

School of Historical Studies

Curriculum and Courses 2019-21*

Previous

Semester – I (Foundation Courses): 16 credits

- **4 core courses (3 credits each)**
 - I. Birth of Civilization in East Asia
 - II. Cultural History of Pre-Buddhist India
 - III. Socio-Cultural History of Asia I
 - IV. South Asian History
- **1 elective course (3 credits each)**
 - I. Performance Studies: Mnemocultures I
- **1 seminar course (1 credit)**

Final

Semester – III (Advanced Courses): 16 credits

- **2 core courses (3 credits each)**
 - I. Maritime Interconnections in the Indian Ocean: Making Culture Portable
 - II. Traditions of Historiography
- **3 elective courses (3 credits each)**
 - I. Digital Humanities I
 - II. History of Sufi and Bhakti Traditions
 - III. Nalanda Through the Ages
 - IV. Supervised Reading
 - V. Language I (Sanskrit/Pali/Korean)
- **1 seminar course (1 credit)**

Semester – II (Bridge Courses): 16 credits

- **3 core courses (3 credits each)**
 - I. Contemplative Traditions: India and China
 - II. Performance Studies: Mnemocultures II
 - III. Socio-Cultural History of Asia II
- **2 elective courses (3 credits each)**
 - I. Cultural History of Buddhist India
 - II. History of India's Deccan Region
 - III. Korea's Linkages with East Asia
- **1 seminar course (1 credit)**

Semester – IV (Specialized Courses): 16 credits

- **1 core course (3 credits each)**
 - I. Cultural Anthropology
- **1 elective course (3 credits each)**
 - I. Asian Interconnections on the Silk Route
 - II. Digital Humanities II
 - III. History of Indian Aesthetics
 - IV. Language II (Sanskrit/Pali/Korean)
- **1 seminar course (1 credit)**
- **Dissertation (9 credits)**

* Each credit will be evaluated for 100 marks

* Discussion and Meeting with Faculty as per time fixed with Faculty

School of Historical Studies

Courses 2019-21*

Core Courses

- Birth of Civilization in East Asia
- Contemplative Traditions: India and China
- Cultural Anthropology
- Cultural History of Pre-Buddhist India
- Maritime Interconnections in the Indian Ocean: Making Culture Portable
- Performance Studies: Mnemocultures I & II
- Socio-Cultural History of Asia I & II
- South Asian History
- Traditions of Historiography

Elective Courses – Cafeteria Model (Bouquet of Courses)[†]

- Asian Interconnections on the Silk Route
- Buddhism and Society in Asia
- Cultural History of Buddhist India
- History of Indian Aesthetics
- History of India's Deccan Region
- History of Medicine: India and China
- History of Sufi and Bhakti Traditions
- Korea's Linkages with East Asia in Modern Times
- Myths and Symbols of Indian Art
- Nalanda Through the Ages
- Studying Religion
- Supervised Reading
- Digital Humanities I & II

SHS Course Goals

- Develop knowledge of Asia's history, society, economy, culture & connectivity
- Examine lesser-explored themes in history, moving beyond disciplinary boundaries
- Understand core issues in critically interpreting historical texts & sources
- Support students through the process of writing & research aligned with the principles of academic honesty

SHS Course Outcomes

- Identify and explain Asia's distinctive historical trajectories
- Apply interdisciplinary insights to reinterpret history or their own disciplines
- Compare and critically evaluate existing works/approaches
- Create coherent, creative & well-founded arguments while identifying the key elements of historical thinking and practice

* Courses to be audited periodically

[†] Under Cafeteria Model – Interdisciplinary courses open to students from other schools

I. Description of Courses

▪ Birth of Civilization in East Asia

This course will provide a foundational knowledge of traditional cultural, social and institutional patterns in East Asia, focusing on the formation and development of the imperial bureaucratic state, and major cultural forms that defined the Chinese civilization and birth of Korean and Japanese civilizations as a result of the process of absorption of the ideas and institutions of Chinese and Indian provenance.

