

## **AAH 215: Arts of South Asia**

---

**Meeting Time:** Mondays and Thursdays, 12:30-1:50

**Meeting Place:** 230 AIMM

### **Dr. Deborah Hutton**

**Office:** 325 AIMM

**Office Hrs.:** Mondays and Thursdays, 2-4pm or by appt

**Phone:** 771-2601

**E-mail:** dhutton@tcnj.edu

---

### **Course Description:**

In this course, we will explore the arts, including architecture, sculpture, and painting, of South and Southeast Asia, with particular emphasis on how “multiplicity” (multiplicity of religions, traditions, beliefs, perspectives, etc.) manifests in the visual culture. We further will explore the roles that monuments play in society, as well as the various methodologies we can employ to analyze them. Over the course of the semester, students will gain an understanding of the visual arts as they relate to religious practices (including those of Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, and Islam) and to the historical, political, and social contexts of the region. Emphasis primarily will be on India, and students will develop an understanding of the historical development of Indian art from circa 3000 BCE to the present. The course also will introduce students to key monuments and artistic traditions of other countries in the region, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Cambodia, Thailand, Indonesia, Tibet and Nepal. Students will learn the practices of visual analysis, including stylistic and iconographical analyses; students also will develop their writing and critical analysis skills.

### **Course Goals:**

1. To learn about the art, history, religions, and cultures of South and Southeast Asia.
2. To explore how “multiplicity” and cultural interaction manifest in the visual culture of South Asia.
3. To explore the significance of monuments in society, including the ways in which they define identity, beliefs, and traditions, and to develop methodologies to better understand and analyze monuments.
4. To develop students’ visual analysis skills; to learn how to think, read, and write critically about art objects, and in general to improve students’ written communication and analytical skills.

---

### **Reading Material:**

#### **Textbooks:**

There are two textbooks for this course available in the campus bookstore:

- Vidya Dehejia. *Indian Art. Arts and Ideas Series*. London: Phaidon Press, 1997.
- Rebecca M. Brown and Deborah S. Hutton. *Asian Art. Blackwell Anthologies in Art History*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

**Supplemental Readings:**

In addition to the two textbooks there will be a few supplemental readings, scanned and available through SOCS. These readings will be crucial to class discussion and/or for your assignments. They are indicated on the course outline and on SOCS under the date for which they should be read. You are required to print them out, read them, and bring them to class on the day on which we will discuss them.

**Please Note:**

The readings from the two textbooks are indicated on the course outline by the authors' last names and listed under the day for which they should be completed. The supplemental readings are available on SOCS and are listed by the date for which they should be read.

**You are expected to complete the readings before class and to bring the relevant book(s) or printout of supplemental readings with you to class.**

**Reserve Books:**

Several books that may be useful to you throughout this semester are on reserve in the library. I will post a link on SOCS to the library listing of those books.

**Other Resources:**

I recommend that you checkout GroveArt, which is an online art encyclopedia, as well as Artstor, an online image database, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Timeline of Art History. Links to all three sites, as well as other useful sites, are on SOCS.

---

**Learning Activities:**

Each of the learning activities below is designed with the 4 course goals in mind. The idea is that they should both further these goals and evaluate how well you are doing meeting those goals.

**Exams:**

There will be two exams: a midterm worth 20% of your course grade and a final exam worth 24% of your course grade. These exams will test your knowledge and comprehension of the material covered in class and in the corresponding readings. Each exam will consist of terms, short answer questions, and essay questions. You will not be tested on visual recall, but you will be expected to memorize terms, names, and details about the works of art as well as religious practices and other pertinent cultural information. We will talk more about the format and how to prepare for them as the semester progresses. I will provide you with study sheets that make it clear which works of art and what terms you need to know for the exams (the study sheets will be posted on SOCS). The essay portion of the final exam will be cumulative; however, the terms and short-answer questions will only cover the material since the midterm. Make-up exams will only be given in the case of emergencies or illness documented with a physician's note.

