

**History 9A (Winter 2012):  
Introduction to Indian History  
M, W, F 10:00-10:50 AM, Rolfe 1200**

**Vinay Lal  
Department of History, UCLA  
Office: Bunche 5240; Tel: (310) 825-8276  
History Dept. Office: Bunche 6265; Tel: (310) 825-4601  
Office Hours: Mon, 2 – 4 PM; Fri, 11-12 noon; and by appointment  
Instructor's e-mail address: [vlal@history.ucla.edu](mailto:vlal@history.ucla.edu)  
Instructor's website [MANAS]: <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia>  
Course website: <https://classes.sscnet.ucla.edu/course/view/12W-HIST9A-1>**

*Introduction to the Course:* The known history of India spans some 5,000 years, from the advent and eventual decline of the Indus Valley Civilization to the present. Needless to say, in the course of ten weeks it is not possible to offer more than an extraordinarily broad sweep of the Indian past, and our endeavor shall be to understand the principal contours of Indian history and those features which led to the development of an 'Indian civilization'. A chronological account is clearly indispensable for the acquisition of even a rudimentary understanding of Indian history; however, an inordinate focus on such an account, which is often no more than an accumulation of dates and facts, might obfuscate not only the manner in which the Indian past continues to obtrude upon the present, but those symbolic, spiritual, and cultural 'unities' which continue to breathe life into India and the Indian sub-continent more generally.

The discussion sections in this course will help students to focus on the chronology, but the course will be more than a mere enumeration of the chronological unfolding of Indian history. Lectures will help to trace the development and contours of Indian civilization through thematic unities. **For instance**, among the most significant intellectual productions of ancient India are the two national epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. (A third epic, the *Shilappadikaram*, is more widely known in South India.) In India, these epics occupy a rather different place than do the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in the Western world. Unlike the Homeric epics, which are now known only to well-educated people, and which have only a marginal living presence in contemporary Western imagination, in India the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* continue to inform everyday life and are present across a large range of cultural, social, religious, and even political phenomena. Despite the low literacy rates that are to be found in many parts of India, especially north and central India, stories from these two epics are known almost universally across the country and are still the subject of daily discussions. References to some characters abound in contemporary Bollywood cinema. Virtually no Indian art form is entirely free of the influence of these epics, and just as much in Hinduism is unthinkable without Rama, the hero of the *Ramayana*, similarly the *Mahabharata* continues to serve as the greatest repository of Indian folklore, literature, and philosophical disquisition. Thousands of places in India are imbued with the presence of characters drawn from both epics. One lives with the characters from the epics in myriad ways. Were this course to proceed only chronologically, we might well forget the living presence of the epics.

Among the subject matters treated in this course are the following, though this list is meant to be illustrative rather than comprehensive:

- development of the Indus Valley Civilization;
- Aryan migrations to India;
- the emergence and development of Hinduism, and subsequently of the so-called heterodox religions, Buddhism and Jainism;
- epic and philosophical literature, especially the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Upanishads, and the Bhagavad Gita;
- the flowering of Indian culture in the period of the Guptas;
- the history of the Tamil people, and the literature of the Sangam period;
- development of Indian art, literature, sculpture, and architecture;
- the Indian polity, and the idea of village republics;
- the theory and practice of caste;
- the diffusion of Indian culture in South-east Asia;
- the emergence and, later, spread of Islam in India;
- Muslim invasions, the politics of conquest, and the question of conversion;
- the emergence in south India and, subsequently, in north India of the *bhakti* (devotional) movement, and the writings of some of its principal votaries, such as the Virasaiva poets, Jnaneshwar, Vidyapati, Chaitanya and Bengali Vaisnavas, Kabir, Tulsidas, Surdas, Mirabai, and Tukaram;
- development of Indian ‘vernaculars’;
- the creation of Muslim dynasties in north India (the Delhi Sultanate) and the consolidation of Hindu kingdoms in the south (for example, Vijayanagar);
- Hindu temple architecture, 10<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries;
- the Mughal Empire, from Babar to Aurangzeb;
- art and architecture of the Mughals and Rajputana;
- the emergence of Sikhism;
- the beginnings of the European presence, and European rivalries, in India;
- the advent of British rule in India;
- the social history of India in the 19<sup>th</sup> century — famines, migration, & labor history;
- India under colonial rule, and resistance to British domination;
- social reform movements, and the “Bengal Renaissance”;
- the Indian Rebellion of 1857-58;
- the emergence of nationalism, and in particular the role of Mahatma Gandhi;
- Hindu-Muslim relations;
- the partition and independence of India;
- and some significant developments in the post-1947 period.

