

*August 27, 2013 DRAFT SYLLABUS – always subject to change!*

## **MIGRATION IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION**

**SAST 335, FALL 2013  
(Thursday 1:30-3:20 PM)**

**INSTRUCTOR: DR. RAJASHREE MAZUMDER**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

This course explores the Indian Ocean basin as an arena of historical continuity and change, examining the experiences of a range of people whose lives were shaped by transoceanic networks. The time period for the course will roughly coincide with the emergence of Islam in the seventh century C.E. to the intrusion of various European powers into the region and the subsequent emergence of the global economy and colonialism in the nineteenth century. Specifically, our focus will be on people who traversed long distances – merchants, itinerant pilgrims, soldiers, sailors, pirates, sex workers and coolie laborers. Which are some of the merchant networks in the early Modern period in the Indian Ocean arena? What are some of the sources that we can use to reconstruct their histories? In the second part of the course we will focus on the transformation of European trading companies to political powers and the impact on the circuits of flows and networks. How did Western imperialism and technology affect the mobility of people? What kind of challenge did their cross-border movements pose to the modern colonial state? At a broader level, did the European presence develop this region or disrupt it? These are some of the questions we will try to answer as we explore the intense globalization that has characterized the Indian Ocean world historically and which continues to do so today. We will rely on a variety of texts including primary sources such as travel literature, scholarly studies of the economic history of merchant communities, as well as Amitav Ghosh's extraordinary novel on medieval life in the Indian Ocean, *In an Antique Land* (1993) and tale of journey of migrants in *Sea of Poppies* (2008).

### **COURSE AIMS**

- To introduce students to the history of an oceanic region

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- To help students grasp an overall understanding of the origins of European expansion and its impact
- To familiarize students with a range of primary sources which make the region's inhabitants actors in their own history
- To provide students with a historical understanding of the concept of globalization
- SAST 335 is a writing and research-intensive seminar designed to aid students in developing skills to effectively research, analyze and write about history. As such, this course will not only explore the history of Indian Ocean arena, but will also teach students research techniques, methods to evaluate historical documents, and how to successfully communicate their ideas in writing.

## **STRUCTURE AND ASSESSMENT**

- The course will be a combination of lecture and discussions on the readings for the week. During our weekly meetings we will have in class-discussions. Students are not expected to prepare formal written presentations, but come up with a series of discussion points, which will stimulate debate. Everyone is expected to participate in the group discussions and individual participation will be graded. However, the final points will be based as much on your willingness to contribute as the originality of your thoughts.
- Each week students are expected to write at least a one-page (max 1.5) weekly assignment/reflection piece to the primary source of the week/main readings for the week.
- Send me your response paper through the course website V2 (dropbox) before 8 AM on the morning of the class (i.e., Thursday of each week that we are going to meet).
- The weekly assignments/papers are meant to be critical reflections and historically argumentative.
- Weekly Assignments/Response/reflection papers will graded with [√+] or [√] or [√-]
- **THE FINAL PAPER (10-12 pages approx.) due during the reading week (7<sup>th</sup> December 2013, Saturday).**
- **FINAL GRADE** will be a combination of your class participation, the weekly papers, book reviews, the material researched/written for the compulsory conferences and the final paper.  
Class Participation – 10 %  
Weekly Write-ups – 30 %  
Compulsory Conferences – 5 %  
Book review – 15%  
Final Paper – 40%

## READING SCHEDULE

For each week, a number of readings are listed, including primary sources (where applicable). Those works listed as essential/required reading are necessary for seminar preparation. Other works listed are useful for general background reading or additional material for the final paper. **The essential readings for the week will be uploaded on the course website Classes\*v2 in a pdf form every week.** Students are expected to download them and read them while taking notes or get printouts with underlines Migration in the Indian Ocean Draft Syllabus.docx and notes in the margins.

These two books to be **purchased** (easily available as paperbacks on amazon)

1. Amitav Ghosh, *In An Antique Land* (1992)
2. Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies* (2008).

While there is **no main textbook for this course**, certain books can be helpful in order to gain familiarity with the concepts. These will be on reserve in the library.

1. K.N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilization in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge 1984)
2. George Fadlo Hourani, *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean* (2nd revised edition, Princeton University Press, 1995)
3. Patricia Risso, *Merchants and Faith: Muslim Commerce and Culture in the Indian Ocean* (Westview, 1995)
4. Janet Abu Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250-1350* (Oxford, 1991)
5. Sunil Amrith, *Migration and Diaspora in Modern Asia* (2011).
6. Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire* (2006).

