

**HIS 460 FILM & HISTORY: COLONIALISM, NATIONALISM AND MODERNITY IN INDIA
(Readings in World History)**

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[Course Web Page](#)

URL <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/filmandhistory/HIS%20460%20Course%20Page.htm>

DO LOOK AT NAU Policy Statements <https://nau.edu/university-policy-library/syllabus-requirements/>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course uses written and visual texts to better understand representations of three key themes in the history of modern India. Starting with the advent of British colonialism in the Indian subcontinent, this course then studies the various nationalist responses to colonialism, and looks at the nature of political, economic, and social issues in post-independence India. Colonialism, Nationalism, and the specific nature of modernity in colonial and postcolonial India will be the main themes we examine through this course. In doing so, we will pay particular attention to the place of gender, class, caste, and the politics of religious identities.

Films are used both to better understand a complex history, and as alternative narratives and/or representations of that history. We will use films to help make a fascinating history come alive in a way not always possible through written texts alone. At the same time, we will also examine how more conventional histories help us better understand and critique cinematic representations. Our aim will be to see how different representations of history help us better understand the complexities of narrating histories, and how to distinguish as well as evaluate these multiple representations.

COURSE OBJECTIVES We aim to:

1. Get a clear grasp of the basic narrative of events relating to colonialism and nationalisms in South Asia from ca. 1830 to recent times.
2. To understand and analyze various competing interpretations of these events.
3. To understand the ways in which traditional historical narratives differ from cinematic representations of history and to explore how these, together or separately, help us better understand colonialism and nationalisms in South Asia (as well as their legacy for the contemporary world).

COURSE STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS

This is a SEMINAR class. While I do not expect prior knowledge of the history of India, I do expect participants in a 400-level seminar class to be able to read and analyze material about unfamiliar names and events in very short order. I must warn all students of a pretty steep learning curve that this course will demand.

At the same time, I think the work will pay off with a complex understanding of Indian history and cinema suitable for a 400-level seminar. I fully expect that this course WILL be run as a seminar where students will take primary responsibility for knowledge production in the classroom. That means all students MUST come to class having completed reading (and viewing) assignments for that day, and prepared to engage in discussion. Fifteen percent (15%) of the total grade for this class comes from participation. If you do not participate, you WILL lose points. See the stipulations under the “Participation” section of “Course Assignments,” below.

We will not screen any of the required films in class, though we will obviously discuss films in great detail. Therefore, it will also be necessary for students to complete the viewing of the films in their own time. The films are available to you via the BBLearn page for the course.

Please make sure you are aware of the differences between, and the different material available at the **COURSE web page** and the **BBLearn page** for this course.

READINGS

There is only one required textbook for this course, though there are MANY other REQUIRED readings which are available either as links from this syllabus via the COURSE WEB PAGE or from the BBLearn page for this course. The textbook is **Barbara and Thomas Metcalf *A Concise History of India*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 3rd edition, 2012)**. Please ensure you DO have this edition as it has updates *required* for this course. This is available for purchase at the NAU bookstore. In addition, I highly recommend an invaluable website on Indian Cinema as an essential aid for a better understanding of some the films used in this course, and a wonderful introduction to many others that are not used here, <https://uiowa.edu/indiancinema/films>

FILMS

We will be using the following films as **required viewing** for this course. They are available as streaming media files accessible via the BBLearn page for the course.

1. Larger Than Life: India's Bollywood Film Culture
2. Lagaan: Once Upon a Time in India
3. Rudyard Kipling's The Man Who Would Be King
4. Gandhi (Attenborough's version)
5. Jinnah
6. Mother India
7. Deewar
8. Bandit Queen
9. Firaq
10. Lage Raho Munnabhai

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Syllabus Quiz. (5 points)** Take-home assignment. To ensure that students read the syllabus as carefully as possible. It is a complicated one!

2. **PARTICIPATION. (15 points)** As this is a seminar, regular attendance and participation are CRITICAL and worth 15 points. *Missing more than one class will automatically lead to deductions in participation points (exact number of points docked will be at my discretion). Missing more than three class meetings will result in a failing grade.* An important part of your education is to be able to express your ideas verbally as much as in writing. Shyness or inability to speak up in public situations cannot be an excuse for not participating in a

seminar. On the other hand, participation does not mean hogging class time! I will evaluate you on the QUALITY and not simply the QUANTITY of your participation. I will be looking for the extent to which your participation reveals a close reading and analytical thinking about the class material. Certainly, seminars are not a forum for presenting uninformed opinions even if they relate to the topic under discussion. You will be expected to, and might be called upon, to relate your interventions to the readings and/or other credible, preferably scholarly, sources of information.

