

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

The Mughal Empire: Muslim Power and Coexistence in South Asia - 35142

Last update 07-10-2024

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: Asian Studies

Academic year: 0

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: English

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Prof. Simon Wolfgang Fuchs

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Coordinator Office Hours: Monday, 13-15

Teaching Staff:

Prof. Simon Fuchs

Course/Module description:

At its peak, the Mughal Empire was one of the most powerful states of the modern era. In the mid-seventeenth century, Mughal rulers controlled an area roughly the size of Europe. Yet, compared to other Muslim empires such as the Ottomans or the Safavids, the Mughal domain usually takes a backseat in Islamic and Asian history. This seminar will introduce students to this overlooked but fascinating political entity!

Course/Module aims:

Learn about how Muslim rule became established in India, a part of the world that never became majority Muslim. Develop an understanding of how religious diversity was managed and played out among the court elites and broader society. Deepen your understanding of the empire's structure of authority and its financial affairs. Become familiar with leading political and religious figures and gain insights into how the Mughal court sponsored art, architecture, and literature. Gain skills in academic writing, reading, and analyzing primary and secondary sources.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:
- Describe the context of the emergence of the Mughal empire and pinpoint major events of its development
- Appraise the debate on religious pluralism vs. intolerance under Mughal rule
- Develop an appreciation of towering, controversial rulers such as Akbar or Aurangzeb
- Debate the role of women and mystics at the court
- Investigate the rich expression of various forms of art under the Mughals

Attendance requirements(%):

100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Lectures, discussions, group-work, analysis of primary sources

Course/Module Content:

Everyone knows the Taj Mahal. This magnificent mausoleum was commissioned in 1631 and completed in 1653. Much less well known than the building is the dynasty behind it. This is surprising, given the fact that the Mughal empire with its changing capitals of Agra, Delhi, Fatehpur Sikri, and Lahore became one of largest, most populous, and most influential states of the early modern era. Under the so-called Great Mughals Jalal al-Din Muhammad (r. 1556– 1605), Jahangir (r. 1605– 1627), Shah Jahan (r. 1628–1658), and Aurangzeb 'Alamgir (r. 1658– 1707), the empire reached the peak of its power, size, and global cultural and commercial influence. In this course, we will explore how Muslim rule became established in India and what made the Mughals so successful. We will also delve into the extensive patronage Mughal rulers extended to the arts, architecture, music, and sometimes rather unorthodox religious traditions. A particular interest of the course lies in the question of how religious diversity was managed and how the empire presented itself to its non-Muslim majority population with consequences until today. We will also discuss how, toward the end of the seventeenth century, the Mughal administration came to struggle in the face of new local competitors and later the aggressive British East India Company that established itself in Bengal.

Required Reading:

Sample list of required readings (full details on Moodle):
Nandini Chatterjee, *Negotiating Mughal Law. A Family of Landlords across Three Indian Empires* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020)
Stephen Frederic Dale, *The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)
William Dalrymple, *The Anarchy: The Relentless Rise of the East India Company* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020)
Richard Eaton, *India in the Persianate Age, 1000-1765* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019)
Supriya Gandhi, *The Emperor Who Never Was. Dara Shukoh in Mughal India* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019)
Abhishek Kaicker, *The King and the People. Sovereignty and Popular Politics in Mughal Delhi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020)
Ruby Lal, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)
A. Afzar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign. Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012)
Ira Mukhoty, *Daughters of the Sun: Empresses, Queens and Begums of the Mughal Empire* (New Delhi: Aleph Book Company, 2018)
Sudev Seth, *Bankrolling Empire. Family Fortunes and Political Transformation in Mughal India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023)
Audrey Truschke, *Aurangzeb. The Life and Legacy of India's Most Controversial King* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2017).

Additional Reading Material:

A full syllabus with required readings and supplementary readings will be distributed in class and will also be made available on Moodle.

Grading Scheme:

Essay / Project / Final Assignment / Home Exam / Referat 60 %

Active Participation / Team Assignment 20 %

Mid-terms exams 20 %

Additional information:

Please note that regular attendance is mandatory. Absences will result in a deduction from your grade. If a student accumulates more than three absences (excluding reserve duty and exceptional circumstances supported by documentation), they will be required to discontinue the course. Students are expected to come to the sessions prepared for discussion, having read the assigned material at home. Preparedness for the sessions is accompanied by short writing assignments before each class, which are mandatory (ungraded). The course cannot be completed without submitting these assignments on time.