**HIST 60: The East India Company, 1600-1857**
Professor Farid Azfar
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**Course Description:**
This course examines the history of the East India Company, paying special attention to the period between 1757 and 1857. We will examine this history from a multiplicity of angles, keying into questions of colonialism, capitalism, conquest, scandal, science, gender, environment, reform, violence, and other critical, intersecting phenomena that continue to spark debate amongst historians. Our travels through this history will be focused by analytical questions: When, how, and why did a trading company transform into a landed, territorial empire? What were the consequences of this transformation? What was the political terrain on which the history of the Company was played out, and in what ways did the Company transform that terrain profoundly? We will start the semester with an intense inquiry into the core narrative and, having comprehended the skeletal structure of the Company’s history, proceed to a series of in-depth engagements with innovative and ground-breaking works on specific moments, problems, and questions. This course will be run as an advanced seminar, with an intensive reading- and writing-load and a heavy emphasis on participation.

**Core Readings (books marked with an * can be found on the library website):**

**Requirements**

**Map Quiz/Short Exam (10%):** A 40-minute in-class exam, including a map-quiz, to be held in the fourth week of class. Apart from the map component, the format will be short-answer.

**Take-home essay exam (30%).** The take-home final will be due at the very end of final’s period.

**Papers and presentations (5-7 pages each) (40%).** Two papers, based on an identified set of sources and topics. Your second paper will encompass a wider range of themes. Both papers are due on a Friday and you will make
presentations on your thoughts concerning both papers on the Monday before they are due.

**Secondary Source Presentation (10%).** You will pick a source from ‘Further Readings’ and make a formal, 30 minute presentation.

**Participation plus weekly 500 word (1-2 page) response papers, or other discretionary short assignments (20%).** Each week, except for when there is a paper due, you will turn in a response paper synthesizing and reflecting upon the week’s readings. I will start each class by calling on one of you to present your paper: this is less in the spirit of ‘pop quiz’ than it is in the spirit of having every voice heard. These papers are essential, and the failure to turn in a paper more than once at the beginning of class on Monday will severely impact your final grade. The time and effort you put into them will heavily influence your performance on the final exam, as well as the quality of your experience in – and your grade for – this class. On occasion, I will substitute the response paper for some other kind of exercise (for instance, I might break you into groups making short presentations on a given week’s readings).

Please note that these percentages are approximate. I will be paying attention to the trajectory of your performance over the course of the semester.

**Policies**

**Absences.** The course policy is as unambiguous as the History department policy: “Students are required to attend all classes for the successful completion of the course. Unexcused absences will result in a lower grade.” For an absence to be excused it must be followed by a note from a doctor or a dean. More than two absences will result in an F or a NC.

**Lateness.** Please do your best to come to class on time. It’s fine to be late once or twice a semester, but if you have a prior engagement (another class, practice for an athletic team) that makes the lateness chronic, you might want to reconsider taking this class.

**Laptops.** Not allowed, no exceptions.

**Plagiarism.** This is a subject enshrouded with fear and confusion, so come to me with any questions. But please also familiarize yourselves with the College’s policy on academic honesty and integrity. Papers suspected of containing plagiarized materials will be subjected to the College Judiciary Committee. A useful description of plagiarism can be found here: [http://www.swarthmore.edu/academics/english-literature/plagiarism-and-citation.xml](http://www.swarthmore.edu/academics/english-literature/plagiarism-and-citation.xml)

**Office hours:** I encourage you all to come visit me during my office hours at any point in the semester, whether or not you have a paper due, and especially if you are experiencing some kind of problem, but also if you would just like to chat about the course or your overall intellectual experience.
Schedule

Week One: Introductions: Five Roads to the East India Company Act of 1773 (1/21)

Week Two: The Master Narrative: 1600-1757 (1/28)

Required Readings:


Week Three: The Master Narrative, 1757-1857 (2/4)

Required Readings:

Ian St. John, *The Making of the Raj: India Under the East India Company* (2012), Chapter 4


Further Readings:


Week Four: Exam and *The Chess Players* (2/11)

Week Five: The Crisis of the 1690s: A View from London (2/18)

Required Readings


* The case of the marriners which served the East-India Company in their wars in the East-Indies. And of the widows and orphans of those that perished in the said wars, to the
number of five hundred, and as many widows. : Humbly presented to the honourable House of Commons. (1690)

* A petition against the East-India Company To the Honourable the Commons of England in Parliament assembled. The humble petition of several merchants and traders, in and about the City of London, and other Their Majesties subjects (1691)

* A Dialogue between a director of the new East-India Company and one of the committee for preparing by-laws for the said company in which those for a rotation of directors and the preventing of bribes are particularly debated (1693)

* The Case of the East India Company (1694)

