

**HISTORY 498C: 03**

**FILM AND HISTORY: INDIA'S PARTITION**

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**URL: <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/partitionandfilm.htm>**

**Class Meetings: TUE: 3:00-5:30 LA 321**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This capstone research seminar takes as its theme the representations of the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947. This major event in the history of the modern world created two (later, three) separate nation-states in the Indian subcontinent and directly impacted the lives of about 11 million people in 1947. Partition continues to play a large role in politics which influences almost a quarter of the world's population even today. Studying India's partition also throws up a range of questions for students of history which lend themselves to comparative analysis. After studying different representations of the partition of the subcontinent in traditional historiography, film and literature in the first half of the course, we move to the second and equally important component of this course. In the second half of the course, students will undertake an independent research exercise, related to the theme of the course, and write a term paper based on that original research.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

This course has two primary objectives. The focus of the first half of the course is to understand contending interpretations of India's partition. Not only will we be reading a variety of different historical interpretations of the event, but taking advantage of a growing number of excellent films on the subject, we will also examine how this event is represented in various films and in one novel. An important component of the first half of the course will be to see how cinematic and literary representations differ from other sorts of written narratives, and how the latter differ amongst themselves. The second major objective of this course is to have you learn how to undertake independent historical research and how to present that research in a form and with content acceptable to the historical profession.

**COURSE STRUCTURE**

Discussions are the lifeblood of a seminar. This is not a lecture class where you can expect to learn simply by reading and listening to the instructor. Rather, learning occurs through in-class discussions as much as from the readings/films and assignments. Recognizing that much of the subject matter of this course may be quite unfamiliar to many students, the first two weeks of the course have been given over to understanding historical background to India's partition. There may be some lecturing involved during this period. However, after that, I fully expect that this course WILL be run as a seminar where students will take primary responsibility for knowledge

production in the classroom. To do that effectively, you must come prepared having done the week's assigned readings and viewed the relevant films. To ensure you are ready to raise questions and discuss the material for the week, I will ask you to bring to class written discussion notes and later questions as well as notes for discussions WHICH WILL BE EVALUATED and count toward a substantial part of your class grade.

In the second half of the semester, you will undertake independent research on a subject related to the theme of this course. All students will first submit a preliminary and then a formal paper prospectus describing their project, sources, their research questions, and a tentative thesis or hypothesis. The actual writing of the paper will go through a peer-review process before the final version of the paper is submitted.

### READINGS AND FILMS

Three books have been ordered at the NAU Bookstore for this course.

**1. Barbara and Thomas Metcalf. *A Concise History of India*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006. ISBN-13: 978-0521682251**

**2. Suvir Kaul (Ed.) *The Partitions of Memory: The Afterlife of the Division of India*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002. ISBN-13: 978-0253215666**

**3. Bapsi Sidhwa *Cracking India: A Novel (Paperback)* Minneapolis: Milkweed, 1992. ISBN-13: 978-0915943562**

In addition, there are a large number of articles either available on the internet, or available as electronic reserves (most of which I will try to link directly from the course webpage).

You are also required to closely analyze a number of films for this course. ALL the films required or recommended for this course are available for in-library use only in the Media Section of Cline Library. The films we will use in this class are:

#### Required

<i>Gandhi</i>	DVD 1695
<i>Jinnah</i>	DVD 1290
<i>Sardar</i>	DVD 1867
<i>Earth</i>	DVD 2231
<i>Division of Hearts</i>	DVD 2330
<i>Silent Waters</i>	DVD 2295
<i>The Cloud Capped-Star</i>	Under Order
<i>Pinjar</i>	DVD 1297

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

The primary requirement is that you attend all class meetings, and come to the meetings well prepared to discuss the films and the readings. I will, on occasion, be screening parts of the films

in class. However, it is your responsibility to come to class having **already** seen the film we are to discuss on a particular day. In addition, there are five different kinds of writing assignments required for this course.

1. ***Discussion Questions and Notes:*** To promote class discussions and ensure that everyone in the class is ready for discussion, I have asked you, on five different occasions, to prepare discussion notes, and on the last three occasions to provide your own questions too! The discussion is meant as a forum where you can present your own INFORMED opinion about the subject you study. It requires thinking independently about the subject. You will not find the ANSWERS for these questions in the class readings or films-- only the EVIDENCE, that YOU have to use to formulate your OWN arguments about the subject. There are no RIGHT or WRONG answers to discussion questions, only more or less persuasive arguments. But, no argument can be persuasive unless it is based on adequate factual, textual, filmic or literary evidence. So, DO take a position on the questions, differ with the assumptions of the questions even, but make your arguments with reference to SPECIFIC data, by deploying known and verifiable historical facts. Merely stating a personal opinion or a general feeling about an issue is not enough. Be as specific as possible about events, dates, personalities, and historical processes and cite page numbers of readings you refer to in your notes. Hold all members of the class to the same standards of historical debate.

