



**SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY**

*The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Format, Kerala*  
University Building, Kureepuzha, Kollam, Kerala-691601 | [www.sgou.ac.in](http://www.sgou.ac.in)

## **ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONS**

### **M.A HISTORY SEMESTER- I HISTORY AND THEORY M21HS01DC**

*Two sets of assignments are given for each course, the first set is descriptive and the second set is analytical. Each set of Assignments will consist of 5 (five) questions and learners shall choose any one from each set. Each Assignment carries 15 marks.*

#### **SET 1 (Descriptive)**

1. Explore the development of historical thinking during the Renaissance and the Enlightenment period. Analyse how the revival of classical learning, critical inquiry, and the scientific method contributed to a more systematic and analytical approach to history. Discuss the impact of key figures such as Voltaire, Gibbon, and Ranke in shaping modern historical thinking, and evaluate the role of empiricism and objectivity in their methodologies.
2. Trace the evolution of historical inquiry from the ancient to the medieval period. Analyse how shifts in religious and intellectual contexts influenced the approach to history. Discuss the emergence of chronicles, annals, and other historical genres in medieval Europe and other regions. Assess the continuity and transformation of historical methodologies during this transitional period.
3. Examine criticisms and debates surrounding Max Weber's thesis on the Protestant work ethic. Explore scholarly responses and alternative interpretations of the relationship between religious beliefs and economic development. Discuss how Weber's ideas have been applied or challenged in studies of different cultural and religious contexts, and

evaluate the ongoing relevance of his arguments in contemporary discussions of capitalism and ethics.

4. Examine the challenges and debates within historiography regarding the concept of objectivity and the role of the historian. Discuss the impact of postmodernism and the questioning of grand narratives on the practice of history. Analyse how the acknowledgement of multiple perspectives and the importance of subjectivity have influenced the writing and interpretation of history.
5. Explore the intersectionality of historical narratives by analysing how race, gender, class, and other social categories intersect and influence historical experiences. Provide examples from historical events or movements where intersectionality is particularly evident. Discuss the contributions of scholars who have emphasised the importance of considering intersectionality in historical research.

#### **General Instructions:**

- *Begin with an introduction*
- *Explain the theory or idea supported by historical evidence*
- *Maintain clarity, style, structure and organisation throughout the assignment*
- *Provide a clear and concise conclusion*
- *Include a bibliography or references section at the end*

#### **SET II (Analytical)**

1. Evaluate the intersections of Gopal Guru's and Sundar Sarukkai views on experience and theory with broader debates in postcolonial historiography. Analyse how their positions contribute to discussions about decolonising historical narratives and the role of indigenous knowledge systems in shaping historical understanding. Discuss the challenges and opportunities presented by their arguments for historians engaged in the study of Indian history.
2. Assess the impact of the interdisciplinary approach on historical narratives and the broader field of historiography. Discuss the challenges and advantages of adopting interdisciplinary methods in historical research.
3. Compare and contrast the positivist methodologies proposed by Auguste Comte and Leopold Von Ranke. Analyse how each thinker approached historical inquiry, the role of

empirical evidence, and the significance of scientific methods. Discuss the influence of Romanticism on historical interpretation and its critique of positivism. Assess the broader implications of these diverse approaches for the development of historiography in the 19th century.

4. Compare the contributions of Max Weber and Emile Durkheim to the integration of social theories into historiography. Analyse the key concepts introduced by each thinker, such as Weber's idea of the Protestant work ethic and Durkheim's study of social solidarity. Discuss how these social theories have been applied to historical analysis, and evaluate their impact on our understanding of historical events, institutions, and societal transformations.
5. Analyse Karl Marx's interpretation of history, focusing on his concepts of historical materialism, class struggle, and the role of economic structures in shaping societal development. Discuss how Marx's ideas have been applied to historical analysis and the understanding of social change. Evaluate the strengths and limitations of Marxist historiography in providing insights into historical events and structures.

#### **General Instructions:**

- *Provide an introduction to the topic*
- *Conduct a critical inquiry by formulating the ideas and structuring the analysis*
- *Ensure an overall clarity, style, structure and organisation throughout the assignment*
- *Conclude with a critical analysis of the topic*
- *Include footnotes, bibliography or references section*



**SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY**

*The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Format, Kerala*

University Building, Kureepuzha, Kollam, Kerala-691601 | [www.sgou.ac.in](http://www.sgou.ac.in)

**M.A HISTORY  
SEMESTER I  
HISTORY OF KERALA UPTO 1800 A.D  
(M21HS02DC)**

*Two sets of assignments are given for each course, the first set is descriptive and the second set is analytical. Each set of Assignments will consist of 5 (five) questions and learners shall choose any one from each set. Each Assignment carries 15 marks.*

