‘Being the other’?: Islam in India (7th-21st c.)

Course Information

Course Duration: 15 Weeks  
Credit Hours: 3 Credits  
Meetings: 2 x 1.5 hr sessions per week  
Cross-listed elective course

Instructor Information:

Prof. (Dr.) Laurence Gautier  
Email: lmagautier@jgu.edu.in  
Office: 52B, Ground Floor, New Faculty Office  
Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Description

This course engages with contemporary debates on the history of Islam and Muslims in South Asia, from the 7th to the 21st century. It will examine a wide range of themes, from so-called Muslim conquests to conversion, syncretism, Sharia or ‘Muslim separatism’. It will give students tools to analyse these oft-fraught issues from a historical perspective, in a contextualised framework. The course will address questions such as: what was ‘Islamic’ about Arab and Central Asian conquests? What factors facilitated the spread of Islam in the subcontinent? Was ‘Muslim separatism’ responsible for Partition? Through these debates, the course aims to unpack widely held assumptions on Muslim identity and Muslims’ place in the subcontinent, in the past as well as in the present. After a few modules on the medieval and early modern periods, a large part of the course will be dedicated to the colonial and postcolonial periods, from which we have inherited ‘modern’ conceptions of Muslim identity and the nation. This course will address students with an interest in history as well as in contemporary politics.

Course method:

Each lecture will include a discussion on a selected academic reading or on a magazine article. There will also be an effort to look directly at primary sources (written, visual and oral). The objective is to familiarise students with historians’ methods of document analysis and to engage with the political and historiographical debates around Islam and Muslims’ presence in the subcontinent.
Course Assessment Breakdown

Reading summaries: 20%
Students will be requested to submit substantial summaries of two academic readings included in the course’s bibliography. These should include a summary and a critical analysis of the readings’ core arguments, of the sources they use, of their location in the political and historiographical debates and of their potential limitations. The purpose is to train students to read academic writings critically.

Mid-term exam: 25%
This in-class exam will include questions on the readings as well as one document analysis.

End-of-term essay: 40%
This essay will be a take-home assignment, meant to assess students’ understanding of the main aspects of the course. Students will be encouraged to use some of the historians’ arguments discussed in class as well as concrete examples drawn from the primary sources examined in class.

Class participation: 15%
This includes participation on the basis of the required readings as well as participation to the workshops on primary sources.

Written Assignment Requirements
All written assignments should adhere to the following, or penalties will apply:

● Stick to the word limit. Penalties will apply to papers which are over OR under.
● Be on single-sided A4 pages
● Have 1-inch (2.5cm) margins
● Have 1.5 line spacing
● Have Times New Roman 12 point font
● Have page numbers in the top right-hand corner
● Have your name, student number, and the title of the assignment on page 1
● Be referenced using the MLA citation system (including a works cited page)
● Avoid plagiarism (see the definition of plagiarism below)

Grade Definition

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<th>Grade Definition</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>O (80% and Above) [8.0]</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>A+ (75%-79%) [7.5]</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
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A Note on Plagiarism
In line with JGU and UGC policy, JSLH operates a zero-tolerance approach to Plagiarism. The unacknowledged use of material by others within your work is a violation of academic integrity and all reported cases will be investigated before potential disciplinary action.

Plagiarism includes:
- direct copying from a book article, web site, or another student's assignment
- paraphrasing another person's work with minor changes, but keeping the meaning, form and/or progression of ideas of the original
- piecing together sections of the work of others into a new whole
- submitting an assignment that has already been submitted for assessment in another subject
- presenting an assignment as independent work when it has been produced in whole or part in collusion with other people, for example, another student or a tutor.

Classroom Punctuality and Conduct:
JSLH conducts all classes on a foundation of professionalism. It is expected that students should be present in class and seated within five minutes of the class start time. Students arriving after a ten-minute window from the designated start time will be refused entry/attendance. Please show courtesy to your instructors and co-learners by observing punctuality. Please also note that the seminar room is a place for free expression and critical thinking and this comes with a responsibility on the part of students to respect opinions expressed and actively participate in the work of the classroom discussion.

**Attendance Policy**
Students must attend all classes. Attendance will be taken. Absences will directly affect your grade and hurt your ability to complete assignments or effectively complete your final essay. As per University regulation and State Law, students must maintain 75% attendance in class. This means that you can NOT be absent for more than seven sessions. Failure to adhere to this threshold will result in disciplinary action, you will be ineligible to sit the final exam, and you will be debarred. JSLH strictly adheres to these policies.

If you miss a session flagger for an assignment activity, you cannot reschedule.

**Disability Support and Accommodation Requirements:**
JGU endeavors to make all its courses accessible to students. All students with a known disability needing academic accommodations are required to register with the Disability Support Committee dsc@jgu.edu.in. The Committee has so far identified the following conditions that could possibly hinder student’s overall well-being. These include: physical and mobility related difficulties; visual impairment; hearing impairment; medical conditions; specific learning difficulties e.g. dyslexia; mental health. The Disability Support Committee maintains strict confidentiality in its discussions.

