History 359
"On the Road in Mughal India"
Fall 2014 - Mr. Fisher, Rice 314, x58524  michael.fisher@oberlin.edu
Class Meets Wednesday, 2:30-4:20pm
Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 11:00-noon, Wednesday 10:00-11:50 and by appointment at a time of mutual convenience

Overview
This colloquium will consider travel narratives written by both Europeans and Asians as they moved across Mughal India (1526 to 1858). 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 European-based 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 (circa 4,000 word, 15-20 page) paper on a relevant topic and also make a 20 minute presentation of her/his research and findings. Mr. Fisher will work with each of the colloquium members on their formulation of their topic, research, writing, and presentation.

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 target length is two pages. 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 of South Asia and the British in Asia and in Europe. 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 a 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:
10/2-10/9 Meet individually with Mr. Fisher to define your paper topic
10/14 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.]
11/26 Penultimate version of paper is due (by start of class). This draft will be fully examined by Mr. Fisher. You should plan to meet with Mr. Fisher soon thereafter about his suggestions for revision.
12/3, 12/10, class paper presentations (20 minutes each)
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 20%, and the average for the three Position Papers (out of four assigned) counts 30% 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

9/3 The Mughal Empire as an Arena
Defining terms and providing context for the seminar and the Mughal Empire

9/9 (Tuesday) Position Paper One due by noon. Select a single passage/paragraph from Babur’s memoir, or else a theme you see running through it, and build an analytic thesis to show its most important significance. You can use one of the secondary sources supplied (Dale or Fisher), or another that you bring in, in order to enhance your own argument. The target length is two pages. Be sure to have an Introductory paragraph, which includes your thesis statement, Body paragraphs that use specific evidence (with citations), and a Conclusion that points to the larger significance of your argument and evidence.
9/10 A Central Asian warlord travels to India as a conqueror
For this seminar meeting, read the following:
   Read Babur, Mughal Emperor-to-be, from his autobiography (1526-29) [17pp.]
   Read Fisher, Introduction and Chapter 1 [38pp.]

9/14 (Sunday) 6:00 PM you are invited to a dinner in my home, 241 Oak St. (775-1728).

9/16 (Tuesday) Position Paper Two due by noon. Select a single passage/paragraph from Gulbadan’s memoir, or else a theme you see running through it, and build an analytic thesis to show its most important significance. You can use one of the secondary sources supplied (Alam and Subrahmanymam or Lal or Fisher), or another that you bring in, in order to enhance your own argument. The target length is two pages.

9/17 Founding the Empire: Babur (r. 1526-30); Humayun (r. 1530-40; 1555-56)
   Princess Gulbadan, from Princess Rose-Body’s memoirs (1528-51) [14pp.]
   Alam and Subrahmanymam, historians, Introduction to Indo-Persian [25pp.]
   Lal, “Historicizing the Harem,” [28pp.]
   Fisher, Chapters 2-3 [48pp.]

9/23 (Tuesday) Position Paper Three due by noon. Select a single passage/paragraph from Reis or Federici or Monserrat, or else a theme you see running through that text, and build an analytic thesis to show its most important significance. You can use one of the secondary sources supplied (Alam or Fisher), or another that you bring in, in order to enhance your own argument. The target length is two pages.

9/24 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.]
   Fisher Chapters 4&5 [47pp.] or Chapter 6 (or both).

10/1 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.]
   Fisher Chapter 7 [32pp.]

Schedule with Mr. Fisher individual meeting about paper topic between 10/2 and 10/9

10/7 (Tuesday) Position Paper Four due by noon; build an argument using any of Biholia, Mundy, Manrique, or Banerjee (plus, if you choose, Vanina or Fisher).
10/8 Inside the Mughal Empire: Shah Jahan (r. 1628-58, d. 1668), Part I
Banarsi Das Biholia, a Jain merchant, from his Half a Story (1586-1642) [15pp.]
Vanina, analysis of Biholia [VaninaBanarsi.pdf, * pp.]
Peter Mundy, English caravaneer (1632-33) [33pp.]
Friar Sebastien Manrique, Portuguese missionary (1640) [19pp.]
Pompa Banerjee, historian, “Burning Questions” [34pp.]
Fisher, Chapter 8 [27pp.]

10/14 (Tuesday) noon: Working statement of the topic and preliminary bibliography is due.

10/15 Inside the Mughal Empire: Shah Jahan (r. 1628-58, d. 1668), Part II
Niccolao Manucci, Venetian traveler (1655-56) [23pp.]
Sanjay Subrahmanyam, historian, "Further Thoughts on an Enigma…Manucci" [42pp.]

FALL BREAK

10/29 The Furthest Mughal Imperial Expansion/Over-expansion: Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707)
François 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.]
Fisher, Chapter 9 [27pp.]

11/5 Late Mughals
Shaikh ‘Ali Hazin, a Persian refugee (1739) [10pp.]
Anand Ram Mukhls, a Hindu pilgrim (1747) [15pp.]
Alam and Subrahmanyam, “Envisioning Power” [31pp.]
Fisher, Chapter 10 [23pp.]

11/12 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: “Vindications 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.]

11/19 Contrasting European Travelers at the End of the Mughal Empire. Read any two or more of the following:
Mrs. Meer Hasan Ali, English wife of an Indian professor, Inside the Harem (1816-27)
[9pp.]
Bishop Reginald Heber, Anglican Bishop of Calcutta (1824-25) [17pp.]
Mary Louise Pratt, literary critic, “Scratches on the Face” [25pp.]
William Dalrymple, historian, “Introduction to Fanny Parkes,” plus Fanny Parkes,
traveler, from Wanderings of a Pilgrim (1831-32) [26pp.]
Fisher, Chapter 11 [21pp.]
11/26 Penultimate Version of your research paper due (submitted in person or electronically)

12/3, 12/10 Paper Presentations

12/20 Saturday at 9:00pm (as scheduled by Registrar) Final version of the research paper due