**SET 1 (Descriptive)**

1. Examine the emerging trends in the writing of historical narratives on Kerala. Choose any two major historical writings on Kerala published recently and identify key themes, debates and interpretations put forth by historians. Discuss how these writings contribute to understanding the history of Kerala and the diverse perspectives presented.
2. Discuss the significance of Brahmin settlements in the temple-centric society of medieval Kerala and the social hierarchy associated with them. Explore their influence on the religious, cultural and economic aspects of the society. Explain the evolution of temples into quasi-political units in the period. You can refer to varying views of historians in this regard.
3. Explain the geographical and cultural aspects of Tinai in Ancient Tamilakam. Evaluate the impact of the introduction of the ploughshare in agriculture during this period. Refer to historical sources for understanding the Sangam period and elucidate the nature of the economy during this age.
4. Discuss the arrival of Jainism and Buddhism in the Kerala context and their influences on religious and cultural practices. You can mention their important settlements in Kerala and their contributions to Kerala society, based on historical sources.

5. Describe the role of Swarupams as dominant power centres in medieval Kerala. Explain the formation of major Swarupams and their impact on the socio-political economic aspects during this period.

**General Instructions:**

- *Begin with an introduction*
- *Explain the theory or idea supported by historical evidence*
- *Maintain clarity, style, structure and organization throughout the assignment*
- *Provide a clear and concise conclusion*
- *Include a bibliography or references section at the end*

**SET II (Analytical)**

1. Analyse the religious policy of the Portuguese in Kerala within the context of the Latinization process and its impact. Evaluate the influence of the Portuguese on religious practices, language and culture in Kerala.
2. Analyse the nature of Megalithic culture in Kerala and critically examine whether variations in Megalithic burials reflect social stratification. Describe the characteristics, burial practices, artefacts, and socio-economic aspects of this culture. Compare the Megalithic culture with other prehistoric cultures in Kerala.
3. Evaluate the interconnection between medieval land relations and the caste system in Kerala. Critically examine the development of the caste system as a social institution during this period. Discuss the concept of alienation of rights in the early medieval period and analyse the socio-economic and political impact of land grants on early medieval Kerala society. Engage critically with historiographic approaches on medieval Kerala and provide your analysis.
4. Analyse the role of the Perumals in shaping the early medieval state of Kerala. Discuss their political authority, territorial expansion, economic policies, and cultural developments. Compare the interpretations of Elamkulam P.N. Kunjan Pillai and M.G.S. Narayanan on the centralisation of power by Perumals.
5. Critically examine the impact of the revenue policy of Tipu Sultan in Malabar. Assess the effect of Tipu's revenue strategies on the economy and society of Malabar. You can frame your analysis by incorporating various interpretations of the Tipu and Mysore occupations.

**General Instructions:**

- *Provide an introduction to the topic*
- *Conduct a critical inquiry by formulating the ideas and structuring the analysis*
- *Ensure an overall clarity, style, structure and organization throughout the assignment*
- *Conclude with a critical analysis of the topic*
- *Include footnotes, bibliography or references section*



**SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY**

*The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Format, Kerala*

University Building, Kureepuzha, Kollam, Kerala-691601 | [www.sgou.ac.in](http://www.sgou.ac.in)

**M.A HISTORY**  
**SEMESTER I**  
**HISTORY OF EARLY INDIA: SELECTED THEMES**  
**(M21HS03DC)**

*Two sets of assignments are given for each course, the first set is descriptive and the second set is analytical. Each set of Assignments will consist of 5 (five) questions and learners shall choose any one from each set. Each Assignment carries 15 marks.*

**SET 1 (Descriptive)**

1. Explain the significance of literary, archaeological, epigraphical, and numismatic sources in reconstructing ancient Indian history. Discuss their relevance in understanding India's ancient past.
2. Compile a list of major sites of the Harappan civilization. Create a table format with site names in the first row and provide detailed descriptions of the features of each site in the second row. Mention the characteristic features such as town planning, artefacts, architecture and other features based on the historical sources.
3. Explore different stages of human evolution, including Australopithecus, Homo genus, Homo habilis, Homo erectus, and Homo Sapiens. Compare their physical features such as brain size, skeletal structure, tool usage, and cultural advancements.
4. Examine the emergence of heterodox sects, such as Jainism and Buddhism, during the 6th century BCE. Discuss the main teachings, philosophies, and practices of these sects. Analyse the socio-cultural factors that facilitated the rise of heterodox sects.
5. Examine the life and reign of Emperor Ashoka, with a focus on his conversion to Buddhism. Discuss the establishment of a centralised bureaucracy, the promotion of Dhamma, and the emphasis on welfare activities.

