
SOUTH ASIA AND ITS WORLD is a course designed to complement PEOPLES AND SOCIETIES OF SOUTH ASIA, Anthropology 240. The latter is an ethnographic survey and concentrates on South Asia as a distinctive civilization. That civilization has endured some 3000 years, and although South Asia was reshaped by British colonial domination, that civilization continues in recognizable ways to the present.

SOUTH ASIA AND ITS WORLD, by contrast, emphasizes the subcontinent’s involvement with the world beyond the region. I mean to course to complicate the notion that India is a land of villages, that caste, astrology, world renunciation, and the subordination of women is an adequate description of South Asian life. South Asia is a land of villages, but it is also a land of colonial port cities, pre-colonial urban settlements, and Indian communities living far away from India.

The focus of SOUTH ASIA AND ITS WORLD falls on the contemporary period, and it falls on India, to the neglect of Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangla Desh, Nepal, and the Himalayan states.

The course takes up four issues. The first is the creation of a specifically Indian modernity. The second concerns the Indian diaspora, and especially the anomalous position of second-generation South Asian Americans, trying to find their way in a world of many contradictions. The course moves on to a third issue, the Indian film industry, in terms of both its place in Indian life and its spread around the world. The fourth section of the course focuses on the process—which began in Sri Lanka and spread to Calcutta, Bodh Gaya, and Sarnath, and onwards to London and the West—by which Buddhism was returned to the land of its birth and became a transnational religion.

**Required Books**

- Mishra, *Temptations of the West: How to be Modern in India, Pakistan, Tibet, and Beyond.*
- Maira, *Desis in the House: Indian American Youth Culture in New York City.*

**Reserve readings**

- Kemper, “Facing the Nation,” in *Buying and Believing*, pp. 44-73, paper

Dutt,


**Calendar of Topics and Readings**

**Indian Modernity**

January 13 (T)        Passage to More than India

January 15 (Th)      Modernity and India: What is Modernity? What is Indian Modernity?

Pankaj Mishra, Temptations of the West, pp. 3-112

January 20 (T)        Producing Modern Places

Watch Kotla Walks before class, DVD DS486 D3 K64; Mishra, Temptations of the West, pp. 113-43

January 22 (Th)    Advertising and consumption

Watch Getting 1.1 Billion’s Attention before class, DVD HF 5415.12 15 G48

January 27 (T)        Producing Modern Faces

Kemper, “Facing the Nation”, in Kemper, Buying and Believing, pp. 44-73.

January 29 (Th)    FIRST paper due
The Indian Diaspora

Feb 3 (T) The Imam and the Indian


Feb 5 (Th) Diasporas Old and New

“The Age of Globalisation” (by Rajesh Rai) and “Life in the Diaspora” (by Brian Stoddart) in Lall, Encyclopedia of the Indian Diaspora, paper reserve, Ladd Library, pp. 66-81 and 90-119.

February 10 (T) Diasporic Communities


February 12 (Th) Diasporic Hinduism

Waghorne, Diaspora of the Gods, pp. 3-74.

WINTER RECESS February 14-22

February 24 (T) Gentrifiying the Goddess

Waghorne, Diaspora of the Gods, pp. 75-170.

February 26 (T) Hinduism in the New World


March 3 (T) Growing up South-Asian American

Maira, Desis in the House, pp. 1-82.

March 5 (Th) Bhangra: Nostalgia Eroticized


March 10 (T) SECOND paper due: Marriages in Heaven
Bollywood

March 12 (Th)  Sex and the City
Mishra, *Temptations of the West*, pp. 113-143, review and Dutt, pp.

March 17 (T)  Indian Cinema and its Audiences

Dharmapala Returns to India, Moves Onwards, and the Buddhist World Returns

March 19 (Th)  Theosophy, Buddhism, India, and Sri Lanka

March 24 (T)  Anagarika Dharmapala

March 26 (Th)  Creating an United Buddhist World

March 31 (Th)  Caste, Religion, the Nation, and Bodh Gaya

April 7 (T)  Destination: Tourism

Course Requirements

The material requirements for this course include two short papers (25% and 30%), a final examination (35%), and class participation (10%).

If you are having trouble (or pleasure) with the readings, the course or me, please come see me straightaway. My policy on late papers is to give extensions, assessing a late penalty (1/3 of a latter grade per day).