**Midterm: 10/20**

**Final Exam: Date TBA (during Final Exam Week)**

**Paper #1: *Bamiyan Buddhas: Reconstruct them?***

This assignment is about investigating one example of a disputed monument, thinking about to whom it and its legacy belong as well as how to commemorate it once it is gone. Specifically, you will be asked to take a position on the possible reconstruction of the Bamiyan Buddha sculptures in Afghanistan that were destroyed by the Taliban in 2001. For this assignment, you will watch the film, the *Giant Buddhas*, read several articles (available on SOCS), and then compose your paper in the form of an extended letter-to-the-editor (approximately 5 pages), arguing for what you think is the appropriate response. More information given at a later date.

**Due Date: 10/03**

**Paper #2: *Exploring the Hindu Temple***

This paper gives you the opportunity to explore what it is you find interesting about Hindu (or Jain) temples (or monuments in general) and how you might approach learning more about it, without undertaking a full-fledged research paper. After choosing your particular topic, you will locate and read 3 sources related to it. In your approximately 5-page paper, you will explain why you found your choice compelling, provide a cogent summary of the sources you found and what they told you about your topic, then finally brainstorm what you might do to explore the topic further. Unlike your first paper, this is not a thesis driven paper, but it does require you to do some library research. More information will be given at a later date.

**Due Date: 11/07**

**Group Project: *Exploring the Taj Mahal***

This project gives us the opportunity to explore, together as a class, all the different approaches to understanding a single monument that we might take, and to develop a complete understanding of the Taj Mahal. You will also develop your research and presentation skills. For it, you will be divided into 5 groups, each assigned a different aspect of the Taj Mahal to investigate. You will work with your group to do the research and develop a 25-30 min presentation, complete with handout and visuals, in which you teach the rest of us what you have learned. These presentations will take place on our last 3 class meetings, and the material that you teach WILL be included on the final exam. More information will be given at a later date.

**Presentation dates: 12/1, 12/5, 12/8**

**Class Participation and Class Structure:**

We will meet twice each week for an hour and twenty minutes. Class will be a combination of lecture, discussion, and group work. Students are expected to be active participants in the learning experience—that means, showing up with the reading done and ready to learn, ask questions, and take part in discussions. Additionally, at various points throughout the semester, you will be expected to team up with fellow students to work together outside of class time. You also will occasionally be asked to complete short writing assignments (separate from your graded papers)—at home or in class, which you will hand in, just to show that you have completed it (they will not be graded, just checked as complete or incomplete). Your class participation grade will be based on how well you meet all of these expectations. To be clear: answering a question “wrong” in class or not understanding a reading will not hurt your grade. Your participation grade is based completely on just trying—that is, effort and engagement.

## Grading Rubric:

Paper #1	17%
Midterm	20%
Paper #2	17%
Group Project	17%
Final Exam	24%
<u>Class Participation</u>	<u>5%</u>
Total= 100%	

You will be given a specific number grade for each of your exams, and letter grades for the two papers, group project, and class participation. Each letter grade will be translated into a corresponding number grade in the middle of each range given below (A=95, A-=91.5, B+=88.5, etc.). These numeric grades then will be averaged together to form your final average, which will be translated into a letter grade. The grade rubric is given below. Please note that final grades are not “rounded up”—instead you have the opportunity to raise your grade, if you desire to do so, through extra credit assignments (see below).

A = 93.00 and above	C+= 77.00-79.99
A- = 90.00-92.99	C = 73.00-76.99
B+ = 87.00-89.99	C- = 70.00-72.99
B = 83.00-86.99	D = 60.00-69.99
B- = 80.00-82.99	F = 59.99 and below

## Extra Credit:

We are lucky enough to have several museums in the region with excellent collections of South Asian art, or with temporary exhibits about South Asian art. Seeing art in person, of course, is a great way to better understand it. For each of the following that you visit, provide me with a 2-page write up and evidence (receipt) of your visit, and you will receive up to 2.0 points on your numeric average. You can earn a maximum of 4.0 points on your final numeric average. That is, if you visit 2 museums and do a good job writing up your visits, you’ll receive 4.0 points, enough to boost you up one grade rank (from a B- to a B, for example). Below is a list of the museums and dates for any temporary exhibits. I’ll also provide links to their websites on SOCS.

- Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC- an excellent permanent collection of South Asian and Southeast Asian art, and also hosting two temporary exhibit this fall: Mother India: The Goddess in Indian Painting (closes Nov. 27<sup>th</sup>) and “Wonders of the Age”: Master Painters of India, 1100-1900 (Sept 28<sup>th</sup>-Jan 8<sup>th</sup>).
- Asia Society, NYC- it has two exhibits this fall relating to South Asia: The Buddhist Heritage of Pakistan: Art of Gandhara (closes Oct 30<sup>th</sup>) and Rabindranath Tagore: Poet and Painter of India (Sept 9<sup>th</sup>-Dec 31<sup>st</sup>).

- Rubin Museum of Art, NYC- this museum focuses on Himalayan art and has a permanent collection as well as a variety of temporary exhibits (note that some will focus on western art or Chinese art—I prefer that your write-up focus more on the art that we discuss in this course).
- Brooklyn Museum, NYC- it has two exhibits this fall relating to South Asia: Vishnu: Hinduism’s Blue-Skinned Savior (closes Oct 2<sup>nd</sup>) and Split Second: Indian Paintings (closes January 1<sup>st</sup>).
- Philadelphia Museum of Art- an excellent permanent collection of South Asian art.
- Newark Museum, NJ- it has an excellent collection of Tibetan art and right now is celebrating the centennial of this collection with 5 newly reinstalled exhibits (through December 31st).

**\*All extra credit must be turned in within 1 week of your visit, and by Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> at the latest.**

---

#### **Tips for Success:**

- Class will be a combination of lecture (with slides), discussion, and group exercises. These class meetings are crucial, so come to class, pay attention, and participate.
- If you don’t understand something, ask questions—either in class, before or after class, via e-mail, or come see me during my office hours.
- The ultimate objective is to balance the “big picture”—the larger ideas and points—with the details that support them. Keep both in mind as you read, take notes, and think about the works covered in class. Always ask yourself: why is this work significant and what are the details that demonstrate this?
- Keep up with the information. It is too much information to cram into your head right before the exams.

#### **A few other important guidelines:**

- I answer e-mail regularly during the week (but not on the weekends); however, if your e-mail will take me more than 2 minutes to answer, I will request that you make an appt to see me in person, either during my office hours, or at another time, if you have a class conflict.
- I am happy to read over drafts of your papers, but you must make an appt. to see me, then sit with me while I read the paper and we go over it together.
- I expect you to check your e-mail and SOCS regularly (once every few days) to keep up with information for class. If you have any problems with accessing SOCS or if there is a problem with any of the material posted there, please let me know ASAP.
- I expect you to respect your fellow students, the course, and me. Do not text message, surf the web, or chat with your neighbor during class. Do feel free to ask questions whenever you want, and you are welcome to bring in drinks and snacks to class as long as you pick up your trash on the way out.

- It is fine to talk over material or assignments with other students in the class, but the work you turn in, including response papers, must be your own.
  - I take the honors code very seriously. Any cheating or plagiarism will have serious repercussions for the student(s) involved. Please review TCNJ's Academic Integrity Policy: <http://www.tcnj.edu/~academic/policy/integrity.html>
- 

## **Course Outline**

### **Unit 1: Introduction**

Class 1: 9/1, Thurs *Exploring South Asian Art*

Class 2: 9/6, Tues (9/5 is Labor Day) *Exploring Monuments*

- Readings: Dehejia, pp4-8; Brown & Hutton, pp202-204
- Assignment: Think about a time that you visited a monument; write up why you went, what you did when you were there, and your reaction to it in the form of a short, informal response paper.

