

AMBEDKAR UNIVERSITY DELHI
School of Undergraduate Studies

LIST OF HISTORY COURSES
WINTER SEMESTER 2012-2013

A. SECOND SEMESTER

H 01- Ancient Societies

Course Coordinator: Anil Persaud (anil@aud.ac.in)

Modern humans, biologically referred to as *homo sapiens sapiens* are traced to around 40,000 years ago. During these forty thousand years of existence modern humans spent around three-fourth of this time as wandering groups dependent on hunting and gathering of their food for survival. The human settlements came in to existence with humans learning and acquiring skills of domesticating animals and plants, leading to agriculture. Starting with agriculture and settled life, human groups developed complex societies. This movement has not been even and unilateral in all parts of the world. Various cultures and societies have grown through different trajectories. At any given point of time humans have been found to live at various social, political, economic, cultural and technological stages of development. From this long human past we have chosen the ancient period as the subject matter of this course. In terms of chronology we will confine ourselves to the history up to the period of first millennium A.D. This vast period can be divided into two major parts: The earlier period which is referred to as pre-history where we have no written records or literary sources. The second is historical period for which in addition to other sources we have literary evidence also. We have chosen what we feel are representative cultures, societies, regions, civilizations, religions and social, political and economic systems for understanding the growth of human civilization in the given period.

H 02- Understanding the Past: Myths, Epics, Chronicles and Histories

Course Coordinator: Prof. Denys P. Leighton (denys@aud.ac.in)

The course is designed not only for students of BA History Honours but for other students in the School. Those interested in literature/drama/'arts', sociology of knowledge, communications and media will profit from this course. For students majoring in History, this is an elective (not compulsory) course.

Course objectives:

- ❖ To become familiar with debates over meanings of the past--for example, how we distinguish between past and present and locate ourselves as impartial (or partial) observers of events in time.
- ❖ To understand the nature of the historian's authority and his/her relation to wider and 'non-professional' audiences or producers of meanings about the past.

- ❖ To pose questions and supply answers to the following: How are 'sources' (written, material, oral and other) used? How is History relevant to the present? Is History an effort to discover and recover 'the past' or is it instead a creative (meaning-making) process, or is it both of these at once? How do we distinguish between historical fact and 'interpretation'? What future is there for History as a scientific and humanistic discipline?
- ❖ While addressing claims about how scientific History organizes our understanding of past events and experiences, we consider alternative ways of knowing that have characterized the past 3,000 or more years of human life—ways that continue to grip the human imagination.

Mode of learning and assessment: We shall examine a selection of historical source materials, beginning with *The Histories* of Herodotus, and writings about the philosophy and practice of history. Other texts (and a few films) are studied to learn about myth, epic, literacy, communications and history's relation to social science. About 50% of each student's course grade is based on midterm and end-semester examinations. Other grades shall be awarded for essays and oral presentations (both individual and group).

TOPIC OUTLINE:

- i. History and 'Civilization', History and the birth of nations. Oral traditions and epics, states and societies; telling and writing collective knowledge and memories.
- ii. History and textual traditions: religious traditions and texts; custodians of memory.
- iii. History as literary form/genre; historians as writers since the eighteenth century; history and the secular imagination; 'The historian is a prophet looking backwards' (F. Schlegel).
- iv. History as a science: positivism and the integrity of facts; the new institutional locations of historians.
- v. History and the postmodern condition: the future of history as interpretive science.

B. FOURTH SEMESTER

H 06- Modern World 1750-2000

Course Coordinator: Dr Dhiraj Kumar Nite (dhiraj@aud.ac.in)

This is a core course for those pursuing BA major in History, and is also available as an optional course to students of other streams.

It focuses on the emergence and progression of the modern world order and implications of the 'modernity' for humankind and their habitat. It engages with the great divergence found between the north Atlantic and the Asians. It lays bare the nature of and reasons responsible for this divergence. It discusses the significance of the rise of modernism. The latter is not viewed as a force *imposed* by the West on 'The Rest' but rather as something emerging from new patterns of interaction between commercial-industrial societies of the northern and western hemispheres and the peoples of the East and South.

