COURSE DESCRIPTION

India is evolving rapidly, after many years of very slow economic growth and development. Singapore and India have shared historical connections; recently, these ties are being nurtured through policies of both governments which encourage closer business contacts. This course will provide the cultural background through which a closer understanding of this vast subcontinent of India and its people can be achieved. The course will introduce the cultures of the different geographical regions of India, and will highlight the role of religion, the arts (including classical music, dance, sculpture, temple architecture), literature and media (including the press, broadcast television and films) in shaping the psyche of the Indian mind. Students will participate in in-class workshops and field trips to different Indian institutions and events in Singapore as part of the course. The course will be especially helpful to those intending to travel to India on leisure, and those intending to do business with India or with the Indian diaspora across the world.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe India’s diverse regional, religious and cultural traditions and practices
- Apply their knowledge of Indian culture to become a more knowledgeable traveler in India, to network with Indian students and managers, and to work in India or with Indians
- Analyze business and political news about India in the appropriate cultural context
- Appreciate the symbolism and meanings of various Indian practices, icons, motifs, and slang
- Understand how Indian culture affects the ways in which the Indian government, and managers and consumers of Indian origin make decisions, do business and work in teams

PRE-REQUISITE/ CO-REQUISITE/ MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE COURSE(S)

Please refer to the Course Catalogue on OASIS for the most updated list of pre-requisites / co-requisites for this particular course.

Do note that if this course has a co-requisite, it means that the course has to be taken together with another course. Dropping one course during BOSS bidding would result in both courses being dropped at the same time.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Individual assignment: 20%

The individual assignment will involve a ten-page double spaced (in Times Roman 12 point font with a one inch margin all around) “book review +” (a review of a non-fiction book, focusing on its strengths and weaknesses, but the “plus” including the student's perspective of what cultural understanding s/he has learnt about India from the book). In the first week of the course, the instructor will suggest 5-8 books such as “The Argumentative Indian” by Amartya Sen, “The Elephant, The Tiger, and the Cellphone: India, the Emerging 21st-Century Power” by Shashi Tharoor, “Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found,” by Suketu Mehta.)
This is due by the Friday of Week 14. The assignment will be assessed based on demonstration of careful reading and analysis of the book, quality of written communication, and most importantly, on the quality of your insights into what you learnt from the book.

**Two person assignment: 20%**
The two person assignment will be a written report on an Indian cultural experience – this could be viewing an Indian movie in the theatre, or watching a DVD, or attending a classical music, dance or theatre performance, or visiting the Indian Heritage Centre, or an Indian temple event, with reflections on what they learnt about Indian culture from that experience. A ten-page double spaced report (in Times Roman 12 point font with a one inch margin all around) is due by Friday evening of the 11th week. Note that a major nine day festival of music and dance (with free admission) will be held at several Indian temples around Singapore in the third week of October. Several other ticketed and free events will also likely be held throughout the first ten weeks of the term. Indian movies with subtitles play in a few GV cinemas and also in a couple of Indian cinema theatres in Singapore. The instructor will highlight these events to you as and when there is information available. Your assignment will be graded based on your observation powers of Indian cultural practices witnessed during the experience, and your ability to communicate your observations and relate them to the materials discussed in class. You are free to choose your own partner for this assignment.

**Quizzes: 20%**
Two closed book (non-cumulative) quizzes will be composed of multiple choice and short answer questions and will be based on the readings prescribed for the course and materials discussed in class. You will be allowed to bring an A4 sized sheet of notes for reference during the quiz. The dates will likely be the 6th and 12th weeks of the course. The better of the two quizzes (on an absolute basis) will be weighted at 15% and the worse at 5%.

**Class participation: 10%**
Regular active attendance and listening is a minimal requirement. You will be graded primarily on the quality of your participation in class discussions, answering questions raised by the instructor and your classmates, and in raising issues related to the readings, workshops, and other materials covered in class.