Topics include: shamanism in East Asian history.; historical, textual, and doctrinal foundations of Confucianism and its influence across East Asia; Buddhism as a tool of diplomacy, political legitimation and trade in Asia and the formation of pan-Asian Buddhist network; influence of Daoism on the Chinese mind; and the rise of Neo-Confucianism as the ideological foundation of states in East Asia. The students doing this course will gain an insightful understanding of the Chinese antecedents of ideology that were introduced to Korea and Japan and examine the ways in which Shamanism, Confucianism, Daoism and Neo-Confucianism were interwoven into the fabric of China's Imperial bureaucratic state and subsequently adapted by Korea and Japan to suit their social and cultural requirements as well as political imperatives.

A list of weekly reading material will be provided in the first class. In doing in-class preparation and writing term-papers and final essay the students need to demonstrate initiative and ingenuity in research, and also attempt both "critical analysis of material and innovative interpretation of evidence". This will be possible only if they undertake independent research and carefully go through a wide range of relevant original and secondary sources.

▪ Contemplative Traditions: India and China

This 3 credits core course focuses on contemplative traditions in India and China, specifically the Vedantic, Yogic, Jain, Buddhist, Confucian, Zen and Taoist traditions. It elaborates the general idea of contemplation (emphasizing meditation as its key dimension), its emergence, and representation across traditions. The course is organized around three related themes, i.e., the mind-body connection, the nature of contemplative experience, and its goals. The course encourages comparative reflections. At the same time, it highlights the need to integrate spirituality and contemplative traditions within academic discourse, particularly combining interdisciplinary approaches to understand and explain the shifting meanings as well as the value of contemplation.

This course aims to introduce students to ideas and practices constitutive of contemplative traditions as well as provide them with interpretive tools for exploring these traditions. At the end of successfully completing the course, students will be able to:

- Identify the defining elements of contemplative traditions and such experience
- Understand the diverse meanings of truth, wisdom and consciousness
- Explore the extent to which contemplative traditions evolved in a cultural continuum
- Create simple, coherent arguments about the themes studied

▪ **Cultural Anthropology**

This course introduces certain key debates in the field which is dedicated to the study of cultural differences. In the broadest terms, cultural anthropologists study “culture”—defined as the process of ordering social life and making it meaningful in a range of settings. The course begins with an understanding of the concept of culture— as a set of meanings, values, and practices— and put it into useful perspective. Subsequently, it would engage with a cluster of topics that are central to the field, including the conception of Human, the question of experience and praxis. Contextualising the question of cultural difference further, it will also critically engage with the two models of forging and theorizing cultural difference from South Asian context. Finally, the course would introduce two significant challenges the field has to grapple with, the digital and the anthropocene: modes of communication play a significant role in shaping and articulation of culture and cultural difference in relation to the modes of being. The onset of the digital in this context intensifies the dialectical nature of culture. The term digital accounts for all that which can be ultimately reduced to binary code but which produces a further proliferation of particularity and difference. On the other, the emergence of the term *anthropocene* to describe our current stage of natural history assumes centrality of human agency, sees it as the prime source of action that shapes the physical world. How to respond to these challenges?

Readings for the course will include selections from Mary Douglas, Pierre Bourdieu, Victor Turner, Clifford Geertz, Bruno Latour, Talal Asad, Raymond Williams, AK Ramanujan, SN Balagangadhara, Amitav Ghosh, Daniel Miller, Heather A Horst among others.

▪ **Cultural History of Pre-Buddhist India**

This course is woven with the threads of pre-Buddhist literary sources and aims to enable the students to locate the cultural markers of early India. The course will deal with such major themes and topics as early cultural establishments (Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic), characteristics of Indus Valley Civilization, and the Vedic literature stretching from the four Vedas up to the Upanisads. By turning the focus away from political history, which defines the history syllabus of most of the Indian universities this course concentrates on cultural history to remedy a major imbalance in understanding of India’s past.

