The Indian Ocean, with its warm waters and its sailor friendly monsoon system, was the first ocean that humans could move across, covering vast distances at relative ease. Consequently, it was also the first ocean across which goods, people and ideas were exchanged on a massive scale over long distances, much before the same happened in other parts of the world.

Circa 1500, given its scale and depth, the Indian Ocean economy was synonymous with the world economy. India, both geographically and economically, was at the centre of this world economy. The entry of Europeans in the Indian Ocean during the early modern period (1500 AD-1800 AD) impacted India and the Indian Ocean in many ways. Did this signify a break from the past or did Indian Ocean and India continue their sway over the world even after, as some call it, ‘Vasco da Gama epoch’ began? This paper, adopting an interdisciplinary approach, seeks to explore economic, political and social changes of the early modern period, and their significance for our times and the times to come.

Notes:

1. It is suggested, that a world map (or Indian Ocean Map) in paper or digital form may be used in the classroom to enhance the understanding of the students, although no questions may be asked regarding it.
2. Internal Assessment: There will be two tests of 10 marks each and 5 marks will be allotted for attendance.
3. Examination Pattern: Students would be required to answer any 5 out of 8 questions. Distribution of questions should be roughly proportional to the amount of reading material under each topic.
4. ‘Further Readings’ given at the end are aimed at enhancing the understanding of the subject for teachers as well as students. However, no direct questions may be asked from them.

Topic Wise Reading List 2017

Unit 1: Introduction

Readings
Unit 2: Commodities and Networks: Europeans in the Indian Ocean Trade, 1500-1800


Readings


Unit 3: Merchants, State, Finance and Trade


Readings

5. Anthony Disney, 1989, Smugglers and Smuggling in the Western Half of the Estado da India in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries, Indica Vol. 26, Nos. 1and
2, March-Sept 1989, pp.57-75 (Also Reprinted in A. R. Disney, Portuguese In India and Other Studies, 1500–1700, Variorum Collected Studies. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009.)

Unit 4: Conclusion

Indian Ocean in the early modern period (1500-1800) – an assessment.

Readings


Further Readings

2. Ashin Das Gupta and M. N. Pearson (ed.), 1987, India and the Indian Ocean 1500-1800, OUP, Delhi, Ch. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 6, 9, 12.