History 359
"On the Road in Mughal India"
Spring 2010 - Mr. Fisher, Rice 311, x58524/58420
Class Meets Wednesday, 2:30-4:20
Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday 11:00-11:50, Wednesday 10:00-11:50 and by appointment

Overview

This colloquium will consider travel narratives written by both Europeans and Asians as they moved across Mughal India (1526 to 1858 century). The focus will be on their actual experiences "on the road" and their disparate representations of the peoples and places they encountered. By including among these travelers Asians from outside India, Europeans, and also Indians, we will be able to understand better cross-cultural exchanges prior to and at the start of the distorting power relationships inherent in colonialism. A wealth of materials (all available in English) provide the primary sources for our collective and individual studies.

Additionally, an extraordinary range of secondary and theoretical analyses of the meaning of these travelers' narratives has emerged. The genre of travel writing has drawn the attention of several scholarly disciplines. In addition to scholars of English literature, anthropologists and historians of Europe and Asia have found fascinating and problematic the role of the traveler as both author and subject, as she/he ventures into unfamiliar territories and among different peoples. By surveying and juxtaposing this range of analyses, our seminar will appreciate their disciplinary distinctions, and the need to master several of them.

The other main concentration of the colloquium is not the work of other people but rather the work of the members of the colloquium ourselves. The first part of the semester has more extensive assigned readings. The second part has less extensive assigned readings and will concentrate on the presentation and analysis of the topics and research of the colloquium members. Each colloquium member will research and write a substantial paper on a relevant topic and also make a 10-15 minute presentation of her/his research and findings. Mr. Fisher will work with each of the colloquium members on their presentation. Further, each colloquium member will also interpret or review the presentation of another member.

The colloquium also requires four brief position papers on the assigned readings (only the top three grades will count, however). Each Position Paper is designed to display the insights and synthetic capacities of each colloquium member. The score on each paper will be reduced one grade for each day it is late.

The Role of the Colloquium Members

Each of the members of the colloquium brings a distinct body of knowledge and interest to the whole. Mr. Fisher's own areas of interests are the interaction between the peoples and polities of South Asia and the British. The other members of the colloquium have (or will develop) their own special knowledge of other topics related to the theme of the course. Through an extensive (3,800 word, circa 15 page) research paper and presentation to the colloquium, each of the other members of the group will study and analyze a specific case study. These papers can deal with any traveler or body of travelers or related issues.

Research Paper guidelines:

Each person in the colloquium will select (in consultation with Mr. Fisher) a research topic. Mr. Fisher will assist in identifying and locating sources for this topic. Topics of special interest would include analytic biographies of Asians, Africans, or Britons who traveled or lived in the Mughal Empire. The full resources of Mudd Learning Center, including an excellent
reference library staff, OHIOLINK, and Interlibrary Loan Office, are available for the extensive research required for each paper.

The following dates are important and non-negotiable:
3/3-12 Meet with Mr. Fisher to define your paper topic
3/22 Working statement of the topic and preliminary bibliography is due (by noon).
[Thereafter Mr. Fisher will be readily available for consultation on the outline and drafts.]
4/30 Penultimate version of paper is due (by noon). This draft will be fully examined by Mr. Fisher. You should plan to meet with Mr. Fisher soon thereafter about his suggestions for revision.
As scheduled in exam week: Final version of the research paper due.

The research paper counts 50%, class participation (including presentation of research paper) counts 25%, and the average for the three Position Papers (out of four assigned) counts 25% of the final grade for the course. The grading is: A+ 100-97; A 96-93; A- 92-90; B+ 89-87; B 86-83; B- 82-80; C+ 79-77; C 76-73; C- 72-70; D 65-69, F below 65.

Accommodation: If you have specific physical, psychiatric or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please let me know early in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide documentation of your disability to the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities in Peters G-27.

Honor Code: The Honor Code applies to all assignments in this course. This means that any student found cheating, plagiarizing, turning in another person’s work as his/her own or otherwise violating the instructor’s explicit or implicit instructions will be subject to a hearing before the Student Honor Committee. To learn more about the Code, see the Rules and Regulations Section VI A and B in Fussers or the Student Handbook. (language courtesy of Susan Colley and the Student Honor Code Committee).

All readings are available on Blackboard.

Class Meetings
2/10 The Mughal Empire as an Arena
 Read and be prepared to discuss the following readings for this first class meeting.
 Babur, Mughal Emperor-to-be, from his autobiography (1526-29) [16pp.]
 Recommended (overview of the historical context): The Mughal Empire (1526-1858) (38pp.)