▪ **Maritime Interconnections in the Indian Ocean: Making Culture Portable**

This 3 credits core course focuses on the evolution of Indian Ocean as an intercultural space from prehistory up to the 15th century. Extending east to west and covering 20% of the world’s oceanic space, the vast Indian Ocean is a uniquely enclosed space surrounded by huge continental landmasses; the Indian peninsula lies at its core. The Indian Ocean is one of the most navigated ocean spaces in human history. The course is organized to look at the history of interconnections in the Ocean and discover especially the spread of culture across societies they connected. Commerce played a pivotal role in the networks’ emergence and diffusion. This course, therefore, challenges us to visualize water as a dynamical connector (of continents and cultures), and to rethink space in terms of geographies of relationships.

This course aims to discover how the unique Indian Oceanic space influenced the nature of connectivity, and with that understanding, explain how individuals embedded in long-lasting networks of especially commerce and motion made culture, even civilizations, portable. At the end of successfully completing the course, students will be able to:

- Identify the elements of cultural transmission
- Describe the overlaps of history and geography
- Explain the material bases of culture
- Create coherent arguments about the themes studied

▪ Performance Studies: Mnemocultures I

This course explores fundamental issues in performance studies. An understanding of performance as an object and a lens, as modality and method, is central to the scholarship across Humanities and Social Sciences. The course focuses on the basic methodological trends that are significant to reflect upon mimesis and alterity.

The course is structured in three parts. In the first part, the learners would acquire a basic understanding of performance and performativity, and the field of performance studies. The second part attempts to address the polemic: whether the field of study is imperialist in nature? There have been scholars who argue that the field of performance studies “must be seen embedded in its historical affiliations not only with particular disciplines such as literature or history, but also particular institutional histories and the place of academic institutions within culture” (Jackson *Professing Performance* 2004). How to respond to the field from non-Euro-American locations? Final part of the course attempts a way out of the epistemological *impasse*, by trying to revisit certain foundational texts in an attempt to forge newer questions; these enable one to view performance as a means of creative expression, as a mode of critical inquiry, and as an avenue for public engagement.

Readings for the course will include selections from Plato, Bharata, Richard Schechner, Diana Taylor, Samuel Weber, Clifford Geertz, JL Austin, NgũgĩWaThiong'o, Fritz Staal, D Venkat Rao and others.

▪ Performance Studies: Mnemocultures II

The course focuses on two domains, *theatre* and *theory*, that significantly constitute the fundamental grids of performance studies. Both of them, derived from the Greek terms *théātron* and *theoría* respectively, share a common etymological source *théā* (*théā*). This Greek source designates a privileged place accorded to the acts of seeing/judging. If *théātron* indicated staging of performance for adjudication in front of spectators, *theoría* foregrounded knowledge as mastery over object. Thus both *théātron* and *theoría* derive their authority from a specific episteme that displaced the register of acoustics with optics, and privileged the sense of sight/seeing (Levine 1997, Cavarero 2005, Luc-Nancy 2007). It culminates in the form of a unitary “project of a life predicated on reason” designated as Europe (Gasche 2009).

In contrast to this narrative of *théātron/theoría* that emerged from European experience, performance traditions from Asia offer a radically different cultural experience. This is the challenge one has to grapple with in the field of performance studies and the studies of oral

cultures. Heterogeneous cultural formations bring forth divergent cultural forms. Focus on the discrete bodily articulations are central here. Contrary to the Aristotelian line of theorization of theatre which renders it as an enactment of narrative identity — which later sets the centrality of meaning in Western thought — these performance traditions do not privilege either narrative or meaning: multiple instances indicate perform-ability without narrative content.

