

The Asian Sphere: Trans-Cultural Flows
A Joint International Program for Outstanding Graduate Students
The University of Haifa and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

READINGS IN THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF ASIA
(נושאים נבחרים בהיסטוריוגרפיה של אסיה)

Dr. Arik Moran (Autumn 2020)

Course Description:

This course examines central trends in the recent historiography of Asia. Taking the revitalization of Global History with the late twentieth century surge of “Connected Histories” (Subrahmanyam 1997) across Euro-Asia as a point of departure, it examines a series of case studies to do with the writing and theorization of Asian History. Special emphasis is given to political contexts of knowledge production within and about Asia from the early modern era to the present. Topics covered include: the role of cultural and material intermediaries in European and South East Asia; the effects of Portuguese rule on religion and society in Goa; the re-centering of historical narratives in the wake of geopolitics and development along the Himalayan frontier; and theoretical exegeses about the nature of history in the postmodern era. By the end of the course, students will have gained a (hopefully) more nuanced understanding of “the Historian’s craft” and of the inextricability of empirical research from the political settings in which it is conducted.

Credit: 2 credits.

Time and Location: Tuesdays 10:15-11:45; Asian Studies Seminar Room 1122, Eshkol Tower.

Academic Requirements: Full attendance; active participation by engagement with assigned readings; submission of six reading reports; one oral presentation; final paper.

Reading Reports: Your reports on assigned readings should (a) summarize the main research questions and arguments, (b) describe the methodology used by their author/s, and (c) comment, critique, and raise thoughtful questions. The length of each reading report should be 2-3 pages.

Final Research Project: Students will choose a research topic in line with course materials by Week 4 (November 10) and submit a single page-research proposal by week 7 (May 12). Students will research the topic independently and present their proposed project in 15-20 minutes at the end of term, using the feedback to improve their final paper, which should not exceed 10 pages.

Grading: Participation 10%; six reading reports 30%; oral presentation 10%; final paper 50%.

Office Hours and Contact Information:

Mondays 11:00-12:00, Room 1012, Eshkol Tower or by appointment

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Course Outline

Week 1 (October 20):

Introduction: Historical Background, Terminology, and Concepts

Week 2 (October 27):

The Case for Global History: Sanjay Subrahmanyam and Eurasian Connectivity

Reading: Subrahmanyam, S. (1997). Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia. *Modern Asian Studies*, 31(3), 735-762.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/312798>

Week 3 (November 3):

Does Global History Have a Pulse?

Reading: Strathern, A. (2012). Featured Review Article. *Strange parallels: Southeast Asia in global context, c. 800–1830*. Volume 2: mainland mirrors: Europe, Japan, China, South Asia, and the islands. *Journal of Global History* 7, pp. 129-142.

Week 4 (November 10):

Religion and Politics in Premodern Asia: The Case of Siam

Reading: Strathern, A. (2019). Sacred Kingship under King Narai of Ayutthaya: Divinisation and Righteousness. *Journal of the Siam Society*, Vol. 107, Pt. 1, pp. 49–77.

Week 5 (November 17):

Early Modern Connectivities I: Portuguese Imperialism and Goa Society

Reading: Xavier, A. B. 2018. “Reducing difference in the Portuguese empire? A case study from early-modern Goa”. In *Changing Societies: Legacies and Challenges*. Vol. i. *Ambiguous Inclusions: Inside Out, Inside In*, eds. S. Aboim, P. Granjo, A. Ramos. Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 241-261. <https://doi.org/10.31447/ics9789726715030.11>

Week 6 (November 24):

Early Modern Connectivities II: Unearthing the Secrets of Catholic Goa’s Material Culture

Reading: Županov, Ines G. (2015). “The Pulpit Trap: Possession and Personhood in Colonial Goa”, *RES, Anthropology and Esthetics*, 65/66: 2014/2015, pp. 298-315.

Week 7 (December 1):

Retrieving the Colonial Past: Records

Reading: Hardiman, D. (1997) Origins and Transformations of the Devi. In *The Subaltern Studies Reader 1986-1995*, ed. Ranajit Guha. Delhi: Oxford University Press. 100-139.

Week 8 (December 8):

Anthropological Readings of History I: Events and Agency in Modern Historiography

Reading: Rodseth, L. (2014). Historical massacres and mythical totalities: Reading Marshall Sahlins on two American frontiers. In *Anthropologists and Their Traditions across National Borders*, eds. R. Darnell and F. W. Gleach. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, pp. 207-248.

Week 9 (December 15):

Anthropological Readings of History II: Identity Politics and the Construction of the Past

Reading: Friedman, J. (1992). The Past in the Future: History and the Politics of Identity. *American Anthropologist*, 94(4), new series, 837-859. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/680224>

Week 10 (December 22):

Scaling Global Histories Down: Geography, Politics, and the Himalayan Frontier

Reading: Martin Gerwin and Christoph Bergmann. 2012. "Geopolitical Relations and Regional Restructuring: The Case of the Kumaon Himalaya, India", *Erdkune*, 66(2), pp. 91-107

Week 11 (December 29):

Whither Global History? Towards a Pragmatic Assessment of the Present

Reading: Galen Murton. 2013. "Himalayan Highways: STS, the Spatial Fix, and Socio-Cultural Shifts in the Land of Zomia", *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology*, 12, pp. 609-621.

Week 12 (January 5):

Presentations I

Week 12 (January 12):

Presentations II

Week 13 (January 19):

Conclusion

***** Syllabus may be subjected to changes *****