

HIST 243: South Asian History and Civilizations

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The South Asian subcontinent is home to over a billion people, just over 23% of humanity. A vivid mixture of languages and religions, the region has an equally rich and complex history and culture. For many, however, the image of South Asia is composed of simplistic religious and cultural essences. This course seeks to provide a more dynamic conception of the peoples of the subcontinent as historical actors contributing to and engaging with their own history. We will survey the history, culture and political economy of the subcontinent from the coming of the British to the present. Some topics under consideration will be: the transition to colonialism; social, economic and cultural change under British rule; nationalism before and after Gandhi; regional and religious identities; decolonization and partition; the character of the post-colonial era in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. There will be significant use of primary written sources (in English) and multi-media presentations.