

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

Office: 25 Waverly Place, # 506
Hours: Thu. 3-5:00pm
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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

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:
 - A printout of the article or set of articles with the necessary bibliographic information clearly marked [Publication, date, byline, url]
 - A 1-2 page reflection/analysis [not a summary of the article since that will be there for us to see]
 - 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

1998 *Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*, 3rd ed. Columbia U.P.

Ganti, Tejaswini

2013 *Bollywood: A Guidebook to Popular Hindi Cinema*, 2nd ed. Routledge.

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

2006 Introduction: situating India, In *India Before Europe*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-24.

Singer, Milton

1972 Passage to More than India: A Sketch of Changing European and American Images, In *When a Great Tradition Modernizes*, New York: Praeger, pp. 1-38.

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 CLASSReadings[C]:

Bose, Sugata & Ayesha Jalal

2003 *Modern South Asia*, 2nd ed. ch. 7, “The First Century of British Rule, 1757-1857”

Dutt, Romesh Chunder

1901 “The Causes of India’s Poverty” from *The Economic History of India Under Early British Rule*. In *Sources of Indian Tradition*, Ed. Stephen Hay, 2nd ed. Volume 2, 1988, Columbia University Press, pp. 120-27.

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

2003 *Modern South Asia*, 2nd ed. ch. 9, “Eighteen Fifty-Seven: Rebellion, Collaboration and the Transition to Crown Raj.” ch. 10, “High Noon of Colonialism, 1858-1914: State and Political Economy.”

Macauley, Thomas Babington

1835 “Minute on Indian Education” In *Postcolonialisms: An Anthology of Cultural Theory and Criticism*. Eds. Gaurav Desai & Supriya Nair. 2005. Rutgers. pp. 121-31.

Part II: Social Organization**Wk 4**

Tue. 2/17 **Orientalism, Colonialism & Caste**

Readings:

Cohn, Bernard S. [C]

1987 "Notes on the History of the Study of Indian Society and Culture." *In An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays*. Delhi: Oxford U.P. pp. 136-69.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]

2008 "Rights" *In India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy*. Harper Perennial. pp. 597-613.

Mines, Diane P.

2009 *Caste in India*, pp. 47-78Thu. 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

2010 "Anjali's Alliance: Class Mobility in Urban India." *In Everyday Life in South Asia*, eds. Diane P. Mines & Sarah Lamb, Indiana University press, pp. 192-205.***** 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

1998 *Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*, preface and ch. 1.

Metcalf, Barbara D. [C]

2009 "Islam in South Asia in Practice;" "A Historical Overview of Islam in South Asia." *In Islam in South Asia in Practice*, pp. xvii-xxv; 1-39.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]

2009 "Islam and the Devotional Image in Pakistan." *In Islam in South Asia in Practice*, pp. 120-32.

Flueckiger, Joyce [C]

2010 Vernacular Islam at a Healing Crossroads in Hyderabad, *In Everyday Life in South Asia*, eds. Diane P. Mines & Sarah Lamb, Indiana University press, pp. 290-308.

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]

2009 "Na't: Media Contexts and Transnational Dimensions of a Devotional Practice." *In Islam in South Asia in Practice*, pp. 101-112.

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

2008 "Freedom and Parricide," "Apples in the Basket," "Ideas of India," & "Redrawing the Map" *In India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy*. Harper Perennial. pp. 19-40; 52-73; 115-34; 189-208.

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

2015 "Abby Weed Grey, Indian Modernism, and the Vicissitudes of Cultural Exchange." *In Abby Grey and Indian Modernism*, Grey Art Gallery Exhibition Catalog, NYU, pp. 13-40.

Hoskote, Ranjit

2015 "The Disordered Origins of Things: The Art Collection as Pre-Canonical Space." *In Abby Grey and Indian Modernism*, Grey Art Gallery Exhibition Catalog, NYU, pp. 41-52.

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

2008 "The Logic of Division" & "Refugees and the Republic" *In India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy*. Harper Perennial. pp. 41-51; 97-114.

