

SEC Reading the Archive

CREDIT DISTRIBUTION, ELIGIBILITY AND PRE-REQUISITES OF THE COURSE

Course title & Code	Credits	Credit distribution of the course			Eligibility criteria	Pre-requisite of the course (if any)
		Lecture	Tutorial	Practical/ Practice		
Reading the Archive	2	1	0	1	Class XII	NA

Learning Objectives

This course seeks to develop skills and methods of historical research through the critical evaluation of primary sources. The first unit of the course will emphasize that the historical archive cannot be treated as mere “information” and that issues of authorship, representation and access are crucial to any understanding of primary sources. At the core of the course are three carefully designed basic research projects that will introduce students to a wide variety of primary sources that range from colonial ethnographic and legal texts to visual photographic archives. The student will focus on one kind of archive in each project along with an important text that will illuminate the reading of this kind of archive by a historian.

Learning outcomes

- To expose students to a wide variety of archives used in historical work.
- To introduce students to scholarship that has critically and creatively used different kinds of primary sources.
- To develop skills to access, contextualize, and analyze primary sources and carry out research.
- A student having studied this course will be skilled in culture and tourism based industries: possible employment includes tour guides, archaeology assistants, archivist, jobs in art galleries, museums, auction houses, researchers in NGOs and other institutions, culture and art based writing and journalism and on social media

SYLLABUS

Unit 1: Theory (15 hours)

Introduction to Primary Sources: Power and Memory in the Archive

Unit 2: Projects

Practical (30 hours.)

- 1) The documentary archive: colonialism and nationalism
- 2) Photography and the visual archive.
- 3) Gender, law and the archive

Essential/recommended readings

Unit 1: Introduction to Primary Sources: Power and Memory in the Archive Theory

This unit will introduce the student to the notion of the archive as a cultural institution produced in contexts of power that allows both for the production, and elision of different kinds of historical narratives. It will also underline the issue of access, and digitization which is crucial to researchers today.

Students will be taken for a guided visit to either the National Archives of India or the Delhi State Archives.

Readings:

- Aparna Balachandran and Rochelle Pinto, Archive and Access, Bangalore, Centre for Internet and Society, 2011, 14-29, 50-81. <https://cis-india.org/raw/histories-of-the-internet/blogs/archives-and-access>
- Joan Schwartz, & Terry Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory," Archival Science, Vol. 2, 1-19.

Unit 2: This unit is divided into 3 sections containing research projects that use different types of archives. *The Documentary Archive: Colonialism and Nationalism:*

In this section, the student can choose to do EITHER a project on a colonial text, or on a document produced in the course of the nationalist struggle in India. In the first case, students will understand the making of colonial knowledge; in the second, they will access the voices of peasants filtered through the accounts of the nationalist elite. Students can choose any section/chapter/ pages of the primary source in consultation with the teacher.

- a. *Primary source:* H.H. Risley and E.A Gait, Report on the Census of India, 1901; *Secondary reading:* Bernard Cohn, "The Census, Social Structure and Objectification in India" in *Anthropologist Amongst the Historians*, Delhi: OUP, 1987, 224-254.
 - b. *Primary Source:* Shahid Amin, Tridip Suhrud and Megha Tod eds, *Thumb Printed: Champaran Indigo Peasants Speak to Gandhi*, Navajivan Trust and National Archives of India, 2022.
Secondary Reading: Shahid Amin, *Thumb Printed: Champaran Indigo Peasants Speak to Gandhi* edited by Shahid Amin, Tridip Suhrud and Megha Tod, Navjivan Press and National Archives of India, Introduction, xiii-xxxvi.
- 2) In this section, the students can choose to either do a project on colonial-era photographs or on online personal photographic archives. In the first

case, the student will be engaged with the idea of the camera as a technology of rule; in the second the focus will be on cultural memory and digitization. Students can choose any section/pages/chapter/s of the primary source in consultation with the teacher.

- a. *Primary Source*: William Johnson, *The Oriental Races and Tribes, Residents and Visitors of Bombay: A Series of Photographs with Letter Press Descriptions*, London: W. J. Johnson, 1863, https://archive.org/details/gri_33125008252070; *Secondary Reading*: Christopher Pinney, *Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs*, London: Reaktion, 1997, Chapter 1: 'Stern Fidelity' and Penetrating Certainty.' 17-71.
- b. *Primary Source*: The Indian Memory Project <https://www.indianmemoryproject.com/>
Secondary Reading: Katja Muller, "Between Lived and Archived Memory: How Digital Archives Can Tell History." *Digithum*, 19, 2017, 1-18. https://redib.org/Record/oai_articulo1211444-between-lived-archived-memory-how-digital-archives-can-tell-history

3) In this section, students will reflect on historical archives are gendered in character through an analysis of a legal text on the Age of Consent controversy. The project will allow students see legal debates and law-making as masculine projects even as the legal archive allows us some access to the agency and voices of women. Students can choose any section/pages/chapter/s of the primary source in consultation with the teacher.

- a. *Primary Source*: Age of Consent Act Report, Government of India, Calcutta, 1929.
- b. *Secondary Reading*: Tanika Sarkar, "Rhetoric against Age of Consent: Resisting Colonial Reason and the Death of a Child-Wife," *Economic and Political Weekly*. 1993, Vol.28,

1869-1878.

Suggestive readings

- Anjali Arondekar "Without a Trace: Sexuality and the Colonial Archive." *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 14, no. 1/2, 2005, 10–27.
- Antoinette Burton, ed., *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005)
- Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013, 79-113.
- Crispin Bates, "Race, caste and tribe in central India: the early origins of Indian anthropometry" In Peter Robb (Ed.), *The Concept of Race in South Asia*, Delhi: OUP, 219-59.

- Edwards, Elizabeth. "Photography and the Material Performance of the Past." *History and Theory*, vol. 48, no. 4, 2009, 130–50.
- Kama MacLean, "The Portrait's Journey: The Image, Social Communication and Martyr-Making in Colonial India." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 70, no. 4, 2011 1051–82.
- Ranajit Guha, "The Prose of Counter Insurgency", *Subaltern Studies: Writings of South Asian History and Society*, Vol 2, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1-42.
- Shahid Amin, "Gandhi as Mahatma: Gorakhpur District, Eastern UP, 1921-2' in R. Guha (ed.), *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, vol. 3, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1984, 1-61.
- Tanika Sarkar "A Book of Her Own. A Life of Her Own: Autobiography of a Nineteenth-Century Woman." *History Workshop*, no. 36, 1993, 35–65.

Examination scheme and mode:

Total Marks: 100 marks

Internal Assessment: 25 marks

End Semester University Exam: 75 marks

The Internal Assessment for the course may include Class participation, Assignments, Class tests, Projects, Field Work, Presentations, amongst others as decided by the faculty.

Note: Examination scheme and mode shall be as prescribed by the Examination Branch, University of Delhi, from time to time.