HIST 401: History of the Indian Ocean World (W)

HIST 663: Seminar in South Asian History

University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (UHM)
Fall 2016 – 3 Credits

MHE08: The Indian Ocean in History

Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD)
Monsoon Semester 2016 – 4 Credits

Meeting on Wednesdays and Saturdays, 11.15am-1.15pm, CR 313 (Admin Block)
Instructor: Dr. Ned Bertz (bertz@hawaii.edu)
Associate Professor, University of Hawai‘i, and Visiting Faculty Member, AUD

Course Description and Goals:
This elective course (MHE08) is part of the Comparative History specialisation area in the MA History Programme at AUD. It is open to undergraduate (HIST 401) and graduate (HIST 663) students from UHM. Different requirements will be maintained for each group, in particular in respect to a final research paper and standards of other assignment material.

The course is designed as a collaborative seminar and will revolve around the idea that the Indian Ocean region, through interactions and imagination, constitutes a coherent unit of historical analysis.
The class will employ a world historical approach from the vantage point of water and coasts in order to destabilize traditional land-centric and nation-state approaches to understanding the human past. Through their interactions, different groups of people facilitated the circulation of goods and ideas, giving rise to a common cosmopolitan culture recognizable throughout the maritime region. We will examine the Indian Ocean through the sweep of global history, sailing across time in a thematic fashion, with a focus on the western Indian Ocean and how contacts between places like India, Arabia, and eastern Africa have shaped the lives of people who lived near the sea and whose existence was affected by the rhythms of the monsoon. Topics to be covered include the role of Islam in connecting the region; the collision between indigenous structures and the intrusion of European imperialism; the lives of individual actors such as slaves, sailors, pirates, and merchants; port towns as nodes of cosmopolitanism; the scattering of Indian, Arab, and African diasporas around the oceanic rim; literature, film, and other aspects of Indian Ocean world cultures; nationalism, race, and identity; sexuality, gender, and love; and, finally, nation-states and globalization in the future of the Indian Ocean world.

It is important to note that it is impossible to conceive of contemporary India without considering the historical impact of the Indian subcontinent’s connections to its larger region, and even in landlocked Delhi traces of this transnational past remain evident and important today. Field site excursions to locations in the city will explore this idea across the semester.

Furthermore, through the choice of its topics this class intends to take up the mission of Ambedkar University, Delhi, weaving its themes of social justice, collaboration, and active student learning throughout each unit: “The University aspires to combine equity and social justice with excellence, and to pioneer an institutional culture of non-hierarchical functioning, teamwork and creativity. The University strongly believes that no knowledge becomes socially productive unless it spreads across society, transcending barriers of caste, creed and class. Only then can teaching and learning become liberating undertakings, contributing to the promotion of equality, social justice and excellence.”

**Student Learning Objectives:**

*At the end of the course, students will be able to:*

1) interrogate their own cultural values via an open-minded and critical analysis of the transnational formation of Indian cultures through contacts within the Indian Ocean world.
2) assess the benefits of learning through contact with others from different cultural backgrounds or who hold different viewpoints, through class discussions and collaborative exercises set in the city of Delhi.
3) develop a clear argument using recognized historical methods and based on an interpretation of primary and secondary sources concerning the history of the Indian Ocean world.
4) clearly write and orally discuss their ideas about key processes in the history of the Indian Ocean world.
Course Expectations and Assessment:

Students from all backgrounds and disciplines of study are welcome and no previous knowledge of the course’s subject is required. Assignments (for which separate instruction sheets will be distributed) will require a thoughtful analysis of our shared texts together with presentations concerning the readings and research at locations across the city of Delhi. This course will apply a collaborative learning structure, relying on students’ high level of engagement and depth of analysis, and grades will be accorded as such.

You will be required to do reading before almost every class, averaging around a hundred pages per week, although this will vary upwards or downwards from week to week.

The assessment of your understanding of course materials will come in the form of two short but formal ‘reaction papers’ (~1000 words each; see appended guide to writing effective reaction papers), one research paper, and weekly informal thought pieces, in addition to classroom participation. Attendance is mandatory in a seminar course, as is being prepared to participate in discussion. Participation will also involve co-leading discussion on days when you complete a reaction paper, and in presenting your weekly thought pieces and research paper proposal and conclusions.

Your weekly thought pieces (TPs) are informal writing assignments (~400 words minimum). In weeks when you complete a reaction paper, a thought piece is not required. A total of ten TPs (more if you like!) need to be completed for full credit, so in a few weeks you may opt to pass. TPs are due before the first class of the week, and on that day you are required to summarize your main points in class. You may write on any topic you choose, but for full credit every TP should refer to one or more of the readings of the previous week. These short essays will not be evaluated on presentation style or grammar, but solely on how well you understood the readings and/or how deeply you thought about them.

Grade Composition:
30% Weekly thought pieces (ten total)
30% Two reaction papers (one each in the first and second half of the semester)
30% Research paper (due at end of semester)
10% Classroom participation (including attendance, discussion, and presentations)

Required Books:
- Vassanji, M. G. The In-Between World of Vikram Lall. 2005.

