

HISTORY 314: CONTEMPORARY INDIA: 1947 TO THE PRESENT

Instructor: SANJAY JOSHI
Office: LA 206
Phone: 523-6216
Web Page: <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6>

Meeting : T-Th. 11:10-12:25, LA 200
Office Hours: T-Th. 12:30-1:30,
and by appointment.
E-mail: Sanjay.Joshi@nau.edu

A Liberal Studies Course in the *Social and Political Worlds* Block. Also fulfills the NAU Global Diversity Requirement.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines social, political and economic developments in India since independence in 1947, and places these developments in a historical and comparative context. Exploring the sources of India's diversity as well as unity, riches as well as poverty, the roots of cooperation as well as conflict, its progress as well as shortcomings, the course aims at achieving a nuanced understanding of the working of the world's largest democracy. Studying the work of well known scholars, as well as a selection from the many sources of information available over the Internet, this course introduces students to the multiple facets that make up India today.

Given the small numbers in this class, I will try to run it as lecture-cum-seminar course. I hope discussions between the students and the instructor will form a significant part of the learning experience. There will, of course, be some lectures too whose frequency and content will depend on my agenda as well as the nature of questions asked by the students! The reading load for the class is not very high, but the course demands that students come to class having done the assigned readings and prepared to discuss them with the instructor and fellow students. As much of the course material is only accessible through the Internet, basic knowledge of how to navigate the World Wide Web is an essential pre-requisite for this class.

READINGS

There is only one required book for this course, available at the NAU Bookstore, though there are other shorter readings either on the internet or on electronic reserve.

Stuart Corbridge and John Harris, *Reinventing India: Liberalization, Hindu Nationalism and Popular Democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press/ Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2000.

I urge you to visit the web sites in advance, and, if possible, print the required readings. As I am sure most of you are aware, connections to web sites often fail at the very time we need them most! For that reason, having hard copies of the readings in advance will prevent panic the night before, or the few hours before, class. I also expect you to read, refer to, and cite from English-language media sources from India and other South Asian nations available on the Internet. We will use these to bring ourselves up-to-date on current developments in the region. Please do look at the media sources listed on the webpage for this course.

<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/contemporaryindia.html>

ASSIGNMENTS

In addition to regular participation in class activities, the course requires students to take two exams, write short reports on three sections of the course, based on questions outlined in this syllabus, and write and prepare a presentation to the class on a topic which matches their choice and the content of the class.

I. Exams

There will be TWO exams, a mid term and a final, with dates indicated in the course schedule below. The mid term will count toward **20%** of the total class grade, and the final for **25%**. The exams will consist of short answer and essay questions and may include a map component. If I think it necessary, I might make one part of the final a take home exam.

II. Section Reviews

Students will be asked to write between 800 and 1000 word reviews of THREE out of FIVE sections of the course (Sections I-III, and V-VI). The reports will be in the form of an answer to a question outlined at the end of each section in the course schedule below. Reviews need to take a position on the question, and refer to all the readings for that section. Extra reading on the themes is not required for these reviews, though evidence of a particularly relevant extra reading in the reports will be rewarded. **Each report will count towards 10% of the total course grade.**

III. Class Presentation

Each student will make a ten to fifteen minute presentation to the class on a topic related to contemporary Indian history, which they will research under my guidance. Each presentation should be accompanied by a eight to ten page (double spaced) paper on the subject. **ALL** written papers, regardless of presentation date, are due on **DECEMBER 1**.

You will have a fair amount of latitude to focus on your topic. Research considerably beyond the class readings IS expected for this assignment. **A formal proposal outlining your presentation topic AND a list of sources you will use, is due on October 18th**. I will be happy to accept proposals before that date. I encourage you to use handouts or other visual aids when making your class presentations. Among possible themes for presentation are:

***India and the Subcontinent**

E.g. Relating to Pakistan, Kashmir, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, or others

***India and the World**

You could present on India' position in the United Nations, on outsourcing, on India-US relations in historical perspective, or on India as Nuclear Power

***India and its Regions**

Your presentations could focus on politics related to Language, to the relations between the center (Federal govt) and states, on marginalized regions such as North Eastern India, on Kashmir, on popular movements to create new states.

***Caste, Class, and Gender**

Presentations could be on Dalit politics, on the significance of Other Backward Castes (OBC) in Indian politics, on the politics of reservations (affirmative action) in India.

You could present on the modernization of patriarchy in contemporary India, on women in politics or the pressure for reservations for women in the political process, on the “new” middle class woman.

Presentations focusing on class-based politics in India could include trade unions, Naxalites, unorganized labor, child labor, peasant or fisherfolk movements, etc.

***India and Environmentalism**

Your presentations could refer to specific movements such as the Chipko (tree-hugging) movement, movements among traditional fishing communities, on ecofeminism, on movements connected with GM seeds, on pollution, or others

I will be happy to entertain other proposals for the presentation, if I can be convinced of its value and feasibility.

