

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY & CLASSICS, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

HISTORY 427 / 627-A2

TOPICS IN INDIAN HISTORY

**SOCIAL AND CULTURAL 'OTHER' IN EARLY INDIAN
TEXTS**

(R 09:00-11:50 at T 2-32)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The evolution of the social order identified through 'Castes' in the early Indian textual traditions was closely related to it being concomitantly challenged due to the dynamics of contact with the tribes and foreigners as 'outsiders' on the subcontinent. To what extent was the normative and prescriptive order of society undermined by these challenges? Why and how did exclusion of the 'outsider' remain the permanent 'Other'? Finally, what were the parameters that allowed for inclusion as discussed in these texts? These are some of the critical questions that will be addressed in this course. This course will emphasize on the agencies for social change as emanating from the political and the economic, issues of subordination, marginality and exclusion/inclusion in early Indian texts.

This is a Seminar Course. It requires bi-weekly readings and written reports based on these readings.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR

Name: Aloka Parasher-Sen

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appointment

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BOOKS – LISTED IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE FOR THIS COURSE

GENERAL READING: For those students who need an Introduction to Ancient India

Romila Thapar, *The Penguin History of Early India from Origins up to 1300 AD*, Penguin Books India, Delhi 2003. This book is strongly recommended for *those without much background*. **It may be purchased or available on RESERVE at Rutherford.**

Upinder Singh, *A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India, From the Stone Age to the 12th Century*, Pearson Longman, Pearson Education, Delhi 2008, Paperback edition 2009. **It may be purchased or available on RESERVE at Rutherford.**

A. L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India: A Survey of the Culture of the Indian Sub-continent before the coming of the Muslims*, Picador Paperback, 2003 [3rd revised edition, New York, Taplinger Publishing Company, 1968. First published London, 1954.

It may be purchase or available on RESERVE at Rutherford

D. N. Jha, *Early India: A Concise History*, Manohar Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, 2004. **Available at Rutherford**

BIBLIOGRAPHY for the Course[All of the following Available at RUTHERFORD]

ESSENTIAL READING:

Aloka Parasher, *Mlecchas in Early India: A Study in Attitudes towards Outsiders up to AD 600*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, New Delhi 1991. This provides *an empirical foundation* for this course. **Text book for this course and ordered for purchase in the Bookstore. Also on RESERVE at Rutherford**

Romila Thapar, *Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1978. **Book on RESERVE at Rutherford**

Aloka Parasher-Sen, Edited *Subordinate and Marginal Groups in Early India*, 2nd Paperback edition, Oxford University Press, New Delhi 2007 Provides various *interpretations on the nature of social exclusion in early India* **Book on Reserve at Rutherford**

B. D. Chattopadhyaya, *Representing the 'Other'? Sanskrit Sources and the Muslims 8th – 14th century*, Manohar, New Delhi 1998

Kushal Deb, Edited *Mapping Multiculturalism*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur 2002 For discussion on *Theory and a comparative Indian-Canadian Perspective* **Book on Reserve at Rutherford**

RECOMMENDED READING:

B. D. Chattopadhyaya, Edited *Studying Early India: Archaeology, Texts and Historical Issues*, Anthem Press, London, 2006 (Originally published Permanent Black Delhi 2003) **Book on Reserve at Rutherford**

Cynthia Talbot, 'Inscribing the Other, Inscribing the Self: Hindu Muslim Identities in Pre-Colonial India, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 1995, 37, 4, 692-722 **UofA online access to** <http://www.jstor.org/stable/179206>

Romila Thapar, J.M. Kenoyer, M.M. Deshpande, Shreen Ratnagar, *India Historical Beginnings and the concept of the Aryan/Essays* Popular Social Science Series, National Book Trust, New Delhi 2006

Aloka Parasher-Sen, 'Of Tribes Hunters and Barbarians: Forest Dwellers in the Mauryan Period' *Studies in History*, 14, 2, 1998, 173-191 **UofA online access to** <http://sagepublications.com>

Romila Thapar, *Interpreting Early India* Oxford University Press, Delhi 1992 or *History and Beyond*, Omnibus Edition, Oxford University Press, Delhi 2004

Aloka Parasher-Sen, *Absences in History: Towards Recovering History of the Marginal in Early India*, Symposia Papers, Indian History Congress-3, Warangal 1992

ADDITIONAL READING:

B. P. Sahu *Iron and Social Change in Early India*, Oxford in India Readings. Debates in Indian History and Society, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2006

German scholars on India: contributions to Indian studies, Edited by the Cultural Dept. of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, New Delhi, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi, 1973-76

P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmasastra* (Ancient and Medieval Religious and Civil Law in India), Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1932-62, 5 vols.

