Cultures and Contexts: India – CORE UA-516
Spring 2015/TTH 9:30-10:45 AM/5 Washington Place Rm. 101

Professor: Tejaswini Ganti
Teaching Assistants: Wenrui Chen
Natasha Raheja
Shannon Ward

Recitations
002: Wed. 8-9:15am - Natasha Raheja
003: Wed. 9:30-10:45am - Natasha Raheja
004: Wed. 11am-12:15pm - Shannon Ward
005: Wed. 12:30-1:45pm - Shannon Ward
006: Wed. 2-3:15pm - Wenrui Chen
007: Wed 3:30-4:45 - Wenrui Chen

Office: 25 Waverly Place, # 506
Hours: Thu. 3-5:00pm
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COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course introduces the history, culture, society, and politics of modern India. Home to one billion people, eight major religions, twenty official languages (with hundreds of dialects), histories spanning several millennia, and a tremendous variety of customs, traditions, and ways of life, India is almost iconic for its diversity. We examine the challenges posed by such diversity as well as how this diversity has been understood, represented, and managed, both historically and contemporarily. Topics to be covered include the politics of representation and knowledge production; the long histories of global connections; colonialism; social categories such as caste, class, ethnicity, gender, and religion; projects of nation-building; and popular culture.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
- To recognize that knowledge about a country/region/community whether it is historical or cultural is never produced in a vacuum but is always inflected by issues of power.
- To develop the ability to question our assumptions and interrogate our commonsensical understandings about India that are circulated through the media, political commentary, and self-appointed cultural gatekeepers.
- To recognize that what we take as given or as essential social and cultural realities are, in fact, constructed norms and practices that have specific histories.

REQUIREMENTS
- All assignments must be completed for a passing grade in the course.
- Deadlines: EXTENSIONS WILL NOT BE GIVEN [except for authorized medical reasons/emergencies]
- LATE WORK WILL BE NOT BE ACCEPTED, i.e., YOU WILL RECEIVE A ZERO INSTEAD.
- Imagine you’re on a flight to India – all cell phones and electronic devices should be turned off.
- Unless you have a very good reason, which you have to clear with me – please do not use laptops in my class.
- Finally, please use the restroom before or after class and not during as it is very distracting to have people exiting and entering the classroom during the lecture period.

I. Exams: 40%
Both exams will consist of a combination of short answer and essay questions.
• Midterm Exam - 20% - IN CLASS, March 12
• Final Exam - 20% - May 14, 8-9:50 AM

II. Assignments – 40% [More specific instructions and descriptions will be available on the course’s Classes site].
1. Media Representation [1000-1200 words]: 5%, DUE in CLASS, Feb. 10
   This paper asks you to pick a recent newspaper or magazine article about India from a mainstream American publication, i.e., The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Time, Newsweek, etc., and analyze how India – in whatever domain such as customs, traditions, peoples, politics, economy, religion, etc. – is being represented. This assignment also requires you to reflect upon how your images or stereotypes about India have been formed and whether the media reinforces or challenges those images.

2. Cultural Biography [1500-2000 words]: 15%, DUE in CLASS, Mar. 5
   This paper asks you to pick an object, commodity, food, word, practice, or concept, commonly associated with India and trace its circulation either to and within India or from India to other parts of the world. In the process of tracing the history of a particular object, practice, word, or concept, you are to analyze and reflect upon your understanding of the concept of “culture” and the phenomenon of transregional and transnational interactions, that is often referred to as “globalization.”

3. Expressive Culture [2500-3500 words]: 20%, DUE in CLASS, May 5
   This paper offers you a great deal of flexibility in terms of topic. You are to analyze a set of cultural forms that we have covered in the course, whether it is film, literature, or art, with respect to the main themes of the course. I will be providing further instructions, but you will have the freedom to analyze and compare the forms within the same medium, i.e. comparing the films we have watched or the short stories and poetry we have read, or across media, i.e. comparing a film with a short story, or paintings with films.

