The peoples of India have produced some of the oldest and most dynamic of the world's cultures. South Asia's physical geography and environment have changed dramatically over time, helping to shape the patterns of its civilizations. Conversely, the billions of people who have lived on the sub-continent have had fundamental effects on its flora, fauna, and land forms. For example, India—once largely forested—now has less than 14% of its surface under tree-cover; the consequences for all areas of the environment and society have been enormous. Two monsoons both bring fertility to the land and also massive destruction.

Further, Indian civilization has contributed to the religious and cultural history of humankind as a whole. The first inhabitants (adivasis, "aboriginals") have apparently remained as continuous cultures for over 5,000 years, in addition to their less visible but nevertheless significant contributions to subsequent civilizations. Similarly, the Indus Valley peoples built cities (flourished 2600-1700 BCE) and then formed a foundation for Indian society today. The Aryan-language speaking Vedic peoples, who migrated into South Asia from the mid-second millennium, provided the most visible component in what became the Hindu tradition. This amalgamation also produced the Ajivaka, Jain, and Buddhist traditions, with profound implications for all of Asia. Each of these traditions contained political as well as social and religious forms.

The growth and elaboration of the civilizations of South Asia have frequently been influenced by peoples originating outside of the sub-continent. The followers of Alexander of Macedon, Mahmud of Ghazni, Vasco da Gama, and numerous other military or commercially-oriented peoples have each supplied elements to the complexity of Indian civilization. The values and traditions of many of these exogenous peoples have proven attractive to the other inhabitants of India; about a quarter of the people of South Asia, for example, have converted to Islam. The regional identities of South Asia each have their own histories, nested within that of the sub-continent as a whole. The incursion of latest of the invading cultures, that of Europe, marks the end of the period under study (circa 1700 CE).

Working within an historical framework, we will explore the most important aspects of Indian history. We will trace the major elements and patterns of society as they changed over time. We will draw heavily on primary sources (in translation) to develop our own understandings of events and ideas, and will use our knowledge to test the theories of other historians.

Class attendance, reading of the required materials, taking of three examinations, and writing one brief (3-5 page) paper are mandatory. The paper topic will be arranged in consultation with the instructor. The three examinations and the one paper are each worth 25% of the final grade. The grading is as follows: 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; [first year students only, D 65-69, F below 65] [all others NE below 70].

ALWAYS BRING THE RELEVANT READINGS WITH YOU TO CLASS

Texts to be purchased at the Bookstore:
Wendy D. Doniger O'Flaherty, *Rig Veda*
P. Lal, *Great Sanskrit Plays*
Ananda K. Coomaraswamy and Sister Nivedita, *Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists*
A. K. Ramanujan, *Speaking of Siva*

Additional required primary and secondary source readings (about 350 pages, available from Blackboard in .pdf and .doc format).

**Central Issue for Your Paper:** Sanskrit drama can provide a valuable source for the history of ancient India. The nature of these plays, however, makes them a special type of source. Your paper is to examine and analyze one specific play as an historical source. What can or cannot it tell us about history? You are to compare and contrast your selected play and any one other historical work.

**Specific Options:** Choose any one of the plays in Lal, *Great Sanskrit.*

1) Assess that one play as an historical source either: (a) for the time it was (probably) written or (b) for the period of history when the events of the play are set. **And**

2) Compare and contrast this one play as an historical source with at least one other historical source (a book or reading assigned for the class or a source agreed upon after consultation with Mr. Fisher).

**Format:** All the standard forms (English language and historical) must be used (e.g. reference notes, bibliography, proper grammar and spelling). All papers must be typed and 3-5 pages long. Any paper submitted after the due date for that option loses three points for each late day.

**Due Dates:** Each paper has a specific due day:

Shudraka, "Toy Cart," pp. 75-188: 10/30
Harsha, "Ratnavali," pp. 339-376: 12/6

**Advice:** Select your play early; you might wish to read ahead in the plays so your choice will be better informed. Select a play about a topic you have a special interest in. Select your other source early and choose one that will give you something valuable to say. Submit a draft of the paper (if you choose to do so) at least one week in advance of the due date since the instructor will need time to read the draft and find time to consult with you about possible improvements. Have a specific thesis: an argument you state clearly and develop over the course of the paper.

**Criteria for Evaluation of your paper**

1) Control over the material in the play and other source, understanding their intended audiences and historical context.
2) Clarity, depth of development, and persuasiveness of thesis.
3) Use of evidence from the material in support of the thesis.
4) Effectiveness of presentation: proper grammar and reference forms.

**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 requests for accommodation due to special needs will be entertained by the instructor if submitted in advance with endorsement from Ms. Boomer.

