

India: Culture, Traditions, & Globalization

Language, Culture, and History of Maharashtra

Fall semester

Instructors

This is a team-taught course, so different instructors will cover different modules.

- Language of Maharashtra - Marathi: **Revati Oak**
- Culture of Maharashtra: **Noopur Desai**
- History of Maharashtra: **Dr. Shraddha Kumbojkar**

Credits

Required course; 6 semester credits

Course Description

Indian culture is an amalgamation of several cultures that represent its various regions and states. In order to understand what makes today's India one must try and learn more about the culture of the different states. This program is offered in Maharashtra, so it is both an opportunity and necessity to learn the language of the state, its culture and history.

Since language is essential for communication with local people, and immersion in the local milieu, first module of the course, **Language of Maharashtra - Marathi**, is taught more in detail than the other two modules. This module focuses on acquiring essential Marathi vocabulary, conversation skills, and some basic reading and writing ability. Once the students are acquainted with the language they will be able to understand cultural and historical nuances better and faster.

Maharashtra's rich and diverse culture and heritage has emerged from a blending of different traditions, arts and cultural practices. The module titled **Culture of Maharashtra** will introduce students to these cultural practices and familiarize them with prominent moments of political, historical and cultural transitions. The course will delve into the idea of Maharashtra through its historical context while looking at multifold traditions and cultural practices of the state. Conversely, it would also be pertinent to explore how these fields have played a crucial role in shaping the idea of Maharashtra in the last couple of centuries. Another important aspect to understand the intricacies of a culture is language, in this case, Marathi. Students will learn conversational skills as well as specific terms and vocabulary which will be in sync with other aspects of the course, namely, history and culture.

Set within the socio-political and cultural context of Maharashtra, the focus would be on outlining important trends and shifts in the development of cultural landscape of Maharashtra in the wake of colonialism, modernization, industrialization, and formation of the state. Similarly, the course would also address how each cultural field has been transformed as a result of socio-political movements as well as popular debates regarding the idea of tradition, modernity and culture in contemporary times.

The course will take a brief overview of the shifts in the cultural fields in Maharashtra with a series of lectures focusing on history, literature, theatre, cinema, music, visual arts and architecture. The other aspects to be covered are religion, festivals, folk practices, textiles, food cultures and other cultural practices of the region. These sessions will also involve interactions with cultural practitioners from different fields and field visits such as heritage walks, museum and studio visits, performances, and access to libraries and archives. The discussions will ponder on different theoretical frameworks to understand and analyze the transitory nature of culture. The course will also raise critical issues that are being discussed in the field of history, culture and heritage today.

The third module, **History of Maharashtra**, focuses on making of modern Maharashtra, highlighting major historical milestones from the colonial times to present times. The classroom discussions will be supplemented with visits to historical place in and around the city to give the students a better understanding of the module.

Course Objectives

- To understand spoken Marathi and respond appropriately
- To learn to read Devnagari script
- To study social, political and economic aspects that have shaped culture in Maharashtra
- To understand aspects of culture in Maharashtra through literature, theatre, art, music, architecture, etc.
- To critically analyse changing nature of culture in Maharashtra
- To get an overview of important milestones in the history of Maharashtra
- To understand the link between the past, present and future

Required Texts

These will be provided prior to the beginning of the semester.

Course Schedule

Module 1: Language of Maharashtra - Marathi

1. The script and the "Barakhadi"
2. Common conversational phrases
3. Self-introduction

4. Basic Vocabulary
5. Numbers
6. Present, past and future tenses
7. Adjectives and adverbs
8. Marathi songs
9. Aural comprehension

Module 2: Culture of Maharashtra

Introduction

How do we define culture? What do we mean by Culture of Maharashtra? What are different cultural practices in the state? This will emerge through discussions of idea of Maharashtra, its formation and different social and cultural forces that have shaped and are still playing a crucial role in defining this identity. In all, cultural mapping of Maharashtra and also the changes that have happened in recent times.

Marathi Theatre

Marathi theatre in the colonial period, Sangeet Natak, Modern Marathi theatre, Theatre movements in Maharashtra

Marathi Literature

Bhakti literature, Modern Marathi literature: poetry, prose and drama, Dalit literature, urban and rural writings, contemporary literature

Music in Maharashtra

Different musical traditions including folk music like Shahiri, Powada, Tamasha and contemporary music of Maharashtra, its social and cultural context

Visual Arts Practices in Maharashtra

Maratha Painting, pre-modern art practice focusing on Raja Ravi Varma and modern art discourse in Maharashtra since Independence, interlinkages between art and literary movements. Also, overview of folk and tribal art forms.

Marathi Cinema

A brief survey of history of cinema. The presentation will focus on new trends in contemporary Marathi cinema.

Architecture

Overview of ancient architecture, e.g. cave temples; colonial architectural spaces; confluence of different styles; types of temple architecture, e.g Hemadpanti; modern architecture in Maharashtra.

Module 3: History of Maharashtra

19th Century: Advent of the Colonial

Presence of the colonial power during the Peshwa period – 18th Century. How the ground was lost to the British. Potentials for social mobility. Anglo Maratha Wars.

Change? No Change?

Establishment of the colonial rule. Elphinstone and the No Change policy. Was it a disguise?

1818-1857

Decline of the Indigene. Waning away of political powers. De-industrialization debate. First generation of English Education. 1857.

1857-1906

Ascent of the Native. Natives begin to talk back. Crown rule. Congress. Education and social reforms. Caste and class consciousness – Satya Shodhak Samaj.

1906-1947

Struggling for Freedom from Colonialism. Moderates, extremists, Gandhi. Persons and events in the freedom struggle. Constitutional developments. Caste consciousness.

1947-1960

Consensus breaks down. Nehruvian Era. Ambedkar and Buddhism. Industrialization and five-year plans. Co-operatives. Maharashtra becomes a state on the basis of linguistic majority.

1960-1990

Statehood, Emergency, Non-Congress Government. Post-Ambedkarite Buddhist movement. Literature, Cinema, rise of the middle classes. Dalit Panther, Shivsena.

Globalisation and After

Mandal, Babri, Blasts and Riots. Multinationals, SEZs, privatization of education, health and industrial sector. Diaspora.

Assessment***Module 1: Language***

Four tests of 20 marks each, and 20 marks for homework.

Module 2: Culture

Two assignments of 25 marks each (as explained separately)

1. Observation and reflections: to be done twice in the semester
2. Essay on a chosen topic related to an aspect of culture of Maharashtra

Module 3: History

- One assignment of 25 marks.
- Seminar format for assessment. In the first session, topics will be given to groups to study.

- In the last session the groups will present a Seminar on “Culture of Maharashtra,” which will be evaluated for 20 marks.

ACM Policies on Academics

A complete listing of ACM policies can be found in your student handbook.

Class attendance and participation

It is essential that students participate fully in coursework and all required academic activities (classroom sessions, site visits, and field trips). Excused absences may only be approved by the Director, and students are expected to make up any missed work. Unexcused absences will adversely affect students’ grades.

Academic honesty

Actions of dishonesty are destructive to the well-being of the academic community, and ACM staff respond to them vigorously. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic theft will result in a failing grade for that assignment and may result in failure for the course.

ACM Policy on Non-Discrimination

The Associated Colleges of the Midwest does not discriminate in the operation of its educational programs, activities, or employment on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, color, religion, national origin, age, veteran status, marital status, or disability.