History 286
Cities in India and South Asia
(Lecture and Discussion course)

Prof. Arafat A. Valiani
Office location: 369 McKenzie Hall
Email: valiani@uoregon.edu

This course introduces students to the historical study of cities in the Indian subcontinent in the modern period (19th century to the present). We will explore a variety of urban contexts in South Asia, as well as comparisons with other Asian and North American cities. However students are not expected to learn about all of the modern human history of cities in the subcontinent. Instead, we will practice applying some of the key analytical approaches that distinguish the study of South Asian urban history. In order to do so, lectures and readings are organized around three prominent themes in the study of urban history of the region, specifically economics, social life, and globalization in relation to four broad research questions or themes. The answers will, of course, vary across cities and contexts however students will be able to identify the various important and different understandings of urban life in South Asian history.

We begin the course by exploring the economic organization of Indian cities includes topics that include the planning of cities spaces allocated for housing, industrial and commercial development, and the design of city infrastructure. Studying these aspects of modern South Asian cities will teach us about what makes them modern and how they have evolved from the nineteenth century to the present. Next we examine social and cultural life in the city by tracing the role of religious identities for urban residents. In doing so we will learn of the effects of caste, ethnicity and religion in the formation of civic and political communities in cities. A course that focuses on cities cannot be complete without an examination of globalization which
we will examine as our final theme. Therefore will analyze how transnational exchanges in the contemporary period transform real estate markets and housing, media and the cosmopolitan, and yet still ‘traditional’, world in which urban residents imagine themselves to exist.

Investigating the economic, social/cultural and global dimensions of urban history of South Asia represent different views of ‘the city’ and the debates on the concept in the field of South Asian history. The course seeks to expose students to this cross-section of perspectives in the field that are tied to issues of power, culture and change, which are tied to histories of different urban agglomerations and phases of the Indian subcontinent in the modern period. Ultimately, they are intended to permit students to decide which aspect of the city, or which combination of dimensions, they view as influencing urban life in the region. In studying this diversity of urban histories students will learn of the multiple forces that construct South Asian urban life and the manner in which tolerance, as well as social exclusion, have manifested in these contexts even though they have undergone significant change in the modern period. Specifically, students will receive a thorough grounding in the manners in which caste and religious identities manifest in urban housing, employment and industry. This will afford them with an understanding of the effects of historically specific beliefs that concern race, ethnicity and gender in terms of the urban economy, social segregation and what urban practices/policies of tolerance, pluralism/multiculturalism and secularism have emerged over time. Such habits of mind, social practices and institutional orientations are substantially different from 20th and 21st century United States in large part because of the uniqueness and powerful articulation of the caste system and religious beliefs in virtually all cities of the Indian subcontinent.

Students successfully completing this course will receive four (4) credits toward the sixteen (16) credits required to satisfy the Social Science and Multicultural (International Cultures) requirements for either a BA or BS degree. History and Sociology majors will receive credit toward their major requirement. This course fulfills a Global Context requirement for Business and Accounting majors.

Learning Objectives:
By the end of term you should be able to:
• Trace changes in cities of modern South Asia, and in comparisons with other Asian and North American, cities over time.
• Analyze and interpret “primary” sources of historical information.
• Identify an author’s argument or thesis.
• Write an essay and develop your own argument, supported by evidence.

Required Reading: The schedule (below) directs you to read specific portions of each book, indicated by page numbers, prior to particular classes. In order to keep costs of required texts for this course down, all assigned readings not included in the required textbook (below) are available on Canvas.

1. Siddhartha Deb, The Beautiful and the Damned: A Portrait of the New India (Faber and Faber 2012)
Class Format: Lecture and Discussion.

Lectures: Each class meeting will be a lecture pertaining to the assigned reading. I expect you to attend every lecture, on time, and ask any questions to the lecturer.

Requirements and Methods of Evaluation

Participation: 10% (evaluation ongoing throughout the term)  
Since this course depends on your active and informed participation in discussion sections, I expect you to attend class and discussion sections regularly, read the assigned texts before coming to class, be prepared to discuss and critique the readings in the discussion sections and class, pose questions and converse with your classmates and me. You will also be assessed in terms of your response to specific discussion questions that I will pose. This means bringing class readings to discussion sections and class with you: be prepared to refer to specific passages when making sense of the readings. Your success and experience in this course is dependent upon each person joining in an ongoing conversation on South Asian urban history.

