

HISTORY OF BRITISH INDIA

(UCLA: History 174B)

Fall 2013

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11-12:15 in Public Affairs 1246

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Course site: <https://moodle2.sscnet.ucla.edu/course/view/13F-HIST174B-1>

Instructor's web site: <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia>

Instructor's Blog: www.vinaylal.wordpress.com

Introduction to the course: Large parts of the world were under British dominion for something like 200 years, from the second half of the eighteenth century to around 1950 when the British Empire had begun to unravel. Where Britain did not exercise direct rule over its colonial subjects, it sometimes resorted to indirect rule. India was the largest British colony and, in common parlance, the 'jewel in the crown'. The English arrived in India as traders; by the early eighteenth century, the East India Company was well established, and by the mid-1760s it had assumed control over considerable portions of the Gangetic Plains and eastern India. The Company was the dominant power until the Rebellion of 1857-58; thereafter, India was governed directly by the Crown.

This course is not intended to offer merely a straightforward chronological account of the expansion of British power in India and the rise and fall of British rule, though we will begin with the arrival of the Portuguese in India in the late fifteenth century and end with the independence of India in 1947. The historiography of British India is quite voluminous: the policies of British rulers, the lives of the great architects of the Empire, the activities of statesmen and generals, and the resistance of Western-educated elites have all received much attention. These were all approaches to the colonial period of Indian history that were exceedingly popular until about two to three decades ago, and these approaches, which are not without some utility, still have their adherents. However, the historiography of British India has now taken us to a consideration of questions that go well beyond the narratives of institutionalized resistance, or a history focused on seminal 'events' and 'the great men of history'.

This course will revolve around two principal sets of questions on which contemporary scholarship has shed considerable light. First, we shall attempt to understand how British rule came to be established in India, the myriad ways in which the colonial state administered the colonized populations and displayed its power, the theories of governance and their relations to reigning ideologies in England itself, and the conquest of knowledge achieved under colonial rule. This conquest of knowledge entailed the initiation of new epistemological projects, the overthrow of indigenous systems of knowledge, and the categorization of the 'native'. Secondly, we shall probe into the encounter between the colonized and the colonizers, bringing to bear upon this discussion considerations of race, class, and gender. This will entail some investigation into the social history of the British in India and what came to be known as the colonizers' civilizing mission. The last few weeks of the course will take us to the history and modes of resistance to colonial rule, 'communalism' and full-blown nationalism, and the emergence of Mohandas K. Gandhi as not only the principal architect of Indian independence but as the foremost critic of Western modernity. None of this will preclude us from a consideration of other vital questions such as the economic history of India under colonial rule and the idea that colonialism drained India of its wealth.

Course Readings: A Brief Note

This course will also have as one of its central considerations the difficulties in writing the history of British India and the manner in which the task might be pursued. Consequently, the readings in Week One, though difficult, are crucial, and students are advised to be attentive to the arguments in the debate surrounding "Orientalism".

A useful work of reference is Joseph Schwartzberg, *An Historical Atlas of South Asia* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1978). This can be found in YRL.

The history and historiography of British India are, as I think shall become demonstrably clear, inextricably intertwined. It is important to return to some of the original documents; wherever possible or desirable, we shall read these in relation to secondary works. We will read from a variety of sources which will introduce you not only to the history of British India but also to the craft of the historian.

Requirements: There will be, on the *average*, approximately 150-175 pages of reading a week. With occasional exceptions, the readings are quite easy to follow. You will derive the greatest benefit from the lectures if you do the entire week's reading before coming to class on Tuesday. Lectures will be podcast, but this should not be construed as a reason to miss class.

The formal requirements are quite simple and are as follows:

(1) Attendance and class participation account for the 10% of the grade.
(2) You will be administered a take-home mid-term exam which will be emailed to you before 1 PM on Tuesday, October 29. You will return it in class on Thursday, October 31. You will be given two essay questions and should write a total of 4-6 double-spaced pages (Times New Roman 12 font, one-inch margins; about 2-3 pages per question). You may NOT consult with other students though you may use your books, other material, and class notes to write your exam. This will account for 35% of the grade.

(3) A take-home final exam will be emailed to you after the last class on Thursday, December 5, and you will be required to email your answers to me by 5 PM on Thursday, December 12. It will account for 55% of the grade. You will be given six questions, divided into three groups of two questions each. Everybody will answer both questions from Group I, and one question each from Groups II and III. In other words, you will answer four of six questions; each answer should be 2-3 pages in length.

Please proofread your papers and exams before submitting them; a computer spell-check will not be sufficient. Gross errors of grammar, punctuation, and syntax will be penalized. Insert page numbers. No cover sheet is necessary, but be sure to write your name and student ID number.

NOTE: Both for the mid-term and the final, please email your exams to me as a **single file in Microsoft Word**. Please do not send me an email inquiring if I have received the exam; to be sure that I have received it, send it to me both at ylal@history.ucla.edu AND dillichalo@gmail.com; send yourself a copy first and ensure that the attachment can be opened. You are requested to follow these instructions carefully.