In addition to these texts, most readings in this course will be in the form of journal articles or book chapters, and are required reading. These items will be circulated electronically, and a hard copy may be made available if students want to photocopy it.
This course counts as an elective for the *Undergraduate Certificate in Islamic Studies*, housed in the College of Arts & Humanities. For more information, please contact Professor Tamara Albertini, tamaraa@hawaii.edu, and see:  
http://hawaii.edu/phil/undergraduate/certificate-in-islamic-studies-requirements/

**Expectations and Procedures:**

1. **Attendance:** Attendance is more than mandatory—it is critical to the success of the course. Missed classes without a valid excuse will result in significantly lowered grades. *It is your duty to notify the instructor in advance if you will be absent. Work due or done in class the day a student is absent must be made up.*

2. **Readings:** Students must do the assigned readings for each class. Not doing the readings, and hence not being able to participate in discussions, is tantamount to being absent.

3. **Deadlines:** All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date specified by the instructor and indicated on the assignment description (to be distributed in class or on Laulima), and the weekly thought pieces are due before class every Tuesday. Sign-up sheets will circulate over the course of the semester so students can plan when their reaction papers will be due. Penalties will apply for assignments submitted late. See me **well in advance** if there is a valid reason why an assignment cannot be completed by the due date. Disclaimer: Reading assignments, paper due dates, etc. may be changed during the course of the semester. It is the responsibility of the student to keep up with such changes announced in class and on the course website.

4. **Paper assignments:** All work done outside the classroom **must be typed.** The student is required to keep a second copy of all assignments in case of a discrepancy. **Students should make several back-up copies of their work,** saving it to flash drives, email accounts, and multiple computers. **Absolutely no computer-related excuses for late assignments will be accepted.** The exact method of assignment submission will be indicated by the instructor.
for each individual assignment. **If a student does not complete two reaction papers and the research paper, a failing grade for the course will be given.**

5. **Participation:** Students will lead discussions cooperatively during the class sessions for which they produce a reaction paper. However, all students are expected to participate in every class discussion. Participation comes in many forms, including thoughtfully asking as well as answering questions, small group work, and all other general classroom activities.

6. **Email and course website responsibilities:** It is the students’ responsibility to check the course website on Laulima and their UH email account regularly – at a very minimum, once between each class meeting.

7. **Information for students with disabilities:** I would like to hear from anyone who has a disability which may require some modification of seating, testing, or other class requirements so that appropriate arrangements may be made. The Americans with Disability Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with hearing, vision, speech, or other disabilities. If you feel you need reasonable accommodations because of the impact of a disability, please speak with me privately to discuss your specific needs, and also consider contacting the KOKUA Program (see below). Late notification may cause the requested accommodation to become unavailable. For more information, see [http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/cguide.htm](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/cguide.htm).

8. **Students whose native language is not English:** Please see me during office hours if you need to discuss possible modifications to the course.

9. **Classroom behavior:** To keep a healthy classroom environment it is essential to respect your peers and your instructor when they are speaking, even if you disagree with what they might be saying. There is to be **absolutely no cell phone use in class** except in the case of an emergency. A computer may be used only for note taking. Feel free to contact me if there is any difficulty or discomfort concerning the classroom environment.

10. **Instructor accessibility:** Please come see me after class, during office hours, or email or call me if there is any matter at all relating to the course in which I may be able to help.

11. **University policies:** It is your responsibility to be familiar with University policies on plagiarism and cheating, student complaint procedures, sexual harassment, and other applicable policies. See, for one source, [http://www.studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/policies/conduct_code/](http://www.studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/policies/conduct_code/).

12. **Plagiarism and academic integrity:** At the University of Hawai‘i, plagiarism is taken very seriously. In addition to the penalties imposed by the instructor of this course, which include the **automatic failure of any plagiarized assignment (note: no resubmissions will be accepted)**, the University Committee on Academic Misconduct reserves the right to impose additional sanctions. **Penalties could range from grade reduction or course failure to the receipt of a disciplinary warning until graduation, suspension from the University, or the recommendation of expulsion from the University.** All written work must be composed in your own words. The ideas of others must be properly cited; the lack of a proper reference will be regarded as plagiarism. Please see me if you have any questions or refer to the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa’s Student Conduct Code on plagiarism: [http://studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/policies/conduct_code/proscribed_conduct.php](http://studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/policies/conduct_code/proscribed_conduct.php).
Assignment and Reading Schedule:

Please note that the below readings should be completed *before* class. The readings are listed by the last name of the author and/or editor and the title, followed by the required chapters, parts, and/or page numbers. At every class meeting (and on the course website) the instructor will indicate where to find the readings and when specifically in each week the readings should be done, but as a general rule try to finish them as early in the week as possible. There will be a sign-up sheet periodically passed around in class to allocate who will write a reaction paper and lead discussion for selected readings (minimum two people for each reading or set of readings – so you’ll never be alone!). Where possible, UH students will be paired with AUD students. Note that some of the reading assignments for the novels include large quantities of pages, so start early to get ahead or at the very least stay on schedule. Please bring to each class the book and/or copies of the articles to be discussed that day.

