

The Making of Modern India Part I: Syllabus for Spring Course

From Wikipedia: Ancient India in 300 BC may have had a population in the range 100–140 million. It has been estimated that the population was about 100 million in 1600 and remained nearly static until the late 19th century. According to the first census taken in 1881, it reached 255 million.

Session I The Great Moghuls – Babur to Aurangzeb

While the reign of the Moghul emperors spans the years 1526 to 1857, the period from 1556 to 1707 is regarded as the greatest era for this dynasty, which was made up of the Muslim descendants of Genghis Khan and Timur (known to the West as Tamerlane). At its height, it included most of the territory that we know today as India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, as well as a major portion of Afghanistan.

Session II East India Company – The Early Years

From its humble beginnings in 1600 England to its peak in 1857, the East India Company was a private business that came to rule all of what is now India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. It developed its own private army, staffed by English officers and by Indians non-coms and enlisted men from many ethnic and religious groups. The Company's rule and freedom of action was gradually regulated and restricted by the English Parliament after a series of financial scandals, military setbacks and exploitations of India, including famine caused by the Company's often ruthless behavior.

Session III The Decline of the Mughals

The East India Company was only one of several causes of the eventual decline and fall of the Mughals, whose poor leadership under successive incompetent emperors was also a major cause. The French, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Persians and many minor Indian states, posed continual challenges to Mughal power. The Persian ruler Nader Shah sacked the Mughal capital in 1739. The Maratha Confederacy was an Indian power from 1674 to 1818 and is largely credited with ending Mughal rule in India. Inter-Indian wars and ethnic and religious conflict contributed greatly to the ultimate English conquests.

Session IV The White Mughals

During the East India Company's first 200 years it was not uncommon for unmarried Englishmen sent out to India to "go native" to the point of converting to Islam or Hinduism, taking of Indian wives (sometimes more than one), and adopting of native dress. A significant and multicultural Anglo-Indian society developed, and English officials sometimes became scholars of Indian literature and art. After 1800, a new generation of English-educated leadership, scandalized by their predecessors' behavior, promoted aggressive Christian evangelism and rigid English social codes.

Session V British Encroachment and Domination: Robert Clive

Major-General Robert Clive, also known as Clive of India, was a British officer and soldier of fortune who established the military and political supremacy of the East India Company in Bengal. Clive's career ended badly for him, for India and for the East India Company as well.

Session VI The Wellesley Brothers

The future Duke of Wellington and his older brother were two of several important Company leaders who are credited with securing India, and the wealth that followed, for the British crown.

Session VII Wahhabis vs. Evangelicals in India

Beginning in 1820, Arabian religious radicals introduced Wahhabi Islam into British India, promoting a harsh and intolerant form of Islam through their madrassas. This development not only played a major role in increasing conflict between Indian Muslims and the English; it also had fateful consequences for all of India and the region that later became Pakistan. It encouraged religious enmity between Hindus and Moslems, who had lived in considerable harmony during most of the Moghul period.

Charles Grant was a British politician influential in Indian and domestic affairs who, motivated by evangelical Christianity, championed the causes of social reform and Christian mission, particularly in India. He served as Chairman of the British East India Company and as a member of parliament (MP). He and other Company leaders in his era proselytized aggressively Christian and played a crucial role in alienating the English from both Muslims and Hindus in India, thus adding a volatile religious component to the commercial and political subjugation of India.

Session VIII Mutiny

The political, religious and economic impact of the East India Company finally led to the inevitable Indian response – what the English call the Sepoy Mutiny and Indians know as the First War of Indian Independence – a nationwide revolt with tragic consequences for all.

Session IX British Revenge and the Last Mughal

The British reaction to rebellion was slow taking shape. When it did, however, it spelled the end of the Mughal line of Indian emperors.

Session X The East India Company Gives Way to The Raj

The steady rise of the East India Company from 1600 onwards occurred contemporaneously with the rise and fall of the Mughals. Ironically, and not coincidentally, the Company survived the demise of the Mughals by not much more than a year, when the British Crown took sovereignty over all India.

The Making of Modern India, Part I

Essential Books for This Course

The Great Moghuls

Gascoigne, Bamber and Christina (1971) *Available from Amazon.com*

The Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty: Delhi, 1857

Dalrymple, William (2008) *Available from Amazon.com*

Optional Further Reading

India: A History

Key, John (2000)

White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth-Century India

Dalrymple, William (2004)

Akbar the Great Mogul, 1542-1605

Smith, Vincent Arthur (1918) Available on Kindle and elsewhere online

Return of a King: The Battle for Afghanistan, 1839-1842

Dalrymple, William (2014)

Video

YouTube: THE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S SEIZURE OF BENGAL AND HOW THIS LED TO THE GREAT BENGAL FAMINE OF 1770 Published on Jan 3, 2015

Lecture By Roy Moxham

Gresham College Lectures – Podcasts Online, and in PDF

India: The Jewel in the Crown

Burk, Kathleen (2005)

See <http://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/india-the-jewel-in-the-crown>

Transcript also available at this site

This Imperious Company - The East India Company and the Modern Multinational

Robins, Nick (2008)

See <http://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/this-imperious-company-the-east-india-company-and-the-modern-multinational>

Transcript also available at this site

The Last Mughal

Dalrymple, William 2008

See <http://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/the-last-mughal>

Transcript also available at this site