

BA Honours with a Major in History

The BA Honours Programme with a Major in History is designed to stimulate the student's interest in India's varied pasts in relation to wider global trends. It aims to introduce students to different ways of accessing the past that make the study of history exciting and rewarding. Through a combination of innovative courses that are thematic and chronological, the student will be equipped to understand historical sources and evidence, analyse them, ask new questions and debate stereotypes and interpretations. The structure of the courses is interdisciplinary with several options that will enable students to explore new frontiers of knowledge. Special attention is paid to aspects of equity, marginality, gender, environment and cultural diversity. In short, the student is trained to think and practise like a historian.

All courses are taught in an interactive and participatory manner in order to encourage a spirit of enquiry and enhance intellectual rigour in students. Issues and questions are framed in historical contexts to foster a critical approach to production of knowledge. Due importance will be given to reading of texts and artifacts. Assessment of student learning will be based on tests, written assignments and presentations. Peer assessment of work may be part of the learning process. Students are encouraged to participate in field trips and excursions. They explore cinema and visual culture and undertake projects that enhance critical thinking and develop analytical skills. Active learning and assessment will be continuous and complement each other. Every student pursuing BA Honours with a Major in History will be assigned an advisor from the faculty to assist the student at every stage to discover and enhance her/his potential.

The History major can also be enriched by specific courses open to students from various majors, dealing, for example, with gender, environmental issues, urbanism, literary culture, and so on. The History Honours Major can be combined with an Honours Major in another subject area for a Double Major upon an additional year of study.

The BA History Honours at AUD is unique in its conception and execution and creates a range of opportunities for students. The programme prepares students to pursue higher studies in history or to choose careers in diverse fields such as administration, law, media, heritage management, conservation and social/development sectors. MA History and further opportunities for historical study besides some masters programmes in related disciplines are available from AUD itself.

The Structure and Courses of the BA Honours Programme with a Major in History

Of the 96 credits required to earn a BA Honours degree with a Major in History, a student has to acquire a minimum of 48 credits (normally 12 courses, each course worth 4 credits) in History. These will consist of a combination of 10 compulsory **core courses** and at least 2 **elective courses**. Courses are structured around a number of themes, areas and time spans. A compulsory core course devoted to historical method and historiography explores the evolution of history as a discipline and different traditions of history writing. The course examines history

in relation to other ways of constructing the past – for example, epics, chronicles, myths and tales. A series of core courses deal with India from the earliest times to the contemporary period. Indian history is studied in conjunction with core courses that cover world history. In addition, a core course on the history of Delhi is offered.

Elective courses are offered on specific themes or issues that may not be examined in depth in the ‘core’ courses: for example, cities, art and architecture, material culture, imperialism and colonialism, socialism, labour, migrations and diasporas, science and technology, environment, contemporary India etc. Other elective courses cover different societies, empires and nations: e.g., China, Japan, African societies and polities. Elective courses provide students with opportunities to pursue their areas of special interest. *Each student must complete at least two elective courses to fulfill the requirements of the BA History Honours degree.*

The semester-wise structure and distribution of courses is as follows:

Semester	Courses	Total Number of History Courses	Total Credits
I	Foundational Courses (general, non-major courses)	--	--
II	Understanding the Past Ancient Societies	2	8
III	Medieval and Early Modern World Early India: Economy, Polity and Society Medieval India I: Polity and Administration	3	12
IV	Modern World Medieval India II: Economy and Society India c. 1700 – 1857	3	12
V	Modern India, 1857 – 1950 Delhi in History Elective I*	3	12
VI	Elective II* Elective III* Elective IV*	3	12
	TOTAL	14	56

* In addition to the 10 compulsory, core History courses, a student must choose 2 elective courses. These 12 courses together yield the minimum 48 credits required for a BA Honours with a Major in History. However, a student may choose up to four History elective courses (two more than required) for 56 total History credits. The elective courses are opted for in the fifth and sixth semesters. Some of the elective courses likely to be offered at the first opportunity are as follows:

India since Independence; Comparative Perspectives on Modern China and India; History of Slavery; History of Architecture in India; History of the Indian Ocean Region; Jewel in the Crown?: India and Britain, an Entangled History.

Further information about the BA Honours Programme with a Major in History at AUD can be sought by writing to Dr Sanjay Sharma (sanjay@aud.ac.in).

