

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

MIRANDA HOUSE

REMINISCENCE

2017

Introducing the Department

The History department of Miranda House has had an illustrious history since its inception in 1948. The department has been associated with several academic luminaries as faculty members and has produced numerous students who have excelled in diverse fields. The discipline of history trains students in critical thinking, rational analysis and enables them to trace intricate connections between the memories of the past and present. The faculty members use best available pedagogical practices to inculcate sense of history in students and train them in understanding the larger role of the subject

in making of contemporary societies.

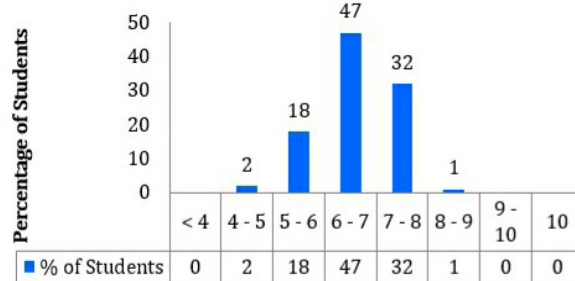
The teaching of the history discipline is not just limited to classroom teaching and tutorial discussions as the department provides several forums for students to discuss contemporary issues, learn through hands-on experience and have interactive dialogues and discussions with renowned historians from across the globe. This is apparent in the various academic activities undertaken by the department throughout the year and also in the student performance.

Academic Performance of BA Honours Students

The academic performance of the BA (Honours History students has always been very good. The pass percentage is consistently high, with some students every year figuring among the highest performers at the university level.

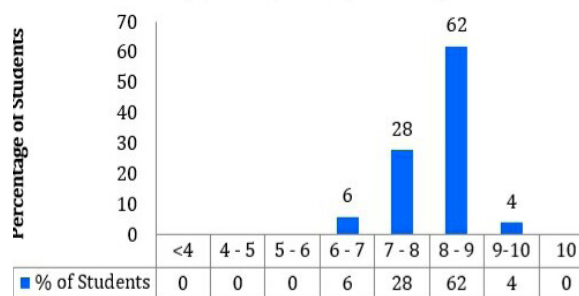
Results of the odd semester 2016 were outstanding!

BA(H) History CBCS (II Yr III Sem)



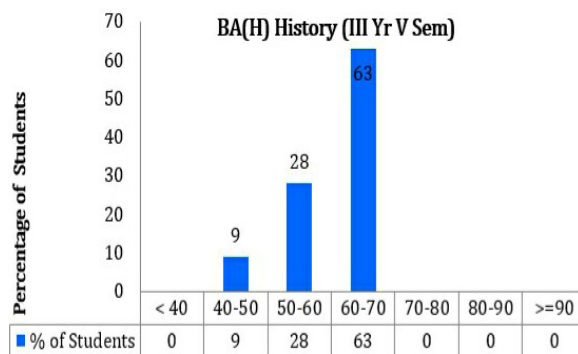
SGPA

BA (H) History CBCS (I Yr I Sem)



SGPA

BA(H) History (III Yr V Sem)



Percentage of Marks

Remedial Teaching

The teaching of the discipline of History at undergraduate level requires inculcation of the ability to think historically by underlining the layers of arguments that constitute historical knowledge. This requires extensive reading of scholarly works largely written in English language. An important challenge is to ensure access to quality reading material to students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, especially the Hindi-medium students. Reading material, though not entirely unavailable, is strictly limited in Hindi translations. The department caters to the difficulties faced by students in multiple ways.

The department offers generic elective and concurrent courses for non-History honours students and BA Programme history discipline students in both English and Hindi medium. However, for History honours courses the medium of instruction for classroom teaching is English but teachers provide

remedial help to the Hindi-medium students.

Since most of the teachers are completely bilingual, they teach both English and Hindi-medium courses. For every History honours course a Hindi-medium tutorial group caters to the challenges faced by the students. The teachers provide summation of their class lectures, reading material in Hindi and provide conceptual clarity for difficult themes. The department also has a collection of books and articles in Hindi in the department library that makes reading material accessible to students. In addition, some teachers conduct remedial lectures for underperforming students according to the requirements of the course. The Hindi-medium students are also encouraged to attend English language workshops conducted by the college to improvise their language and writing skills and bring them at par with other students.

