

History 543.04: Contemporary India and South Asia

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Course Description

This course examines the political, social, economic, and cultural history of the South Asian subcontinent from independence in 1947 to the present. We will focus on India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, touching upon other South Asian countries (Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan) when appropriate. Many observers have noted the seeming paradoxes of modern India: the world's largest democracy has also developed an increasingly authoritarian state; the country's grinding poverty continues amidst the gleaming office parks of the new global economy; powerful movements for social justice contend with the rise of repressive religious nationalisms. Despite some differences in politics and economy, we may find similar themes and historical forces at work in Pakistan and Bangladesh as well. Situating South Asian history in its local, regional, and global contexts, this course examines these paradoxes in a survey of the tumultuous events of the last half-century.

We utilize a wide range of materials, including scholarly articles, films, literature, journalism, and more. This course does not assume prior knowledge about South Asia.

This course fulfills the following requirements: Group A, post-1750

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will:

1. Acquire a perspective on history and an understanding of the factors that shape human activity. This knowledge will furnish students insights into the origins and nature of contemporary issues in South Asia, and serve as a foundation for comparative understanding of the region.
2. Develop critical thinking through the study of diverse interpretations of historical events.
3. Apply critical thinking through historical analysis of primary and secondary sources.
4. Develop communications skills through exams, essays, and class discussions.

Course Materials

1. Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy* (Routledge, 1998).
2. Rohinton Mistry, *Such a Long Journey* (Vintage, 1992)
3. Arundhati Roy, *The Greater Common Good* (India Book Distributor, Ltd., 1999)
4. Course packet: Most of our readings will be in the packet, available through Zip publishing.
5. Several articles are accessible online; I strongly encourage you to print out these articles and bring them to class.

Course Requirements and Grades

Your grade for the course will be based on the following:

1. Attendance and Participation (10%): We will devote some part of each class meeting to discussion. Please come to class having completed the readings and be prepared to discuss them with your fellow students. I strongly encourage you to take notes on all readings and to jot down any questions you have about them. In addition to supporting your class participation, these notes should also assist you in preparing the essays and exam. Any “pop” quizzes or other short assignments will be included in the participation grade.
2. Map quiz: (5%): I will ask you to identify countries and important cities in South Asia.
3. Essays (20% each): I will ask you to write three short essays responding to the readings (2-3 pages each). You will have a choice of topics.
4. Final exam (25%): This will be a “take-home” exam. I will provide you with questions in advance.

Enrollment Policy

All students must be officially enrolled in the course by the end of the second full week of the quarter. No requests to add the course will be approved by the Chair of the Department after that time. Enrolling officially and on time is solely the responsibility of the student.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

** Note: This syllabus is for the purposes of course approval. If approved, it will include specific dates for readings and assignments.

Week 1: Introduction

- Joseph E. Schwartzberg, *A Historical Atlas of South Asia* [selections]
 - Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy*, ch. 1
- MAP QUIZ

Week 2: Legacies of Empire: Independence and Partition

- Bose and Jalal, chs. 16-17
- Mohandas Gandhi, *Gandhi Reader*, [ed. Bhikhu Parekh] “Excerpts from Gandhi’s Prayer Speeches, 1947-48,” pp. 279-283.
- Muhammad Ali Jinnah, “A Vision of Pakistan,” in *Sources of Indian Tradition*, vol. 2
- Jawaharlal Nehru, *Independence and After: A Collection of Speeches, 1946-1949*, “Tryst with Destiny,” “The Light has gone out,” pp. 3-4, 17-19.
- Faiz Ahmed Faiz, “Freedom’s Dawn (August 1947),” <http://www.aajkaynaam.org/site/poetry/Faiz.htm>

Additional materials

- Audio recording of Nehru’s speeches [we will hear this in class]

Week 3: Building the postcolonial state: Freedom, Equality, Democracy?

