Preliminary Exam in Global South Asias  
Fall 2011

This exam is composed of one required question (Section A) and two other questions (chose from Section B).

You must do a total of three (3) questions.

Be sure each essay has a clear line of argument, addresses as many dimensions of the question as possible, and offers relevant, persuasive evidence from specific secondary sources wherever appropriate. Good luck!

Section A: Required question:

You’ve been hired to teach South Asian history in a public Midwestern university and your department chair wants your course to serve as an elective for majors who have chosen a global studies focus. Develop a 4 page rationale for the course that addresses your approach to such a challenge in 100 level course. Divide the syllabus into three broad sections and provide 1-2 page abstracts of what each will cover and what readings will be used as well. Finally, describe an assignment, whether written, oral or digital, that advances your pedagogical aims for the course (1-2 pages). How will you assess the impact of your global South Asia focus?

Section B: Choose TWO (2) questions

1) The term “Global South Asias” denominates a new field of inquiry that promises to move beyond an area studies approach on the one hand and an imperial history ambit on the other. What are its geographical presumptions, its conceptual parameters and its inter/disciplinary orientations? To what extent is it dependent on recently established paradigms of networks, identities, and mobilities? (How) is it distinguishable from a comparative approach? and what traces of the older models that it seeks to eschew remain imprinted on it, with what consequences?
2) To what extent are religion, caste, and class either dissolved, re-created, or reinforced in the history of the South Asian diaspora? What specific historical variables account for these patterns?

3) Identify and explain the major changes and continuities within the South Asian diaspora of the Indian Ocean World during the period 1500 to the present. To what extent are changes and/or continuities the product of European Empire, or the product of the social and economic strategies of South Asians?

4) How have the political agendas of historians who write on Global South Asia shaped both the stories and the analytical frameworks of the stories that are written from the 1960s to the present? What have been the contributions and limitations of such politically engaged historiographies, and to what extent to they depart from the concerns of scholars who focus on South Asia alone?

5) How does the category of diaspora limit and/or enable a global view of South Asian identities? What are the analytical and methodological presumptions that inform your use of the term, and who are the scholars who model its limitations and possibilities? What do you say to critics who argue that dominant usages of diaspora privilege identities over analysis of political economy, global capital and materialist histories?