Course materials: Three books have been ordered for your use at ASUCLA:

Barbara D. Metcalf & Thomas R. Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India* (Cambridge UP; 2nd ed., 2006; 3rd ed., 2012)

Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India* (Macmillan India)

E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India* (HB); various editions)

The rest of the readings are online.

Schedule of Classes and Readings

Week 0 (Thursday, September 26): Introduction to the Class; The Interpretation of Indian History; "Orientalism"

Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Viking, 1978), pp. 1-28.

Ronald Inden, "Orientalist Constructions of India", *Modern Asian Studies* Vol. 20 No. 3 (1986), pp. 401-446. [This is quite difficult, but don't worry if you don't understand all of it.]

Week 1 (October 1 & 3): The Mughals; the Emerging European Presence in India; the emergence of the East India Company

K. M. Pannikar, *Asia and Western Dominance* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1953, new ed. 1959), pp. 21-54.

Metcalf and Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, pp. 1-55.

Philip Lawson, *The East India Company: A History* (London: Longman, 1993), pp. 1-41.

Week 2 (October 8 & 10): Company Rule, Social Life in Early British India, and the 'Conquest'

C. A. Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 45-78.

William Dalrymple, *White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth-Century India* (Penguin, 2004), pp. 1-84.

Thomas B. Macaulay, "Warren Hastings" (various editions), selections.

Week 3 (October 15 & 17): Ruling India: Texts of Governorship; Theory and Practice of Governance

Metcalf & Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, pp. 56-91.

John Malcolm, "Notes of Instructions to Assistants and Officers", in his *A Memoir of Central India* (London, 1823), Vol. II, pp. 433-476.

Bernard S. Cohn, "The British in Benares" and "From Indian Status to British Contract", in *The Bernard Cohn Omnibus* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 2004), pp. 422-482.

Philip Mason, *The Men Who Ruled India* (1953/54; abridged Indian ed., Delhi: Rupa Books, 1985), pp. 75-115 [skim these pages].

Weeks 4-5 (October 22, 24, and 29): The Conquest of Knowledge: Essentializing India, Knowing the Native

Documents:

a. Warren Hastings, "Letter to Nathaniel Smith", in *The Bhagavat-Geeta*, trans. Charles Wilkins [1784], reprinted in *The British Discovery of Hinduism in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. P. J. Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 184-91.

b. Robert Orme, "Effeminacy of the Inhabitants of Indostan" [1782], in his *Historical Fragments of the Mogul Empire* (reprint, Delhi, 1974), pp. 295-306.

c. Thomas B. Macaulay, "Minute on Indian Education" [of 2 Feb. 1835], on the internet at: <http://www.english.ucsb.edu/faculty/rraley/research/english/macaulay.html>

Scholarly Assessments:

Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*, pp. 79-105.

Vinay Lal, "The Epistemological Imperatives of the Colonial State in British India, 1760-1900", in *Committees of Inquiry and Discourses of 'Law and Order' in Twentieth-Century British India* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1992), Vol. I, Ch. 1, pp. 27-90.

Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1996), pp. 3-75.

Bernard S. Cohn, "The Census, Social Structure and Objectification in South Asia", first published in *Folk* Vol. 26 (1984), pp. 25-49, in *Bernard Cohn Omnibus*, pp. 224-254.

Vinay Lal, Introduction to M. Pauparao Naidu, *The History of Railway Thieves in India*, ed. Vinay Lal (reprint ed., Delhi: Vintage Books, 1996), pp. i-xxvii.

NOTE: Take-Home Mid-term Exam will be emailed to you on October 29. Your written exam is due in class on Thursday, October 31st.

Week 5 (second half—Thursday, October 31): The Colonizer & the Colonized: Social Encounters

R. V. Vernede, ed., *British Life in India* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1995), pp. 96-136 ("Servants").

Vinay Lal, "Hill Stations: Pinnacles of the Raj", *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 8, no. 3 (September 1997), 123-32, at: <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia/History/British/HillStations.html>

You are advised to start reading E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India* (1924), which will be discussed later in the quarter.

Week 6 (November 5 & 7): The Political Economy of Imperialism

John F. Richards, "The Opium Industry in British India", *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 39, nos. 2-3 (2002), pp. 149-80.

Julia Lovell, *The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams, and the Making of China* (Picador USA, 2011): Read Chapter One only, online (at amazon.com).

Irfan Habib, *Indian Economy, 1858-1914*, Vol. 28 of *A People's History of India*, Gen. ed. Irfan Habib (New Delhi: Tulika Books/Aligarh Historians Society, 2012), pages TBA.

Karl Marx, "The British Rule in India", "The Future Results of British Rule in India", in *Karl Marx on India*, ed. Iqbal Husain (3rd ed., New Delhi: Tulika Books/Aligarh Historians Society, 2008), pp. 11-17, 46-51.

