

SOUTH ASIA AND ITS WORLD: BHANGRA, BOLLYWOOD, AND BUDDHISM, ANRE 264, Bates College, Winter Semester 2009, TTH 2;40-4:00PM
OFFICE HOURS: MTW 11-12, 161 PETTINGILL, 786-6083
FINAL: 1:15PM, Wednesday, 15 April, 2009

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.
- Waghorne, Diaspora of the Gods: Modern Hindu Temples in an Urban Middle-Class World.

Reserve readings

- Kemper, "Facing the Nation," in Buying and Believing, pp. 44-73, paper
- Ghosh, "The Imam and the Indian," and "The Diaspora in Indian Culture," electronic reserve.
- "Rai, "The Age of Globalisation" and Stoddart, "Life in the Diaspora" in Lall, The Encyclopedia of the Indian Diaspora, pp. 66-81 and 90-119, paper reserve.

- Brown, “Creating new homes and communities,” in *Global South Asians*, pp. 59-111, paper reserve.
- Dutt,
- Dickey, “Consuming Utopia,” in Breckenridge, Consuming Modernity, pp. 131-46, electronic reserve.
- Dewey, “Doing Bombay Darshan: The IMF, Structural Adjustment and National Identity in the Hindi Film Industry,” in Jolly, ed., Once upon a Time in Bollywood, pp. 1-19.
- Prothero, “The Sinhalese Buddhist revival,” in The White Buddhist, pp. 85-115, paper reserve.
- Brekke, “Anagarika Dharmapala and the Politics of Religion,” in Brekke, Makers of Modern Indian Religion, pp. 86-115, paper reserve.
- Kemper, “Dharmapala’s Dharmaduta,” in Learman, ed., Buddhist Missionaries in the Era of Globalization, pp. 22-50, paper reserve.
- Doyle, “Liberate the Mahabodhi Temple,” in Heine and Prebish, eds, Buddhism in the Modern World, pp. 249-80, paper reserve.

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 I5 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
- Amitav Ghosh, “The Imam and the Indian,” and “The Diaspora in Indian Culture,” electronic reserve.
- 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
- Judith Brown, “Creating new homes and communities,” in Global South Asians, pp. 59-111.
- February 12 (Th) Diasporic Hinduism
- Waghorne, Diaspora of the Gods, pp. 3-74.
- WINTER RECESS February 14-22
- February 24 (T) Gentrifying the Goddess
- Waghorne, Diaspora of the Gods, pp. 75-170.
- February 26 (T) Hinduism in the New World
- Waghorne, Diaspora of the Gods, pp. 171-241.
- March 3 (T) Growing up South-Asian American
- Maira, Desis in the House, pp. 1-82.
- March 5 (Th) Bhangra: Nostalgia Eroticized
- Maira, Desis in the House, pp. 83-209.
- 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

Dickey, “Consuming Utopia,” In Breckenridge, Consuming Modernity, pp. 131-46, and Dewey, “Doing Bombay Darshan: The IMF, Structural Adjustment and National Identity in the Hindi Film Industry, in Jolly, Once upon a Time in Bollywood, pp. 1-19.

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

- March 19 (Th) Theosophy, Buddhism, India, and Sri Lanka
Prothero, “The Sinhala Buddhist Revival,” in The White Buddhist, pp. 85-115.
- March 24 (T) Anagarika Dharmapala

Brekke, “Anagarika Dharmapala and the Politics of Religion,” in Makers of Modern Indian Religion, pp. 86-115 .
- March 26 (Th) Creating an United Buddhist World

Kemper, “Dharmapala’s Dharmadutha,” in Learman, Buddhist Missionaries in the Era of Globalization, pp. 22-50.
- March 31 (Th) Caste, Religion, the Nation, and Bodh Gaya

Doyle, “Liberate the Mahabodhi Temple,” In Heine and Prebish, eds., Buddhism in the Modern World, pp. 249-80.
- 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 letter grade per day).