The course intends to grapple with such cultural difference while engaging with performance traditions/oral cultures. Critical exploration of contrasting components of the European and Indian accounts will be undertaken in search of possible ways of engaging with the performance traditions and oral cultures from South Asia. Readings include selections from Plato, Aristotle, Nietzsche, *Nātyasāstra*, *Dattilam*, *Sangīta-Ratnākara* and *Brihaddeshi*, and writings of Jean-Pierre Vernant, Marcel Detienne and Mukund Lath, in addition to the contemporary scholarship on performance studies and orality.

▪ **Socio-Cultural History of Asia I**

This 3 credits core course comprises the first part of our survey of Asia's history from the deep prehistoric origins up to the 15th century. The primary focus is on society and culture, especially the evolution of networks of interactions, with some reference to political organization. Evidently, this course sweeps over a huge space-time. The course challenges us to look beyond political histories and isolated actors towards thinking about networks of interaction, their emergence and role in producing deep social and cultural change. That is, focus on local actors in actual material contexts, acting upon their conditions, thereby, influencing the production and exchange of ideas, goods, information, values, beliefs and behaviors. This approach can shed greater light on the relationship between Asia's striking socio-cultural dynamism and the robustness of its linked networks. At the same time, it has implications for the realization of a harmonized, integrated Asia in the wider 21st century global context. The course is organized in a combination of chronology and themes in order to get a sense of the process as much as episodes that produced a deep impact on societies in Asia and connected them.

The course aims to develop a preliminary knowledge of broad trends in Asian social and cultural history, and discover how its underlying interconnectedness and dynamism played out. At the end of successfully completing the course, students will be able to:

- Identify the principal trajectories in Asia's history
- Explain society, culture and their interrelationship
- Make simple connections across space-time
- Compose simple, coherent arguments about the themes studied

▪ **Socio-Cultural History of Asia II**

This 3 credits core course comprises the second part of our survey of Asia's history between the 15th- 21st centuries CE. The primary focus in this course is on society and culture with some reference to political organization. The course aims to develop a preliminary knowledge of broad trends in Asia's history and discover its underlying interconnectedness

and dynamism, especially shifts in networks of mobility and exchange both during colonization and in its aftermath. This study is also relevant to the present Asian context: as fresh interdependencies emerge among Asian societies, e.g., ASEAN, BIMSTEC and SAARC, their effort is to leverage a shared past by harnessing the accumulated wealth of these long-standing networks that interconnected Asia. The course ends with insights into emerging modes of socio-cultural connectivity in 21st century Asia and the globalized world. At the same time, we will remain attentive to the struggles that previously-colonized societies face. The course aims to develop a preliminary knowledge of broad trends in Asian social and cultural history, and discover how its underlying interconnectedness and dynamism played out. At the end of successfully completing the course, students will be able to:

- Identify the principal trajectories in Asia's history & apply new learning to explain present-day Asia
- Explain society, culture and their interrelationship
- Make simple connections across space-time
- Compose simple, coherent arguments about the themes studied

▪ **South Asian History**

South Asia comprises anything but a monolithic and unchanging geo-cultural space. Contributions from recent scholarship on this region present before us a historical canvas, which is markedly dynamic and receptive to multiple influences across political, economic, religious and cultural landscapes. This course is framed with the precise intention to engage deeply with these new works and researches, produced over the last decade, which familiarize us with multiple facets of South Asian history focusing on people and communities, regional histories, but most importantly the coming together of communities, peoples and ideas – leading to a rich fabric of social and cultural bonding. Such traits presented itself through language, literature, music, poetry, folk cults, art and architecture. Some of the key themes on which this course will focus on, emerge from inter-disciplinary perspectives, as follows:

- Introduction to South Asian history and society
- Foundation of the State structure
- Practices of chronicle-writing
- Era of Decentralization
- Trade history
- Language and vernacular literature

