

Expressive Cultures Images: Indian Court Painting: 1450-1800

A course proposal for the Spring Term of 2015

The university draws students from many regions of the world and this course could provide an option which expands the geographic and cultural diversity of the current offerings in the “Expressive Cultures: Images” category. It will serve to introduce students in a variety of fields and disciplines to the subcontinent’s vibrant and diverse visual production. Before the twentieth century, the cultural and artistic life of the Indian subcontinent was primarily supported by rulers in various regional centers. During the period covered by this course, 1450-1800, paintings on paper filled several important roles. They fused the indigenous tradition of devotional imagery with new, primarily secular functions. In the Indian cultural tradition paintings provide visual metaphors for various moods, seasons, times of day and concepts. They celebrate the lives and accomplishments of individual rulers through the medium of narrative pictures and portraits. They also recall the lives and personalities of gods and heroes.

In addition to this subjects’ intrinsic appeal, there are specific reasons why this course is particularly appropriate for the spring term of 2015. The Metropolitan Museum of Art holds an important collection of Indian paintings which are on display in pair of contiguous galleries, one contains paintings from the Islamic Department and the other has examples from the Asian Art Department. In addition, exceptionally, during the spring of 2015 the museum will host a major loan exhibition devoted to Indian art focused on pictures and objects from the Deccan region. Although American audiences have gained a certain familiarity with Mughal art, works from the Deccan are so widely scattered around the globe that only scholars dedicated to that region’s study have been able to see more than a few of the region’s extraordinary paintings. This course is timed to take advantage of this unique opportunity.

Despite the interest and richness of Deccani Art, however, that topic is probably too specialized to constitute the entire focus of a course aimed at undergraduates with no prior exposure to study of the subcontinent’s artistic accomplishments. For that reason, the course which I would like to offer is entitled “Indian Court Painting: 1500-1800” and I propose to give will also consider paintings made for rulers in various sections of the subcontinent. It will explore open with a consideration of pre-Mughal painting from western India, and analyze paintings made for the Mughals before turning to the Deccani states with a particular focus on materials that will be in the exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of it. The final section of the course will explore court paintings made for the Rajput rulers of northern and western India during the later seventeenth eighteenth centuries. These pictures draw from both the Mughal and Deccani traditions but also exhibit unique features which are visually engaging. The art of these three dynastic groups will be presented sequentially as series of case studies but these specific examples will also be cross-referenced in ways that will help the students to understand the ways in which these artistic traditions interacted.

The challenge of tackling not one but three unfamiliar topics in a single course may seem overly ambitious, but the project is made more feasible by the presence of a single book which can provide a cultural, geographical and historical framework that will help to link together the disparate elements and give them a more concrete physical and intellectual focus. That book is *India before Europe* by Catherine B. Asher and Cynthia Talbot, published as a paperback by Cambridge University Press. Chapters of this book will be used in discussion sections to provide a context for the paintings from

specific artistic centers that will be contained in the two formal lectures given each week. Additional readings will be assigned to provide background for the pictures discussed in the lectures.

Although a course focused solely on painting from the Deccan would not be appropriate for a general undergraduate audience the integration of materials from this exhibition will enrich the student's understanding of the course's lectures and readings. The two groups of paintings mentioned above, the permanent collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the special loan exhibition about the art of the Deccan will both be used as the focus of student writing assignments. They will be asked to write two papers which are based directly on paintings on view at the Metropolitan Museum. To ensure that the students actually visit the museum rather than working from digital resources they will be required to provide proof of their visits in the form of admission stickers which carry the date of a visit.

Student Assignments and Assessment

1. Attendance of lectures and discussion sections : 20% of grade
2. Weekly summaries of the assigned readings: 1 double sided, single spaced page/week: 30%
These summaries should analyze the contents of the readings and connect them with the themes of the lectures.
3. Paper of 6 pp. focused on two paintings from the permanent collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art due in the 6th week of the term 15 %
4. Mid-term examination 10%
5. Final project which will take the place of the final examination: 25%
This project will consist of a ten page paper describing an exhibition proposal containing 10 paintings selected to be representative of the materials covered in the lectures, readings and exhibition visits.

1. Jan. 26-30: Introduction to the themes and structure of the course

Lec. 1: 15th Century Western Indian Painters abandon Palm Leaves for Paper

Lec.2: The Mandu Sultans order a Persian Cook Book & Dictionary

Readings:

C. B. Asher and C. Talbot, *India before Europe*, CUP Press. Issbn 0-521-00539- 6, pp. 1-24, 84-114

Saryu V. Doshi, "The Master of the Devasano Pado Kalpsutra and Kalakacharya Katha," in *Masters of Indian Painting I: 1100-1650*, Geneva, 2011, 53-66.