EVALUATION

Grades will be determined using the following criteria:

Participation	05
Reviews of Sections	30 points
Mid Term Exam	20
Final Presentation including written essay:	20 points
Final Exam	25 points

TOTAL FOR COURSE 100%

The grading scale for the course will be as follows:

90%+ = **A**; 80 - 89% = **B**; 70-79% = **C**; 60-69% = **D**; below 60% = **F**.

COURSE POLICIES

I expect regular class attendance of course, without which there is no point in your being enrolled in this class. Missing too many classes will however undoubtedly and negatively impact on your class performance, especially given the discussion-oriented nature of this class, and will be penalized at my discretion. Missing class will also result in lower points for attendance/participation, which count for 5% of the total grade for this class.

If you miss a class, whatever your reasons for doing so, it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to arrange to meet or call a classmate and find out what happened in that class. I also expect you to come to class having done all the required reading, and prepared to engage in discussion. Finally, I expect you to be motivated to learn about the subject, and to improve your skills as a historian and social critic.

included!) which focuses on one of the important revolutionaries who did not follow Gandhi's path of non-violence.

**** Review Question for Section I:** *Is it legitimate to label the independence of India and Pakistan in 1947 a "passive revolution"? Provide data to support your contention.*

SECTION II SEPTEMBER 13-26 GANDHI'S INDIA TO NEHRU'S INDIA (1947-1960S)

Required Reading and Viewing

September 13: *Making India Modern*
Corbridge and Harris, Chapter Two, pp. 20-39.

September 15: *Nehru and Others*

Ramachandra Guha, "Verdicts on Nehru" *Economic and Political Weekly of India* [EPW] (May 7, 2005)

<http://www.epw.org.in/showArticles.php?root=2005&leaf=05&filename=8623&filetype=html>

Ramachandra Guha, "Gandhi's Ambedkar"

<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/GandhiAmbedkar.html>

September 20-22: Screening of documentary "Dynasty: The Nehru-Gandhi Story" in CLINE LIBRARY MEDIA SCREENING ROOM A.

Review of Section I is due September 20, at the screening.

September 26: Corbridge and Harris, Chapter Three, pp. 43-66.

Recommended Reading

Sunil Khilnani, "Nehru's Faith" *EPW* (November 30, 2002)

<http://www.epw.org.in/showArticles.php?root=2002&leaf=11&filename=5204&filetype=html>

****Review Question for Section II:** *What do you see as Nehru's greatest contribution to the building of modern India, and what was the most significant weakness of the era? Support your contention with specific examples.*

SECTION III SEPTEMBER 29-OCTOBER 4 POPULISM AND DISCONTENTS OF DYNASTY (1960S-EARLY 80S)

Required Readings

September 29: Sunil Khilnani "Looking for Indira Gandhi" *Seminar*, # 540, (August, 2004)
<http://www.india-seminar.com/2004/540/540%20sunil%20khilnani.htm>

October 4: Corbridge and Harris, Chapter Four, pp. 67-92

October 6: TBA

Review Section II is due.

Recommended Films

Hazaar Chaurasi ki Ma (Mother of Prisoner 1048) DVD 1306
(About the “Naxalite” movement in India)
Ankur DVD 1301 Class and Caste tensions in rural India.

**** Review Question for Section III:** *How can you use Indira Gandhi’s reign till 1975 to point out the differences between “populism” and “democracy”? Once again, refer to specific examples to make your case.*

OCTOBER 8-11 MID TERM TIME

October 8: Mid Term Review.
October 11: *Mid Term Exam.*

SECTION IV OCTOBER 13-18 EMERGING TENSIONS: THE POLITICS AND ECONOMICS OF CHANGE (1980S AND 1990S)

Required Readings

October 13 Corbridge and Harris, Chapter Five, pp. 93-118.
October 18: Surinder Singh Jodhka “Looking Back at the Khalistan Movement” *EPW* Review Article (April 21-27, 2001)
<http://www.epw.org.in/showArticles.php?root=2001&leaf=04&filename=2409&filetype=html>

Review Section III is due.

Proposal for Final Class Presentation Topic is due (with sources!)

Recommended Films

Maachis or *Amu*

Cline Library has neither of these videos, though we may acquire one or both by this time of the semester. The former is a Bollywood film (some song and dance included!) focusing on Sikh militancy in the northern Province of Punjab in the 1980s. The latter has not yet been released on DVD or VHS, but tells the story of an experience of anti-Sikh riots in northern India in 1984.

****There is NO scheduled review for Section IV****

SECTION V OCTOBER 20-NOVEMBER 3 FRACTURED VERDICTS, DIVIDED POLITICS: MANDAL, MASJID, AND GLOBALIZATION (1990S)

Required Reading and Viewing

October 20: Corbridge and Harris, Chapter Six, 119-139.
October 25: Corbridge and Harris, Chapter Seven, pp. 143-172.
October 27: Sumanta Banerjee “in Search of the ‘Gandiva’ Seminar, # 533 (January 2004)
<http://www.india-seminar.com/2004/533/533%20sumanta%20banerjee.htm>
November 1: Screen selections from documentary *Ram ke Naam* (In the Name of God)
November 3: Corbridge and Harris, Chapter Eight

Recommended Readings and Films

This section covers one of the “hottest” debates in contemporary India – viz. around Hindu Nationalism. There is an immense amount of material on the topics and I would be happy to recommend additional readings depending on student interest.