▪ **Traditions of Historiography**

Historiography refers to the history of history writing as well as the theoretical principles and methods underlying such narratives. While all societies have recorded the past, history makes the additional claim of presenting a true representation (of the past) that is supported by evidence and is, hence, verifiable. That said, history writing has changed significantly, both in its methods of inquiry as well as the themes/subjects it engages. This course provides an understanding of the core issues in the practice of history and how they have 'turned' and shifted over a period of time. In addition, this course highlights Indic

conceptions of history writing epitomized in the *itihāsa* Puranic traditions and critically examines the issue of *itihāsa*-as-history as well as the debates generated. After successfully completing the course, students will be able to:

- Identify the core elements, dominant themes, and shifts within history writing
- Critically evaluate existing works & approaches
- Apply interdisciplinary insights to history
- Compose simple & coherent arguments about the themes studied

Module I: This module will discuss several genres of history writing and historiographical issues they raise. We will analyse history represented in biographies, dynastic histories, fables and authoritative narratives influenced by the ‘great traditions’ highlighting how bias, morality, subjective identity, power and religious affiliation shaped historical understanding and writing. We will also discuss how political and intellectual contexts shaped history writing, methodology and content.

Module II: This module focuses on some of the major historiographical concepts and themes that emerge from overlaps of history and geography and influence conceptualizations of the region. We will also discuss the origins of such traditions in antiquity and borrowings from the rich traditions of knowledge available locally as well as across a wider region.

Module III: This module highlights some of the key theoretical elements in the writing of history – context, space-time, fact, source, explanation, objectivity, hindsight and philosophy (of history) – and identifies the critical ‘turns’ within the larger history of history writing. The module concludes with a discussion on future possibilities, especially interdisciplinarity, in order to enlarge the scope of historical enterprise. This module aims to introduce the general principles underlying the writing of history, highlighting the diversity of historical approaches, and share interpretive tools to assess those. At the end of the module, students will be able to identify dominant themes within historiography, evaluate key approaches, and discuss emerging interdisciplinary possibilities.

Module IV: This module intends to explore ‘what is *itihāsa* in the Indian context and in contrast to Modern History’. Every civilization develops its own pattern to carry forward its eternal values. India developed traditions of *Itihāsa-Purāṇa*, which were essentially a comprehensive plan for human life. The module primarily aims to understand and explain early Indian attitudes towards the past through exploring some of the early literary evidences.

Module V: This module introduces various debates within the field of historiography pertaining to the status of narrative and representation. Historiographical exercise witnesses the emergence of representation as a central theme in the interface between historiographic research and the writing of historiography. Historiographic research aims to establish factual truth— either statements or causal explanations. The writing of historiography deals with how factual truths can, or should be, integrated into one coherent narrative whole. The module addresses various positions within the traditions of historiography around this central issue.

▪ Asian Interconnections on the Silk Route

Asia has been understood as constituting multiple worlds of geography, history and society. This course is designed to further that understanding of Asia in geographical and historical terms. It explores Asian societies as interconnected formations stretching from West Asia, through Eurasia, Central Asia, and South Asia to Southeast Asia and East Asia. Thereby it allows us to rethink conventional Area Studies scholarship that have for long carved up the broader field of Asian Studies.

Exchange, interchange, flows and circulations within Asia will broaden the scope of this course by allowing the study of history at the interface of linguistic, geographical, aesthetic and religious boundaries. This course will focus on elaborating instances where *routes* like the Silk Road, create *connections* for trade and movement, resulting in dynamic *contact zones*. Students will be introduced to an understanding of Asia across times, and will benefit through diverse readings addressing various historical narratives around the Silk Road interconnections.

▪ Buddhism and Society in Asia

This course aims to provide a systematic understanding of the political and social role of Buddhism in various Asian countries and the significance of Buddhism in forging a cohesive pan-Asian Eastern Civilization. Through discussion of such topics as the rich plethora of Buddhist symbolism and Buddhist cults and their appropriation by rulers, the changing paradigm of sangha-state relations and engaged Buddhism in Asia, the students will gain an incisive understanding of the role of Buddhism in restructuring political formations and transforming society in Asia.