**Discussion notes that either do NOT have a clearly outlined thesis OR do not point to specific evidence to support the thesis WILL be penalized.**

NOTES: You need to prepare at least two to three pages of (single-spaced) TYPED notes for the discussion. Your notes should be in the form of short thesis-type ANSWERS to the questions posed to you, followed by EVIDENCE to support that answer. You may simply point to page and paragraph numbers of assigned texts and point to significant portions of the films when indicating the evidence. Discussion notes do not have to be formally written, and will be evaluated for content and not style. You may use abbreviations and write these up in "note form" as long as you address the questions below. **Bring TWO copies of your notes.** You will hand one copy to me, and use the other to participate in the discussion.

QUESTIONS: Once you have some experience of the discussion process, students in this seminar should be ready to put together their OWN list of **discussion** questions. I expect to see between four and six questions, all designed to encourage discussion of the major issues brought up by the films and the readings. At least one question should make a connection between the film and readings where appropriate. Do look over the questions I have set up for the first two discussions. While you are free to frame your questions in any way you choose, keep in mind that I will be evaluating them on the extent to which they reveal a close reading and analysis of the films and readings. You are, of course, free to bring up **queries**, separately from the discussion questions. You should also bring in brief notes which indicate your own positions on the discussion questions and the evidence you would use to support your positions.

2. ***Prospectus for Research Paper:*** You must submit, by the dates mentioned in the syllabus, TWO versions of your prospectus for a research paper. The first draft (around three to four pages)

must have the following sections:

- a. A **description** of your research project with historical background explaining its relevance and significance and setting it in its historical context. (around 1 page)
- b. A statement which outlines your **RESEARCH QUESTION** and at least a tentative **THESIS** you will put forward in your paper. (1 page, max.)
- c. A bibliography which includes at least a few **PRIMARY** sources and **SECONDARY** works you will use to write your paper. (At least 2 pages)

Treat the second and final draft of the prospectus like your first outline of the final paper. This is the only occasion on which you will get formal feedback from me before the submission of your final paper, so try to make this as complete, as thorough, as possible. I would suggest a page length of ten double-spaced pages for the second draft. While the requirements are similar to the first draft, I expect this to be a much more sophisticated version, where you need to indicate exactly HOW each entry in your bibliography will support your paper's thesis.

3. **Peer Review of Paper** You must carefully proofread, edit, and comment on a classmate's paper, and provide at least one page of **constructive** feedback to your peers. Please try to provide the sort of feedback on peer papers you would find most helpful yourself. Be considerate of the effort they have put into the paper, and keep in mind that this is **not** an opportunity to "trash" peer work, but rather an opportunity for everyone to write a substantially better paper than the version they have submitted. Do correct writing errors, but also try to provide more substantive comments on your classmates' work.

4. **Research Paper** Your final assignment for this class is to produce a 20-page paper **based on original research** engaging with the theme of this course. The paper needs to be double spaced, with 12 point font, and one-inch margins. *The paper can be about any part of the world, and not necessarily South Asia, as long as it deals with a history that examines issues created by the formation of political boundaries and their representation in film and/or literature.* You could, for instance, conceivably write a paper on film and the historical literature on the partition of Ireland, or that of Palestine. Alternatively, you could think of exploring similar issues around the US-Mexico borderlands. The writing of the paper will go through multiple stages, starting with two drafts of your paper prospectus (see above). I will give you feedback on both drafts of the prospectus. You will then submit the first draft of your paper to a classmate (selected by me) who will peer-review the paper (also see above). A final revised and hopefully polished version of the paper will be submitted to me by **December 10<sup>th</sup>**. I expect this paper to be of publishable quality, and if it is so, then with your permission, I would like to publish it on the course website after you have made the changes I suggest.

**THE RESEARCH PROCESS:** There is no single way through the maze of processes which produces a high quality research paper. The following are just a few suggestions, based in part on how a some historians produce their final work.

