be mobile-friendly, low-bandwidth tolerant, multilingual where feasible, and provide offline/printable alternatives so learners with limited connectivity can participate.

Bates' ACTIONS framework:

1. Access

Provide a multi-format study package: printed SLM (posted), downloadable PDF (low file size), text transcripts, audio lecture MP3s, and short video lectures. Make all core content mobile-friendly (responsive LMS, Moodle, Google Classroom), conduct local study-centre sessions for those who cannot reliably access internet.

Justification:

Distance learners often have limited or intermittent internet and rely on mobile devices; ensuring content is usable in low bandwidth and offline preserves access — which Bates identifies as the top priority for distance programs.

2. Costs

Use open-source LMS (Moodle) and free tools (YouTube, Google Docs for collaboration, TimelineJS / StoryMap for interactive timelines). Reuse / adapt existing OER/IGNOU SLMs to reduce production costs.

Keep learner costs low: short videos, compressed files, and audio etc.

Justification

Minimizing costs increases affordability and scales better; institutional investment in initial content pays off across cohorts. Bates' model places cost high in selection criteria after access.

3. Teaching & Learning (Teaching function)

Pedagogy: source-based, inquiry & project-based learning. Each module pairs short narrative recordings (teacher lectures), guided questions, and scaffold activities. Core activities: primary-source analysis (documents, images), historiography readings, short essays, peer critiques, a group research mini-project (local history/oral history), reflective learning journal.

Scaffolding: model answer exemplars, graded rubrics, and tutor feedback loops.

Synchronous sessions: optional bi-weekly tutor webinars for debates, Q\&A and 'historians' roundtable'.

Justification

History learning is best supported by developing critical thinking and source evaluation skills rather than rote memorization; the online format can deliver source materials and structured tasks to support these skills.

4. Interactivity & User-friendliness

Structured asynchronous forums with scaffold prompts and small-group peer discussions; peer assessment with rubrics; interactive timeline and map assignments (TimelineJS, StoryMap) with tutor moderation; frequent low-stakes quizzes (auto-graded); clear, consistent LMS navigation and short orientation module for using technology.

Justification

Interactivity builds presence and deeper learning in distance education. User-friendliness reduces dropout.

5. Organizational issues

Roles: course coordinator (academic lead), media production team, regional tutors/mentors, LMS admin, assessment team.

Support: regional and study centres for SLM distribution and offline sessions; central helpdesk with ticketing, tutor office hours, FAQ and quick WhatsApp updates.

Quality assurance: pilot test one module, gather analytics and learner feedback, then scale.

Assessment logistics: assignments submitted through LMS; term-end proctored examinations at regional centres or secure online proctoring as option.

Justification

The institution must be able to support production, learner support, and assessment at scale; organizational readiness is a gating factor in Bates' model.

6. Novelty

Avoid using novelty (VR, expensive bespoke apps) unless there is clear pedagogical gain and sustainable access. Use tried, stable tools first; pilot novel tech (e.g., virtual museum tours) as optional enrichment for well-connected learners.

Justification

Novelty is the least important criterion: new tech should be used only when it demonstrably improves learning and won't harm access or cost.

7. Speed (of implementation)

Implement in phases: develop Weeks 1–4 fully as a pilot, run with a single cohort/regional centre, and iterate (2–3 months). Scale to full 12-week course after evaluation. Provide faculty training in the pilot phase.

Justification

Phased roll-out reduces risk, allows quality improvements, and trains staff before full scaling. Speed is important but must not compromise access/quality.

Suggested course blueprint (practical)

Learning outcomes

By course end the learner will be able to:

1. Describe the major political, economic and social transformations in India, 1757–1947.
2. Analyze primary historical sources and evaluate historians' interpretations.
3. Construct evidence-based historical arguments in written and oral form.
4. Conduct a small local history/oral history enquiry and present findings digitally.
5. Reflect critically on history's relevance to contemporary India.

Weekly module outline (12 weeks) —

1. Introduction & methods of history; sources — orientation; primary source workshop.
2. Mughal decline & regional states— documentary analysis.
3. Company rule & economic change — archive docs, maps.
4. Land revenue systems & agrarian change — case study, map assignment.
5. Social & religious reform movements — historiography forum.
6. Colonial economy, industrialization & migration — data interpretation quiz.
7. Education, print & public sphere — source review.
8. Nationalism I: early movements — timeline project.
9. Nationalism II: 20th century movements — debate session.
10. Partition: causes & consequences — oral history mini-project.
11. Historiography & interpreting the past — review and peer critique.

12. Final synthesis: e-portfolio submission & wrap-up.

Assessments

Weekly low-stakes quizzes / participation: 20%

Three short assignments (source analyses): 30%

Group mini-project (oral history/local study, digital presentation): 25%

Final e-portfolio / term-end exam: 25%

Assessments emphasize analysis & evidence use (not just recall).

Tools / Tech stack (recommended):

LMS: Moodle (responsive) / Moodle Mobile.

Video hosting: YouTube (unlisted).

Collaboration: Google Docs, Padlet / Jamboard.

Interactive media: TimelineJS, StoryMap, simple embedded maps.

Communication: Email, WhatsApp broadcast groups (for quick notices) + scheduled

Zoom/google meet sessions for synchronous tutorials.

Offline delivery: PDFs, MP3s, and printed SLMs mailed via regional centres.

Mapping to ACTION(S): these choices maximize access (mobile and offline), minimize cost (open tools), match teaching function (source-rich tools), support interactivity (forums, timeline), are implementable by the organization, avoid unnecessary novelty, and allow phased rollout.

Sample module

(Module 4 — Land revenue & agrarian change):

Lesson flow

1. Pre-reading PDF (downloadable, 6 pages).
2. 10-minute audio lecture and transcript (for low data).
3. Primary source pack: revenue settlement excerpts (scanned images and OCR text).
4. Activity: Source analysis worksheet (submit 500-word answer).
5. Forum prompt: Compare two revenue systems — post 250-word reply and one peer reply.

6. Optional: Live tutor Q\&A (recorded).

7. Formative quiz (5 MCQs).

Justification: combines low-bandwidth audio, text and primary sources, scaffold assessment and forum to deepen analysis — balanced for access and pedagogy.

Tutor & student support

Orientation week: simple video and PPT/pdf on how to use LMS, upload assignments, and participate in forums.

Tutor model: Each regional tutor handles 25–40 students, provides two asynchronous feedback cycles per assignment and conducts one monthly live session.

Helpdesk: email, WhatsApp, scheduled phone support for urgent tech issues.

Faculty training: short online workshops on giving feedback, moderating forums, and using digital tools.

Quality assurance & evaluation

Pilot one module, collect learner analytics (engagement, drop-out), open-ended feedback, and tutor input.

Use iterative improvement: revise content and workflows before running full course.

Maintain repository of versions and align final exam with stated learning outcomes.