

V55.0516, World Cultures: India
Spring 2007, MW 11:00-12:15pm, Room 206

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Course Description:

The South Asian subcontinent houses one of the largest and most diverse populations in the world. Because cultural practices vary significantly from region to region and across historical periods, it is impossible to present a singular notion of South Asian culture. In this course, we explore a wide range of South Asian cultural practices by looking through the rubrics of space, place, and pilgrimage. We examine the many ways in which the cultural history of the Indian subcontinent has been understood in many different historical periods – ranging from the Indus Valley to the present day – by looking at the many physical and imagined places and spaces that have been constructed over time. Case studies will range from imagined spaces like the nation to physical places such as Delhi, Banaras, and Madurai. In the process of peeling back the layers of cultural forms and meanings built into the subcontinent's landscape, we will cover a wide variety of topics, including nationalism, communalism, caste, gender, religion, popular culture, and politics. The course will draw on a wide variety of primary literary texts (translations of Sanskrit and Persian texts, pilgrimage accounts, novels) as well as visual sources (film, art, architecture, and urban form).

Readings (for purchase at the NYU Bookstore):

Stanley Wolpert. *A New History of India*. 7th edition. Oxford University Press, 2003.

Jawaharlal Nehru. *The Discovery of India*. 1946. New edition. Oxford University Press, 1990.

Rabindranath Tagore. *Home and the World*. 1916. London: Penguin Books, 2005.

Dianna Eck, *Darshan*. 3rd edition. Columbia University Press, 1998.

William Dalrymple. *City of Djinnns*. 1993. New York: Penguin Books, 2003.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADE BREAKDOWN:

In order to receive a passing grade for this course, *all* assignments must be completed.

I. Exams: 50% (25% + 25%)

There will be two exams during the course of the semester – an in-class mid-term and a scheduled final exam. Both will be worth 25% of your final grade for the semester. Detailed instructions on what to expect will be given before each exam. Advice on Studying: Keep up with the reading. Study your lecture notes and handouts regularly.

II. Papers: 40% (5 x 5% + 1 x 15%)

During the course of the semester, you will be asked to write a series of 5 short response papers (1½-2 pages in length, worth 5% of your final grade each) and one longer paper (5-6 pages in length, worth 15%

of your final grade). All papers must have a clear thesis, laid out in the introductory paragraph (which should be a short introductory paragraph for responses), with a fully developed argument which is supported by carefully selected evidence. They should be double-spaced, using 12 point font in a standard font and 1" margins at the sides, top, and bottom. Please **proofread** your papers before handing in, check spelling, and make sure that your paper is well organized and that your argumentation is coherent and clear!!!

III. Attendance and Participation During Sections: 10%

Attendance and active participation in section is mandatory. The course preceptors may ask you to do short assignments for section. You are expected to do **all** of the reading assigned for each section meeting and to complete all assignments given by your preceptors. Grades will be deducted for absence, and a **Failing Grade** for the *course as a whole* will be issued if you miss more than 3 sections.

IV. Extra Credit (5%)

You will have the opportunity to boost your grade by attending one of the lectures in the "Critical Issues in South Asian Studies" series, dates TBA, and writing a short, 2-3 page response. Your response should include a summary of the speaker's main arguments, your own responses to the speaker's main arguments, and an analysis of the points of connection between the invited lecturer's topic and material that we have covered in class. You will be awarded 1-5 points towards your final grade for the semester depending on the quality of your response. The speakers that will be coming to NYU's campus this spring include:

- Professor Mridu Rai, Yale University (January)
- Professor Richard Davis, Religious Studies, Bard College (February)
- Professor Lawrence Cohen, Anthropology, UC-Berkeley (April)
- Professor Kaivan Munshi, Economics, Brown University (April)

Please plan ahead to make sure that you will be able to attend one of these lectures in the event that you would like to try to boost your grade. While I encourage you to attend all of these lectures, you can only receive extra credit points for one of them. Extra credit responses must be handed in within one week of the lecture.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES:

1) Lectures and Readings: Readings and Lectures form the foundation of this course. Please do all readings *before* class as they provide vital context for lectures. Similarly, lectures may present material not covered in readings, and regular attendance at lecture is vital to your satisfactory performance on assignments and exams. You will be responsible for topics presented during lecture, regardless of whether they are found in assigned readings. If you miss a lecture, it is your responsibility to make sure you get notes and find out whether any important announcements were made.

