Cultures and Contexts: India – CORE UA-516
Spring 2019/TTH 9:30-10:45 AM/19 University Place, #102

Professor: Tejaswini Ganti
Teaching Assistants: Andrew Ashley
                     Leela Khanna
Recitations
       002: Friday 8:00-9:15AM – Silver 412
       003: Friday 9:30-10:45AM – Silver 409
       004: Friday 11:00-12:15AM – Silver 501
       005: Friday 12:30-1:45PM -- Silver 518

Office: 25 Waverly Place, # 503
Hours: Thu. 3:00-4:30pm or by appointment
Phone: 998-2108
Email: tganti@nyu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course introduces the history, culture, society, and politics of modern India. Home to over 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 PENALTY: each day that an assignment is late, you will lose a full letter grade, i.e. if you turn in an assignment late by one day, and it was determined to be a B+, you’ll get a C+, if it’s two days late, then a B+ becomes a D+, etc.
- 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: 50%
   1) Midterm Exam - 25%; this exam will be comprised of two equally weighted components:
a) **Take-Home Due in Class, MARCH 7**
   i) A take-home, open-book, open-note portion that will consist of a series of essay questions. The questions for this portion of the exam will be distributed in advance and you will have one week to complete them.

b) **IN CLASS EXAM, MARCH 14**
   i) An in-class portion that will be primarily short answer, identification and other objective elements.

2) **Final Exam - 25% - Take-Home Due MAY 14 -- -- uploaded by 5 PM on Turnitin**
   a) This will be a cumulative exam comprised of a series of essay questions that will be distributed in advance.

II. **Assignments – 30%** [More specific instructions and descriptions will be available on the course’s Classes site].

1. **Media Representation** [1500-2000 words]: 10%, **DUE FEB. 14**
2. **Cultural Biography Entries and Analysis** [1500-2000 words]: 10%, **DUE APRIL 11**
3. **Social Inequality, Difference, and Democracy Op-Ed** [1000-1200 words]: 10%, **DUE May 2 –**

III. **Recitations – 20%**: Attendance is mandatory and the grade is broken down in the following way:
   - **Discussion/Exercises – 15%**: You may receive short homework assignments periodically in your recitation.
   - **Attendance – 5%**: if you miss more than 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. 14: Media Representation Paper uploaded on NYU Classes
March 7: Take-home portion of midterm due in Class
March 14: In-Class Midterm
April 11: Cultural Biography Paper uploaded on NYU Classes
May 2: Social Inequality Paper uploaded on NYU Classes
May 14: Take-home final exam uploaded on NYU Classes

**COURSE MATERIALS**

- **Required Texts** [books available at the campus bookstore]
  
  Davis, Richard H.
  2009 *Global India circa 100 CE: South Asia in Early World History*. Association for Asian Studies.

  Eck, Diana

  Jeffrey, Craig

  Kapoor, Raj
  1951 *Awara* [feature film – available on YouTube]

  Mines, Diane P.
  2009 *Caste in India*. Association for Asian Studies.

  Valmiki, Omprakash

- **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**
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 IN THE WORLD
Wk 1
Tue. 1/29  Introduction
Readings:
Jeffrey, Craig
2017  Modern India: A Very Short Introduction, pp. 1-10 (Ch. 1 – “Hope”)

Thu. 1/31  Representations of India Over Time
Readings [C]:
Asher, Catherine B. & Cynthia Talbot
Singer, Milton

Wk 2 “CULTURE” AND “GLOBALIZATION”
Tue. 2/5  *Guest Lecture – Prof. David Ludden, Chair, Dept. of History, NYU*
Readings:
Agar, Michael. [C]
Davis, Richard H.
2009  Global India circa 100 CE: South Asia in Early World History, pp. 1-30.
Lavenda, Robert H. & Emily Schulz [C]
Williams, Raymond [C]
1983  Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society. Rev. ed. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 87-93.

