Course Name:

Perspectives on Indian Civilization

Faculty Name: **Michel Danino**

Number of credits: **1**

1) **Course brief / Abstract:** The course offers an introduction to the foundations of Indian civilization. It begins with a broad historical framework of India's beginnings (from the Indus/Harappan civilization to the classical period), but lays more emphasis on what made ancient Indian society tick, the cultural manifestations in various fields, and some of the "master ideas" that made India a distinct, rich and diverse civilization. It will also build many bridges between "ancient" and "modern", highlighting echoes of the past in today's India. It will neither glorify nor demonize India's foundations, but will try to understand them.

    The course will insist on the assimilation of concepts and arguments rather than data, and will be highly interactive in nature. A few essential readings will accompany the course, selected from a variety of scholars to offer insights on Indian society or culture.

2) **Course Objectives:** British economist Joan Robinson once observed: "Whatever you can rightly say about India, the opposite is also true." Could the opposite of that insight be true? India is maddeningly complex; yet within that complexity and infinite diversity, certain principles and undercurrents have been at work for almost 5,000 years. The course attempts to identify them, and in the process will offer fresh insights (and some knowledge) about this ancient yet still living civilization.

3) **Prerequisites:** The course has no specific prerequisites, barring a keenness to understand India beyond the colonial as well as current stereotypes.

4) **Learning Outcomes:** The main outcomes are (1) a broad historical understanding of the roots of Indian civilization; (2) an understanding of its cultural and ethical strengths, many of which have applicability in and relevance to our current challenges; (3) an invitation to look at contemporary social, intercultural and environmental problems and challenges afresh; (4) some teamwork, since the final project will be team-based.

5) Schedule:

Day	Session 1 (Duration: 85 minutes)	Session 2 (Duration: 80 minutes)
22.10.18	Protohistorical foundations	Harappan culture & legacy
23.10.18	The road to classical India	Polity, governance and administration: from Ashoka to Kautilya and beyond
24.10.18	Sacred geography of India	Ecological principles and practices
25.10.18	Architecture: principles and practices	Sacred geometry in ancient India
29.10.18	Technological heritage (1)	Technological heritage (2)
30.10.18	Systems of ethics: principles	Systems of ethics: in history
31.10.18	Systems of ethics: in business	Systems of ethics: unsung heroes
13.11.18	(110 minutes) two essays	(110 minutes) Presentations of team projects

6) Assignment Brief and Evaluation criteria*:

Class Participation	Weightage: 20		What constitutes class participation: the presence of the mind more than that of the body! An active mind is one that questions and, if need be, challenges.	
Assignment 1: Essay	Weightage: 20	Individual	**Brief of assignment:** a short essay, in class, inviting reflection on some principles / concepts discussed in the class. About 700 words in a half-hour.	Form of output: ○ Academic Paper
Assignment 2: Essay	Weightage: 20	Individual	**Brief of assignment :** a short essay, in class, inviting reflection on one of the mandatory readings. About 700 words in a half-hour.	Form of output: ○ Academic Paper
Assignment 3: Project	Weightage: 40	Group	**Brief of assignment :** a short essay, in class, inviting reflection on one of the mandatory readings. About 700 words in a half-hour.	Form of output: ○ Film and Visual media

7) Grading Rubric:

Grade	Expectation
A	**Excellent mastery and discussion of the concepts; crisp and clean expression of one's arguments, with some original thinking. No "padding" and of course no "copy-paste". Excellent final project in both substance and presentation.**
A-	**The same with "very good" instead of excellent.**
B+	**The same with "decent" instead of excellent.**
B	**From "B" down, grades reflect growing inadequacies in either clarity of concepts or the ability to present a clean argument.**
B-	
C+	
C	
C-	**From "C-" down, grades reflect not only the above but a growing lack of seriousness in addressing the course content.**
D+	
D	
D-	
F	

8) Samples of expected work: (To be submitted separately)

9) Reading list and references: (underlined titles are mandatory readings; others are not, but are strongly recommended)

- The Indus Civilization - GL Possehl
- <u>Mohenjo-daro, city of the Indus valley</u> - M Jansen 1985
- <u>Introduction to Harappan Civilization</u> - VN Prabhakar (slides)
- <u>The Harappan Legacy</u> - Michel Danino
- History of Ancient and Early Medieval India, From the Stone Age to the 12th Century - Upinder Singh - Ch 6
- <u>India and Nature</u> - Michel Danino
- <u>Democracy in Ancient India - S Muhlberger</u>
- Guilds in Ancient India - KK Thaplyal
- <u>People of India, Ethnography of Mahabharata, Pluralism & Synthesis - KS Singh</u>
- *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilisation* - AS Altekar (1938) (Ch. 1 only)
- <u>Nalanda - H Scharfe</u> (extract)
- <u>Indian Temple Architecture up to 750 AD - MW Meister</u>
- The temple as a metaphor for the journey within - A Croker
- <u>Hindu ethics - SC Crawford</u>
- Ethics & values in Indian economy and business - P Kanagasabapathi

10) Resources and course requirements: good collar mike; slide changer with laser pointer