

Ambedkar University Delhi

Course Outline

Monsoon/Winter Semester

School: Undergraduate Studies (Specify Campus)

Programme with title: BA History (Honours)

Semester to which offered: (I/II/ III/IV/ V/VI)

Course Title: Understanding the Past: Myths, Epics, Chronicles and Histories

Credits: 4

Course Code (new): SUS1HS431

Course Code (old): H02

Type of Course:	Compulsory	No	Cohort	BA (H) History
	Elective	Yes	Cohort	BA (H) other than History

For SUS only (Mark an X for as many as appropriate):

1. Foundation (Compulsory)
2. Foundation (Elective)
3. Discipline (Compulsory)
4. Discipline (Elective) X
5. Elective X

Course Coordinator and Team: TBD

Email of course coordinator:

Pre-requisites: NONE

Aim:

- To become familiar with debates over meanings of the past--for example, how we distinguish between past and present and locate ourselves as impartial (or partial) observers of events in time.

- To understand the nature of the historian's authority and his/her relation to wider and 'non-professional' audiences or producers of meanings about the past.
- To pose questions such as the following: How are 'sources' (written, material, oral and other) used? How is History relevant to the present? Is History an effort to discover and recover 'the past' or is it instead a creative (meaning-making) process, or is it both of these at once? Why have historians held contrary opinions about this? How do we distinguish between historical fact and 'interpretation'? What future is there for History as a scientific and humanistic discipline?
- While addressing claims about how scientific History organizes our understanding of past events and experiences, we consider alternative ways of knowing that have characterized the past 3,000 or more years of human life—ways that continue to grip human imagination.

Brief description of modules/ Main modules:

- I. Do you need a philosophy of history to understand history? Myths, epics and pre-modern understanding of past and present.
- II. Indian patterns in/of the past. Greco-Roman historiography.
- III. Medieval historiography: 'European', Chinese and 'Islamic'. Epics, chronicles and legends of nations.
- IV. Ibn Khaldun, *Muquaddimah*. Bacon and Descartes on understanding the past: science and 'facts' of history.
- V. The university revolution and history in an era of nationalism. The 'Annales School' and the ideal of 'total' history. Universities and study of history after 1945. History in the 'developing' world.
- VI. History and postmodernism.
- VII. What is left of history? Reflections on modernist and postmodernist history.

Reading List:

1. Herodotus, *The Histories*, trans. A. D. Godley: selections.
2. Mahābhārata: selections.
3. Abu'l Raihan Al-Biruni, *Tahqīq mā fi'l Hind*, trans. E. C. Sachau, Alberuni's India, 2 vols. (London:
4. K. Paul, Trench and Truebner, 1888-1910): selections.
5. E. H. Carr, *What Is History?* (London: Penguin, 1990 [1961]).
6. Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History* (California UP, 1982): selections.
7. Keith Jenkins, *Re-thinking History* (Routledge, 2003 [1991]): selections.
8. Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqqadimah*, trans. Franz Rosenthal: selections.

Secondary Readings:

Tentative Assessment schedule with details of weightage:

S.No	Assessment	Date/period in which Assessment will take place	Weightage
1	Short take home essay	Pre mid term	25%
2	Exam	Mid term	25%
3	Oral Presentation	Post Mid term	20%
4	Exam	End semester	30%