1. Choose a topic, area, or subject (related to the theme of this course) which interests you.

2. Go to the library and READ work by historians (in books and scholarly journals) which deals with the topic. Use all resources at your command, including visiting with faculty who happen to have expertise in your area and/or topic of expertise. <http://www.cal.nau.edu/history/faculty.asp> is a great way to find these specialists. Then go and read some more! While you are reading, keep two questions in mind:
  - a. what sort of questions are historians NOT addressing?
  - b. could there be SOURCES which would give you the data to address those questions?
3. Based on a. and b. above, formulate your research question. You may well come up with a THESIS or HYPOTHESIS at this time, which will need to be supported by evidence.
4. This, in turn, should lead you to RESEARCH and the search for sources to support your hypothesis. The more diligent you are in research, the better your final product will be. Don't hesitate to modify or even change your thesis depending on the evidence you collect.
5. Finally, the writing process! Write, and revise, and then revise again till you (and your peers as well as your instructor) are satisfied that you have conveyed your argument with clarity, and supported it with the best evidence you can unearth.

### EVALUATION AND GRADES

Grades will be determined using the following criteria:

Two sets of Discussion Notes (total)	20 points
Three sets of Discussion Questions and Notes (total)	30 points
Research Paper Prospectus (final)	10 points
Peer Review	05 points
Final Paper	25 points
Participation (includes regular attendance and quality of in-class participation)	10 points
<b>TOTAL FOR COURSE</b>	<b>100 points</b>

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, which is particularly critical for a seminar class which meets once a week. Given that we only have around eight or nine substantive class meetings for this course, missing even one class will have serious learning consequences. I will certainly penalize absences. More than one absence from class, unless it is for documentable reasons and allowed for by University policy, will result in a penalty of 3 points deducted from your participation points. ***More than three absences from scheduled class meetings will automatically result in a failing grade.*** 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.

**PLEASE NOTE:** I do not give extensions on paper deadlines or other assignment deadlines, except in cases allowed for by University Policy. I do not offer the option of an incomplete or "IP" at the end of the course, unless warranted by exceptional emergency situations.

Plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and will result in failing the course. Please consult the section on “Academic Integrity” in the *NAU Policy Statements* appended to this syllabus for further details. IT IS THE STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITY TO FAMILIARIZE HERSELF/HIMSELF WITH THESE MATTERS AS DEFINED BY THE UNIVERSITY.

## **PROVISIONAL COURSE SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO MODIFICATIONS)**

### **August 26: Introductions**

#### Objective

1. Course and Seminar Participants' Introductions
2. Introductory Lecture and Discussion on Historical Background.

#### For Future Assignments

1. Start reading Metcalf and Metcalf ASAP, especially if you don't have much background on South Asian history.
2. ON YOUR OWN TIME (as homework) make sure you see the following films over next two weeks. ***Gandhi* (DVD 1695); *Jinnah* (DVD 1290); *Sardar* (DVD 1867)**

### **September 2: Historical Background**

#### Objective

1. To understand the historical developments from the decline of the Mughal Empire to the period to the beginnings of the nationalist movements against British Imperialism, roughly, 1700-1930.
2. In particular, to focus on themes which better help us understand the events and processes which contributed to the eventual partition of the Indian subcontinent.

#### Readings

1. Metcalf and Metcalf, Chapters One through Five
2. Look over Outlines 1 through 4 on the course web page.

Discussion Assignment 1: Bring Notes for the following Discussion Questions: (please read the requirements under the Assignments section of the syllabus, above. You will need to have seen the films and done the readings above to be able to write decent notes on the following questions )

- \* Was politics in pre-British times organized around lines? Were Hindu and Muslim important categories in politics of the times?
- \* What sort of categories \*would\* you say were the salient ones in politics in the subcontinent before the establishing of British rule?
- \* Why did religious identity become salient for Indians living in British India? What role did colonial policies play in making these more salient for politics in colonial India?
- \* What class of Indians were most concerned with questions of religious identity in British India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? Why?
- \* What alternative bases of political solidarities do you think were possible for Indians living in British India in the 1920s and 1930s?
- \* What questions might we be asking of the material you have read if Partition were NOT

the focus of our course?

## September 9: **Film and the Politics of South Asian History Leading to Partition**

### Objective

1. To get a good sense of the historical events which led up to the partition of the subcontinent, in particular the “high politics” of India’s partition.
2. To begin to understand that this is a history which can be, and almost always is, narrated from very different points of views and to try and evaluate the merits and demerits of these different positions.
3. To be able to understand the strengths and limitations of different styles of historical narrative, in particular the difference between academic prose and cinematic representations.