**Group Project Presentation and report: 30%**
The group project assignment will involve a cross-cultural study of any one aspect of Indian culture learnt in the course (e.g. film, literature, music, dance) and making a presentation in the form of a short skit, or powerpoint presentation, or dance or video. The study will contrast Indian culture with any other culture (e.g. Singaporean, Chinese, Malay, French, British, Japanese, Korean, American). Group size and formation will be decided at the end of the second week of the course after the class size is determined. The groups will be of size 5-6. The presentation will be for a maximum of 12 minutes (tentative, depending on the size of the class). The report will be of a minimum length of ten pages double spaced (in Times Roman 12 point font with a one inch margin all around) and will describe the cross cultural differences explored in the presentation with references to source materials. While you may write a longer report, ten pages should be adequate, and you should try to restrict the length to within 15 pages.

For all three assignments in this course, students are encouraged to think about (and report) what they learnt from the assignment that would help them in dealing with India, Indians, the Indian diaspora and Indian businesses and government.

For all assignments, the instructor will be available for face-face consultations once a week, and will also be happy to answer questions posed through the interactive forum on eLearn throughout the course.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

All acts of academic dishonesty (including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, facilitation of acts of academic dishonesty by others, unauthorized possession of exam questions, or tampering with the academic work of other students) are serious offences.

All work (whether oral or written) submitted for purposes of assessment must be the student’s own work. Penalties for violation of the policy range from zero marks for the component assessment to expulsion, depending on the nature of the offence.
When in doubt, students should consult the course instructor. Details on the SMU Code of Academic Integrity may be accessed at http://www.smuscd.org/resources.html.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

The course will be taught through Powerpoint presentations, class discussions, viewing and discussion of movies and documentaries, in-class workshops, presentations by guest speakers and a field trip.

RECOMMENDED TEXT AND READINGS

There is no recommended text. A list of recommended articles, books and book chapters will be provided. A course pack of readings will be made available.

An illustrative set of readings is given below. Chapters from some of these books will be required reading. Other topics will be:

History, Philosophy and Religion

- **Ashoka: The Search for India’s Lost Emperor** by Charles Allen, Abacus, 2012
- **A History of South India: From Prehistoric Times to the Fall of Vijayanagar** by K.A.Nilakanta Shastri OUP India; 4th edition, 1976
- **The Illustrated History of South India (Oxford India Collection)** by K.A Nilakanta Sastri (the late) (Author), R.C. Champakalakshmi (Author), P.M. Rajan Gurukkal (Author), Oxford University Press 2009
- **India Unbound: The Social and Economic Revolution from Independence to the Global Information Age** by Gurcharan Das, Anchor; Reprint edition , 2002

Arts, Movies and Culture

- **Artistic Form and Yoga in the Sacred Images of India** [1926]; Translated and edited by Gerald Chapple, James B. Lawson and J. Michael McKnight [1984]
- **Love in South Asia A Cultural History (Editor: Francesca Orsini)** Part of University of Cambridge Oriental Publications, 2006
- **In Search of Sita: Revisiting Mythology Paperback** by Namita Gokhale (Author), Malashri Lal (Author) Penguin Books; 2009
- **Ramayana in the arts of Asia** by Garrett Kam, Select Books, 2000
- **The desi NRI** by NABS, ST Commercial Press, 2010
Food

- **Eating India: An Odyssey into the Food and Culture of the Land of Spices** by Chitrita Banerji, Bloomsbury USA; First Edition edition, 2008
- **Indian Food: A Historical Companion**, by K T Achaya, Oxford University Press, 1994

**SCHEDULE OF TOPICS (Tentative)**

A more detailed listing of topics, readings, assignments and due dates will be uploaded on eLearn in the first week of the term. Classes will meet once a week for 3 hour long sessions.

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<th>Week No.</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Sub-topics</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>An Introduction to India</td>
<td>Brief history, constitutional structure and geographical regions in India</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Religions and philosophies in India - Hinduism</td>
<td>Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Islam, Christianity</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Religions and philosophies in India</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Indian Food</td>
<td>History, beliefs, practices, diets</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Field trip to Little India</td>
<td>Temple, Gurudwara, spice market, restaurant</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Performing Arts</td>
<td>Music, dance, theatre</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Performing Arts</td>
<td>Music, dance, theatre</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Mid-term Break</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>Sculpture, architecture, painting, temple arts, jewelry, textiles</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Television and Media in India</td>
<td>Broadcast, print, internet, social media</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Film in India</td>
<td>Hindi and regional commercial and art film</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Modern India</td>
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<td>13</td>
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