### **WEEK ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE: THE INDIAN OCEAN WORLD (08/29/2013)**

This week we will lay down the groundwork for the following meetings. Following introductions, we will watch an excerpt from a documentary film in the class: “From Africa to India: Sidi Music in the Indian Ocean Diaspora” [a video by Amy Catlin-Jairaz, in close collaboration with Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy and the Sidi community, 2003] and discuss, how forms of music (and therefore forms of culture) have been transported in this Indian Ocean region.

*August 27, 2013 DRAFT SYLLABUS – always subject to change!*

There will be an in-class discussion and response writing on the following questions:

- What are the relative advantages and disadvantages of using sea and ocean basins as frameworks of historical analysis?
- What do you know about, and what are your impressions of the ‘Indian Ocean world’?
- What do you hope to gain from this course?

### **WEEK TWO: ISLAM AND THE INDIAN OCEAN (09/05/2013)**

How did the spread of Islam along the coasts provide a framework for mercantile networks in the Indian Ocean arena?

### **WEEK THREE: “SPICES AND GUNS: ASIANS AND EUROPEANS IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY INDIAN OCEAN” (09/12/2013)**

Europeans had always traveled to the east/orient since the ancient times. But what changes particularly during the period we are studying? Is it the beginning of western dominance in this region as K.M. Pannikar saw it (writing in 1953)? Or do we need to modify our view in the light of more recent historiography? What do the Portuguese specifically bring to the Indian ocean region? What are our sources?

### **WEEK FOUR: THE CHINESE MOMENT AND THE INDIAN OCEAN (09/19/2013)**

The readings this week are meant to discuss how the Chinese state and merchant groups were actively involved in this trans-oceanic networks as far as the Gulf and Red sea. What are your perceptions on this? Do you see the Chinese mercantile activity at par with what Europeans were doing at this time? What is the role of the state in all of this? Does the Chinese state ban foreign merchant from visiting its ports? What does the case study of Quanzhou reveal?

### **WEEK FIVE: MERCHANTS CONNECT: THE GENIZA CONNECTION (09/26/2013)**

Discuss the importance of the Geniza documents for the reconstruction of the social and economic history of the period? What impact did the discovery of the Geniza documents have upon the history of the Indian Ocean? What role do "reputation" and "trust" play in

*August 27, 2013 DRAFT SYLLABUS – always subject to change!*

the success of mercantile trading Diasporas?

**WEEK SIX: Assignment and Library Work (10/3/2013)**

Write three pages response paper using the readings from week five and Amitav Ghosh's novel *In an Antique Land*.

Essential Meeting with the South Asia Librarian at the Sterling Memorial Library

**WEEK SEVEN: TRANSOCEANIC MIGRATIONS: A NEW FORM OF SLAVERY? (10/10/2013)**

What are your thoughts about the “freedom” of Indian Ocean migrants?

**WEEK EIGHT: (10/17/2013)**

Read the novel Amitav Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies* (John Murray, 2008). Write two pages response paper using the readings from week seven and Amitav Ghosh's novel. I will give you the questions/broad outline of how to approach this assignment, as we get closer to this week.

**October Recess: 10/22/2013-10/27/2013**

**WEEK NINE: EUROPEAN PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN 1600-1800 (10/31/2013)**

How far, and in what ways, did Europeans disrupt the old Indian Ocean economy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries?

**WEEK TEN: MIGRANT POOR IN THE COLONIAL PORT-CITIES (11/7/2013)**

Segregation was a key element in the colonial organization of the port cities. How did poverty and disease become interlinked in city planning and municipal discourses during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in these port cities?

*August 27, 2013 DRAFT SYLLABUS – always subject to change!*

**WEEK ELEVEN: PATHWAYS OF THE PILGRIMS (11/14/2013)**

What was new about the hajj in the late-19th century? Why was the colonial state fearful of the hajj pilgrimage? How do pilgrims themselves see the journey?

During this week will return to Ibn Battuta (from week two) in the short film titled *Journey to Mecca: In the Footsteps of Ibn Battuta* by Bruce Neibaur (2009). The film will be put on reserve at the library for viewing before the class.

**WEEK TWELVE: PROSTITUTION AND SLAVERY (11/21/2013)**

How do the experiences of women and children add to our understanding of Indian Ocean lives?

We will watch the film by Tomoko Yamazaki *Sandakan Hachibanshokan Bohkyo* (Sandakan No. 8) (Brothel No. 8) (1974) or *Sandakan Brothel No. 8: an Episode in the History of lower-class Japanese Women* ((with English subtitles). The film will be kept on reserve in the library.

**\* November Recess 11/23/2013 to 12/1/2013**

**WEEK THIRTEEN: NATIONALISM OVERSEAS (12/05/2013)**

Assess the role of oceanic circuits in the rise of anti-colonial nationalism? What was the role of the information revolution in the dissemination of nationalism across the Indian Ocean?

❖ **FINAL PAPER due** during the reading week (7<sup>h</sup> December, Saturday 2013).