

Maritime South Asia and the Indian Ocean

Course Objective

Adequate understanding of multifaceted challenges facing *Maritime South Asia*—one of the most diverse and complex sub-regions of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR)—is at times compromised by excessive focus on *Continental South Asia*. It needs to be appreciated that ‘South Asia’ comprises three littoral states namely India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, two island states of Sri Lanka and Maldives and three ‘landlocked’ states of Afghanistan, Nepal and Bhutan with transit rights under the Law of the Sea.

It is not only the historical accounts of trade flows but also of cultural exchanges, religious circulation, and connections/ties among port cities of the Indian Ocean that make this ocean eminently qualified to be called a ‘world’. Indian Ocean world, when approached in a geo-historical perspective, could be invaluable social science laboratory to enlarge the scope of what is being terms as ‘Non-Western’ and/or ‘Global IR.’ A large heterogeneous international system that prevailed before the onset of Western domination questions the IR discipline’s traditional prejudice associating homogeneity and uniformity with order, and heterogeneity and diversity with disorder.

No longer neglected, the Indian Ocean has become pivotal to a global geopolitics that is increasingly becoming ocean-basin centric. The Indian Ocean Region—with its complex, cultural, socio-economic, and political diversity—has become the fulcrum of globalizing international geopolitical economy. The major shifts in geopolitical and geoeconomic tectonic plates (e.g. simultaneous rise of Euro-Asian Rimland) and the imperatives of maritime security have resulted in growing assertions of high stakes by both state and non-state actors in securing the flows of ship-borne international trade passing through the SLOCs in the Indian Ocean and its adjacent seas.

At the same time, new questions have been added to research agenda of Indian Ocean Studies, including the ‘security’ of Indian Ocean/Indo-Pacific sea lanes of communication (SLOCS) against the backdrop of competing narratives of connectivity, China’s aggressive pursuit of its multi-spatial grand strategy through Belt & Road initiative, radicalism and terrorism, poverty, environmental degradation, climate change and weak state capacity. Shifting alliances, strategic partnerships, and new forms of alignment in the Indo-Pacific, have further added to the geopolitical challenges facing maritime South Asia. [\(Read More\)](#)

Department of International Relations

Faculty: Social Sciences

Course Title: Maritime South Asia and the Indian Ocean (MPhil/PhD Optional)

Number of Credits: Four

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Evaluation

This optional course of four credits is divided into six units distributed over a period of *fourteen weeks*. Highlighted in the brackets following the unit title are some of the key concepts/ideas to be discussed. The course assignment will carry 40 percent of weightage, which could include a full-length term paper of 5000 words. The remaining sixty percent will be based on mid-term and end term examination.

Course Structure

Unit One: Geo-Historical Perspectives: South Asia in Indian Ocean World(*Two Weeks*)

This unit is a reminder that present day territorialized political geographies and the national boundaries of the Indian Ocean littoral states eclipse the centuries old systems of trade and circulation, connecting histories across the Indian Ocean. Embedded in the history of the ‘Indian Ocean World’ are geocultural and geopolitical perspectives that transcend national frontiers. The rise and decline of the Bay of Bengal as a connected region and maritime highway between India and China, characterized by one of the largest movement of people in world history. On the other side of the sub-continent, in the Western Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea remained one of the crossroads of global commercial, social and cultural exchanges since the Hellenistic period and well into the 17th century. This unit will expose the students to the importance of pursuing further research on the workings of the diverse international systems as a historical norm in order to reveal how ‘order in diversity’ indeed emerged and endured in the Indian Ocean international system

Primary Readings

Sugata Bose (2009) *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. (Chapters 1, 2, 3 & Conclusion)

Sunil S. Amrith (2013) *Crossing the Bay of Bengal: The Furies of Nature and the Fortunes of Migrants*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. (Chapters 1, 2 & Epilogue)

R. J. Barendse (2002) *The Arabian Seas: The Indian Ocean World of the Seventeenth Century*, Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe. (Chapters 6 & 11)

Andrew Phillips and J. C. Sharman (2015), *International Order in Diversity: War, Trade and Rule in the Indian Ocean*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Introduction, chapter 1 & conclusion)

Unit Two: Mapping Indian Ocean Geopolitics and Geostrategy(*Two Weeks*)

This unit accounts for the growing significance of Indian Ocean and its bordering states in world geopolitics and global geostrategy since 1970s. It looks at the growing assertions of classical geopolitical-strategic tenets of the Mahanian theory ‘sea-power,’ including naval projection, control of sea-routes and access to bases by both India and external powers. It also examines the implications of China’s self-image of a formidable land power and ascending global sea power, and growing India-China competition, bordering rivalry, in many parts of the Indian Ocean region.

Primary Readings

David Brewster (2014) *India's Ocean: The Story of India's Bid for Regional Leadership*, London: Routledge. (Chapters 1-3).

David Scott (2006) India's "Grand Strategy" for the Indian Ocean: Mahanian Visions, *Asia-Pacific Review*, 13:2, 97-129.

