This course introduces students to the religious worlds of the South Asian diaspora in Malaysia and Singapore, centered upon Hindu, Muslim and Sikh temples and shrines. The course aims to deepen students’ understanding about historical and contemporary South Asian religious worlds in port cities such as Singapore, Melaka and Penang through introducing them to the academic literature on South Asian Sufis, gods, temples and shrines in these cities, and alternatively, through visits to shrines and temples in Malaysia and Singapore. These visits will equip students with a deeper understanding of the religious practices, traditions and rituals of the historical and contemporary South Asian diaspora.

In the Spring break, students will be familiarized with the temples and shrines of Melaka, Penang and Singapore, most of which can be traced to the settlement of South Asians from Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab in the 19th century. The trip will commence in Singapore. Thereon, the class will proceed to Malaysia. Throughout this period, students will be introduced to, on the one hand, temples devoted to Saiva gods and shrines dedicated to saints who undertook voluntary or involuntary journeys to Southeast Asian cities. On the other hand, the active religious worlds of South Asian devotional cults in Southeast Asia, and a variety of religious traditions, festivals, performances and rituals from Sufi musical sessions to Saiva ecstatic trances. Throughout this period, students will be strongly encouraged to consider ways in which a study of the religious worlds of the South Asian diaspora can benefit from an intense engagement with the ‘lived’ practices of Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism in the shrines and temples of Singapore, Melaka and Penang. Moreover, students will be strongly encouraged to consider, in the course of their travels through the Straits of Melaka, how the development of religious institutions and cultures was associated with economic and political developments in the 19th century Malay Peninsula.

**Grading:**

**Assignments**  
(Section I, week 8) – 10%  
(Section I, week 14) – 10 %

**Participation** – 20%

**Presentation** – 10%

**Prospectus** – 20%

**Research Paper** – 30%
**Classroom Teaching**

Throughout the semester, students will be introduced to the scholarship on South Asian communities across the Bay of Bengal, patterns of South Asian settlement in Southeast Asia, socioeconomic and cultural connections between historical South and Southeast Asia, South Asian communities in the modern Malay Peninsula, and the development of South Asian religious institutions and distinct religious cultures in Southeast Asian cities. Students will also be introduced to the anthropological, historical and literary works on the veneration of Saiva gods and Muslim and Sikh saints in modern Southeast Asia.

**Course Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics &amp; Readings (to be completed for class)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong> Introductions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong> What is Southeast Asia?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documents:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early maps of Southeast Asia: <a href="http://www.cosmography.com/emsa.htm">http://www.cosmography.com/emsa.htm</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map of contemporary Southeast Asia:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3</strong> An Introduction to Indian Communities in Southeast Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracts from K. S. Sandhu and A. Mani (eds.) <em>Indian Communities in Southeast Asia</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracts from Brij Lal and Peter Reeves (eds.) <em>The Encyclopedia of the Indian Diaspora</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracts from Rajesh Rai and Peter Reeves (eds.) <em>The South Asian Diaspora: Transnational Networks and Changing Identities</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 4</strong> Tracks, Trails and Travel in the Indian Ocean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracts from Sugata Bose, <em>A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Empire</em>, pp. 1-35.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 5</strong> Cultural Contact in the Historical Indian Ocean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Daud Ali, ‘Connected Histories? Regional Historiography and Theories of Cultural Contact Between Early South and Southeast Asia’, in Michael Feener and Teren Sevea (eds.) *Islamic Connections: Studies of Muslim South and
| Week 6 | ‘Chulias’ and ‘Klings’ in Southeast Asia  
Extracts from Salma Khoo Nasution, *The Chulia in Penang: Patronage and Place-Making around the Kapitan Kling Mosque 1786–1957*.  
Extracts from the *Hikayat Abdullah*, edited and translated by A. H. Hill. |
| Week 7 | ‘Indian Diasporas’ in Modern Southeast Asia  
Extracts from Engseng Ho, *Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean*. |
| Week 8 | Cults in Malaysia and Singapore – Muneswaran Worship  
| Week 9 | Cults in Malaysia and Singapore – *Keramats*  
| Week 10 | ‘Sikhs in the City’: Punjabi and Bhojpuri Cults in the Malay Peninsula  
| Week 11 | ‘Hinduism of the Carnivalesque’ – Piercing and Bleeding for Murugan and Draupadi  
**Week 12**

‘Islam of the Carnivalesque’ – Tombs, Feasts, Ecstasy and ‘Madness’

Michael Feener, ‘ʿAlid Piety and State-sponsored Spectacle: Tabot Tradition in Bengkulu’, *Shi'ism in South East Asia: ʿAlid Piety and Sectarian Constructions*.


Extracts from C. B. Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore*.


---

**Week 13**

**Prospectus Presentation:**

The students will be expected to submit a five page prospectus outlining their research interests. The paper should show evidence of their engagement with the different theoretical frameworks introduced in this course.

---

**Week 14**

Orientation Class (with other course) in preparation for trip.

---

**Section II – Winter Trip**

In the Spring break, students will be familiarized with the temples and shrines of Melaka, Penang and Singapore, most of which can be traced to the settlement of South Asians from Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab in the 19th century. The trip will commence in Singapore, and the class will proceed to Malaysia for 6 days (Melaka, Kuala Lumpur and Penang):

3/4/2018: Indian Heritage Centre, Singapore, and Walking Tour of Little India; Evening Devotional Music
3/5/2018: Walking Tour of Keramats and Shrines
3/6/2018: Walking Tour of Muneeswaran Shrines; Interaction with NUS South Asian Studies faculty
3/7/2018: Leave for Melaka; ‘Chetti’ Lunch in Melaka; Pulau Besar – evening trip; Night Walking Tour of a Temple and Mosque
3/8/2018: Visit Kampung Chitti; Leave for Kuala Lumpur; Evening Visit to Batu Caves
3/9/2018: Leave for Georgetown Penang, via train [tentative to train timings – meet Salma Khoo Nasution, and visit to Kampung Kling mosque and adjacent Nagore Dargah]
3/10/2018: Morning visit to Jalan Baru Temple; Afternoon visit to Dato Koyah, Khoo Kongsi, and Kek Lok Si
3/11/2018: Walk through Georgetown (Re-tracing steps), Return to Singapore

Throughout this period, students will be introduced to, on the one hand, temples devoted to Saiva gods and shrines dedicated to saints who undertook voluntary or involuntary journeys to Southeast Asian cities. On the other hand, the active religious worlds of South Asian devotional cults in Southeast Asia, and a variety of religious traditions, festivals, performances and rituals from Sufi musical sessions to Saiva ecstatic trances. Throughout this period, students will be strongly encouraged to consider ways in which a study of the religious worlds of the South Asian diaspora can benefit from an intense engagement with the ‘lived’ practices of Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism in the shrines and temples of Melaka, Penang and Singapore. Moreover, students will be strongly encouraged to consider, in the
course of their travels through the Malay Peninsula, how the development of religious institutions and cultures was associated with economic and political developments in the 19th century Malay Peninsula.

In the third part of this course, students are required to submit response papers pertaining to critical issues that emerged from the Spring break trip, formulate research questions and create bibliographies for a research paper (the instructors will provide students additional readings for their selected topics), present their tentative research paper, and upon Week 14, submit a research paper.

Upon Returning:

- Instructor will conduct a Review of Trip
- Students are required to submit a Two page response paper on Critical issues that emerged from the trip
- Class will meet to reformulate research questions and create bibliographies
- Additional readings will be provided according to topics selected by students
- Library Sessions on how do you process the qualitative data gathered in the field, will be organised