Week 7 (first half: Tuesday, November 12): Resistance and Incipient Nationalism: The Rebellion of 1857-58 and India as a Crown Colony

Metcalf & Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, pp. 92-122.

Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India 1885-1947* (Delhi: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 1-42.

Shekhar Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition: A History of Modern India* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2004), pp. 158-180.

Marx on the Indian Revolt: *Karl Marx on India*, pp. 83-91, 101-118, and 246-48.

Week 7-8 (November 14 & November 19): Social Reform Movements and Indian Women under Colonialism

Metcalf and Metcalf, *History of Modern India*, pp. 123-166.

Lata Mani, "Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India." *Cultural Critique*, no. 7 (Fall 1987):119-56.

Vinay Lal, "The Incident of the 'Crawling Lane': Women in the Punjab Disturbances of 1919", *Genders*, no. 16 (Spring 1993).

Weeks 8-9 (November 21 & November 26): Nationalism and Communalism

NOTE: Thursday, November 28, is a HOLIDAY (Thanksgiving).

Metcalf & Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, pp. 167-202.

Sarkar, *Modern India*, pp. 43-63, 96-135.

Gyanendra Pandey, "The Colonial Construction of 'Communalism': British Writings on Banaras in the Nineteenth Century", in Ranajit Guha, ed., *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society* (Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 1989), Vol. VI, pp. 132-168.

E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India* (1924; various editions)

Week 10 (December 3 & 5): Gandhi, the Achievement of Indian Independence, and Partition

Sarkar, *Modern India*, pp. 178-216, 414-454.

M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule* (1909), in Vol 10 of Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi. This can be accessed online at <http://www.gandhiserve.org/cwmg/cwmg.html>. Read pp. 245-83

M. K. Gandhi, speech at his trial in 1922, the so-called "Great Trial"; online at: <http://www.gandhiserve.org/cwmg/cwmg.html>; go to Vol. 26, pp. 351-2, 377-86

Syed Hasan Manto, *Kingdom's End and Other Stories*, trans. Khalid Hasan (Delhi: Penguin; London: Verso, 1987), pp. 11-38.

Other useful notes/reminders:

1. There are many websites devoted to Gandhi. None is as useful as

<http://www.gandhiserve.org/>

which also has a link to the *Collected Works of Gandhi* (100 vols.), which you can access by clicking at

<http://www.gandhiserve.org/cwmg/cwmg.html>

2. My own web site ("Manas") on South Asian culture and history, <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia> will be of considerable use throughout the course. You might begin with a tour of the webpage on British India, <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia/History/British/BrIndia.html>, and at the end of page 2 you will find links to some of my other articles, including research pieces, on British India which are posted on the site.

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Simple Guidelines for the Take-Home Exams

1. NUMBER and STAPLE your pages. **Use a 12-point Times New Roman font.**
2. Proof-read your paper before submitting it; a computer spell-check will not suffice. The computer will not help you distinguish, to take two examples, between "complimentary" and "complementary", or between "principle" and "principal".
3. Read your exam to yourself; if something doesn't **sound** right, the sentence may have to be rewritten. GROSS errors of grammar, diction, syntax and punctuation will be penalized.
4. For rules of grammar and syntax, consult E. B. White, *Elements of Style*, or any one of handbooks for writers published by Oxford UP. Not everything in White's book need be endorsed, but for the most part you should follow his advice. For example, you should try to avoid split infinitives: thus, the proper form would be "to eat quickly", rather than "to quickly eat", and so forth. Learn when to use the hyphen. So "empire-building" is hyphenated; to pick a more difficult example, you'll write, "In the twentieth century" without a hyphen, but "twentieth-century British India" is the correct form in the second instance, since "twentieth-century" together qualifies "British India".
5. Certain abbreviations are unacceptable: for instance, write "British", not "Brit". "Through" should not be spelled as "thru", and so on.
6. On the subject of references, you must provide page citations if you are quoting from a text. For example, if you quote from Metcalf, it is enough to give the citation in the following form: Metcalf, p. 28. **No bibliographical reference is necessary for texts used in the classroom.** IF, HOWEVER, you are using books not on the syllabus, then you should give a complete bibliographical reference at the end of the paper. You are free to use books and articles not on the syllabus, but then you must provide citations not only for passages quoted from these works, but also in those instances where you have borrowed an idea from some other writer. For consecutive references within your paper to the same text, it is enough to say: "ibid., p. 35." The best guide to follow is the *Chicago Manual of Style*, and their short reference style-sheet can be accessed at: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html
7. References from the internet are acceptable, though you are urged to be very cautious and discriminating in your use of internet sources. Do not rely excessively, or even at all, on Wikipedia. On the whole, I would prefer if you were to use published sources. If you do use internet sources, please be sure to give the URL for the website and the date you accessed it.
8. References to my website, MANAS, are NOT acceptable. Also, you may NOT cite my lecture notes (for example, Lal, class lecture, 19 November 2013), though you can cite my published work as you would with any other author's published work.