K. S. Singh, *People of India*, National Series, Anthropological Survey of India, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1993

EXAMINATIONS AND GRADING:

Active participation in class (includes bi-weekly reports to be presented electronically before each class or at the time of presentation – **See chart below** for details – 10% per report. See note below on UofA policy on plagiarism which applies to writing reports as well) 40 %

Mini-Paper (about 3 pages; to be submitted **on or before Oct. 22, 2009 by 2 pm** sharp) 10 %

Research Paper (about 10 pages; to be submitted **on or before Nov 19, 2009 by 10 am** sharp) 50 %

LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

There will be NO final examination in this Course

EXPLANATION ON ASSIGNMENTS AND DUE DATES

Active participation in class (includes bi-weekly reports to be presented electronically before each class or at the time of presentation) DETAILS AS GIVEN BELOW 40 %

S. No.	Author	Name of Article	Reading between	Report presentation Date
1.	R. Thapar	‘The Image of the Barbarian’ in R. Thapar, <i>Ancient Indian Social History</i> , 1978	Sept. 3-17	Sept 17
2.	A. Parasher-Sen	‘Foreigner’ and ‘Tribe’ as Mleccha’ in A. Parasher-Sen, <i>Subordinate and Marginal Groups</i> , 2007	Sept. 17- Oct.1	Oct. 1
3.	D. Hellman-Rajanayagam	‘Is there a Tamil race?’ in A. Parasher-Sen, <i>Subordinate and Marginal Groups</i> , 2007	Oct. 1-15	Oct. 15

4.	B. D. Chattopadhyaya	Representing the 'Other' Sanskrit Sources and the Muslims' in A. Parasher-Sen, Subordinate and Marginal Groups, 2007	Oct. 15 - 29	Oct. 29
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Mini-Paper (about 3 pages; to be submitted on or before Oct. 22, 2009 by 2 pm sharp) **10**

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Topic for Mini-Paper is on the theme: "Defining the 'Other' – Theoretical Issues"

Topic for Research Paper on the theme: "The Nature and Notion of Social Exclusion in Early India" **50%**

Research Paper (about 10 pages; to be submitted on or before Nov 19, 2009 by 10 am sharp)

EXPLANATORY NOTE ON GRADES:

Grades for all assignments and the final grade will be assigned according to the descriptions of the various grades in the official grading system of the University of Alberta as given below. Any questions about the system may be addressed to the Instructor before the Assignments are submitted

POLICY ABOUT LATE ASSIGNMENTS IN THIS COURSE:

Late Assignments will NOT be accepted.

ON PARTICIPATION IN CLASS:

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in a seminar. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections 23.4.2 and 23.4.3 of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the "participation" component of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

1. Policy about course outlines can be found at [§ 23.4\(2\) of the University Calendar](#).
2. “The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour, see http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/gfcpolicymanual/content.cfm?ID_page=37633 and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.” (GFC 29 SEP 2003).
3. Students MUST make themselves aware of the university regulations concerning plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation of facts and participation in an offence. IGNORANCE IS NO EXCUSE. Students MUST read the section on inappropriate academic behaviour of the code available at <http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/gfcpolicymanual/policymanualsection30-3-2.cfm>
4. The instructor will follow to the letter the procedures set in section [30.5.4](#) in respect to Inappropriate Academic Behavior.
5. All students should consult the “Truth-In-Education” handbook or Website (<http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/>) regarding the definitions of plagiarism and its consequences when detected. Students involved in language courses and translation courses should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.” Students in languages courses should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, excessive editorial and creative help in assignments is considered a form of “cheating” that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences. An instructor who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. Before unpleasantness occurs consult <http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/> ; also discuss this matter with any tutor(s) and with your instructor.

APPENDIX – U OF A GRADE SYSTEM

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value
Excellent	A+	4.0
	A	4.0
	A-	3.7
	B+	3.3

Good	B	3.0
	B-	2.7
Satisfactory	C+	2.3
	C	2.0
	C-	1.7
Poor Minimal Pass	D+	1.3
	D	1.0
Failure	F	0.0

Explanation on Conversion from percentage to Letter Grades:

All assignments are graded out of 100. To arrive at the final grade, the final percentage value is converted to a letter grade as follows:

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Point Value	
A+	90-100	4.0	
A	85-89	4.0	
A-	80-84	3.7	
B+	76-79	3.3	
B	72-75	3.0	
B-	68-71	2.7	
C+	64-67	2.3	
C	60-63	2.0	
C-	56-59	1.7	
D+	52-55	1.3	
D	50-51	1.0	
<i>Failure</i>	F or F(R)	0-49	0.0

Note: F(R) denotes eligibility of a student to apply for a re-examination of a course.