



MUS 492/495

## *From the Big Temples to the Silver Screen*

The Music of South India

6-30 January 2016

Dr. Mark Harbold

*(Left) Students with Dr. Kausalya and veena maker,  
Ideal Riverview Resort, Thanjavur*

# *From the Big Temples to the Silver Screen* The Music of South India Syllabus

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This independent research experience offers rich, profound encounters with South Indian music and the historic, religious, classical, folk, and popular contexts in which it grew and still flourishes. Each student adopts an independent research project to pursue during our weeks in India. Sunaada Foundation, our Bangalore host, provides an immersion in Hindustani (North Indian) classical music, with intensive music lessons from Pt. Nagarajrao Havaldar offering a comprehensive introduction to *raga*, *tala*, *gamaka*, improvisation, form, *gharana*, and other musical/cultural aspects of this venerable musical tradition. Madras Christian College, our Chennai host, provides further resources for independent research, including lectures & discussion sessions, Karnatak (South Indian) classical music lessons, and other “hands-on” activities with renowned Indian musicians, scholars, and dancers. We make music, learn yoga, and enjoy India’s vegetarian-friendly cuisine. We go to concerts and festivals featuring India’s finest musicians, witnessing world-class performances at Chennai’s famed “December Season” festival (one of the largest in the world), and joining 1,000 musicians at Tiruvaiyaru’s famous Tyagaraja Aradhana as they sing the *Pancharatna Kritis* on the anniversary of the great composer-saint’s death. Side trips in Bangalore include visits to Lalbagh Gardens and the Karnataka Folk Museum. During our time in Chennai, we tour British Madras, A.R. Rahman’s music school, St. Thomas sites, a film studio, a dance academy, ancient and modern churches and temples, see a “Kollywood” movie, and visit a rural village. For a field trip to Mahabalipuram, we stay at a beach resort on the Bay of Bengal, attend the annual Dance Festival, visit a stone-carvers’ colony, and tour a suite of U.N. World Heritage monuments surrounding the historic Shore Temple (India’s oldest free-standing stone temple). In Thanjavur we visit the historic Brihadiswara (Big Temple) complex, a museum filled with iconic Chola bronze statues, a library housing the accumulated literary treasures of several Thanjavur dynasties, and a foundation in a rural village that teaches music to children of all castes. This third-world immersion seeks to provide an authentic Indian experience. Accommodations will be safe but often simple. (We cannot always guarantee access to hot showers, Western-style toilets, or toilet paper!)



## COURSE GOALS

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This course will help you to:

1. Explore, observe, and experience India's diverse musical and artistic expressions, including those found in religious, classical, folk, and popular contexts.
2. Learn specific features of ancient and modern musics in their Indian context—with attention to process and materials, cultural significance, the role of the artist within society, and underlying techniques and theoretical concepts (such as *bhava*, *raga*, and *tala*).
3. Explore relationships and make connections between India's music and its art, architecture, dance, religions, history, and culture.
4. Recognize more deeply the dignity and value of these non-Western musical/cultural expressions, and in turn recognize more profoundly the dignity and value of your own cultural identity.
5. Pursue individual research into areas of Indian music and culture of vital interest to you.

## COURSE EVALUATION

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Grades will be assigned based on the following:

1. *Attendance & Participation*: You will engage in all course activities (e.g., guest lectures/discussions, group discussions, cultural events, common meals, and site visits). You will also engage constructively with each other and required course activities. (20%)
2. *Readings*: Evidence of engagement with required readings (including daily newspaper readings) will appear in and be evaluated through class discussion, your journal, and your final paper.. (20%)
3. *Journal*: You will keep an academic journal in which you reflect critically on your experiences, observations, lectures, readings, and class discussions. (20%)
4. *Paper*: You will engage in a research project under the supervision of the instructor. The culmination of that project will be a carefully focused 7 to 10 page research paper that draws on what you learn through readings, interactions with scholars & musicians, and other experiences in India. (40%)

*Typical Activities at Madras Christian College—Chennai*  
*Morning reading on MCC guesthouse porch - Bull horns painted for Pongal - Walking tour of MCC*



## REQUIRED READINGS

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It's an excellent idea to do your primary and supplemental readings before we leave on January 6th—why miss India by sitting in your room reading? While in India, I also expect you to regularly read one of the English-language Indian daily newspapers.

## PRIMARY TEXTBOOKS

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- Chatterjee, Samir. *The Music of India*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Chhandayan, 2009.
- Neuman, Daniel M. *The Life of Music in North India: The Organization of an Artistic Tradition*. University of Chicago Press, 1990.
- Viswanathan, Tanjore and Matthew Harp Allen. *Music in South India* (with accompanying CD). Oxford University Press, 2003

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## SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS

- While in India, I expect you to regularly read one of the English-language Indian daily newspapers.
- Get a good travel guide to take along. It's tempting to get a comprehensive guide to the entire country, but that adds extra weight to your luggage. Here are my top picks:
  - Michelin's *Chennai and Tamil Nadu: The Green Guide* is highly recommended as a small, portable, recently updated travel guide (2013) full of good information about Tamil history and culture. It doesn't cover our destinations in Bangalore, but it's an especially handy guide to everything else.
  - *Rough Guide to South India* is among the best if you want coverage for all the places we will go. It has not been updated since 2007, but the information is still valid for our destinations. It also provides good information on South Indian history and culture.
  - The *Lonely Planet Guide to South India & Kerala* is often recommended. It is less detailed than the *Rough Guide*, but it was updated recently (2013).
  - I am especially fond of the *DK Eyewitness* guides, profusely illustrated with color photos, diagrams, maps, etc., but they don't publish a separate guide for South India — it covers the entire country.
- The books on the **SUPPLEMENTAL READING LIST** below are not required reading, but are strongly recommended if they apply to your independent research project or if you simply want to learn more about some specific aspect of Indian music, art & architecture, or culture!
- To prepare for the trip, good videos can help a lot in getting oriented to Indian history and culture. Check out the following DVDs:
  - *The Story of India*—Michael Wood's excellent 6-part BBC documentary on the history of India weaves together India's past and present, giving good coverage to south India, for once! You'll learn about many of the sites we will visit in January.
  - *Gandhi*—Richard Attenborough's 1982 Oscar Award-winning film remains an excellent introduction to the life and work of this seminal figure, and it fills in details of the independence movement that Wood just doesn't have time to cover.
  - Any Bollywood movie!—If you don't know any, try *Lage Raho Munna Bhai*, *Lagaan*, *Three Idiots*, *PK*, *Jodhaa Akbar*, or *Slumdog Millionaire*.

*Typical Activities at MCC and Mahabalipuram*

*Students with Ghatam Karthick & percussionists – Ideal Resort welcome - Hike on Bay of Bengal to Tiger Cave*



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## SUPPLEMENTAL READING LIST

### INDIAN MUSIC

- Farrell, Gerry. *Indian Music and the West*.
- Jackson, William J. *Tyāgarāja: Life and Lyrics*.
- Kaufmann, Walter. *The Ragas of North India*.
- Lavezzoli, Peter. *The Dawn of Indian Music in the West*.
- Mathai, Kamini. *A.R. Rahman: The Musical Storm*.
- Pesch, Ludwig. *The Illustrated Companion to South Indian Classical Music*.

- Rajagopal, Geetha. *Music Rituals in the Temples of South India*.
- Saṅgīt Mahābhārati. *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Music of India*.
- Sriram, V. *The Devadasi and the Saint*.
- Subramanian, Lakshmi. *From the Tanjore Court to the Madras Music Academy: A Social History of Music in South India*.
- Viswanathan Peterson, Indira & Davesh Soneji, eds. *Performing Pasts: Reinventing the Arts in Modern South India*.
- Wade, Bonnie C. *Music in India: The Classical Traditions*.
- Weidman, Amanda. *Singing the Classical, Voicing the Modern: The Postcolonial Politics of Music in South India*.

## INDIAN ART & ARCHITECTURE

- Craven, Roy C. *Indian Art: A Concise History* (revised edition).
- Dehejiya, Vidya. *Indian Art*.
- Fisher, Nora. *Mud, Mirror and Thread: Folk Traditions of Rural India*.
- Harle, J.C. *The Art and Architecture of the Indian Subcontinent*.
- Jaitly, Jaya. *Incredible India: Crafting Nature*.
- Krishna, Nanditha. *Arts and Crafts of Tamil Nadu*.
- Michell, George. *The Hindu Temple: An Introduction to Its Meaning and Forms*.
- Michell, George. *Indian Art and Architecture*.
- Mitter, Partha. *Indian Art* (Oxford History of Art).

## INDIAN HISTORY, CULTURE & SOCIETY

- Basham, A.L., ed. *A Cultural History of India*.
- Basham, A.L. *The Wonder that was India*.
- Coward, Harold G. & David Goa. *Mantra: Hearing the Divine in India and America*.
- Dharma, Krishna, ed. *Mahabharata: The Greatest Spiritual Epic of All Time*.
- Eck, Diana L. *Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*.
- Gokulsing, J. Moti & Wimal Dissanayake. *Indian Popular Cinema: A Narrative of Cultural Change*.
- Inden, Ronald. *Imagining India*.
- Johnson, Gordon. *Cultural Atlas of India*.
- Keay, John. *India: A History*.
- Koller, John M. *The Indian Way: An Introduction to the Philosophies & Religions of India*.
- Rajagopalachari, C., ed. *Ramayana*.
- Schwartz, Susan L. *Rasa: Performing the Divine in India*.
- Selby, Martha Ann & Indira Viswanathan Peterson, eds. *Cultural Constructions of Space and Place in South India*.
- Thapar, Romila. *Early India: From the Origins to AD 1300*.
- Vasudevan, Ravi S., ed. *Making Meaning in Indian Cinema*.
- Venkataraman, Leela. *Indian Classical Dance: Tradition in Transition*.
- Zimmer, Heinrich. *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization*.

### *Typical Activities in Tambaram and Thillaisthanam*

*Shopping in Tambaram – Traditional meal on banana leaves – Kolatta Javandharai ritual at Kaveri River*