Best Practices

The department provides ample opportunities for student enrichment and enables students to showcase their writing and research skills and receive hands-on experience in historical method.

Heritage Walk

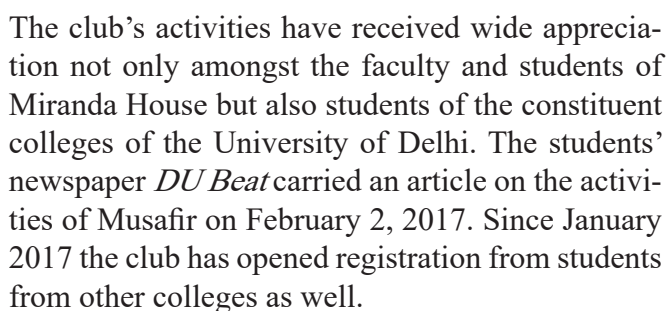
The history department regularly organizes field visits to museums, archives and historical monuments in the city of Delhi. Dr Srimanjari leads an annual walk on the Kamla Nehru Ridge to bring its historical riches to light. In the past the department has organised regular walks to monuments of historical importance in Delhi such as Purana Qila, Qutub complex, Humayun's tomb for the students. Heritage walks are also organized in association with INTACH/Agha Khan Trust. Ms Swapna Liddle from the INTACH conducted a walk in the historical sites in old Delhi in 2014; in 2015 volun-

teers associated with the Aga Khan Trust led a walk around the Nizamuddin complex.

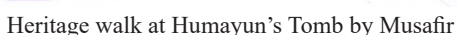
Musafir

A new initiative undertaken by the students and teachers of the history society is the foundation of the Heritage walk club: **Musafir**. The club is run independently by the students while the faculty members play an advisory role. The main motto of the club is to explore the rich monumental heritage of the city of Delhi and broaden the understanding of history through field work.

Musafir has explored Lodi gardens, Qutub complex, Qudsiya Bagh, Mehrauli Archaeological park, Jama Masjid, Red Fort, Humayun's tomb, Purana Qila, Jahanpanah and Begumpur, and Tughluqabad.



The heritage walks have proved to be a great learning experience for the participants as well as walk leaders. The students do a substantial amount of research, self-learning to grasp the intricate architectural details of the monuments as well narrate the lived history of the monuments. This helps students to see how the present is sometimes intruding into the tangible heritage of the past.



The department has its own library, devoted exclusively to History and funded directly by teachers and students of the department. This library is housed in seven cupboards located in the first floor college corridor.



The books and articles in the department library were collected over the years due to the efforts of the faculty members of the History department. The largest number of books and articles cater to the essential reading material for the eighteen papers of the History (Honours) course. This includes printed editions of books and journal issues as well as photocopies of relevant portions of articles and books, subject to copyright restrictions. A significant number of books in the library have been

generously donated by the current teachers as well as by the superannuated faculty members.

The department in recent years has started building an e-resource library for the students. The college provides access to various online journals collective and teachers also use scanning facilities to provide e-reading material to visually impaired as well as regular students.

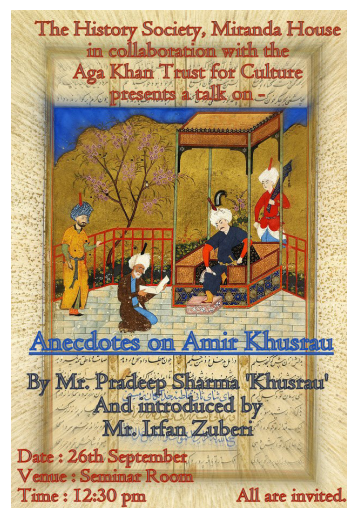
Beyond the Classroom

The History department organizes a wide range of academic activities in every semester. These include the history society festival—*Tarikh*, seminars by historians of eminence, discussion forums, movie screenings, visits to museums, heritage walks in association with INTACH, excursions to historical sites, students' paper presentations and most recently, a students' magazine.

