Indus River Region and South Asian Gardens

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The emphasis of this course is on monumental gardens of the Mughal period, but Hindu, Sikh, and earlier Islamic traditions are also considered. In addition, we explore in-depth colonial British gardens and the role of South Asian plants and gardens in the British Empire. We conclude with attention to conservation issues.

Living and archaeological garden evidence is studied as well as literature, first-hand documentary reports, and visual art.

Week 1 Introduction to region, history, cultures, and historiography of Indus River region and South Asia

Week 2 Pre-Mughal gardens, Non-Mughal gardens

Week 3 Timurid gardens and history

Week 4 Mughal gardens, Part 1
Week 5 Mughal gardens, Part 2: Babur (r. 1526-30), Humayun (r. 1530-40, 1555-56)

Week 6 Mughal gardens, Part 3: Jahangir (r. 1605-27), Shah Jahan (r. 1628-1658)

Week 7 Lahore gardens
- Sajjad Kausar, Michael Brand and James L. Wescoat, Jr., Shalamar Garden: Landscape, Form and Meaning (Karachi: Pakistan Department of Archaeology, 1990).

Week 8 Taj Mahal
- Wayne E. Begley and Ziyauddin A. Desai, eds., Taj Mahal, The Illumined Tomb – An Anthology of Seventeenth Century Mughal and European Documentary Sources (Cambridge, MA: Aga Khan Program for Islamic architecture, 1989). (Selections to be divided among students)

Week 9 Taj Mahal Continued

Week 10 Flora and water
Week 11 English Colonial

- Rebecca Preston, “‘The scenery of the Torrid Zone’: Imagined travels and the culture of exotics in nineteenth century British gardens,” in Felix Driver and David Gilbert (eds.), Imperial Cities (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 194-211.

Week 13 Garden conservation in India and Pakistan


Weeks 14-15 Student Presentations