Thu. 2/7  Agents of Globalization in Early World History
*Guest Lecture – Prof. David Ludden, Chair, Dept. of History, NYU*
Readings:
Davis, Richard H.
2009  Global India circa 100CE: South Asia in Early World History, pp. 31-62.
Khair, Tabish, et. al. [C]
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. 2/12
Readings[C]:
Bose, Sugata & Ayesha Jalal
Dutt, Romesh Chunder
Jeffrey, Craig
Robins, Nick

Thu. 2/14
Readings[C]:
Bose, Sugata & Ayesha Jalal
Macauley, Thomas Babington

**Wk 4  GLOBAL CULTURAL FLOWS: MUSIC**
Tue. 2/19  Origins and History of Jazz in India
Readings[C]:
Fernandes, Naresh.

Thu. 2/21  Cosmopolitan Nature of Film Music
Readings[C]:
Beaster-Jones, Jason
Shope, Bradley

**Wk 5  GLOBAL CULTURAL FLOWS: CINEMA**
*Please watch Awara prior to this class

Tue. 2/26  Hindi Cinema as a Cultural Hybrid

Readings[C]:

Ganti, Tejaswini

Kesavan, Mukul

Thu. 2/28  Hindi Cinema as Global Popular Culture

Readings[C]:

Eleftheriotis, Dimitris & Dina Iordanova

Gurata, Ahmet

Iordanova, Dina, et. al.

Rajagopalan, Sudha

PART II: SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Wk 6  UNDERSTANDING CASTE

Tue. 3/5  Orientalism, Colonialism & Caste

Readings[C]:

Cohn, Bernard S.

Jeffrey, Craig

Thu. 3/7  Caste as Social Category

Readings:

Mines, Diane P.
2009  Caste in India, pp. 1-46

Wk 7

Tue. 3/12  The Politics of Caste

Readings[C]:

Guha, Ramachandra [C]

Mines, Diane P.
2009  Caste in India, pp. 47-77

Thu. 3/14  MIDTERM – [In Class]
**3/19 & 3/21  SPRING BREAK**

**Wk 8  CASTE IN PRACTICE**

**Tue. 3/26  Caste & Intersectionality**

**Readings:**

Racine, Josiane & Jean-Luc Racine with Viramma [C]:
2002 *Viramma, Life of an Untouchable*, chs. 16, 17, 19, 25 & “Routes to emancipation: a Dalit life story in context”

Valmiki, Omprakash

**Thu. 3/28  The Lived Realities of Caste**

**Readings**

Valmiki, Omprakash

**Wk 9  HINDUISM AND ISLAM**

**Tue. 4/2  Introducing Hinduism**

**Readings:**

Eck, Diana

**Thu. 4/4  Introducing Islam**

**Readings: [C]**

Metcalf, Barbara D.

**Wk 10  RELIGION IN PRACTICE**

**Tue. 4/9  Images and Icons**

**Readings:**

Eck, Diana
1998 *Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*, ch. 2

Elias, Jamal J. [C]

Flueckiger, Joyce [C]

**Thu. 4/11  Pilgrimage and Devotion**

**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]
PART III: NATION

Wk 11 NATIONALISM

Tue. 4/16 Anti-colonial Struggles

Readings[C]:

Bose, Subhash Chandra

Gandhi, M.K.

Guha, Ramachandra

Nehru, Jawaharlal

Thu. 4/18 The Creation of Hindi

Readings[C]:

King, Christopher R.

Lelyveld, David

Rai, Alok
2001 “What’s in a Name?” In Hindi Nationalism, New Delhi: Orient Longman, pp. 11-16.

Wk 12 PARTITION

Tue. 4/23 Logics and Legacies of Division

Readings[C]:

Guha, Ramachandra

Butalia, Urvashi

Thu. 4/25 Representing Partition

Readings [C]:

Bedi, Rajinder Singh

Choudhary, Salil
Faiz, Ahmad Faiz  

Insha, Ibn-e  

Manto, Sa’adat Hasan  

Prabakar, Vishnu  

Rai, Amrit  

Sahni, Bhisham  

Ta’uswi, Fikr  

**Wk 13 POSTCOLONIAL NATIONALISM**

**Tue. 4/30** Forging a New Nation  
Readings [C]:  
Guha, Ramachandra  

Jeffrey, Craig  

**Thu. 5/2** Hindutva and the Politics of Religion  
Readings [C]:  
Davis, Richard H.  

Guha, Ramachandra  

Jeffrey, Craig  
2017 *Modern India: A Very Short Introduction*, pp. 68-83 (Ch. 5).

Mishra, Pankaj  

**Wk 14 REVISITING HISTORY**

**Tue. 5/7** Hindutva and the Politics of Pre-colonial History  
Readings [C]:
Thu. 5/9  Concluding Thoughts

Readings [C]:

Guha, Ramachandra

Jeffrey, Craig

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