3. **DISCUSSION NOTES. (10 points each)**

This may be a relatively new kind of assignment for you, so do pay attention to the following: You will be given specific questions or topics around which to frame your discussion notes a few days in advance of the discussion day. To evaluate the notes, I will be looking for both a clearly-outlined THESIS in response to each question, **AND relevant data/evidence to support your thesis**. The evidence/ data can be in “note” form, but the notes MUST have citations to specific pages in the readings as well as the film assigned that week. Notes that do not indicate a clear thesis or sufficient supporting data will be penalized at my discretion. To allow you to get used to the requirements of this assignment, your first two sets of notes are worth only 10 points each. The proportion of points gets higher in the assignment below. If University-related business compels you to miss a discussion, you will be allowed to submit notes **in advance of your departure**.

4. **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS and NOTES (30 [15 points each])**

You must submit TWO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS **and** NOTES on the appropriate dates marked on the syllabus. I expect to see between three and five 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. The questions must be written on a separate page, and you **MUST BRING ENOUGH COPIES** of your **questions** FOR ALL MEMBERS OF THE CLASS. Your questions need to be accompanied by two to four pages of notes, starting on a separate page. **Your notes are not to be shared.** Notes should follow the same format as required for the Discussion Notes assignment (above) with the significant difference that these notes should suggest ways in which the questions you pose can be addressed. As with the above assignment, you **MUST** include specific citations (including page numbers) to the readings and the films. **You will lead the discussion for the period when your questions are being discussed.**

While you are free to frame your questions and notes in any way you choose, keep in mind that I will be evaluating them on the extent to which they reveal familiarity with and analysis of the appropriate films and readings. You are, of course, free to bring up **queries**, separately from the discussion questions. **Each set of discussion questions and will be worth 15 points, for a total of 30 points.**

5. **FINAL PROJECT (30 points [5 proposal, 25 final paper])**

For your final assignment, you will write a high-quality final paper of at least 10 to 15 pages in length analyzing AND historicizing ONE of the following films. The paper will be evaluated on the quality of research, argumentation, and quality of prose. The films are:

PYAASA <https://uiowa.edu/indiancinema/pyaasa>

BEGUM JAAN https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Begum_Jaan

HAIDER <https://upperstall.com/film/haider/>

GULLY BOY <https://upperstall.com/film/gully-boy/> (awaiting availability currently, I may substitute another film if we are unable to get collective access to the film)

The films are all available to stream via BB Learn. The links above will give you a sense of what the films are

about, so that you may be able to make an informed decision about your topic in advance of spending a long time watching the film.

Your paper must pay attention to the film as a **product of the time it was released**, but also locate it in context of a longer history of the Indian subcontinent. Each of these films can be read as having a particular theme, and your paper must locate the film in the actual history and historiography of that theme (e.g. *Begum Jaan* is a film on partition, and also women's empowerment/disempowerment), **your paper must explore the history and historiography the theme running through the film**. This will involve undertaking independent research via the library and scholarly databases. *Your paper must use at least TWO scholarly and TWO journalistic pieces (such as film reviews or newspaper/magazine articles) that are NOT currently PART of existing course readings.*

I also want you to analyze the film in the context of similar previous or contemporary Indian films on a comparable topic. I expect a discussion of *a minimum of two or three other films* included as part of your paper. **At least one of the films** you compare it to has to be outside the list of required or recommended films for this course. I leave it to you to make the case of how the film(s) you choose are comparable.

This is not a project that you can undertake over just a few days. Therefore, I have included a process to ensure you start early on this project. I ask that you write a **formal proposal of three to four double-spaced pages (excluding citations)**, in academic prose, and submit that to me by **November 18**. In addition to your film of course, the proposal must contain a list of your academic and journalistic sources and films, and outline your proposed argument for the paper. I will meet with you individually in the weeks of November 18 and 25 (outside of class times) to discuss and comment on your proposal. The **final paper is due December 2nd, by 4 pm** in my mailbox in the History office.

I will allow but not demand that students to **pair up in teams of two (no more)** to complete this assignment. If you are teaming up, I recommend creating your team as soon as possible, and certainly before the fourth week of classes. If I am not informed of a team by this date, you will be writing your papers individually. I will be more than happy to help you in your research, but the responsibility for selecting, researching, and writing the paper is ultimately your own. I strongly encourage you to keep consulting with me on this project as the term progresses.