D. Ehnbohm, "The Masters of the Dispersed Bhagavata Purana," in *Masters of Indian Painting I: 1100-1650*, Geneva, 2011, 77-96.

B.N. Goswamy, "The Master of the Jainesque Sultanate Shahnama," in *Masters of Indian Painting I: 1100-1650*, 41-52.

Norah M. Titley, ed.,tr, *The Ni'matnama Manuscript of the Sultans of Mandu, The Sultan's Book of Delights*, 2004, (selected receipts for food and perfumes)

R. Skelton, "The Ni'matnama: a landmark in Malwa Painting," *Marg*, vol. 12(3), pp. 44-50, Bombay, 1959.

2. Feb. 2-6: The Mughal Rulers and their Persian Heritage: Babur r.1526-1530; Humyun r. 1530-40, 1556

Lec. 1: The Central Asian Heritage of Babur shapes Mughal Visual Culture

Lec.2: The Emperor Humayun and his Persian painters

Readings:

Asher & Talbot, *India before Europe*, pp. 115-123.

Babur: *The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur Prince and Emperor*, trans. W. M. Thackston, 50 pp. of selected passages describing Babur's impressions of India and how it differs from Iran

S. Canby, "Abd al-Samad," in *Masters of Indian Painting I: 1100-1650*, Geneva, 2011, 97-110.

Stuart Cary Welch, "Zal in the Simurgh's Nest: a Painting by Mir Sayyid 'Ali for a *Shahnama* Illustrated for Emperor Humayun," in *Arts of Mughal India: Studies in Honour of Robert Skelton*, pp. 36-41

E. Fisher, "The Technique of Indian Painters: a Short Note," in *Masters of Indian Painting, II*, 793-798.

John Seyller, "Painting Workshops in Mughal India," *Masters of Indian Painting II*, 799-804

3. Feb. 9-13 Akbar (r.1556-1605) establishes painting as a Mughal court activity

Lec. 1: Akbar's fascination with history shapes Mughal court culture

Lec. 2 Akbar's fascination with portraiture sets the agenda for other Indian rulers

Readings:

Asher & Talbot, *India before Europe*, 123-151.

Abu'l Fazl, *The Akbarnama*, approx 25 pages on Akbar's ideas & attitudes

S. Stronge, *Painting for the Mughal Emperor: the Art of the Book, 1560-1660*, London, 2002, "The Making of a Royal Manuscript," 36-56, "Illustrating the *Akbarnama*" 58-85;

Amina Okada, "Basawan," in *Master Artists of the Imperial Mughal Court*, 1-16.

4. Feb. 16-20: Jahangir (r. 1605-1627) develops a personal vision of painting

Lec. 1: From Court Portraiture to Jahangir's Dream Pictures

Lec. 2; Nature Observed, Nature recorded the paintings of Mansur

Readings:

Jahangir, *Memoires*, 25 pp. of his observations on the visual arts.

Stronge, *Painting for the Mughal Emperor*, 110-141;

Asok Kumar Das, "Mansur,"; in *Master Artists of the Mughal Court*, ed. P. Pal, Bombay, 1991, 39-52;

Jeremiah P. Losty, "Abu'l Hasan," in *Master Artists*, 69-86; Terence McInerney, "Manohar," in *Master Artists*, 53-68.

5. Feb. 23-27; Shah Jahan (r.1627-58) : a Sense of order, a Love of Ceremony

Lec 1: The *Shah Jahan Nama* Paintings

Lec 2: The Album as portable museum

Readings:

Asher & Talbot, *India before Europe*, 152-163, 186-207.

Stronge, *Painting for the Mughal Emperor*, 142-174.

Ebba Koch, "The Hierarchical Principles of Shah Jahani Painting," in *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology*, Oxford, 2001, 131-156

Elaine Wright, "An Introduction to the Albums of Jahangir and Shah Jahan," in *Muraqqa': Imperial Mughal Albums From the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin*, Alexandria, VA., 2008

6. Mar. 2-6 The Impact of Late Mughal Painting and its 18th century Revival: Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707) and Muhammad Shah (r. 1720-48)

Lec. 1: Aurangzeb: a Focus on Portraiture

Lec.2: Muhammad Shah with his court; the Mughal Legacy Revived in 18th century Delhi

Readings:

Asher & Talbot, *India before Europe*, 225-236

N. Haidar, "Bhavanidas," in *Masters of Indian Painting: 1650-1900*, pp. 531-546.

W. Dalrymple, Y. Sharma, *Painting and Painters in Mughal India, 1707-1862*.

Terence McNerney, "Chitarman II," in *Masters of Indian Painting*, II, 547-562.