III. Recitations – 20%: Attendance is mandatory and the grade is broken down in the following way:
   ▪ Media Journal – 10%: While taking this class it is important to stay current with news from and about India. You are to read on a regular basis Indian newspapers or newsmagazines, such as Times of India, Hindustan Times, Indian Express, The Hindu, Outlook, Frontline, India Today, Deccan Herald, Tehelka, Deccan Herald, Asian Age, Statesman, Telegraph [links are provided on the Classes site] and required to keep a weekly journal where you write an entry reflecting upon either a specific event, person, happening, or a set of issues, debates, problems that are being discussed in the Indian English-language media. This journal will be checked regularly by your TAs in recitation and can also serve as the basis for discussion in recitation. You are expected to start keeping this journal from the 2nd week of class and hence you will have a total of 13 entries for the semester. Each clearly dated entry will have the following component:
      1. A printout of the article or set of articles with the necessary bibliographic information clearly marked [Publication, date, byline, url]
      2. A 1-2 page reflection/analysis [not a summary of the article since that will be there for us to see]
      3. Please keep everything in some sort of folder or binder in a chronological order so that it is easy to keep track of the entries both for yourself and for us.
   ▪ Discussion/Exercises – 5%: You may receive short homework assignments periodically in your recitation.
- **Attendance** – 5%; if you miss more than a total of 3 recitations [including those for which you have a valid excuse], you will receive a zero for this portion of your grade.

**RECAP OF DUE DATES**
- Feb. 10: Media Representation Paper
- Mar. 5: Cultural Biography Paper
- March 12: Midterm
- May 5: Expressive Culture Paper
- May 14: Final Exam

**COURSE MATERIALS**
- **Required Texts** [books available at the campus bookstore; films and books available on reserve at Bobst Library]
  - Chatterjee, Gayatri
    - 2002 *Mother India*. BFI Film Classics.
  - Chopra, Yash
    - 1975 *Deewar* [film, color, 174 min.]
  - Davis, Richard H.
    - 2009 *Global India circa 100 CE: South Asia in Early World History*. Association for Asian Studies.
  - Eck, Diana
  - Ganti, Tejaswini
  - Kapoor, Raj
    - 1951 *Awara* [film, black & white, 170 min.]
  - Khan, Mehboob
    - 1957 *Mother India* [film, color, 168 min.]
  - Lal, Vinay
    - 2011 *Deewar: The Foothpath, the City and the Angry Young Man*. Harper Collins.
  - Mines, Diane P.
    - 2009 *Caste in India*. Association for Asian Studies.

- **There will also be a series of readings available for you to read/download/print from the course’s NYU Classes site, these will be marked with a C on the syllabus**

- **The films, Awara, Mother India, and Deewar will be on reserve at Avery Fisher [media library at Bobst] for you to view before we discuss them in class.**

**Special Accommodations**
If you have a disability, which may require classroom, test-taking, or other reasonable modifications, please see me as soon as possible and be sure to register with the Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980).

**COURSE OUTLINE**
**Part 1: India and the World**
- **Wk 1**
  - Tue. 1/27 *Introduction*
  - Thu. 1/29 *Representations of India Over Time*
Readings [C]:
Asher, Catherine B. & Cynthia Talbot
Singer, Milton

Wk 2  Agents of Globalization in Early World History
Tue. 2/3
Reading:
Davis, Richard H.
2009 Global India circa 100CE: South Asia in Early World History. [all]

Thu. 2/5
Readings [C]:
Khair, Tabish, et. al.
2005 “Three Chinese Scholars go “West” to India (5th-7th century), In Other Routes: 1500 Years of African and Asian Travel Writing, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 32-41
2005 “Al-Buruni’s Defence of Hindu India (1030 AD)” In Other Routes: 1500 Years of African and Asian Travel Writing, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 78-84.

Wk 3  India in the Colonial World System
Tue. 2/10
MEDIA REPRESENTATION PAPER DUE IN CLASS
Readings [C]:
Bose, Sugata & Ayesha Jalal
Dutt, Romesh Chunder
Robins, Nick
2006 The Corporation that Changed the World: How the East India Company Shaped the Modern Multinational, chs. 3 & 4, pp. 39-80.

Thu. 2/12
Readings [C]:
Bose, Sugata & Ayesha Jalal
Macauley, Thomas Babington

Part II: Social Organization
Wk 4
Tue. 2/17 Orientalism, Colonialism & Caste
Readings:
Cohn, Bernard S. [C]

Thu. 2/19  Caste as Social Category
Readings:
Mines, Diane P.
2009 Caste in India, pp. 1-46

Wk 5
Tue. 2/24 The Politics of Caste
Readings:
Guha, Ramachandra [C]
Mines, Diane P.
2009 Caste in India, pp. 47-78

Thu. 2/26  Caste and Class in Practice
Readings[C]:
Racine, Josiane & Jean-Luc Racine with Viramma
2002 Viramma, Life of an Untouchable, chs. 16, 17, 19, 25 & “Routes to emancipation: a dalit life story in context”
Dickey, Sara