2/15 (Monday) Position Paper One due by noon; build an argument using Alam&Subrahmanyam and/or Gulbadan and/or Lal.

2/17 Founding the Empire: Babur (r. 1526-30); Humayun (r. 1530-40; 1555-56)
 Alam and Subrahmanyam, historians, Introduction to Indo-Persian [25pp.]
 Princess Gulbadan, from Princess Rose-Body’s memoirs (1528-51) [14pp.]
 Ruby Lal, “Historicizing the Harem,” [28pp.]
2/21 (Sunday) 6:00 PM you are invited to a dinner in my home, 241 Oak St. (775-1728).

2/22 (Monday) Position Paper Two due by noon; build an argument using any two of Alam, Reis, Federici, Monserrat.

2/24 Mughal Imperialism: Akbar (r. 1556-1605)
   Sidi Ali Reis, an Ottoman Turkish shipwrecked admiral (1554-56) [11pp.]
   Cesare Federici, a Venetian tourist (1563-66) [15pp.]
   Father Antonio Monserrat, a Portuguese Jesuit missionary (1579-82) [28pp.]
   Muzaffar Alam, historian, “Pursuit of Persian” [33pp.]


3/3 The Imperial Court and the Imperial Frontier: Jahangir (r. 1605-27)
   Mirza Nathan, a Mughal Officer in Bengal and Assam (1607-08) [19pp.]
   William Hawkins, an English Ambassador (1608-12) [23pp.]
   Emperor Jahangir, from his autobiography (1619-20) [27pp.]
   Gautam Bhadra, of Subaltern Studies School, “Two Frontier Uprisings” [11pp.]

Schedule with Mr. Fisher individual meeting about paper topic between 3/3 and 3/12

3/8 (Monday) Position Paper Four due by noon; build an argument using any two of: Biholia, Mundy, Manrique, Manucci, Subrahmanyam, Banerjee.

3/10 Inside the Mughal Empire: Shah Jahan (r. 1628-58, d. 1668)
   Banarsi Das Biholia, a Jain merchant, from his Half a Story (1586-1642) [15pp.]
   Peter Mundy, English caravaneer (1632-33) [33pp.]
   Friar Sebastien Manrique, Portuguese missionary (1640) [19pp.]
   Niccolao Manucci, Venetian traveler (1655-56) [23pp.]
   Sanjay Subrahmanyam, historian, “Further Thoughts on an Enigma…Manucci” [42pp.]
   Pompa Banerjee, historian, “Burning Questions” [34pp.]

3/22 (Monday) noon: Working statement of the topic and preliminary bibliography is due.

3/24 No class meeting (already made up by individual paper-session meeting).

SPRING BREAK

4/7 The Furthest Mughal Imperial Expansion/Over-expansion: Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707)
   Francois Bernier, a French-Mughal courtier (1664) [40pp.]
   Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, a French jewel dealer (1665-66) [23pp.]
   Sanjay Subrahmanyam, historian, “Taking Stock,” [32pp.]
   Kate Teltscher, historian, chapters from India Inscribed [32pp.]
4/14 Late Mughals
   Shaikh ‘Ali Hazin, a Persian refugee (1739) [10pp.]
   Anand Ram Mukhlis, a Hindu pilgrim (1747) [15pp.]
   Alam and Subrahmanyam, “Envisioning Power” [31pp.]

4/21 From the Mughal Empire to Europe. Read any one or more of the following:
   Bernard Cohn, historian, “Command of Language and Language of Command” [21pp.]
   Mirza Abu Talib Khan, traveler and Persian Professor in London: “Vindication of the Liberties of Asiatic Women” (1799-1801) [5pp.]
   Sake Dean Mahomet, Camp-Follower, Subedar, Restaurateur, and Shampooing Surgeon, from *The Travels of Dean Mahomet* (1769-83) [33pp.]

4/28 Contrasting European Travelers at the End of the Mughal Empire. Read any one or more of the following:
   Bishop Reginald Heber, Anglican Bishop of Calcutta (1824-25) [17pp.]
   Mary Louise Pratt, literary critic, “Scratches on the Face” [25pp.]

5/3 (Monday noon) Penultimate Version of your research paper due

5/5, 12 Paper Presentations

5/22 (Saturday) at 7:00 PM (as scheduled) Final version of the research paper due