Documentaries by Anand Patwardhan, *In the Name of God* (VT 4419), *Father, Son and Holy War* (VT 6652), and to some extent, *War and Peace* (VT 8892) focus on the decade of 1990s which saw Hindu majoritarianism grow in popularity in India. Among feature films (fictional by definition), *Hey Ram* (DVD) and *Mr and Mrs Iyer* (DVD) provide realistic and very different readings of life in the times of growing Hindu chauvinism.

Review Question(s) There are a complex set of issues in this section of the course. As a result I am offering TWO different review questions. Please attempt only ONE of the two, even while putting your review in the larger context of the political economy of 1990s.

**1. “Why is Hindu Nationalism so vilified? After all, Hindus do constitute the majority of the population! It’s just democracy at work!” Comment in light of readings/films.

OR **2. Why did it become necessary to open up the Indian economy to global forces in the 1990s? What benefits have emerged from the liberalization of the Indian economy and for whom?

SECTION VI NOVEMBER 8-22

PROBLEMS AND NEW POSSIBILITIES: CASTE AND GENDER IN INDIA

Required Readings and Viewing

November 8: Corbridge and Harris, Chapter Nine

November 10: *Readings on Caste and Politics*

1. “Merit of Reservations” <http://www.indiatogether.org/2004/apr/edt-reserve.htm>
2. “Do Reservations Work” <http://www.indiatogether.org/2005/apr/soc-rsvstudy.htm>
3. Gopal Guru, “Dalits in Pursuit of Modernity” **Electronic Reserve.**
4. “The State of Dalit Mobilization: An Interview with Kancha Ilaiah” <http://www.foil.org/resources/ghadar/v1n2/ilaiiah.html>

Review Section V due

November 15: *Gender and Inequality*

1. Amartya Sen “Many Faces of Gender Inequality” *Frontline*, 18, 22, (October 27 - November 09, 2001) <http://www.flonnet.com/fl1822/18220040.htm>

Pamela Philipose, “The Beti-Marua Mindset: Are We Ready for a Future Without Daughters” *Indian Express*, September 15, 2004.

http://www.nwmindia.org/News/Round_up/beti_maru.htm

November 17: *Women in Action*: Screening: *When Women Unite*.

November 22: Urvashi Butalia, “Women’s Movement in India: Action and Reflection” <http://www.twinside.org.sg/title/india1-cn.htm>

Recommended Reading and Films

The place of caste in Indian society and politics has a rich body of scholarship, which I will be happy to discuss in more detail with those students who are interested in the area. For a detailed report on Dalits in India see a report put together by Human Rights Watch, “BROKEN PEOPLE: Caste Violence Against India’s ‘Untouchables’” <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/india/> See also an entire issue of the journal *Seminar* dedicated to “caste, race, and the dalit question” <http://www.india-seminar.com/2001/508.htm>

There isn’t great filmic coverage of caste issues. Among the documentaries, none of which are ideal, *Untouchable?* (VT 9033) is the one I would recommend. A very powerful (and controversial) feature film which focuses on caste and gender is *Bandit Queen* (DVD 168). I must warn you about the violence and some sexual content of this film which some students have found disturbing in the past.

Sawnet (<http://www.sawnet.org>) is a great site to start learning more about women in contemporary South Asia. The area of women and gender studies is one which is producing some of the most interesting academic and political scholarship about India. Once again, I will be happy to recommend extra readings depending on student interest. There are also a very large variety of films, documentary as well as feature, which touch upon women, gender inequality and resistance. For two contrasting examples, see *Dadi’s Family* (VT 1565) a documentary about an intergenerational joint-family household, and the feature film *Monsoon Wedding* (DVD 708) about a transnational upper middle class household and household politics as they organize for a family wedding. See also, *Bandit Queen*, *Father, Son and Holy War*, and of course, *When Women Unite*, all cited above.

Review Question(s) Once again, you have two potential questions for the review, from which you should pick one. Both need to address the relevant readings above and offer specific data to support the positions taken.

** 1. *Why is it necessary to organize along lines of caste in Indian politics? Is such “casteism” a sign of the backwardness of the Indian polity?*

OR ** 2. *Are Indian women victims of an immensely patriarchal system or active agents in shaping their own destiny?*

NOVEMBER 29-DECEMBER 6

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Review Section VI due November 29, ...or earlier if you want more time for your presentation.

DECEMBER 8

END OF TERM REVIEW

DECEMBER 15, 10:00-12:00

FINAL EXAM