- Bose and Jalal, ch. 18
- Jawaharlal Nehru, “Produce or Perish” and “Economic Freedom for Asia,” in *Independence and After: A Collection of Speeches*

- B.R. Ambedkar, "Protection Against Economic Exploitation: A Fundamental Right," in *Untouchable! The Voices of the Dalit Liberation Movement*, ed. Barbara R. Joshi
- Constitution of the Republic of India [selections], *Sources of Indian Tradition*, vol. 2
- "Objectives of the Constitution," from the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates, in *Sources of Indian Tradition*, vol. 2

RESPONSE PAPER #1 DUE

Week 4: Populism and Authoritarianism

- Rohinton Mistry, *Such a Long Journey*

Week 5: Unity in Diversity? Caste, society, and state

- Human Rights Watch, "The context of caste violence"
http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/india/India994-04.htm#P550_72244
- B.R. Ambedkar, "What path freedom?" and "The future of parliamentary democracy," in *Untouchable! Voices of the Dalit Liberation Movement*
- Dalit Panthers, *Manifesto* (Bombay, 1973)
- Kancha Ilaiah and Yogi Sikander, "Challenging Brahminical Fascism"
<http://www.countercurrents.org/dalit-ilaiiah050304.htm>
- India together [editorial, 2004], "The Merit of Reservations,"
<http://www.indiatogether.org/2004/apr/edt-reserve.htm>

Week 6: Towards Equality? Women's Movements

- Geraldine Forbes, "Women in independent India," in *Women in Modern India*
- Committee on the Status of Women in India, *Towards Equality* (1975), selections
- "Editorial: Towards Redefining ourselves and the society we live in," *Manushi: A Journal about Women and Society*, issue 1, (1979)
<http://www.indiatogether.org/manushi/issue1/editorial.htm>
- Khawar Mumtaz and Farida Shaheed, eds. *Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back* [selections]

RESPONSE PAPER #2 DUE

Weeks 7-8: Contesting the Nation: Islamization, Hindutva, and the Politics of Religion

- Bose and Jalal, ch. 19
- Richard H. Davis, "The Iconography of Ram's Chariot," in *Contesting the Nation: Religion, Community and the Politics of Democracy in India*, ed. David Ludden
- Amrita Basu, "Mass Movement or Elite Conspiracy? The Puzzle of Hindu Nationalism," in *Contesting the Nation*
- "This is not Bombay," and "What Bombay Teaches Us," in *When Bombay Burned*, ed. Dileep Padgaonkar
- Katy Gardner, "Women and Islamic Revivalism in a Bangladeshi Community," in *Appropriating Gender: Women's Activism and Politicized Religion in South Asia*

- Jafar, Afshan, "Women, Islam and the State in Pakistan," *Gender Issues* vol. 22, no. 1 (2005).
- FILM: *Ram ke Naam* (In the Name of God), dir. Anand Patwardhan, (1992) [screened in class]

Weeks 9-10: India Shining? Globalization and New Social Movements

- Bose and Jalal, ch. 20
- Arundhati Roy, *The Greater Common Good*
- Nagaraj Adve, "Coke lacks fizz for farmers in Mehdiganj," India Resource Center: <http://www.indiaresource.org/campaigns/coke/2004/cokemehdiganj.html>
- Geeta Seshu, "Midnight coolies in the sunshine sector," India Resource Center: <http://www.indiaresource.org/issues/globalization/2003/midnightcoolies.html>
- Thomas L. Friedman, *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century* [selections]
- Research Unit for Political Economy, "Why the United States Promotes India's Great Power Ambitions," *Monthly Review* vol. 57, no. 10 (March 2006): <http://www.monthlyreview.org/0306rupe2.htm>

RESPONSE PAPER #3 DUE

TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM: The exam questions will be handed out on the last day of class; the exam will be due on the university-scheduled exam date for this course.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES

Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term academic misconduct includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp).

Here is a direct link for discussion of plagiarism:

http://cstw.osu.edu/writingCenter/handouts/research_plagiarism.cfm

Here is the direct link to the OSU Writing Center: <http://cstw.osu.edu>

Disability Services

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>