**Week One: Introduction to the Course and the Indian Ocean World**

Readings:
- Kaplan, “Center Stage for the 21st Century,” in *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2009)

**Week Two: The Early Indian Ocean World and the Rise of Islam**

Readings:

*Outing:* At any point during this week, student groups of four (only one UH student per group) should visit one Delhi landmark associated with Islam.

**Week Three: A Merchant, Slave, and Anthropologist in/of the Early Indian Ocean World, I**

Readings:
- Ghosh, *In an Antique Land*, “Prologue,” “Laṭaīfa,” and “Nashāwy” (to p. 179)

**Week Four: A Merchant, Slave, and Anthropologist in/of the Early Indian Ocean World, II**

Readings:
**Week Five: Arrival of Europeans in the Early Modern Indian Ocean World**

*Readings:*

- Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*, Chs. 5-7: “Europeans in an Indian Ocean World,” “The Early Modern Indian Ocean World,” and “Britain and the Ocean”

**Week Six: Empire and Resistance and in the Indian Ocean World**

*Readings:*


*Outing: At any point during this week, student groups of three (only one UH student per group) should visit one Delhi location associated with the history of imperialism.*

**Week Seven: Sailors and Life at Sea in the Indian Ocean World**

*Readings:*


**Week Eight: Slaves, Labor, and the African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean World**

*Readings:*


**Week Nine: Pirates in the Indian Ocean World, Past & Present**

*Readings:*

• Negi, “Understanding Somali Piracy: Globalisation, Sovereignty, and Justice,” in *Economic and Political Weekly* (June 18, 2011)
• Khouri, “Somali Piracy Reflects a Troubling World,” in *Agence Global* (November 24, 2008)

**Week Ten: Cosmopolitan Indian Ocean World Ports – Bombay & Dar es Salaam**

*Readings:*
• Mehta, *Maximum City* (2004), “Personal Geography” (pp. 3-17)

**Week Eleven: South Asian Diasporas and the Indian Ocean World – India to Africa**

*Readings:*
• Vassanji, *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* (2003), Part I (pp. 1-137)

**Week Twelve: Indian Ocean World South Asian Diasporas in Africa**

*Readings:*
• Vassanji, *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall*, Parts II-IV (pp. 141-370)

*Outing: At any point during this week, student groups of two (only one UH student per group) should visit a Delhi location associated with diaspora (either the Indian diaspora or groups that have come to India), such as embassies & high commissions, community centers, Indian state institutions that connect to the diaspora, immigrant neighborhoods, etc.*
**Week Thirteen: Cultural Studies in the Indian Ocean World**

*Readings:*

*Outing:* At any point during this week, each individual student should visit the National Museum to investigate what objects it contains that reflect traces of Indian Ocean connections.

**Week Fourteen: The Future of the Indian Ocean World**

*Readings:*
- Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*, Ch. 8: “History in the Ocean”

*Examination Period: Research Paper Presentations*

**Research papers due on the last day of the examination period.**
The Indian Ocean in History – Reaction Papers
Writing a good reaction paper is a layered task. The first goal is to summarize an author’s (or the authors’) work(s). The second goal is to apply an analytical viewpoint by commenting, for example, on the text’s main arguments, usage of evidence, and/or overall importance in certain contexts. The third goal is to raise questions about the reading for class discussion.

Each person may write her or his reaction papers in a different format, but they should be professional documents in style and tone. They need to be approximately 1000 words in length. Give your reaction paper a title, and under the title list the bibliographic reference for the reading(s).

Concentrate on effectively organizing your reaction paper, and write it clearly, with proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Proofread it repeatedly. Cite page numbers for key ideas or quoted passages. Use a consistent system of citations. Indent and single-space longer quotations (over four lines). Concision is very important, as is clarity. Write with precision, and then rewrite each sentence to improve your paper. The whole class will be reading your work, so ensure that readers will know exactly what you are communicating and will be impressed by how you wrote it.

There are several analytical angles to consider in writing a good reaction paper. This list is not exhaustive, nor is it mandatory to include all of these items:

* What is the author’s thesis, or main argument, and into what debate is it entering?
* What is the context in which the author is writing? What is s/he responding to?
* What are the text’s uses of sources?
* What is at stake in the points the author makes? What are the text’s implications?
* Are there key terms you need to define in order to understand the author’s work?
* Can you identify some key quotations in the text that highlight the major arguments?
* How does the piece make us think differently about Indian Ocean history?
* Does the approach develop new methods or theories for understanding the Indian Ocean?

Reaction papers need to be submitted by noon on the day before they will be discussed in class. Please send the paper (saved as a Word document) to the instructor via email.

In class, the student who wrote a reaction paper will initiate discussion after the other students have had time to read their short essays.

First, the presenters should sum up in brief detail what they wrote. Then they need to launch a conversation by asking questions designed to provoke a discussion. The object is not to test your fellow students, but to work cooperatively through the reading’s key ideas. It is wise to have a long list of possible questions to keep the discussion flowing.

At this point, the burden shifts to the other students in the class, and to the instructor, to engage with the ideas you are presenting.