Malini Roy, "The Revival of the Mughal Painting Tradition during the Reign of Muhammad Shah," *Princes and Painters in Mughal Delhi*, New York, 2012 pp. 17-23\

7. Mar. 16-20: European Themes in Mughal Painting & Midterm Exam

Lec. 1: The Copying and Transformation of European Painting by Mughal Artists

Lec. 2: Mid-term exam

Reading:

Chandramani Singh, "European Themes in Early Mughal Painting," in *Chhavi: Golden Jubilee Volume*, Benares, 1973, 410-410.

Amina Okada, "Keshav Das," in *Masters of Indian Painting I*, 153-166.

John Seyller, "Basawan," in *Masters of Indian Painting I*, 119-134.

(Spring Break: Mar 16-20)

8. Mar. 23-27: Artistic Culture at the Deccan Courts:

Lec 1: Introduction to the Deccan: Geography, History, Visual Art at the Literature & Art courts,

Lec 2: Painting at Ahmadnagar and the Northern Deccan :1550-1600

Readings:

Asher & Talbot, *Asia before Europe*, 163-185;

M. Zebrowski, *Deccani Painting*, Berkeley, 1983, 17-39, 40-59.

R. Skelton, "Farrukh Beg in the Deccan: an Update," in *Sultans of the South: Arts of India's Deccan Courts, 1323-1687*, New York, 12-25.

9. Mar. 30-Apr 3: Painting at Bijapur under the Adil Shahi Dynasty :1579-1627

Lec 1: Bijapuri Painting in the 16th and early 17th century

Lec 2: Bijapuri Painting in the later 17th century

Reading:

M. Zebrowski, *Deccani Painting*, "Sultan Ali Adim Shah I (1557-79) of Bijapur," pp. 60- 66, "Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah II Bijapuri (1579-1627), patron of the Arts," 67-21.

Deborah Hutton, "The Pem Nem: A Sixteenth-Century Illustrated Romance from Bijapur," in *Sultans of the South*, pp. 44-63

Navina Haidar, "The Kitab-i Nauras: Key to Bijapur's Golden Age," in *Sultans of the South*, pp. 26-43.

10. Apr. 6-10: Painting at Golconda under the Qutb Shahi Dynasty :1580-1672

Lec 1: Sixteenth Century Painting at Golconda

Lec 2: Painted and Printed Textile Pictures from the Deccan

Readings:

M. Zebrowski, "Miniature Painting: Golconda and other Centers, in Cambridge History of India, vol. 1, pt. 7, pp. 191-225.

Marika Sardar, "A Seventeenth Century Kalamkari Hanging at the Metropolitan Museum of Art," in *Sultans of the South*, 148-161.

11. April 13-17 Western Indian Painting in the 17th century: The Rise of Local Masters

Lec 1: The Chunar Ragmala of 1605 and its Importance

Lec 2: The Royal Library at Udaipur in the mid 17th century Jagat Singh I and Sahibdin (1620-55)

Andrew Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur*, Zurich, 2001, chs. 2, 3, pp. 21-84

12. Apr. 13-17 The Hunter and the Hunted in 17th Century Western Indian Painting

Lec. 1: In Praise of Elephants

Lec 2: Hunting Tigers in the forests of Kotah

Milo C. Beach, "Masters of Early Kota Painting," in MIP II, 459-478.

Stuart Cary Welch, "Kotah's Lively Patrons and Artists," in *Gods, Kings and Tigers in the Art of Kotah*, Munich-New York, 1997, 15-38.

John Britschgi, "Masters of Early Kota," in *Wonder of the Age: Master Painters of India, 11100-1900*, New York, 2012

13. Apr. 20-24 The Depiction of Court Life at 17th & 18th century Udaipur in Mewar

Lec 1: Portraying the Ruler and his pastimes Sangram Singh II (1710-34)

Lec 2: The Palace as Stage, the Palace as Subject

Andrew Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur: Art and Patronage under the Maharanas of Mewar*, Zurich, 2001, pp. 109-140, 141-178, 179-214.

14. Apr. 27-May 1: The Pandit Seu Family of Painters: the transmission of an artistic legacy at the Courts of Western India across generations

Lec 1: Krishna and Radha as Models for Court Lovers in Western and Northern Indian Painting in the 18th century

Lec. 2: Court Ceremonies and the Idealization of Court Life

Readings:

B.N. Goswamy and Eberhard Fischer, "Manku," in *Masters of Indian Painting II*, 641-658; "Nainsukh of Guler," in *Masters of Indian Painting,,II*, 659-696, "The First Generation after Manuki and Nainsukh of Guler," in *MIP II*, 687-718.

Final Exams: May 13-19