EVALUATION AND GRADES

Grades will be determined using the following criteria:

Syllabus Take Home Quiz	05 points
Discussion Notes	20 points (10 each)
Discussion Questions and Notes	30 points (15 each)
Final Project Proposal	05 points
Final Project Essay	25 points
Participation	15 points

TOTAL FOR COURSE 100 points

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. Missing even one class, unless it is for documentable reasons and allowed for by University policy, will have serious learning consequences. I will certainly penalize absences. ***More than three unexcused 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 (Dates, Readings, and Assignments subject to modification)

WEEK ONE August 26	INTRODUCTIONS
Objective	We get to know each other, and learn about the content of this course, and what is expected of all participants in this seminar.
Readings	Syllabus! Read Carefully
Assignment	Syllabus Quiz Assigned

WEEK TWO September 2	NO CLASS: LABOR DAY
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WEEK THREE September 9	FILM & HISTORY
Objective	To understand the connections between film and history, get a good sense of Indian history before the emergence of British rule.
Required Viewing (ALWAYS required before class)	Larger Than Life: India's Bollywood Film Culture http://digital.films.com/PortalViewVideo.aspx?xtid=33907 (NAU Users Only)
Required Readings (ALWAYS required Before Class)	1. Robert A. Rosenstone, “History in Images History in Words: Reflecting on the Possibility of Really Putting History onto Film,” in <i>Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History</i> . Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1998. http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/rosenstonefilmhistory.pdf 2. Nasreen Munni Kabir, “ Bollywood Basics ” Chapter One of <i>Bollywood: The Indian Cinema Story</i> (Channel 4 Books). 3. Metcalf and Metcalf, Chapter One and Two.
Recommended	<i>The Story of India: Freedom</i>

	http://digital.films.com/PortalViewVideo.aspx?xtid=41065 (NAU Users Only)
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Film and History, and also, Film <i>as</i> History • Discuss Indian history up to British rule • Discuss the emergence of Indian Cinema and its “Bollywood-ization” • Take Home Syllabus Quiz due • If you are planning a team paper, I would strongly advise you to have your team finalized at this point and let me know by next week the composition of your team. If I am not informed of a team effort, you will be writing your paper individually.

WEEK FOUR September 16	UNDERSTANDING COLONIAL RULE AND ITS REPRESENTATION
Objective	To understand the workings of Colonial Rule and the contexts of its representation in this film.
Required Viewing	<i>Lagaan</i>
Required Readings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Metcalf and Metcalf, Chapter Two and Three. 2. Chandrima Chakraborty, “Subaltern Studies, Bollywood and ‘Lagaan.’ <i>Economic and Political Weekly</i>, Vol. 38, No. 19 (May 10-16, 2003), pp. 1879-1884. 3. Sudhanva Deshpande, “Subaltern Fantasies.” <i>Economic and Political Weekly</i>, Vol. 38, No. 23 (Jun. 7-13, 2003), pp. 2310-2311.
Assignment	Questions for Discussion ONE on September 23.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Cricket as a sport! • Discuss the “High Noon” of British Empire in India • Discuss Film in the context of this history • Discuss the film as a product of the context of early 21st C India

WEEK FIVE September 23	EMPIRE AND CINEMA IN BRITISH INDIA
Objective	To understand the workings and representations of British colonialism. Does seeing a film in the context of history change our understanding of the film?
Required Viewing	<i>Man Who Would Be King</i>
Required Readings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Metcalf and Metcalf, Chapter Three and Four. 2. Edward Said, Introduction to Rudyard Kipling's <i>Kim</i> 3. Rudyard Kipling, “Man Who Would be King”
Activities	<p>First Half of Class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the “High Noon” of British Empire in India • Discuss Film • Discuss Film in context of the readings <p>Second Half of Class</p> <p>Discussion # 1 (British Colonialism in India) Remember to bring two copies of your notes, one to hand in to me and the other to use to discuss and make notes for revisions</p>