**General Instructions:**

- *Begin with an introduction*
- *Explain the theory or idea supported by historical evidence*
- *Maintain clarity, style, structure and organisation throughout the assignment*
- *Provide a clear and concise conclusion*
- *Include a bibliography or references section at the end*

**SET II (Analytical)**

1. Explore the trade networks of the Harappan Civilization with their contemporaries, such as Mesopotamia and Egypt. By analysing the archaeological findings, evaluate the impact of these trade networks on the socio-economic and cultural aspects of the Harappan civilization.
2. Explore the sources and historical evidence that shed light on the emergence and growth of Mahajanapadas in ancient India. Analyse the social, economic and political structure of the Mahajanapadas.
3. Critically analyse the causes that led to the decline of the Mauryan Empire. Analyse the views of Romila Thapar and D.D. Kosambi.
4. Discuss the salient features of different types of burials in the megalithic period of South India. Analyse the socio-cultural and religious aspects of megalithic burials and their significance in understanding ancient funerary practices. Mention the significance of megalithic burials, ancestor worship, afterlife beliefs, and commemoration practices.
5. Analyse the question “Was there feudalism in India”? Compare the opinions of various historians regarding the question. Critically analyse the recent development in the feudalism Debate. Consider the opinions of HarbansMukhia, R.S. Sharma, D.D. Kosambi, B.N.S. Yadava and D.N.Jha in the debate.

**General Instructions:**

- *Provide an introduction to the topic*
- *Conduct a critical inquiry by formulating the ideas and structuring the analysis*
- *Ensure an overall clarity, style, structure and organisation throughout the assignment*
- *Conclude with a critical analysis of the topic*
- *Include footnotes, bibliography or references section*





**SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY**

*The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Format, Kerala*

University Building, Kureepuzha, Kollam, Kerala-691601 | [www.sgou.ac.in](http://www.sgou.ac.in)

**M.A HISTORY**  
**SEMESTER I**  
**HISTORY OF ANCIENT SOCIETIES**  
**M21HS04DC**

*Two sets of assignments are given for each course, the first set is descriptive and the second set is analytical. Each set of Assignments will consist of 5 (five) questions and learners shall choose any one from each set. Each Assignment carries 15 marks.*

**SET 1 (Descriptive)**

1. Examine the role and significance of archaeological evidence and scientific analysis in reconstructing the prehistoric period. Explore the fundamental role of archaeological findings, such as artefacts, fossils, and excavation reports, in reconstructing the prehistoric era. Evaluate the importance of scientific techniques like Carbon Dating, DNA analysis and other scientific methodologies used in studying the prehistoric era.
2. Explain the distinct developmental stages of the Palaeolithic Mesolithic and Neolithic periods. Explore advancements in tool technology, social organisation, agriculture, and cultural practices during each period. Find out the significant differences and advancements across the Paleolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic ages.
3. Explore how innovations in agriculture, pottery, and other technologies influenced the development of early civilizations. Discuss the implications of these technological changes on the organisation of communities, surplus production, and social structures during the Neolithic era.
4. Investigate the crucial role of the Nile River in shaping ancient Egyptian civilization. Explore how the Nile's annual flooding contributed to agricultural abundance, sustainable livelihoods, and the development of a complex society.

5. Explore alternative social formations in Latin America beyond the traditional narratives of European colonisation. Investigate the diverse indigenous cultures and societies that existed before and during the arrival of Europeans in Latin America. Examine how these societies organised themselves politically, socially, and economically.

**General Instructions:**

- *Begin with an introduction*
- *Explain the theory or idea supported by historical evidence*
- *Maintain clarity, style, structure and organisation throughout the assignment*
- *Provide a clear and concise conclusion*
- *Include a bibliography or references section at the end*