Screening Little, if any, of excerpts from the three films under discussion

### Films to be discussed

***Gandhi, Jinnah, Sardar***

### Readings

1. Metcalf and Metcalf, Chapters Five and Six
2. Mushirul Hasan, “Prologue” and “Introduction” pp. 1-44 of his *Inventing Boundaries: Gender, Politics and the Partition of India*. Delhi: OUP, 2000.  
<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/hasanprologintro.pdf>
3. Robert A. Rosenstone, “History in Images History in Words: Reflecting on the Possibility of Really Putting History onto Film,” in his *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 1995: 19-44.  
<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/rosenstonefilmhistory.pdf>
4. Read Outline #5 carefully.

Discussion Assignment 2: Bring Notes for the following Discussion Questions: (please read the requirements under the Assignments section of the syllabus, above and follow guidelines from the Sept 2 assignment as well as my comments on your submissions from that date. )

- \* Whom can we blame for partition? Why? Should we?
- \* When did the partition of India become inevitable? For whom?
- \* To what extent are the films faithful to the history with which you are familiar? Are they reliable sources of history? Why or why not?
- \* How and What do the films tell you about partition which is not in the history books? That is, what do they ADD to your knowledge about partition of the subcontinent?
- \* Why are films able to tell such a different story from the one found in books and articles?
- \* How do the films differ amongst themselves, and why?
- \* What tentative conclusions may we draw about the relationships between film and history from this comparison?

## September 16: **Research Class**

### Objective

To learn techniques of historical research.

To acquire familiarity with resources in Cline Library and in the use of Inter Library Loans.

### Reading

Carefully look over the webpage created for this class by the good folks at Cline Library

Please start reading Bapsi Sidhwa's novel, *Cracking India*

### Assignment

Bring the **first draft of your research prospectus**, with a topic and some basic sources drawn from film, literature and conventional historiography that you might use to write the paper. ***This should be about three to four pages, double-spaced.***

## September 23: **Understanding Partition: Film focus *Earth***

### Objective

1. To understand how the events of 1947 have been represented in historical and popular prose, and contrast these with representations in the film.
2. To understand how these events had differential impacts across class/caste, age, and gender divides.
3. To seek to question the representations of partition violence in both film and historical literature.
4. To explore the relationship between violence and collective identities during events leading up to 1947.

### Screening

Excerpts from Deepa Mehta's *Earth*.

### Reading

1. Gyanendra Pandey "Three Partitions of 1947." Chapter Two of *Remembering Partition*. <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/pandeychaptertwo.pdf>
2. Suvir Kaul *Partitions of Memory*. "Preface to the US Edition" and "Introduction."
3. Lucy Chester "The 1947 Partition, Drawing the Indo-Pakistani Boundary." *American Diplomacy* Volume VII, Number 1, 2002. Copy and paste the following URL [http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/archives\\_roll/2002\\_01-03/chester\\_partition/chester\\_partition.html](http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/archives_roll/2002_01-03/chester_partition/chester_partition.html)

### Assignments in Progress

Finish reading *Cracking India*

Work on revising your prospectus in line with what you learnt from the research class.

September 30: **History, Film and Fiction: Fiction Focus *Cracking India***

Objective

To understand how fictional literature, film, and traditional historiography differ in their representations of the same events. Specifically, we will compare Bapsi Sidhwa's novel with Deepa Mehta's film.

Reading

*Cracking India*.

Discussion Assignment #3: Discussion Questions and Notes

To be provided by YOU! Please read the requirements under the Assignments section of the syllabus, above. Your questions should compare representations of partition in traditional historiography, film, and fiction and provoke discussions that help evaluate the relative strengths and weaknesses of the three kinds of representations.

October 7: **Partition Today : Film focus *Division of Hearts***

Objective

1. To understand the continuing impact of partition on the lives of ordinary folks in the South Asian region.
2. To understand the very different concerns which animate personal/local narratives of partition and nationalist narratives of the event.
3. To understand how the personal and local get folded into nationalist narratives.
4. To discuss how and why it may be important to untangle the personal and local from the nationalist.
5. To understand how a documentary film approach to partition differs from that of a feature film.

Reading ALL in Suvir Kaul ed. *Partitions of Memory*.

1. Richard McGill Murphy, "Performing Partition in Lahore."
2. Nita Kumar, "Children and the Partition."
3. Mukulika Banerjee, "Partition and the North West Frontier: Memories of Some Khudai Khidmatgars."

Screening

Excerpts from *Division of Hearts*

October 14: **Gendering Partition: Film Focus *Silent Waters***

Objective

1. To understand the experience of partition as being highly gendered, for women and men.
2. To understand, in particular, some women's experience of partition and what this tells us about ideas of the nation animating the politics of partition.
3. To compare and contrast the written versus the cinematic representations of women's victimization and agency during and after the events of 1947.