It is worth reiteration that owing to the very lengthy time span covered by the course, which is intended to provide a broad overview of some of the principal developments in Indian history, our treatment of subjects cannot be very detailed; *and students are forewarned that the period after 1750 AD will receive even more truncated treatment.* Students interested in India during the colonial period, or South Asia after 1947, are advised that I offer two upper-division lecture courses, *The History of British India* and the *Cultural and Political History of Contemporary South Asia*, every other year.

***Requirements:***

- A. Students are expected to attend class **regularly**. Lectures, 50 minutes long, will be held thrice a week, and TA's have been advised to take note of attendance. Section meetings will be held once a week, for two hours. Though the sections with the TA's will provide plenty of opportunity for debate and discussion, *students are encouraged to ask questions during the lectures as well.*
- B. Students will write a take-home mid-term exam. You will be emailed the exam the day before it is due in class. The exam will comprise of three essay questions and you will answer two of those questions. If you miss the exam and wish to do a make-up, your grade will be deducted by one full letter grade.
- C. There will also be a final exam, administered in class, of three hours duration.
- D. *In addition, the students must complete whatever assignments are set by their teaching assistant. However, TA's have been advised to keep written assignments to a minimum.*

The grades for this course will be apportioned on the following basis:

Mid-term exam – 30%;

Section participation, attendance, and assignments – 20%; and

Final Exam – 50%

It is expected that lectures will be video streamed and/or podcasted; they can be accessed at [www.bruincast.ucla.edu](http://www.bruincast.ucla.edu)

**BOOKS.** Books for the course will be available for purchase at the UCLA Bookstore. You should buy the following books:

Romila Thapar, *Early India*: (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004);

Vinay Lal, *Introducing Hinduism: A Graphic Guide* (London: Icon Books, 2005; new ed., 2010);

Thomas and Barbara Metcalf, *A Concise History of India* (Cambridge UP);

William Buck, *The Mahabharata* (Berkeley: University of California Press); and

R. K. Narayan, *The Ramayana* (New York: Penguin Books).

All other readings are available online.

**MANAS:** A website that I developed largely for pedagogic purposes on South Asian history, culture, and religion will be of considerable use to you: please see <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia>

You are encouraged to consult it, not as a substitute for the readings and lectures, but to complement them.

**Note for Students with disabilities:** Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact me for additional assistance, and all such communications will be treated confidentially. If you wish to request an accommodation due to a disability, please contact the Office for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible at A255 Murphy Hall, (310) 825-1501, (310) 206-6083 (telephone device for the deaf). Website: [www.osd.ucla.edu](http://www.osd.ucla.edu).

## **CALENDAR OF LECTURES AND READINGS:**

*Week I:* (Jan 9, 11, 13): Introduction to the course and to Indian History; Imagining India; The Thesis of Orientalism; The Indus Valley Civilization; the Aryan Migrations to India. On Jan 13<sup>th</sup>, we'll venture into the early history of Hinduism -- the Vedas and Upanishads.

**Reading:** Edward Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 1-28; Nehru, *Discovery*, 45-52, 64-94; Thapar, *Early India*, 37-97, 104-117.

You may start reading Lal, *Introducing Hinduism*, towards the end of Week I. You can finish it in one sitting. You should also slowly start digging into Buck, *The Mahabharata*.

*Week II* (Jan 18, 20): Hinduism, continued; the ‘caste system’; Buddhism and Jainism; Ashoka and the Mauryan Empire; the Indian polity.

**Note:** Monday, Jan. 16, is a HOLIDAY (Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birthday).

**Reading:** Nehru, *Discovery*, 110-37 (and re-read 81-84 from last week); Swami Prabhavananda, *Upanishads*, 13-28, 63-78; Thapar, *Early India*, 117-126, 154-208.

*Week III* (Jan 23, 25, 27): Early History of the Tamil people and Sangam literature; Classical Hinduism: Hindu Deities, Vishnu and Shiva; the Goddesses of Hinduism and its little traditions; Indian Epic Literature and Its Relation to Indian Society; the **Ramayana**.

**Reading:** Nehru, *Discovery*, 98-110; Thapar, *Early India*, 98-104; selections from Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty, *Hindu Myths* (Penguin Books, 1976); R. K. Narayan, *The Ramayana*, complete; excerpts from Amar Chitra Katha comic books.

*Week IV* (Jan 30, Feb 1, 3): The Ramayana (continued), **The Mahabharata**; The Bhagavad Gita; and other philosophical schools.