Other focus themes of the course are: The **economic order of modernity**, characterized by the driving concerns for affluence, accelerating consumption, intensification of resource use and perpetual growth. **Modern polity** characterized by the nation-state, the developmental state, military fiscalism, centrality of citizenship, civic rights and political representation. **Changing social structure** involving identification of persons based on 'individual' merit or roles rather than inherited or ascribed status, the collapse of traditional social structures ('orders' of society) and the formation of new classes and social categories. **Changing cultural patterns** occurring in tandem with social changes, including secularization, entrenchment of scientific and professional ethics, privatization of many areas of social life, the establishment of status based on consumption, and more rigorous segregation of leisure from labour/work.

Assessment involves three types of exercise: two essay submissions and their presentations to the class (each of 30% of total grade). The third component is weekly discussion to be done in different groups of student on selected reading materials. This accounts for the remaining 40% of the total.

H 07- Medieval India-II (Economy and Society)

Course Coordinator: Dr. Yogesh Snehi (yogesh@aud.ac.in)

This course on Medieval India (Economy and Society) offers an insight into the nature of agrarian and urban economy and society in medieval India. For the sake of clarity and convenience it has been divided into three chronological phases; Early Medieval, Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire.

There are two components of this course. While dealing with issue of restructuring of agrarian economy and land revenue administration, urbanization and emergence of new classes which gave impetus to urban economy in medieval India, this course opens up a foray of debates on the nature of economic formation of a period which is generally relegated as a phase of decline and gloom. The course is thus premised on an understanding of complex

economic processes which led to the evolution of state polity. This understanding is further exemplified through a reading of social processes.

It is pertinent to underline that medieval India was a period of development of diverse forms of architecture, literature, paintings, critical social debates in the form of Nath, Bhakti and Sufi movements. How do we understand these diverse strands of social formation in a milieu which was fluid with competing ideologies both radical and liberal? These issues expose the minds of students to fascinating discourse on medieval Indian history and help them understand contemporary processes.

This course does not require prior knowledge of history and is open to students of diverse disciplinary backgrounds.

H 08- India c. 1700 - 1857

Course Coordinator: Dr Sanjay Sharma (sanjay@aud.ac.in)

This course is a 4 credit compulsory course for those pursuing a Major in History. It is also available to students of other streams as an optional course.

This course explores the complex dimensions of the transition in India from the late Mughal period to the ascendancy of British power till the revolt of 1857. It has two main components. While it traces the trajectory of the processes of British colonization of India, it also seeks to throw light on the varied experience of colonialism by the subject population. It begins with the debates on the decline of the Mughal Empire and the nature of eighteenth century Indian society. It then discusses the pattern of British conquest of India in the global context of trade, warfare and empire building. It seeks to understand the processes by which the East India Company moved from trade to territorial control. The course gives equal importance to the various aspects of the impact of early colonial rule and the ways in which the subject population of India internalized, questioned and opposed colonial rule. It discusses the nature of popular protests from the eighteenth century till the rebellion of 1857.

H 09- Introduction to East Asian Society and Culture (EASC)

Course Coordinator: Dr Dharitri Chakravarty (dharitri@aud.ac.in)

This course is an optional course discipline in History and is available to all students of the BA honours programmes.

The objective of the course is to encourage students to develop multi- or inter-disciplinary perspective to the study of East Asia. It is designed more like a survey course to introduce students to the histories, societies and cultures of China, Japan and Korea covering a period from 19th century, when colonialism was at its peak, to the post World War II, and intends to provide a base for further studies on the region.

East Asia as a region has emerged to become a dominant power since the World War II and there has been a growing interest among international communities to understand the region's traditions and cultures. The purpose of the course is to enable students to identify, compare and contrast key features of the physical and cultural geography of East Asian countries. The course will help understand the unifying characters of the region as a whole as well as the uniqueness of the individual societies and cultures. The main themes to be covered will include Confucian ideology as the foundation of East Asian society, contact with the West, spread and influence of Christianity, modernization, popular culture, etc.

The evaluation will consist of a written assignment (15%), mid-term assessment (25%), presentation (10%) and end-semester examination (40%). Students will earn 10% for attendance and active class participation. Apart from regular class lecture, films on one or two themes will be an integral part of the course instruction.

C. SIXTH SEMESTER

H 14- Wars and Revolutions in 20th Century

Course Coordinator: Dhirendra Datt Dangwal (dhirendra@aud.ac.in)

The course shall focus on the emergence of a new world order in the 20th century. Various events influenced this development. Two world wars played crucial roles in shaping the contemporary world. The course shall closely examine the origin, course and consequences of these two wars.