Brief descriptions of the core courses of the History Major are provided below:

Understanding the Past

This course introduces students to *philosophy of history*. Its main objective is to familiarise students with debates over meanings of the past – for example, how we distinguish between past and present and locate ourselves as impartial (or partial) observers and interpreters of events in time. The course tries to furnish answers to such questions as: How are ‘sources’ (written, material, oral and other) to be used? What is the nature of the historian’s authority? How is History relevant to the present? While addressing claims about how scientific History organises our understanding of past events and experiences, we consider alternative ways of knowing that have characterized the past 3,000 or more years of human life – ways that continue to grip human imagination. What do historians *do* in the name of studying History? Is History an effort to discover and recover ‘the past’ or is it instead a creative (meaning-making) process, or is it both of these at once? Why have historians held contrary opinions about this? How do we distinguish between historical fact and ‘interpretation’? What future is there for History as a scientific and humanistic discipline? We shall examine these issues through a wide selection of historical source materials and writings about the practice of History. The course is designed for the BA History Honours but is open for enrollment by other students in the School.

Ancient Societies

The modern humans, biologically referred to as *homo sapiens sapiens* are traced to around 40,000 years ago. During these forty thousand years of existence, modern humans spent around three-fourth of this time as wandering groups dependent on hunting and gathering of their food for survival. The human settlements came in to existence with humans learning and acquiring skills of domesticating animals and plants, leading to agriculture. Starting with agriculture and settled life, human groups developed into elaborate societies and complex systems. They have not followed a predictable, well-defined path. This movement has not been even and unilateral in all parts of the world. Various cultures and societies have grown through different trajectories. At any given point of time humans have been found to live at various social, political, economic, cultural and technological stages of development.

From this long human past we have chosen the ancient period as the subject matter of this course. In terms of chronology we will confine ourselves to history up to the period of first millennium A.D. This vast period can be divided into two major parts. The earlier period which is referred to as pre-history where we have no written records or literary sources. The second is historical period for which in addition to other sources we have literary evidence also. In view of the vast canvas and long period it would not be possible to undertake the study of every social group and society in this course. We have, therefore, chosen what we feel are representative cultures, societies, regions, civilizations, religions and social, political and economic systems for understanding the growth of human civilization in the given period.

Medieval and Early Modern World:

c. 500 CE to 1750 CE

This course examines interactions between Europe and other world regions over the span of a millennium in terms of exchanges, disruptions and adaptations. At the center of the course is 'Europe', a corner of the Eurasian landmass that was rather marginal to world relations before about 1300 CE. The course surveys the broad changes that occurred in, developed through and extended beyond Europe from the aftermath of the Roman Empire till the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century. We begin by considering the ways that the concepts of 'medieval' and 'early modern' can be applied to understand global as well as European history. The course then tracks key developments within Europe over twelve centuries with respect to society, economy, politics, culture and religion. A central theme here is the emergence and decline of feudalism, through which students are introduced to changing aspects of European agrarian production and trade, the exercise of power through both centralized and decentralized state systems, and the place of Christianity in European civilization (including Western Christianity's relation to other faiths). Aspects of Asian and African history before 1500 CE are examined, with special attention paid to cultural and commercial transactions among people of the 'Old World' societies. Europeans' 'discovery' of

the Americas changed everything for Europe and the rest of the world. Thus Old and New World (and North-South) encounters between 1500 and 1800 CE are a major focus of the second part of the course. This was an era of conquest and colonialism, forced and 'free' migration, coerced labour, and denser global circulation of goods and ideas. While some parts of the world were less influenced than others by these transactions, new modes of production, communication and governance led to the emergence of *modernity*, characterized by market relations, capitalism and bourgeois culture. These aspects of modernity, as well as new attitudes toward and applications of technology and the emerging conceptions of 'race' and nation are explored in the second part of the course. The course also examines popular culture, changing patterns of everyday life and gender relations. Primary sources and secondary texts as well as some films are used to explore issues and themes of the course.

Early India: Economy, Polity and Society

The course on early India will familiarise students with economy, polity and society of the Indian subcontinent from the pre-historic times up to the 8th century. The course will deal with reconstructions of the early history of the Indian subcontinent based on various historical sources rooted in archaeology, myths, memory, folklore, classical texts and popular literature. It intends to equip students with an understanding of the methods and tools of history writing and discusses the process of reinterpretation of early India's past by modern historians. The course traces aspects of marginality and hierarchy as they evolved over a period of time. Power relations, social stratification and state structures are analysed in relation to changing modes of production. Labour use, distribution of resources and social hierarchies are discussed with reference to the *varna* system and gender. A historicised understanding of new religious thoughts and ideologies that emerged in early India such as Buddhism, Jainism and the varied practices of Hinduism will provide insights into the social and political conditions of early India.