### **Unit 2: Buddhist Art in South Asia**

Class 3: 9/8, Thus *Indus Valley Civilization through the beginnings of Buddhism*

- Readings: Dehejia, pp25-48; Brown & Hutton, pp13-20

Class 4: 9/12, Mon *Narrative Buddhist Art*

- Readings: Dehejia, pp51-76, Brown & Hutton, pp21-29

Class 5: 9/15, Thurs *Images of the Buddha: The Kushan and Gupta Dynasties*

- Readings: Dehejia, pp79-124; Brown & Hutton, pp30-33

Class 6: 9/19, Mon *Borobudur*

- Readings: Brown & Hutton, pp57-70; supplemental reading (on SOCS)

Class 7: 9/22, Thurs **No Class Meeting**

- Assignment: Watch movie for Bamiyan Buddhas paper (Paper #1)

Class 8: 9/26, Mon *Tibetan Buddhist art & Thai Neo-Traditional Art*

- Readings: Brown & Hutton, pp140-146 & 147-166

### **Unit 3: Medieval Hindu Art in South Asia**

- Class 9: 9/29, Thurs *Introduction to Hindu art*
- Readings: Dehejia, pp11-22 & 137-152; Brown & Hutton, pp34-42
- Class 10: 10/3, Mon *Rock-cut temples, part 1: Elephanta*
- Readings: Dehejia, pp103-4 & pp124-134
  - **Paper #1 Due**
- Class 11: 10/6, Thurs *Rock-cut temples, part 2: Mamallapuram*
- Readings: Dehejia, pp185-204; Brown & Hutton, pp43-56
- Class 12: 10/10, Mon *Power and Grace: The Chola Dynasty*
- Readings: Dehejia, pp207-228; supplemental reading (on SOCS)
- Class 13: 10/13, Thurs *Eroticism and Hinduism: The Temples of Khajuraho*
- Readings: Dehejia, pp155-169; Brown & Hutton, pp71-82

**10/17, Mon: No Class—Fall break**

Class 14: 10/20, Thurs **Midterm**

### **Unit 4: South Asian Art, 1200-1900**

- Class 15: 10/24, Mon *Temple City in the Jungle: Angkor Wat*
- Readings: Brown & Hutton, pp83-92; supplemental reading (on SOCS)
- Class 16: 10/27, Thurs *The Peaceful Liberators: Jain Art*
- Readings: Dehejia, pp169-176
- Class 17: 10/31, Mon *Art of the Sultans: Islam comes to India*
- Readings: Dehejia, pp249-265
- Class 18: 11/3, Thurs **No Class Meeting**
- Assignment: work on Paper #2
- Class 19: 11/7, Mon *Mughal art under Akbar and Jahangir*
- Readings: Dehejia, pp299-334; Brown & Hutton, pp93-100
  - **Paper #2 due**
- Class 20: 11/10, Thurs *Rajput painting*
- Readings: Dehejia, pp337-362; Brown & Hutton, pp116-126

### **Unit 5: South Asian art in the 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> centuries**

- Class 21: 11/14, Mon *Art of the colonial era*
- Readings: Dehejia, pp379-406; Brown & Hutton, pp127-139
- Class 22: 11/17, Thurs *Early 20th century painting*
- Readings: Dehejia, pp409-424; Brown & Hutton, pp167-176; Supplemental reading (on SOCS)
- Class 23: 11/21, Mon *Art after Indian Independence*
- Readings: Brown & Hutton, pp177-188; Supplemental reading (on SOCS)

11/24, Thurs: **No class, Thanksgiving**

- Class 24: 11/28, Mon *Contemporary South Asian art*
- Readings: Supplemental Reading (on SOCS)

### **Unit 6: Course Conclusion**

- Class 25: 12/1, Thurs *Taj group presentations, part 1*
- Class 26: 12/5, Mon *Taj group presentations, part 2*
- Class 27 12/8, Thurs *Taj group presentations, part 3 & Course Conclusion*

**Final Exam:** During Exam Week (12/14-12/20); date TBA