▪ Cultural History of Buddhist India

A close reading of Buddhist texts reveals that Buddha and his teachings extend, expand and complement Vedic vision. The age of the Buddha was a transformative phase in which India witnessed various social, philosophical and artistic structures. Based on Buddha's teachings various literatures have been composed known as 'Buddhist literature'. Primarily based on the early Buddhist literature (*tripitakas*), this course provides an opportunity to explore geographical, social, literary, artistic and religious dimensions of India in the age of Buddha.

▪ History of Indian Aesthetics

With a solid background provided by the Vedas, a continuous and cumulative inquiry regarding the nature of *kalā* (art), its ontological status, how it is created, what is its purpose, concept of *rasa*, *bhāva* theories of reception, and other related issues have been started and in due course of time it culminated at a point where one can say that our tradition has made a cumulative chain of thinkers, in which each has their own unique contribution and thus made a *Saundryāśāstra* – a discipline of Aesthetics.

The course primarily aims to explore the history and issues of aesthetics, which originated and developed in Indian context. In doing so, it encompasses the chronology of thinkers, brief analysis of their texts, underlining their contributions, and thus mapping the intellectual history of Indian aesthetics. The thrust of the course is to prepare a foundation in domain of classical Indian theories of aesthetics and gradually conceptualizing an Asian aesthetics.

▪ **History of India's Deccan Region**

The Deccan constitutes a large stretch of land in peninsular India stretching from the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea. Its historical traditions, spanning centuries, attest the richness of this region as an inseparable component of South Asia's history. Yet this area south of the Vindhya mountains has received much less attention from scholars, primarily due to an overtly north-India centric focus in historical study.

The course is primarily aimed at introducing students to the rich history of the Deccan as an independent subset of historical enquiry. This will primarily be achieved by taking into account the rich scholarship over the last two decades that has revived academic interest in this region. Deccan as a region begins to be historically accounted for from the rise of the powerful dynastic powers of Chalukyas, Pallavas and Pandyas from 600 A.D., followed by the even more powerful Cholas further south, three centuries later. Moving away from the idea of an isolated region, therefore, the course will bring into focus a dense network of Asian connections with Deccan as its centre; forged through the idea of the 'Sanskrit cosmopolis' and powered by the movement of traders, scholars, nobles, administrators, military commanders not only from Asia but even as far as Africa.

The cultural richness of the region will also be engaged with through art and architecture, the local dialect of Dakhani enriched by the vernacular traditions of Telegu, Marathi and Kannad, prose and poetry compositions, and paintings. By taking into account this trans-regional history of the Deccan, students will be encouraged to engage with the following themes,

- Multicultural milieu of the Deccan
- Deccan's historical ties with Asian and African regions
- Historical and cultural dimensions that turned Deccan into a 'pull factor' in global Asian history

▪ **History of Medicine: India and China**

This 3 credits elective course offers a study of medicine in India and China from antiquity to the modern times. This course will introduce ways in which the body, mind, disease, illness and disorder as well as healing were conceptualized and practiced. The principal focus of the course is on the classical systems of medicine and healing in India and China. Tibet is also included in our discussion.

This course aims to explore how health, disease, medicine and healing have been conceptualized and practiced in these parts of Asia through extant texts, e.g., the *Sushruta Samhita*, one of the most important ancient Indian treatises on medicine and surgery that was also transmitted to other parts of Asia. At a wider level, this course aims to address (and

historicize) the larger question of why medicine varies despite humans being biologically identical across societies. At the same time, it aims to initiate discussion on public health issues and the evolving field of Medical Humanities. At the end of successfully completing the course, students will be able to:

- Identify dominant trends within the existing histories of medicine
- Discuss emergent issues pertinent to the field, e.g., how was health and healing conceptualized, how was healthcare organized, how do people relate to illness, and what did they do to get cured
- Create simple, coherent arguments about the themes studied

▪ History of Sufi and Bhakti Traditions

Module I: This module will provide an introduction to the spiritual tradition of Sufism. The history of this intellectual and institutional tradition will be mapped, beginning from its origins around the tenth century. As the spiritual dimension of Islam, Sufism as a branch of Islamic culture carries a significance influence and popularity in the Indian subcontinent. This module, however, does not limit itself to being only a historical survey on Sufism. Rather it will focus on select themes, which will help formulate a coherent understanding on the subject. The course will introduce students to Sufism through an understanding of its historical background, origins and development.

Framing of various themes is done keeping in mind a logical continuity in ideas. Issues those are fundamental, like Sufi doctrines, will be discussed as well as other relevant themes like approaches to Sufi traditions, idea of classical Sufism, dimensions of Sufism in the Indian subcontinent, its relation with the State and the role of women.

Module II: Indian religious tradition primarily conceives *bhakti* as a path leading towards knowledge – *bhakti yoga*. *Bhakti* can't be understood only as a certain religious devotional attachment. Rather, it is an integrated whole of the emotion (*bhāva*) and the knowledge (*jñāna*) both. This module endeavours to provide a philosophico-historical framework to study *bhakti*, its evolution and growth. The literature produced on *bhakti* traditions is rich and diverse. The module will also map the historical account of various *bhakti* traditions (mainly Saivism, Vaisnavism, Śākta, Caitanya movement, North-east *bhakti* movement, and Nātha tradition) with their essential characteristics based on the available literary and other materials.

▪ Korea's Linkages with East Asia in Modern Times

This course of study aims to introduce Korea's linkage with her two neighbours, China and Japan, in the modern times. Topics in modern history include: Korea's intellectual engagement with the Scholars of Qing China in the late Joseon dynasty (1392-1910); wave of reforms and rebellions in the wake of the opening of Korea to the West and Japan; Japan's colonial rule and Korea's fight for freedom. This course will also shed such important topics from the contemporary history of Korea as the division of Korea in 1945 and the outbreak of the Korean war in 1950 in which China was involved.

▪ Myths and Symbols of Indian Art

Art in India meant to convey its civilisational values manifested in its philosophy, literature and culture. Every civilization has developed its own myths and symbols to carry forward its eternal values. Exploring Indian art one invariably encounters with a rich and versatile repertoire of symbols such as Purṇa Kumbha, Aśvattha, Kalpavṛkṣa, Samudramanthen, Śeṣaśayivīṣṇu, Mātṛkā, Mithuna, Padma, Dhvaja, Cakra, Yakṣa, Yakṣiṇī, Dharmacakra, Stūpa, Caitya, Śālabhañjikā, Uṣṇīsa, Dohada, and many more. Right interpretation of Indian art seeks a well understanding of its symbols. The course will introduce students the following key conceptual and theoretical questions:

- What is myth?
- What is symbol?
- Inter-relation between myth and symbol
- Interpretation of various myths and symbols
- Intellectual and cross-cultural history of various symbols
- Iconographical study of some Hindu deities

▪ Nālandā Through the Ages

Nālandā was a prominent place in the time of Buddha and Mahāvīra, and in subsequent centuries it got further imbued with the memories of many great thinkers. It finds an elaborate space in the early Buddhist literature (*tripiṭaks*) and Jain sources. Nālandā emerged as one of the major centres of higher learning/monastic scholasticism in the world in the early Gupta period. For a period of more than 800 years, the institution served as a beacon light of knowledge traditions, exchange of ideas, and art. *Nālandā Mahāvihāra* received students and teachers from China, Korea, Sumatra, Armenia, central Asia, etc. and was in the centre of the much complex socio-cultural and religious network. This course, woven around above-mentioned themes, will provide an opportunity to the students to understand the history of Nālandā through different lens from art-historical to archaeological, and from text to oral.

