

The Mughal Empire

HIST 3780

Online Course

3 Weeks: January 3 – January 21, 2022

Contact

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This syllabus may change throughout the semester. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to be exceptionally flexible and considerate to deal with this challenging situation. I will notify you with as much advance time as possible of there are any adjustments.

This is an online course, but it has all of the content, rigor and expectations of a regular, in-person course. Indeed, since there are no scheduled classes, you must be even more disciplined and organized in order to be successful. That includes completing each week of readings, going through the posted lecture notes, and submitting assignments on time. Perhaps most importantly, you must take the initiative to reach out to me if you need any help.

Description

This course explores the fascinating history of the Mughal Empire and its impact in South Asia and the wider world from approximately 1400 to 1800. Students will closely read secondary and primary texts along with audio, visual and literary materials to appreciate different political, economic and cultural changes from a variety of perspectives. We will begin by asking why the historiography of the Mughal period is so contentious, and what different interpretations tell us about the challenges of studying and writing this history. Next we will examine the following themes in greater detail: the pre-Mughal context of the subcontinent; the tumultuous career of the first emperor Babur and the establishment of Mughal rule; the main features and fortunes of the subsequent emperors Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb; the innovations in military tactics, civil administration and court culture; the revolts by various regional, ethnic and class groups against Mughal authority; the changes in religious practices, social hierarchy and gender relations; the interactions and comparisons between the Mughals and other empires such as the Ottomans in Turkey and Safavids in Persia; and the arrival of European explorers, missionaries and merchants. Throughout the course we will learn the importance of historicism, and how we understand the shifting relationship between the past and present.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course students should be able to:

- Identify global issues, processes and patterns relevant to the history of the Mughal Empire.
- Analyze diverse cultures, systems and environments through cross-cultural perspectives.

- Employ diverse frames of reference to expand critical thinking and problem-solving.
- Identify cultural differences, their ambiguities, similarities and inter-cultural relations.
- Use diverse communications patterns and knowledge of other cultures to extend access to information, experience and understanding.

Evaluation

Reading Analysis (8 total) 60%

This assignment asks you to write a short (1-2 paragraphs) analysis for every few days of readings. Rather than summarize the entire text, you should discuss any single aspect that you think is especially compelling or confusing, or that relates to the present-day. Be sure to include a specific quotation from the text with a parenthetical citation. Your analyses are due at the times listed in the schedule, and should be submitted on Blackboard.

Final Take-Home Exam 40%

The final exam will be a take-home essay. You will choose one out of two possible themes. Your essay should be 4-5 pages in length, double-spaced, size 12 Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins. You will have at least three days to complete it, which will be due at the time noted below and submitted on Blackboard. It will cover material from the entire course.

Texts

Michael H. Fisher, *A Short History of the Mughal Empire* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015).
ISBN: 9781848858732

The Fisher book is available for purchase at the WPU Bookstore, online at various booksellers and for six-hour loan at the Cheng Library. All other class materials (articles, chapters, videos) are available on the course website on Blackboard.

Policies

Grading

All writing assignments will be evaluated on three criteria:

- Writing Style (spelling, punctuation, structure and clarity).
- Textual Engagement (using evidence from the readings with appropriate citations).
- Creative Interpretation (expressing a well-reasoned perspective on a specific issue).

The letter-to-number grade scale is as follows: A = 93-100, A- = 90-92, B+ = 87-89, B = 83-86, B- = 80-82, C+ = 77-79, C = 73-76, C- = 70-72, D+ = 67-69, D = 63-66, D- = 60-62, F = <60

Lateness

Assignments are due online on Blackboard at the time specified in the schedule. Late assignments will be penalized one mark (i.e. 8 to 7) for each day they are late, and will not be accepted after five days from the due date.

Integrity

I expect all work you hand in to be your own. You will earn zero credit for plagiarized work (intentional or accidental), or work that is otherwise academically dishonest. I will also be forced to report the incident in accordance with WPU Academic Integrity Policy. If you do not know what constitutes plagiarism, please read the Student Handbook (p. 74-78), contact me by email, speak to staff at the Writing Center at 973-720-2633, or visit the following links:

- Academic Integrity Policy: wpconnect.wpunj.edu/catalog/front.cfm?section=AIN
WPU Homepage → Academics → Undergraduate Catalogue → General Information → Academic and Related Regulations → Academic Integrity Policy
- Avoiding Plagiarism: www.youtube.com/watch?v=asHqcz1kxTU
WPU Homepage → Academics → Library → Workshops & Tutorials → Tutorials → Avoiding Plagiarism @ WPU

If you have any questions about plagiarism, it is your responsibility to contact me by email, make an appointment or come to my office hours.

Schedule

TBD