**Reading:** William Buck, *The Mahabharata*, complete; Nehru, *Discovery*, 138-44, 170-76, 189-202; *Bhagavad Gita*, in Radhakrishnan & Moore, eds., *Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*, pp. 101-119, 138-45, 157-63.

*Week V* (Feb 6, 8, 10): The Development of Art, Sculpture, and Architecture; Aspects of Everyday Life; “secular” literature: stories from the Panchatantra and Kathasaritsagara, and Indian folktales; Shankaracharya and the decline of Indian Buddhism; some regional dynasties.

**Reading:** Nehru, *Discovery*, 181-89, 223-54; Thapar, *Early India*, 326-380, 386-89, 402-4, 474-81; K. M. Pannikar, *A Survey of Indian History* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1956), 105-35; selections from *The Panchatantra*, trans. Arthur W. Ryder (reprint, Bombay: Jaico Publishing House, 1973), pp. 127-37, 236-41, 344-63; *Tales of Ancient India*, trans. J. A. B. van Buitenen (University of Chicago Press, 1959), pp. 11-23, 51-54; and A. K. Ramanujan, ed. and intro., *Folktales from India* (New York: Pantheon, 1991), pp. 238-40, 262-74.

*Week VI:* (Feb 13, 15, 17): The Expansion of Indian Civilization in South-east Asia; Indian Ocean trading networks; Hindu kingdoms in the South; The “Muslim Invasions” and the Politics of Conquest.; Vijayanagar; Muslim Dynasties in north India, including the Delhi Sultanate and the Lodis.

**Reading:** Nehru, *Discovery*, pp. 202-23, 250-66; Thapar, *Early India*, 405-441; Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund, *A History of India*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 152-80.

**N.B.: The mid-term will be emailed to you on Tuesday, February 14, by 4 PM. It is due in class on Wed, February 15, at 10 AM. The exam must be completed on a computer and you are required to turn in a hard copy to your TA.**

*Week VII:* (Feb 22, 24): Devotional Literature: The Bhakti Movement; the Development of the Vernacular Languages; the founding of the Mughal Empire; the emergence of Sikhism.

**Note:** Monday, Feb 20, is a HOLIDAY (President's Day).

**Reading:** Nehru, *Discovery*, 277-99 (and re-read 254-63 from last week); Thapar, *Early India*, 348-57; selections from the Bhakta poets (online and/or handed out in class); Metcalf & Metcalf, Chapter 1.

*Week VIII* (Feb 27, 29, March 1): The Expansion of Mughal rule; the art and architecture of the Mughal Court and the Rajputana states; the Marathas; The European Presence in India: the Portuguese and the East India Company.

**Reading:** Nehru, *Discovery*, pp. 295-308; Pannikar, *Survey of Indian History*, 149-85; K. M. Pannikar, *Asia and Western Dominance*, pp. 21-54, 73-84.

*Week IX* (March 5, 7, 9): The Decline of the Mughals; Politics in the Deccan, western India, and the Punjab; the Advent of British rule in India; India under Company Raj; the Indian Rebellion of 1857-58.

**Reading:** Nehru, *Discovery*, 308-366; Pannikar, *Survey of Indian History*, 186-208; Metcalf & Metcalf, Chapters 2-4.

*Week X:* (March 12, 14, 16): Social Reform Movements; the Nationalist Movement; Gandhi and the Indian National Congress; relations between Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs; Independence and the Partition of India; the assassination of Gandhi; and some reflections on contemporary Indian society.

**Reading:** Nehru, *Discovery*, 366-434 (you can skim these pages), AND 459-502; Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, complete, online at [www.gandhiserve.org/cwmg/cwmg.html](http://www.gandhiserve.org/cwmg/cwmg.html) [Vol 10 of Collected Works, pp. 245-314]; Metcalf & Metcalf, Chapters 5-7 and Epilogue.

**FINAL EXAM:** March 23, 11:30 AM – 2:30 PM.

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*Simple Guidelines for the Take-Home Mid-Term:*

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 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. Split infinities are, for example, not always easy to avoid. 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 the Ramayana, it is enough to give the citation in the following form: Ramayana, p. 28. No bibliographic reference is necessary for texts used in the classroom. IF, HOWEVER, you are using a different edition of the Ramayana than the

one assigned in class, then you should ALSO give a complete 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](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. 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 — for example, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/dutt/duttintr.htm> (accessed 10 January 2011).

8. References to my website, MANAS, are NOT acceptable. Also, you may NOT cite my lecture notes (for example, Lal, class lecture, 30 January 2012), though you can cite my published work as you would for any other author.