2) Paper Assignments and Due Dates: Deadlines are non-negotiable. Allowances for serious illness or family emergencies, including a death in the family, will be made only with the proper, verifiable documentation. If you foresee a conflict with sports or other activities, it is your responsibility to work around your schedule to ensure that all assignments are handed in on time. Assignments will be deducted 1/3 (one third) of a grade for every day that they are late. Papers that are handed in more than two weeks late will not be accepted and will automatically be entered as a zero.

3) Exams: All dates for exams are listed on the syllabus. If you foresee an extenuating circumstance that would interfere with your attendance on those days, you must see me at least 2 (two) weeks prior to the date of the quiz or exam. In all such circumstances of absence, appropriate, verifiable documentation must be provided.

4) Plagiarism: All of your work must be your own. In writing your papers, you must footnote all sources – including information provided by another student or by the professor in lecture. Failure to footnote your sources in written assignments is considered plagiarism. Copying or emulating the work of other students is also considered plagiarism. This is a serious academic offense which will result in a failing grade for the course and possible further penalty under University regulations. Please consult the University's Academic Code and definitions of Academic Dishonesty carefully, found at <http://www.nyu.edu/wagner/current/policies/>. Useful links with advice on avoiding plagiarism are provided on that webpage. If you have any further questions about whether or not your activities or assignments may constitute plagiarism, please consult me before you finalize your work and turn it in. The repercussions for a late paper are significantly less devastating than for one that violates academic code.

6) American Disabilities Act Policy:

Please inform me as soon as possible if you have a disability compliant with the ADA, so that we can work together to accommodate your needs.

Schedule of Lectures:

Week 1: Introduction

Jan. 17 Introduction to Course
For Reference: Wolpert, Chapter 1

Week 2: Colonialism and the Nation

Jan. 22 In Search of India in the Early 20th Century
Reading: *Wolpert, Chapter 1, pp. 3-12; *Ayesha Jalal and Sugata Bose, *Modern South Asia*, *Chapter 1 (pp. 1-7) and Chapters 13-14 (pp. 109-127) (*Blackboard*)

Jan. 24 Partition and the Nation
In-Class Video: "Stories my country told me: with Eqbal Ahmad" (56 min.)
Reading: Metcalf and Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, Chapter 7 (pp. 200-226) (*Bobst reserve*)

Week 3: Early Developments in Subcontinent

Jan. 29 The Indus Valley
Reading: *Wolpert, Chapter 2, pp. 13-22; look over Jonathan Mark Kenoyer, "Around the Indus in 90 Slides," online essay at <http://www.harappa.com/indus/indus0.html>

Jan. 31 The Coming of the "Aryans," the Vedas and the Epics, and Settlements along The Gangetic Plain in the 1st Millennium B.C.
Reading: *Wolpert, Chapters 3-4, pp. 23-52
Recommended: Ainslie T. Embree, ed. *Sources of Indian Tradition*, Vol. 1, Chapters 1-2 (*book on reserve at Bobst*)

Weeks 4-5: Following in the Footsteps of the Buddha

Feb. 5 Buddhism and the Making of Early Indian Empires
Reading: *Wolpert, Chapter 5; *Lopez, *Buddhism in Practice*, pp. 4-9, 16-26 (*Blackboard*)

Feb. 7 Pilgrimage, Practice, and the Politics of Preservation at Sanchi
Reading: excerpts from the lavishly illustrated volume, *Unseen Presence: The Buddha and Sanchi*, including the following: *Vidya Dehejia, "Sanchi and the Art of Buddhism," pp. xvi-xxxi; Kevin Trainor, "Constructing a Buddhist Ritual Site," pp. 20-35; Gregory Schopen, "What's in a Name: The Religious Function of the Early Donative Inscriptions," pp. 60-73; *Gary Michael Tartakov, "New Paths to Sanchi," pp. 113-130. (*all posted on Blackboard*)
Recommended: Gary Michael Tartakov. "Art and Identity: The Rise of a New Buddhist Imagery." *Art Journal* (1990): pp. 409-416 (*Blackboard*)

Feb. 12 Tibet and its Global Diaspora
In-Class Video: Home to Tibet (55 min.)
Reading: *Robert Thurman, "Tibet, Its Buddhism, and Its Art," in *Wisdom and Compassion*, pp. 20-38 (*book on reserve at Bobst*); Franz Michael, "Survival of a Culture: Tibetan Refugees in India," pp. 737-744 (*Blackboard*)