▪ Studying Religion

This 3 credits elective course focuses on studying religion, especially elaborating its research methodology. While research is a systematic inquiry organized (or designed) around a specific purpose or outcome, methodology is a strategy of inquiry that clarifies the research process. In particular, the methodology of studying religion requires us to be attentive to our own assumptions, conceptualization and positioning in regard to religion, its wider context, and moving beyond binaries.

This course aims to investigate how religion has been studied and build research strategies. At the end of successfully completing the course, students will be able to:

- Describe and evaluate trends within the existing studies of religion
- Design a basic research process for studying religion or its aspects

- Create simple arguments about the themes studied

▪ **Supervised Reading**

This course aims to help students develop research skills broadly in a specific field of study that they plan to explore further. It involves critical reading of prescribed texts in the students' proposed area of research and writing of a research paper of approximately 4000 words, under the supervision of a faculty member. This course aims to construct and consolidate a solid foundation in a particular area of research that is compatible with the research interest of the student and formulate a concrete research question that would be explored in the final semester in the form of a dissertation.

Reading list for this course will be developed primarily by the student in consultation with the supervisor.

▪ **Digital Humanities I**

The intersection of the computational technologies and the traditional humanities disciplines has given rise to the field of Digital Humanities. In the last two decades, the field has not only gained increased attention, but also has expanded rapidly. In simple terms, it can be said that Digital Humanities designates a set of theoretical and practical approaches to the technological engagement with cultural materials.

Digital Humanities investigates how the condition of digitality is changing the ways we produce and share knowledge in the humanities. One of the key challenges here is this: the humanities as a discipline values subtlety, nuance, conflicting ideas, and even paradox. When one is working with digital technology that is paradigmatically constituted by the principles of computing, ranging from word-processors to data visualization and digital maps, one has to negotiate with newer challenges. So how does one practice humanities and social sciences in this context? This course is an introduction to some of the issues involved here.

Attempting to introduce the field, the course examines the history, theory and practice of Digital Humanities. After charting out the shift from Humanism through Humanities to Digital Humanities, the course proceeds to give a brief historical overview of the Humanities computing, which paved way for the emergence of this field of study. Further, it introduces the fundamental elements that constitute Digital Humanities, i.e., text, document, object, artefact, image, sound and space. It will also familiarise the students with certain theoretical debates regarding the constitution of the field. Subsequently, the course tries to grapple with the notion of Digital History and Archive in the digital age.

Readings for the course will include selections from Johanna Drucker, Anne Burdick, Susan Hockey, Frederica Frabetti, Tony Weller, Kate Theimer, Eric Meyer & Schroeder, Nishant Shah and others.

▪ **Digital Humanities II**

Information and communication technologies are rapidly transforming the ways of being in the world. They are also altering the modes of perception, affection and action, thus transforming the fields of humanities and social science research. We are witnessing the significant reconfigurations of the modalities of cognition and articulation due to the impact of *mnemotechniques* (the methods of transmitting memory) and the *mnemotechnologies* (the technologies that systematically and schematically order memories). Thus, it is a question connected with the problem of memory—as gathering of thought, of remembering and forgetting, in relation to the techniques of human cultivation.

The course introduces the field which addresses the problems of *anthropos* and *techne* (the human and the technology) in relation to memory. How do cultures try to address this question? What are the dominant paradigms of configurations of memory? How do technologies constitute different modes of recollection, articulation and transmission of thought? What are the bearings it has on the conception of past? The course attempts to engage with these questions in the context of the onset of the digital.

Readings for the course will include selections from Plato, Aristotle, Vidyāpati, Richard Terdiman, Jan Assmann, Martin Heidegger, Albert Borgmann, Bernard Stiegler, Wolfgang Ernst, Mark BN Hansen, Rafael Capurro and others.

School of Historical Studies