*** SPECIAL EVENT – GLOBAL SOUTH ASIA CONFERENCE ***
Feb. 27 & 28 – Institute for Public Knowledge [IPK], 20 Cooper Square, 5th Floor

Wk 6
Tue. 3/3 Introducing Hinduism and Islam
Readings:
Eck, Diana
Metcalf, Barbara D. [C]

Thu. 3/5  Religion in Practice
CULTURAL BIOGRAPHY PAPER DUE IN CLASS
Readings:
Eck, Diana
1998 Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India, ch. 2
Elias, Jamal J. [C]
Flueckiger, Joyce [C]

Wk 7
Tue. 3/10 Religion in Practice [cont.]
Readings:
Asher, Catherine B. [C]
2009 “Pilgrimage to the Shrines in Ajmer.” In Islam in South Asia in Practice, pp. 77-86.
Eck, Diana
1998 Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India, ch. 3 and afterword.
Eisenlohr, Patrick [C]

Thu. 3/12 MIDTERM [In Class]

3/17 & 3/19 SPRING BREAK
If possible, please see the following Hindi films: Awara [dir. Raj Kapoor, 1951], Mother India [dir. Mehboob Khan, 1957], and Deewar [dir. Yash Chopra, 1975]

Part III: Cultural Production
Wk 8 The Birth of a New Nation
Tue. 3/24
Readings[C]:
Guha, Ramachandra

Wed. 3/25 Visiting Grey Art Gallery during recitations to see the exhibit, “Abby Grey and Indian Modernism”

Thu. 3/26 Visualizing the Nation
Readings[C]:
Hapgood, Susan
Hoskote, Ranjit
Viswanathan, Rashmi
2015 Catalogue Entries In Abby Grey and Indian Modernism, Grey Art Gallery Exhibition Catalog, NYU, pp. 53-98.

Wk 9 Partition and its Legacies
Tue. 3/31
Readings [C]:
Guha, Ramachandra

Butalia, Urvashi

Thu. 4/2 Representing Partition
Readings [C]:
Bedi, Rajinder Singh

Choudhary, Salil

Faiz, Ahmad Faiz

Insha, Ibn-e

Manto, Sa’adat Hasan

Prabhakar, Vishnu

Rai, Amrit

Sahni, Bhisham

Tauswi, Fikr

Wk 10
Tue. 4/7 Introducing Popular Hindi Cinema
Readings:
Ganti, Tejaswini
2013 Bollywood, chs 1 & 4

Thu. 4/9 Hindi Cinema as Global Popular Culture
Readings:
Ganti, Tejaswini
2013 Bollywood, ch. 2
Eleftheriotis, Dimitris & Dina Iordanova [C]
Jordanova, Dina, et. al. [C]

**Wk 11** Law, Justice, and Global Popularity: The Case of *Awara*

**Tue. 4/14**
**Readings:** *Watch the film Awara prior to this class*
Ganti, Tejaswini
2013 *Bollywood,* ch. 3
Hoffheimer, Michael [C]

**Thu. 4/16**
**Readings [C]:**
Gurata, Ahmet
Rajagopalan, Sudha
Van Fleit Hang, Krista

**Wk 12** Gender, Kinship, and Nation in Hindi Cinema: The Case of *Mother India*

**Tue. 4/21**
**Readings:** *Watch the film Mother India prior to this class*
Chatterjee, Gayatri
2002 *Mother India,* pgs. 9-59

**Thu. 4/23**
**Readings:**
Chatterjee, Gayatri
2002 *Mother India,* pgs. 59-83.
Thomas, Rosie [C]

**Wk 13** Class, Justice, and the City in Hindi Cinema: The Case of *Deewar*

**Tue. 4/28**
**Readings:** *Watch the film Deewar prior to this class*
Lal, Vinay
2011 *Deewar,* chs. 1-5

**Thu. 4/30**
**Readings:**
Lal, Vinay
2011  *Deewar*, chs. 6-9

**Part IV: Challenges Ahead for the “Idea of India”**  
**Wk 14**

**Tue. 5/5  **  Hindutva and the Politics of Religion  
**EXPRESSIVE CULTURE PAPER DUE IN CLASS**

**Readings [C]:**

Davis, Richard H.

Guha, Ramachandra

Jha, D.N.

**Thu. 5/7  **  The Nation in Practice

**Readings [C]:**

Guha, Ramachandra

Amartya Sen
2005  “Secularism and its Discontents” In *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity*, pp. 294-316.

**FINAL EXAM  - Thursday, MAY 14, 8:00-9:50 AM**  [note different time]