Reading responses: 20% (2 x 25 points each)  
For any three of the required texts or assigned readings write a four-page response. This assignment has three goals:
- Show that you read the text in its entirety and understood its primary arguments and themes.
- Place the text in the context of the study of South Asian urban history by connecting it to lectures and/or class discussions.
- Respond to the book by answering the following interpretive questions.
  · What kind of book is it? Is it a history, a chronicle, an academic study or report, an ethnography or something else? What is the subject of the book? Does it have a clear thesis or principle idea? How does the author go about making his or her case (i.e., based on what sources, language, or imagery?)
  · What is the author trying to say or convey?

Exams: Mid-term and Final Exam (20% each)  
Any work submitted for credit that includes the words or ideas of anyone else must fully and accurately identify your source in a complete citation. If you are confused about this or do not understand the consequences of academic dishonesty at the UO—or the ethical issues behind these university policies—please read the UO plagiarism policy:  
http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/

I encourage you to take advantage of my scheduled office hours (listed on the department website) or to make an appointment to see me. If you have concerns or special needs please meet with me, I am committed to accommodate students with disabilities.
Tentative Schedule (This may be adjusted as we progress, I will announce any changes in class one week in advance as well via Canvas)

1. HOW DO WE CONCEPTUALIZE ‘THE CITY’?

Week 1: Monday, Map assignment distributed.
Introduction: South Asian Cities—What, Where and When
-Syllabus Review
-Introduction to the study of South Asian urban history.

Wed. Map assignment due.
Orientalism and Methods of Interpreting Colonial Cities

2. HOW DOES THE ECONOMY SHAPE CITY LIFE?

Week 2: Monday, Markets and the Production of Urban Space (New York and Lahore)

Wed. Precolonal Urban Structures and Changes Under the Colonial Economy

Week 3: Monday, Town Planning as Economic Policy and Method of Control (Bombay)
-Primary Source: report of Colonel Robert Napier, who was charged with the redesign of Lucknow after the 1847 rebellion, The City Must be Safe, 1858, quoted extensively in The Making of Colonial Lucknow by Veena Talwar Oldenburg, pp. 27-58.

Wed., Rational Planning as a Method of Reform

Week 4: Monday, The Making of a New Capital, American Urban Planning in Postcolonial Karachi I (Pakistan)

Wed., Creating a Modern Road System, American Urban Planning in Postcolonial Karachi II (Pakistan)

Week 5: Monday, Master Planning in India, American Urban Planning in Postcolonial New Delhi (the Chicago model is introduced in India)
-Primary Source: Collated correspondence from Albert Meyer, Ford Foundation representative in India, 1949-60, 30 pages.
Wed., Planning a City for Consumption, American Urban Planning in Postcolonial New Delhi (the Chicago model is introduced in India)
-Primary Source: Collated correspondence from Albert Meyer, Ford Foundation representative in India, 1949-65, 32 pages.

Week 6: Monday, Master Planning and American Urban Community Development in Postcolonial Western India (Ahmedabad)

Wed., Urban Networks, Housing and Consumption in Postcolonial Ahmedabad

3. DO CITIES POSSESS A SINGLE CULTURE?

Week 7: Monday, Art, Real Estate and Gentrification (New York)

Wed., Civic Sensibilities and Religious Ethics in Cairo

Week 8: Monday, Religious Community, Activism and Ethnic Violence (Ahmedabad, western India)

Wed. Religious Processions and Public Festivals

4. WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF GLOBALIZATION ON CITIES?

Week 9: Monday, Real Estate and Designing Homes
Primary Sources:

**Wed. Becoming Rich in New Delhi**
Chapter 1, ‘The Great Gatsby: A Rich Man in India’, The Beautiful and the Damned

**Week 10: Monday, The Social Space of Technology**

**Wed. Gender, Work and the City**
Chapter 5, ‘The Girl from F&B: Women and the Big City’, The Beautiful and the Damned