

ANTH/AS/HIST/MATH¹ 395:
In Search of Zoroaster (Zarathustra) and Brahma: A journey into Indo-Iranian cultures (3 credits)
Wednesday evenings [6.00-8.30]
Location: Forestry 106

Instructors:

Professor Mehrdad Kia
Associate Provost for International Programs & Director, Central & Southwest Asian Studies
Professor Ardeshir Kia
Associate Director, Central & Southwest Asian Studies
Professor Bharath Sriraman
Associate Professor- Mathematical Sciences

Course Outline and Objectives

This thematic course will introduce the student to the parallels and intricate connections between Indo-Iranian civilizations from ancient to contemporary times. The course will begin with the Gathas of Zoroaster and the Rig veda of the vedic Indians and culminate in an examination of the conflicted modern identity of Iranians and Indians. Along this 4000 year journey, the major themes that will arise and be explored in this course are:

- Pre-historic Period in the Indus Valley and Iranian Plateau
- Ancient Migrations, Plausible theories
- Zoroastrianism and Vedic Hinduism
- Shamanistic and animistic elements in Zoroastrianism and Vedic religion and its transformation into monotheism
- Similarities in languages in the Indo-Iranian group [Vedic, Sanskrit and Avestan]; the structure of ancient Indo-Iranian societies
- The influence of Buddhism; The mathematical elements of this time period, particularly the intricate ritual geometry involved in the construction of fire altars in Bactria.
- Mani /Invasions
- The Golden Age of Central Asia /The Silk Road
- The dawn of Islam
- The rise of 3 great empires
- The Ottoman and Mughal empires and a renewed fusion of art, religion, culture and languages
- The dawn of artificial boundaries as a result of colonialism
- Commonalties in arts, poetry and modern languages
- The identity crisis in denial of shared histories/past and culture
- Sufism- the web that connects India and Iran
- Modern "national" identities of citizens of India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran

Instructor Office Hours

Mehrdad Kia, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:30-5:00, Office: International Center Building
Ardeshir Kia, To be announced
Bharath Sriraman, Mondays, 9-11, Math 301 [Mathematics Building]

Course Assistant: Aimona Tashieva
Ms. Tashieva will periodically lead the class discussion.

Textbooks (required)

Burjor Avari (2007), *India - The Ancient Past: A history of the sub-continent from 7000BC to AD 1200*, Routledge

Michael Axworthy (2008), *A History of Iran: Empire of the Mind*. Basic Books

Faculty FAC Pack on reserve in the Mansfield Library

The following book on Zoroastrianism is on Reserve at the library

Boyce. M. (1984). *Zoroastrianism*. The University of Chicago Press

Assignments

First Exam 20%

Second Exam 20%

Third Exam 20%

Attendance 10%

Final Research Paper 30%

[Topic of your paper is due by October 15]

Note on assignments and the course

This is a reading intensive course which assumes students have the maturity and seriousness needed to complete the assigned readings in order to keep up with the course material. The readings may initially seem overwhelming because of the new vocabulary from linguistics, philology, geography and history, but are necessary in order to grasp the complex intertwined histories of the civilizations of Iran and India. The lectures and audio-visual materials incorporated in the course will help in understanding the readings as well as complement it.

Attendance is mandatory and will greatly aid students to clarify the readings and keep up with the course.

Missing more than one class will result into loss of one grade.

Students are also advised to keep a notebook with notes from the lectures, definitions and new vocabulary that arise over the course of the semester. This notebook may be used in the in-class exams.

Exams are scheduled at the end of four week blocks.

Administrative Policies: [Important]:**

Sept. 15 is the last day to ADD or DROP courses without a fee charged.

Oct. 6 is the last day to drop with instructor and advisor signatures. This option ends on Dec. 5

Note: After Oct. 6 a grade or WP or WF must be assigned and will appear on your transcript.