The course shall analyse the scale and complexity of World War I. War was unique in various ways: its use of technology, the scale of devastation, and loss of human life. At the end of the war entirely new world orders emerged. We shall examine them. We shall also explore the nature of Russian and Chinese revolutions. The diplomatic efforts after WWI focused on preventing similar wars in the future, but as we know these directly contributed to World War II. The role of the rise of Fascism and Nazism was equally important in understanding the origin of WWII. Aggressive nationalism, coupled with suspicion, competitive capitalism and imperialism led to WWII. This war shall be analysed in all its dimensions.

The course shall end with examining the new world order that emerged at the end of the war. The cold war, the European reconstruction, rise of non-alignment shall be discussed. We shall also focus on the Korean and Vietnamese wars. Finally, we shall examine the end of the cold war and the emergence of a unipolar world.

H 15- Contemporary India 1947-92

Course Coordinator: Prof. Salil Misra (salil@aud.ac.in)

This course attempts to provide an overview of the major socio-economic and political changes during the first four decades of independent India. Since this is a very vast area, the major themes will be chosen selectively (though not randomly) and not exhaustively. For the sake of clarity, structures of power and economic processes will be treated as the matrix within which major changes will be shown to have taken place. The basic premise of the course is that independent India has been in the midst of a major social transformation, however messy and uneven. The course will offer a discussion of some of the major ingredients in this process of social transformation. The Indian constitution as the blueprint of the transformation, making and the unmaking of the Indian nation, changes in the political structure, different stages of the economic development, different protest movements, rise in identity assertion, and the emergence of the new social groups are some of the major sub-themes that will be taken up. Following is a break-up of different modules:

- Politics in Independent India I (Making of the Constitution, Integration of Princely states, Zamindari abolition, politics under Nehru, Emergence of non-Congress forces in the 1960s; Green Revolution, JP movement and Emergency)
- Politics in Independent India II
- Economy: From Command Economy to Liberalization
- Identity Assertions
- Questioning the Nation
- New Social Groups
- The Foreign Policy

H 16- Caste and Indian Modernity

Course Coordinator- Dr. Shailaja Menon (shailaja@aud.ac.in)

The story of caste in India has a long genesis. It ranges from the most banal to the most philosophical. A wide spectrum of scholars has attempted to understand, analyse and deconstruct caste. At different historical junctures, ideas of caste have undergone permutations. It was argued that with the onset of modernity, progress rational values, caste would wither away. The term 'modern' is expressed to demarcate the past from the present. With the privileging of science, technology and rationality by the Enlightenment, modernity was invested with values creating a binary 'other' steeped in superstition and tradition. Every society, individual or institution felt compelled to acquire the abstraction of modernity. In Asia, Latin America and Africa, the experiences of colonialism mediated the abstraction of modernity. For the caste ridden Indian society, modernity, far from being an abstraction was something tangible as it enabled scores of the oppressed communities to seek entitlements by invoking the legal-judicial norms, again a by-product of modernity. At one level, the colonial encounter set free the local people from many hidebound traditions and opened up new vistas of social progress through education and emerging employment opportunities. The privileged communities sought refuge in the pristine imagined past unable to come to terms with modernity whereas the rest (the anti-caste intellectuals) eagerly courted modernity to establish a more secular and progressive society.

Thus, modernity is driven with contradictions. Despite the mystic of capitalist development notwithstanding, Indian society is grappling to make sense of 'semi-feudal and semi-colonial remnants'. (Gail Omvedt, Seeking Begumpura, Navayana, 2008, p.10) Hence, the exploited people have not relapsed into silence but have challenged the contradictions of modernity. As Ambedkar has observed, throughout its historical trajectory there have been attempts to annihilate the superstructure- the edifice of caste brutality as a precursor to create a modern liberal society. This course seeks to analyse the different perspectives on modernity, the manner in which various social categories in India appropriated modernity and strove to benefit from it.

Possible Themes

- ✓ Ideating Modernity-Ram Mohan Roy, Gandhi, Phule, Ambedkar, Periyar, Narayana Guru etc
- ✓ Alternative Socio-Political Mobilizations
- ✓ Modernity and its Other (Analysis of Hind Swaraj and Annihilation of Caste)
- ✓ Modernity as Power and its Diffusion