**SET II (Analytical)**

1. Evaluate the significance of the shift from hunting-gathering to agricultural practices in human history. Provide a detailed account of the significant transformations that occurred during the Neolithic Age, including the domestication of animals and plants, settlement patterns, technological advancements, and socio-economic developments. Explain the concept of the Neolithic revolution coined by V. Gordon Childe. Compare and analyse the theories of transition to agriculture, including the theories of Robert Braidwood and Lewis. R. Binford.
2. Examine the legacies of Ancient Greece on Western civilization. Analyse how elements of Greek culture, philosophy, art, and governance have influenced subsequent societies, including the Roman Empire and modern Western democracies. Discuss both the positive and challenging aspects of this legacy, considering how it has shaped ideas about governance, citizenship, and cultural values.
3. Analyse the interconnectedness and exchanges between two major Bronze Age civilizations, such as the Indus Valley Civilization and the Mesopotamian civilizations. Assess the impact of economic, cultural, and technological exchanges on the development of each civilization. Discuss how these interactions influenced societal structures, trade networks, and the exchange of ideas, and explore any evidence of cultural diffusion or hybridisation.
4. Evaluate the lasting impact of the Babylonian, Assyrian, and Persian Empires on subsequent political and economic developments. Analyse how the economic systems and state structures established by these empires influenced the long-term trajectories of

the regions they once controlled. Assess the extent to which imperial legacies shaped later political entities, economic practices, and cultural norms.

5. Examine the significance of copper and bronze metallurgy in the transition from prehistoric nomadic lifestyles to settled agricultural communities. Analyse how the development of metalworking technologies, particularly the advent of bronze, influenced the economic, social, and technological aspects of human settlements. Assess the impact of metal tools and weapons on agriculture, trade, and defence, and discuss how these metallurgical advancements contributed to the establishment and sustainability of early settled communities.

**General Instructions:**

- *Provide an introduction to the topic*
- *Conduct a critical inquiry by formulating the ideas and structuring the analysis*
- *Ensure an overall clarity, style, structure and organisation throughout the assignment*
- *Conclude with a critical analysis of the topic*
- *Include footnotes, bibliography or references section*

\*\*\*\*\*



**M.A HISTORY**  
**SEMESTER I**  
**AN INTRODUCTION TO HISTORICAL RESEARCH**  
**(M21HS01AC)**

*Two sets of assignments are given for each course, the first set is descriptive and the second set is analytical. Each set of Assignments will consist of 5 (five) questions and learners shall choose any one from each set. Each Assignment carries 15 marks.*

**SET 1 (Descriptive)**

1. Explain the role of archives in historical research. Define what archives are and explain their relevance as repositories of historical records and primary sources. Identify its significance, functions, and contributions to the preservation and interpretation of historical knowledge. Identify emerging trends, such as digitization and online accessibility, and their impact on historical research.
2. Describe the key steps involved in identifying a research problem in historical research. Examine the criteria and parameters that historians take into account when choosing a research problem for investigation.
3. Describe the process of formulating research objectives for a hypothetical study. Explore the relationship between research objectives and the broader research questions or problems. Discuss the importance of clearly defined research objectives in a research plan.
4. Imagine yourself as a historian analysing a primary source of a specific historical period. Discuss how you would examine the authenticity of a historical source and its content using external criticism and internal criticism. Describe the techniques you would use and the challenges that might arise during the process.
5. Ethical citation practices form the foundation of academic integrity. Explore ethical concerns associated with appropriate citation practices in historical research. Explain the concepts of 'Research ethics' and 'Plagiarism'. Discuss the potential consequences of failing to uphold various aspects of ethical citation standards in academic writing.

**General Instructions:**

- *Begin with an introduction*
- *Explain the theory or idea supported by historical evidence*
- *Maintain clarity, style, structure and organisation throughout the assignment*
- *Provide a clear and concise conclusion*
- *Include a bibliography or references section at the end*

**SET II (Analytical)**

1. The interdisciplinary approach helps in bridging historical research to different academic disciplines. Illustrate how insights from interdisciplinary fields such as anthropology and sociology can significantly enrich the understanding of historical topics. You can provide examples showing the impact and contributions of these disciplines to historical interpretations and methodologies.
2. Analyse the intricate relationship between historians and historical facts when constructing historical narratives. Explain the challenges, nuances and methodologies involved in interpreting and utilising historical facts to shape historical narratives.
3. Analyse and assess the crucial role of a literature review in historical research. Examine how a comprehensive literature review supports historical research. Explore its impact on framing research questions, identifying gaps, and influencing the methodology adopted in historical studies.
4. Choose a primary source from any historical period and critically analyse it. Then, compare your analysis with the interpretations offered by other historians who have also examined the same source. In your write-up, highlight the key points of agreement and divergence among historians and assess the significance of these differing interpretations on our understanding of history.
5. Examine the challenges researchers may face when collecting oral histories from diverse cultural groups. How can these challenges be addressed to ensure the accuracy and authenticity of the collected data?

**General Instructions:**

- *Provide an introduction to the topic*
- *Conduct a critical inquiry by formulating the ideas and structuring the analysis*
- *Ensure an overall clarity, style, structure and organisation throughout the assignment*
- *Conclude with a critical analysis of the topic*
- *Include footnotes, bibliography or references section*