



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Introduction to Early and Medieval South Asia - 35575

Last update 20-08-2019

HU Credits: 4

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: Asian Studies

Academic year: 0

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Yigal Bronner

Coordinator Email: yigal.bronner@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: by appointment

Teaching Staff:

Prof Yigal Bronner

Course/Module description:

The Indian Subcontinent is a vast swath of land with a unique unbroken cultural-territorial continuity going back at least 3500 years. At the same time, the region has always been extremely varied linguistically, religiously, and in every cultural aspect, from poetry to cuisine, so that it is easier to think of it as a continent than as homogenous nation. What, then, is India? How did it evolve? This introductory course will begin to answer these questions by providing a historical and cultural overview of South Asia from the dawn of history to the eve of colonial rule. It will be followed in the second semester by the course "Introduction to Modern India."

Course/Module aims:

To enable the students access to South Asian history and key cultural concepts, beginning with the dawn of its history (and even prehistory), the ancient Vedic religion, the formation of its classical cultural and political models, the medieval period, the rise of Islam, and the period of early modernity.

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

Familiarity with the geography of South Asia, with its main historical periods, with its foundational texts, its philosophies, arts, and key figures in the region's culture and politics.

Attendance requirements(%):

According to divisional regulations.

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: The course will consist of lectures in class and reading at home.

Course/Module Content:

The course is divided to four main parts, consisting each of 6-8 lectures: (1) the ancient Vedic religion and the so-called axial age; (2) the formation of the classical models; (3) the history and culture of South India; and (4) Muslim India and the early modernity. For a detailed class-plan, please consult the Moodle site.

Required Reading:

For a detailed reading list, please consult the Moodle site.

Additional Reading Material:

See Moodle site.

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 70 %

Presentation 0 %

Participation in Tutorials 0 %

Project work 0 %

Assignments 0 %

Reports 0 %

Research project 0 %

Quizzes 30 %

Other 0 %

Additional information:

On top of the final exam at the end of the semester, students will be given four very short quizzes (5 minutes each, at the beginning of four different classes) that will be based on the assigned readings. Actually, only three quizzes are required, but students can take all four of them and have only the best three count. For the dates of the quizzes, consult the class plan in the Moodle site.

This course is accompanied by a guided reading session (Reading Training in Relevant Texts; 35110). Here students will read in small groups from some of the foundational texts of South Asian civilization, and the program will agree follow that of the Intro class. This accompanying class is strongly recommended for all students, and is required for students who major in the field, through either the Asian Studies or Religious Studies departments.

Please note: a "pass" grade in this class is 70 for students who are part of the India and Indonesia Program. For other students the pass grade is 60. Students who belong in the Asian Cultures Program: please consult the office of the Asian Studies department about the required minimum grade.