

## Delhi through the Ages: the Making of its Early Modern History

## Course Objective:

The objective of the paper is to teach students about the changes in the city of Delhi from its early inception to the eighteenth century. The course teaches how the city grew into one of the largest cities in the world and was the capital of some of the great empires of its time. As the capital of these empires, Delhi profited from continuous immigration, state patronage and a vibrant cultural life. But the course also wants students to learn that the city was not merely dependent upon its rulers for cultural and political sustenance. It focuses on Sufis, litterateurs and merchants who also gave the city its unique character and resilience in the face of political turbulence. Other than recourse to readings the course tries to acquaint students with Delhi through project work and introspection of Delhi's presence and its uneasy relationship with its past.

## Learning Outcomes:

The study of Delhi will introduce students to different kinds of sources – archaeological, architectural and a variety of textual materials. Students will learn how to use these materials and correlate their sometimes discordant information. Through the study of a city which was also a capital it will teach students to analyze processes of urbanization and state formation. But the focus on the city will also teach them the difficulties in appropriating narratives of the state with the history of particular localities. The course underlines the need to read the history of the city creatively without subsuming it within the state.

## Course Content:

1. Between Myth and History – Delhi's Early Past: Indraprastha, Lalkot
2. From settlements to cityscape – Understanding the Many cities of Delhi
3. Delhi's 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Century settlements – Case study of any two: 1) Delhi-yi kuhna's *masjid-i jami* (old Delhi/Mehrauli), 2) Siri, 3) Ghiyaspur/Kilukhri, 4) Tughluqabad, 5) Jahanpanah, and 6) Firuzabad (see the numerically correlated readings below).
4. Shahjahanabad: Qila Mubarak (Red Fort) as a site of power and the morphology of the city
5. 18<sup>th</sup> century Delhi: political upheaval and social empowerment – complicated understandings of 'decline'

## Essential Readings:

- Singh, Upinder. (2006). *Ancient Delhi*. Delhi: Oxford University Press
- Richard J. Cohen. "An Early Attestation of the Toponym Dhili", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 109 (1989), pp. 513-519.
- Kumar, Sunil. (2019) "The Tyranny of Meta-Narratives; Re-reading a History of Sultanate Delhi", in Kumkum Roy and Naina Dayal ed, *Questioning Paradigms, Constructing Histories: A Festschrift for Romila Thapar*, Aleph Book Company, pp 222-235.
- Irfan Habib, "Economic History of the Delhi Sultanate – an Essay in Interpretation", *IHR* 4 (1978), pp. 287-303.
- Ali Athar. (1985). "Capital of the Sultans: Delhi through the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Centuries", in R.E. Frykenberg, ed., *Delhi Through the Ages: Essays in Urban History, Culture and Society*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 34-44
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- Koch, Ebba. (1997). "Mughal Palace Gardens from Babur to Shah Jahan (1526-1648)", *Mugharnas*, vol. 14 pp. 143-165
- Koch, Ebba. (1994). "Diwan-i 'Amm and Chihil Sutun: The Audience Halls of Shah Jahan", *Mugharnas*, vol. 11, pp. 143-165.
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- Rezavi, Syed Ali Nadeem, (2010). "The Mighty Defensive Fort": Red Fort At Delhi Under Shahjahan – Its Plan And Structures As Described By Muhammad Waris." *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 71, pp. 1108-21.
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- Alam, Muzaffar. (2013) "Introduction to the second edition: Revisiting the Mughal Eighteenth Century" in *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India: Awadh and the Punjab 1707-1748*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp.xiii-ixiv
- Raziuddin Aquil, (2017) "Violating Norms of Conduct" in *The Muslim Question: understanding Islam and Indian History*, Delhi: Penguin Random House, pp. 133-156.
- Dadlani, Chanchal. (2017). "The City Built, the City Rendered: Locating Urban Subjectivity in Eighteenth-Century Mughal Delhi." *Affect, Emotion, and Subjectivity in Early Modern Muslim Empires: New Studies in Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Art and Culture*, pp. 148-67.
- Chenoy, Shama Mitra. (1998). *Shahjahanabad, a City of Delhi, 1638-1857*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers.
- Ataulah. (2006-2007). "Mapping of 18<sup>th</sup> Century Delhi: The Cityscape of a pre-Modern Sovereign City" *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, vol. 67 pp. 1042-1057.