WEEK SIX September 30	GANDHI'S INDIA
Objective	To understand the history and representations of Gandhi. Do the two differ?
Required Viewing	<i>Gandhi</i> (Richard Attenborough version)
Required Readings	1. Metcalf and Metcalf, Chapters Five and Six. 2. David Hardiman, "Father of the Nation" in <i>Gandhi in His Time and Ours</i> . New York: Columbia University Press, 2003. http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/hardimangandhigender.pdf 3. Salman Rushdie, " Attenborough's Gandhi " in <i>Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991</i> London: Granta, 1991.
Recommended	Rachel Dwyer " The Case of the Missing Mahatma: Gandhi and the Hindi Cinema. " Special issue of <i>Public Culture</i> edited by Ritu Birla and Faisal Devji, 23, 2 (Spring 2011), pp. 349-376
Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion # 2 Questions (for October 7th) Assigned. You <i>Your notes should be more substantial than for the first discussion</i> as this one covers two weeks' worth of films and readings. • <i>Start working on your final paper topic. Research bibliographies & films on the topic.</i> You <i>will</i> be asked to talk in class about progress made in two weeks' time.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Historical Background to Gandhi • Discuss Gandhi's ideology • Discuss Attenborough's representations of Gandhi • Gandhi and Gender • Gandhi, Religion, and Politics

WEEK SEVEN October 7	COMPETING NATIONALISMS AND PARTITION
Objective	To understand the alternative views of nationalism represented Jinnah, the complicated politics of partition of the subcontinent, and the gendered nature of the violence that accompanied it
Required Viewing	<i>Jinnah</i>
Required Reading	1. Metcalf and Metcalf, Chapter Seven. 2. David Gilmartin, "Partition, Pakistan, and South Asian History: In Search of a Narrative," <i>Journal of Asian Studies</i> , vol. 57, no. 4 (November 1998) pp. 1068-95. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2659304?origin=JSTOR-pdf or http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/gilmartinpartition.pdf 3. Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, " Speaking for Themselves: Partition History, Women's Histories. " Ritu Menon and Kamala Bhasin, <i>Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition</i> (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1998) pp. 3-27. 4. Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin "Honourably Dead" in <i>Borders and Boundaries: Women and India's Partition</i> . Delhi: Kali for Women, 1998, pp. 32-64. http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/Menon_BhasinHonourablydead.pdf
Recommended Reading:	Eqbal Ahmad on Qaid-i-Azam, M. A. Jinnah http://pakteahouse.net/2008/09/17/eqbal-ahmad-on-quaid-i-azam-m-a-jinnah/ (especially parts 2 and 3)

Activities	<p>First Half of Class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Film • Discuss Readings on Partition • Discuss Jinnah vs Gandhi, History, Film, Context, and Representation <p>Second Half</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion #2 (Nationalism, Gandhi, Jinnah, and Partition) Remember to bring two copies of your notes, one to hand in to me and the other to use to discuss and make notes for revisions
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WEEK EIGHT October 14	THE EARLY NATION-STATE AND DISCONTENTS
Objectives	To understand both the difficulties faced by the new Indian government and the disappointments confronting the people after the “success” of nationalism. The representation of this duality in film.
Required Viewing	<i>Mother India</i>
Required Reading	<p>1. Metcalf and Metcalf pp. 231-251.</p> <p>2. Ramachandra Guha, “Verdicts on Nehru: Rise and Fall of a Reputation” <i>Economic and Political Weekly</i>, Vol. 40, No. 19 (May 7-13, 2005), pp. 1958-1962. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4416605</p> <p>3. Rosie Thomas, “Sanctity and Scandal: The Mythologization of Mother India,” <i>Quarterly Review of Film and Video</i> 11:3 (1989): 11-30.</p>
Assignment	Prepare YOUR Questions (on a separate page) and discussion notes based on readings and films for Discussion #3 covering WEEK EIGHT and NINE for submission October 21. See description of this assignment, above.
Activities	<p>First ¾ of class time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Nehru’s Vision and Its Implementation/Limitations • Politics in Post Independent India • Discuss the representation of early independent India in this film • Discuss the range of social, economic, and political problems the film reveals and their potential connection with economic political policies of the Nehruvian era? <p>Last ¼ of the class period</p> <p>Oral report by each student/team on progress made on the paper</p>

WEEK NINE October 21	FROM DISILLUSIONMENT TO ANGER? INDIA AFTER NEHRU
Objective	To understand the way India changed, other than in terms of leaders and their personalities, from Nehru's time to Indira's
Required Viewing	<i>Deewar</i>
Required Reading	<p>1. Metcalf and Metcalf, pp. 251-264.</p> <p>2. Sudipta Kaviraj, “Indira Gandhi and Indian Politics.” <i>Economic and Political Weekly</i>, Vol. 21, No. 38/39 (Sep. 20-27, 1986), pp. 1697-1708. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4376158</p> <p>3. Jyotika Viridi, “The ‘Fiction’ of Film and ‘Fact’ of Politics: <i>Deewar</i>.” <i>Jump Cut</i> 38 (1993): 26-32. http://ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC38folder/Deewar.html</p>