* A Brief abstract of the great oppressions and injuries which the late managers of the East-India-Company have acted on the lives, liberties and estates of their fellow-subjects with a short account of their unjust dealings with the natives in sundry parts of India, which has so much expos’d the honour and interest of the nation, and hazarded the loss of that advantageous trade, humbly presented to the consideration of the honourable, the knights, citizens and burgesses, in Parliament assembled (1698)

* Anon, Sam, against sheperd: or, Reasons offer’d by the new East-India Company, for passing the bill, for raising two millions, with the benefit of the trade to India, in the year 1698 (1699)

* Anon, An Account of what has passed in the treaty between the old and new East-India Companies towards an agreement (1699)

* Anon, An Elegy on the death of the old East India Company who died of a wound she receiv’d from a patent, value two millions (1699)

* Anon, An answer to the most material objections against the bill for restraining the East-India wrought silks, &c. humbly offered to the consideration of the Lords (1699)

* Anon, A touch of the times in a dialogue between an East-India tyger and a high-German wolf concerning the late terrible battel at the cock-pit between our English bull-dogs and the tyger, on Thursday the 9th of March, 1699. With the bull-dogs complaint against wolves and tygers in general. To which is added, A sayter [sic] on the cock-pit combate. (1699)

Further Readings:


**Week Six: Weavers and the View from South India (2/25)**

**Required Readings:**

**Further Readings:**


**Week Seven: The Revisionist Imperative (3/4)**

**Required Readings:**


**Further Readings:**


**SPRING BREAK**

**Week Eight: The Black Hole of Calcutta (3/18)**

**Required Readings:**


**Further Readings:**

Michael Edwardes, *The Battle of Plassey and the Conquest of Bengal* (1963)


**Week Nine: The Crisis of the 1760s (3/25)**

**Required Readings:**
Fort-Williams-India House Correspondence, volume 3 from The Hathi Trust
http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/006214189


* Ghulam Hussain Khan, Seir Mutaqharin, or History of Modern Times (1789), Volume II, Sections XII and XIV


Presentations on Monday and Paper One due at the end of the week

Week Ten: Empire on Trial (4/1)

Required Readings:

Nicholas Dirks, The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain (2006)

Macaulay’s essay on Hastings in The Edinburgh Review
http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00generallinks/macaulay/hastings/txt_complete.html

* Edmund Burke, Mr. Burke’s speech, in Westminster-Hall, on the 18th and 19th of February, 1788, with explanatory notes (1788) [ECCO]

Further Readings:


Week Eleven: Sex, Gender and Slavery (4/8)

Required Readings:

* Indrani Chatterjee, “Colouring Subalternity: Slaves, Concubines and Social Orphans in Early Colonial India,” in Subaltern Studies X: Writings on South Asian History and Society (1999), 49-97

* Indrani Chatterjee, “Kinship and Kinlessness in the Nizamat of Murshidabad,” in Gender, Slavery, and Law in Colonial India (1999), 37-77

Further Readings:


Complete *Gender, Slavery and Law in Early Colonial India* and *Sex and the Family in Colonial India*


**Week Twelve: Company Science (4/15)**

Required Readings:

* Kalyanakrishnan Sivaramakrishnan, “Intimations of a Government Rationality at the Margins of Empire” and “British Entry into the Jungle Mahals,” in *State-making and Environmental Change in Colonial Eastern India* (1999), 29-75


Further Readings:


Mark Harrison, Preface and “Climate, Topography, and the Debate over Colonization, c 1820-1860,” in *Climates and Constitutions: Health, Race, Environment and British Imperialism in India, 1600-1850* (1999), v-vi, 111-152

The rest of Kalyanakrishnan Sivaramakrishnan, *State-making and Environmental Change in Colonial Eastern India* (1999)


**Week Thirteen: Company Words (4/22)**

Required Readings:
Miles Ogborn, “The Work of Empire in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Indian Ink*

* Calcutta Gazette (Eighteenth Century Collections Online)

**Presentations on Monday and Paper Two due at the end of the week**

**Week Fourteen: The Conquest of Space and Time (4/29)**

**Required Readings:**


* East India Merchant, *A Letter to the Right Honourable Lord John Russell: on the subject of Indian Railways,* “Bristol Selected Pamphlets” (1848) [Available on JSTOR]

* John Bourne, *Indian River Navigation: A Report Addressed to the Committee of Gentlemen Formed for the Establishment of Improved Steam Navigation Upon the Rivers of India: Illustrating the Practicability of Opening Up Some Thousands of Miles of River Navigation in India, by the Use of a New Kind of Steam Vessel, Adapted to the Navigation of Shallow and Shifting Rivers* (1849) [JSTOR]

**Further Readings:**


**Final Exam due on May 18th**

**ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

- Lucy Sutherland, *The East India Company in Eighteenth Century Politics* (1962)
- Martha McLaren, *British India and British Scotland, 1780-1830: Career Building, Empire Building, and a Scottish School of Thought on Indian Governance* (2001)