The annual festival, *Tarikh* is a constant feature for last 23 years now. The two-day festival entails lectures by eminent historians and academics from social sciences and paper presentation by students. The students participate in the departmental festival with great enthusiasm as it equips them with skills in researching history, engage with primary sources and participate in the process of

history-writing. In addition, film screening, quiz competitions, debates and fun activities such as skit and historical play are also organized by the department during the festival.

On several occasions in collaboration with other organizations panel discussions and talks are also organized by the department. In collaboration with Aga Khan Trust history society organized a talk on 'Anecdotes on Amir Khusrau' in September 2012.



Most recently, in February 2017 the department invited eminent historians Prof. Romila Thapar and Prof. Kumkum Roy for a dialogue and discussion on 'The Many Meanings of Heritage'.





Discussion forums and movie screenings are regularly organized by the department to initiate discussions on popular culture and understand the relevance, rhetoric, and nuances of historical events and processes depicted in films. This helps in developing analytical skills amongst students and hence is another way to enhance learning. Some of the movies screened in 2015 were *An Inconvenient Truth* (documentary on Climate Change), *Life is Beautiful* (dark humour on German Concentration Camps) and *A Way to Justice* (Women's

rights and Gender transformation).

In order to make teaching and undergraduate education engaging and comprehensible, a tangible experience of the objects of study is critical. Visits to museums and to places of historical interest are organized for both the BA Honours and BA Programme students. Most recently, in September 2016 teachers accompanied the students of BA Programme and Generic Elective papers for a Heritage walk to the *Qutub* complex.





An outstation trip is organised in most academic sessions to places of historical importance and interest. In the past, the honours students and faculty members have travelled to Rajasthan (Udaipur, Mount Abu, Ranakpur, Chittorgarh: 2015), Gujarat (Lothal, Ahmedabad, Patan, Dholavira: 2014), and Karnataka (Hampi, Badami, Aihole, Pattadakal: 2012). We have also been to Harappa for a departmental trip in the recent past.

The faculty members and students have collaborated in several ongoing research and innovation projects that are financed by the University of Delhi and Miranda House. This includes projects relating to climate change (Dr Snigdha Singh) and digitisation of coins (Dr Bharati Jagannathan). The department has also organized workshop in collaboration with INTACH in 2014-15 as a part of 'Adopt a Monument' initiative. A walk was organized to the Pir Ghaib Baoli, a dilapidated baoli near the Hindu Rao hospital wherein the students were trained in

conservation and bio-remediation. This was an important step in community outreach in heritage conservation.



In recent times the history society has started a students' magazine *Muntakhab*. The magazine carries some of the award-winning papers presented by students in the annual festival as well as freshly-commissioned essays. These initiatives would further enhance the academic potential of the students.

Students Speak

“Being part of Musafir and leading the walk to one of the most iconic and politically significant monuments of India — Red Fort — was a wonderful experience. Till then, this monument only had an aesthetic value for us. However during the course of our preparations, we realized how the Qila-i-Mubarak, as it was called in the 17th century, was not just a fort, but a symbol of imperial grandeur and power.”

Tanushree and Rabia, History Honours, IInd Year, Walk Leaders for Red Fort

“Undertaking heritage walks has significantly expanded my knowledge about Delhi. I have become aware of, and I am deeply invested in the rich history and heritage of this vast metropolis. Musafir has allowed me to explore my love for history in a new and fun way and discover Delhi through a fresh perspective. Leading walks has made me a better, more confident public speaker. I have been able to interact with history enthusiasts from different streams and share my passion of history with them, and in turn learn from them as well.”

Soumya Sahai, History Honours, IIIrd Year, Walk Leader for Jahanpanah and Begumpur, Mehrauli Archaeological Park and Tughlaqabad



“True to its name, Musafir instigated in us the travelling bug and made us revisit Delhi’s historical past. The neglected, forlorn and yet majestic buildings of Jahanpanah and Begumpur reminded us the need to study and conserve the heritage that is present around us.”

Anukriti, English Honours, Participant

“Musafir is really an appreciable initiative undertaken by the History Students. I attended the walk at Jahanpanah and Begumpur which was very interesting and informative. I am looking forward to attending more walks by Musafir.”

Saumya Mittal, English Honours, Participant