The course will introduce students to various approaches to the study of the forms of historical knowledge produced and maintained in the pre-colonial societies and will discuss how different social groups constructed and interpreted their past. Thus, it would acquaint students with the broader questions of historical consciousness and nature of history writing in pre-colonial India. This will be done by using examples from the historical narratives available in different vernacular narrative traditions of medieval India.

The first part of the course (Lectures 0-5) will offer an overview of approaches to comprehend the relationship between memory, history and narratives. This part will begin with a discussion on social function of memory and subsequently will emphasize various conceptual paradigms like collective memory, social memory, social framework of memory etc. The relationship between individual and group memories, how did they influence each other while creating, negotiating a powerful social past, how the construction of social memory defined and redefined the identity of communities, various mnemonic techniques employed by the communities belonging to literate and non-literate medieval societies, the interrelationship between literary tradition and the historical narratives etc., will also be covered.

The second part (Lectures 6-12) will supplement the theories with specific case studies. These cases are chosen from the historical studies on narratives that deal with the social and historical memory of people from different lingual and cultural regions. Thus these case studies represent various aspects of medieval history of modern regions like Assam, Kashmir, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Punjab, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, etc. These narratives are broadly dated between the 12th and 18th centuries.

**Lecture-0: Past in Present: The Social History of Remembering**

**Readings:**


Thapar, Romila, *The Past Before Us: Historical Traditions of Early North India*, Permanent Black, Delhi, 2013. (Introduction)


**Readings:**


Kolakowski, Leszek, *Main Current of Marxism,* (Chapter, 14, 15 &16)


**Lecture-2: Social Frameworks of Memory**

**Readings:**


Halbwachs Maurice, *On Collective Memory,* 1926 (Chapters: 1-6, pp.42-118)


Lecture-3: Remembering in non-literate cultures

Readings:


Thapar, Romila, The Past Before Us: Historical Traditions of Early North India, Permanent Black, Delhi, 2013. (Introduction).

Lecture-4: Dreams: Unconscious Remembering

Readings:

Freud, Sigmund, Dream Psychology, (Chapters 1-3)

Freud, Sigmund, Interpretations of Dreams, Translation by A.A. Brill, 1911 (Chapter 1, The Scientific Literature of Dream Problems)

Gay, Peter, Freud for Historians, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1985 (Chapter 1-3, pp. 1-135)

Kruger, Steven, Dreaming in the Middle Age, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1992 (Introduction and Chapter 1, pp. 1-16)


Le Goff, Jacques, Time, Work and Culture in the Middle Ages, Chicago, 1980, (Part five: Dreams, pp. 193-231)
Lecture-5: Was there History Writing in India before Colonialism?

Readings:
Thapar, Romila, *The Past Before Us: Historical Traditions of Early North India*, Permanent Black, Delhi, 2013. (Introduction)


Aquil, Raziuddin and Partha Chatterjee (ed), *History in the Vernacular*, Permanent Black, Delhi. (Introduction)


Lecture-6: Recording, remembering and Legitimization of power-1

1. Indo-Persian culture in north India
2. Hindu-Urdu Literary cultures
3. Sanskrit historical narratives in Kashmir

Readings


Sharma, Sandhya, *Literature, Culture, and History in Mughal North India, 1500-1800*, Primus Book, Delhi, 2011. (Introduction)


**Lecture-7: Recording, Remembering and Legitimization of power-2**

4. Karanam culture in south India
5. Buranjis culture in North-East India
6. MadalaPanji tradition in Orissa
7. Rajamala—the narrative history of Tripura

**Readings:**

Sajal Nag, ‘Contesting Exclusion, Resisting inclusion contradictory trends in Historical Research in North-east India ( 1800-1900), in Sabyasachi Bhattacharya (ed.), *Approaches to history: Essays in Indian Historiography*, Indian Council of Historical Research, Delhi, 2011.


Thapar, Romila, *The Past Before Us: Historical Traditions of Early North India*, Permanent Black, Delhi, 2013. (Chapter-15).


Lecture-8: Multiple Narratives: Many approaches to the past

1. Many narratives of Somanatha
2. Namdev in History and Memory
3. PrithvirajChouhan in History and Memory

Readings:
Thapar, Romila.,The Past As Present: Forging Contemporary Identities through History, Aleph, 2014. (chapter-17)
Tolbot, Cynthia.,The Last Hindu Emperor: Prithviraj Chauhan and the Indian Past, Cambridge University Press, 2015 ( Introduction and relevant chapters)

Lecture-9: Local Narratives and Making of Regional Identity-1

1. Social Memory in Kayamkhanis narratives of Northern Rajasthan
2. Past in Mangalkabya Narratives of West Bengal
3. Kulagranthas of Bengal

Readings:
Chatterjee, Kumkum, The culture of history in Early Modern India: Persianization and Mughal Culture in Bengal, Oxford University Press, 2009, Delhi ( Introduction 1-23)

Lecture-10: Local Narratives and Making of Regional Identity-2

4. Forms of Historical Knowledge in Bakhar Narratives of Marathi communities
5. Sikh imagination of the Past: Reading of Gursobha
6. Charan: Bardic tradition in western India

Readings:


Lecture-11: Ethnic Narratives, Identity and social Mobility-1

1. KonguVellalars- South India
2. Jats- North India
3. Gujars- North India
4. Meos peasantry

Readings:


Lecture-12: Ethnic Narratives, Identity and social Mobility-2

5. Padmashali weavers- Deccan
6. Vishwakarma Craftsman- South India
7. Teliki- South India

Readings:


RamaswamyVijaya, ‘ Migrations of the Weaver Communities in Medieval Peninsular India, Thirteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries’, in VijayaRamaswamy (ed), Migrations in Medieval and early Colonial India, Routledge, 2016.
Tutorial-1

‘Remembering is a social act’—discuss the social context of memory.

Readings


Halbwachs Maurice, On Collective Memory, 1926 (Chapters: 1-6, pp.42-118)


Connerton, Paul, How Society Remembers, Oxford University Press, Cambridge, 1989. (Chapter-1)


Tutorial-2

Using collective memory of one or more social/ethnic group/s in Medieval India as a case study, discuss the applicability or non-applicability (or both) of theory/theories on social/collective memory. (Feel free to choose a case study from the course readings or from outside of it)

Readings

For Theories


Halbwachs Maurice, On Collective Memory, 1926 (Chapters: 1-6, pp.42-118)


Connerton, Paul, How Society Remembers, Oxford University Press, Cambridge, 1989. (Chapter-1)


For Case Studies


Murphy, Anne., ‘History in the Sikh Past’, *History and Theory*, vol.46, No.3, 2007


Chatterjee, Kumkum, ‘Communities, Kings and Chronicles in TheKulagranthas of Bengal’ *Studies in History*, 21, No-2.


Tolbot, Cynthia.,*The Last Hindu Emperor: PrithvirajChauhan and the Indian Past*, Cambridge University Press, 2015 ( Introduction and relevant chapters)