### Readings

1. Urvashi Butalia, "Abducted and Widowed Women: Questions of Sexuality and Citizenship During Partition," in Meenakshi Thapan, ed., *Embodiment: Essays on Gender and Identity* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997)  
<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/butaliaabductedwomen.pdf>
2. Priyamvada Gopal "Bodies Inflicting Pain" in Suvir Kaul ed. *Partitions of Memory*.
3. Jasodhara Bagchi "Freedom in an idiom of loss" *Seminar* 510, February 2002. (Click through from <http://www.india-seminar.com/2002/510.htm> or cut and paste the following URL <http://www.india-seminar.com/2002/510/510%20jasodhara%20bagchi.htm>)

### Screening

Possibly excerpts from *Silent Waters*, and *Pinjar*.

Discussion Assignment # 4 Discussion Questions and Notes To be provided by YOU, with questions centrally addressing the following theme: *what does adding a gendered perspective to the history of partition add to our understanding of those times*. Remember to draw on texts AND films for your questions and your notes.

### October 21: **The Oft-Forgotten Partition: Bengal. Film Focus ??**

#### Objective

1. To understand what was unique to the process and experience of partition in Bengal, as well as to understand the commonalities with the Punjabi experience.
2. To understand both how the histories of 1947 are unique to region, **and** how can we use them for comparative analysis.

#### Reading

1. Jasodhara Bagchi and Subhoranjan Dasgupta "The problem" *Seminar* 510, February 2002. <http://www.india-seminar.com/2002/510/510%20the%20problem.htm>
2. Urvashi Butalia "The Nowhere People" *Seminar* 510, February 2002. (Cut and paste following URL <http://www.india-seminar.com/2002/510/510%20urvashi%20butalia.htm> or click through from <http://www.india-seminar.com/2002/510.htm>)
3. Meghna Guha Thakurta "Uprooted and divided" *Seminar* 510, February 2002. (Cut and paste following URL or click through from <http://www.india-seminar.com/2002/510.htm> <http://www.india-seminar.com/2002/510/510%20meghna%20guha%20thakurta.htm> )
4. Joya Chatterjee "Rights or Charity? Government and refugees: the debate over relief and rehabilitation in West Bengal, 1947-1950," in Suvir Kaul ed. *Partitions of Memory*.

#### Recommended

As many of the short essays/poems/story/documents as you can manage from the special issue of *Seminar* used above <http://www.india-seminar.com/2002/510.htm>

#### Assignment

FINAL *Research Paper Prospectus DUE*

October 28: **Different Stories: Film focus *Pinjar***

Objective

1. To understand and be in a position to critique traditional historiography on India's partition.
2. Relating today's readings to what we have seen and read so far, to seek to evaluate the strengths and limitations of both film and traditional historical narrative in being able to recount people's experiences.
3. To question how can we tell the story of partition differently, in more inclusive and more complex ways. What sort of strategies of collecting information, thinking, writing or attention to different social groups do we need in order to change our perceptions about these days of momentous social change?

Reading

1. Gyanendra Pandey, "By way of Introduction" Chapter One of *Remembering Partition*.
2. Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Remembered Villages: Representations of Hindu-Bengali Memories in the Aftermath of the Partition" pp. 318-337, Mushirul Hasan ed. *Inventing Boundaries: Gender, Politics and the Partition of India* Delhi: OUP, 2000.  
<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/chakrabartyrememberedvillage.pdf>
3. Ramnarayan Rawat "Partition Politics and Achhut Identity: A Study of Scheduled Castes Federation and Dalit politics in U.P. 1946-1948," in Suvir Kaul ed. *Partitions of Memory*.
4. Urvashi Butalia, "An Archive with a Difference: Partition Letters" in Suvir Kaul ed. *Partitions of Memory*.

Screening

*Pinjar* excerpts.

Discussion Assignment # 5: Discussion Questions and Notes To be provided by YOU! By this time you really should know what is expected of you!

November 4 and 11: **No Class Meeting: Work on your paper**

November 18: **NO Class meeting**, BUT you MUST make arrangements to turn in the first draft of your paper to the classmate who has been assigned to peer review your paper.

November 25: **Peer Review of Paper**

Objective

Provide helpful feedback to your peers in class on the first draft of their papers.

Reading

Peer papers.

December 2: **No Class: Schedule meetings with me to discuss your paper if necessary.**

December 10: **Turn in final paper at 3 pm in my office.**