David Brewster (2018) *India and China at Sea: Competition for Naval Dominance in the Indian Ocean*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Chapters 1-3)

Dennis Rumley and Sanjay Chaturvedi (2015) *Energy Security and the Indian Ocean Region*, London: Routledge Revivals. (Chapters 1,2 & 12)

Dennis Rumley and Sanjay Chaturvedi (2015) *Security of the Sea Lanes of Communication in the Indian Ocean Region*, London: Routledge Revivals. (Chapters 4, 7 & 8)

Don Berlin, "Sea Power, Land Power and the Indian Ocean," *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2010, pp. 52-66.

K. Panikkar (1945), *India and the Indian Ocean. An Essay on the Influence of Sea Power on Indian History*, London: George Allen & Unwin.

Unit Three: Maritime Security and Maritime Order in the Indian Ocean(Two Weeks)

This unit is based on the assumption that one needs to focus on the entire spectrum of 'maritime security' and 'maritime order' and not only its naval dimensions. The naval power dimension no doubt is critically important but remains an integral part of what can be perceived as multifaceted maritime power, which included naval capabilities and naval diplomacy. It shows how and why the traditional strategic geographies articulated through sea power-land power dichotomy in Western geopolitical tradition, and reinforced by Cold War cartographies, are getting increasingly displaced due to the emphatic resurgence of Asian maritime power.

Primary Readings

Sam Bateman (2012) "Maritime Security Governance in the Indian Ocean Region", *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 188-201.

Vijay Sakhujia (2011) *Asian Maritime Power in the 21st Century: Strategic Transactions, China, India and South East Asia*, Singapore: Institute of South East Asian Studies.

Lee Cordner (2010) "Rethinking Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean Region," *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 67-85.

James Kraska (2011) *Maritime Power and the Law of the Sea: Expeditionary Operations in World Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sanjay Chaturvedi (2017) “Mapping Maritime Order in the Greater India Ocean from IR Perspectives” in Yogendra Kumar (ed.) *Whither Indian Ocean Maritime Order*, New Delhi, Knowledge World.

Unit Four: Maritime Regionalism and Sub-Regionalism: Growing Focus on BIMSTEC (Two Weeks)

This unit aims at introducing the concept of ‘maritime regionalism’, and the important role it could play in providing shoreline and infrastructure protection, water quality maintenance, food security, livelihood support, and innovative ocean governance architecture in the Indian Ocean region. The unit also examines both the role of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) in providing overall leadership in maritime regionalism, and the promise and potential of BIMSTEC in the Bay of Bengal.

Primary Readings

Prabir De (ed.) (2018) *Twenty years of BIMSTEC: Promoting Regional Cooperation and Integration in the Bay of Bengal Region*, edited by Prabir De, New Delhi, Knowledge World.

Christian Wagner (2013) “The Indian Ocean Rim – Association for Regional Co- operation (IOR–ARC): the Futile Quest for Regionalism?”, *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 9:1, 6-16.

Dennis Rumley and Timothy Doyle (ed.) (2015) *Indian Ocean Regionalism*, London and New York: Routledge.

Manoj Gupta (2011) *The Indian Ocean Region: Maritime Regimes for Regional Cooperation* (New York: Springer, 2011).

Unit Five: Rise and Return of the Indo-Pacific: Implications for South Asia (Two Weeks)

Indo-Pacific’ is a ‘Super Region of Sub-Regions’ discursively carved and geopolitically constructed out of mind-boggling diversity, with the aid of an intriguing assemblage of strategic geographies. The unit explores the extent to which these *geographs* converge and/or diverge around certain core issue areas needs to be explored. The core concerns that could possibly be discerned from repeated official policy pronouncements of the major proponents of Indo-Pacific—primarily USA, India, Japan, Australia and Indonesia—include ‘freedom of passage’, rule based maritime order’, and ‘security of sea lanes of communication’. This unit examines various strategic geographies/geographs of Indo-Pacific –especially those advanced by the members of Quad – and shows how South Asia is getting increasingly implicated the complex interplay between the Indo-Pacific and Chinese narratives of connectivity under B&R initiative, both on land and at sea. The unit, taking the Bay of Bengal as a case, will provoke the student to broaden and deepen the meaning of connectivity that goes beyond physical infrastructure like building roads, railways and ports.

Primary Readings

Nitin Agarwala & Premesha Saha (2019) Is the Bay of Bengal Regaining its Lost Importance? *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 15:3, 336-345.

Dennis Hardy (2019) “Repositioning the Bay of Bengal: Implications of Regional Change”, *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 15:3, 265-280.

Jean Marc F. Blanchard (2018) *China’s Maritime Silk Road Initiative and South Asia: A Political Economic Analysis of its Purposes, Perils, and Promise*, New York: Macmillan Palgrave.

Priya Chacko (ed.) (2016) *New Regional Geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific: Drivers, Dynamics and Consequences*, London, Routledge.