Class meetings
9/6 Introduction to Physical and Cultural Geography: Where is India (at)?
9/8-11 People of the Indus Valley (c. 2600-1700 BCE)
Required: Clark, "Representing the Body…Harappa" (on Blackboard in .pdf format, 25 pp.)
Optional: explore www.harappa.com
9/13 "Others" and "Selves" as seen in the Vedas
Required: O'Flaherty, Rig Veda, pp. 139-207 (esp. hymns 4.18, 1.32, 3.31, 10.108, 2.12, 1.85, 1.165, 1.170, 1.171, 5.83, 5.40, 10.127, 1.160).
9/15 Vedic Sacrificial Order
Required: O'Flaherty, Rig Veda, pp. 22-83 (esp. hymns 10.129, 10.90, 10.130, 10.190, 10.81-82, 10.14, 10.16, 10.154, 10.58, 10.71, 10.125, 10.173, 10.33, 10.101).
9/18 Vedic Moral Order
Required: O'Flaherty, Rig Veda, pp. 85-138 (esp. hymns 1.163, 1.162, 1.1, 10.124, 8.79, 9.74, 10.94, 4.58, 4.26-27, 10.119, 9.113, 8.48, 10.136).
9/20 Vedic Political and Social Orders
Required: O'Flaherty, Rig Veda, pp. 209-297 (esp. hymns 7.103, 9.112, 6.75, 10.34, 10.10, 1.179, 10.95, 8.91, 10.86, 10.40, 10.85, 10.97, 10.145, 10.159, 10.184)
9/22 Urbanization, Ajivakas, and Jainism
Required (on Blackboard, in .doc format, 17 pp.): Jain stories: "Lakshmipunja," "Mairavati" selections from Tattvarathadhigama Sutra and the commentary on it.
9/25 The Buddha and Buddhism
Required (on Blackboard, in .doc format, 10 pp.): Buddhism, Part I.
9/27 Dramatic cultural developments
Required: (on Blackboard, in .doc format, 45 pp.): selections from Natya Shastra by Bharati Muni and Lal, Great Sanskrit, Introduction, pp. xi-xx.
9/28 [Thursday] 7:00-7:50 PM; Examination Review Session
9/29 Examination One [in class]
10/2 No Class, Yom Kippur
10/4 Envisioning the Divine: Puranic Hinduism
Required: Coomaraswamy, Myths, pp. 219-244, 286-301, 310-332.
10/6 Hindu Monism (guest lecture by Professor Richman, Dept. of Religion)
10/9 Rise of the Magadha 'Empire' and Princess Padmavati

10/11 Mauryan Empire: Chandragupta
Required (on Blackboard, in .doc format, 10 pp.): selected readings on Buddhism, Part II.

10/13 Sensual Orders: Kama
Required (on Blackboard, in .doc format, 39 pp.): selections from Kama Sutra by Vatsyayana

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Fall Break

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10/23-25 "History": The Ramayana
Required: Coomaraswamy, *Myths*, pp. 23-117

10/27 The Later Ramayana
10/27 due by 9:00 AM Paper Option #1, on Bhasa, "Dream of Princess Vasavadatta"

10/30 Political and Material Order: Artha
Required (on Blackboard, in .doc format, 31 pp.): selections from Artha Shastra by Kautilya.
10/30 due by 9:00 AM Paper Option #2, on Shudraka, "Toy Cart".

11/1-11/3 "History," The Mahabharata

11/6-8 The Universal Moral Order: Dharma
Required (on Blackboard, in .doc format, 29 pp.): selections from Dharma Shastra by Manu, "Laws of Manu."

11/9 [Thursday] Review Session 7:00-7:50 PM

11/10 Examination Two (in class)

11/13 South India: The Temple and the State
Required (on Blackboard, in .doc format, 18 pp.): Sports of Siva.

11/15 Wedding of the Goddess
Required (on Blackboard, in .doc format, 13 pp.): Selections from "Siva, Minakshi, Visnu: Reflections on a Popular Myth in Madurai," by Dennis Hudson
11/15 due at 9:00 AM Paper Option #3 on Bhavabhuti, "Later Story of Rama"

11/17 Popular, anti-structuralist devotionalism
Required: Introduction plus the selected poems of any one of the poets

11/20 North Indian states: Sakas, Kushanas, Guptas, Harsha and beyond
due at 9:00 AM Paper Option #4, on Vishakadatta, "Signet Ring"

11/22-27 Islam, Muslims, and the Islamic State in India
Required (on Blackboard, in .doc format, 9 pp.): selected readings on Islam in India.
11/27 due at 9:00 AM Paper Option #5, on Kalidasa, "Shakuntala"

11/29 Sufism, Sikhism, Kabir, Mira Bai
Required (on Blackboard, in .doc format, 13 pp.): selected readings on Bhakti Devotionalism.

12/1 The Mughal State: Akbar
Required (on Blackboard, in .doc format, 7 pp.): selected readings on Akbar, Mughal Emperor (Padshah).

12/4-6 Mughal Imperialism
Required (on Blackboard, in .doc format, 16 pp.): Bhadra, "Two Frontier Uprisings."
12/6 due at 9:00 AM Paper Option #6, on Harsha, "Ratnavali"

12/8 Shivaji, Maratha Identity and the End of the Mughal Empire
Required (on Blackboard, in .doc format, 48 pp.): Pearson: "Shivaji," and Richards: "Imperial Crisis."

12/11 Outsiders become insiders: Indian Jews and Christians
Required (on Blackboard, in .doc format, 19 or 24 pp.): Read either "Jewish Diaspora in India" by Wink or "Christians of South India" by Bayly.

12/13 New outsiders: Europeans in Indian markets and courts
Required (on Blackboard, in .doc format, 9 pp.): Bernier's "Letter to Colbert."

12/17 (Sunday) review session: 3:00-4:00 PM
12/18 (Monday) 9:00-11:00 AM; As scheduled, Final Examination