Activities	<p>Discuss the following in the first half of class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indian politics from Nehru to Indira • Democracy and Populism and the limitations of populism • Discuss <i>Deewar</i> as product of the 1970s <p>In the second half of class</p> <p><i>Discussion # 3</i> BASED ON YOUR QUESTIONS and Notes. You need to bring sufficient copies of questions for the whole class as well as two copies of your notes.</p>
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WEEK TEN October 28	ANGER OF THE OPPRESSED
Objectives	To understand the ways in which caste, class and gender come together to form the matrix of Phoolan Devi's oppression. Also, the controversial ways in which it was represented by Shekhar Kapur in this film.
Required Viewing	<i>Bandit Queen</i> Please be advised that this film has graphic depictions of violence, and also sexual violence, that readings below also repeat.
Required Readings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. William R. Pinch, Review of The Bandit Queen. <i>The American Historical Review</i>, Vol. 101, No. 4 (Oct., 1996), pp. 1149-1150. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2169642 2. Arundhati Roy, "The Great Indian Rape Trick." 3. Mala Sen, "Right of reply: 'Bandit Queen' gives it to you straight." <i>The Independent</i>, March 2, 1995. 4. My Powerpoint "Caste: A Historical Approach"
Assignment	<p>Prepare Questions (on separate page) and discussion notes based on readings and films for WEEKS TEN and ELEVEN for submission November 4. Discussion # 4. These should be as substantial a set of notes (as for Discussion # 3) because they cover two weeks' worth of films and readings.</p> <p>Continue work on final paper. By this time you should have a good sense of your topic, and the outside readings and film to go along with it. <i>If you do not</i>, this would be the time to meet with me to make sure you are on track.</p>
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Caste, some history and its operation in everyday life • Discuss readings • Discuss film in the context of the readings and earlier discussion

WEEK ELEVEN November 4	TARGETING MINORITIES
Objective	To understand the growing intolerance and rise of Hindu nationalism in contemporary India in a historical context.
Required Viewing	<i>Firaaq</i>
Required Readings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Metcalf and Metcalf, Chapter Nine. 2. Syed Asif Haider "Firaaq: Remembering Gujarat" <i>Polyvocia – The SOAS Journal of Graduate Research</i>, Vol. 2, March 2010. 3. Gyanendra Pandey, "Can a Muslim Be an Indian?" <i>Comparative Studies in Society and History</i>, Vol. 41, No. 4 (Oct., 1999), pp. 608-629
Assignment	Keep working on your final paper. A formal PROPOSAL (worth points) is due the week after Veteran's Day (in two weeks' time)

Activities	<p>First Half Discussion of Films and Readings in the context of history How do film and history help us understand the increasing violence in society?</p> <p>Second Half Discussion # 4 (Class, Caste, Gender and Religion as axes of oppression and response in contemporary India) based on your questions. You do need to bring notes as well.</p>
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WEEK TWELVE November 11	NO CLASS: VETERAN'S DAY Please do work on your paper PROPOSAL
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WEEK THIRTEEN November 18	FROM GANDHI TO GANDHIGIRI: ARE WE POSTCOLONIAL YET?
Objectives	To discuss and understand the complications of modernity in contemporary India with a focus on changing representations of Mahatma Gandhi.
Required Viewing	<i>Lage Raho Munnabhai</i> http://www.uiowa.edu/~incinema/Lage%20Raho%20MB.html
Required Reading	1. Ashis Nandy, " Gandhi After Gandhi ." <i>The Little Magazine</i> Vol. 1, Number 1 (May 2000) 2. Arunabha Ghosh and Tapan Babu, "Lage Raho Munna Bhai: Unravelling Brand 'Gandhigiri'." <i>Economic and Political Weekly</i> , Vol. 41, No. 51 (Dec. 23-29, 2006), pp. 5225-5227 http://www.jstor.org/stable/4419050
Assignment	Submit paper proposals
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss readings and films • Sign up for appointments over assigned times NEXT WEEK • Keep in mind that if working as a team, BOTH team members must be available to attend the meeting

WEEK THIRTEEN and FOURTEEN November 25	Meetings IN MY OFFICE with individuals or teams
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WEEK FIFTEEN December 2	No Class meeting. FINAL PAPER DUE in my box in the HISTORY OFFICE by 4:30 pm
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