Butalia, Urvashi

2000 "Beginnings," "Blood" & "Facts" *In The Other Side of Silence*, Duke University Press, pp. 3-83.Thu. 4/2 **Representing Partition**Readings [C]:

Bedi, Rajinder Singh

1995 "Lajwanti" *In India Partitioned: The Other Face of Freedom*, ed. Mushirul Hasan, New Delhi: Lotus Books, pp. 177-89.

Choudhary, Salil

1999 "The Dressing Table" *In Stories about the Partition of India*, ed. Alok Bhalla, New Delhi: Harper Collins, pp. 33-49.

Faiz, Ahmad Faiz

1995 "The Morning of Freedom" *In India Partitioned: The Other Face of Freedom*, ed. Mushirul Hasan, New Delhi: Lotus Books, pp. 86-87.

Insha, Ibn-e

1999 "Our Country" *In Stories about the Partition of India*, ed. Alok Bhalla, New Delhi: Harper Collins, pp. 400-01.

Manto, Sa'adat Hasan

2001 "Toba Tek Singh" [1953] *In Translating Partition*, ed. Ravikant & Tarun K. Saint, New Delhi: Katha, pp. 63-72.

Prabhakar, Vishnu

1995 "My Native Land" *In India Partitioned: The Other Face of Freedom*, ed. Mushirul Hasan, New Delhi: Lotus Books, pp. 125-33.

Rai, Amrit

1999 "Filth" *In Stories about the Partition of India*, ed. Alok Bhalla, New Delhi: Harper Collins, pp. 695-705.

Sahni, Bhisham

1995 "We Have Arrived in Amritsar" *In India Partitioned: The Other Face of Freedom*, ed. Mushirul Hasan, New Delhi: Lotus Books, pp. 113-24.

Tauswi, Fikr

1995 "The Book of Divine Knowledge" *In India Partitioned: The Other Face of Freedom*, ed. Mushirul Hasan, New Delhi: Lotus Books, pp. 100-112.**Wk 10**Tue. 4/7 **Introducing Popular Hindi Cinema**Readings:

Ganti, Tejaswini

2013 *Bollywood*, chs 1 & 4Thu. 4/9 **Hindi Cinema as Global Popular Culture**Readings:

Ganti, Tejaswini

2013 *Bollywood*, ch. 2

Eleftheriotis, Dimitris & Dina Iordanova [C]

2006 "Indian Cinema in the World." *South Asian Popular Culture*. 4(2): 79-82.

Iordanova, Dina, et. al. [C]

2006 "Indian Cinema's Global Reach: Historiography Through Testimonies." *South Asian Popular Culture*. 4(2): 113-40.

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]

2006 "*Awara* and the Post-colonial origins of the Hindi Law Drama." *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television* 26(3): 341-59.

Thu. 4/16

Readings[C]:

Gurata, Ahmet

2010 "'The Road to Vagrancy': Translation and Reception of Indian Cinema in Turkey." *BioScope* 1(1): 67-90.

Rajagopalan, Sudha

2006 "Emblematic of the Thaw: Early Indian Films in Soviet Cinemas." *South Asian Popular Culture*. 4(2): 83-100.

Van Fleit Hang, Krista

2013 "'The Law Has No Conscience': The Cultural Construction of Justice and the Reception of *Awara* in China." *Asian Cinema* 24(2): 141-59.

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]

1989 "Sanctity and Scandal: The Mythologization of Mother India." *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 11(3): 11-30.

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.

2005 The Cultural Background of Hindutva *In India Briefing: Takeoff at Last?* Eds. Alyssa Ayres and Philip Oldenburg, New York: Asia Society, pp. 107-40.

Guha, Ramachandra

2008 “Minding the Minorities” & “Riots” *In India After Gandhi: The History of the World’s Largest Democracy*. Harper Perennial. pp. 365-86; 624-50.

Jha, D.N.

2001 *The Myth of the Holy Cow*. New Delhi: Matrix Books. preface, introduction, ch. 1

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

Readings [C]:

Guha, Ramachandra

2008 “Why India Survives” *In India After Gandhi: The History of the World’s Largest Democracy*. Harper Perennial. pp. 733-59.

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]