Medieval India I: Polity and Administration

The course will begin with an exploration of the early medieval origins of Rajputs and their polity. It further traces the roots of the Turkish and Mughal empires in India to the influences and compulsions of central and west Asian polity. It discusses the interactions between immigrant Islamic groups and indigenous communities, and the establishment of institutions like *iqtadari* and *jagirdari*. It tracks the challenges to the fiscal-oriented centralization of power and continuous resistance from 'regions' that were periodically absorbed but often resurfaced as independent states. The course will also attempt to trace the development of such

institutions which often transcended political boundaries over time and space. It locates their evolution within various discourses on statecraft, governance and kingship as evident in the wide-ranging sources of the period.

Modern World

This course will focus on what we mean by 'modern world', and how it has been understood by the major thinkers since the 18th century. The course will go into the major components of modern world: a new and distinctive type of economy (based on perpetual growth), polity (based on nation-state system and democracy) and social structure (secularization, a new class profile among other things). After acquiring an understanding of what is meant by 'modern world', the course will discuss those processes and structures that have shaped the emergence of modern world. A good sense of these processes and structures can be had by discussing the dimensions of 'Affluence' (economic growth, capitalism and industrialization), 'Integration' (conquests, domination of the new world, a new trading pattern initiated by Atlantic Europe integrating Americas, Africa and Asia), and 'Domination' (Imperialism and Colonialism, world wars, challenges to domination by the processes of Decolonization). In other words, the course has a double focus. It will seek to provide an understanding of the idea of modern world and also debate the key processes that have gone on to create the world as it exists today.

Medieval India II: Economy and Society

The course offers an insight into the nature of agrarian and urban economy of the early and late medieval India. It takes into account an analysis of the social structures with particular reference to peasantry, trading classes and ruling elites. It provides insights into medieval Indian society through readings on arts, architecture, and language and pays particular attention to the development of literature and painting traditions. This course further discusses the debates on religion and state, and the evolution of devotional traditions such as Bhakti and Sufi, which shaped the distinctive cultural ethos of medieval India.

India c. 1700 - 1857

This course explores the complex dimensions of the transition in India from the late Mughal period to the ascendancy of British power till the revolt of 1857. It situates this period in the debates on the nature of eighteenth century Indian society and some aspects of early colonial

rule. The positions of historians on questions of 'change and continuity' and 'decline vs. growth' in the eighteenth century are evaluated with examples from Mughal territories and other regional states. It then discusses the pattern of British conquest of India in the global context of trade, warfare and empire building. It seeks to understand the processes by which the East India Company moved from trade to territorial control. The advent and consolidation of colonial rule is explored through a study of new systems of revenue extraction, trade and its impact on Indian industries, the evolution of law and administration of justice, army, police, education, modern print culture etc. The course throws light on the evolution of the ideological apparatus of colonial rule by discussing key concepts like Orientalism, Utilitarianism, Evangelicalism, along with legal and social reform of Indian society. A deeper understanding of colonial governance and experience of colonialism is attempted by analysing early European attitudes towards race, science, disease, medicine and climate in India and the reformist and technological solutions offered for the 'improvement' of a 'backward' colony.

Modern India, 1857 – 1950

The course intends to familiarise students with the nature of colonial rule and its impact on Indian society and economy. It also explores the nature of anti-colonial struggles. It analyses colonial institutions, policies and tracks the changing nature of Indian economy. It deals with the emergence of new classes and how they responded to the colonial regime. In this context new social and political organizations and their initiatives (social and religious reforms and caste movements) are analysed. The course discusses various dimensions and forms of resistance by sections of Indian society particularly tribals, peasants, workers and women. It examines nationalism and its various manifestations in India. The formation of the Indian National Congress and its early initiatives, and mass mobilization under the leadership of Gandhi are analysed critically. The course also discusses the organisational and ideological aspects of peasant, labour and left movements. Finally, it discusses developments and circumstances that led to India's independence and partition.

Delhi in History

This course explores the multi-layered pasts of Delhi and its environs through archeological, imperial, architectural, literary and other dimensions. The formation of the modern capital city is viewed through the prism of myth and memory, the cultural remains of the many previous cities contained within Delhi and the continuous role of settlements, migrations, displacements

and violence in Delhi's emergence as a centre of power and authority. The course is designed to give a sense of the long history of Delhi by focusing on certain key themes: Delhi as it is embedded in the Mahabharata epic, the stone age, several historical sites like the Purana Qila, the medieval urban centre of bazaars, Sultans and Mughal emperors, Delhi's relationship with the hinterland, and its emergence as an imperial city under the British. It also views Delhi's life and history through the eyes of its residents: traders, artisans, service providers, musicians, poets, writers, devotees, Sufis, and those associated with governance.