Academic misconduct (as defined by the 2006-2007 Catalog, p.21) will not be tolerated

Syllabus and Readings^[2]

<p>August 27</p>	<p>Introductions The structure of the course, expectations etc</p> <p>Short Lectures with course overview</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Video: From Indus to Independence: A Journey through Indian history</p>	<p>Readings (for Sept.3)</p> <p>Pandey, B.N. (1995). Cultural Relations between pre-Islamic Iran and India. In M. Shojakhani & M.R. Rikhtehgeran (Eds). <i>Indo-Iranian Thought- A World Heritage</i>. Renaissance Publishing House, New Delhi [in FAC Pack]</p> <p>Jamison, S.W & Witzel, M. (1992). Sections I,II,III of <i>Vedic Hinduism</i> (pp.1-62) [in FAC Pack]</p>
<p>September 3</p>	<p>Lecture (Sriraman): Timelines, Indo-Iranians and ancient immigrations: Plausible theories</p> <p>Lecture (Sriraman): The Vedas/Gathas, parallels in world views and a small primer on vocabulary</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Video: Indus- the unvoiced civilization</p>	<p>Readings (for Sept 10)</p> <p>Avari [pp. 1-99]</p> <p>Boyce. M. (1984). Zoroastrianism pp 1-27. The University of Chicago Press. [In Reserve]</p> <p>Jamison, S.W & Witzel, M. (1992). Sections IV, V of <i>Vedic Hinduism</i> (pp. 63-87) [in FAC Pack]</p>
<p>September 10</p>	<p>Lecture (Sriraman): Zoroastrianism and vedic Hinduism – structure of society</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>Video: The influence of Alexander</p>	<p>Readings (for Sept. 17_</p> <p>Avari [pp. 99-199]</p> <p>Boyce. M. (1984). Zoroastrianism pp 27-53. The University of Chicago Press. [In Reserve]</p>
<p>September 17</p>	<p>Lecture (Sriraman): Buddhism, Bactria, conflict and migrations</p> <p>Discussion:</p> <p>Video: Alexander (continued)</p>	<p>Readings (for Sept. 27)</p> <p>Avari [pp. 200-]</p> <p>Staal, F. (1999) Greek and Vedic geometry. <i>Journal of Indian Philosophy</i>, 27,105-127 [will be supplied as a pdf file]</p>
<p>September 24</p>	<p>Lecture (Sriraman): Mythologies and Epics.</p> <p>Lecture (Sriraman) Ancient Indian mathematics; geometry of fire altars common to Zoroastrianism and vedic Hinduism</p> <p>Exam 1</p>	<p>Reading: (FAC-PAC) J. Harmatta, “The Emergence of the Indo-Iranians: The Indo-Iranian Languages”, pp. 357-378.</p>

October 1	Lecture (Kia, A) Migrations Video	Reading: (FAC-PAC) A. Abetekov and H. Yusupov, "Ancient Iranian Nomads in Western Central Asia", pp. 23-33.
October 8	Lecture (Kia, A) Trade & Commerce – The Silk Road Video	Reading: (FAC-PAC) A. Tafazzoli and A.L. Khromov, "Sasanian Iran: Intellectual Life", pp. 79-102.
October 15	Lecture (Kia, A) The GoldenAge of Central Asia Video Research paper topic due date	Reading: (FAC-PAC) N.N. Negmatov, "The Samanid State", pp. 77-94.
October 22	Lecture (Kia, A) Wars, Peace and Rebirth Exam 2	Reading: (FAC-PAC) A. Akhmedov, "Astronomy, Astrology, Observatories and Calendars – The Persian and Indian Origins of Islamic Astronomy", pp. 195-204.
October 29	Lecture (Kia, M). The spread of Islam	To be assigned Reading from Axworthy
November 5	Lecture (Kia, M): The arrival of Turks/Ottomans	To be assigned Reading from Axworthy
November 12	Lecture (Kia, M) 3 great empires	To be assigned Reading from Axworthy
November 19	Video: Bashu	To be assigned Reading from Axworthy
November 26	Lecture (Kia, M): Colonialism Exam 3	To be assigned
December 3	Lecture [Kia, Kia and Sriraman] : Modern Identities Video: I am a Sufi, I am a Muslim Research Paper due date	

^[1] Note to Math majors/minors- This course may not be used to satisfy 300-level math requirements.

^[2] Videos and other sources have been placed on reserve in the Mansfield Library [4 hour –in building use only] Students are responsible for making a copy of the assigned readings.