

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
Department of History
Semester I, 1985-86

<u>COURSE NO.</u>	<u>COURSE TITLE</u>	<u>INSTRUCTOR</u>
450	History of Modern India [South Asia]: The Age of Company Raj	Frykenberg

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Gandhi, in 1942, called the British promise of full Independence as soon as the War was over a "post-dated cheque on a failing bank." He refused to cooperate and soon found himself under "detention" while most other Congress leaders found themselves in jail. So ended the Quit India Movement. Meanwhile, for the remainder of the War, anti-Congress forces sought to strengthen their positions. The Pakistan Movement gained such momentum that, by 1945, it was a formidable threat to the political unity of the subcontinent. When Congress leaders still refused to listen to him, Jinnah's call for Direct Action and the Great Killings of Calcutta ended the last hopes for unity.

The "subcontinent" of India is as big as Europe, and more complex. Moreover, never until modern times did all of it ever come together under a single rule. Nor, indeed, was there reason to think that it could ever happen. The process by which this could happen had begun several times, only to be frustrated by the extreme complexity of segmented (and caste dominated) social structures and regional cultures. The Mughals almost succeeded, especially in North India. But their system of governance began to unravel and disintegrate after the death of Emperor Aurangzeb, in 1707. Thereafter, by degrees, the Marathas made a bid to succeed them. Eventually, some fifty years later, the East India Company, which had begun operating in 1600 and which had been ruling small coastal enclaves since 1639, found itself in the middle of an "arms trade" and a scramble for survival (and succession). Not until the defeat of both the French and the Marathas did the Company's position become more than that of just another power in India. The process of transition to "Company Raj" over India began just after the British lost thirteen colonies in North America.

Americans, in particular, can find fascinating parallels between their own history and the history of India. Lord Cornwallis left one empire in America then consolidated another in India. On a deeper level, respect for "rule of law" and parallels in constitutional development, especially over the last two centuries, provide interesting comparisons and contrasts. Certainly a country of nearly 800 million people, with enormous agricultural, industrial, and human resources, cannot be taken lightly, least of all by Americans.

Students are challenged to look more carefully at common stereotypes and to probe more deeply into the workings of one of the World's oldest civilizations.

LECTURES

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 1:00 to 2:15 p.m., lectures will occasionally be interrupted by ad hoc discussions on topics or questions raised by students.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS:

Two short essays (with tutorial guidance and critical feedback). Final examination question(s) handed out one week before hour schedule in timetable.

GRADING SYSTEM:

Traditional, with optional pass-fail. Emphasis upon quality writing.

REQUIRED READINGS:

As listed in Syllabus: T.G.P. Spear,
Adam Watson,
S. Wolpert,
and others.

HONOR COURSE COMPONENT:

A research essay of 10,000 words, produced in close consultation with instructor.