

ARCHAEOLOGY OF EARLY SOUTH ASIA

Monsoon 2018

M A Course: M 21431 (Four Credits)
(Two credits)

MPhil Course: P 21229

Mode of Evaluation for MA: 2 Tutorials (2 credits) + End Semester Exam (2 credits)

Mode of Evaluation for MPhil: 2 Tutorials (1 credit) + End Semester Exam (1 credit)

Course Instructor: Supriya Varma

This is an introductory course on the archaeology of early South Asia. This course has been organized thematically rather than chronologically and the themes selected substantially reflect the recent archaeological research undertaken in South Asia. The themes covered include the beginnings of agriculture and pastoralism in South Asia, in particular the domestication of rice and bovinds. The discipline of archaeology is ideally suited for investigating settlements, regions and landscapes and this is evident from the large number of excavated sites as well as regional surveys that have been carried out. As compared to the rural settlements or pastoral camps, much more work has been done on large urban centres, and more recently on some coastal sites in order to better understand the Indian Ocean trade. Within sites the evidence collected (in the form of artefacts, production facilities, debitage and work areas) at a more micro scale provides useful clues for reconstructing craft production and technologies. The themes of gender, childhood, and household, too are now beginning to be investigated in South Asian archaeology. What is also apparent is that most of the archaeological research in South Asia has focused on deep histories, but refreshingly an interest in the medieval and even contemporary periods is slowly emerging. As far as investigations of different regions are concerned, areas that had so far remained neglected, like the North East, or Ladakh, are also drawing attention from archaeologists.

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