- Nilanjan Sarkar, "An urban imaginaire, ca 1350 : The capital city in Ziya' Barani's *Fatawa-i Jahandari*", *IESHR*, VOL. 48 (2011): 407-24.
- 1) Flood, Finbarr B. "Introduction" in Finbarr B. Flood, *Piety and Politics in the Early Indian Mosque*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. xi-lxxviii
- 2) Jackson, Peter. (1986). 'Delhi: The Problem of a Vast Military Encampment', in: R.E. Frykenberg (ed.), *Delhi Through the Ages: Essays in Urban History, Culture, and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp.18-33.
- 3) Najaf Haidar, 'Persian Histories and a Lost City of Delhi', *Studies in People's History*, vol. 1, (2014): 163-171
- 3) Desiderio Pinto, s.j., "The Mystery of the Nizamuddin Dargah: the Account of Pilgrims", in Christian W. Troll, ed., *Muslim Shrines in India*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 112-124.
- 3) Kumar, Sunil. (2019) "The Tyranny of Meta-Narratives: Re-reading a History of Sultanate Delhi", in Kumkum Roy and Naina Dayal ed. *Questioning Paradigms, Constructing Histories: A Festschrift for Romila Thapar*, Aleph Book Company, pp 222-235.
- 3) Aquil, R. 2008. "Hazrat-i-Delhi: The Making of the Chishti Sufi Centre and the Stronghold of Islam." *South Asia Research* 28: 23-48.
- 4, 5, 6) Welch, Anthony and Howard Crane. (1983). "The Tughluqs: Master Builders of the Delhi Sultanate": *Muqarnas*, vol. 1, pp. 123-166.
- 6) Flood, Finbarr B. (2003). "Pillars, Palimpsests, and Princely Practices: Translating the past in Sultanate Delhi" *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, No. 43, Islamic Arts, pp. 95-116.
- 6) Anand Taneja, 'Saintly Visions: Other histories and history's others in the medieval ruins of Delhi' *IESHR*, 49 (2012).

#### Suggested Readings:

- Singh, Upinder, ed., (2006) *Delhi: Ancient History*, Delhi: Social Science Press
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- Page, J.A. (1937). *An Memoir on Kotla Firoz Shah, Delhi*. New Delhi: Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India #52
- Shokooby, Mehrdad. (2007). *Tughluqabad: a paradigm for Indo-Islamic Urban planning and its architectural components*. London: Araxus Books.
- Anthony Welch, "A Medieval Center of Learning in India: the Hauz Khas Madrasa in Delhi", *Muqarnas*, 13 (1996): 165-90;
- Anthony Welch, "The Shrine of the Holy Footprint in Delhi", *Muqarnas*, 14 (1997): 116-178;
- Hasan, S. Nurul. (1991). "The Morphology of a Medieval Indian City: A Case study of Shahjahanabad", in Indu Banga ed. *The City in Indian History*, Delhi
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- Chandra, Satish. (1991). "Cultural and Political Role of Delhi, 1675-1725", in R.E. Frykenberg, *Delhi through the Ages: Essays in Urban History, Culture and Society*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 106-116.
- Moosvi, Shireen. (1985) "Expenditure on Buildings under Shahjahan—A Chapter of Imperial Financial History." *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, vol. 46 pp. 285-99.
- Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, (2001). "A True Beginning in the North" and "A Phenomenon called 'Vali'" in *Early Urdu Literary Culture and History*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 109-126, 129-142.
- Bayly, Christopher Alan. (1986). "Delhi and Other Cities of North India during the 'Twilight'", in *Delhi through the Ages: Essays in Urban History, Culture, and Society*, edited by Robert Eric Frykenberg. Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 221-36.

#### Teaching Learning Process:

Classroom teaching supported by group discussions or group presentations on specific themes/readings. Given that the students enrolled in the course are from a non-history background, adequate emphasis shall be given during the lectures to what is broadly meant by the historical approach and the importance of historicising various macro and micro-level developments/phenomena. Interactive sessions through group discussions or group presentations shall be used to enable un-learning of prevailing misconceptions about historical developments and time periods, as well as to facilitate revision of issues outlined in the lectures. Supporting audio-visual aids like documentaries and power point presentations, and an appropriate field-visit will be used where necessary.

#### Assessment Methods:

Students will be regularly assessed for their grasp on debates and discussions covered in class. Two written submissions; one of which could be a short project, will be used for final grading of the students. Students will be assessed on their ability to explain important historical trends and thereby engage with the historical approach.

Internal Assessment: 25 Marks

Written Exam: 75 Marks

Total: 100 Marks

#### Keywords:

Myth, history, settlements, cityscape, morphology, social empowerment, Delhi, urbanisation.