**Use of phone, texting and laptops**
Laptops are welcome if you need them to take notes or engage with course material but if it becomes apparent that you are using it for any other purpose, we will ask you to shut them down. Please have respect for your instructor and your fellow students. Do not distract others. Mobile phones are not to be used in class, and please switch them to silent.
Sessional Breakdown

Subject to slight adjustment. Readings for each week are listed below each session, and should be completed before class.

General Session Plan

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<td>Sessions 3-6</td>
<td>Islamization: conversion by force?</td>
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<td>Module 2</td>
<td>Mughals: golden or dark age?</td>
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Detailed Session Plan

**Week 1:** Introduction

Session 1: The ‘Muslim’ category in question  
Session 2: Key political and historiographical debates: Islamic intrusion in India, conquest and orthodoxy

Suggested Reading: Metcalf, “The Study of Muslims in South Asia”

**Module 1: Muslim as invaders?**

**Week 2:**  
Session 3: Early steps: trade and conquests.  
   The Central Asian connection: Mongols, Turks, Afghans and Persianate culture  
Session 4: Muslims’ vs ‘Hindus’? The case of temple desecration

Required Readings (read at least one of the two):  
Thapar, “Somanatha and Mahmud”; Eaton, “Temple Desecration in Pre-Modern India”.

Suggested Readings:
Wink, “The early expansion of Islam in India”; Eaton, *India in the Persianate Age*, chp.1

**Week 3:**
Session 5: Delhi Capital
Session 6: Alauddin Khilji, a villain?

Required Reading: Mukhia, “Alauddin Khalji, a Sultan Who Did Not Care …”

Suggested Readings:
Jackson, “Muslim India: the Delhi Sultanate”;
Eaton, *India in the Persianate Age*: “The Delhi Sultanate under the Mamluks”

**Module 2: Islamization: conversion by force?**

**Week 4:**
Session 7: Different patterns of conversion. The case of Bengal
Session 8: The role of Sufis

Required Readings (read at least one of the two):
Eaton, "Approaches to the Study of Conversion to Islam in India."

Suggested Reading: Green, "Blessed Men and tribal politics”.

**Module 3: Mughals: Imperial Islam**

**Week 5**
Session 9: Babur: heir to Timur and Chinghiz Khan
Session 10: Looking at the Babri Masjid through historians’ lens

Required Readings:

Suggested Readings:
Dale, "India under Mughal rule.";
Varma and Menon, "Was There a Temple under the Babri Masjid?".

**Week 6**
Sessions 11-12: “Good” vs “Bad” Muslim? Akbar and Aurangzeb

Required Readings:
Lal, “Aurangzeb, Akbar and the Communalization of History”; Brown, “Did Aurangzeb ban music?”

Suggested Reading: Dale, "India under Mughal rule.", pp. 274-314.

**Week 7**
Session 13: Rule by Sharia?
Session 14: Women and the Mughal Court
Required Reading: Alam, "Sharia and governance in the Indo-Islamic context."


**Week 8:**
Session 15: Beyond the Mughals: Islam in South India
Session 16: South Asian Islam(s): ‘syncretism’ or ‘creative adaptation’?

Required reading: Metcalf, “The Study of Muslims in South Asia”

Suggested reading: Narayanan, "Religious vocabulary and regional identity”.

**Week 9:**
Sessions 17-18 : MID-TERM EXAM

**Module 4: Muslims under colonial rule: rejecting modernity, turning within?**

**Week 10:**
Session 19: 1857 and the emergence of the ‘Muslim question’
Session 20: Religious reform, modernism and jihad - preludes to partition?

Required Reading: Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India* (pages to be confirmed).

Suggested Reading: Lelyveld, *Aligarh’s first generation* (pages to be confirmed).

**Week 11:**
Session 21: The Khilafat Movement: Hindu-Muslim Unity?
Session 22: Muslims and “composite nationalism”

Required Reading: Metcalf, "Observant Muslims, secular Indians”.

Suggested Reading: Minault, Gail. *The Khilafat movement*.

**Week 12:**
Sessions 23-24: The debate on 'Muslim separatism': Muslims behind partition?

Required Reading: Jalal, "Exploding communalism”.


**Module 5: After partition: internal outsiders?**

**Week 13:**
Sessions 25-26: The long partition: violence, displacement and split identities

Required Reading: Zamindar, *The long partition* (pages to be confirmed).
Suggested Readings: Partition Museum website; Butalia, *The other side of silence*.

**Week 14:**
Session 27: Constitution, minority rights and national integration: diversity against unity?
Session 28: A backward minority?

Required Reading: Bajpai, *Debating difference* (pages to be confirmed).

Suggested Reading: Sachar Committee Report (Ministry of Minority Affairs).

**Week 15:**
Session 29: Speaking in one voice? The Pasmanda movement against ‘upper-caste’ Muslims
Session 30: Conclusion: Being Muslim in today's India

Required Readings:
Alam, “Democratisation of Indian Muslims”;
Jaffrelot, "Losing by Religion”.

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**Reading list**

This reading list includes required readings as well as optional ones.