Feb. 14 No Class, College Art Association Conference

Weeks 6-8: Holy Tirthas and Temple Cities in Hindu Traditions

Feb. 19 No Class, President's Day

Feb. 21 Pilgrimage and Practice at Banaras
 In-Class Video: "An Indian Pilgrimage: Kashi" (30 min.)
Reading: *Diana Eck, "Banaras: An Introduction," in *Banaras: City of Light*
 (Blackboard)

Feb. 26 Banaras's Other Bank: The Ramlila at Ramnagar
Reading: *Richard Schechner and Linda Hess, "The Ramlila of Ramnagar" (Blackboard)

Feb. 28 The City as Sacred Center at Madurai
 Start In-Class Video: Start Wedding of the Goddess (76 minutes)
 Reading: *Holly Baker Reynolds, "Madurai: Koyil Nakar," pp. 12-37 (Blackboard)

Mar. 5 The Wedding of the Goddess at Madurai
 Finish In-Class Video: Wedding of the Goddess

Mar. 7 **MIDTERM**

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Mar. 12, 14 Spring Break

Weeks 9-10: Building Imperial Spaces at Delhi and Agra

Mar. 19, 21 The Seven Cities of Delhi
 Reading: *Wolpert, pp. 105-130

Mar. 26 The Mughals at Agra and Fatehpur Sikri
 Reading: *Brand and Lowry, "Fatehpur Sikri: Akbar's City of Victory," (Blackboard);
 *Look Over "Virtual Taj" online at: <http://www.taj-mahal.net/>; Wolpert 148-168
 Recommended: Wayne Begley, "The Myth of the Taj Mahal," pp. 7-37 (Blackboard).

Mar. 28 Delhi and the British Raj
 Reading: *Thomas Metcalf, "New Delhi: The Beginning of the End," in *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj*, pp. 211-239 (Blackboard).

Week 11: Warrior Gurus & Peaceful Liberators: Pilgrimage and Place in Sikh and Jain Traditions

Apr. 2 The Golden Temple at Amritsar and the Practice of Sikh Pilgrimage
 In-Class Video: Sikhism: The Golden Temple (15 minutes)
 Reading: *Patwant Singh, "The Golden Temple," in *The Arts of the Sikh Kingdom*
 pp. 47-57 (Blackboard); Ainslie T. Embree, "Sikhism: Faith and Practice," in
Sources of Indian Tradition, pp. 493-510 (Blackboard)

- Apr. 4 The Many Paths of Jain Pilgrimage
 Reading: *A.L. Basham, "The Basic Doctrines of Jainism," in *Sources of Indian Tradition*, pp. 49-57 (*Blackboard*); *Phyllis Granoff, "Jain Pilgrimage: In Memory and Celebration of the Jinas," in *The Peaceful Liberators*, pp. 63-74 (*Blackboard*); Pratapaditya Pal, "Introduction," in *The Peaceful Liberators*, pp. 13-36 (*Blackboard*).

Weeks 12-13: Mapping Geography, Locating Culture, and Redefining Places in the 19th and 20th Centuries

- Apr. 9 Colonial Mappings and Nationalist Appropriations of Geographic Space
 Reading: *Sumati Ramaswamy, "Maps and Mother Goddesses in Modern India," in *Imago Mundi* 53 (2001), pp. 97-114 (*Blackboard*).
- Apr. 11 Tribal Places and the Politics of Those on the Margin
 Reading: Katherine Hacker, "Traveling Objects: Brass Images, Artisans and Audiences," in *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 37 (Spring 2000), pp. 147-165 (*Blackboard*); Mary Lanius, "Mithila Painting," in *Making Things in South Asia*, pp. 135-141.
- Apr. 16, 18 Re-Envisioning the Modern Metropolis: Urbanism and the Restructuring of Economic Class
 Video Clips: *Shree 420*, *Dil Chahta Hain*
 Reading: Selected articles and Movie Reviews;

Weeks 14-15: Contested Space and Communal Identities in South Asia Today

- Apr. 23, 25 Ayodhya, Kashmir, and the Production of Communal Identities
 In-class Video: Ram Ke Nam, "In the Name of God" (97 minutes)
 Reading: *K.N. Panikkar, "A Historical Overview," in *Anatomy of a Confrontation*, pp. 22-33 (*Blackboard*); *Mridu Rai, "Contested Sites: Religious Shrines and the Archaeological Mapping of Kashmiri Muslim Protest," in *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects*, pp. 183-223 (*Blackboard*); Bernbeck and Pollock, "Ayodhya, Archaeology, and Identity," pp. S138-S142 (*Blackboard*)
- Apr. 30 Review and Wrap-Up