William Choong (2019) “The Return of the Indo-Pacific Strategy: An assessment, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, DOI: 10.1080/10357718.2019.1639134

Unit Six: Future of Indian Ocean Studies: Mapping New Horizons (Four Weeks)

This unit, looking ahead, identifies new frontiers of Indian Ocean research. Examples include ‘Blue Economy’ (a concept yet to be operationalized), ‘Cyber Security’(mitigation and regulation of risks related to the lack of robust and resilient cyber security regulation as ships and ports get increasingly connected to each other through cyberspace), and ‘communication security’ (in the form of undersea fiber-optic cables –Cable Highways— through which nearly all voice and internet traffic, including financial and military transmissions, travels). As climate change unfolds, the adverse effects of tropical cyclones, sea-level rise, flooding, erosion, and salinity intrusion on coastal communities, structures and environments are going to be felt throughout South Asia and beyond. Maldives faces existential threat. The unit examines at length substantial and unprecedented challenges posed by global warming and climate change before South Asia (one of the most natural disaster prone regions on the face of the globe), its marine habitats and coastal communities.

Primary Readings

IPCC(2019): *IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate* [H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, V. Masson-Delmotte, P. Zhai, M. Tignor, E. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegría, M. Nicolai, A. Okem, J. Petzold, B. Rama, N.M. Weyer (eds.)]

Sanjay Chaturvedi and Vijay Sakhuja (2015) *Climate Change and the Bay of Bengal: Emerging Geographies of Fear and Hope*, Singapore: ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute & New Delhi: Pentagon Press. (Chapters 2, 3, 6 & 7)

Edward J. Malecki and Hu Wei (2009), *A Wired World: The Evolving Geography of Submarine Cables and the Shift to Asia* *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 99(2): pp. 360–382.

Michelle Voyer, Clive Schofield, Kamal Azmi, Robin Warner, Alistair McIlgorm & Genevieve

Quirk (2018) “Maritime security and the Blue Economy: intersections and interdependencies in the Indian Ocean”, *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 14:1, 28-48.

Rory Hopcraft & Keith M. Martin (2018) Effective Maritime Cybersecurity Regulation – the Case for a Cyber Code”, *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 14:3, 354-366.

Erika J. Techera (2018) “Supporting Blue Economy Agenda: Fisheries, Food Security and Climate Change in the Indian Ocean”, *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, (14)1: 7-27.

Sanjay Chaturvedi & Timothy Doyle (2010) Geopolitics of fear and the emergence of ‘climate refugees’: imaginative geographies of climate change and displacements in Bangladesh, *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 6(2): 206-222.

Timothy Doyle and Sanjay Chaturvedi (2011), “Climate Refugees and Security: Conceptualizations, Categories and Contestations”, in *Oxford Handbook of Climate Change and Society*, edited by John Dryzek, Richard B. Norgaard and David Schlosberg, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Secondary Readings

Michael Pearson (ed.) (2015) *Trade, Circulation and Flow in the Indian Ocean World*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan. (Chapter 1 &3)

Alessandro Stanziani (2014) *Sailors, Slaves and Immigrants: Bondage in the Indian Ocean World, 1750-1914*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan (Chapter 1)

Suchandra Ghosh (2019) “Crossings and Contacts Across the Bay of Bengal: a Connected History of Ports in Early South and Southeast Asia,” *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 15:3, 281-296.

Christian Bouchard and William Crumplin, “Neglected No longer: the Indian Ocean at the Forefront of World Geopolitics and Global Geostrategy,” *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, vol. 6, no.1, 2010, pp. 26-51.

Peter Brobst (2005), *The Future of the Great Game. Sir Olaf Caroe, India's Independence, and the Defense of Asia*, Akron: The University of Akron Press. (Chapters 2 & 5)

Robert Kaplan, *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Battle for Supremacy in the 21st Century*, New York: Random House.

Dennis Rumley, Timothy Doyle and Sanjay Chaturvedi (2012) “Securing the Indian Ocean: Competing Regional Security Constructions”, *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 8(1), 21-20.

Phil Johnston, (2010) “Security of Maritime Trade: A cooperative and Coordinated Approach for the Indo-Pacific region,” *Australian Journal of Maritime and Ocean Affairs*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2010, pp. 1-10.

Dennis Rumley and Sanjay Chaturvedi (2015) *Geopolitical Orientations, Regionalism and Security in the Indian Ocean*, London: Routledge Revivals. (Chapters 1, 4 & 13)

A.K. Pasha (2012) “The Gulf Cooperation Council: a Regional Approach to Peace, Security and Development”, *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 8:1, 90-98.

Jean-Marc, F. Blanchard & Colin Flint (2017) “The Geopolitics of China’s Maritime Silk Road Initiative,” *Geopolitics*, 22:2, 223-245.

David Scott (2012) “The “Indo-Pacific”: New Regional Formulations and New Maritime Frameworks for US-India Strategic Convergence”, *Asia-Pacific Review*, 19:2, 85-109.